

“The Enthroned Son”

Fixing Our Eyes on Jesus Our High Priest

Hebrews 1:5-14

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Jeff: Heavenly Father, we are thankful for the day that You've given. Each day is a gift from Your hand. And we're thankful for Your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Father, as we come, we come through Him. Thanking You because of His sacrifice and because of His death which drew us near to You. But not only His death, but also for His resurrection. And Father, we're thankful for that resurrection because it gives us hope. It gives us a certainty and a conviction with regard to the Atonement itself. For we know that Jesus Himself, though He was imputed with our sins, was a sinless divine Man, and death could not hold Him, sinless. And so He burst forth from the grave, showing Himself not only to be a righteous sacrifice on our behalf, but Your Son.

And so, Father, we are thankful for the Lord Jesus Christ and for the Holy Spirit who was sent that we might understand the truth of the gospel. Father, we glory in it. As we come before You today, we thank You for it.

And also, Father, before we begin to study Your word, we pray for our brother Gregg. And we ask that Your hand would be upon him. We pray that You would be ministering to him through his physical trial. We pray, Father, that even in this he would see Your hand. We pray, Father, for that trial to resolve itself soon. And Father, we ask and pray that he would be better for it for having gone through it.

We're thankful for our brother Bruce and for his recovery. Father, we're thankful to hear that he is attending the Bible study on Thursdays. And we pray for his presence here. Father, we ask and pray that You will continue to cause his healing to be uninterrupted. And Father, we pray and give You the glory for it. We ask all these things in Christ's precious name. Amen.

Men: Amen.

Jeff: All right. Let's turn to Hebrews chapter 1. And today we're going to finish chapter 1. We're going to look at verses 13 and 14. Let me just read these verses to you. Actually, let me just go back and give you the context. Since we're going to be finishing today, let me start in verse 5. And again you'll remember that verse 5 is the opening part of the inclusio and verse 13 is the closing part of that. They're the book ends that surround this section. So listen, starting in verse 5, to God's word.

“For to which of the angels did God ever say,

‘You are My Son;

Today I have begotten You?’

“Or again,

I will be to Him a Father,

And He shall be to Me a Son?’

“And again, when He brings the Firstborn into the world, He says, ‘Let all God's angels worship Him.’

“Of the angels He says,

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*‘He makes His angels winds,
And His ministers a flame of fire.’*

*“But of the Son He says,
‘Your throne, O God, is forever and ever;
The scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Your kingdom.
You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness.
Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You
With the oil of gladness beyond Your companions.’*

*“And,
‘You, LORD, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning,
And the heavens are the work of Your hands.
They will perish, but You remain.
They will all wear out like a garment,
Like a robe You will roll them up.
Like a garment they will be changed.
But You are the same,
And Your years will have no end.’*

*“And to which of the angels has He ever said,
‘Sit at My right hand,
Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.’*

“Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?”

Participant: The word of the Lord.

Men: Thanks be to God.

Jeff: All right. Well we don’t have our projector today. And I have a couple of things that I’d like you to see. So I’ll do my best to communicate them to you.

But I want us to think about three things. First of all, I want us to think about some introductory matters. Then I want us to think about *the session of Christ*. And I’ll talk more about that in a minute. But I want us to think about *the Trinitarian aspect of Christ’s session*. I want us to think about *the eschatological aspect of Christ’s session*. And then I want us to think about *the pastoral aspect of Christ’s session*. Now we’ll talk about what those words mean, and we’ll talk about what *session* means in just a minute. But before I do, I just want us to think about a couple of introductory matters.

I want us to think about a question as we start. The question is what’s around the corner? Several years ago I was making my way down Meridian Rd. nearby my house. And as I was coming down that road I noticed that there was a biker, a bicyclist.

One of the reasons he caught my attention was because he was riding on the opposite side of the road that he should have been on. You know the bicyclist is supposed to go with traffic, right,. Not against traffic. And he was riding against traffic. And so it just caught my notice.

