

II. The Supremacy of Jesus Christ

September 12/13/14, 2017

Hebrews 1:1-4

Aim: To demonstrate that Jesus is superior to everything else in His person and work as Prophet, Priest, and King.

Schreiner: The opening of Hebrews is elegant and eloquent, demonstrating the literary artistry of the author. The introduction gives no evidence that the writing is an epistle, for the author doesn't introduce himself, the recipients aren't identified, and there isn't a greeting. The opening suggests a literary work, something like a literary essay on the significance of Jesus Christ. We know from the conclusion of the work, however, that Hebrews has epistolary features, and thus the book should not be classified as a literary essay. Still, the author invites the reader via the elevated style of the letter to reflect on and apply his theology.

Schreiner: The main point of the first four verses is that God has spoken finally and definitively in His Son. The author beautifully contrasts the past era in which God spoke to the ancestors and prophets with the last days in which God spoke to us in His Son.

A. A Superior Word (Hebrews 1:1-2a)

1. Long Ago (1:1)

¹*Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets...*

Schreiner: God is a speaking God, and He has spoken to the prophets in a variety of ways and modes in the OT. The first verse is marked by alliteration in the Greek, with five different words beginning with 'p': 'at different times' (*πολυμερως, polymerōs*); 'in different ways' (*πολυτροπως, polytropōs*); 'long ago' (*παλαι, palai*); 'fathers' (*πατρασιν, patrasin*); and 'prophets' (*προφηταις, prophētais*). From the outset the literary skill and the deft style of the author are apparent so that the reader sees a master craftsman at work.

a) God Spoke

MacArthur: Here is an indication of how God wrote the Old Testament. Its purpose was to prepare for the coming of Christ. Whether by prophecy or type or principle or commandment or whatever, it made preparation for Christ. For us to know anything about God, He must tell us. We could never know God if He did not speak to us. Thus, in the Old Testament, the writer reminds us, 'God...spoke.' Every religion is but man's attempt to discover God. Christianity is God bursting into man's world and showing and telling man what He is like. Because man by himself is incapable of identifying, comprehending, or understanding God at all, God had to invade the world of man and speak to him about Himself. Initially, He told us He would be coming. This He did through the words of the Old Testament. He used men as instruments, but was Himself behind them, enlightening and energizing them.

Phillips: As soon as we begin the Book of Hebrews, we encounter what is perhaps the single most important statement that could be made in our time: 'God spoke.' This is one of the most vital things people today need to know. Ours is a relativistic age; as many as 70 percent of Americans insist that there are no absolutes, whether in matters of truth or morality. Secular society having removed God, there no longer is a heavenly voice to speak with clarity and authority. Really, we are told, we don't know anything for sure, nor can we. All this is

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especially the case when it comes to our knowledge of God Himself. Can we know our Creator, if there is one? Is there a Savior to help us? Unless God has spoken, we cannot even be sure He is there; unless God is there, there is no ultimate hope for us as individuals, and no answer for the ultimate problem of death. Therefore, there is nothing more important, nothing more essential, than what Hebrews says in its very first verse: ‘God spoke.’

Phillips: This is the uniform testimony of the Bible about itself, that it is God’s very Word. The Bible’s books were written by human authors, who spoke and wrote in human language. But the Bible insists that through them God Himself spoke and speaks to us still (cp. 2 Pe. 1:21; 1 Tim. 3:16). The divine authorship of Holy Scripture needs to be emphasized today.

Phillips: Whenever the writer of Hebrews cites Scripture, it is never the human author whom he credits but the divine Author. In 2:12 he cites Psalm 22:22 and ascribes it to Jesus Christ speaking in the Old Testament. Hebrews 3:7-11 cites Psalm 95 but prefaces it not by saying ‘as David said,’ but ‘as the Holy Spirit says.’ So it goes throughout Hebrews. The point is not to deny the significance of the Bible’s human authors, but to show that our emphasis, following the Bible’s own emphasis, must always be on God speaking in His Word.

Bruce: ‘God has spoken.’ This initial affirmation is basic to the whole argument of this epistle, as indeed it is basic to Christian faith. Had God remained silent, enshrouded in thick darkness, the plight of mankind would have been desperate indeed; but now He has spoken His revealing, redeeming, and life-giving word, and in His light we see light. Our author is not thinking of that general revelation of Himself which God has given in creation, providence, and conscience—but of that special revelation which He has given in two stages: first, to the fathers through the prophets, and finally in His Son. These two stages of divine revelation correspond to the Old and New Testaments respectively. Divine revelation is thus seen to be progressive—but the progression is not from less true to more true, from the less worthy to the more worthy, or from the less mature to the more mature. How could it be so when it is one and the same God revealed throughout? The progression is one from promise to fulfillment, as is made abundantly clear in the course of this epistle.

b) *Long Ago*

Schreiner: The revelation given in the past is described as occurring ‘long ago’. The author is not emphasizing primarily that the revelation occurred in the distant past. His main point, given the remainder of the book, is that OT revelation belongs to a previous era. A new day has arisen, a new covenant has arrived, and the old is no longer in force. The ‘first’ covenant is ‘old’ (*παλαιουμενον, palaioumenon*) and hence obsolete (8:13). The words of the previous era are authoritative as the word of God, but they must be interpreted in light of the fulfillment realized in Jesus Christ.

c) *Many Times and Many Ways*

Schreiner: The diversity of revelation in the former era is featured. God spoke ‘at different times’ and ‘in different ways.’ OT revelation was transmitted through narrative, hymns, proverbs, poetry, parables, and love songs, through wisdom and apocalyptic literature. God communicated with His people for hundreds of years, throughout the history of Israel.

MacArthur: Notice how God spoke: ‘in many portions and in many ways.’ The writer uses a play on words in the original language: ‘God, *polumerōs* and *polutropōs*...’. These two Greek words are interesting. They mean, respectively, ‘in many portions’ (as of books) and ‘in many

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different manners.’ There are many books in the Old Testament—thirty-nine of them. In all those ‘many portions’ (*polumerōs*) and in ‘many ways’ (*polutropōs*), God spoke to men. Sometimes it was in a vision, sometimes by a parable, sometimes through a type or symbol. There were many different ways in which God spoke the Old Testament. But it is always God speaking. Even the words spoken by men and angels are included because He wants us to know them. ‘Many ways’ includes many literary ways. Some of the Old Testament is narrative. Some of it is poetry, in beautiful Hebrew meter. The ‘many ways’ also includes many types of content. Some is law; some is prophecy; some is doctrinal; some is ethical and moral; some is warning; some is encouragement; and so on. But it is all God speaking.

