

Title: My Son, the King
Text: Hebrews 1.5-14
Theme: The Eternal reign of the God-King, Christ!
Series: Hebrews #3
Prop Stmtnt If you value anything more than you value Christ, it is idolatry.

Read Text:

Sometimes church seems like a real pain, doesn't it? Do you ever just want to stay home? There are probably a thousand reasons you could come up with as to why it would be so much easier not to come. You're tired. You stayed up too late watching the Olympics. You got up late. You yelled at your kids or your spouse this morning and it was really stupid, but you haven't made it right yet and of course you're feeling their eyes on you this very moment and you really wish that I hadn't brought it up, and are hoping that I will move on. You're haven't started on your taxes. You have projects that need to be done. You haven't had a chance to slow down all week. You're discouraged. You're disappointed in yourself. You've made some bad decisions and don't want to face them. You don't like people pretending and then there is the old standby about hypocrites. We all know that the church is where every pretender goes – right? Then there's baby dedication. Sure you're happy for these couples, but you haven't been able to have children and this always hurts. Frankly, you just feel like quitting, running, hiding, staying away, avoiding conversations and accountability. But here you are. Then Nathan tells you to turn around and greet people and now you're stuck. It hasn't always been like this, but right now it sort of crummy.

I saw a cartoon of a man lying in bed, his wife looked like she was dressed for church and she said, "You are coming this morning aren't you?" He said, "The music stinks, the people are annoying, and the sermon is boring. Give me one good reason why I should go with you to church." She said, "Because you are the pastor."

The truth is, we often live facing a headwind. The path we are called to travel is usually uphill. There are times of great enthusiasm that make that section of the journey a little easier. However, many of the days are accompanied by resistance. And it wears on us and wears us down. The book of Hebrews was written to a group of believers facing a strong wind in their face and heaviness upon their hearts that was not letting up. Some were second generation believers, who were cultural Christians and not truly born of the spirit. The initial enthusiasm, the miracles, the explosive growth that accompanied the birth of the church in Acts 2 was long gone. Years of relentless persecution had taken their toll. The loss of homes, loss of jobs, imprisonment in some cases, the estrangement of family, the sense of social isolation was all a sobering time to consider whether or not this Jesus stuff was really worth it. And there was the church itself. Look at us. We're all broken. Some of us are harsh, cold, condescending, and distant, others are shallow.

But there was an additional strain on these believers to which some of you can relate. If you are from a very structured religious tradition and you no longer follow that because you have truly embraced Christ, then a part of your childhood experiences are gone. The

fact that you do not celebrate them is a difficult and sometimes awkward reminder to your family that you now think that they are wrong. That unresolved tension can be weighty. To whom do you listen when you are tempted to quit? I love this book. I love preaching these truths because I know that they are feeding your soul. I love preaching these truths because they just rip off the layers of make-believe, which is hard for so many of us, but so needful because when our vulnerabilities and fears are exposed like raw nerve endings, then we are ready for the Spirit's ministry to our souls. We are then ready to hear, believe and bank on Christ and love him, purely because he is worthy of our love and not because of some immediate benefit that we're promised if we love him. What joy to love unencumbered by a sense of return, but loving because the object of our love is truly desirable in the most ultimate sense.

So, as I preach through Hebrews, I will repeatedly remind you of the theme of this book. Press on Pilgrim – we're not home yet. But as I do that, I will keep bringing you back to the reason why we press on. We press on because pressing on for Christ, pressing on in Christ, pressing on by Christ puts the supremacy of Christ on display. Pressing on no matter what, makes much of Jesus. And the book of Hebrews rightfully makes so much of Christ. The truth is, you cannot make too much of Christ. It is impossible to overemphasize Christ. The exhilarating first 4 verses of this book make that so evident. But then his point is that Christ is far superior to angels. He brings that up in verse 4 and then focuses upon that for the next 10 – why? It seems a bit random to us. Why do you suppose the author emphasizes this? Is it because these early believers had a fascination with angels and were tempted to view them as being more important than Christ? It is true that there was, on the part of some Jews, a rather elaborate and extra-biblical system of belief about angels. But that does not mean that these early believers had bought into that anymore than we do, although there is plenty of speculation about angels.

