

Jesus is Greater Than the Angels

Hebrews 1:4-6

Pastor Jeremy Cagle, February 27, 2022

If you brought your Bibles with you, please open them to the book of Hebrews. Because we are in a book that has affectionately been called the New Testament Leviticus, or Leviticus 2.0, the updated version, because it's built on the same thing that book is, and that is how to approach God, or how to draw near to Him. Because the Book of Leviticus said that you did that you approached God through the law. That's how you know Him and get forgiveness. You do it through the sacrifices of the blood and bulls and goats and lambs and all those things. But this book in the New Testament says you do it through one thing, and one thing only, not the 1000s of sacrifices or the millions of offerings, you do it through Christ. And that's all. And that's what we're going to read about and talk about this morning. If you would, look in chapter one with me, because it talks about this when it says these words:

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things through whom also He made the world. And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature. And He upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down to the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much better than the angels as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.

For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are My Son, today I have begotten you?" And again, "I will be a Father to Him and He shall be a Son to Me"? And when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says, "And let all the angels of God worship Him." And of the angels He says, "Who makes His angels winds, and His ministers a flame of fire." But of the Son, He says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the righteous scepter is the scepter of His kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God has anointed You with the oil of gladness above Your companions." And, "You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands; they will perish but You remain and they will all become old like a garment, and like a mantle You will roll them up; like a garment they will also be changed. But you are the same, and Your years will not come to an end." 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"? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?

We'll stop the reading there. As you read that you can just tell the author of Hebrews doesn't waste any time getting into the deep end as he jumps right into some really wonderful things. When you read it you can tell there's a progression of thought here because the author starts off mentioning the prophets in verse one, which is another reference to the Old Testament. They were God's spokesman back then. Then he mentions purification in verse three. That's a reference to the sacrifices that the Book of Leviticus talks about, and what they did because they made purification for us, they cleansed us off, that he mentions the angels in verse four as a way to say Jesus is greater than all of them. No matter how you look at it, no matter how you turn and twist it and see it, He's better than anything Israel had in the Old Testament; He came to fulfill all of it.

So we need to look at them that way. And just to say a few words about this, angels have been so abused in our culture because people have developed so many strange ideas about them that we tend to stay away from them. But they are a very biblical concept. The Jews talked about them a lot because they thought angels were the mediators between heaven and earth, they believe they were the ones who were responsible for bringing us closer to God, which is why when you read the Old Testament, there's about 100 references to them, more than twice per book, because they just couldn't stop thinking about them. They just had angels on the brain. And every time you turn around, they're doing different things. But the main job is that they were our helpers, they were God's ministers of mercy to you. The word angel in Hebrew means invoice or messenger because that was their job; they came down from heaven with a special message from God. And that is that God loves you, He cares about you, and He's actually interested in what's going on in your life. If you think about it, God didn't have to do this. But he created one special being with one purpose only to give Him glory and to come minister to you. And the Jews love them.

If you remember, after Jacob tricked Esau out of his birthright, he fled from him. And while he was on the run, he had a dream in which he saw a ladder reaching up to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And that's a good way to summarize what they did that the angels traveled up and down and God's ladder, because they were constantly coming to help us. Exodus 14, verse 19, also says that when Israel was in the wilderness, the angel of God was going back and forth in front of the camp of Israel in order to keep them safe. And that's a good way to see this as well, because angels go back and forth among God's people, they go to and fro in order to make sure we're doing okay even though we don't often know it.

There's other passages in the book of Hebrews, where it talks about angels ministering to us and we're unaware. Because they're invisible most of the time. In fact, the Jews to understand this came up with a list of things that angels did, and it might be good to talk about some of that, because it helps to explain what this passage is about. And the first one is that they protect us. If you want to write this down in your notes, they believe the angels were sent by God in order to keep us safe from harm. Many of you have heard of the term guardian angels before, which refers to a specific angel who was given to watch over you as you go through life. But the Jews believe there wasn't just one of them out there, there were 1000s of them, maybe millions of them. And if you want to keep your finger in the book of Hebrews, and turn with me back to the book of Second Kings, gives you a good example of this. But if you would turn to Second Kings, chapter six, you can see how the angels protected a man named Elijah, who was a very lonely man, because he prophesied at a time when the entire nation of Israel was apostate; it turned its back on God. So he was one of the only ones standing for truth. But if you're reading Second Kings, chapter six, it shows you what the Lord did to help him out because Elijah had upset the king of Aram. And in verse 14, it tells us this: "The King sent horses and chariots and a great army there and they came by night and surrounded the city." We don't have horses and chariots today. But if you would think of tanks, that would be a good way to compare this. "Now when the attendant of the man of God had arisen early and gone out, behold an army with horses and chariots was circling the city. And his servant said to him, 'Alas, my Master! What shall we do?' So he [Elisha] answered, 'Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.' Then Elisha prayed and said, 'O Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.' And the Lord opened the servant's eyes and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses, and chariots of fire all around Elisha."