Bruce: The earlier stage of the revelation was given in a variety of ways: God spoke in His mighty works of mercy and judgment, and made known through His servants the prophets the meaning and purpose of these works; they were admitted into His secret council and learned His plans in advance (cp. Jer. 23:18, 22; Amos 3:7). He spoke in storm and thunder to Moses (Ex. 19:19; Dt. 5:22ff.), in a still small voice to Elijah (1 Kgs. 19:12). Priest and prophet, sage and singer were in their several ways His spokesmen; yet all the successive acts and varying modes of revelation in the ages before Christ came did not add up to the fullness of what God had to say.

Hughes: The emphasis here is on the grand diversity of God’s speech in the Old Testament. God utilized great devices to instruct His prophets. God spoke to Moses at Sinai in thunder and lightning and with the voice of a trumpet. He whispered to Elijah at Horeb in ‘a still small voice’ (1 Kgs. 19:12). Ezekiel was informed by visions and Daniel through dreams. God appeared to Abram in human form and to Jacob as an angel. God declared Himself by Law, by warning, by exhortation, by type, by parable. And when God’s seers prophesied, they utilized nearly every method to communicate their message. Amos gave direct oracles from God. Malachi used questions and answers. Ezekiel performed bizarre symbolic acts. Haggai preached sermons. And Zechariah employed mysterious signs. The significance of this immensely creative and variegated communication is that it dramatically demonstrated God’s loving desire to communicate with His people. It was never hackneyed, never boring, never inscrutable, never irrelevant. It was always adequate for the time. It was always progressive, revealing more of God and His ways. It was always in continuity with the previous words of God. But in all of this (its adequacy, its progressiveness, its continuity, and its power), God’s eloquence was never complete. As grand as it was, it was nevertheless fragmentary and lacking.

Phillips: The author describes former revelation as coming ‘at many times and in many ways.’ His point is not merely the diversity of revelation in the Old Testament, but its fragmentary, incomplete, and gradual character. Each book in the Old Testament contains true divine revelation, even necessary revelation. But each book is fragmentary and incomplete. The Old Testament is unfulfilled. It expectantly longs for the answer that comes in Jesus Christ.

MacArthur: Yet, beautiful and important and authoritative as it is, the Old Testament is fragmentary and incomplete. It was delivered over the course of some fifteen hundred years by some forty-plus writers—in many different pieces, each with its own truths. It began to build and grow, truth upon truth. It was what we call progressive revelation. Genesis gives some truth and Exodus gives some more. The truth builds and builds and builds. The revelation did not build from error to truth but from incomplete truth to more truth. And it remained incomplete until the New Testament was finished. Divine revelation, then, going from Old Testament to the New Testament, is progressive revelation. It progressed from promise to fulfillment. The Old Testament is promise; the New Testament is fulfillment. In fact, the Old Testament itself clearly

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indicates that the men of faith who wrote it were trusting in a promise they had not yet understood. They trusted in a promise that was yet to be fulfilled.

d) Fathers and Prophets

Schreiner: ‘God spoke to the fathers.’ The one true God is a speaking God, one who communicates with His people and reveals His will and His ways to them. The ‘fathers’ can’t be limited to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob but include and encompass all those addressed in OT revelation. The writer identifies the entire OT as prophetic.

Phillips: Another reason for the superiority of the Christian faith is the contrast in the channel of its revelation, that is, the *how*. In the Old Testament, God spoke by the prophets, but in the New He speaks by His own Son. One could hardly find a greater group of spiritual giants than the prophets of the Old Testament. Yet how they pale compared to the very Son of God come to earth (cp. Jn. 3:31). The revelation in Christ, then, given not merely to our forefathers but preserved for us in Scripture, is superior to that given formerly through His prophets.

MacArthur: Long ago God spoke to ‘the fathers,’ the Old Testament people, our spiritual ancestors—also our physical ancestors if we are Jewish. He even spoke to some of our Gentile predecessors. He spoke to them by the prophets, His messengers. A prophet is one who speaks to men for God; a priest is one who speaks to God for men. The priest takes man’s problems to God; the prophet takes God’s messages to men. Both, if they are true, are commissioned by God, but their ministries are quite different. The book of Hebrews has a great deal to say about priests, but its opening verse speaks of prophets. The Holy Spirit establishes the divine authorship of the Old Testament, its accuracy and its authority, through the fact that it was given to and delivered by God’s prophets. The Old Testament is only a part of God’s truth, but it is not partially His truth. It is not His compete truth, but it is completely His truth. It is God’s revelation, His progressive revelation preparing His people for the coming of His Son, Jesus Christ.

2. Last Days (1:2a)

...²*but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son...*

a) In These Last Days

Schreiner: The God who spoke in the past still speaks, but ‘in these last days’ He has spoken finally and definitively in His Son. This Son is the Davidic heir promised in the Scriptures, and He is also the agent of all creation.

Schreiner: The ‘last days’ (Gen. 49:1; Num. 24:14; Is. 2:2; Jer. 23:20; 25:19; Dan. 10:14; Hos. 3:5; Mic. 4:1) represent the days in which God’s saving promises are fulfilled, and they have now commenced with the coming of the Son. Believers no longer live in the days when they await the fulfillment of what God has promised. They live in the eschaton: ‘the end of the ages have come’ (1 Cor. 10:11). It is inconceivable that the readers would embrace the old era with its sacrifices and rituals now that the new has come in Jesus Christ.

Bruce: It is ‘in these last days’ that God has spoken in Him, and by this phrase our author means much more than ‘recently’; it is a literal rendering of the Hebrew phrase which is used in the Old Testament to denote the epoch when the words of the prophets will be fulfilled, and its use here means that the appearance of Christ ‘once for all at the consummation of the ages’ (9:26) has

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inaugurated that time of fulfillment. God's previous spokesmen were His servants, but for the proclamation of His last word to mankind He has chosen His Son.

Phillips: By contrast, God's revelation in Christ is not partial or incomplete. This is why the Christian era is described as 'these last days.' The point is not that Jesus is about to come back any minute, but that this is the age of fulfillment when God's revelation has been made complete. This is what makes the *when* of Christian revelation so much better.

b) *Spoken By His Son*

Schreiner: God has spoken in His Son. The revelation in the former era was diverse and partial, but the revelation in the Son is unitary and definitive. The final revelation has come in the last days for God has spoken His last and best word. No further word is to be expected, for the last word focuses on the life, death, and resurrection of the Son. Believers await the return of the Son (9:28), but they don't expect a further word from God. No more clarification is needed. The significance of what the Son accomplished has been revealed once for all, and hence the readers must pay attention (2:1) to this revelation.

