

Text: Heb. 1:4-14

Title: The claims of the excellent Son

Time: 3/23/2014 - pm

Place: NBBC

Introduction: In 1701 Britain's Act of Settlement decreed that only Protestant descendants of the granddaughter of King James I would ever be allowed into the line of succession to the English throne. In addition, the law stipulated that no heir to the throne could be married to a Roman Catholic or born out of wedlock.

Common law practice stipulated that the rule of male primogeniture be followed, that younger brothers were given precedence in the line of succession over their elder sisters. After more than three hundred years, all that changed in April of last year.

Now the Succession to the Crown Bill of 2013 provides liberty to marry a Roman Catholic and still remain in the line of succession, and it does away with the practice of primogeniture. I found a website that tracked the line of succession of the English throne down to 100 people in that line. It was pretty complex, and with the new law, I guess that now everything has to be reconfigured and recalculated.

Well, the first chapter of Hebrews talks about a line of succession that is much simpler. There is only One who bears the title that is qualified to be in this line. That title is *Son*, and that One is Jesus Christ. Remember that last time we saw that Christ is the heir of all things (v. 2). In our passage this evening, we will learn that this heir has a number of glorious claims that are based on His title *Son* (v. 4). To celebrate the excellent claims of the Son, the author takes us into a comparison between Him and the angels.

We live in a world in which evil seems to have a claim on everything. I have titled the message this evening, "The claims of the excellent Son," and I want us to remember, that in this dark world of sin and despair and destruction and disappointment and decay and disease and death, there is One in the line of succession who has some very special claims on a very important inheritance. Our faith in Him and in the truth of His claims can be a source of great strength as we live in a world where it seems that evil has a claim on everything.

I. The excellent Son has a claim to God the Father (v. 5).

Illustration: You may know of the latest claim of evil on our state's definition of natural rights. Our NH Senate passed unanimously an amendment to our constitution that would add a right to homosexuality to our constitution's definition of natural rights.

Application: Well, the second of these quotations in our chapter comes from 2 Samuel 7 and the Davidic Covenant, a promise that speaks to the truth that Christ is the coming King in the line of David. The first quotation comes from Psalm 2, a passage the members of our state's Senate would do well to read again (Read Ps. 2).

What exactly is meant by the phrase, "Today I have begotten you?" I think we get that answer from the apostles in Acts 13:33. The promise that God the Father would on a certain day beget His Son was fulfilled on the day God raised Jesus from the dead approving of His work on the cross.

Paul explains this in Rom. 1:4. Evil makes a claim on this world and its inhabitants in denial of the fact that God has raised Christ from the dead. Because God did that, He has

the claim on all things as the rightful heir. And this also means that Jesus Christ is the only way any man can have any claim on God. Because He is the risen one, we must come to God by Him.

II. The excellent Son has a claim to our worship (v. 6).

Application: You may have noticed a second title for this royal heir – the *Firstborn*. In relation to God the Father, Christ is the today-begotten Son. In relation to the rest of the universe, Christ is the Firstborn.

Our author speaks of a point at which this Firstborn is brought into the world. That could refer to the first or second coming of Christ, certainly, but I think it best to see here the moment described for us in Revelation 5 (Read).

Notice what the angels do as Christ is pronounced the only one worthy to open the title deed of the universe as the Firstborn heir (v. 11). They worship Him. The excellent Son has a claim to this worship on that day as the Firstborn of all creation.

Notice that they are not the only ones who worship (24 elders are likely representative of at least some of the people of God, from both the Old (12 patriarchs) and New (12 apostles) Testament periods, in heaven). What do we learn from this heavenly scene about what it means to us that the Son has a claim to our worship? Our worship must be grateful for Christ's death (v. 9); our worship must be full of Christ's hope (v. 10); our worship must magnify Christ (vv. 11-14a); and our worship must humble ourselves (v. 14b). There is nothing in the worship of the Firstborn that is concerned about our own personal tastes or preferences. Biblical truth about worship precludes such a concern.

III. The excellent Son has a claim to eternal sovereignty (vv. 7-8).

Application: Psalm 104 tells us that angels are created beings. They had a beginning like the rest of the creation described in that Psalm. Like angles, we are mere creatures.

On the other hand, Psalm 45 tells us that the Son had no beginning; to the contrary, he has always been on His eternal throne. In fact, the Son is God.