Now while the passage doesn't mention angels by name here, just about everyone agrees that's who this was, because no one else could do that. They were the only ones who could drive a chariot of fire. But the reason God sent them was because Elisha's servant was scared to death. He was frightened over this army that had come to

arrest him. So the Lord sent him another army to fight for him, which was a bigger army and a fiercer army and a more terrifying one. In this passage, Elisha prayed that he would just see them because he couldn't see them; they're invisible. He had no idea. They were there. And he pray for grace to see them. Verse 17 says the mountain was full of them. And we don't know what mountain this was referring to. And it says they were surrounding Elisha, which means they covered him on all sides. No danger would come because that's one of the things that they do: they protect us. I mean, so many times we feel like the servant; we feel like we're all alone, we're the only one standing up for God. We're the only ones preaching the gospel. We're the only ones who speak the truth. And the Lord reminds us here that we're not because the hills are full of fire. You just have to ask for help to see them.

Another thing that angels do is they rescue us. Not only do they protect us, but they also deliver us when we're in danger and in trouble. And if you want to go back even further in your Bibles to the book of Genesis, you can see this in Genesis 19. Just to show you how far back the doctrine of angels goes, it's in the very first book of the Bible, because here it tells the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, which was a very wicked place, somewhere you wouldn't expect to see angels was so wicked God was deciding to destroy it. But before he did that, Genesis 19, verse one, says this:

Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening as Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. And when Lot saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground. And he said, "Now behold, my lords, please turn aside into your servant's house and spend the night and wash your feet; then you may arise early and go on your way." They said, however, "No, but we shall spend the night in the square." Yet he urged them strongly, so they turned aside to him and entered his house; and he prepared a feast for them, and baked unleavened bread and they ate. Before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, surrounded the house, both young and old, all the people from every quarter; and they called to Lot and said to him, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may have relations with them."

And then if you look down in verse 11, the story goes on. And it says,

[The angels] struck the men who were at the doorway of the house with blindness, both small and great, so they weary themselves trying to find the doorway.

And the passage goes on to say that the angels helped Lot out of the city, which he didn't want to do, he was very hesitant, because he liked the place. So the angels carried him out kicking and screaming, because that's what they do as well. They rescue us, even against our will sometimes. You can just tell how evil Sodom and Gomorrah was when you read this passage, because it says that all the men of the city, both young and old, came to harm these creatures. The angel stayed there one night, and they all showed up. Makes you wonder how many times they've done that before. And in fact, it was so bad that verse 11 says, even after they were struck with blindness, the men kept groping for the door, because they were so consumed with lust, they couldn't stop themselves. You don't have to wonder why God destroyed this city. It was that bad. But before He destroyed it, He rescued the only man who didn't treat the angels that way. And that was Lot. I mean, make no mistake, Lot was not perfect. He really had his faults, but he was a believer, he did love the Lord. So God sent angels in order to save him because that's one of the ministries as well.

And one more ministry is this, they often also comfort us. They protect us, rescue us, and they comfort us and encourage us when we're feeling low. And if you would just turn over one more time to the book of Daniel. I just want you to see this for yourselves and read it with me. I want to take you there because we just read from the beginning of the Old Testament to show where the angels appeared. They were at the start of it, but they're also at the end as well. You see them in the book of Daniel, when the Jews were exiled into slavery. You would think that if, after the exile God was through with them, He wouldn't send any angels but He did. And Daniel chapter three, verse one, tells one more story about them when it says, "Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, the height of which was 60 cubits and its width six cubits; and he set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon."

The chapter goes on to say that Nebuchadnezzar threatened to punish anyone who wouldn't bow to the statues. You guys may know the story about throwing men into a fiery furnace who would not bow, which is what Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego ended up doing because they would refuse to bow and they said they would rather die than do something like that. So Nebuchadnezzar says, okay, and if you look down in verse 19, here's what happens in the story. It says, "Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with wrath, and his facial expression was altered towards Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. He answered by giving orders to heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated. He commanded certain valiant warriors who were in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in order to cast them into the furnace of blazing fire." Then these men were tied up in their trousers, their coats the caps and their other clothes and were cast into the middle of the furnace. And if you look in verse 24, it says, "Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astounded and stood up in haste; he said to his high officials, 'Was it not three men we cast into the midst of the fire?' They replied to the king, 'Certainly, O king.' He said, 'Look! I see four men loosed and walking about in the midst of fire without harm, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods!'"

Now, there's a lot of discussion as to who that fourth man was there. Some say it might be the Son of God, which is probably the case because it's a reference to the pre-Incarnate Christ or Jesus before He became a man. It's one of the few times he shows up this way. But either way, I want you to see in verse 28, what Nebuchadnezzar says about him next, because he calls him an angel. He thought he was another messenger sent from heaven. If you think about it, the Lord could have saved Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego without doing this. He could have rescued them from the fiery furnace without sending anybody to help them. But He did this in order to encourage them because that's another task that angels do. But the point is that angels are all over the Bible. They serve all sorts of functions.

