

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Hebrews 1:7-9

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the bible again. Let's continue reading Hebrews chapter 1, and today we'll read verses 7-9.

Angels are mighty in power and are messengers of God, tasked with delivering messages or carrying out missions assigned by Him. When people encounter angels, they often involuntarily feel a sense of awe, even to the point of worshipping the angels. In Daniel 8:17-18, when the angel Gabriel was sent by God to explain a vision to Daniel, Daniel fell prostrate in fear, but Gabriel immediately helped him stand up, refusing Daniel's worship.

The Apostle John, while writing the Book of Revelation, recorded that he was taken to heaven and saw many astonishing visions and revelations. Twice, John unconsciously attempted to worship an angel. The first instance is in Revelation 19:10: "And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, 'See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God!'" The angel refused John's worship and told him to worship God alone.

The second instance is in Revelation 22:8-9. After receiving the complete revelation with the help of an angel, John again fell down to worship the angel, likely out of gratitude. However, the angel clearly told John in Revelation 22:9: "Then he said to me, 'See that you do not do that! For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.'" Angels, knowing their rightful place, prevent people from worshipping them.

Satan was once an angel, but he desired to usurp the worship meant for God, resulting in his fall and becoming the source of sin. After Adam's fall, sin became part of human nature, leading people to follow Satan and enjoy being worshipped by others, which is highly offensive to God. Today, by God's grace, we are given the

ability and position to serve Him and the church. We are merely God's servants and must not accept people's exaltation, let alone their worship.

When Paul and Barnabas were preaching the gospel in Lystra and performed miracles with great power, the priest of the pagan gods attempted to offer sacrifices to them. Let us look at Paul and Barnabas's reaction, recorded in Acts 14:14-15: "But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard this, they tore their clothes and ran in among the multitude, crying out and saying, 'Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them.'"

May all believers understand and firmly remember that angels are sent to serve you, and the saints with positions in the church are also here to serve you. They are all God's servants and cannot accept worship from people, for worship belongs to God alone.

The author of Hebrews used a comparative approach to reveal that the name of Christ is far superior to that of angels and that Christ's status far exceeds theirs. The author of Hebrews cited three Old Testament passages to describe Christ's supremacy over angels. The first is in Psalm 2:7: "You are My Son, today I have begotten You." This indicates that Christ has always been God's only begotten Son in eternity. After His incarnation and resurrection, His human nature was exalted and declared to be the Son of God with power.

The second passage is in 2 Samuel 7:14: "I will be his Father, and he shall be My Son." This refers to Christ's resurrection and His role in building the church. The church is Christ's body, God's temple, and the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, the delight of God's heart. Therefore, when Jesus fulfills this role, God once again declares, "I will be your Father, and you will be My sons." From Christ until today, every saint participating in building the church receives this declaration from the Father: "I will be your Father, and you will be My sons."

The third is in Psalm 97:7. The author of Hebrews quotes from the Septuagint: "Let all the angels of God worship Him." The Chinese Union Version translates it as "all

gods,” reflecting different textual traditions. This passage speaks of Christ returning to earth as the firstborn, at which time both the old creation and the new creation will converge in Him, and all the angels will worship Christ.

From Hebrews 1:7-9, the author describes Christ's superiority over angels. Though angels are mighty, they are sent by God to carry out His missions, while Christ reigns on the throne with royal authority.

Verse 7: "And of the angels He says: 'Who makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire.'"

This directly quotes Psalm 104:4: “Who makes His angels spirits, His ministers a flame of fire.” It describes how angels execute God’s missions swiftly, like the wind, demonstrating their loyalty and power to accomplish His tasks promptly. For example, when Daniel, during the exile, realized from the prophecy of Jeremiah that Jerusalem’s desolation would last seventy years, he prayed and confessed sins on behalf of himself, his ancestors, kings, and leaders. He pleaded for God’s mercy upon Israel. His prayer aligned with God’s will, and God sent the angel Gabriel to reveal the prophecy of seventy sevens to Daniel.

Let us look at the response of the angel Gabriel. In Daniel 9:21, it says, “Yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering.” Gabriel’s action was indeed swift as the wind. The wind signifies agility in action, while fire represents judgment or powerful protection.

Let us first examine the aspect of judgment. In Genesis 19, the sins of Sodom were exceedingly grave, and God sent two angels to investigate and rescue righteous Lot before raining sulfur and fire upon the city to destroy it. God uses fire to execute judgment.

Fire also has a protective aspect. In 2 Kings 6, when the king of Syria sought to capture the prophet Elisha, he sent an army to surround the city of Dothan. Elisha's

servant was terrified and asked what they should do. In 2 Kings 6:17: “And Elisha prayed, and said, ‘Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.’ Then the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.” Elisha prayed, and God revealed a vision of angels with chariots of fire surrounding and protecting him. Angels, with the agility of wind and the power of fire, fulfill God’s commands faithfully.

