

Paying attention to God's word (1:5-2:4)

The Victorious Christological Claim (1:5-14)

A. Introduction.

- A. In verses 5-13 the author...
 - A. *begins to confirm* his claim in vs4 that the son is superior than the angels, this is what “for” indicates.
 - A. The 7 quotations given in vs5-13 correlate with the 7 claims made about the son in 1-4 (see chart).
 - B. *continues the theme* of “God's speaking”, he introduces the quotations as “God said, He said... etc”.
 - C. *compares God's word* to the Son with God's word to the Angels.
 - A. In doing so he is reinforcing his emphasis on the surpassing greatness of God's word in a Son (1-3).
 - B. It is interesting, the author gives us a dialogue between God and the Son, God speaks to the son in chapter 1 and in 2:12-13, the Son responds.
 - D. *shows us that* Jesus superiority/greatness is found in so far as He (the Son) stands over all creation.
 - A. This is why he is even superior to the great angels, Moses and even the temple/high priest, since they are all apart of creation.
- B. Vs4-13 are framed by Psalm 110:1.
 - A. Again, the author's whole argument of the Son's surpassing greatness/superiority rests upon *the fact that he is now exalted*, seated at God's right hand.
- C. Vs14 is the author's pastoral application of his argument.
 - A. It also gets the hearers ready for his exhortation in 2:1-4.

B. Coronation of the Son (1:5-6) – declaration of Son's superiority –

- A. Here the author supports his claim made in vs4 (“**For**”)
 - A. *by declaring* the superior dignity of the exalted status of Jesus.
 - B. In other words the focus is on who Jesus has been declared to be in his exaltation.
 - C. He gives us 3 quotations which focus on Jesus' status as the exalted Lord.
- B. The author first makes a point *from the silence of scripture*, “**to which of the angels did God ever say...**”.
 - A. It is a rhetorical question, they know that God has never spoken these words to any angel.
 - B. It indicates that God spoke the following words only to the Son.
- C. **Quotation 1** “...you are my son, today I have begotten you...” is taken from Psalm 2:7.
 - A. These words were once addressed to the King at his coronation, now they are God's word to the Son at his exaltation. (In 5:5-6 we will see God declare Jesus both Son and high Priest at the exaltation, citing these words again).
 - B. “**...you are my son...**” - continuing the claim of vs4, Jesus has inherited a better name than the angels.
 - C. “**...today I have begotten you...**” Is not a reference to Jesus birth, but his exaltation to a new status.
 - A. (Jesus will be called the “first born” soon as well).
 - B. This was understood in the NT as a reference to Jesus resurrection (Romans 1:4, Acts 13:33).
- D. **Quotation 2** “...I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son...” was taken from 2 Samuel 7:14.
 - A. It indicates the appointment of the Son to a unique status before God.
 - A. God made a promise to David concerning His descendent, that he **would be to him a father** and he **a son**. The immediate context is talking about Solomon, but the promise is ultimately about Jesus.
 - B. This is fulfilled and proclaimed also in Jesus resurrection + ascension (exaltation). Being the one who was “*raised up*” like David was “*raised up*” to save His people before Him.
 - C. **Qu. What is the resurrection + ascension?** (Look at ==> **Acts 13:30-35; Luke 1:67-79; Romans 1:4; 1 Sam 2:6-8.**)
 - A. The resurrection + ascension then is a proclamation of Jesus as the one God promised to “raise up”. It is a proclamation of Jesus as the “Son”, the “King” (the exalted one) who is the saviour of His people, all of mankind including you.
 - B. “...again, but when he brings the firstborn into the world...” This is not talking about Jesus' birth. This is

talking about Jesus status.

A. **“But”** - this is a contrast of words. God's word to the Son (vs5)/God's word to the Angels (vs6).

B. **“firstborn”** - echoes the reference to the Messianic king in Psalms 89:27 (I will make him my Firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth).

A. The image of the firstborn is taken from the privileges of the firstborn son in Israel. Here it indicates the special relationship of Jesus to God.