According to some Jewish tradition, angels were the ones who also gained the law of Moses on Mount Sinai because they wrote it out the 10 commandments before he broke them. Some say they drove the chariots of fire that carried Elijah away. So they did it for Elijah. Some say they ministered to Jeremiah when he was thrown into a well. They helped Daniel when he was in the lions den. They helped Jonah when he was in the whale. But I mentioned that because it sheds a lot of light on our passage this morning, if you would look back in Hebrews, chapter one, verse three again. It says, "And he is the radiance of God's glory in the exact representation of his nature, and upholds all things by the Word of His power. When he had made purification of sins, He sat down to the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they." Now we're going to talk about this more in a moment, but the word "name" here in verse four is a Greek word which can mean name or the thing that you're called. But it also means your title or your position in life. And that's the way it's used here, because the author says this is what God has given Christ.

Now, after he made purification for sins and sat down, the Lord gave him a more excellent position than the angels because He did something they could never do, and that is to die for your sins. While the angels could help you out temporarily, Jesus did more than that. They could assist you for a season by pulling you out of a burning city and walking in the fire with you. He did more because he reconciles you to God. And so the author says you need to focus on him now because verse four says, He is so much better than the angels. I don't know about you guys, I can't think of anything better than an angel, can you? If you're going to send something to help me, that's what I want. The author says this is better than that. You can have Christ.

“Better” is a very common theme in the book of Hebrews. The word is mentioned 13 times to say that in Christ, you have a better hope, a better covenant, a better testament, a better promise, a better sacrifice and a better country than anything that Jews ever had. And here's how much better it is: it's better than the angels. Because Christ is the one true mediator between heaven and earth.

In fact, this is something you're going to see over and over again in the first chapter of Hebrews. Because you don't have to go to the rest of the book to see this. It's right here in the opening verses, but starting in verse two, and going all the way down to verse four, the author will give you seven descriptions of Christ to show you that He is greater than everything in creation, because He is the heir of all things and the radiance of God's glory, and the exact representation of His nature. In other words, He is God Himself, the second person of the Trinity. And then starting in verse five and going all the way down to verse 13, he's going to give you seven quotations from the Old Testament to say to not only did Jesus do all of this, but the Bible talked about it beforehand. I mean, if you're looking in your bibles there you see quotation marks all over this chapter. Because the Lord spoke about this in advance so you can't miss it. You have no excuse if you don't see Christ this way. Because it all goes back to Him now. As a Gentile, it's hard to explain how important this concept was, to the Jews, but to the Jews, you really couldn't get any closer to God than an angel. Which is why they came up with some really odd ideas about them. When you read from their rabbis, they said that there are over 200 angels that control the movement of the stars in the direction of the wind, which really sounds almost blasphemous, because that's something that God does. But they thought so highly of them. They said that about him. They believe there were 1000s of other ones who washed over Satan and the demons in hell, in order to make sure nobody gets out is if that could happen. They stood there with a flaming sword, kind of like sentinels, and said, there are millions more that watch over mankind in order to keep tabs on us and watch everything we do and write it all down in a book. They even reached to the point that they said, every blade of grass has its angel, which sounds a little creepy.

So the author of Hebrews starts out the book this way, in order to show you that to be saved, you don't need all that now. You don't need a million angels. You don't need 1000 eyes looking all over you. You just need one thing and one thing only, and that is Jesus Christ, Amen. It's not to take away from angels. They are beautiful things. It's just to point out that this is the one thing you need for salvation. It's important today because people turn to so many other things for help. They go running in so many other directions. The Bible says you only need to run to one thing and that's Him. When the reformers were breaking away from the Catholic Church, they came up with a phrase to explain this in Latin called Sola Christus. And it means in Christ alone, because unlike the Roman Catholic Church taught at the time, you don't have to be saved by your works. And you don't have to be saved by your efforts. And you don't have to be saved with the mass or Jesus plus the mass, or Jesus plus the sacraments and the Pope and all that, you just need Jesus. That's it. They actually came up with several principles to explain this known as the five Solas because they believe that salvation was sola Gracia, or by grace alone, and it was Sola Fide or through faith alone. And it was Sola Scriptura, through scripture alone, and it was Soli Deo

Gloria, for the glory of God alone. But it all went back to Jesus Christ. He's the one who holds our salvation together.

In one of his books on this subject, Donald Grey Barnhouse says that in many old European towns, when you're traveling from one place to another, you can ask the locals, "Is this the best way to get somewhere?" And they'll tell you, "Mr., it's the only way." And it's the same way with salvation. Christ is the only road that will take you there. And that's what we're going to talk about this morning by looking at three reasons why Jesus is greater than the angels. So if you're taking notes, that's our outline today. In Hebrews one, verses four through six, we're going to look at three reasons why Jesus is greater than the angels. And we're going to do this because this is how the book of Hebrews begins. It starts by showing you the excellencies of Christ, and telling you how He is compared to every other prophet, priest or king that came before Him. And it says He doesn't compare. Because it gives you the only Road to Heaven. And we're going to see this with three reasons why Christ is greater than the angels.