Bruce: His word was not completely uttered until Christ came; but when Christ came, the word spoken in Him was indeed God's final word. In Him all the promises of God meet with the answering 'Yes!' which seals their fulfillment to His people and evokes from them an answering 'Amen!' (cp. 2 Cor. 1:20). The story of divine revelation is a story of progression up to Christ, but there is no progression beyond Him.

MacArthur: The whole New Testament is centered around Christ. The gospel tells His story, the epistles comment on it, and the Revelation tells of its culmination. From beginning to end the New Testament is Christ. No prophet had been given God's whole truth. The Old Testament was given to many men, in bits and pieces and fragments. Jesus not only brought, but was, God's full and final Revelation. Since the revelation is complete, to add anything to the New Testament is blasphemous. To add to it The Book of Mormon, or Science and Health, or anything else that claims to be revelation from God is blasphemous. 'God has in these last days finalized His revelation in His Son.' It was finished.

Schreiner: The author also emphasizes that God has spoken 'by His Son.' In the OT Israel is the Lord's son, His firstborn (Ex. 4:22). And the Davidic king is also identified as God's son (2 Sam. 7:14; Ps. 2:7). The author implies that Jesus is the true Israel and the true king.

Hughes: But no more! For in Christ came an astonishing eloquence, the ultimate speech of God. Jesus is God's final word. The Greek here is simply *in huios* – 'in Son'—emphasizing that the person of His Son contains everything. He is the ultimate medium of communication. God has spoken to us in His Son! This amazing eloquence of God is substantially the same as that describe in the chain of thought in John 1:1-14. What is the result of all this eloquence? We meet God the Father! 'No one has ever seen God,' says John, but 'the only God, who is at the Father's side, He has made Him known' (Jn. 1:18). Jesus exegeted God. That is some communication! The astounding eloquence of God!

Phillips: These opening verses tell us not merely that God has spoken, but that His final and definitive revelation is in and through His Son, Jesus Christ. The writer makes this point through three contrasts in verses 1 and 2. First, there is the *when* of revelation: 'long ago,' in contrast to 'in these last days.' Second, there is the *to whom* of revelation, 'to our fathers,' versus 'to us.' Third, there is the *how* of revelation, namely 'at many times and in many ways...by the

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prophets,’ versus ‘by His Son.’ The author’s point, which is the burden of the entire Book of Hebrews, is to show the superiority of Christianity to the old covenant religion. He wastes no time getting to this point, arguing the supremacy of Christ over the prophets. This supremacy does not in any way malign the Old Testament faith. Unlike pagan religions, it was a legitimate revelation and a true faith. Nonetheless, Christ is superior and with His coming there is no now excuse for reverting back to Judaism.

3. Present Implications

Phillips: The fact that ‘God spoke’ has several important implications. First, if God speaks in the Bible, then the Bible carries divine *authority*. Today, many want to set aside the Bible’s teachings when they collide with current cultural standards. But just as God commands our obedience, so He also demands that we humbly obey His Word.

Phillips: Second, if God wrote the Bible, then it is enduringly *relevant*. After all, if God does not change—and by nature He cannot—then His Word does not change either. The teaching given all through the Bible—on God’s character, on sin and on His moral standards, on the good news of salvation and how it comes to us—abides forever for the simple reason that God abides forever (see 13:8). God not only spoke in the Bible to those who first received it, but He speaks as well to those who read it today.

Phillips: Third, since God has spoken in the Bible, even though He did so with great diversity—‘at many times and in many ways’—we also hold to the *unity* of the Bible. The Bible consists of sixty-six books written over at least thirteen hundred years by over forty different people. And yet it is one book with one unified message. This provides us with an important interpretive principle, namely, that Scripture is best interpreted by Scripture itself. Since the Bible is one message spoken by God, we should understand the teaching in one passage in light of the way that teaching is given elsewhere in Scripture. To be sure, the Bible’s message is progressively revealed, so that the gospel appears in but in the Old Testament and in bloom only in the New Testament. Nonetheless, the clear teaching God gives in one place constrains our interpretations of the same subject elsewhere in the Bible.

MacArthur: In the first verse and a half of Hebrews, the Holy Spirit establishes the preeminence of Jesus Christ over all the Old Testament, over its message, its methods, and its messengers. It was just what those Jews, believing and nonbelieving, needed to hear. And so it established the priority of Jesus Christ. He is greater than the prophets. He is greater than any revelation in the Old Testament, for He is the embodiment of all that truth, and more. God has fully expressed Himself in Christ.

B. A Superior Son (Hebrews 1:2b-3)

Schreiner: The subsequent verses indicate that Sonship transcends these categories (of son and king), for Jesus is also the unique and eternal Son of God, one who shares the nature of God. Indeed, the following verses indicate why the readers must pay heed to the word spoken in the Son, for the Son is far greater than angels. He is the exalted and reigning Son, the one who rules the universe.

Schreiner: Verse 3 unpacks further the nature and supremacy of the Son. First, the author speaks ontologically about the Son, maintaining that He fully shares the divine nature and identity. Second, the Son’s role in sustaining the cosmos is affirmed. Third, and most crucial for his

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argument, the Son's reign at God's right hand is featured. The Son reigns and rules as the one who has accomplished full cleansing for sin.

Bruce: Seven facts are stated about the Son of God which brings out His greatness and show why the revelation given in Him is the highest which God can give.

MacArthur: There are countless human explanations as to who Jesus was. But what is important is to look at what God says about who Jesus was and *is*. In just half of verse 2 and in verse 3 is a seven-fold presentation of the excellencies of Jesus Christ. In all these excellencies He is clearly much more than a man.

Phillips: Verses 2-3 contain seven statements of Christ's supremacy. This number seems deliberate, because verses 5-14 go on to list seven Old Testament citations that are ascribed to Christ. Seven was the number for perfection or completion, and that is the writer's point here: the perfect supremacy of Christ. Furthermore, the seven statements of verses 2 and 3 may be organized along the lines of the three great Old Testament offices that are perfected and completed in Christ: prophet, priest, and king. This is a helpful and biblical way of thinking about our Lord. He is prophet in that He perfectly reveals God to us. He is priest in offering Himself for our sins, cleansing us, and interceding for us with God. He is our king, reigning now in heaven and ruling over us as Sovereign Lord.