And the second thing that caught my notice is that we were heading for a bend. He was on that opposite side. I was riding with him. And I just noticed that before we went to round the bend, I noticed that he stopped. And he stopped and I don’t know what he was

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doing. But he stopped and he went to adjust something on his bike. And I went ahead and rounded the corner.

And as I went around the corner, I noticed that there was a car coming in the opposite direction. And the car coming in the opposite direction was going a little faster than it ought to have been. But one of the things that caught my attention because of this whole thing being played out in front of me was that he actually cut the curve. So he went over the white line of the berm, and he was hugging the very edge of the berm.

And I thought to myself that I just caught a glimpse of something that could have unfolded in a very, very bad way. Had that bicyclist not stopped, he would have been in that front grill of that man’s car. And I thought to myself, very rarely have I ever been in a situation where I had something of a bird’s-eye view like that, where I knew something that the bicyclist didn’t know. And I knew something that the motorist didn’t know and that they would probably never know. And yet I knew it. And I thought that, you know, in the slightest possible way, this must be what it’s like to be God, right? *(Laughter)* A bird’s-eye view of watching everything unfold before you, except that He knows the end from the beginning because He planned it all.

And you know, after that I thought to myself. I said, “You know, I’ll tell you what. I would love it if God would just take me up every once in a while, not all the time, but just every once in a while take me up and give me that bird’s-eye view of my life, saying, ‘You can’t see this and you can’t see this, but look at this!’” And I think that would be so wonderful!

And then the longer I thought about that, I said this to myself. I said, “I don’t think that would be so wonderful.” *(Laughter)* And then the imaginary self in me said, “Why do you think that?”

And I said, “Because I know me.” And this is what I would say. I would love that because I would love to appreciate the providence of God. Surely that would make me appreciate the providence of God, right? But that other part of me said, “No, it wouldn’t, because after you saw the plan, you would say this. You would say, ‘Yes, but why didn’t You do this?’” *(Laughter)* “Or why didn’t You do that? God, I can’t figure out for the life of me why You would put me in that circumstance.”

Participant: I wouldn’t do that.

Jeff: Would you do that? I know you would do that, so don’t lie to me. *(Laughter)*

Participant: Amen!

Jeff: Now the more I thought about that as a scenario for my own life, you can put that question and that whole scenario in context for these Roman Christians. And you can say something like this. You could say, Boy, wouldn’t it be neat to show them the bends in the road in the past, you know, the bends in the road that happened to them and to those who were in exile under the Claudian persecution? Wouldn’t it be neat to show them what the bends in the road are going to be up ahead?

And they don’t need to see bends in the road. You see, the question then is what then do they need? And the answer is very, very simple, at least as we think about verses 13 and 14 today. What they need is to see the session of Christ.

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Now you know what the word *session* means. The word *session* goes back to the 14th century. It’s a French word. It means *to sit*. And you can’t say it like we say it. You can’t just say *session*. You have to say *ses-see-own*, if you’re French. Am I right? You’ve got to pucker up your lips and say *ses-see-own*. (*Laughter*) And it’s a Latin term, *session—to sit*. And it means *to sit*.

And so we are looking today at Christ’s session. Now this is an important affirmation of the Christian faith. It’s in the Apostles’ Creed. Why is it so important that Christ was seated at the Father’s right hand? I mean there are any number of reasons why that’s the case. And we know that one of them has been alluded to already, as we think about the first four verses of chapter 1. He sat down because He completed the offering of His sacrifice.

But I want to give you three reasons today that come from the text that we’re looking at that will help us to understand why it’s important for us to not only affirm the session of Christ, but how it ministers to us. And I also want to talk to you a little bit today about how we need to think about these verses in light of the whole, because there are others who would seek to undermine even what these verses say. And we’ll talk about that as we go along.

So the first things that I want us to think about are *the Trinitarian aspects of this text*. Now we’ve already noticed some Trinitarian aspects to this text. For instance, when you think about it—and you can think about these as Christological, and yet they are Trinitarian.