And the first one is because He's the son of God. This means that He and God are the same. He has the same nature as the Father. The angels have a holy nature, they are sinless. But they're not the same as God, there's a very clear distinction between them, but it's not that way with Christ. And if you read in verses three to five,

And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature. And He upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down to the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much better than the angels as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.

For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are My Son, today I have begotten you?" And again, "I will be a Father to Him and He shall be a Son to Me"?

The key word we're focusing on there is the word, son. You know, I've told you before the book of Hebrews starts in an unusual way, because it doesn't give you any introduction here or any words of welcome. Apparently, the author was so excited and worked up at the thought of talking about Christ that he just started writing and he couldn't stop. You don't really find out any biographical information to the end of the book because it was almost as if he just couldn't keep himself from getting on to this topic. And some scholars say it's a good thing that he did, because it doesn't detract from the subject, you don't get distracted by anything in the introduction, Jesus is on center stage, and he just leaves them there through the book. And as he does so, in verse five, he gives you the first of 39 quotations about him from the Old Testament. Seven of them are in the first chapter. So it's very heavy on the front end and we're going to be going back to the Old Testament a lot to understand this, but the reason he does this is because the Jews had a very high regard for the scriptures. They held it in high esteem as they should. So in order to reach them at the very beginning, the author says, Okay, if you like the Old Testament so much, let's see what it says. If you have such a high opinion of them, let's let scripture interpret scripture and go back there with me. And in fact, he also puts this in question marks to say, Don't you know this already? I mean, haven't you already seen these things for yourself? It should be obvious to you by now. And in order to do that, in verse five, he quotes from Psalm chapter two, that's the first one he mentions, because it's a Messianic Psalm. It's one of several psalms in the Old Testament that were written to point Israel to the Messiah, which is why it was quoted by Peter in the book of Acts. He mentions it there. The Psalm was also quoted by John in the book of Revelation. They all understood the significance of it. And it showed that because it showed that Jesus is King. And in fact, if you want to keep your finger in the book of Hebrews, and turn with me again to the book of

Psalms, I was going to apologize for going back and forth so much in your Bibles this morning, but I'm not going to do that because the book of Hebrews was written to explain the Old Testament to you. I mean, it was written so you could see it through New Testament eyes. And so in order to do that, you just have to flip back and forth. There's no other way. But if you look at Psalm two in its entirety, you've got to really see what it's saying here so you can get a feel for what the author's telling you because it says this,

Why are the nations in an uproar in the people's devising a vain thing? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, "Let us tear their fetters apart and cast away their cords from us!"

He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them. Then He will speak to them in His anger and terrify them in His fury saying, "But as for Me, I have installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain."

"I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord: [And here's the quotation from Hebrews.] He said to Me, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You. Ask of me and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware.'"

Now, therefore, O kings, show discernment; take warning, O judges of the earth. Worship the Lord with reverence and rejoice with trembling. Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way, for His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!

Now, there is so much that can be said about that psalm alone, but the main idea is in the first few verses when it says, "Why are the nations in an uproar and the people's devising a vain thing?" In other words, why are they troubling themselves so much like this? Why are they going to war in the Ukraine right now? Because it doesn't matter. At the end of the day, they won't amount to much because the One who sits in heaven laughs at them. And the idea there is that He laughs not out of derision or mockery, but it's kind of like Uh huh. Because He knows they're not in charge, He is. They're not the ones calling the shots. He's the one doing that.

In fact, it's been said that if Psalm one shows you the contrast between the wicked and the righteous, you know how blessed it is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked. Psalm two shows you the contrast between wicked nations and righteous ones. And the contrast is this: the kingdom of God, the righteous nation is ruled by one person and that's Christ. He's on the throne. Not prime ministers, not presidents, not kings, only Him. Because God has decided to give everything into His hands. In verse nine it says when He does that, Jesus will break them with a rod of iron and shatter them like earthenware, which means that he'll judge the nations severely for their sins, you'll punish them with a vengeance to the point that they will be obliterated and there won't be anything left. So why bother with all that? Focus your attention on Him. Verse 13 says when He does, He'll pour out His wrath upon them, which means that He will do this in an angry way; there'll be an element of fury to Christ's response. So verse 12 says you need to do homage to the Son, you need to bow to Jesus. But the point is, going back to the book of Hebrews, that all of this happens because Jesus is God's Son. You see the word, son, repeated several times in Psalm chapter two. It happens because He is one with the Father and the term Son of God can be a bit misleading at times, because it's so common for people today to say, Yeah, Jesus is God's Son, I understand he's God's Son, I get that. So we might want to explain it a little more. But it means that He has God's DNA. I mean, He and God have the same being and nature and character. They're one God and two persons or

