

Hebrews 1:1-14

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[0 : 00] Good morning, open up your Bibles to Hebrews chapter 1. So a little heads up, if I slur my speech or I create some new words you've never heard of before, just go with it. Example, I created a word called perspersion the other day, I think which is the blend of perceptive and perspective.

So, just a heads up, that happens. But, we are in the book of Hebrews, going verse by verse. I know there's a lot of excitement about this, especially in my own heart.

And related to that, I thought I would give a book plug, which is related to the sermon today. But it's a book called Loving the Old Testament by Alec Mortier, and forward by Tim Keller, Don Carson. Good book.

But, he has this little section in here that I would really appreciate it, called, What Would Jesus Say About the Old Testament? Kind of thing. And it says, He says, If we walked up to Jesus and says to Him, Why are you quoting so much of the Old Testament?

Please tell me, Why are you quoting it so much? He would say, The old what? I don't know what you mean. What do you mean by the Old Testament? And in our poor, flustered way, because we didn't expect that answer from Him, we would begin to explain to Him what we meant by the question, Why do you keep quoting the Old Testament?

[1 : 34] And in the long run, the Lord Jesus would say to us kindly, Oh, I see. You mean the Holy Scriptures. Why didn't you ever call them by such a weird name? You mean the Scriptures.

And we find that in John 10, 15, the Scriptures cannot be broken. That is the wording we have used, not the Old Testament, but the Scripture. And if we went on talking to the precious Savior, He would again say, Oh, I see what you mean.

You mean the Word of God. Just as we hear His words in Mark 7, 13, making the Word of God non-effect because of your tradition.

And if we pursued the matter a little further, He would say to us, Why do you call it the Old Testament? It is God's law. So, as in Luke 10, 26, What is the written law?

And what is your reading of it? Jesus would have known what we meant, not have known what we meant by the Old Testament. He would say the Scriptures, the Word of God, the law. It's not attacking the name, but really just the understanding of how people just continue to think it has no relevance as we're our Lord, you know, held it in very, very high esteem.

[2 : 41] So, example in our text today, there are many citations from what we would call the Old Testament. And the New Testament writers always proved what they said by pointing back to the Scriptures.

And that's a pretty arrogant thing when we say that we don't have to prove what we say by the Scriptures themselves. But Nathan's already given you a lot of really good context just on the book of Hebrews.

But to kind of keep in mind that it was obviously written to a Jewish audience. And there are probably, in my opinion, like three different camps of Jews in this group.

There are some who have converted and actually become followers of Jesus, believed Him to be the Messiah and fulfillment of the Scriptures. And then there are some who are kind of on the fence trying to decide, like, do we throw ourselves and become followers of Jesus or do we remain in the Old?

And then there's the camp trying to pull them back into the Old. There's the... So, a lot of times when you're reading Hebrews, it's good to kind of think about who He actually might be addressing.

[3 : 55] And then our text today is kind of a continuation of what Nathan preached on last week of how Christ is supreme and Christ is better, Christ is more prominent, and He is the fulfillment of

what was in the Old.

So, as we read this, we'll start in verse 1 because it's just sort of a continuation. Hebrews 1.1 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets.

But in these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed the heir of all things, through whom also He created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature, and He upholds the universe by the word of His power.

And after making purifications for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Having become as much superior to angels as the name He has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

For to which of God's angels did God ever say, You are my Son, today I have begotten you? Or again, I will be to Him a Father and He shall be to me a Son.

[5 : 17] And again, when He brings the firstborn into the world, He says, let all of God's angels worship Him. Of the angels, He says, He makes His angels winds and His ministers a flame of fire.

But of the sun, He says, Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness, and therefore, God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness beyond Your companions.

And You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth and the beginning of the heavens are the work of Your hands. And they will perish, but You will remain.

They will wear out like a garment, like a robe. You will roll them up like a garment. They will be changed, but You are the same. And Your years will have no end.

And to which of the angels He has ever said, Sit in My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet? Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve those for the sake of those who inherit salvation?