B. Colossians 1:15,18 calls Jesus “the firstborn of all creation... the firstborn from the dead”. Romans 8:29 calls him “the firstborn among many brothers”.

C. **“world”** - is not the earth, but the world of the exaltation, the world to come, glory.

E. **Quotations 3** “...let all God's angels worship him...” is either taken from Psalm 97:7, or the Septuagint translation of Deuteronomy 32:43.

A. **Cockerill:** In Deuteronomy 32:43, the angels are called to worship God because he has brought the salvation of his people to its conclusion. The pastor, however, is convinced that the exalted Son and "heir of all" (1:2) is the one through whom God has accomplished this salvation. Thus the angels are invited to worship him.

A. **Philippians 2:9-11, Revelation 5**

B. This is a special argument in Hebrews, because in Hebrews it is the inferior who renders homage to the superior (7:4-8).

F. **Summary:** Ok, so what are we seeing? We are seeing a picture in these quotations of a king's coronation. We are looking into glory, the coming world and are seeing Jesus' coronation. He is the Son, the newly crowned king, the promised descendent of David and higher than all other kings. And to this king all the angels are making homage. *Notice* who Jesus is, the exalted crowned King, the firstborn son, the object of angelic worship. *Notice* the greatness of God's word in Jesus, as the angels are told to worship Him, and he is proclaimed son and king in glory.

C. **The transience of Angels (1:7-9) – basis for the argument –**

A. Having declared the superior dignity of the exalted status of Christ in 5-6, in vs7-13, the author provides the basis for his argument that the Son is superior to the angels.

B. **Quotations 4** is from Psalm 104:4 “...he makes His angels winds.... flames of fire...”.

A. Rabbis often used this verse to point out the transcendence of God (He is above everything) or the might of angels. Here it is used to show the inferiority of angels.

B. *He makes his angels/ministers...* The point is clear.

A. Angels do not have a unique relationship to God because they are at God's disposal. (He does with them as He wishes).

B. The author is making a contrast. We see this in vs8 **“but** of the Son he says...”.

C. **Quotations 5**, “Psalm 45:6-7”

A. *“Your throne, O God, is forever...”* - The contrast is clear.

A. Where as angels are changeable (made into winds/flames of fire) the Son is eternal (forever).

B. The amazing thing here is that God is speaking to God! God calls Jesus “God” (theos).

C. The author's major purpose though is pressing “forever” as a contrast between the eternity of the Son and the mutability of angels.

A. This is important in Hebrews because the heavenly existence of Jesus makes possible the unlimited duration of his existence (priesthood, reign... etc).

B. *“...the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom...”* -

A. Cockerill: The rule of the divine Son now seated at God's right hand is righteous or upright in a way no other has ever been, for it is the exercise of God's own sovereign righteous rule so desired by the OT prophets.

C. *“...You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you...”*

A. The context of Hebrews suggests that these phrases refer to Jesus' earthly life, death, and appointment to a new status at the exaltation.

D. "...with the oil of gladness beyond your companions."

A. Can be translated "O God, your God has anointed you..." Identify Jesus as God once again.

B. This is referring once again to Jesus' exalted place above the angels.

D. **Summary:** This is the first argument he gives. Did you see it? He makes his point through a contrast. The Angels are at God's disposal, they are *subject to change*. But the Son is *eternal*, his throne remains forever, he is *unchangeable*. So it is this fact that the Son has been appointed to an eternal position that places Him above the angels. Notice again the surpassing difference in the word God has given to each.

D. **The eternity of the Son (1:10-13)**

A. **Quotation 6** "Psalm 102:25-27"

A. You... laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning... the heavens are the work of your hands..."

A. This quotation brings to the fore the instrumental role of the Son of God in creation, which he claim in 1:2.

B. "...they will perish, but you remain..."

A. This introduces the claim of the transitoriness of the creation and the abiding quality of the son.

B. This is a major theme of the book. The author reinforces this fact with the parallel expressions in the rest of the sentence.