Hughes: The grand theme of these verses is the supremacy of Christ as God's final word. Christ is held up like a great jewel to the sunlight of God's revelation, and as the light courses through it, seven facets flash with gleaming brilliance. We have given these facets names so they can be easily followed and assimilated. Christ is: *Inheritor, Creator, Sustainer, Radiator, Representor, Purifier, Ruler.*

1. King (1:2bc)

Phillips: It is with the last of these offices, Christ as king, that the writer of Hebrews begins his sevenfold exclamation of the supremacy of Christ. In the first two of seven statements, we see Jesus as Lord both in His person and in His work.

a) *Inheritor (1:2b)*

...whom he appointed the heir of all things...

Phillips: First, He is 'appointed the heir of all things.' This is something that follows from Christ's being God's only Son. In Israel, it was the firstborn son who had the right of inheritance. This was God the Father's appointment, His purpose in creation: that His Son should be blessed and glorified in receiving all things. This is also the ultimate purpose of our redemption: His inheritance is the innumerable company of the redeemed and the universe renewed by virtue of His triumphant work of reconciliation.

Hughes: It is natural for the writer to first emphasize that Christ the Son is Inheritor because sons are naturally heirs. Thus, the text naturally flows from sonship to heirship. The writer, in stating here that Jesus is 'the heir of all things' is also consciously identifying Him with the Lord's 'Anointed' and 'Son' in Psalm 2:8. Thus Jesus is specifically said to be heir of Planet Earth and its peoples. But the promise also embraces the universe and the world to come (cp. 2:5-9). The immense scope of Christ's inheritance come from His dual functions as Creator and Redeemer. As Creator of the universe, He is its natural heir (cp. Col. 1:16b; Rom. 11:36). Scripture is clear:

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everything in the physical universe is *for* Him and *to* Him and will consummate *in* Him as heir of a new creation.

Hughes: But in addition to His natural inheritance as Creator, as Redeemer He has also earned a vast inheritance of souls renewed through His atoning work of reconciliation on the cross. We are His inheritance (cp. Eph. 1:18)! Think of it—Jesus is heir to all the heavens and numberless worlds, but *we* are His treasures. The redeemed are worth more than the universe. But there is even more! In the letter to the Romans we are called ‘heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ’ (Rom. 8:17). Because Christ and Christ along is heir to all things, and we live in Him, we are heirs of all (cp. 1 Cor. 3:21-23).

Schreiner: Jesus as the Son was appointed (*εθηκεν, ethēken*) by God as ‘heir of all things.’ In the OT, inheritance language is typically used with reference to the land of Canaan, which was promised to Israel as an inheritance (cp. Dt. 4:38; 12:9; Jos. 11:23). But the Son is the heir of ‘all things,’ which echoes the promise given to the Davidic king in Ps. 2:8: ‘Ask of Me, and I will make the nations your inheritance and the ends of the earth your possession.’ The Son is the heir because He is the Davidic king, the fulfillment of the covenant promise made to David that he would never lack a man to sit on the throne.

Bruce: God has appointed Him ‘heir of all things.’ These words no doubt echo the oracle of Psalm 2:8. Our author applies the preceding words of this oracle to Christ in verse 5. But in his mind the inheritance of the Son of God is not limited to earth; it embraces the universe, and particularly the world to come.

MacArthur: Jesus’ first excellency mentioned here is His heirship. If Jesus is the Son of God, then He is the heir of all that God possesses. Everything that exists will find its true meaning only when it comes under the final control of Jesus Christ. Even the Psalms predicted that He would one day be the heir to all that God possesses (e.g., Ps. 2:6-7, 8-9; 89:27; see also Col. 1:16; Rom. 11:36).

b) Creator (1:2c)

...through whom also he created the world.

Phillips: The writer of Hebrews goes on to say, ‘through whom also He created the world.’ Jesus Christ, God’s Son, is Lord and King because of His divine role in creation. Not only was the world made for Him, but it was made by Him. There can hardly be a stronger claim for lordship than this. If you are the one who made something, and for whom it was made, then you are its rightful lord. So it is in the case of Jesus Christ (see Col. 1:16).

Schreiner: Jesus’ rule as the Son demonstrates that He is the Messiah, the Davidic king, the one through whom God’s promises to Israel are fulfilled. As the son of David, He is a human being, but He is more than a human being, for ‘God made the universe through Him.’ The phrase ‘the universe’ (*τους αιωνας, tous aiōnas*) is most often temporal, but here it designates the world God has made, and the author features the Son as the agent of creation (cp. Jn. 1:3; 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:16). We can easily fail to see how astonishing this statement is. The one who was put to death in Jerusalem on a cross a few decades earlier is now praised as the one who created the world!

Bruce: It was through Him that God ‘made the universe.’ The Greek word here rendered ‘universe’ is *aiōnas*, which primarily means ‘ages’; but its meaning cannot be restricted to ‘ages’ either here or in 11:3, where it appears in a similar context. The whole created universe of space

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and time is meant, and the affirmation that God brought this universe into being by the agency of His Son is in line with the statements of other New Testament writers (Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:16).

Hughes: Having introduced the Son's superiority as Inheritor of all things, the thought naturally moves to His supremacy as the Creator of all. The word used for 'world' (*aiōnas*—literally 'ages') is a marvelously elastic and dynamic term that fits remarkably well with what we now know of our expanding universe. Jesus was the agent in whom and through whom the entire universe of space and time was created (cp. also Jn. 1:3; 1 Cor. 8:6; Rom. 11:36; Col. 1:16).

MacArthur: The second excellency of Christ mentioned in Hebrews 1 is His creatorship: 'through whom also He made the world.' Christ is the agent through whom God created the world (cp. Jn. 1:3). One of the greatest proofs of Jesus' divinity is His ability to create. Except for His complete sinlessness, His total righteousness, nothing more sets Him apart from us than His creatorship. Ability to create belongs to God alone and the fact that Jesus creates indicates that He is God. He created everything material and everything spiritual. The common Greek word for 'world' is *kosmos*, but that is not the word used in 1:2. The word here is *aiōnas*, which does not mean the material world but 'the ages,' as it is often translated. Jesus Christ is responsible not only for the physical earth; He is also responsible for creating time, space, energy, and matter. Christ created the whole universe and everything that makes it function, and He did it all without effort.

Phillips: Hebrews 1:3 adds that even now 'He upholds the universe by the word of His power.' Those Jewish Christians who first received this letter were being tempted to renounce Christianity. But Jesus fulfills and gathers to Himself all that the office of king ever meant to Israel. He is the true king, the Lord of all, and the faithful of Israel are those who worship and serve Him. We need to embrace the same truth. Jesus is king over the church and over the Christian people, no less than when the Israelites of David's day looked to his authority and obeyed his commands.