three persons, if you include the Holy Spirit, blessed trinity. And the term, son, this is what's known as an anthropomorphism. It's the attribution of a human characteristic to God, because obviously, Jesus is not a son in a human sense. He's not literally God's offspring, because God doesn't have that; He doesn't have children, because He's a spirit, He doesn't have a physical body. But the reason He calls Jesus this is because this is really the only way that we can understand it. Our minds are too small to understand the Trinity. It's too big for us. So the Lord uses images like this one so we can wrap our minds around this, because just like a son talks like his father and walks like his father, Jesus does the same with God. And just like He looks like his dad, and acts like his dad, and copies him and his expressions, Christ does that with the Father, which is why He's given all these privileges in Psalm two. That's why He's given these honors. Psalm two, verse eight says, "The earth is given to Jesus as an inheritance and the very ends of the earth as His possession." That's because He's a Son. Sons get an inheritance. It actually appears three times in Hebrews chapter one: in verse two and verse four, and then down in verse 14, to show you that Jesus will be given everything that previously went to God, He'll be endowed with it. For some of you, when your dad died, all you got was a cheque or some land or maybe a vehicle or house or something. Jesus will get the whole world because that's from His father.

And let me tell you what this has to do with us today. This means that if you follow Jesus Christ, you follow someone who is the ruler of the world, Amen. If you trust in Him, you trust in someone who reigns over everything, including the nations. Because despite what you may have heard, the world is not governed by destiny. And it's not governed by chance. And it's not run by the Coronavirus. And it's not led by liberals or Democrats or any politician out in Ottawa, it's run by Him and a day is coming when He's going to fix it. And the time is coming when He will return in order to make it right and put everything in its place. And so you don't have to panic about it, because it rests in His hands. I don't know about you but I can deal with anything if I know it's only going to last for a little while. And I can handle anything if I understand it's going to be fixed one day. And the Lord says that's what's going to happen with this world.

Putting this whole thing together, earlier in verse three, it says that when He made purification for sins, Jesus sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high to show you that that's where He is right now. This is why you don't see Him in the world, He is at the right hand of God. Because when a king wanted to honor someone, He would place Him at His right hand as a way of saying, "This is my equal." But what Psalm two says and what the author mentions in verse five, is that he won't stay there indefinitely. Because the time is coming, when He will come back to claim what is His. He's at the right hand and He's going to come down, and when He does that, it won't be anything like His first trip to the earth, or the first time He was among us. The first time He came to suffer, the second time He will come to rule. Theologians call this the Second Advent of Christ. The first advent, or the first arrival of Christ to the earth was when He was despised and mocked and rejected by men and nailed to a cruel cross. But in His second arrival, He will be so much more than that. In fact, in His first arrival, nobody really saw Him as He truly was. There were some times like at the Mount of Transfiguration when the disciples saw Him there and they saw Him in His glory and they realize this is not like everybody else.

But you won't get a full taste of that until He comes back. And the thought of it should get you excited. You know, I've heard it said that we're not on the planning committee for Jesus' return. But we should be on the welcoming committee. In fact, this world is so bad right now, one question people often ask when you talk to them is, where is the justice and all this? Well, the answer is, it's coming. The Justice it's on its way. It's not here yet, but it will be just as it's not raining now. But that doesn't mean it won't be forever. They often ask the question as well, where is God in the midst of all this? What's He up to? The answer that is that He's waiting and watching

and keeping an account of all those who don't do homage to the Son, because He's getting ready to judge them. In fact, when you read a passage, like Psalm two, one thing that strikes you is that the punishment is so bad in there, that it's hard to read. When it breaks your heart, it says that He'll shatter people and He'll break them like pottery. You guys have smashed a pot before, what happens to it is it goes everywhere. You can ever put it back together again. And it says He'll cause them to tremble and die and perish in the way. That's not referring to things that's referring to people. It's not the nations in general, it's the leaders of them and the rulers. Christ is going to crush them. But the point is that he can do all this, because Jesus is King. The one who came once as a lowly baby in a manger is going to come back to rule the entire world.

This brings us to another reason why Jesus is greater than the angels. And that is because He is begotten. The first one is because He's the Son of God, which is important because that's a title that's used for no one else in the Bible, but Him. But the second one is because He is begotten, which is a word that means that he has become one of us. Christ was born in human flesh. And if you look in verse three, reading on it says this, "And He is the radiance of God's glory, and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the Word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much better than the angels as He has inherited a more excellent name than they. For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are My Son, today I have begotten you"?"

We talked about the word, son, there, now let's talk about the word, begotten. When you start reading the book of Hebrews, one thing commentators tell you is that verses one through four, the start of the letter, they kind of get it going, but verse five is really where it begins because this is where he starts quoting from the Old Testament. And he did that for the simple reason that the Jews had a hard time believing Christ was the Messiah, as the Apostle Paul says it was a stumbling block for them. So the author spends a considerable amount of time quoting from their own scriptures to help you with that. And as he does it, he gives you a second reference to Psalm two when he says, "For to which of the angels did God ever say, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten you'?" That word, begotten, is a Greek word from which we get the word Genesis, and it means to create something or cause it to be born. And interestingly enough, it's the same word Jesus used when he told Nicodemus, that unless someone is born again or converted, he cannot see the kingdom of God. And that's a good way to render it because Jesus wasn't born as much as he was converted. Because he was transformed from one form of life into another. He had always existed; there was never a time when Christ was not here among us. So when he became a baby, he just shifted into a different form of existence. You and I didn't experience when you were born, you came into existence for the first time, you've entered the flow of human history in a way that you had never done before. But Christ was always in the flow of history. He was always there. Which is why, to my knowledge, the Bible never says Jesus was born; they always say He was begotten.

