

## Prayer

Thank You, Lord God, for the little things of life which make our day and give us security in all we do. The love of those who are close to us; the things we do each day for others, and what they do for us; the food we eat, the drinks we enjoy, and the conversations we share each day. May we never stop praising You for the little things that make life good. AMEN

## Other Prayer Suggestions

### Weekly Theme: the Elderly in Church

Pray this coming week for the elderly in your church fellowship. There will be many who are not known to you, but only known to those who have contact with them because they are now housebound, where once they were regulars who kept the faith alive in your church. Count it a privilege to get to know some of these people if you can, and pray for them.

## Meditation

Lord Jesus, save us from a world where people think  
 That if everyone would embrace democracy,  
 Then there can be peace on earth!  
 That if we could find the cures for all ills,  
 Then everyone will live healthily!  
 That if the poor were all given aid,  
 Then poverty would all go away!  
 That if we pour money into technology,  
 We can solve all the world's problems!  
 That if psychologists isolate what 'religion' is,  
 Then no-one will need to believe in God!  
 That if we put all the bad people in jail,  
 Then everyone will be able to live in peace!

Open our eyes to how sin corrupts all human endeavour  
 And save us again by the power of Your love!

## Bible Study - Hebrews 1:8-14

<sup>8</sup> But of the Son He says, 'Your throne, O God, lasts forever and ever, and the sceptre of justice is the sceptre of your kingdom. <sup>9</sup> You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed You before Your companions with the oil of gladness. <sup>10</sup> And, 'In the beginning, Lord, You founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands; <sup>11</sup> they will perish, but You will continue; they will all wear out like clothing; <sup>12</sup> You will roll them up like a cloak, and they will be changed like clothing. But You are the same, and Your years will never end. <sup>13</sup> But to which of the angels has He ever said, 'Sit at my right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet? <sup>14</sup> Are not the angels all ministering spirits, sent to serve for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?

## Review

Jesus Christ has been given the highest place in all Creation by the Father, above that of any other beings, in particular, angels. This is the theme of this passage in the first chapter of Hebrews which contains three substantial quotes from the Old Testament to show us that the Son fulfils the highest aspirations of the prophets and psalmists and of God's revealed Word. Immediately before this passage, four brief Old Testament quotes were used by the writer to prove that angels were created spiritual servants of God which had a quite different role in God's world to His Son (1:5-7). Now these three quotes continue to compare the Son with the angels, but highlight the divine properties of the Son, giving us much to think about!

Verse 8 begins 'but of the Son He says ...' and reminds us that the writer thinks of God as speaking to us directly through the words of Old Testament Scripture. The quote takes up the rest of verses 8 and 9 and comes from Psalm 45:6,7. This was probably spoken to a king in ancient times, but the king was a figure of (Messianic) hope for God's work in the world, through whom He would fulfil His Covenant promise to bring salvation. This is why early Christians were quite at home using such passages as prophetic of the work of Jesus Christ. Through the disciples they knew that Jesus was Himself someone who was just and true in His dealings with people, was full of love and hated evil; and had also been anointed by baptism of the Holy Spirit' (Matt 3:13f.). Jesus fulfilled the words of Psalm 45 by establishing the Kingdom of God in righteousness and justice, and He was the first and only Son of God, whose kingdom would last for ever (1:8,9). He demonstrated the royal authority of God.

Secondly, Jesus was eternal; or as we now say, He is eternal! Hebrews 1:10,11,12 quotes some verses from the end of Psalm 102 which talk about the presence of Jesus at the beginning of Creation. Because He stands with God above the created world, He is not changed by the passing mortal character of the worldly order; the quote says 'You are the same, and Your years will never end.' This means that having passed through death once and experienced resurrection, Jesus will never die again or go away! Interestingly, Psalm 102 is a psalm of encouragement to someone who is experiencing trouble, perhaps illness (Psalm 102:3-5) or even stress (Psalm 102:8f.). In this context, the unchanging love of God and His eternal faithfulness are qualities of God seen in the real Jesus, who healed people and never gave up on them, offering them hope when there was nowhere else it could come from. The message for our secular world today is that whatever people may say, He will not just 'go away'!

The last quote in Hebrews 1 is the famous quote from Psalm 110, used in many places in the New Testament (Luke 20:43, Acts 2:35, 7:49) to explain why Jesus could be called the 'Son of David' but also the 'Son of God', and that Jesus was in fact truly divine, because David indicated this prophetically in what he wrote in Psalm 110. Scholars like to run rings around this argument today, simply because they read Psalm 110 as exclusively about the kingly authority of those in David's line, and fail to understand its prophetic role. Be that as it may, the clear understanding of the New Testament is that this passage affirms Christ's complete authority over all things, and in the light of this, all angels are but 'ministering spirits' (1:14) whose work is to do the will of the One who is Lord of All, Jesus Christ.

The last two passages we have studied in Hebrews give seven reasons for the highest authority of Christ over all Creation and over all created things, including angels. Each of them adds to our understanding of the supreme majesty and divinity of Jesus Christ.

## Questions *(for use in groups)*

1. In what ways do we see God's royal authority in the world today?
2. Does it help your faith and the faith of the church to know that God is 'eternal'? If so, can you explain how it helps?
3. Read Psalm 110 and see if you can understand who is saying what to whom; then compare it with our passage. Does this help you understand what is said and why?

## Discipleship

The first chapter of Hebrews offers us texts which the early church regarded as 'proof' of the divinity of Jesus Christ. If you were to go to Scripture, what seven texts would you choose to show that Jesus Christ is God's Son and has come to save the world and reconcile people to God? Such a task sounds rather like an exercise which does not have a particular purpose, but if you do this, then you will have a useful resource with which to defend your faith!

## Final Prayer

Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Friend, give us peace in the midst of strife, joy in the midst of unhappiness, and grace in the midst of trouble. By this we know your love and affection. May we never take it for granted. AMEN