One angel decided to compete with that throne – his name was Lucifer. How often do you and I look to compete with the God of this throne? He is the excellent Son, who is God, and who has a claim to eternal sovereignty. Just as the throne of heaven is His throne, so also must the throne of our hearts be His throne (the Lord’s Prayer: “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven”). 1 Pet. 3:15: “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts.”

Where Christ rules, the kingdom is always an upright and righteous kingdom, whether it be heaven, the millennial kingdom someday, or the heart of man this evening.

IV. The excellent Son has a claim to the Spirit’s anointing (v. 9).

Application: The word *anoint* is related to the word *Christ*. Jesus is the Christ because He was anointed by God’s Spirit at His baptism to execute the offices of prophet, priest, and king, which offices required the anointing of oil in the Old Testament. This anointing is done with an oil that becomes the oil of gladness when the work is complete (Isa. 61:1-3). It is this celebration of the completed work that the Son has claim to. Notice some aspects of the completion of this work of the Anointed Christ:

1. The anointing required becoming man (“God, your God”); as a man, Jesus Christ served His God – He being in the form of God took upon Himself the form of a servant, and it was part of that form of a servant to now relate to His heavenly Father as any other man would; for God to have a God was a great act of humility and sacrifice. He did so in order to be our one Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5).

2. The anointing required sinless devotion to God’s law (“loved righteousness”; “hated lawlessness”); had Christ failed one time to love righteousness or to hate lawlessness, we would be without the mediation of our prophet, priest, and king. We would have no mediation between God and man. There would be no oil of gladness, only the oil that fuels the flames of our deserved judgment.

3. The anointing was for the sake of fellows (“above thy fellows”; better “alongside thy fellows”; see v. 14); the point is that we share in the anointing of Christ by virtue of the Spirit of Christ that dwells within us. That same Spirit desires to help us love righteousness and hate lawlessness. Being filled with Him and submitting to His control is the key to our gladness and joy.

V. The excellent Son has a claim to creation (vv. 10-13).

Illustration: At times my wife will tell me that I need to change the sweater I like to wear, because I have worn it too long, and it now needs to be washed. Jesus Christ talks that way about all of creation, for He has a mighty claim to it. He is going to throw it in the wash someday.

Application: Jesus’s claim to creation is the Creator’s claim to creation. He is not Himself a creature, for all creation was founded by Him, and whereas it grows old and gets worn out, He stays the same.

Jesus is the Lord Jehovah of Psalm 102. Jehovah is the One who “said” Psalm 102. Jesus is the One who is going to someday take all that He has made, roll it up like a change of clothes, and get something new and clean instead. We need to glorify, set our affection on, and faithfully serve the Creator, not on the creation. Men and movements that make the creation their cause while denying the Creator are a blight to creation, not a help to it.

VI. The excellent Son has a claim to ultimate victory (vv. 13-14).

Illustration: In our home we use footstools to get reach the top of our cupboards.

Application: A throne has a footstool, where the feet of the king can rest. This is where every enemy of Christ will be someday, because the Son has a claim to ultimate victory.

Those enemies are not yet there, are they? Our world is full of those who deny these claims of the Son of God upon it. We know by sight every day that the ultimate victory is not yet a part of our experience. But in the face of that, we must know by faith every day that the ultimate victory is already secured, that future victory is a settled matter.

Jesus no longer works for it to be accomplished, because as He said on Calvary’s cross, “It is finished.” Now He sits at the right hand of the Father, not idle, but completely victorious. And in the meantime He sends angels to service our needs as those who are heirs of salvation with Him.

When we say that we are the saved, we lay claim to what the Son has claimed for us, although it is an inheritance that involves a short time of suffering. That time of suffering

shall be followed by an eternal weight of glory. The angels help us in our warfare as we live in this world that denies the claims of the Son upon it, but the day will soon come when we need their help no longer.

Conclusion: It is in the light of these magnificent and true claims that we pray our daily prayers for victory over our enemy. That is why they are prayers like this one, which are always assured of Heaven's triumphant answer: "But the God of all grace, who hath called you unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you" (1 Pet. 5:10).

“A man came – I think it was actually in Philadelphia – on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, ‘Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.’ That is the distinction – the sermon, and the ‘lightning and the thunder.’ To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters.”

– David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

*Preachers and Preaching*