

More on the Superiority of Christ**Introduction**

In order to justify the statement that the Son is better than the angels in 1:4, the Bible lays out seven Old Testament (OT) quotations in 1:5-14. We looked at the first four sections in the previous notes, namely: (1) the Son has a unique relationship to the Father (Psalm 2:7 and 2 Samuel 7:14); (2) the Son receives angelic worship (Deuteronomy 32:43); (3) angels are servants (Psalm 104:4); and (4) the Son rules over all (Psalm 45:6-7). We pick up later in these notes with #5, 6, and 7.

These quotations are interesting because upon first read of the OT texts, it might not be immediately evident that something as special as the divine Messiah is being discussed. But there are clues in the OT texts that this is indeed the case, because the meaning of the OT is in the OT, not outside of it. That is to say, the OT saint did not have to wait until the New Testament (NT) to get the interpretation of the OT text he was reading.

That said, still some of the references to the Messiah are somewhat obscure. Some of the psalms, for instance, can be read as if addressed to a human king, but then they extend into a realm beyond a mere human king. At these points, application would not make sense to someone who is not a divine-human king. We certainly won't exhaust this issue in our study of Hebrews, as there are whole large books written about the use of the OT in the NT. But we can make satisfactory progress without being experts in the field.

It makes me wonder at the opportunity the disciples had to hear Jesus explain to them all the things concerning him from Moses and the prophets (Luke 24:27, 45). But we have a similar opportunity in our day as we read the book of Hebrews, which is doing a lot of what Jesus did with those disciples in that it quotes OT passages and gives us some insight as to their meaning with regard to the Messiah. Here are some examples:

**About Psalm 2**

This psalm could almost be interpreted entirely to refer to the human Davidic king. However the universal language of verses 8 and 10, the iron-rod rule of verse 9 (Revelation 2:27), and the putting of trust in the king in verse 12 all go beyond what can be said of any ancient Davidic/Solomonic king and kingdom.

**About 2 Samuel 7:14**

God promises that David's house, kingdom, and throne would be established forever. But he mentions the condition of sin and how it will apparently in a temporary fashion interrupt the exercise of that kingdom—as we see today of the house of David. Evidently it was impossible to find someone who was (a) a seed, that is, a man who (b) does not commit iniquity so as to maintain his rule and not come under the chastening of God. Even the best of the kings—David and Solomon—had major sins. After that, the dynasty pretty much went

downhill. The only solution is a divine-human king who doesn't have the sin problem. He will continue on the throne forever.

### About Psalm 45

The notes last time mentioned the special case of Psalm 45. In it, we saw that the psalmist called the king the most handsome of men (most English translations render it this way). Note that Saul and David were both considered handsome—an external qualification for people to be interested in them as king, even though God does not focus on externals (1 Samuel 9:2, 16:12, 16:7). Psalm 45:2 also says that God has blessed the king, but then says in verse 6, “Your throne, O God, is forever...” This title of “God” is given to the same “you” who is the most handsome of men. This seems to fit nicely with a human-divine king.

## 5. The Son is the Creator, v. 10

Ps 102:25

As we saw in 1:2, the Son is the creator of all things. This is the clear testimony of the Bible, from John 1:1-3 and Col. 1:16, that Jesus is the God-man who long before His incarnation created the heavens and the earth. John's gospel is very clear when it says that everything was created by the Logos, the Son of God. Note what it says, in contrast to those who say that the Son Himself was created:

1. All things were made through Him.
2. Without Him nothing was made that was made.

It is as if John anticipated the error in the doctrine of Christ that has troubled the true church for centuries—he said that everything was made through the Son, and then as if to double-down on that statement, John said that there is nothing that is excepted from that statement.

One area of theology that is influenced by the teaching of Christ's creation of all things is what we call the doctrine of the “creator-creature distinction.” The idea of this doctrine is that it teaches that there are really only two classes of things. In the first class or “set,” there is only one item, and that item is God. Of course, God exists as three integrally united persons sharing one nature, but nonetheless, these three persons are one God. In the other set is everything else. There is God, who is the creator, and there is the creation, which is fundamentally distinct from God. The creation is everything that is *not* God. The Son is part of the first class, the Three-in-One God, and He made everything in the second class. There are no other classes to consider. This doctrine, in turn, is connected to the doctrine of God's holiness, that is not only His moral purity, but also His transcendence above all that is created.

The Son is the master craftsman. Bezalel was a master handyman of the tabernacle (Exodus 31:2-5); Solomon was wise and designed many beautiful things (1 Kings 7:1); and there are many other humans who have achieved great feats of art, technology, and construction. But there is only one Jesus, whose handiwork is the universe, the earth, the animals, the angels, and mankind, with all their marvelous complexity, interconnectedness, and immaterial parts.

Not insignificantly, all of this means that the Son of God created *you!* He had a hand, however direct or indirect, in forming you while you were in your mother's womb. Without Him, you *would* be a blob of tissue, a tumor, or noth-

ing at all. Christian or Muslim or Hindu or Buddhist, you were made, as it were, by the hands of God. God had the power to make you the way it pleased Him (Romans 9:20). This includes that He permitted you to go your own way and depart from Christ (particularly if you are not born again). But it does not mean that He has no legitimate claim on your life. Rather, He commands all men everywhere to repent of sin because there is a day coming when the Creator will be the Judge (Acts 17:31).