And in fact, the author doesn't quote all of Psalm two at this point, but tying that into the context of that Psalm, verse seven of Psalm two actually says this, it says, "I will tell you of the decree of the Lord. He said to me, 'You are my son, and today I have begotten you.' And that term, decree, is helpful because apparently this decision of God the Father to beget the Son was actually decreed ahead of time; it was decided long ago in the eternal counsel of the Trinity, when the Father, Son and Spirit met, to determine how to save us. Now, we don't know much about that, because none of us were there in the eternal councils of the Trinity. We know from passages like Ephesians one, verse four, that God chose us in Him from before the foundations of the world. And that's helpful, because I don't know about you, but I wasn't doing much before the foundations of the world, were you? I wasn't very busy, because I wasn't around yet. But God was and this is what He was doing: He was planning to save us by begetting

the Son. He was finding a way to help us. In Acts chapter two, verse 23, it also says, "This man, Jesus, was delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God to be crucified by the hands of godless men. That's a good verse as well, because it says, on the one hand, the men who nailed Christ to the cross were godless. They were evil people. But on the other hand, it didn't matter because it happened according to God's predetermined plan. You think about the worst event in human history, it had to be the cross is when the most innocent person of all time was murdered. And God was sovereign over that. So don't you think He's sovereign over what's going on in Russia right now? Don't you think He's sovereign over this world? First Peter one, verse 20, says Jesus was foreknown before the foundation of the world, and that shows you how this plays out because Christ was known before the creation of the world. But now He has appeared; He existed from before time began, where He was one with the Father, one with the Spirit in perfect harmony, but now He has shown up on the earth, which is what verse five means when it says, "You are my son, today I have begotten you."

That word, today, it means God has known Jesus from all eternity; He had that relationship with Him throughout all of existence. But today, something happened to change that this moment, something took place in order to make it different. And what happened is that Christ was begotten. I quoted from a lot of scriptures to you there, but you have to put all these pieces together to see the greatness of what he's saying. He's saying that it took all of eternity to make this happen, it took all of time. Which is another reason why Christ is greater than the angels.

One commentator said that to the Jewish mind, angels were extremely exalted, so if the author of the Hebrews was to persuade his fellow Jews that Christ is the mediator of a better covenant, then he would have to show that Christ was better than them. And this is how he did it by showing Jesus was begotten, because whereas the angels were made, Christ was not. And whereas the angels were creatures, Jesus was not that either. He is the Creator Himself. And as the Creator, He allowed to do something, he allowed Himself to do something wonderful for our salvation. And that was that He became a man in order to deliver us from sin. The Bible tells us the angels were not eternal. Unlike God, they haven't always been around. There was a time when they were made on the first day of creation, when God created the heavens and the earth. And that puts them below Jesus, because He never went through that. There was never a time when He was made. He was begotten.

And let me tell you how this applies to our lives today. This means your salvation is perfectly secure, because it's based on all of this. It's a fixed thing. It's a secure thing. It's perfectly safe, because it was decreed long ago that Christ would do this for you, in eternity past by the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. So there's nothing you could ever do to change it because you're not that smart. Amen. You're just not that intelligent. No offense. Jesus himself said in John six, "All the Father gives Me will come to me and the one who comes to me I will never cast out." And why did he say that? Because that's built on the work of God, not man. Salvation is built on the things that He does, not what you do, which is why it'll never be lost. You don't even have to worry about it. Because how in the world could God plan your salvation from all eternity and then mess it up the moment you show up? It doesn't make sense. How can you determine from before the foundations of the world with a Blessed Trinity to do all of this and begat the Son and nail Him to a cross, and then blow it the moment you arrive? That's crazy. So you don't want to look at it that way. In fact, you can make the argument in this first chapter of Hebrews, that this was written to demonstrate that Christ was King, to show you that this is the one who saves you now: it's none other than the Lord of heaven and earth, who judges the nations and shatters it like earthenware. And the idea here is that if He can do that for the nations, just think what He can do to your sin. If He can shatter whole countries and whole peoples like that, just think what He can do to your flesh, and the evilness inside of you. So you don't have

to worry about that. Now you can just believe and be at peace, because your salvation stretches all the way back to eternity, it goes all the way back to the beginning of time.

To show you this is how safe it is, the author of Hebrews actually says this in several different ways in the book. In chapter two, verse 14, he says, "Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise also predicted the same, that through death, He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is the devil." And what that means is that since we share in Christ, flesh and blood, or since he shares in ours, Jesus can defeat the devil for us. He can render him powerless. So many Christians worry about the devil today, don't they? They're so afraid, but you don't need to be. There's no reason to fear the devil, not if you have Christ, because he has rendered him useless. He's broken all his power.