[6 : 39] So, in our text today, the writer of Hebrews, whether it was Paul or Apollos or someone else, is addressing an issue that was going on at this time, but a lot of angelic confusion both then and now in a lot of ways.

So, we're talking about angels today. But we're also talking about Christ's superiority and His ability to rule over angels. angels, and most of us would probably think about angels as protector, guides. Children may think of them as some angelic, imaginary friend that they may have. All sorts of things, but in this time, there was a dangerous teaching that was kind of a mixture of local Jewish folklore and paganism central to the idea that angels could come to you and help protect you from evil spirits.

So, they would wear amulets and other things just as protection from evil spirits. And an old ancient amulet that was worn around the neck around this time says on the inscription, Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, protect the one who wears this.

Flee, O hated one, Solomon pursues you. So, this superstition, I guess, around angels that they were somehow protectors against evil spirits in a paganistic kind of way.

[8 : 13] And, as we know very well, if you know some of this stuff, but a lot of the world's false religions and cults have been started by someone who said they had an angelic encounter and they were given certain things to follow.

So, in Islam, Muhammad claimed an angel appeared to him showing him the true and new way. In Mormonism, Joseph Smith claiming to receive revelations from the angel Moroni and God the Father and Jesus the Son.

So, we need to be aware that this kind of stuff is real, but are they really from God or are they from the enemy? There's a lot of warnings about having misunderstandings about angels.

examples. For example, 2 Corinthians chapter 2 verse 13, for such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.

And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no surprise if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness.

[9 : 22] righteousness. We all know the famous Galatians chapter 1, but even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preach to you, let him be accursed.

So isn't that crazy that some of these world religions and cults were started by this very thing that they had just read and been aware, be warned. but it goes on even like our modern day perception of angels as these sweet and docile creatures that kind of come and hang out with us.

A lot of that is kind of depicted in western art and statues and other things. But as we know, the famous screw tape letters were as a fictional work of one demon instructing another demon on how he ought to act around humans.

And regardless to angels, he said that the depiction of these angels was more of a soft, not powerful kind of creature.

And he says, finally, the soft, slim, girlish, and angels of the 19th century art shape so feminine that they avoid being voluptuous only by their total insipidity.

[10:42] Big word there. The frigid auras of teton table paradise. They are pernicious symbol. In the scripture, the visitation of an angel always is alarming and has to begin by saying, fear not.

But the Victorian angels look as if they're going to say, they're there. angels. So, we have all kinds of different ideas of angels, but I'm really thankful that I had a chance to study this more in depth because it was a good reminder for me.

It was such a good reminder. One of my close brothers has more of a Pentecostal background, and he a long time ago said, I feel like the people in the reform camp overthink everything and are too academic, and I had the other response of like, well, I think the R2, you know, not as academic and not so right on, but he is a true brother, but he always just reminded me like, look, we live in a spiritual realm.

There are spiritual realities that I feel like you just can't put in the natural world, and you have to like, so he was always challenging me in that area, and I'm really thankful. But a few things just to kind of look at before we start.

unpacking the text just about angels and generals and things to kind of hang your hat on, I guess, is a definition of what is an angel. Created spiritual beings with moral judgment, high intelligence, possessing great power, and yet without physical bodies.

[12:21] Sort of a safe definition without getting into all the other deals. those are also referred to throughout scripture as the holy ones, spirits, watchers, thrones, dominions, principalities.

And we know there are several types of angelic beings kind of singled out in scripture. A cherubim who were given the task of guarding the entrance of the garden of Eden in Genesis 3.

They accompany and serve God as he goes about, Psalm 18. Then we know the seraphim, some of my favorite ones to think about from the encounter of Isaiah 6, the flaming ones who have six wings and whose voices shake the foundations that you're standing on, praising God.

We know that they have rank and order. Michael was called the archangel in Jude 9. He's also called the chief of princes in Daniel 10 and a warrior and leader of the angelic host.

