

Sunday Evening 5th January 2014 Kenneth Gray Hebrews 1 “The Supremacy of God’s Son”

Although the authorship of Hebrews is unknown it provides an excellent biblical exegesis of the transition from Old Testament thinking to the liberating truths of the New Testament . Now temple worship rituals have been replaced by direct access to God through Jesus. The writer gets straight to the point: *“In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but 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.”*

God previously used the prophets to rekindle the zeal of his chosen people for their first love and to bring them to repentance. The prophets, though mighty warriors for God, were just men. They could not offer salvation. Temple worship rituals were not enough - for salvation the world needed Jesus Christ.

Sadly, 2 thousand years later, there are some in the Church who still find it too difficult to accept this truth that Hebrews proclaims that Jesus is God’s appointed Son and heir to all things and through whom all things have been made. Their confidence in modern learning and ingenuity leads them to imagine that God’s Word somehow needs re-interpretation.

It is one thing to say ‘I am saved!’ but quite another to live out our lives in the light of this truth. The Gospels have described the life Jesus has lived on earth. Now in Hebrews we are receiving God’s final words to us through Jesus his Son and the status of Jesus is spelled out unequivocally. There is no wriggle room. However God may have called each of us to serve him, the supremacy of Jesus should be central to our being. In verses 3& 4 we are told *‘The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.’*

Within 20 years of the Resurrection the doubters within the early church had begun speculating about the divinity of Jesus Christ. Satan continues nowadays to try and undermine our confidence in the divinity of Jesus. But the writer of Hebrews reminds us that wherever the Son is there is the Father and vice versa. So whoever questions the authority of the Son therefore questions the authority of the Father. We cannot claim that the acts of Jesus are good if we do not recognise him as God incarnate.

Kenneth observed that human beings are very mindful of their identity and status. We get worked up if we sense we are not being given ‘our place’. We expect others to give us the respect we feel we are due. Yet many in the Church fail to give Jesus his place. Jesus’ place is at the right hand of God in glory. Eternity’s joy will be to gaze on the glorious face of Jesus tirelessly.

The point of this passage of Hebrews is to urge us to have a proper perspective about how God ministers to his people. At this time people were very interested in angels until there came a point where many began to treat angels as more important than the Saviour. Hebrews points out the folly of this. In life we never go to the second-in-command, the deputy when we can go straight to the boss. As Christians we can go direct to the throne of grace - no other intermediary necessary - and the writer is telling us to stay focused on Jesus. This warning is as relevant in 2014 as it was when written. We cannot afford to become distracted by ‘angels’ in whatever guise they present themselves. As a church we must focus less on the worldly aspects of the church- peripherals like buildings and administration - and concentrate instead on essentials like outreach in order to fulfill the Great Commission.

We sometimes placate our conscience, for example by contributing a small proportion of our finances to worthwhile charities in order to justify to ourselves generous spending on our buildings. Should we not be assessing how the amount of time we spend in committees or running organisations compares with the amount of time we spend in God’s presence? Are we giving Jesus supremacy in our lives?

Of Jesus the writer states: *‘You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness;’* How hard it is to live that out today! Wickedness is almost everywhere. We find it at sporting events like football matches where foul

language and expressions of mutual hatred are liberally hurled by opposing fans. We find it in our living rooms when we turn on our televisions and are confronted by gratuitous sex and violence. We find it in our work places where colleagues are a mix of good and bad. But the biggest challenge is the wickedness in ourselves. We find ways to excuse our own sin but sometimes wickedness gets the upper hand.

If we understand and remain focused on the supremacy of Jesus how can we look upon him and not love righteousness and hate wickedness?