Phillips: Jesus was appointed heir of all things, which were made through Him and are even now sustained by Him. [DSB: Consider also Paul's doxology in Romans 11:36: 'For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.']. But this is seen only by God's Word, and only with the eyes of faith. Jesus is enthroned, not upon an earthly throne, but 'at the right hand of the Majesty on high' (1:3). We can see this only by faith. Believing on Christ as our king, we must obey Him by faith.

2. Prophet (1:3abc)

Phillips: This passage exalts Christ not only as Lord of all, but also as the One who perfectly reveals God in all His glory. He is the true king, but also the final prophet.

Schreiner: The first two clauses in verse 3 focus on the nature of the Son, showing that the Christology here is not merely functional but also ontological. The Son is the King and the Creator because of who He is because He shares the nature of God.

a) Radiator (1:3a)

³*He is the radiance of the glory of God...*

Schreiner: The author begins here by claiming Christ 'is the radiance of God's glory.' The word 'radiance' (*απαύγασμα, apaugasma*) could mean 'reflection,' so that the Son mirrors God's glory. Or it could be defined as 'radiance' or 'outshining' to emphasize the manifestation of

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God's glory. It seems that the meaning of active radiance is slightly more likely. In either case God's glory is revealed in the Son.

Bruce: He is the 'effulgence' or 'reflection' of God's glory. This statement is involved in the identification of Christ with the Wisdom of God. In the Alexandrian Book of Wisdom, a work with which our author may well have been acquainted, Wisdom is said to be: '...a breath of the power of God, and a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty; ... a reflection of eternal light, an unspotted mirror of the working of God, and an image of His goodness' (Wisdom 7:25ff.). The word 'reflection' or 'effulgence' (Gk. *apaugasma*) used both there and here denotes the radiance shining forth from the source of light; and Philo similarly uses it of the Logos in relation to God. Just as the radiance of the sun reaches this earth, so in Christ the glorious light of God shines into the hearts of men and women.

MacArthur: Third, we see Christ's radiance, the brightness of the glory of God. 'Radiance' (*apaugasma* 'to send forth light') represents Jesus as the manifestation of God. He expresses God to us. No one can see God; no one ever will. The only radiance that reaches us from God is mediated to us from Jesus Christ. Just as the rays of the sun light and warm the earth, so Jesus Christ is the glorious light of God shining into the hearts of men. Just as the sun was never without and cannot be separated from its brightness, so God was never without and cannot be separated from the glory of Christ.

Hughes: The fourth facet of the Son's superiority brilliantly sets forth His relation to the Father—'He is the radiance of the glory of God.' The ESV translation 'radiance' here is proper, as against some others that use 'reflection.' There is a vast difference between the two, as different as the functions of our solar system's sun and moon. The moon *reflects* light, whereas the sun *radiates* light because it is its source. Jesus does not simply reflect God's glory; He is part of it! This was shown on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mk. 9:3). It was His own essential glory, but it was also the Father's. This is what blinded Paul on the Damascus Road (Acts 9:3; 22:6).

Phillips: Hot and brilliant as the sun is in the heavens, we would never see it or feel its warmth without the radiating beams that come to earth. So it is with God and His Son, who is the radiance of His glory. Without the Son we remain in the dark regarding the glory of God. But with the Son we have an ideal, indeed, a perfect revelation of God (cp. 2 Cor. 4:6). We do not see God in Christ through drawings that purport to represent His features, much less through an actor who tries to represent the way Jesus must have been. We see God in Christ through the Bible's teaching of His person and work, of His holy zeal and compassionate love, of His heavenly words and mighty, saving works.

Phillips: As the Son, Jesus is a better revelation than that which came through the prophets. It is one thing to know a chosen servant. But as Martyn Lloyd-Jones explains, 'A servant may be able to say everything that is right about his lord and master, he may know him well and intimately, but he can never represent him in the way that the son can. The son is a manifestation of the father by being what he is. Thus our Lord Himself, while here on earth, represented and manifested the name of God in a way that is incomparable and greater than all others, because he is the Son of God.'

b) Representor (1:3b)

...and the exact imprint of his nature...

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Schreiner: The Son is also ‘the exact impression of His nature.’ The word translated ‘exact impression’ (*χαρακτηρ*, *charaktēr*) is used of the impression or marks made by coins. Here it denotes the idea that the Son represents the nature (*υποστασις*, *hypostasis*) and character of the one true God. He reveals who God is, and thus He must share the divine identity. The Son cannot represent God to human beings unless He shares in the being, nature, and essence of God. The Son of God reveals the reality of the one true God (cp. also Jn. 1:1, 3, 18; 14:9; Col. 1:15; Phil. 2:6).

Bruce: He is the very image of the essence of God—the impress of His being. Just as the image and superscription on a coin exactly correspond to the device on the die, so the Son of God ‘bears the very stamp of His nature.’ The Greek word *charaktēr*, occurring here only in the New Testament, expresses this truth even more emphatically than *eikōn*, which is used elsewhere to denote Christ as the ‘image’ of God (2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15). Just as the glory is really in the effulgence, so the being (Gk. *hypostasis*) of God is really in Christ, who is its impress, its exact representation and embodiment. What God essentially is, is made manifest in Christ. To see Christ is to see what the Father is like.

Phillips: Jesus is the perfect prophet—the one who fully reveals God’s glory—because He is not only similar to God the Father, but also is ‘the exact imprint of His nature.’ The Greek word is *charaktēr*, which gives us the word ‘character.’ It refers to the stamp or imprint made by a die or seal. The best example is a coin with the imprint of a ruler’s face; in the same way, Jesus bears God’s image or imprint (cp. Col. 1:15; Jn. 14:9).

MacArthur: Christ’s next excellency is His being. Jesus Christ is the express image of God. Christ not only was God manifest, He was God in substance. ‘Exact representation’ translates the Greek term used for the impression made by a die or stamp on a seal. The design on the die is reproduced in the wax. Jesus Christ is the reproduction of God. He is the perfect, personal imprint of God in time and space. Colossians 1:15 gives a similar illustration of this incomprehensible truth: ‘He is the image of the invisible God.’ The word ‘image’ here is *eikōn*, from which we get *icon*. *Eikōn* means a precise copy, an exact reproduction, as in a fine sculpture or portrait. To call Christ the *Eikōn* of God means He is the exact reproduction of God. ‘For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form’ (Col. 2:9).