And it is true that angels are fascinating beings. Angels appear throughout the Scriptures as powerful beings who bring information, carry out judgment, provide protection, give assistance and strength, and of course, they worship God. But I do not think that the author is attempting to put down a cult-like fascination with angels that has arisen in the church. What is going on here is something that is so much bigger than that. And we really don't see it until we step back a bit and try to take in a bigger view. Then, after seeing the bigger picture, we can then look more closely at this particular text and see how glorious it is even as it relates to the whole thing.

Now, again, (and I pray that you get this) I need to challenge many of you to think so much bigger and grander about what Christianity truly is. I must challenge you and call you to do this because that is exactly what this text is doing. Some of you think like this:

Salvation is the train that will take you to heaven/eternal life when you die. And in order to get on that train, you have to have the Jesus ticket. You with me? Now the question is, how do you get the ticket? If you were raised in a roman catholic context you were told that if you were baptized, confirmed, went to confession, attended mass, participated in lent, got married, gave money, had last rites, etc. then you would hopefully get the ticket, at least many pieces of it. But, if you were raised in an evangelical, protestant

setting many of you were told that all you had to do was pray a prayer. Hey, this is so much easier. Pray this prayer and you get the Jesus ticket and then you are guaranteed a seat on the train. Jesus is the ticket to eternal life. In fact, to hear some speak about heaven, it is the place of eternal retirement without money and health worries and all that Jesus is, is the ticket to get there. So, what happens if you aren't sure whether or not you have the ticket? Pray again, and make sure you use all of the right words this time. If that is what the gospel is really all about, then why doesn't the author of Hebrews just say that? After all, there are people who are discouraged and others whose unfaithfulness give evidence that they are not genuine believers. Why doesn't he just tell them to pray the prayer again? The reason is because that is NOT what the gospel is all about. I want you to see how this all unfolds! In order to help these people see what their lives are about, he starts by explaining what God's plan is all about.

God, in eternity past devised a plan whereby he could publicly display the incredible greatness, majesty and honor of His Son. God, the Father determined to build a kingdom for his Son in order to establish him as the King. So God created the universe, with the earth as the focal point of it. But, before he made the earth and the universe around it, God made angels. He created angels to be the first audience who would have a front row seat during the week of creation. He also made the angels to be his servants in order to carry out his orders that would ensure the execution of his plan. They are witnesses, worshipers and workers. Job 38.7 says that when God laid the foundation of the earth that the morning stars (a phrase for the angels) sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy. They responded to the authoritative Word and creative works of God with exuberant singing and shouting! But God was not done. The pinnacle act of creation was not the magnificent universe with its unimaginable vastness and billions upon billions of stars. The creation account in Genesis spends so little attention on that. What aspect of creation does Genesis focus upon? It focuses upon the creation of the human race. The human race was the chief act of God's creation. The chief act was not angels. Angels were made as his ministers (v.7). Angels were made to serve those who would inherit salvation (v.14). And yes, they are glorious beings. Yes, they are powerful beings. But if these glorious, powerful beings were made and ordained and sent out for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation – then what do you suppose that says about the magnificent glory of this salvation and what do you suppose this says about the incredible joy and glory of those who will inherit it? Now, let's stop and review.

1.1-4 – God has spoken through his Son – and you must listen (big idea)

2.1-4 – God spoke through angels – and there were consequences for those who did not listen to that, how much more severe will be the consequences for those who do not listen the words of the son! Because, (1.5-14) Christ is superior to the angels.

