



The Supremacy of Christ

(www.mensgroup.org - "Original Study")

PRAY: A suggested opening prayer for small group members or individuals to invite God to connect as we seek Him in His Word and bless us with peace and contentment in our lives.

Heavenly Father, thank you for this study. We pray that you guide us into strength and truth with the Holy Spirit, and that we are refreshed in our thankfulness and appreciation for the grace of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The book of Hebrews is estimated to have been written between 60 and 70 AD. For many years, the authorship has been attributed to the apostle Paul, but today it has been debated whether it was written by Paul or someone he influenced. This was an exceptionally difficult time for new Christians because there was considerable persecution in that period. It was just before the time of The Destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD by the Romans.

Hebrews, of course, was written to the Hebrews—aka the Jews. It was written to instruct Jewish believers that Judaism had been superseded by Christianity, and this was a huge change in faith for the Jews to accept. Unlike the Gentiles, who for centuries past had lost all knowledge of the true God and worshipped idols, the Jews had a Divine religion and a Divinely-appointed place of worship for the last 1,000 years. The first place of worship was the Tabernacle in the desert and the second place of worship was the Temple in Jerusalem.

To be asked to forsake their beliefs which had been honored and handed down by their fathers for over a thousand years was to make a HUGE DEMAND upon them. Unless they gave up faith in Jesus, they were not allowed to enter the Temple, which meant they would be banished from the altar, the sacrifice, the high priest, and the house of God—first the Tabernacle and then the Temple.

Those who chose to cling to the Messiah would be severed from the Messiah's people, the Jews. It was the most severe test to which their faith could be put. Their loyalty to Jesus would cost them separation from all the traditional sacred rights and privileges of Jerusalem.

If you were suffering hardship and persecution because of your faith, with intense pressure to turn away from Christ to avoid persecution, what would you do?

The writer of Hebrews knew their situation was critical and there was an urgent need for their faith to be strengthened, and that their understanding of faith could be enlightened by their understanding of the Old Testament, which the Jews DID know.

As we examine the beginning of Hebrews, we will develop a better understanding of the supremacy of Christ over Judaism through comparing Jesus to the Prophets and Angels.

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Hebrews 1:1-14 and Hebrews 2:1-4

God's Final Word: His Son

1 In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. ³ The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. ⁴ So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.

The Son Superior to Angels

⁵ *For to which of the angels did God ever say,*

*"You are my Son;
today I have become your Father"?*

Or again,

*"I will be his Father,
and he will be my Son"?*

⁶ *And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says,*

"Let all God's angels worship him."

⁷ In speaking of the angels he says,

*“He makes his angels spirits,
and his servants flames of fire.”*

⁸ But about the Son he says,

*“Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever;
a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom.*

⁹ *You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness;
therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions
by anointing you with the oil of joy.”*

¹⁰ He also says,

*“In the beginning, Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth,
and the heavens are the work of your hands.*

¹¹ *They will perish, but you remain;
they will all wear out like a garment.*

¹² *You will roll them up like a robe;
like a garment they will be changed.
But you remain the same,
and your years will never end.”*

¹³ To which of the angels did God ever say,

*“Sit at my right hand
until I make your enemies
a footstool for your feet”?*

¹⁴ Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?

Warning to Pay Attention

2 We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. ² For since the message spoken through angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, ³ how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. ⁴ God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

1. In the first paragraph of Hebrews 1, we see the contrast between Old Testament prophets and Christ, the Son. What are some of the differences between the two?

Verses 5 through 14 testify to the statement made in verse 4, where it says, *“So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.”* These truths are all drawn from the Old Testament Scriptures, and it is interesting to note that there are 7, which in Scripture often symbolizes completeness and perfection.

Centuries before Jesus appeared on Earth, the Old Testament bore witness to the supremacy of Christ. This the Jews could understand.

For reference, here are the places where we can find each of the 7 proofs:

1. Verse 5a—is quoted from Psalm 2:7
2. Verse 5b—is quoted from 2 Samuel 7:14
3. Verse 6—is quoted from Deuteronomy 32:43
4. Verse 7—is quoted from Psalm 104:4
5. Verses 8 & 9—are quoted from Psalm 45:6 & 7
6. Verses 10-12—are quoted from Psalm 102:25-27
7. Verse 13—is quoted from Psalm 110:1

Notice that five of the quotations are from the Psalms and all are from the Old Testament.

2. Who is the speaker being quoted in each of the 7 proofs/quotations in Hebrews 1:5-14?

3. Do you think that these 7 proofs/quotations are adequate to establish that Jesus is God and why?

4. For the Hebrews/Jews hearing this, how likely is it that they would accept it on reason alone versus having intercession of the Holy Spirit?

APPLICATION

Let's take a look at Hebrews 2:1-4 again:

¹ We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. ² For since the message spoken through angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, ³ how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. ⁴ God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

Holy Bible - New International Version

This Epistle was written to the regenerated, saved Jews of this time, 60 to 70 AD, who were under the almost unbearable temptation to forsake their commitment to Christianity and to return to Judaism.

Consider these questions and provide answers from both "then & now" perspectives:

What have they heard, that they must "pay the most careful attention" to?

What might be some examples of "violations and disobedience," and what would the "just punishment" be?

What are they escaping from and how do they escape?

What are the “signs, wonders and various miracles”?

SUGGESTED CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, thank you for these teachings. Thank you that you are our “great escape.” Because of you and what you have done for us, we have nothing to fear. We pray that you feed our souls and keep us hungry for you. Ignite a flame in our hearts that we may not neglect you, but pursue you with everything we have. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.

All our Blessings,

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EXTENDING THIS STUDY

Dr. R.C. Sproul (1939—2017) preached his final sermon on November 26, 2017, at Saint Andrew’s Chapel in Sanford, Florida. The title of the sermon was “A Great Salvation” from Hebrews 2:1-4. He concluded that sermon with these words: “I pray with all my heart that God will awaken each one of us today to the sweetness, the loveliness, the glory of the gospel declared by Christ.”

[Click here](#) to listen to R.C. Sproul’s Final Sermon, “A Great Salvation.”

YouTube link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0k9kGCmY6Jg>

Note: *If you’re not experiencing true fulfillment in life, visit the following website for more information on how to make certain you are getting the most out of this life:*

<http://www.cru.org/how-to-know-god/would-you-like-to-know-god-personally.html>