Hughes: The following phrase balances out His identity by emphasizing that He is also the *Representor* of God: ‘and the exact imprint of His nature.’ The word translated ‘exact imprint’ refers to the image on a coin that perfectly corresponds to the image on the die. Jesus is therefore completely the same in His being as the Father. However, there is still an important distinction—both exist separately, as do the die and its image.

Hughes: Now when you take these two facets—*Radiator* and *Representor*—together, you have a remarkable exposition of the identity of the Father in the Son. As *Radiator*—‘the radiance of the glory of God’—Jesus is part of the source, one with the Father. This is what John emphasizes when he says, ‘the Word *was* God’ (Jn. 1:1). But also as *Representor*—‘the exact imprint of His nature’—Jesus is distinct, must as John also emphasizes when he says, ‘the Word *was with* God.’ Jesus is all of God ‘*very God of very God*.’ When you see Him, you see the Father. But He is also a distinct person. This is all bound in with the mystery of the holy Trinity.

Hughes: Jesus is a superior revelation of God. When we see Him, we know just what the God of the universe is like. We know how He thinks. We know how He talks. We know how He

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relates to people. God has spoken in His Son. It is His ultimate communication, His final word, His consummate eloquence. Oh, the superiority of the Son!

c) Sustainer (1:3c)

...and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.

Schreiner: After affirming the Son's ontological divinity (in 1:3ab), Hebrews returns to the Son's role in the created world. He is not only the one through whom the world was made but also sustains the universe 'by His powerful word.' The thought is similar to Col. 1:17, 'And by Him all things hold together.' Not only did the created world come into being through the Son; it also continues, 'And is upheld because of the Son.' The created world does not run by 'laws of nature' so that the Son's continued superintendence is dispensed with. The author of Hebrews does not embrace a deistic notion of creation. The universe is sustained by the personal and powerful word of the Son, so that the created world is dependent on His will for its functioning and preservation. Implied in the expression is that the universe will reach its intended goal and purpose.

Bruce: He upholds all things 'by His enabling word.' The creative utterance which called the universe into being requires as its complement that sustaining utterance by which it is maintained in being. So Paul can write to the Colossians of Christ as the one in whom all things were created and also as the one in whom 'all things hold together' (Col. 1:17). He upholds the universe not like Atlas supporting a dead weight on His shoulders, but as one who carries all things forward on their appointed course.

Hughes: But not only is He Creator, He is also Sustainer. He is not passively upholding the universe like 'Atlas sustaining the dead weight of the world.' Rather, He is actively holding up all things. He does it by His spoken word. The writer is very specific here. He does not use *logos* ('word'), which is used to indicate revelation, but *rhema* ('word'), the spoken word. Just as the universe was called into existence with a spoken word, so it is sustained by the utterance of the Son (cp. Col. 1:17). There is nothing in your soul that is beyond the creative power of God. You are not an exception to His creativity, no matter how unique you may imagine yourself or your problem to be. But He is also our Sustainer. He can sustain the universe, and He can sustain the struggling, harried church. Jesus is adequate for *everything*.

MacArthur: The fifth of Christ's excellencies is His administration, or sustenance. He 'upholds all things by the word of His power.' Christ not only made all things and will someday inherit all things, but He holds them all together in the meanwhile. The Greek word for 'upholds' means 'to support, to maintain,' and it is used here in the present tense, implying continuous action. Everything in the universe is sustained right now by Jesus Christ.

Phillips: Furthermore, Jesus 'upholds the universe by the word of His power.' Jesus wields divine power because as God's Son He is fully God. As the true and great and final prophet, He is able not merely to reveal God's will but also to establish God's will upon the earth.

Phillips: This description of Jesus as the great and final prophet helps us to gain a proper understanding of the relationship of the Old Testament to the New. The reason the Hebrew Christians should not revert from Christ back to Judaism is not that the Old Testament was wrong. Through the long line of prophets, God left His people with His revelation for their salvation. But the chief message of that revelation was of a Savior yet to come, the true prophet who would not only point to salvation but would also accomplish it. The way to be a true

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follower of Isaiah and the other prophets was and is to believe their message, to receive in faith the One for whom they prayed, who is the head of their order and the fulfillment of their age-old longing.

3. Priest (1:3d-e)

Phillips: We need to give homage to Jesus, God's Son, as the King who is Lord of all. And we need to listen to Him as the true and final prophet who perfectly reveals God's glory. But there is a third office Jesus perfects and completes, that of the priest. Apart from His ministry in this office we may bow to God, and we may listen to God, but we can never be accepted by God and draw near to His presence. The theme of Christ's priestly office will occupy much of the Book of Hebrews, and it is a message we must understand if we want to be saved.

a) Purifier (1:3d)

After making purification for sins...

Phillips: Jesus fulfills the priestly office because He offers the one true sacrifice to take away our sin. Yes, Jesus rules within us by His spirit, and He speaks to us as prophet through the gospel. But these are possible only because as Lamb of God He laid down His life for our sins, making purification for us upon the cross. Then, as the true and final priest, He went into heaven to present His own blood to God to secure our full, perfect, and final forgiveness.

Schreiner: The Son's rule commences 'after making purification of sins.' The word for 'purification' (*καθαρισμος, katharismos*) is cultic (cp. Ex. 29:36; 30:10; Lev. 14:32; 15:13; 1 Chr. 23:28), anticipating the discussion on the efficacy of the Levitical sacrifices in chapters 7-10 (see also 9:14, 22-23; 10:2). The Son's once-for-all sacrifice cleanses the sins of those who believe in Him.

Bruce: He has 'made purification for our sins.' Here we pass from the cosmic functions of the Son of God to His personal relationship with mankind, to His work as His people's high priest, which is elaborated throughout the epistle. The wisdom which created the worlds and maintains them in their due order may well beget in us a sense of wondering awe; but the grace which has provided a remedy for the defilement of sin by a life freely offered up to God on our behalf calls forth a sense of personal indebtedness which the contemplation of divine activity on the cosmic scale could never evoke. The underlying emphasis here, however, is that by making purification for sins the Son of God has accomplished something incapable of achievement by anyone else.

Hughes: We have been all over the universe with the cosmic Son, and then suddenly He is introduced as the priestly Purifier who paid for our sins with His own blood. Ceaseless cosmic activity, and then *boom!* His once-and-for-all sacrifice for our sins. Actually, this is a cosmic achievement because Jesus did something no man or priest could ever do: offer along the sacrifice that paid for all sins. That had to be the work of a cosmic being!

MacArthur: The sixth excellency of Christ is His sacrifice: 'when He had made purification of sins.' What a tremendous statement! The Bible says the wages of sin is death. Jesus Christ went to the cross, died our deserved death for us, and thereby took the penalty for our sin on Himself. If we will accept His death and believe that He died for us, He will free us from the penalty of sin and purify us from the stain of sin.

b) Ruler (1:3e)

...he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high...