C. "...you remain... you are the same..."

A. The author has contrasted the eternity of the Son with the impermanence of creation.

B. The author will often contrast the eternity of the Son and the high priest and the Christian possession to the transitoriness of everything that belongs to creation.

C. These verses 1:11-12 correspond to 12:26-27. At the end everything will be shaken and only those things which cannot be shaken will remain.

D. It is Jesus' eternity which places him above creation and everything in it.

A. These verses in 5-13 have confirmed vs1-4, that God has spoken his ultimate word in His Son, and have given us the basis for His superiority. *His exaltation has placed him above everything.*

B. The rest of the book will demonstrate that Jesus is superior over Moses, and the Temple practises, in so far as he stands over all of creation.

A. This is why Christians place their trust in the things unseen, and not of the things that are seen. They place their trust in an eternal Lord and Saviour who has risen above the heavens, not in things which will pass away. (Heb 11:1).

B. **Quotation 7** "Psalm 110:1"

A. Just like he started with a rhetorical question he ends with one by quoting again Psalm 110:1 (vs4).

B. The first verse of this psalm was understood as the ascension of Jesus Christ, after His death and resurrection to the right hand of God.

A. He is affirming his claim that Jesus is the exalted king who stands above the creation.

B. This is importance because the people he is writing to do not see this.

C. The author will be appealing to this psalm and reflecting on the exaltation of Jesus throughout Hebrews.

C. **Summary:** this is the second argument he has given for Jesus superiority. *Creation will change, it will not remain, but He will remain. He has been exalted above all of creation and reigns forever.* God's ultimate word through the son is thus His eternal word that is not subject to change. Notice again the surpassing difference in the word God has given in creation and in His Son.

E. **The listeners as heirs salvation (1:14) – pastoral application –**

A. Here in vs14, the author teaches us about the role of angels. He tell us that they are *ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation.*

B. He uses a rhetorical question at the beginning. He wants His readers to think about this. Why?

A. Because he has a pastoral goal. (All theology is pastoral).

B. He has not simply spoken about the relationship of Jesus and the Angels to give them a theological lesson. He is addressing their situation.

C. The community has an issue. They are a struggling church in the world. How does this verse help them?

A. He reassures them of their place in God's plan.

A. God has not forgotten them, He has not abandoned them, He has given them His angels to minister to them.

B. He encourages them through their status in Christ.

A. Though right now they are struggling, they are actually in a position above the angels. Their relationship to the exalted Son has placed them above the angels who exist to serve them.

C. He gives them confidence in saying they are about "to inherit salvation".

A. They are about to inherit salvation because they will participate in the triumph of the one who "is heir of all things (1:2)".

D. However, as the author insists throughout the homily, the community lives between the saving events described in 1:1-13 and the ultimate inheritance. This is undoubtedly why they are facing a crisis of faith because they have not yet experienced the promised inheritance.

C. **Summary:** The author responds to their crisis through reminding them of the role of angels, reassuring them of their special place in the divine plan, hoping to re-establish their confidence as he prepares the way for the exhortation that follows in 2:1-4.

F. **POINT:** So far we are seeing that He is seeking to treat those who are tempted to abandon their faith by giving them the truth of who Jesus is, what He has done/doing/will do, and what this means for them.

A. **Implications:** misconceptions about Jesus may cause a person to fall away.

B. How do you cure, help people who are falling away? By giving them the truth of Jesus *for* them.

G. **The severe consequences of rejecting God's word (2:1-4)**

A. Having compared God's word in the past with God's word in these last days (1-2a), the author now turns in 2:1-4 to the community's response to what it has heard.

B. He gives them the logical conclusion in vs1 to hearing God's word, he focuses on the "why" giving them a contrast between the 2 words. Vs2 becomes the basis for the comparison in vs3-4. This exhortation is the first warning in Hebrews and also shows them the greatness of their salvation.

