

caying things the world sees as so important and valuable.

Friday 9/28

Read: Hebrews 1:10-12; Psalm 102:12-28

Examine: Here, again, the author is quoting the Septuagint and there are some subtleties that will need to be understood. In this Psalm the psalmist is crying out to God for mercy and restoration. He is oppressed by a sense of his brief lifespan in contrast with the eternity of God's being. In your NIV version (based on the Hebrew) the supplicant prays this entire Psalm. But in the Septuagint version, the psalmist's prayer ends with verse 22. From 23 on the voice is that of Yahweh, and that is how the author of Hebrews understands it. Christ is the supplicant who shares with his people the consequences of their sins as well as God's righteous judgment. The Father responds that he will live and rule eternally, along with "the children of your servants" who will live eternally in his presence.

Apply: Oh, how the author of Hebrews' head must have spun as the Holy Spirit opened up to him the fantastic and wondrous truth of this Psalm as it applied to Jesus of Nazareth! Here was the eternal Son of God himself, the Word by which all exists and is upheld, who took upon himself our afflictions and judgment. And it is through his victory that we will be eternal co-heirs of his eternal kingdom. No wonder the Son has ascribed to him a dignity which surpasses all the names that angels bear. Long live our King Jesus! And long live all those who put their trust in him as their Savior!

Pray: Pray in thanks to your King, who has shared in all your sufferings, doubts, and afflictions and taken them to the cross. Live in the confidence that we have a King who will always, eternally, be there for you and with you.

Saturday 9/29

Read: Hebrews 1:13-14; Psalm 110

Examine: Psalm 110 is seen uniformly throughout the New Testament as referring to the Messiah and is applied to Jesus. Even the scribes saw this Psalm as Messianic (cf. Mark 12:35ff). Jesus himself at his trial claimed to be the one addressed in these words when he told his judges that they would from then on see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Almighty (Mark 14:62). While the most exalted angels are those privileged to "stand in the presence of God", none has ever been invited to sit before him, still less to sit in the place of unique honor at God's right hand. This is reserved for our saviour king who takes his rightful place on the eternal throne of heaven!

Apply: First, even the greatest of God's angelic messengers exist to minister to us, the inheritors of the salvation won by Christ (v. 14). That's you and me. Second, our great eternal king is also our great high priest. But he is not a priest of the order of Levi, but of the mysterious priest Melchizedek (Psalm 110:4). He is a priest who intercedes not only for Israel, but for the entire world. Third, as God has no greater messenger than his Son, he has no further message beyond the gospel. All is revealed, all is fulfilled, and all has been given to us in Christ.

Pray: Thank God this week for the Gospel message, the final word on our salvation. As you prepare for worship tomorrow, pray for a renewed love for God's word and strive to faithfully study and apply it in your life.



CHRIST the
REDEEMER
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Taking Gathered Worship Home

Family and Individual Devotions Meditations in the Book of Hebrews Week of September 23, 2007

The passage this week from Hebrews 1:5-14 is fascinating and rewarding to study in detail for three main reasons.

First, we see the use of the Old Testament by the New. For the New Testament Apostles, the Old Testament was the Scripture that taught about Christ, and was used extensively in their letters and teachings to show, not only the Jews, but the world, about the nature and mission of the Messiah. Particularly, this section shows what remarkable theology is exhibited in books like the Psalms (of the seven OT quotations here, five are taken from the Psalter). More than anything, the modern Christian Church needs to reawaken in its study and use of the Old Testament to learn more and more about Christ and authentic Christianity.

Second, this section shows us the OT's attestation that Christ is superior to the angels. Why would this be important for the listening Hebrew congregation? First, the final message of God, communicated by the Son, is affirmed by even more majestic means than that which attended the law, which was communicated by angels (cf. Heb 2:2f). Next, the new world over which the Son is to reign as Messiah far surpasses the old world in which various nations were assigned to angels for administration (cf. Heb 2:5). Finally, it warned against much of the strange teachings which crept into Hebrew worship, such as angel-worship (which seems to have been present among the Colossian Christians).

Third, the three sentences in this section (vv. 5, 6-12, and 13) correspond to the three stages of a coronation liturgy found, not only in other ancient near eastern texts, but also in the Old Testament. These stages are a) a declaration by God that he has adopted the king as his son (v. 5); b) the presentation of the king to his people, and his proclamation as king (vv. 6-12); and c) the enthronement proper (v. 13). So great a Son, so great a King! This is the coronation ceremony of our savior, Lord, and King of Kings!

Sunday 9/23

Read: Hebrews 1:5a; Psalm 2

Examine: Psalm 2:7 reads almost directly out of a coronation ceremony. While directly related to the reign of King David and his heirs, it was also believed that in the latter days these words would be most fully realized in the Messiah of David's line who would rise up in the time of fulfillment (Luke 1:32).

Apply: Words similar to this were used at Jesus baptism (Luke 3:22). The words do not mean that it was at that point that Jesus "became" the son of God (a heresy known as

“adoptionism”), questioning the eternity of Christ’s divine Sonship. Rather, as with a prince who is crowned as heir at his age of maturity, the Son of God from everlasting entered into the full exercise of all the prerogatives implied by his Sonship when, after his suffering had proved the completeness of his obedience, he was raised to the Father’s right hand.