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Phillips: This sevenfold exclamation of praise to God's Son is completed with the statement that 'He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.' There were no seats in the temple at Jerusalem. The priests offered sacrifices for the purification of the people day and night without ceasing because the problem of sin had not yet been solved. They never sat down. But when God's Son, the true priest whom the old covenant priests merely represented, shed His blood for us, His atoning sacrifice was the one to which all the others had merely pointed. He sat down, because there was no more sacrifice to be made, God's Son having offered His infinitely holy and precious blood once for all. That being the case, if the readers of Hebrews wanted the benefits of the Old Testament sacrifices, then they must not turn away from Christ but hold fast to His death for their salvation.

Schreiner: Since atonement has been accomplished, the Son has now 'sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.' The allusion is to Psalm 110 in the letter, a psalm that pervades the entire letter and plays a fundamental role in the author's argument. In Psalm 110:1, David's Lord sits down at God's right hand (see also 1:13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2). The right hand signifies power (Ex. 15:6, 12), protection, (Ps. 16:8; 73:23; Is. 41:10), and triumph (Ps. 20:6; 21:8). Indeed, it signifies that Jesus shares the same identity as God.

Bruce: He 'sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.' 'The Majesty on high' is a periphrasis for God. That Jesus is enthroned at the right hand of God is one of the earliest affirmations of Christian faith; it goes back to Jesus' own application to Himself of the opening words of the divine oracle in Ps. 110: 'Sit at my right hand.' That no literal location is intended was as well understood by Christians in the apostolic age as it is by us: they knew that God has no physical right hand or material throne where the ascended Christ sits beside Him; to them the language denoted the exaltation and supremacy of Christ as it does to us (cp. Eph. 4:10; Phil. 2:9). Psalm 110 provides the key text of this epistle, and the significance of Christ's being a *seated* high priest is explicitly set forth in the following chapters, especially in 10:11-14, where He is contrasted with the Aaronic priests who remained standing because their sacrificial service never came to an end.

MacArthur: The last of Christ's excellencies in this passage is His exaltation: 'He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.' The 'Majesty on high' is God. The 'right hand' is the power side. Jesus took His place at the right hand of God. The marvelous thing about this statement is that Jesus, the perfect high priest, 'sat down.' This is in great contrast to the priestly procedure under the old covenant. There were no seats in the tabernacle or temple sanctuaries. The priest had no place to sit because God knew it would never be appropriate for him to sit. His responsibility was to sacrifice, sacrifice, sacrifice, over and over again. So the priests offered sacrifices daily—and never sat down. But Jesus offered one sacrifice, and said, 'It is finished.' He then went and sat down with the Father. It was done. What could not be accomplished under the old covenant, even after centuries of sacrifices, was accomplished once by Jesus Christ for all time.

Hughes: The immensity of His cosmic achievement is given perspective by the phrase that follows: 'He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.' He is Ruler. The overarching significance here is that priests never sat down. Levitical priests always were standing, standing, standing—because no sacrifice was complete. The borders of the high priest's garment was sewn with bells so the people could hear him moving inside the Holy of Holies—and thus know he had not been struck dead. See him enter the Holy Place trembling as he bore the sacrificial blood before the glowing mercy seat. There he entered and stood year after year, high priest

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after high priest, for the work was never done. But Jesus, a high priest after the order of Melchizedek, sat down (10:11-12). From the cross Jesus shouted, ‘It is finished’ (Jn. 19:30) and then, reassured, took His seat forever. Jesus’ colossal work underlies the utter blasphemy of the thought that we can pay for our own sins with works of righteousness. There is only one way to purity, and that is the blood of Christ.

Hughes: Lastly, there is the *ultimate* significance of Jesus’ sitting down at the right hand of the Majesty in Heaven—and that is His ruling exaltation! This was prophesied in Psalm 110:1. ‘The right hand’ is the place of highest honor. And it is here, in this supreme exaltation at God’s right hand, that Christ intercedes for us (cp. Rom. 8:34). The thought is utterly sublime but true—this glorious cosmic being at the apex of His splendor is praying for you and me! Can it really be? Yes! God’s Word says it is so. Wonder of wonders!

Schreiner: Here the author emphasizes the forgiveness of sins, for the Son is seated at God’s right hand since His work is finished. And He reigns at God’s right hand as the Lord of the universe and as the Davidic Messiah. The exaltation of Christ is a common theme in the NT (see Phil. 2:9-11; Col. 1:15-18; Eph. 1:21; 1 Pe. 3:22), and thus we see Hebrews shares the worldview of the NT generally in presenting Christ as the exalted and reigning king over the universe.

Phillips: Since this is a throne, naturally we think of His kingly office. But it is also as our priest that Jesus takes up His heavenly royal seat. The King who rules on the throne of heaven is the very priest who sacrificed Himself for our salvation and whose presence there bears everlasting testimony to our forgiveness.

MacArthur: Jesus’ sitting down at His Father’s right hand signifies at least four things. They are, briefly: 1) First, He sat down as a sign of honor (cp. Phil. 2:11). To be seated at the right hand of the Father is honor indeed. 2) Second, He sat down as a sign of authority (cp. 1 Pe. 3:22). He sat down as a ruler. 3) Third, He sat down to rest. His work was done (cp. 10:12). Fourth, He sat down to intercede for us (cp. Rom. 8:34). He is seated at the right hand of the Father making intercession for all of us who belong to Him.

MacArthur: Here we have God’s portrait of Jesus Christ. We have seen the preeminent Christ in all His offices. We have seen Him as a prophet, the final spokesman of God. We have seen Him as a priest, atoning and interceding. We have seen Him as King, controlling, sustaining, and seated on a throne. This is our Lord Jesus Christ.

C. A Superior Name (1:4)

...⁴*having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.*

Phillips: Verse 4 completes what in the Greek text is a single sentence that runs on from the beginning of verse 1.

Schreiner: Verse 4 is tied closely to verse 3. The Son who is seated at God’s right hand and rules the world as the Davidic Messiah and Lord has become greater than angels. The kingly role of both Israel and David is fulfilled in Jesus as the one who rules over all. Clearly the author is not suggesting that He has become greater than angels as the eternal Son of God. His argument, anticipating chapter 2 as well, is that the Son has become greater than the angels as the God-Man.