Now why do I say that? Well, they are Christological because we learned some things in the first four verses about the Son. We learned that He is “*the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of His being*.” And those things told us something about the Son. They told us something about the Son’s ontological being, His being prior to creation. They told us that He is not the Son of God in the sense that Moses was the servant of God and so had a derived glory. The Son has a glory original to Him because He shares the very substance and essence of God.

But also, we’re not talking *modalism*. In other words, it wasn’t as if the Father was in the Old Testament, and once the Old Testament is completed the Father changes clothes and now comes down as the Son. And then after the Gospels are finished, the Son ascends into heaven, changes His clothes and comes back down as the Holy Spirit. No. He is the exact imprint or representation of the Father, saying what? That He is actually a second Person, though He has the original glory of the Father.

So these things are Christological in nature, but not only Christological. These things are Trinitarian. Why? Well because we are being told something about the Father and Son and Their relationship one to another. And we could include the Trinity. This text doesn’t include the Trinity at this point. So those things are things we’ve already been told about the Trinitarian aspect of the Son in His relationship to the Father.

There are other things that we’re told in this text that help us to put meat on the bones of those things. Now I’ve already told you why it is that we find the *inclusio* that we find in 5 and in 13. “*To which of the angels did God ever say?*” And I’ve told you that when you look at it in context, he’s building an argument.

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And what is he saying here? Remember? Why is he using the angels in terms of the whole context of the argument? Remember?

Participant: The Law.

Jeff: Yes. The angels were used to deliver the law of God. And then he goes on and he talks about Moses. And then he goes on and he talks about the priesthood. And the point is that he’s saying that Christ is greater than—

Participant: The Law.

Jeff: Yes. That’s the idea. This is just one piece of a larger argument. And yet we can’t forget that it is an argument. And there are some wonderful stand-alone things here. In other words, we are being told who Christ is over against the foil of the angels. So it’s a wonderful thing. And that’s what I want us to see right now.

So let’s just look at these verses that come in between 5 and 13. And we’ll just pick out some things, four things that I want us to see. Yes, Sig?

Sig: I guess you could probably spend the whole session on just explaining how Christ’s greater than the Law. We know He said, “*I did not come to abolish the Law, but to fulfill it.*”

Jeff: Yes.

Sig: And by fulfilling the Law, does He become greater than the Law? Or is that a whole different—

Jeff: He’s the embodiment of the covenant. And so He’s the embodiment of every segment of the Law that was fulfilled in Him. It has reached its culmination in Him. And so He’s the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise, right? He is the Seed through which we are seeds, right? That sort of thing. So He’s the culminating point.

Well let’s just notice some things that I want to point out to you that help us again to see Christ and set Him in a Trinitarian context. The first one is this. The text says, “Let the angels worship Him.” Now we notice immediately how important that was. “Let the angels worship Him.”

But then in verse 7 we also notice this. We notice that the angels are created. Remember how we used Psalm 104 and he talks about the angels as created beings? And yet the Son is what in the very next verse? He is God.

And so what he does is that he offsets the idea that the angels are created. They’re winds. They’re fire. They’re created. But God the Son is God. And that’s the idea in verse 9. The Son is addressed as God.

And then the verses that we looked at the last time, what did they tell us? They told us that the Son shares in the attributes of God because He shares in the *ousia* of God, the very essence of God. He is immutable; He is unchanging. And the wonderful thing about that was that not only does he begin his book telling us that. But you go all the way to chapter 13. He says, “*Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever.*” What is he doing? He’s reaffirming what he said in those verses. Jesus is immutable. He and the Father share those attributes.

Now I think those are all Trinitarian aspects that affirm all that we were saying in the very first four verses. So look. Let me just say this to you, men. If someone ever comes up to you and says, “Yes, but the Bible really doesn’t teach that Jesus is God. That’s a

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construct of the early church that they imposed upon it.”, I want you to look at them seriously and say this. I want you to give them this kind of studied look, and then go like this. “Duhhh!” (*Laughter*) Because you see it everywhere! It’s here!

