

Looking this morning at Hebrews chapter 1 verses 4 through 14. Now remember the audience and the occasion of this letter. This letter is being written to some Jewish converts to Christianity. And they are being tempted to turn back to their former religion.

And the reason is that they are facing persecution. They're suffering on behalf of following Christ. They're exhausted. They're worn out. And they are wondering if it's all worth it. They're wondering if they should keep following Christ or if they should turn back. And Christians today face the same temptation. Christians get worn out. Christians get exhausted. Christians sometimes think, is it all worth it? Was it better before I followed Christ?

And the author of Hebrews comes out in the first three verses, which are the thesis of the book, which he will be unraveling and developing and proving those first three verses for the entirety of the rest of the book. And in those first three verses, he comes out with powerful proclamation that Christ is better. that following Christ is worth it simply because of who Christ is and what Christ has done in and for you to redeem you. And so he comes out in those first three verses that we looked at last week and he says, Christ is better because he speaks a better word, better than the Old Testament, not in terms of authority, not in terms of truth, but in terms of fulfillment.

He is the fulfillment of the Old Testament. He's better in terms of his person. He is the one through whom the world was created, the one for whom the world was created. He is the climax and center of all of human history in his incarnation, in his death, and in his resurrection. And he is the radiance of the glory of God, the exact imprint of his nature. His person is better. There's nothing that compares with him. And then his work is better. making atonement for sins, he sat down. He accomplished the work of redemption.

But how, if you had to verify the magnificent claims of these first three verses, how would you verify that if you were trying to persuade someone? You might turn to Jesus' miracles and say, see, he's better. You might turn to his resurrection and say, see, he's better. But do you know how the book of Hebrews proves the deity of Christ? The Old Testament. Seven Old Testament quotations this morning that he goes to to show Christ is better. His deity is real.

How can you know that? Well, you Jewish converts, if you just studied your Old Testament closely, you would know that Christ is better. Well, with this in mind, let us pray and ask God to bless the reading and preaching of his word. Dear Heavenly Father, we come before you this morning and we ask that you would help us, that you would teach us. In the name of Christ, we pray, amen.

It says the word of God, Hebrews chapter one, verses four through 14 in this text, We will see that Christ, or we're going to say the son, the son is superior to angels, the son is superior to angels. Beginning in verse four, having become as much superior, and that's literally the word better, 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. And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, let all 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 son, he says, your throne, oh 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. And you, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands. 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.

And to which of the angels has he ever said, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for you? Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation? Ascends a reading of God's holy word. The son of God is superior to angels.

Unfallen angels, in all of their greatness, in all of their grandeur, so glorious that in the book of Revelation you see in Revelation 19.10 that John was tempted to fall down and worship the angel. The angel said to John, worship God. As glorious as these beings are, if you saw one you'd be tempted to fall down and worship the angel.

As glorious as they are, They are infinitely less glorious than Christ. They are creatures. He is the creator. If you could climb the ladder of being, you start perhaps with plants, and then you climb up to, I don't know, animals, and then you make your way up to humanity, and maybe you make your way up to angels, and then you go up to the next rung, you wouldn't hit Christ. because Christ is in a league all of his own.

Christ is superior to the angels by an infinite, infinite distance and a league all of his own. But why angels? Why does the author bring up angels here? And it seems that it is because the angels in one way or another were involved in the giving of the law in the Old Testament. So look at chapter two, verse two of Hebrews. In chapter 2 verse 2 we read this, for since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, How shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? They appear from several other texts in the New Testament to have had some involvement as mediators in the giving of the law.

So for example, in Acts 7.53, Stephen, when he preaches that great sermon, in Acts 7.53, Stephen says this, you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it.

And so why does he bring up angels here? Because he is saying to them, to those who were tempted to go back to the shadows rather than delighting in the fulfillment that has come in Christ, he is saying to them, Christ's revelation is not in any way inferior to that which was delivered through the angels. Don't leave, he is saying to them, the revelation that has come in its fullness in Christ, and live in the shadows of what he came to fulfill. But I suspect nobody here is tempted to go do such a thing as this in the same way that they were, so why should you care about Christ being superior to the angels here this morning? Well, if Christ indeed is superior to the angels, the application is simply this. Will you esteem him as such? Will you worship him as such? Will you delight in him as such? If what we're about to see in verses 4 through 14 is true of Christ, what place does he have in your life? Does he reside on the throne of your heart?