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1. Superior to Angels

Schreiner: The author introduces angels here, which play a major role in the ensuing argument (1:5-2:16). Why does the author emphasize Jesus' superiority to angels? Were the Hebrews assigning a particular significance to angels? Angels were the mediators of the Mosaic law (2:2; cp. Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19). In stressing the Son's superiority to the angels, the author features Jesus' supremacy over the Mosaic law and the Sinai covenant. Hence, the reference to the angels ties into one of the central themes of the letter. The readers should not transfer their allegiance to the law mediated by angels. Such a gambit should be rejected, for they would be opting for what is inferior since the Son rules over angels as one who has 'inherited' a name better than theirs.

Phillips: This seems like an odd ending, but there are two explanations. The first is that Jewish spirituality in that day had an excessively high view of angels. The Jews connected angels with the great events of the Old Testament, believing that God gave Moses the law through angelic mediation and that it was an angel voice that spoke to Moses from the burning bush (Ex. 3:2). The writer of Hebrews does not quarrel with these facts but rather with their interpretation. He acknowledges that angels are ministering spirits God sends for our help (1:14). But that God employed angels does not mean that we should exalt them, as many Jews seem to have been doing. The angels, like the prophets, were servants of the old covenant. But Jesus Christ is the Son who fulfills the old covenant. He is the Christ, the Messiah, which means 'Anointed One.' He fulfills the three anointed offices of the Old Testament: prophet, priest, and king. Therefore, the only way to fulfill all that the Old Testament taught, the only way to realize all that the Israelite fathers had looked to with hope, was to trust in the Son of God, Jesus Christ. Upon the throne of heaven, He is exalted above even the angels, and His name—that is, His title or position—is more excellent than theirs.

Phillips: There is another possible reason why the writer brings in angels, one that resonates with our own spiritual environment. The reason is that people know they need a mediator with God. They need someone to open a doorway to heaven and to the blessing and power of God. They need supernatural help for their otherwise insurmountable problems. People in the first-century church, just as in our own time, found in angels an appealing and non-demanding form of spiritual hope and comfort (see Col. 2:18). The fact that we don't know much about angels makes them attractive for our veneration; we can fill in the details as we want them to be.

2. Inherited Name

Schreiner: The word 'inherited' (*κεκληρονομηκεν, keklēronomēken*) reaches back to 'heir of all things' (1:2). Such an inheritance has been *gained* through His suffering and death, signifying again the rule of the Son at His resurrection. The author introduces here one of his favorite words: 'better' (*κρείττων, kreittōn*).

Bruce: The comparative adjective 'better' is used thirteen times in Hebrews to contrast Christ and His new order with what went before Him. Here His superiority to angels is asserted, and elaborated by the following chain of Old Testament quotations for two specific reasons—to show (i) that the final message of God, communicated by the Son, is safeguarded by even more majestic sanctions than those which attended the law, communicated by angels (2:2ff.), and (ii) that the new world order over which the Son is to reign as Mediator far surpasses the old world in which various nations were assigned to angels for administration (2:5).

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Bruce: His name is more excellent than theirs may be inferred from the context to be the title ‘Son.’ He inherits the title ‘Son,’ as he inherits all things (v. 2), by the Father’s eternal appointment.

Hughes: Christ’s superiority over angels is adduced because He has a superior name. According to Jewish thought, a person’s name revealed His essential nature and could express rank and dignity. Jesus had the name ‘Son’ from all eternity, and it is the name He will always keep, as the perfect tense of the phrase ‘the name He has inherited’ indicates. No angel was ever called ‘Son,’ though sometimes they were generically referred to as sons—for example, ‘the sons of God’ presented themselves before the Lord (Job 1:6). But no angel ever had the title ‘Son.’

Schreiner: The more excellent name is typically understood to be the Son. But others argue that the name here is probably Yahweh, the name of God revealed to Israel. Although the term ‘Son’ is not a name but a title or description of Jesus, it is to be preferred. The word ‘Son’ occurs four times in the chapter (1:2, 5 [twice], 8), so the reader naturally thinks of the word ‘Son.’ And the author speaks of Jesus inheriting the name. It is difficult to see how Jesus could inherit the name Yahweh. Such a state of affairs would suggest that there was a period when Jesus wasn’t divine and that He inherited such deity at some point. But doesn’t the same objection apply to the word *Son*? No, for in using the word *Son* the author would be referring to Jesus’ exaltation and rule as God *and* man, and such a rule only commenced at His resurrection.

D. A ‘Superior’ Summary

Phillips: What this passage reveals about Jesus Christ is a cause for much greater comfort and hope than we could ever gain through the mystical worship of angels. When the Bible presents God’s Son as the true prophet and priest and king, God is showing us that Jesus Christ is and does all that our soul could ever need. Jesus Christ is Messiah, the long-expected Anointed One, who enters into the God-given offices of the Old Testament so that He might save us to the uttermost. Jesus is the perfect and all-sufficient answer from God for our everlasting blessing. The significance of this for the original readers is obvious: if you have a Savior like this, you never let Him go.

Phillips: What this passage tells us about Christ reminds us not merely *that* we must hold to Him in faith, but also *how* to draw near Him in faith. This comes through our understanding of His three offices as prophet and priest and king. Jesus is our King. We need to be ruled and governed, protected and led. Let us therefore bow before Him and crown Him Lord of all, flying His banner at the gates of our hearts and forsaking all other kingdoms and rulers. Jesus is our Prophet. We need truth; He is the Truth and He speaks the truth. Let us therefore come to His Word seeking light and forsaking all the false prophets who would lead us astray. Jesus is our Priest. So we should readily come to Him for cleansing, for forgiveness, for interceding prayers, and for a full and loving reconciliation with God the Father. Let us therefore confess our great need for His blood and for His ongoing priestly intercession in heaven. Let us lay hold of the cross, forsaking all claim to any merit of our own. In all these ways, through His three offices, let us commit ourselves to Jesus Christ alone, who is able to save us to the uttermost, to the glory of God the Father.

Schreiner: Jesus is the culmination of God’s revelation. The OT Scriptures point to Him and are fulfilled in Him. We see in the introduction to Hebrews that Jesus is the prophet, priest, and king. He is the prophet, for God’s final word is spoken by Him and in Him. He is the priest by

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whom final cleansing of sins is accomplished. He is the king who reigns at God's right hand. The last days have arrived in Jesus and the final word has been spoken, and hence there will be no further revelation until Jesus' return. The great revelatory events have taken place in Jesus' ministry, death, resurrection, and exaltation. Believers do not need any other word from God for their lives. They are to put their faith in what God has revealed in and through Jesus Christ.

For next time: Read Hebrews 1:4-14.