

Can you even imagine the moment Jesus ascended heaven’s throne? Having taken on our flesh and blood, lived among us, died sacrificially for us, and rose from the dead, defeating sin and death, he ascended to heaven, pioneering our way into the very presence of God. When Jesus stepped up to the throne, all of heaven was captive to a celestial coronation, a ceremony so glorious that the most extravagant of earthly coronations are a dim reflection. The author of Hebrews desperately wants us to know that *“In these last days [God] has spoken to us by his Son”* (v. 2). But following that thought in the next verse is a truly astounding statement: *“The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.”* Then in verse 6 God tells the angels to worship the Son.

That’s because Jesus was no angel—which is my main point today! Listen again to verse 4: *“So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.”* I’m going to use today’s Hymn of Praise to frame Hebrews chapter 1. Only a moment ago we sang, ***“All hail the power of Jesus’ Name! Let angels prostrate fall; bring forth the royal diadem, and crown Him Lord of all!”*** What does all that mean? Well, most of us don’t have mental categories for the pomp and circumstance of coronations in the ancient world. Perhaps the only time we have witnessed an entire kingdom harness its collective wealth and attention to put on a once-in-a-generation tribute to the monarch was the coronation of King Charles in May of last year. The more extravagant, the more important is the person and their position. Royal weddings have splendor, but the coronation of a new king or queen, and the solemn moment of placing the crown on their head, is without equal. Yet history’s most grandiose coronations are dwarfed by the heavenly finale to which the greatest of earthly ceremonies are but a faint shadow.

**“And crown Him Lord of all!”** is the chorus we sang today. The first chapter of Hebrews gives us a glimpse into the coronation of God’s Son, a truly unique moment when the God-man is formally crowned Lord of all. The scene is set in

verse 3 which says: *“After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.”*

Then Hebrews quotes Psalm 2, which was a psalm of coronation for the ancient Israelite people. *“You are my Son,”* God says to the new king of Israel, *“today I have become your Father”* (1:5). That was the day of his ascension to the throne on which the new ruler of God’s people formally became God’s “son” to serve as his official representative to the people. Coronation Day was the day, so to speak, that God elevated the human king as Lord over his people.

We also sang earlier **“To Him all majesty ascribe.”** So next, in verse 6 we read, *“And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, Let all God’s angels worship him.”* That could only happen, let me repeat once more, because Jesus was no angel! And what world is this verse referring to? This would not be a reference to the incarnation, but to Jesus’s return to heaven following his ascension. Verse 5 of Hebrews chapter 2 clarifies this by referencing that it is *“the world to come, about which we are speaking.”* In other words, “the world” in view in Hebrews 1 is not this earthly, temporal world into which Jesus came by way of Bethlehem. Rather, it is the world into which God brings his firstborn, the heavenly realm, what we would normally call *“the world to come.”* The kingdom of heaven is the world into which Jesus ascended after his earthly mission was completed.

As Jesus, the victorious God-man, enters heaven itself, and proceeds to its ruling seat, God announces, *“Let all God’s angels worship him”* (1:6). Worship him: *God and man* in one spectacular one of a kind person who is assuredly not an angel!

Originally God made humans *“a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor”* as the writer of Psalm 8 says. But now the angelic hosts of heaven worship him, *“one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus”* as 1 Timothy 2:5 says. So great is this man, as a genuine member of our race, that he not only eclipses and bypasses the race of angels, but in doing so, he brings us, his people along with him. Our Redeemer did not rise

from the tomb for fallen angels. *“For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham’s descendants”* says Hebrews 2:16. In Christ, angels no longer look down on humanity but look up. As Peter’s first epistle reveals, we mere mortals will experience firsthand the things *“even angels long to look into”* (1:12).