Verses 8-9: “But to the Son He says: ‘Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions.’”

Concerning the Son, the focus is not on Christ’s power but on His identity and position. He is directly addressed as God, affirming His deity as the second Person of the Trinity. Next, it mentions His position: He is seated on the throne, ruling with authority as King.

Hebrews 1:8-9 quotes Psalm 45:6-7: “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions.”

Let’s break it down: Christ’s throne is eternal, and His authority is everlasting. Earthly governments all hope to endure, but none of them can withstand the test of time. The shortest lasts only a few days, while the longest may persist for hundreds of years. However, Christ’s reign is eternal, for His authority is righteous. The word for authority in this context is often translated into English as ‘scepter,’ which symbolizes the ruler’s staff of authority, representing the principles and methods by which the ruler governs.

Christ's scepter is one of righteousness, meaning He rules His kingdom with justice, equity, and fairness, without even a hint of corruption or injustice. Today, in earthly kingdoms, whether autocratic or democratic, which ruler dares to claim that they

attained their position through entirely righteous means? Who can say their governance is completely fair and just to all groups and individuals? Not one! This is the fundamental reason why no earthly kingdom can endure.

What is gained by deceit will inevitably be taken by someone even more cunning. Governance built on a balance of self-interest will eventually be consumed by self-interest. Only Christ's scepter is righteous because His kingdom was secured through His self-sacrifice. By shedding His blood and giving His life on the cross, He purchased His citizens with His very life. He went through death, burial, and resurrection, triumphing over the devil who held the power of death, thereby establishing His kingdom. His scepter is righteous because His kingdom was won through His sacrifice.

Christ loves righteousness and hates lawlessness, speaking of His character. The source of righteousness is God, while the source of lawlessness is Satan. Christ first dealt with the problem of sin for His citizens. All who enter His kingdom are placed in the church to learn to develop Christlike character: to love righteousness and hate lawlessness. This is the lifelong lesson for every Christian.

During this age of grace, also known as the church age, Christ, with His boundless love and patience, leads His saints to gradually break free from the dominion of sin, enabling them to face every challenge and circumstance with righteousness. Through this process, His people develop the character befitting citizens of the heavenly kingdom.

When Christ returns, His kingdom will be fully realized on earth, and the saints will reign with Him. Therefore, God, your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness. Because everything Christ has done aligns perfectly with God's will, God has anointed Christ with the oil of gladness. In the Old Testament, before someone took up a sacred office, they had to undergo examination and then be anointed.

In 1 Samuel 16, we see Samuel sent by God to anoint one of Jesse's sons to succeed Saul as king of Israel. Jesse had eight sons, but the youngest, David, was out tending sheep. Jesse brought his seven older sons before Samuel, but none passed the test. Samuel asked Jesse, "Are all the young men here?" Jesse initially did not consider

his youngest son, David, a shepherd, to be king material. While David was overlooked by his father, he was chosen by God. Samuel insisted that David be called, and he anointed David as God directed. David was thus transformed from a shepherd into the king of Israel.

Similarly, Christ was sent by the Father to the lost sheep of Israel. At the start of His ministry, Christ went to John the Baptist to be baptized. Matthew 3:16-17 records: "When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'" The Holy Spirit descended upon Christ like a dove, signifying that God anointed Christ with the Holy Spirit, empowering Him to begin His earthly ministry. God also testified, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Thus, God anointed Christ with the oil of gladness.

After three years of faithful ministry on earth, preaching the gospel and proclaiming God's word, Christ led a few disciples up the Mount of Transfiguration. On the mountain, God once again testified about Christ. Matthew 17:5 states: "While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!'" Christ's earthly work and ministry pleased God. Even when Christ was crucified to accomplish redemption, God tore the temple veil in two from top to bottom, caused a great earthquake, and broke the rocks apart. At that moment, a Roman centurion in charge of the crucifixion declared, as recorded in Matthew 27:54: "Truly this was the Son of God!"

We see that Christ fulfilled His earthly ministry, gained the Father's pleasure, and was even recognized by Gentiles as the Son of God. In contrast, angels act solely under God's direction. God has never anointed an angel. Thus, Christ's position surpasses that of angels. His ministry, grounded in His authority, is also far superior and more perfect than theirs. May God help us learn to appreciate Christ's kingship, His anointing, and the execution of His righteous rule. Loving righteousness and hating lawlessness is exceedingly glorious.

Let's pray together: Dear Lord, help us to recognize that Your redemptive grace is filled with love, tolerance, and mercy. When You reign, it is marked by righteousness, justice, and a hatred for sin. You grant Your church the grace to partake in both aspects—to enjoy Your sacrificial love and to grow in Christlike character through service in the church. Help every saint in Your church to receive Your provision in love and to develop noble character, becoming citizens of Your heavenly kingdom. Bless my church. I pray in the Holy Name of Jesus Christ.