And the truth is, that if we can, by faith and by God's grace, embrace the glorious truths of verses 4 through 14, it will be a profound antidote to false doctrine and a profound catalyst to godly living. It will be a profound antidote to false doctrine because all false doctrines that are truly heretical at some level nearly always, if not always, try to pull from the supremacy of Christ.

They try to lower the goodness of God. We don't need to worship Mary. You don't need to worship angels. Worship God. Worship Christ. What do those types of views say about Christ? A view where you need to bow down to Mary, or you need to worship angels. What does that say of Christ?

He's not good enough. He's not glorious enough for your worship. He's not so good that nothing else matters in comparison to him. You need something else. What does a works-based religion teach? Every works-based religion, every works-based view of Christianity proclaim. They might not say it in these words, but what are they saying? Christ isn't good enough. Christ isn't good enough. Christ isn't awesome enough. He hasn't fulfilled it all. He hasn't done it all. It's lowering Christ. It's taking from his supremacy.

If by faith we can grasp the Christ that we are about to witness in verses 4 through 14, it will be an antidote to false doctrine and it will also be a catalyst to godly living because you will want to live for the Christ of verses 4 through 14 when you behold him in his glory. You will want him more than anything else because he's better than everything else. So Christ today is superior to angels. The son of God is superior to angels.

We see this in three ways. Because of his name, because of his deity, and because of his works. His name, his deity, his works. So first, because of his name versus 4 and 5. Let us begin with verse 4. Having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

This word superior or better will be used 12 more times in our 12 more 11 more times in the book of Hebrews. 12 times in total. And it is always used to contrast Christ with the old covenant, to contrast Christ with the shadows, to show that he is superior, that he is better, that he's the fulfillment. So this is a theme that is going to ring throughout the entirety of the book. He is the climax of the entire Old Testament.

But what does it mean to say that his name is better? We might hear that his name is better and think of when either we were or we are or maybe one day kids you will be. choosing a name for your child, and you think, oh, I like Steve, and maybe the other person in the marriage is, well, I like John, and well, Steve's better than John, or whatever it might be. That's not what it means when it teaches us that Christ's name is better. The name in this context reveals something of the essence of the being, something of the very nature of the person. And so when the name is said to be better than the angels, it's not a opinion like, Steve is a better name than John. It's an objective declaration that this nature, this being is better than the angels. And what is the name that is given to him? What is the name here we see? Son.

And you see these two Old Testament quotations to prove the point. Verse five, there are two Old Testament quotations, Psalm 2-7 and 2 Samuel 7-14. So verse five, for to which of the angels did God ever say, you are my son, today I have begotten you. That's a quotation from Psalm 2-7.

When did God the Father say to these words to his son? When did he say, you are my son, today I have begotten you? This, I declare unto you, in my judgment, is a statement of the eternal generation of the son. In eternity past, we say with the creed that he is begotten, not made. that he is eternally generated from the father. There was never a time when the father became the father because he always had the son. And it was in that day that he said these words to him. Now, many commentators will say that These words are to be applied and excluded to Christ's resurrection, and there's warrant for that. They're not altogether off in my judgment.

For example, in Acts 13.33, Paul used Psalm 2.7 in this sort of way to say, in his resurrection, God said to him, you are my son, today I have begotten you.

Or even in this book, Hebrews 5.5, so also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, you are my son, today I have begotten you. However, Why did the father, why could the father say those words to his son in his resurrection? Why could the father say, today I have begotten you in Christ's resurrection? because it was a public declaration of what was true from eternity. The resurrection was a public declaration. It didn't make the son something he was not previously. Beloved, please see, the resurrection didn't make Jesus the son, but it was a public declaration of that fact.

So Psalm 2.7 can rightly, as Paul himself does, apply to his resurrection. because that's when he was publicly declared, in fact, to be who he was.

But in its first and primary application was to his eternally being the son of God. And so he is saying here, he's better than the angels because he's eternally been the son. Psalm 2, 7. And then not only this, he quotes 2 Samuel 7, 14. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son." In the original context, you may remember that this would have been applied to Solomon.