In Revelation 12, verse 7, it says, Now a war arose in heaven, and Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back.

[13:44] But he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. So we don't really think about that kind of stuff. We tend to just make our faith about right here.

But there is an eternal and unseen realm that the Scripture screams at us if we would just pay attention. And so we at least know there are four functions of angels that we see in Scripture.

I'll give you the four. There could be more, but I think this summarizes pretty well. Angels continuously worship and praise the God they serve. Angels continually worship and praise the God they serve.

Nehemiah chapter 9. You are the Lord, you alone. You made the heavens and the heaven of heavens with all their hosts, the earth and all that is in it, the seas and all that is in them.

You preserve all of them, and the host of heaven worships you. So, very majestic language, angels. The second function, angels minister to believers.

[14:56] They serve and help and minister to children of God, those who are in Christ. Psalm 34, verse 7, The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him and delivers them.

Angels, thirdly, communicate God's message to man. We see this a lot. Gabriel visiting Mary, a lot of other messenger angels.

And then, fourthly, angels will be given the task with carrying out God's final earthly judgments and ushering in the second coming of Christ.

It says in 2 Thessalonians, Paul writes, God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us.

When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord

Jesus.

[16:03] So, it's awesome what angels are. I think most of us would just tend to dismiss the idea. I've never really had much conversation with people about an angelic host.

But as powerful as they are, the writer of Hebrews is trying to say that Jesus is superior. He is greater. He's more powerful. The angels serve and worship Him.

As we've been reading in the first few verses there, He is superior. And the word is kind of used of more advantageous, more excellent, far surpassing is Jesus, the Son of God than the angelic host. So, a writer uses Scripture from the Old Testament to prove what he's saying. He's pointing back and saying, this is why Jesus is superior to angels.

So, I have four. Nope, five of them. I was going to combine two, but just for sake of clarity, we have five.

[17:09] Five reasons why Jesus is deemed far superior to angels. First off, Christ's superior name.

Christ's superior name. If you look at verse 4 in Hebrews, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

For to which of the angels did God ever say, you are my son, today I have begotten you. Or again, I will be to him a father and he shall be to me a son.

So, in the ancient mind, obviously, names were a lot more important than they are now. They represent a person's character, their ability, their mission, especially when that name was given to them by God.

And Jesus Christ, you know, we know that means to save the Savior, the Messiah, the Anointed One. But here, he says, God never looked at any of his angels and said, you are my son, today I have begotten you.

[18:13] Capital S, if you would. Jesus possessed the name of son from all eternity, and he will always retain that name. The perfect tense of the phrase, name has inherited, it indicates that he will always keep that name.

No angel was ever created by God and called a son. And so, just so you know, another reference to angels, they're referred to as the sons of God in Job 1.6, but the high title and name given to the son is different.

He uses Psalm 2 here, which is a well-known messianic psalm, a picture of the Messiah, to which the Jews understood, at least in their minds, to be one day fulfilled in a descendant of King David. But the heart of the psalm is fulfilled in the reign of Jesus, Yahweh's son, the Anointed King, both in the present and the future, Zion. So the phrase, though Jesus always existed as God's son, it says, today I have begotten you.

It could be kind of expressed this way, without butchering the language. God has begotten the already living son. If you would, today. Indicates Jesus was born at a certain point in time in our world, and he lived here among us in the incarnation.

[19:44] But in Romans 1, 1 through 5, this is further proof of this. Paul is referring to this idea of Psalm 2. And he says, The gospel of God was promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures concerning his son, who was descended from David according to the flesh, and was declared to be the son of God in power, according to the spirit of holiness, by his resurrection from the dead.

So he uses that. Today I have begotten you. You are my son. And then he also uses, in the second part of, I mean, in verse 5, he quotes from 2 Samuel chapter 7, which is another strong messianic passage, commonly known as the Davidic covenant, where God makes a covenant with David and his descendants.

But the prophet Nathan told David after his death that he would have a son, a covenant heir that would build a house of God and would establish a throne that would last forever.