And then if you look in chapter four, verse 14, this is a little longer of a passage. But it says, "Therefore, since we have a great high priest, who is passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession, for we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weakness, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore, let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace." And that says, not only do you not have to worry about the devil anymore, you don't have to worry about temptation. You don't have to worry about what sin could do to you, because Jesus is our Great High Priest. And he took care of that too.

Then if you want to look at one more verse in chapter 10, verse 19, he says, "Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place, by the blood of Jesus by a new and living way, which he inaugurated for us, through the veil, that is his flesh. And since we have a great high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience." And the key word there is conscience because it says Jesus came to cleanse your conscience as well. So you don't have to go around wondering, Am I saved? Or am I not? That's a conscience issue. Am I getting into heaven? Or am I not? Does God love? Verse 22, says you can have full assurance on that issue. Not half assurance, full assurance. But it's all because of Christ and the great things that He did.

I read somewhere this week that it's a pretty silly thing to sit inside a city and ask people how to get there. It's pretty dumb to be in Chilliwack, and asking people how to get to Chilliwack. And in a similar way, it's a really silly thing to be sitting in Christ and to be asking people how to get saved. If you're in Christ, it's already happened. You just have to enjoy that now, and that brings us to one more reason why Jesus is greater than the angels, just to review these other ones. The first one is because He's the Son of God. Secondly, because He's begotten, which is something we don't hear a lot about today. But it was very important for the Jews to understand because to a Jew, they never really understood how God could ever stoop so low to be a man. God is holy. Man is not Holy. God is perfect, man is sinful. The author says Jesus could do that because He was begotten, he was born of a virgin born without sin, and came into this world in order to save us. And that brings us to one more reason why He is greater. And that is because He is the firstborn. He is the Son of God, He is begotten.

And then the third reason Jesus is greater than the angels is because He is the firstborn, which means He is the greatest person who ever lived. He stands head and shoulders above everybody else. And if you read on in verses five and six, it says, "For to which of the angels did God ever say, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten you'? And again, 'I will be a Father to him, and he shall be a Son to me'?" And when He again brings the firstborn into

the world, He says, 'Let all the angels of God worship Him.'" Now we're going to focus on the term firstborn in a moment.

But as you go through this passage, the author just piles one Old Testament verse on top of another to show you how great Christ is, kind of stacks them up; they're like pieces on a puzzle, in order to show you that he is the greatest thing of all. And as he does, he gives you two more prophecies about Him. The first one at the end of verse five is found in Second Samuel seven where it talks about the Davidic Covenant. Because if you remember your Bible history there, the Lord told David, "I will establish your throne forever." And obviously, that promise was never fulfilled by his descendants because they died; you can't have an eternal throne if your descendants keep dying. So the author here says that one day there's going to be a descendant of David who will never die, he will have an Eternal Throne. And that is Christ. And when He comes, the Lord will be a Father to Him, and He shall be a son to Him. That's a direct quotation from Second Samuel seven, verse 14, to again, show this relationship with God and Jesus, not only will he be David's son, but He will be the Son of God, offspring of an eternal King. And that brings it to the next quotation here in the passage, which is taken from Psalm 97. We read that right in the middle of the service. Because Psalm 97, quoted there in verse six, highlights Christ's second coming as well. And that song begins by saying, "Let the earth rejoice, let the nations be glad." Why? Because the Messiah is coming. People need to rejoice because the Savior is on the way. And when He gets here, verse six says, He will be worshipped by the angels. And that's a pretty startling statement because angels don't just worship anybody. They're never divided on that issue. Because the moment they do, it's idolatrous, and they get kicked out of heaven. So what the author is saying here is that this is one of the strongest evidences of Jesus deity in the entire Bible, that the angels do this for Him because he is God. Because He deserves it. Not only is Jesus greater than them, but He's this this much greater than them... enough to be worshipped as God. To highlight that, the author gives him another title when he calls him the firstborn.

Verse six in its entirety says, "And when he again brings the first born into the world, He says, 'And let all the angels of God worship Him.'" The Greek term for firstborn doesn't refer to a firstborn according to time, it refers to someone who was first born according to rank, or their position in a family. If you remember your Bible history for a moment, you'll know that Esau was the literally the firstborn son of Isaac, but he wasn't treated that way. Jacob was; Jacob was given all the promises, Jacob was given all the rewards. Why? Because in the eyes of God, he was more important. He was the symbolic firstborn. It is the same way with Jacob's son, Joseph. His father gave him a coat of many colors and gave him gifts and praise and all that stuff, even though he was 11th in line, because he was more important the same way with Christ. God treats him that way, too. I mean, you guys know Jesus was not the first person born in human history. He was born 1000s of years after the world began, he could have been the 100,000,000 billionth person born. But God doesn't treat him that way. In fact, the word for firstborn is another anthropomorphism here because Jesus was not firstborn in every sense of the word, because you couldn't say that He held that title the way Joseph did, or the way Jacob did. Because again, God doesn't have biological children, He doesn't produce descendants that way. This just refers to the fact that God puts him above all others. He places him in higher esteem. And in fact, this word, is used nine times in the Bible, to say that Jesus is the firstborn over several things, because it says He is the firstborn over many brothers. He's the firstborn among every creature. He's the firstborn among the dead. And in each of those cases, it doesn't refer to chronology. Because Jesus was not the first person to die, he was just the most important one. And he was not the first born among all his Jewish brothers. He just stood above all the other ones, he was preeminent. And that's the way it's used here. And in fact, the author in this passage, the one thing he keeps pointing out to you is that you really can't have too high a view of Jesus. This is not an ordinary person here. He's not a typical man.

