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Introduction

The prologue to the book of Hebrews reminded us that God spoke and His Son is His speech. Through humiliation then exaltation, God gave Jesus of Galilee superiority to angels. It was after He made purification of sins that "he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴ having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs" (1.3-4). Now, building on this exalted status of Jesus, the writer of Hebrews gathers some Scriptural sayings together in order to show us some of the things that God spoke about His Son and to Him.

There are three questions in this section (5-14, vs. 13-14 comprising the 3rd) that imply answers. The answers affirm three things that God never said to angels, but that He did say to His Son.

^{5a} For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you"?

^{5b} Or again [to which of the angels did God ever say], "I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son"?

¹³ 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"?

Therefore, three answers will guide our communion remembering today: The Father says that Jesus is the risen Son, Jesus is the unique Son, and Jesus is the conquering Son.

1A. Jesus is the risen Son (1.5a)

Again, 5a (For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you"?) is a question that makes a statement. What does God state? To answer that question, we need to know what "begotten" means.

There are no angels to whom God said these words about being begotten. He could say of angels, "on such and such a day I created you" if begotten meant being created, but this saying does not apply to them. Importantly, "begotten" does not speak of origination, of creation or of coming to be. We cannot think of being created as applicable to the Son. That is impossible for two reasons.

a) The notion of origination is impossible because Jesus created all things.

As Colossians 1.16 states, **For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities- all things were created through him and for him.** There is no suggestion here that God created Jesus, say, as the highest creature. He created all things, and as John puts it, He created everything that was made (Jn. 1.3, **All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made**). Thus, those who oppose our Lord's deity have to go against these passages and insert the word other. However, clearly, He created all things, not all *other* things.

b) The notion of origination is impossible because begotten has a distinct meaning

"Begotten" means to receive a special place of privilege. Hebrews 11.17 (Ps. 2.7) helps us understand the word. The ESV translates begotten as "only": **By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son.** Isaac neither was Abraham's only son nor was he his first son (eldest). It is a figurative expression that means special in privilege and position. It has nothing to do with the human act of begetting or the

chronological order in which children are born. There is no analogy in Hebrews 1.5 that conveys the idea of order of appearance. Jesus is the only son like Isaac was the only son: each is the only one that had the right of inheritance, blessing, and position. Each is the special son. Isaac was Abraham's son of promise and Jesus is God's Son of fulfillment, the greater Isaac.

On what *day* then was Jesus begotten (**today I have begotten you, 5a**)? Paul in Acts makes it clear that the day in view is resurrection day: (Acts 13.32-33, **And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, ³³ this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you "**). Notice that Paul like the writer of Hebrews has Psalm 2.7 in mind in this earth-shaking shift from promise to fulfillment.

Therefore, we have to conclude that no angel became incarnate, died for the cleansing of sins, or was raised, *begotten*, and exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on high. The Father tells us that Jesus is His Son, His only Son as the incarnate redeemer whom He raised from the dead.

2A. Jesus is the unique Son (1.5b-12)

Or again, "I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son"? (1.5b). This question implies an answer, namely, God did not say this of the angels but of Jesus. Angels do not have God as Father.

Moreover, this is unique in a very comprehensive way that is distinct from that of angels or human beings.

Jesus exists in a special relationship to God the Father in a special Father-son bond of intimacy. He is the Father's Son (My Son; in a sense that no other is His Son; He is the only one of whom this can be said, My Son; He is the Son of God). Likewise, for Jesus the Father is "My" Father in a sense that no other has God as Father: He is the Father of Jesus Christ our Lord. In keeping with this uniqueness, Jesus spoke of Himself as the Son and your Son in the high priestly prayer (Jn. 17. 1). A number of things result from this unique relationship.

1) Because of this unique relationship, Jesus is worthy of worship by angels while angels are not worthy of worship. ⁶ **And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him"** (1.6). A key verse from the OT that is in view in this quote is Deuteronomy 32.43. The ESV translation reflects the Hebrew in Deuteronomy when it says, "bow down to him, all gods": **Rejoice with him, O heavens; bow down to him, all gods, for he avenges the blood of his children and takes vengeance on his adversaries. He repays those who hate him and cleanses his people's land.** (Cf. Ps. 97.7, **All worshipers of images are put to shame, who make their boast in worthless idols; worship him, all you gods!**). The term for "gods" in the Hebrew text could refer to God or to angels, but the writer of Hebrews by inspiration adopts the interpretation that angels are in view. He does this by using the Greek OT for his quote; the LXX interprets "god" to mean angels.

Firstborn (1.6) is not first in time but first in position (it has similarities to the word begotten). Ps. 89.27: **And I will make him the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth.** Context refers to David. Thus, a) firstborn is not first son born or first chronologically since David is Jesse's eighth or youngest son (1 Sam. 16.10). b) The meaning is clear in the remaining phrases: **the highest of the kings of the earth.** c) David inherited that position to some degree, but Jesus is the greater David in view. What David was in part and metaphorically, Jesus became fully and literally, the king of all the kings of the earth, king of kings and Lord of Lords. To be a firstborn is like being prime minister in England or first lady in the United States. Notably, when we speak of the first lady, we do not mean that she is the oldest lady!

What happened when God brought His firstborn into the world (1.6)? To what does this refer? It refers to the subjection of all things to the Lord Jesus that took place at His resurrection. The writer helps us on this point in 2.5: **Now it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking.** The phrase "of which we are speaking" looks back from chapter 2 to chapter 1. The coming of the Son into the world (1.6) in view is the resurrection (not his birth or second

coming). Being the preeminent one (as firstborn) based on His resurrection (being begotten), He is therefore *become* the object of worship by the angels.

