

## Hebrews 1:4-14

### The Father's Testimony Concerning His Son *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee – v. 5*

One of the marks of a man who has been truly saved is that he develops an interest in reading. Since God has revealed Himself in His word a Christian quite naturally develops an interest in that word. And usually, at least to some extent, he gains an interest in reading good Christian books. I know that many of you have good collections of commentaries and theology books and practical helps books that apply the Scripture to various aspects of your lives.

The problem we face in our day is that there are so many Christian books available that you can find yourself wondering which ones are good and which ones not so good. And one of the things that book publishers utilize in order to convince you that their books are the best is endorsements. You usually see these on the back cover of the book – endorsements from men and women of notoriety telling you in a sentence or two why the book in your hand is worth having. I've often wondered how many of these Christian leaders of reputation have actually read the books that they endorse. It seems at times that the whole thing has come to resemble the promotional techniques of the world in some respects.

At any rate, we find that in this section of Hebrews Paul is utilizing a similar tactic as endorsements but on a much higher level. It's one thing to have the endorsement of Christian men of renown but it's quite another thing to have the endorsement of God Himself. And in this section of chapter 1 that's exactly what Paul is demonstrating with regard to Christ. Christ, in other words, has God's endorsement. Or if I could put it another way – God the Father, in this portion of chapter 1 bears testimony concerning His Son.

Remember the argument that we've been considering – God has spoken to us in these last days by His Son. We should, therefore, give the more earnest heed to the things that we have heard from God's Son. And in order to impress upon His readers why they should give the more earnest heed to God's Son, Paul has been laboring to expound the excellency of the Son of God. He is *the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person. He upholds all things by the word of his power and has by himself purged our sins* which action has won for Him the position that He now occupies of being seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

You could say by way of analysis that vv. 2 and 3 contain the thesis statement of Paul regarding the superiority of Christ and now he's going to prove His thesis by calling for witnesses and not just any witnesses but the witness of God Himself. It reminds me of a portion in John 5 where Christ, as it were, presents His credentials to the Jews **{Jn. 5:31-37}**. His works bore witness to Him, John the Baptist bore witness to Him, and His Father bore witness to Him.

In this section of Hebrews 1 we find a portion of the Father's witness to His Son. And what Paul will do is to draw from a number of specific Old Testament passages in which the Father bears testimony concerning His Son. If such testimonies would not convince the wavering Jews of the authenticity of Christ then it would only be because their hearts were hard toward God Himself. It becomes for us, then, a good portion of Scripture to bear witness to the authenticity of Christ. How do we know that He's the One we should listen to? How do we know that He is our Redeemer? How do we know the authenticity of His person and work? This morning, in preparation for our time around the Lord's table, I would like to press the issue of the authenticity of Christ by drawing your attention to:

### The Father's Testimony Concerning His Son

Would you notice with me first of all that we find:

#### I. A Testimony of His Relationship to His Son

The Apostle asks the question in v. 5 – *For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?* The title of Son and the truth that Christ was and is His only begotten Son certainly establishes Christ's authenticity as our Redeemer. Angels may also be called sons – but they are created sons – and you and I may be called sons – even as we are adopted sons and even as we have been begotten by a new birth into the hope that we possess. But only of Christ can it be said that He is by His very essence the Only Begotten Son of the Father.

This title, *The begotten Son of God*, then, is a title that takes us beyond what we can comprehend when it speaks of the eternal generation of the Son of God. I think the best description of its meaning is given to us by Christ Himself when He says in Jn. 5:26 *For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.* There is some debate among commentators about the meaning of this statement whether it applies to the Son of God in His essence or whether it applies to Christ as our Mediator.

So one commentator asks: *Does this refer to the essential life of the Son before all time or to the purpose of God that this essential life should reside in the Person of the Incarnate Son, and be manifested thus to the world? The question is as difficult as the subject is high. But as all that Christ says of His essential relation to the Father is intended to explain and exalt His mediatorial functions, so the one seems in our Lord's own mind and language mainly the starting-point of the other.* That's a clever way of saying that both ideas are correct – the statement speaks of Christ in His essence, as eternally begotten, and it speaks of His office as our Mediator.

We do know, of course, that this title for Christ as the Son of God exalts Him over the angels and designates a relationship that has always been in existence throughout time and eternity. There has never been a time when Christ was not the Son, the only begotten of the Father. There has never been a time when the Son of God did not bask in the love of His Father or that His Father did not find joy and satisfaction in the love of His Son. This is important to keep in mind when we think of our salvation for it magnifies God's grace

all the more to know that there was nothing lacking in the Godhead that would compel God to design and execute our salvation. He redeemed us of His own sovereign pleasure in order to magnify His grace to poor, guilty sinners.