God was saying that, David, I will raise up a son for you who will have an eternal kingdom that will last forever. And that begins to be fulfilled in Solomon. But it finds its climax and consummate fulfillment in Christ, great David's greater son. And so what do these two Old Testament texts then say about Christ? They say this, he is the eternal son of God. And he brings an eternal kingdom.

His name is better than the angels. No angel has ever called a son like this. No angel has ever given authority like this. And so shouldn't we praise him? Shouldn't we worship him? For this is who he is. But secondly, we see the son is better because of his deity. Because of his deity. through nine, beginning in verse six. And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, let all God's angels worship him. You see his deity right here in verse six, in this quotation from Psalm 97, seven. The angels themselves, according to Psalm 97, seven, worship the son.

The angels don't want you, the unfallen ones, don't want you to worship them. You're, he's saying to them, you're tempted to go back to the angels. The unfallen angels are saying, don't come back to me. Don't worship me. Worship God. Worship Christ. They worshiped Christ. Psalm 97, seven, let all God's angels worship him. The Hebrew author applies that verse to Christ. Him. When Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness, he tempted Jesus

to worship him. Remember Jesus said to Satan, you shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve. Yet what does this text say? It says the angels worship Christ. Christ said only worship God. This says, worship Christ.

How can Jesus say only worship God, and then Hebrews 1.6 say worship Christ? Because Christ is God.

What do you see happening in Christ's incarnation? Angels worship him, Luke chapter two. Glory to God in the highest and on earth, peace among those with whom he is pleased, What do you see in Revelation chapter 5? Angels worshipping God in heaven ceaselessly. The angels are around the throne worshipping God, the son who is seated on the throne. And they worship him because he is God.

And so if sinless, unfallen angels ceaselessly worship God, what's the application For you, if sinless, unfallen angels ceaselessly worship God, how much more ought we to worship God? You see, the angels cannot worship God as their Redeemer. They can only worship Him as their Creator. But you, who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved, can worship God, worship Christ, not only as your creator, but as your redeemer. The call then, the application then, is how much more should we worship him?

But you continue to see his deity in verses seven and eight. So you see it in the fact that he's worshipped, but you see it also in verses seven and eight in another way. 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 oh God is forever and ever. Verses seven and eight are a contrast and verse seven he speaks of what he says of the angels. Look he says of the angels he says and then he gives a quotation. And then verse 8 begins, but of the sun he says, so you see he's contrasting the angels and the sun. And of the angels he says, and then he quotes Psalm 104, to the effect that the angels are servants and ministers of God. The angels are servants and ministers.

But of the sun he says, your throne. Oh God is forever and ever. Hard to state deity more clearly than that. Look at that, your son, your throne, oh God, he just called the son God. He says in verse seven, the angels, their servants and ministers. Verse eight, but of the son he says, your throne, oh God, he just called the son God. The difference is the angels are ministering spirits of God, and the son is God himself, the second person of the Trinity. This is a quotation from Psalm 45, which we sang together this morning.

And as he continues to develop this quotation into verse nine, we read this, still speaking of the son, it says, You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. And if we could try to capture the application here to the Son, we might read it this way. You, Son of God, have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Now, when did the Son of God do that? When in fulfillment to the Son of God do that?

Love righteousness and hate wickedness. He did that in his perfect life. You see, because God cannot have a people who have any blemish or spot. And what verse 9 is saying is that the Son of God came and loved righteousness and hated wickedness. and he did it for his people. He loved righteousness every day of his life and hated all wickedness every day of his life that he might ransom a people for himself. What made the cross necessary is that God hates sin. And what makes our salvation a reality is that Christ took that sin on himself and

fulfilled righteousness for us. This is proclaiming to us the way of salvation. And it also, again, proclaims the deity of Christ.

Because what angel could fulfill salvation and redemption for humanity? If an angel assumed a human nature, even an unfallen angel, he could not fulfill verse nine of Hebrews. Because this verse is about the redemption that we have because of Christ. And even if an angel assumed a human nature, even if all the angels that are alive today assumed a human nature, and died for you, they could not achieve redemption for you. Because they're still creatures. They're still finite. They're not infinite. And we owe God an infinite debt.