Now you will have people who will say to you, “That’s not in the text.” And they’ll have to change the text in order to get it out of the text. And I’m thinking of the Jehovah’s Witnesses.

Now I have some comparison texts and I’ll just read them to you. But what I did is that I went to the Green Dragon. It’s not green anymore; it’s gray. They must not like that nomenclature. The Green Dragon is the New World Translation. The New World Translation is the translation of the Jehovah’s Witness church. And I wanted you to see it. But you need to hear the comparison. So let me just give you some of the comparisons of the texts that I’ve already given to you.

Hebrews 1:6 from the ESV reads this way. “*Let all God’s angels worship Him.*” Now the New World Translation says this in Hebrews 1:6. “*And let all God’s angels do obeisance to Him.*”

Now the word is *prosceneo*. And if you look at Jehovah’s Witness literature, this is what they’ll say on their information page.

“*Let’s answer some questions for you who are inquiring about Jehovah’s Witnesses.*” One of the things they’ll say is that they’ll say this. “*If you look at the Bible, you will notice that prosceneo is translated, when it refers to God, as worship. But any time prosceneo is used of Jesus, it is translated obeisance.*”

Now they’ll say, “What’s the difference?” Well, the difference is that it’s not in the text. In other words, they don’t have a textual reason for translating it *worship* there and *obeisance* here. They have a preconceived notion about who Jesus is, and it demands that they not translate *prosceneo* as *worship* when it refers to Jesus, but *obeisance*. They rendered obedience or respect to Him. They can’t say that anyone ought to worship Jesus. They can’t, because Jesus is not God. And if you render worship to Jesus, then you’re rendering worship to a created being. Okay?

So Hebrews 1:6 says, “*Let all of God’s angels do obeisance to Him.*” Not worship, obeisance. Let them show obedience to Him.

Hebrews 1:8. “*But of the Son He says,*”—that is, the Father says, “*Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.*” The New World Translation of Hebrews 1:8: “*But about the Son He says, ‘God is Your throne forever and ever.’*” Isn’t that interesting!

Okay, how about this one? Hebrews 1:9, ESV. “*Therefore God, Your God, has anointed you.*” The idea is that I’m addressing God and telling You that God has anointed You. I’m addressing God the Son and saying that God the Father has anointed You, right? That’s the idea.

The New World Translation. Hebrews 1:9: “*That is why God, Your God.*” You see, it’s now a reaffirmation of the first. “*That is why God, Your God, has anointed You.*” One is an address and the other one is a reaffirmation of the first.

Participant: Jeff?

Jeff: Yes?

Participant: Who was the author of Hebrews?

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Jeff: Who is the author of Hebrews?

Second Participant: It was written by God. I have no idea.

Jeff: Yes. I mean there are all kinds of suggestions as to who it could be. Some say Paul, some say Barnabas, any number of people. What were you thinking? Do you have a follow-up?

Participant: No. We have this Word, and it’s inspired by the Holy Spirit, and we have other translations, right? This translation is fallen. Of course, I’m just thinking about it, and I don’t know. But it’s a big difference.

Jeff: It’s a huge difference.

Participant: There’s a huge difference.

Jeff: Yes. Someone once said that there’s the issue of Scripture that sort of undergirds all this. And I thought that maybe it would be a good idea for us to look at the Scriptures themselves in terms of how we got them and that sort of thing. That might be a good study for us to go through.

Participant: Because the latter I obviously see as self-serving for these things.

Jeff: Oh, it’s very self-serving. I mean, all of the New World Translation is really self-serving. Okay? So any questions, any thoughts about any of that?

Okay. So the next thing I want you to notice is that there is *an invitation of the Father for Christ to seat Himself at His right hand*. Now here’s what I want you to grab when you think about this. We’ve noted that the author of Hebrews is really working in two aspects of Christology.

The first one is the *ontology aspect*. And that is what we talked about right at the very beginning, where we noticed that the Son is what? He’s the very radiance of God. And He’s the second Person of the Trinity. And we call that *ontology*. It’s the idea of being. We have to use time-bound language in order to describe eternity. But this was Christ prior to creation. This is what we would call Christ *ad intra*, in terms of the Trinity. This is Him before creation.