Now what is interesting to note about this title *the begotten Son of God*, is the use of it by the Apostles. The quotation is taken from Psalm 2:7. In His sermon at Antioch in Pisidia Paul says in Acts 13:32,33 *And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.*

And a little later in Hebrews we see in 5:5 reference to this text from Psalm 2 again: *So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.* The Psalm from which this text is taken makes the application to Christ's ascension and His intercessory work that takes place once He is ascended in heaven. So after describing the raging of the heathen and their conspiracies to cast off the ways of the Lord we read in Psalm 2:6-8 *Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give [thee] the heathen [for] thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth [for] thy possession.*

By compiling the New Testament usages of this text in Psalm 2, then, we are able to see application to Christ's resurrection, application to Christ's call to be a priest, application to His ascension and we might add from our text in 1:5 application to Christ's incarnation – {cf. 1:5,6}. The key that comes into play in each of these references is the phrase *this day*. *This day have I begotten thee*. Where His essence is concerned *this day* must be viewed as an everlasting present – much the same way as the title *Jehovah* means *I am that I am*. Where His Mediatorial Office is concerned the phrase *this day* may be applied to these various aspects of Christ's work – His incarnation, His call to be a priest, His resurrection and His ascension.

All of these aspects of Christ's ministry are things to be remembered around the table of the Lord. His birth, His priesthood, His resurrection, His ascension – these things all contribute to our salvation and they all demonstrate the authenticity of the One who has spoken to us in these last days. How we should glory, then, from the many rich and varying perspectives that the word of God furnishes to us by this statement *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*.

But would you consider with me next that not only do we find the Father's testimony concerning His relationship to His Son, but we also find:

## II. A Testimony of the Father's Estimation of His Son's Worth

Notice what we read in v. 6 *And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.* We saw in our last study how the angels contribute to those scenes in Scripture that are designed to magnify the glory of

God. When we read of His glory in Isaiah 6 we find seraphim on hand who must cover their faces before the throne of God when they sing *holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts. The whole earth is filled with His glory.* And when Christ is born the veil of heaven is drawn back and those shepherds watching their flocks by night are able to see the heavenly worship that is due to Christ. We find, in that instance, the fulfillment of our text here in v. 6 – *And let all the angels of God worship him.*

The thing I want to impress upon you this morning is that worship is the sole prerogative of Deity. We are to worship only God. Recall what Christ said to the devil during the time of His temptation when the devil offered to Christ an easier way to gain the world. *All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me* – to which Christ replied *Thou shalt worship the Lord, thy God, and him only shalt thou serve* (Mt. 4:10).

Now once you know and appreciate that worship is the sole prerogative of Deity then you can see at once the estimation of God the Father toward His Son when He says *let all the angels of God worship him.* In the mind of God the Father, His Son is worthy to be praised and worshipped and served. In the estimation of God the Father His Son deserves to be worshipped. This is tantamount to saying that God the Father ascribes Deity to His Son.

But notice that Paul will reinforce his case even more when he comes to v. 8 – *But unto the Son [he saith], Thy throne, O God, [is] for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness [is] the sceptre of thy kingdom.* This verse certainly stands out as an exceptional testimony to the Deity of Christ. There is no doubt about who is speaking – this is the testimony of God Himself. And there's no doubt about who is being addressed – *unto the Son he saith.* And there's no doubt about how the One speaking addresses the Son – *unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.*

I don't know of any verse in Scripture that speaks any plainer about the Deity of Christ. The Son is God. The Son is acknowledged by God as being God. This is God the Father's own testimony regarding His Son – and you'll notice that He doesn't refer to Him as merely an exalted being as if to say He was the chief of angels or the highest ranked being among created beings. Men may attempt to diminish His glory with such notions and indeed this is what false cults do – but God Himself bears witness to the truth that His Son is God.

And in this testimony to the Deity of His Son the Father also bears witness the rule of His Son. This leads to my next point for you see the Father not only bears witness to the relationship of His Son to the Father, and not only bears witness to the worth of His Son by ascribing Deity to His Son and by calling on angels to worship His Son. But note with me next.

### III. A Testimony Regarding the Rule of His Son

And the thing to keep in mind in this portion of Heb. 1 is that we are hearing from God Himself. We are not being given the opinions of men. We are not even being given the

opinion of an apostle – we are hearing from God the Father when we read in verses 8 and 9: *But unto the Son [he saith], Thy throne, O God, [is] for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness [is] the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, [even] thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.*

God bears witness to the rule of His Son by acknowledging the throne of His Son and by acknowledging the duration of His Son's rule. *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.* This is why we have hope in eternal life because the reign of Christ is forever. Our salvation is as durable as Christ's rule and reign and our salvation is as secure as Christ's position on the throne. Call to mind again the words of v. 3 and note how Christ would not be seated at the right hand of the Majesty on High until He had by Himself purged our sins. What a glorious truth to call to remembrance this morning around the Lord's table.

But would you also note that God the Father bears witness to the nature of Christ's rule from the throne in vv. 8 & 9: *a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity.* We see in the gospels how Christ loved righteousness by rendering perfect obedience to the law of His Father. And we see His love for righteousness and His hatred for iniquity when we behold Him bleeding and dying in our place, being nailed to Calvary's cross. If you want to know what Christ thinks of sin then look to the cross and behold Him subjecting Himself to the penalty of sin. When we see the very dying form of One bearing shame and scoffing rude being condemned in our place, then we can't help but agree with God the Father's testimony of His Son that Christ has loved righteousness and hated iniquity.

Let the emblems of the Lord's table bring that truth to your remembrance this morning. The bread bears witness to His perfect life and His love for righteousness and the cup bears witness to the price He was willing pay because of His love for righteousness and His hatred for sin. And both the elements combine to bring to our remembrance His grace and love and mercy toward our poor, guilty and unworthy souls.

There's a statement at the end of v. 9 that I think magnifies Christ's love for us all the more. Would you note that on account of His love for righteousness and His hatred for sin God the Father saw fit to anoint Him - *therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.* We know that Christ was anointed with enabling power to do all that He needed to do but this verse tells us that He was also anointed with the oil of gladness. This indicates to us that all that Christ bore he bore gladly in order to redeem us. There was no hesitation on His part. There was no reluctance. There was no regret. He gladly went to Calvary's cross in order to purchase us to Himself.

So we have in this portion of Hebrews 1 the Father's testimony regarding His Son. We've seen a testimony regarding the relationship of the Son to the Father – He is God's only Begotten Son – and we've heard the testimony of the Father regarding the worth of His Son – He deserves to be worshipped by angels – how much more is He then worthy of our worship? And we've heard the Father's testimony regarding the reign of His Son – It is

a righteous reign and it is an everlasting reign. We didn't focus on vv. 10-12 which tell us that the durability of this reign will outlast the present state of heaven and earth. *They shall perish, but thou remainest* the Father says with regard to the rule of His Son. It only remains for us to consider briefly how we hear from God the Father:

### III. A Testimony Regarding His Service to His Son

In v. 13 the question is raised again about the angels. *To which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?* We looked at this verse last week and noted how our esteem for Christ is boosted all the more when we consider His triumph and the triumph of His cause.

We live in a day when the name of Christ is blasphemed openly and often. We live in a day when the forces of darkness seem to have their way. These are days that try the patience of Christians who, like Christ, love righteousness and hate iniquity. Like those Jewish Christians who were bearing the hostility of their Christ-rejecting countrymen we find ourselves living in a world that is hostile to Christ and hostile to grace.

What a blessing to hear, therefore, the testimony of God the Father to His Son – *Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool*. Notice from this statement that it is God Himself who will perform the task – *sit on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool*. It is God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will see the matter through while Christ Himself sits at God's right hand.

Shouldn't this serve to greatly increase our confidence in Christ? Indeed – shouldn't our estimation of the greatness of our Redeemer be all the more elevated when we hear the testimony that the Father bears toward His Son? The opinions of mere men may and often times do mislead us. Those early Jewish Christians, undergoing the immense pressures of life that were sorely afflicting them may have had cause to wonder if they had been misled by the misguided opinions of men. The devil, to this very day, works hard to try to convince believers that all they've really done is follow cunningly devised fables.

Do you find yourselves asking, therefore, *how do we know? How do we really know that these things are true and that Christ is who we say He is and that He's really done what we've been taught He's done?* May I suggest to you today that the most authoritative witness you can find to bear witness to the truth of Christ is the witness of God Himself?

God has borne witness to His Son – *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*. God has borne witness to the worth of His Son – *let all the angels of God worship Him*. God has borne witness to the rule of His Son – *Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever* and God has borne witness to how He will serve His Son – *Sit on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool*.

As we remember Christ around this table this morning let's keep in mind who it is that bears testimony concerning Him and then let's remember Him with strong confidence in who He is and what He's done. May the gladness with which He was anointed also be our portion as we affectionately meditate on His sufferings and death.