Some of you have gotten in arguments before with cults, such as the Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses, who will quote this verse and they'll say, Well, no, see, Jesus was first born, therefore he was just a man. But that's not the way the author uses it here, because men aren't worshipped by angels are they? And they're not called God. But the point in all of this is that this is who has come to save you. Verse two, if you want to tie this into earlier, verse two says he is the heir of all things, and the radiance of God's glory, and the exact representation of His nature. And He upholds the world. Not that He holds it up, but He upholds it; He doesn't carry it on his back like a burden. And He does more than that, He directs the world as it should go. And now the author takes it one step further, and says the most glorious creatures imaginable, give him all their praise. Because they can't help themselves to show you that you can't have too high a view of Christ. You can't think too much of them. Because no matter how big you think Jesus is, he's always bigger, always. And no matter how much you say about Him, you could always say more, because He never stopped blowing your mind.

In fact, we probably need to say more about this, because this is such a problem today. But when you doubt your salvation, this is what you're doing. You're not doubting yourself, you're doubting Him. And when you question your assurance, and you say, am saved? Am I not? Am I? Am I going to heaven? Or am I not? Does God love me? Or does He not? You're not questioning your own weakness, or your own shortcomings, you're doing that to your Saviour. You're saying you don't think He's strong enough to save you. And that's a terrible thing to do, because He doesn't deserve that.

Your issue is not that you don't have enough self-esteem. Your issue is you don't have enough Christ esteem. You have a too low a view of the cross. And there's no excuse for that. Because even though this chapter, it's hard to read, the author does make his point crystal clear. And that is that Jesus is bigger than everything. He says he's bigger than the prophets. And then as he's going down the list, he says, no, no, that's not enough. Jesus is bigger than the angels. And then as he goes down, he says, no, no, that's not enough, either. It's like He's searching for words, to find out how to say it. So he says that Jesus is greater than the governments or the kingdoms of this world. And then he says, no, no, I've got to go farther. So he's going to end the chapter by saying Jesus is greater than creation. He's bigger than the world itself. But even then you get the impression He's not done yet because He just keeps going higher and higher and higher and he keeps giving Him more and more glory to remind you that that's where your salvation comes from. It comes from the greatest thing in the universe.

And I can't wait to study him more with you in the weeks to come. As you read this book, you're going to tell there's going to be so much more to say. But it should thrill your hearts more and more as you dive farther and farther into it because you're not saved by your works. And you're not saved by your efforts, or your attempts to keep the law. You're saved by Christ alone.

In my studies this week, I came across a story about the time I was in seminary and we came across an old janitor reading his bible in the book of Revelation. So we asked him, "Do you know what you're reading in there?" And the man said, "Yes, I do. I'm reading about how Jesus will win." And friends, I tell you that story because that's the message of the book of Revelation and every book of the Bible, and that is that Jesus will win. He won over sin, He won over death, he won over hell, and he will win over all these crazy things that are happening in the world today. So you can just put your faith in His hands, Amen. Will you do that today? Let me close us in a word of prayer, and ask for God's grace to do that.

Heavenly Father, we thank you so much this morning for our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. And we thank you for the privilege of studying deep things like the book of Hebrews. It's going to be a book that every time we read it, we're going to want to read more. Lord, thank You that it puts our Saviour on display. And as we come to the Lord's table, we're here to remember what He has done for us. This one who was the firstborn and the Son of God and the only begotten died for us. Because we couldn't come to you on our own. The blood of bulls and goats was not enough. All our good works are not enough. It's only Him. Lord, thank you for that. And I do pray for our congregation today. I know that some of them are struggling with assurance of salvation, and they're wrestling with all these issues, coming down to sin, the devil, and temptation. Remind them to take their eyes off of that and put them on Christ. Thank you for such a Saviour. Thank you for such a one who is this high and exalted.

We lose sight of Him sometimes, Lord, when we're down here in the mud and the muck of this world. Things can seem so dirty down here. Sometimes they can seem so depressing and discouraging. And yet this reminds us we have nothing to be discouraged about, not if we look to heaven. So we want to do that today, Father, and we do anticipate the day the Lord Jesus returns. It's not soon enough as far as we're concerned. Because when He does, He's going to judge everything and make it right. So Father, I do pray for those who are lost this morning, that they would put their lives in His hands so that when He returns to judge, He won't judge them. And Christ would be glorified and exalted and we pray this in His name. Amen.