But a lot of people would say, Wasn't that Solomon? But the problem was, Solomon sinned greatly in the eyes of the Lord and was not the fulfillment of that prophecy.

His throne was not established forever. As we know. So the promise can really only be fulfilled by the one God designates as his son that will be established forevermore.

[21:16] So both Psalm 2 and 2 Samuel 7 are tied together in this idea. So when the angelic host visited Mary in Luke 1, Gabriel, right?

He said, He will be great, and he will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever.

And of his kingdom there will be no end. A direct fulfillment of Psalm 2. This poetic expression of Jesus has a higher name, a higher status, a higher title than any angel could ever have.

And it was echoed, right, at his baptism. This is my beloved son. The transfiguration, the same thing. So Jesus is superior in his name, his title over angels.

Secondly, he goes on to argue that Christ's superior honor, Christ's superior honor, which we kind of see in verse 6.

[22 : 21] And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, let all God's angels worship him. So this next argument is saying, Jesus is worshiped and adored and feared by angels.

Again, Nathan explained this last week, but the phrase firstborn is not implying that Jesus was created, but the word just really denotes prominence of position, of title, using the rights, the privileges that were given to the firstborn, particularly the son of the king.

So it's in relationship to his status and of high rank. He is a image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, Paul said, Colossians 1.

So where he cites, let all God's angels worship him. He's using the Greek translation of the Hebrew from Psalm 97, verse 7, or Deuteronomy 32.

It can be said that, think about Jesus' life, and when he walked on this earth, when he came into the world, he was worshiped, right, by an angelic host that ushered in his coming to this world in Luke 2.

[23 : 38] Think of some others. During his temptation, after he survived in the wilderness, the temptation of the enemy, it says that angels ministered to him after that.

And in the darkness of Gethsemane, before his crucifixion, it says that God sent an angel to stand and strengthen him, to encourage him, to help him remember, right?

So we know that Jesus is the exact imprint of God's nature, which we read in verse 3. So the chief employment of angels is to worship and praise God, and so they're doing that with the Son, who is that exact imprint.

Only God is worthy of worship, right? We know examples in Scripture where an angel appears to someone, and someone falls down, and they say, Get up!

I am not God. Do not worship me. So angels will worship, fear, love, and revere the invincible Son of God.

[24 : 46] A proof text, Revelation 5, we all know that. The living creatures and the angels, myriads of myriads, thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power, wealth, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing.

So we know that. That's Revelation 5, 11 through 13. For sake of time, just a proof text there. But thirdly, thirdly, Christ's superior status over angels.

See this in verse 7. Writer says, Of the angels, he says, He makes His angels winds, His ministers a flame of fire.

But of the sun, he says, Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness.

Therefore, God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions. So His status, He has a higher status.

[26 : 03] Here's the simple comparison. Angels are servants. Jesus is the sovereign. The angels are servants. Jesus is the sovereign. And again, he quotes from two passages.

Psalm 104, which speaks about God being the all-powerful creator and sustainer of things, which is also mentioned earlier in Hebrews. And it's even implying that this is understood that the splendor of angels comes from God's creative hand.

The sun employs His angels as heavenly ministers to carry out His will. And we see that, right, in Scripture. Winds, fire, thunder, lightning, which He carries out His decrees and judgments on the earth.

John Owen said this is a picture of their power and powerful, effective, agile, and swift in carrying out God's will. Then he quotes Psalm 45, verses 6 and 7.

And this is a psalm that is extolling the Davidic king, which only Jesus, as the Davidic Messiah, truly meets the description for. And break this down in three different ways here.

[27 : 22] And then Psalm 45, 6 through 7, that he's quoting. But it describes the king's throne, his scepter, and his anointing. His throne implies that his rule will never come to an end as he sits at the right hand of the Father.

His scepter, a symbol of power and authority where he executes righteousness. And his anointing with the oil of joy or gladness, the joy of the heavenly king, the joy that was set before him that he knew he would receive at the Father's right hand.