But there is a mixing of ideas here. It’s not just the ontology of Christ that’s brought into the foreground. But it’s also the mediatorial work of Christ that’s brought into view. And so when the text says, out of Psalm 2,

*“You are My Son;
Today I have begotten You”*,

That has reference to his mediatorial work, not His ontology. He is eternally begotten. And yet, in terms of His mediatorial work, this has special application.

So that’s the way we ought to view His session to the right hand as Mediator, who has completed His work, who has authored the final sacrifice, the culminating sacrifice. He is granted, invited, to sit at the Father’s right hand.

So we need to keep those in mind. And when you confuse those—and people do—when you confuse those things, then what happens is that you usually end up losing the ontology. And this is the case with what we call *adoptionistic Christology*. Adoptionistic Christology is that Jesus is just a man, and at His baptism He is adopted as the Son of God. He didn’t pre-exist prior to that. He was not in heaven with the Father. This is a man being adopted as God’s Son. And so you have to hold these things in tension. They’re

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both there in Hebrews chapter 1, both the ontology and the mediatorial aspects of Christ’s Person.

Now I want to just say something practical before we get into the pastoral. I want you to notice this. It says in the text,

*“Sit at My right hand,
Until I make Your enemies Your footstool.”*

Now that’s really difficult, isn’t it, because we understand that the idea here is “Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool.” Now that’s tough, and what I love about Hebrews is that it acknowledges the difficulty.

I want you to just go ahead to chapter 2, verse 8b, that is, the latter half of 8. The author says, *“At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to Him.”* The wonderful thing is that he’s acknowledging that yes, the Father has invited the Son, the mediatorial Son, to sit at His right hand so He makes His enemies His footstool. And yet right now we don’t see the implications of that session.

And that takes us to the second thing that I want us to talk about, the *eschatological aspect of Christ’s session*. Now what does *eschatology* mean? Eschatology—*eschaton*—means *last*. Now it doesn’t just mean *final*, like when you’re thinking of the taxonomy of systematic theology, where you put eschatology at the end of the book. But it can mean something else. It can mean *ultimate things*.

And I think that sense is shared here. In other words, there is the present reality that exists within the ultimate reality of Christ’s session. There is the present reality which exists in the ultimate reality of Christ’s session. You might think about that in terms of D-Day and V-Day.

You know, when the Allies stormed the beaches of Normandy, that was a decisive battle. That was D-Day. Basically and virtually the war was over at that point. But no one had signed a treaty. When they signed the treaty, that was V-Day. And so they had to live in between D-Day and V-Day.

And when you think about the cross, and all of the culminating aspects of Christ’s session, you think about D-Day. And yet, says the author to the Hebrews, “we don’t see everything in subjection to Him.” That’s because V-Day, the consummation of all things, has not yet arrived. We live in between the times. We feel the tension of all that.

And that’s why, living in between the times, we notice veers 14. In between D-Day and V-Day God uses angels. This is where God brings back the angels to the discussion and says to us, “Now look. I don’t want to denigrate My angels, because My angels have value. And the value of My angels is that they minister in between the times.”

And look how the New Testament portrays that. Acts 14:7—you don’t have to go there; I’ll just read it to you. In Acts 14:7, this is when Paul is in prison and Herod is seeking his life. *“An angel of the Lord suddenly appeared, and a light shone in his cell”*, and remember, he strengthens him.

In Acts 27:23 the very same thing happens. They’re on the ship. Remember that they’re getting tossed about and they’re not sure they’re going to survive. And Paul says to the captain and crew, *“This very night an angel of the God to whom I belong, and*

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whom I serve, stood before me.” And so in between the times the angels of God minister to the servants of God, whether seen or unseen.

So I think there’s something critical here that we have to understand. We have to understand that we live in between those two points in the sense of God’s ultimate plan. And I think that we can get ourselves in a very bad position if we don’t think rightly about these things.