Pray: What an awesome privilege it is to enter into prayer into the presence of the king of the universe. Thank God for such a privilege, and let your prayers this week reflect the incredible privilege that is ours.

Monday 9/24

Read: Hebrews 1:5b; 2 Samuel 7:1-16

Examine: As with almost all quotations of the Old Testament in the New, the author quotes a single verse but is recalling the entire context of that verse. 2 Samuel 7 is one of the most important chapters in all Scripture. Here the prophet Nathan conveys God’s response to David’s desire to build a house for the ark of God. But God does not need or desire the pitiful “houses” built by humans, but promises to establish the “house” of David “forever.” While verses 12-13 refer immediately to David’s son Solomon, the actual distant referent is the Messiah. He will reign forever.

Apply: The fulfillment of the ancient promise made through Nathan is clearly celebrated in Gabriel’s words of annunciation to Mary (Luke 1:32f) and in Zechariah’s thanksgiving (Luke 1:68f). The fulfillment of the prophecy to David in 2 Samuel 7 is met in the eternal kingship of Christ and in the “house” that is Christ’s visible body, evident every time his people meet together in worship and praise.

Pray: Pray for Christ’s house. As you pray for the needs of each member of CTR, recognize that you are building up the “house” God has given us and in which he dwells with us.

Tuesday 9/25

Read: Hebrews 1:6; Deuteronomy 32:39-47

Examine: This quotation bears a general resemblance to Psalm 97:7 as it reads in the Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint), “Worship him, all his angels.” But it more closely resembles (and more likely is quoting) the longer Septuagint form of Deut 32:43, the concluding words of the Song of Moses (you’ll have to look at your footnotes in the NIV to catch this!):

“Rejoice, O heavens, along with him, and let the sons of God (angels) worship him;

Rejoice, O nations, with his people, and let all the angels of God ascribe strength to him;

For he avenges the blood of his sons, and will avenge it, and will recompense punishment to his adversaries; Even to those who hate him will he recompense it, and the Lord will cleanse his people’s land.”

Apply: In the original setting it is to Yahweh the God of Israel, that angels are to give worship. But now that worship is to be given to the Son. This is to occur when God brings his firstborn into the world. Again, this is not so much about his incarnation as it is of his being introduced to the world as the Son of God, of his exaltation and enthronement as sovereign over the inhabited universe, including the realm of angels, who are accordingly summoned to acknowledge and worship their Lord. How much more are we, created lower than the angels (Psa 8:5) called to acknowledge and worship our Lord *and Savior* Jesus Christ.

Pray: Not only is it a privilege to pray to our Savior King, but it is also a privilege to be invited into his courts to worship. Do we reflect that great privilege that is ours? Pray that

our lives would reflect that kind of worship in all we do.

Wednesday 9/26

Read: Hebrews 1:7; Psalm 104:1-9

Examine: Again, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews is quoting from the Septuagint version of Psalm 104:4. The emphasis in the Greek text is slightly different than the Hebrew. Whether God turns his messengers into wind and fire or he uses these elements as his messengers, the point is they are all created but the Son is eternal.

Apply: Understanding just how the New Testament authors use the Old Testament can be quite challenging. Sometimes even scholarly commentators with extensive knowledge of Greek, Hebrew, Latin, and other ancient languages struggle to put together just what the New Testament authors were trying to convey. One thing is certain; these authors were intimately familiar with the imagery and meaning of the Old Testament Scriptures. Furthermore, they understood that the one author, the Holy Spirit, is the true author and interpreter of these words. And guided by the illumination of the Holy Spirit in our own minds, we can agree with the authors of the New Testament regarding their testimony of Jesus, a prophet, priest, and king superior to all the angelic hosts, and to all things created.

Pray: Pray for the illumination and wisdom that God has promised you through the Holy Spirit as you study and apply God’s word in your life. Pray that you would not get bogged down in the technicalities, but in the power of the simple truths that shine through in his word, a word that is meant to change your life.

Thursday 9/27

Read: Hebrews 1:8-9; Psalm 45

Examine: Psalm 45 celebrates a royal wedding, probably of a king of the house of David. Remarkably, in Psalm 45:6 the king is addressed as “God,” while at the same time in verse 7 it is “your God” which has set him “above.” What King of Israel could claim such? For the Hebrew poets and prophets a king of David’s line, however humanly corrupt, was the vicegerent of Israel’s God; he belonged to a dynasty to which God had made special promises bound up with the accomplishment of his purpose in the world. The real referent is to Christ himself, of which the Davidic kings were merely types and shadows. In the fullest sense this Messiah can be addressed not merely as God’s Son, but actually as God, for he is both the Messiah of David’s line and also the effulgence of God’s glory and the very image of his being.

Apply: All created things and earthly dynasties, even the angels, are subject to time and tide, change and decay, but Messiah’s throne endures forever. But who are His “companions” mentioned in Heb 1:9 (Psa 45:7)? These are the “many sons” of Heb 2:10, whom the firstborn Son is not ashamed to call his “brothers” in Heb 2:11, the “partners” (same Greek word) in Heb 3:14. It is Christ’s Church, his disciples and followers. Our joy is great because of our eternal companionship with him, but his is greater still. Remarkable!

Pray: Pray for the joy that can only come as a “companion” of our great eternal king. Pray that you may recognize what is eternally important and lasting amidst the transient and de-