So, they are. Angels are great. They're splendid. They're majestic. They're powerful beyond our wildest dreams. But they are not greater than the Son.

They are servants of the Son. and they tremble before him. Fourthly, Christ's superior existence. Christ's superior existence. Seen in verses 10-12. And you, Lord, lay the foundation of the earth in the beginning and the heavens are the work of your hands.

[28 : 38] They will perish but you remain. They will all wear out like a garment. Like a robe, you will roll them up. Like a garment, they will be changed. But you are the same and your years will have no end.

Now, it's saying that angels were created things. Christ has always existed. He has always existed and he will always exist. He will never change this idea of being immutable, eternal.

Christ has a superior existence to angels. He will, saying here, that all creation will be unmade and remade one day but God and his son remain the same and are unchanged.

We all know that to be true about this world. Everything around us is falling apart. The creation is groaning but we know that it will be renewed one day.

Everything around us is changed but Jesus remains the same today, yesterday and forever. Fifthly and lastly some other things we'll look at in a second but if we look at our text verse 13 and 14 we see Christ's superior vocation or his work.

[29 : 57] What does he do? And to which of the angels has ever said sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.

And are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who inherit salvation? So Christ rules and angels serve.

It's kind of a connection to their status. It's like what does the king do? He rules. What do angels do? They serve. So this is getting into their function and there's a lot to consider here but one of my favorite psalms as of late the last few years has become Psalm 110.

Have any of you ever really studied Psalm 110? How many books have been written about Psalm 110? Not many. One of those forgotten ones but it's quoted in the New Testament 14 times.

It shows that it's one of the most significant Old Testament passages in the mind of New Testament writers when it comes to talking about the Messiah. And from Psalm 110 you see this idea of God making Christ's enemies a footstool for him.

[31 : 10] And a cool beautiful picture of this custom for a defeated king to throw himself down prostrate before the conquering king. And the sign of submission.

And then the victorious king would put his feet on top of the conquered king forcing his neck down to the ground basically saying you're my footstool.

I have conquered you. So John Calvin's commentary on the psalm he says from this psalm from that statement of this making his enemies a footstool.

From this let us learn that however numerous those enemies may be who conspire against the son of God and attempt the subversion of his kingdom all will be unavailing for they shall never prevail against God's immutable purpose but on the contrary they shall by that greatness of his power be laid prostrate at Christ's feet.

Amazing to think about. So a passage I'd like for you to turn to is 2 Kings chapter 6.

[32 : 24] I just thought about sharing one of my favorite images of angels in scripture but this is a prophet Elisha not Elijah but Elisha 2 Kings chapter 6 and we can look down at verse 15 but just so you know the Syrians and others are out to destroy the prophet to take him down they're coming against him with an army and it says that he's in Dothan that's not Dothan Alabama but in verse 15 we see this so I want you to just think which one would you be here would you be more like his servant or be more like Elisha in your awareness of a spiritual realm around you verse 15 when the servant of the man of God rose early in the morning he went out and behold an army with horses and chariots was all around the city and the servant said alas my master what shall we do he said do not be afraid for those who are with us are more than those who are with them then

Elisha prayed and said oh lord please open his eyes that he may not that he may see excuse me that he may see so 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 and when the Syrians came down against him Elisha prayed to the lord and said please strike this people with blindness so he struck them with blindness in accordance with the prayer of Elisha what a what a picture so you always have to be careful when you do this but are you tempted just to think that's the scripture that's the scripture well I'm sure many of us are aware of very similar stories in the history of the church outside of just the scripture where the same thing happened

I was going to read you a couple so all of us are aware of good old John Patton the old Scotsman missionary went to the cannibals and they said you'll be eaten by cannibals you'll be consumed if you go and try to share the gospel with these people but I'll refrain from quoting what he said back but you know the giggles tell me I'll know what he said but while he was in the New Hebrides the headhunters the cannibals were all around and they were very intent on taking his life and that of his wife and they were in a hut they could hear the cries and screams of the natives all around them coming toward them and so they shut the door and began to pray just for God's intervention for protection and here's kind of what happened on that dark night a Scottish missionary and a couple found themselves surrounded by cannibals intent on taking their lives the terror filled the night they fell on their knees and prayed that