H. **The necessity of paying attention (2:1)**

A. The author spoke directly to them in the vs1-2 with the claim that "God had spoken to *us* in a Son", here in 2:1 the author comes back to speaking directly to them. He is looking at their response.

B. "...Therefore we must..." – indicates that the author is making a logical conclusion. Since God has spoken they must "pay attention" to what they have heard.

C. "...what we have heard..." – does not refer only to the words of chapter 1, but to the entire Christian message that they have received.

A. The author will make the point in later chapters that those who heard in the past did not respond with faithfulness. The author does not want them to "refuse the one who is speaking" but to "hear his voice".

D. "...lest we drift away from it." – it is the picture of a boat that runs off course.

A. It is necessary to pay attention to God's word because the only alternative is to drift away like a ship that goes off course and fails to reach its goal.

B. The author knows of no other alternative for them. His constant warnings indicate the danger that he sees coming towards those who neglect the word.

C. Receiving God's ultimate word has placed them in a privileged position.

E. **Illustration:** The Parable of the Sower illustrates this perfectly.

F. **Summary:** God's word must be paid attention to, for there is the danger of drifting away from it.

G. **Q. Why would not paying attention to the word cause us to drift away?** Think about "...faith comes by hearing...".

I. **God's judgement in the past and present (2:2-3a)**

A. The author begins to tell them why they must now pay attention to the word. The author uses a contrast in vs2-3 between God's word in the past and in these last days. His argument here is based on the distinction we have already seen, that the new revelation corresponds to God's word in the past but is qualitatively superior.

B. **Word in the Past // Word in these last days**

- C. Word spoken by angels // spoken by the Lord
- D. every transgression // if we neglect the great salvation
- E. was valid // was validated
- F. just recompense // how shall we escape such a great salvation?
- G. “For since the message ...proved to be reliable...” – He begins again with a premise they would accept (1:1).
- A. He doesn't say the old word was junk, but that it was “valid” reliable.
- B. Although it was delivered by angels, this word was ultimately from God.
- C. “Valid” emphasises the certainty and reliability of God's word
- H. “...and every transgression... received a just retribution...” – the validity of the law is evident in the fact that the refusal to heed God's word had consequences.
- A. Although here he speaking of God's word at Mt Sinai, later he is going to show the certainty of God's promise of consequences for failure to heed the word that was spoken. When God swore that Israel would not enter God's rest (3:11), the words were irrevocable.
- I. “...how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?” – the author is arguing from the lesser to the greater. To neglect a greater salvation would mean greater consequences.
- A. This rhetorical question suggests that the community that rejects God's ultimate word will not escape God's judgement. This is the first in a series of warnings (3:12-19; 6:4-6; 10:26-31).
- J. **Illustration:** rejecting the word of an ambassador declaring peace... rejecting the word of the king declaring peace... rejecting God's word in Noah....? God's word is a 2 edged sword (he'll talk about that later, Law/ Gospel).
- K. **Summary:** The past message was valid and had consequences for refusing to heed it, how much more this greater word?
- J. **The testimony of God (2:3b-4)**
- A. The author shows the greatness of this salvation by giving 3 reasons it should be taken seriously.
- A. *The fact that it was spoken by the Lord.* It was not spoken by angels, but by the highest authority. He has shown that angels to do share the exalted status that Jesus has.
- B. *It was validated by those who heard him.* This is speaking of those who heard Jesus' words directly. The apostles. The apostles were also witness to the resurrection.
- A. It was not only the word of Moses that was valid, but also the word spoken by the Lord. This legal metaphor “validated” indicates the *guarantee* of the gift of salvation.
- C. *God also bore witness.* I wonder if this is a reference to Acts 2. But God did bear witness to the word through working many signs and wonders through the apostles. God also bore witness by giving the Holy Spirit, which they have also received.
- B. **Summary:** The Word was spoken by the Lord, the highest authority, it was validated “guaranteed”, God himself witnessed it by giving the Holy Spirit! Notice also the difference in God's speaking, (not angels speaking, but God speaking... where is the superior word found?).