I want to tell you how it is that I think somebody can think wrongly about these things. I ministered to a guy. He’s a great guy. His name is Ron, and he was in the last church I served. And after I left there—well, while I was there,—Ron started experiencing kidney failure and he was on dialysis.

And after I left I had some ongoing conversations with Ron. For a while the church I planted there didn’t have a pastor, and so I was continuing to talk to him. And he was telling me that if he felt he had enough faith, God would heal him of his kidney failure.

Now this is a guy who did not buy into the health and wealth gospel. This is a guy that listened to “The White Horse Inn” and R. C. Sproul and loved these guys of the Reformed Faith. And I said to him, “Ron, brother, you know that’s not the case. You know that the fact of the matter is that there is a sovereign God who superintends all things. And what you’re saying is, ‘I can leverage this God by my belief.’ And what you need to remember, Ron, is that even the tiniest of genuine faith lays hold of an entire Christ, and you have all the benefits of Christ by faith, even the weakest faith.” And so this is not a matter of if I have enough faith, my kidneys will be healed and I can leverage God in that.

And he would assent to that. He would agree with that. He locked himself in his house. And I called a member of the congregation and I said, “Hey, something’s not right. You need to go to Ron’s house and beat on the door.”

So they went and they beat on the door. And he acknowledged them; he answered them. And he said, “I’m fine. I’m just not coming out.”

They talked to him through the door. He said, “I’m not coming out; I’m fine.”

The next day he called this person and said, “Come get me. Bring an ambulance.” He ends up going into the hospital. He lasted for about three days and he died.

And to me, when I think about living in between the times and having right thinking about living in between the times, that story just comes back to me constantly, that we need to have a right understanding about living in the humiliation of Christ between D-Day and V-Day. And God has given us the resources in His Son to live in between the times.

And that doesn’t mean that the humiliation that we experience is going to evaporate because we have enough faith. It means that faith in the Son will carry us through those difficulties until V-Day, whether that be our death or His coming.

And let me press on to this final point, *the pastoral aspect*. Let me have you notice something. The pastoral aspect is when the preacher brings back around this whole idea of angels. And he helps us to see the significance of his talk about angels in relation to the incarnation of the Son.

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I want you to think about this. In Christ’s incarnation, in His incarnation, He is the highest manifestation of humanity. And yet He is below the angels. So even in the highest manifestation of perfect humanity, we’re still below the angels.

And yet the angels serve us because we are united to Jesus Christ, the Son of God. And that just has a way of ministering to you, doesn’t it, when you know that the higher serve the lower, because the lower are united to the Higher.

There’s another thing that I think is absolutely worth our notice. And it’s the idea that we are *heirs*. And you ask yourself. Wait a minute! How is it that we can be heirs? And it ties back in with what I just said. You have to go back to verse 4 in order to understand it. Sorry, verse 2.

“But in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed the Heir of all things.” In other words, as it says in verse 14, we are heirs because we’ve been united to the Son who is the Heir of all things—not only the Alpha Creator, but the Omega Heir to all things. I just think that’s absolutely profound when you think about it.

And in between the times, we have been given to think about these things, to meditate upon them, and realize that what we experience in between D-Day and V-Day, what we experience here and now, is really and wonderfully what we are seeing unfolded for us in this text.

Participant: Amen.

Jeff: We usually interact a little bit in between. I was rambling through this. But do you have any questions or thoughts that you want to bounce off? No?

Okay, why don’t we pray? Our heavenly Father, we thank You and praise You for this day, for the time that You’ve given us to be together, for Your love expressed toward us in Jesus Christ, and for the wonder of it all. Father, thank You for this opportunity these weeks to linger through Hebrews chapter 1, and to just take in and take on board who Christ is and what He has done on our behalf, and how being united to Him we are heirs to all things. Father, thank You. We praise Your name through the Lord Jesus Christ this morning, and ask that You’ll give us a good day serving You. And we ask it in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Men: Amen.

Jeff: All right. Thank you, men.

Men: Thank you. *(Applause)*