## **6. The Son is Eternal and Immutable, v. 11-12**

**Ps 102:26-27**

God is eternal (Exodus 3:14) and immutable (Malachi 3:6). So is the Son. In contrast to the aging and fading earth and universe, the Son of God remains the same and will never have an end.

The world and universe are degrading under the weight of the second law of thermodynamics as entropy increases. Even so, the ultimate reason that the heavens will perish is because God is going to actively do something to dissolve them (see 2 Peter 3:10-12).

Nothing can change the Son of God. He obviously shares the very essence of deity since He is eternal and immutable.

By *eternal* we mean that the Son has always existed. I suppose we can somewhat grasp the idea of time infinite in the future. But the eternity of the Son means that He also existed in time infinite in the past, we could say, or before there was time. He is timeless in that sense, though He can interact with His creation within the confines of time. There was no time when God was not, nor a time when the Son was not.

By *immutable* we mean that the Son of God is always God, and never changes in his essential being. See James 1:17. You might pose an objection to the doctrine of Christ's immutability. If He is unchangeable, then how could He take on humanity to become Jesus of Nazareth? Or, how could he "do" anything—doesn't that necessitate *change*? But when we speak of immutability, we are speaking of the nature of God or the nature of the Christ. That nature is unchangeable—holy, love, omniscient, omnipotent, etc. But this does not imply that the unchanging-ness extends to God's actions, or else He could not *do* anything. We as people can be involved in all kinds of actions at a particular point in time that do not change us or mean we are changing as a person.

God is in the business, however, of changing His children. That means he wants to change *you who believe in Christ!* It is not an immediate changeover, but it is a slow process of growth and change so that we mutate into a person who is more like Jesus Christ than we were before. Our target is immutable and so it is not a moving target. His nature is what we desire to be replicated in ourselves. This process we call by the technical term "sanctification" but it is simply that we become like Jesus in our thinking, character, behavior, attitudes, speech, plans, priorities, etc. (Romans 8:29).

## **7. The Son is at the Right Hand of God, v. 13**

**Ps 110:1**

Another contrasting statement is given here that shows the Son's superiority over angels. None of them have received an offer/command like the Son did. The command was to sit at the right hand of God, the place of honor and prominence. His sitting shows His work is done, and that He is awaiting his enemies to be put under his feet.

The world is presently in the strange state of having its king, Jesus, absent for a while (Luke 19:11-27). He has a throne prepared to rule over the world in

righteousness (v. 8-9), but He is awaiting the appointed time when He can bring that rule into active expression directly on the earth over His enemies.

One thing that we can profitably consider is the nature of this “sitting” that Jesus is doing right now. Psalm 110 does not say that the Son is ruling from that throne at the moment. It pictures Him as *waiting*, not *ruling*. The rule will come after His enemies are made into a footstool. The expression of the rule of our Lord will be seen outwardly at that time. To help you understand the nature of His kingdom, remember this: during the church age, Christ’s kingdom is *not yet*. It is not already operative. It is *not yet* and it will not be until Christ returns (Revelation 19). His earthly government, this kingdom idea, is distinct from His sovereignty over all things. That sovereignty He has and exercises all the time.

#### About Psalm 110

This psalm is clearly Messianic. David writes, “The LORD said to my Lord...” thus showing that YHWH was speaking to Adonai as a distinct person, both of whom are David’s Lord. The only conclusion could be that both are divine persons, as Jesus sought to show the Pharisees in Matthew 22:42-45.

An important note in the Psalm is that the king will also be a priest. The middle verse of the psalm brings this out with the surrounding verses on both sides speaking about the Messiah’s kingship. In the OT, no king was a priest, except for Moses. He was essentially a king, and did some priestly functions. The priestly function was given to Aaron and his descendants. After that time, when a king took priestly prerogatives into his own hand, he was in big trouble because the priesthood was given exclusively to the Levites (Numbers 3:10 says no outsiders can officiate as priests). Saul disobeyed God and Samuel in offering sacrifice (1 Samuel 13:9, 12). Uzziah did the same thing out of pride in 2 Chronicles 26:16-21. He was angry when the priests re-proved him, but then he became a leper.

Back to this notion of the Lord’s enemies being his footstool, I would not want to be Christ’s enemy. How about *you*? Many people think they are OK with God, but sinners who are not reconciled to God are, by definition, still enemies of God. Those who do not believe on the Son of God at this moment have the wrath of God hanging over their head. If you were to die in this state, that wrath would be exercised in full and you would be cast into eternal punishment—that’s right, forever. That is a long time. It never ends.

#### Conclusion

We can say in short that the Son of God is God and Savior (Titus 2:13, 2 Peter 1:1). He shares all the attributes that characterize the nature of God, such as immutability and eternity. He will rule over all things. He will judge all men. He created us all. So think of this: “If you do not believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins.”