Not only that, but there is incredible glory for those who listen to and follow the words of the Son. God made humans so that they would be part of this incredible plan for the kingdom of his Son. And while sin severely corrupted the earth, the sinfulness of the human race became the occasion for God to show off the glory of His character and the glory of His Son by making a brilliant display of his love and grace on the cross and an

equally brilliant display of his power in the resurrection of Christ from the dead. The only way for you to be rescued from your sin, to be forgiven, redeemed, saved from wrath and saved to glory is through the death of Christ in your place. You have to recognize that Christ took your place. Christ took your sin, therefore Christ took your judgment. This most incredible act of God most magnificently put on display the kind of God that he is. He then raised Christ from the dead who then ascended into heaven and is at the right hand of the throne of glory where he awaits the consummation of the kingdom when he will by rights receive the honor and worship that he is due when he is finally crowned as king of the universe. But, his incarnation, his life, his humiliation, his suffering, his death, his burial, his resurrection, his ascension also paved the way for us. (2.10) “It was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.” Our salvation was only made possible by the perfect, mature, complete Son of God who experienced dreadful suffering in order to fully obey the Father’s plan for our redemption. There is no other way. Dirk Ficca, minister in Chicago, speaking about the people in his religious denomination said that the majority of them feel that “the God they know in Jesus” can bring salvation to non-Christians.” He was saying that God can rescue people apart from Christ. Dirk is dead wrong! God cannot and will not rescue people apart from belief in His Son because his humbling and perfectly obedient life, sacrificial death, glorious resurrection and subsequent exaltation was the only means by which God has established his Son as the King forever and **the** means by which Christ is bringing us into his glory. What I mean is that God has designed a plan to take sinners like us and make us to share in, revel in, and participate in his glory! He did not do that for angels. (2.5-8) He not only designed the plan, He accomplished the plan. In fact, He is the plan. Jesus is not the ticket, he is the train and the destination.

So, if that is what is in store for those you are followers of Christ then 1) You had better make sure that you believe him (2.1-4) and 2) You now have all the reason and motivation that you will ever need to persevere. So, press on pilgrim. That’s the plan.

Now you are ready to see how this text (1.5-14) fits into his argument. He is simply speaking from the lesser to the greater. If the Mosaic Law (that was delivered to Moses) by angels was so important (2.1-4), how much more important is the Word that is delivered to us by Christ? That’s the point! He is arguing for how important it is for us to listen to the word of Christ because of the undeniable reality of the supremacy of Christ over everything, especially angels and angels are amazing, but nothing like Jesus! That’s what this text is about.

Christ is Supreme Because:

1. Of the unique relationship between the Father and the Son (5)

Verse 5 is a rhetorical question that has two parts to it. When I say rhetorical I mean that the author is not asking this question in order gain information but in order to make a point. The verse is a mini-chiasm. Lines 1 and 4 correspond to each other while lines 2 and 3 do the same. The obvious answer to the question is that God has never said

anything like this to an angel. The verse is also a combination of two OT passages. The first is from the 2nd Psalm, the King Psalm, the establishment of the ultimate King upon his throne Psalm. The phrase “begotten” is not inferring that Christ had a beginning, which would mean that he is a created being. That argument completely misses the point. He is the eternal King whose exaltation after death is the means to his being established as King. Since Christ is the only one who could die for our sins, and was raised again, his return to glory and subsequent seating at the right hand of God was the “today I have begotten you” moment. That is what Psalm 2 was referring to. Christ is the Son, the King. The establishment of his throne in heaven will culminate in his reign on the earth. And the next phrase only adds to that idea. It is a quote from 2 Samuel 7, where God is establishing a covenant with David and promising him that not only his son will sit on David’s throne, but God is establishing a line of kings through David that will reign forever, which of course is fulfilled in Christ. The promise to David’s son, that God would “be to him a father and he shall be to me a son” was partially fulfilled in Solomon but was also a prophecy that pointed to Christ. The language of verse 5 underscores the very thing that flavors the entire plan of God. The eternal relationship of love and joy and contentment that is experienced with the Father and the Son is what drives the Father to do all of these things. His Son is so glorious, so perfect, so gracious, so wonderful and the Father enjoys the Son so much, that he is using the Son as the means to enjoy us, in a manner like he enjoys his Son. The Father enjoys the Son so much, delights in, exults in and rejoices in the Son so much (because the Son looks like, acts like, is just like the infinitely glorious Father) that in order to increase the glory of the Son and the enjoyment and pleasure of God, He made and redeemed thousands upon thousands of people in order for them (us) to be like his Son. Our inheritance is not a mansion – oh please! It is Christ! Do you get it? Jesus is not a ticket, He is the train and the destination!! None of these things are said about angels. The text gives a 2nd reason. Christ is supreme because