And so by declaring in verse 8 that He is God, and then making it known in verse 9 that as God the Son loved righteousness and hated wickedness, And we know that that takes its fulfillment in Christ's work. The text is proclaiming to you that Christ did for you something no angel ever could do. As God, he fulfilled the requirements of the law and accomplished redemption on the cross. Therefore, verse 9, God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness. And that took place at Pentecost. when the Son received the Spirit and poured out the Spirit upon the church. He received the oil of gladness and poured him out on the church. Acts 2, 33.

And so again, I ask you, what other object will you have for your worship today? Is there someone who can do something that compares with what Christ has done for you? Is there someone who is in the same league as Christ in your heart. Clearly a text like this tells you he's superior to angels, he's superior to all, and he deserves your entire worship. But thirdly, the son is superior to angels because of his work. We've seen his name, his deity, and now his work. Verses 10 through 14 highlight his work. First his work in creation, And you, Lord, lay the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands.

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. The author takes Psalm 102, verses 25 through 27, talking about Yahweh's creating work, and applies Yahweh's work and creation directly to the Son of God. And throughout this quotation, there's a contrast between the Son of God and the created world. You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but what about you?

You 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. He is the creator, and he is immutable. The Son of God is immutable. The end of verse 12, but you are the same and your years will have no end.

Why should you care that the Son of God is immutable other than the fact that the Bible simply states it? What hope would there be for you this morning if you believed in a changing Christ? If you believed in a being for your salvation that could change? The implication would simply be this.

Maybe today he loves you, maybe tomorrow he doesn't. Maybe today his work's been applied to you on the cross, but maybe tomorrow he changes his mind. The immutability, the unchangingness of Christ is what can give you hope in the midst of death. It's that characteristic of his being that can give you confidence that he does love his people, that when he says, I will never leave them or forsake them, that is true because he's not like us. You may

have had someone in your life who has, in one way or another, said, I will never leave you or forsake you, and that someone has left you and forsaken you. If Christ is like that person, if he is changing, you would have no assurance of salvation. His immutability is what puts steel in your backbone as you go through the trials of this life.

So you see his work in creation in verses 10 through 12 but you continue to see his work developed in the way he rules. Verse 13 and 14, and to which of the angels has he ever said, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet. See he rules and he says this, are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation.

Christ executed the office of a king in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies. He rules and the angels don't. The angels do his bidding. He never does the bidding of the angels. Now it's interesting to think about how the angels did minister to Christ in his earthly ministry. They worshiped him at his birth.

When he was tempted in the wilderness, we read in Matthew 4.11 that they came to him after the temptation.

We also read that an angel came to him in Gethsemane in Luke 22.43 as he was sweating those drops like blood.

And as one who sympathizes with us in our weaknesses, he commands the angels today and the angels do his bidding. They are his angels who do what he wills them to do, even for us today, for our salvation. Verse 14, for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation. There's no knowing how God commands the angels for us to this day, for those who have inherited salvation. Well, today we have seen that the angels, that the son is superior to angels because of his name, his deity, and his work.

But I want to draw this to one final application. And this comes from a commentary I read this week. But this was a statement. Beware of the death of awe. Beware of the death of awe. Even as Christians, we often are not in awe of Christ. We are not truly moved in our hearts by who he is and what he has done for us to accomplish redemption. And that is not a healthy thing. When we read a text like this, it challenges us to be amazed, to be freshly astonished at his superiority, at his incomprehensible grandness. He is simply just amazing.

And we often think to ourselves, perhaps, well, I need a way to be a better husband. I need a way to be a better wife. I need a way to be a better grandfather, father, parent, child. Well, if by God's grace we were gripped by the transcendent glory of Christ, we would be better in all those areas because we'd be lost in awe and wonder at Christ, and we would live differently because of the one who has gripped our hearts.

Let us pray. Dear Heavenly Father, we do pray that you would increase in us awe at who Christ is and what he has done for us. We praise you that the angels are but dust in comparison with Him. They are less than dust. And if this is true for the angels, how much more must it be so for us? And yet, He who is so incomprehensibly glorious has brought us to you through His life, death, and resurrection, and ascension. And so I pray that you would help us at Second Presbyterian Church to be in more awe and wonder of Christ. We pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen.