

## Prayer

Dear Jesus, we honour You. We thank You for teaching us about the Father, we praise You for giving Your life in the service of others, we give You all the glory for enduring opposition on our behalf, we bless You for standing firm against Satan and His works. Dear Jesus, what you did for us led to Your death, and we are lost in wonder love and praise! AMEN

## Prayer Suggestions

**Prayer ideas** (offered to help you consider more than your regular routine of prayers)

*When you watch TV today, write down a list of the social issues that are raised by the programmes, and pray about them briefly after you have watched.*

**On-going prayers** (to supplement your own prayers about personal concerns and items of news)

- **Pray blessings on your neighbours** *Pray for any neighbours with whom you have had a difficult relationship, whether they are neighbours who live near you, or people you meet regularly in the general region of your home*
- *Give thanks to God for the blessings you receive from others, especially those who are very close to you*
- *Pray for the news media, and pray that they will report the news faithfully and for the benefit of all*

## Meditation

Let us eat a simple Paschal meal of bread and wine,  
And as we eat the bread and drink the wine, remember Christ.

He taught His faithful followers the deeper things of God,  
He spoke the eternal truth yet stood accused of blasphemy.

He loved His chosen friends, though all of them deserted Him,  
He healed the sick and suffering, yet bore the pain upon Himself.

He preached 'Good News' to all, from God our Lord and Father,  
He lived to demonstrate its truth through death to eternal life.

He looked at those in need and loved them with a glance,  
He bore the insults of the ignorant whilst witnessing to 'grace'.

So when we've eaten all the bread and drunk the wine,  
May this become in us the real presence of our Lord.

---

## Bible passage - 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?

---

## Bible Study

### Review

The Father has given the highest place in all Creation to Jesus Christ, above that of any other beings, in particular, of angels. This is the theme of the whole of the first chapter of Hebrews, and our passage today contains three substantial quotes from the Old Testament to show us that the Son does indeed fulfil the highest aspirations of the prophets and psalmists, and of all Scripture. He fulfils God's will as His Servant and Messiah. Prior to this passage, the writer quotes four brief Old Testament passages to prove that while angels are 'created' spiritual servants of God, God's Son is spoken of in Scripture in a quite different way (1:5-7). Now, the three quotes in today's passage highlight the divine properties of the Son, and they give us much to think about!

Verses 8 and 9 offer this quote:

'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.'

In reading this, it becomes clear that the writer thinks of God as speaking to us directly through Scripture. The quote comes from Psalm 45:6,7, and was probably spoken originally to an Israelite king at his enthronement. But by the time of Christ, any mention of a 'king' in the Psalms was thought to refer to the Messiah, through whom God would fulfil His Covenant promise to bring salvation. Consequently, the early Christians quite naturally believed that they spoke about the work of Jesus Christ, as we do today. They also knew personal details about Jesus, and were able to say that He had the properties mentioned in this psalm, and therefore fulfilled it. As the quote suggests, He 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.). He was the first and only Son of God and he had announced the coming Kingdom of God.

Verses 10 to 12 offer this quote:

'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.'

In this way, the writer of Hebrews says that Jesus was a heavenly and eternal being. The quote comes from Psalm 102, where these words indicate that Jesus was present at God's work of Creation. As part of God's very nature therefore, Jesus is not changed by the passing of time in the way that you and I are changed, He is *'the same'*, and His *'years will never end'* (1:12). This means that having passed through death once and been raised, Jesus lives eternally! Interestingly, Psalm 102 is a psalm of encouragement to someone who is experiencing trouble, perhaps illness (102:3-5) or stress (102:8f.). The quote therefore suggests that one important feature of the risen Christ's power and authority is to minister to people who are suffering, as the earthly Jesus did. His eternal life offers people hope when it could be found nowhere else.

Verse 13 contains the last and final quote:

'Sit at my right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet'?

This comes from Psalm 110, a famous psalm used frequently in the New Testament (e.g. Luke 20:43, Acts 2:35, 7:49). The early Christians often used this text to prove from scripture that Jesus should be called not just the 'Son of David', but also the 'Son of God'. They believed that the text was David's prophecy of one who would come after him who was greater than he, that is, the Messiah, the Christ. Some reckon that Psalm 110 is exclusively about the authority of the kings in David's line, but this interpretation still points to Jesus, who was 'born of David's line'. This quote therefore affirms that Jesus is the Messiah, and that He has divine authority over all things. 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, that is, Jesus Christ.

The last half of Hebrews 1 offer seven reasons for believing that Jesus is the 'Christ', the 'Messiah, and the 'Son of God'. He has the highest authority as one who was involved in Creation, and therefore has authority

over angels, who are 'created beings'. However, each of the seven quotes offered as proof of this say much more about who Jesus is, and as a whole, they offer us a remarkable insight into the nature of Jesus in God's plan of redemption.

---

## Discipleship

### **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 this helps?
3. Read Psalm 110 and try to determine who is saying what to whom; then compare your conclusions with what we have studied today.

### **Personal comments by author**

*The first chapter of Hebrews offers us passages of Scripture that the early church regarded as 'proof' of the divinity of Jesus Christ. I am fascinated by the way that the early Christians used the Scripture. All the evidence of the New Testament points to their knowing the Psalms very well, as might be expected because it was, in effect, a hymn book of the Jewish people and was 'taken over' by Christianity. However, there is little evidence of their knowing much of the Old Testament except the prophet Isaiah and stories of the great heroes of the faith; Samson, Noah, Moses etc. However, what they knew, they certainly used to the full!*

### **Ideas for exploring discipleship**

- *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? You will then have a useful resource with which to defend your faith!*
- *Pray and ask the Lord to renew His people in their understanding of the Bible and the 'Word of God'. Too many people do not know the Bible well though they consider themselves knowledgeable Christians; pray that this may change.*

---

## 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

---