2. Of the inferiority of anything and everything else (6-7)

These two verses are also quotes from two OT passages. The point of the first one is that Christ, the first born (a reference to his position of honor who shares both the father’s authority but who also inherits more than anyone else), is the one that God has ordained to be worshiped. God never calls us to worship angels. Angels are called to worship Christ. By the way, the passages that this is drawn from (Deut. 32.43 and Psalm 97.7) both use the name Yahweh in them as the one who is receiving worship. Here, this passage about Yahweh (the OT covenant name of God) is used in reference to Christ, which is a statement about the deity of Christ, which is a point that becomes very, very clear in the next section.

But don’t lose sight of the argument. Christ is supreme because he alone is the object of worship. Angels are not to be worshiped, angels are created beings (v.7) who were made to serve. In passages, like Isaiah 6 that speak about God’s awesome power and majesty, angels are described as worshiping and attending in places of service. Verse 7 is taken from Psalm 104 recounts the story of creation and tells of the greatness of God expressed in his works. The point is, the angels were made as part of God’s great works. They are amazing creatures. When they speak, they speak on behalf of God, so their word must be

given honor. So, how much more honor and attention should Christ be given. If you are going to listen to an angel who exists to serve and obey Christ, how much more should you listen to the word of Christ? Christ is supreme because...

3. **He is the eternal God and King** (8-12)

Imagine that your child just won a gold medal at the Olympics this week and you were asked, "what is that like?" "Are you proud of him/her?" Are you kidding me, you would be elated! Listen to the elation in the voice of the Father as he declares with divine exuberance, "Your throne, O God is forever and ever." Here the author is quoting from Psalm 45 and we see how this is fulfilled in Christ. God the Father is making it so clear that his Son is God, the very God. The Father is so overjoyed about His Son because His Son is just like his Father. "The scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom." We cannot wait for his kingdom to come and his will be done on earth as it is in heaven. We are so tired of the stories of corruption and injustice at all levels of our society. I really do not think that we can even begin to imagine what it will be like to live under the King who is eternally righteous.

Now, I do not say this with anger, malice or bitterness. I say this because it needs to be said. The truth of verse 8 completely dismantles the Islamic religion. The truth of verse 8 completely destroys the Mormon religion and the Jehovah Witness cult. Within those religions there are sincere people, pleasant people, but sincerity does not count. If you do not recognize and agree with what God says about his own Son, then you have created a false religion and it will not rescue your soul. Christ is supreme because He is the eternal God and King. His own Father says so! The Father is so thrilled with how his Son loves righteousness and hates wickedness that God has anointed his Son with the oil of gladness beyond his companions. Christ occupies a position of honor that is unique to all other aspects of creation. There is a relationship of gladness in the Godhead.

In verses 10-12, another contrast is established. Christ laid the foundation of the earth "in the beginning." The point is, Christ is eternal, even while that which has been made is not. The day is coming when this earth is going to be re-made. But not Christ. (v.12) He is the same.

Concl.

Verse 13 begins just like verse 5. This is called an inclusion. The point has been made. Christ is supreme. In fact the Father has given him a seat next to his, while the Father takes all of the enemies of Christ and makes them his footstool. (What is God doing right now? He is in the process of setting up the enemies of his Son to be crushed.) God did not do this for the angels, they have a different task. They are to minister to those who will follow the Son. The Son inherits the kingdom. My Son, is the King. You better listen to him; he is going to get it all. If you are part of those who listen to him that means that we inherit salvation. The angels exist in part to minister to us and for us. We are the sons of glory whom the Father sent the Son to go and redeem, so that we could share in his glory. God always finishes what he starts, so can you. Press on Pilgrim.