2) Because of this unique relationship (of intimate Sonship), He is not a servant (as are angels), but God on a throne; the Father calls Him God; He receives an anointing of joy above His fellow human beings: (⁷ **Of the angels he says, "He makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire."** ⁸ **But of the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom.** ⁹ **You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions,"** 1.7-9).

The angels are servants, but God says that the Son has a throne and a kingdom that are eternal and upright. He rules faithfully with unending uprightness.

God anointed the Son above all other men because He loved righteousness and hated wickedness. This anointing is with the oil of gladness.

Did God say this about any angel: I will be to him a father and he shall be to me a son? The Father-Son relationship is not something that God granted to angels. In a special way, it is granted to Jesus: He is *the* Son; the Father is *His* Father; He refers to Him as "my" Father as no one else can do, as not even an angelic being (superior to man) can do.

By contrast, angels are God's *servants*. Moreover, they are servants *of Jesus* (v. 7)

3) Because of this unique relationship (sonship by resurrection, v. 6), Jesus is identified as unchanging and eternal Creator (¹⁰ **And, "You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands; ¹¹ they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment, ¹² 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,"** 1.10-12). Jesus of Galilee, born of Mary and a descendant of David is the Creator (cf. 1.2 with Rom. 1.1-4) who endures forever while the creation perishes. This *man* sustains the creation (cf. 1.3) and will bring it to its appointed end; while He has no end. These are marvelous words from God about Jesus of Galilee!

No angel worships another angel, but angels worship Jesus, the Son. Notably, worship belongs only to God. When the apostle John was about to worship an angel, the angel forcefully rebuked him (Rev. 22.8-9). Thus, Jesus has equal ranking with God. Remarkably, He has that as a man our brother; as the God-man, the eternal God incarnate.

3A. Jesus is the conquering Son

He subdues all His and our enemies (WSC, 26, Christ executeth the office of a king, in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies). ¹³ **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"?** ¹⁴ **Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?** (1.13-14).

Surely, there is an echo of Isaiah 66.1-2 here: **Thus says the LORD: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest?"** ² **All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the LORD. But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.** The earth becomes the heir's footstool on this side of the fall (after the fall). When God made the earth the footstool of His feet, the fall had not yet occurred. Now, the footstool includes a sinful world and enemies of God. Man's hatred of the light is deep. With it goes a basic animosity of the human heart against the authority of God. It is so because the light of Christ exposes the sin of autonomy, which is the core of human rebellion.

Jesus became Sabbath king by making purification of sins for the heirs of salvation that His servants, the angels, serve. In verse 14, we have a little more about the theme of purification barely hinted at in 1.4. The angels serve man. They serve sinners, sinners whose sins are washed and who inherit salvation.

Conclusion

We can apply this text with a much more argument. If God says, "let the angels worship my Son," *how much more ought we to worship Him*. It is even more imperative that we worship

Him. Angels who do not have a saving union with the Son worship Him; how much more ought we to worship Him; we have salvation by the blood of Jesus.

Furthermore, we are to worship Him because God says so. Three simple remarks bring this out.

1) We worship Him as God humiliated and exalted

Carefully note that we do not worship Him as God. Instead, we worship Him as God incarnate, humiliated and exalted.

2) We worship Him in light of what He is and does per 1.1-4

We worship Him because He is the speech of God, the perfect revelation of the mind of God in human terms. We worship Him because as the perfect radiance of the beauty of God, He is co-Creator of all things and heir of all things; all things are for Him (that is why they exist, for Him).

3) We worship Him because of God's particular sayings regarding His Son, 1.5-14

He is the resurrected Son, the unique Son, and the conquering Son. There is a special Father to Son intimacy. Jesus is the upright king who hates evil. He is the unchanging Sabbath king of glory. Words fail us. We have to ask, "Who is this *man*?" We have to answer: "He is *God* on the throne of heaven receiving the worship of angels."

We must honor Him by doing what the Father says of Him. In summary, the Father says, "worship my Son."

What then shall we say to these things?

What do we in fact say in our partaking of the elements of bread and wine?

1) I need Him

Jesus is Lord of glory, God the Son, Creator and sustainer of the universe, purifier from sins, king on a throne, saving Sabbath king. I acknowledge that I need the body and blood of this man exalted above the angels. I need what is represented by the bread and wine: nourishment for life eternal. That is the gift of cleansing He gives to me, a polluted and wrath deserving sinner. O Lord Jesus, I need you.

2) I own Him

He is not just a great king I know of; He is my king and I commit myself to live for Him in all that I do. O Lord Jesus, I entrust myself to you and I own you as my very own. I own you as my prophet, priest, and king. I commit myself to learn from you and to do whatever you command.

3) I own His family as my family

Jesus made purification of sins. He did so for the heirs of salvation. These heirs are His brothers and sisters as the writer of Hebrews tells us in chapter 2.

We must continually remind ourselves that no man is an island in the Lord. We cannot live in isolation and on the fringes of communication. We are to love one another as Jesus loves us. He has made us a family, so, communion involves renewing our commitment to one another love. O Lord Jesus, I own your family as my family.

Let us so take and eat making these affirmations in prayer to our risen and exalted Lord Jesus!

Hence, it is appropriate that we receive Jan into membership here at the Table.

Now let us renew our church covenant as members of one family with Jesus Christ the enthroned Lord of glory as our elder brother!

We have to say with the song writer: how marvelous, how wonderful and so our song of worship shall ever be because Jesus has a name that is superior to that of angels, and no one but God can plumb the depths of this astounding person. To Him be all glory, now and forevermore, amen.