This new King of the universe is indeed fully man and fully God and is addressed as such in verse 8 of our passage. Quoting Psalm 45 Hebrews’ author writes: *“Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom.”* Verse 12 (echoing Psalm 102) restates the glory—*“But...your years will never end”*—which is similar to the climactic expression of saying, “Long live the king!” **But *“Your years will never end”* goes well beyond “Long live the king!”**

**“Bring forth the royal diadem”** is another line from the hymn “All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name” by Edward Perronet that was first published in *The Gospel Magazine* in November 1779. A “royal diadem” is a jeweled crown. In Hebrews 1:13 the writer asks: *“To which of the angels did God ever say, ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet?’”* This question points to the grand oracle of Psalm 110, which lingers in the background of Hebrews chapter one since the mention in verse 3 of Jesus sitting *“down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.”* For generations, the people of God had waited for the day in which King David’s greater son, his Lord, would ascend to the throne and hear these sacred words from God himself. Then, at long last, captured in the vision of Hebrews 1, the great coronation dream of Psalm 110 is finally fulfilled.

Having finished the work his Father gave him to accomplish, God’s own Son (not merely David’s son) ascends the throne—not a throne on earth but the throne of heaven. The Father himself has crowned him King of all the universe. He has *“brought forth the royal diadem”* and crowned him King of *“every kindred, every tribe, on this terrestrial ball.”* This new King of the universe is also fully man and fully God.

We who call him King and Lord will not only gather one day “*with yonder sacred throng*” to fall at his feet, but even now, he gives us the dignity of participating in heaven’s ongoing coronation ceremony. We crown him with our praises, in daily lives of praise and together in the midst of this congregation, when we gather on Sunday with our family of faith in worship. But still, the glorious enthronement of Christ has not ended but continues. We see it now and experience it by faith and participate with our praises. But one day soon, with all the redeemed, we at last will join in the everlasting song that does not end and grows richer and sweeter for all eternity.

So, here’s another truly astounding thought. When verse 2 says “*In these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe,*” the last days really began with the coming of the Son into the world. We have been living in *the last days* since the days of Christ—that is, *the last days* of history as we know it before the final and complete establishment of the kingdom of God.

Jesus is, the author of Hebrews insists, God’s “spokesperson.” Of course, that wasn’t always so. In verse 1 Hebrews tells its readers, “*In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways.*” That’s a reminder that since the beginning of measured time God has never been completely silent or left God’s beloved people in the dark about God’s character, or his plans and purposes.

The God who spoke all of creation into existence didn’t just create God’s Israelite people through God’s covenant with their ancestor Abraham. God also graciously inspired his spokespersons to speak in a variety of ways to the beneficiaries of that covenant. The point for the writer of Hebrews is this: The Word that God has spoken by his Son is the decisive Word. By the Son’s own design, that word has been captured for the ages in the writings of the New Testament. He explicitly made provision for this, so that every generation is not left to dream up the decisive Word of God for itself. This Word will not be followed by any greater word or replacement word. This is the Word of God—

the person of Jesus, the teaching of Jesus, and the work of Jesus, captured by inspiration in the apostolic writings we call the New Testament.

Sometimes I feel like complaining that I'm not hearing the Word of God. I long to hear the audible voice of God (like Moses at Sinai), and get frustrated God is not speaking in ways that I may crave. Am I saying that I have exhausted the final decisive Word revealed to me so fully and authoritatively in Scripture? Has it become so much a part of me that it has shaped my very being and given me life and light?

Or have I treated it lightly—skimmed it like a newspaper, clicked through it like a quick series of internet postings, dipped a finger into it like a taste-tester—and then decided I wanted something different, something else? In the book of Hebrews God is calling us to hear his final, decisive, inexhaustible Word—to meditate on it, to study it, to memorize it, to linger over it, and to soak in it until it saturates us to the center of our being.

Remember that Jesus the Son of God “*sustains all things by his powerful word.*” Creation isn't heading toward oblivion, but toward becoming the inheritance of Jesus. While those who have the most power, or money, or military might may seem to hold God's world in their hands, the book of Hebrews sees things very differently. It declares that everything is, instead, held together by the sustaining power of the risen and ascended Savior's mighty Word.

I often feel that in Hebrews we find a Jesus that human words are totally inadequate to describe. Perhaps that's one of the reasons why things like art, music and poetry play an important role in worship. Human words aren't enough. Sometimes we must sing or create! Jesus' followers need many avenues through which the Spirit can help us catch a glimpse of Jesus' majesty, glory, beauty and might. To handle the heavenly revelation of Hebrews 1 with emotionless rationality would be to deny its transforming power. Dear friends, the Messiah who is God's Son is God's supreme revelation. And he's no angel! May we worship him forever. Amen.