God would protect them intermittent with their prayers the missionaries heard the cries of the savages and expected them to come to the door at any moment but as the sun began to rise to their astonishment they found that the natives were retreating into the forest the couple's heart soared to God and it was a day of rejoicing the missionaries bravely continued their work but about a year later a chieftain from that tribe was converted as the missionary spoke with him he remembered the horror of that night he asked the chieftain why he and his men did not kill them and the chief replied who are those men who are with you the missionary answered why there were no men with me there was just me and my wife and the chieftain began to argue with him saying no there were hundreds of tall men shining garments with drawn swords circling about your house so we couldn't attack you we ran back into the jungle it's good stuff

I'm going to read you one more there was a in east Africa back in the 1950s there was an uprising of a tribe very hostile tribe and they went to a nearby village that had around 300 men women and children and they killed all of them slaughtered the entire village mainly because they were Christians or known to be but there was an academy nearby the Rift Valley Academy was kind of a private school for missionary children to go and stay kind of like Black Forest would be in Germany and they knew that this tribe was coming that way they could hear them shouting battle cries had all kind of weapons and torches and they they came around the school and this is what you read in the darkness slighted torches were seen coming toward the school soon there was a complete ring of terrorists around the academy cutting off all avenue of escape shouts and curses could be heard coming from the Mamas which is the tribe they began to advance on the school tightening the circle shouting louder and louder coming closer and then unexpectedly when they were close enough to throw spears they stopped they began yelling and retreating running back into the jungle the army eventually was called out and captured this band of raiders later at their trial their leader was called to witness and the judge questioned him on this particular night did you kill the inhabitants of Lorry which is that village and he said yes we we did we killed them all and then the judge said well why did you not go on to complete your mission like why didn't you attack the school the missionary school and the leader of the Mamas answered we were on our way to attack and destroy them as well the between us and the school there were huge men dressed in white with flaming swords we became afraid and we ran and we hid going on there's just be aware right this isn't just fairy tale this isn't just the Hobbit more the Rings this is even better right reality spiritual realities around us a scripture that has probably been abused a little bit

[39 : 54] Hebrews 13 verse 2 says you don't neglect to show hospitality to strangers for thereby some have entertained angels unawares meaning that they may be around us and you don't know a story precious to me a long time ago my mom was I think three or four years old living toward Marble Hill direction Nelson Georgia which is a lot more rural than than now but my grandmother who's one of the most God fearing women I know they're riding in a car and it was a very very bad storm thunder lightning rain and had a flat tire out in the middle of nowhere in this wide open area with just the storm pounding down on them and she didn't know what to do and couldn't call didn't have a text message service back then and began just to pray like

Lord please get us out of this situation this is dangerous and we need to get home please provide and she looked up and saw a man walking towards her just kind of out of the blue and he just came up real easy real nice and was like do you need help can I help you said yes please do the man changed her tire my grandmother was looking at the man turned around to get her purse to just say thank you like here's some money within three seconds just gone like in the wide open like this not even standing there anymore so just be aware there's a spiritual realm around us and the angels are a sign of God's love and care for us but even as great as they are be aware that when the angels rebelled against God God did not send them any savior so how much more value are we if you think about it that

God sent us a savior those created in his image to redeem us! in closing just look at Colossians chapter 1 Colossians chapter 1 verse 13 just to highlight Christ's greatness and glory verse 13 he has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved son in whom we have redemption the forgiveness of sins he being Jesus he is the image of the invisible God the firstborn of all creation for by him all things were created in heaven on earth visible and invisible whether thrones dominions or rulers or authorities all things were created through him and for him and he is before all things and in him all things hold together let's pray together