

## “Worship the Son” part 2

### Fixing Our Eyes On Jesus, Our High Priest

Hebrews 4:1-6

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**Jeff:** Our heavenly Father, we thank You for this day. We thank You for this day because it is a day that You have made in Your eternal counsels and You’ve brought it to pass in Your good providence. And so today, Father, we know is Your day. And as we look forward to it, we pray with great expectation that You will supply our daily needs, that You will give us our daily bread, that You will keep us from temptation, that You will deliver us from evil—Father, that You would help us to be people who have understood Your grace and so forgive one another, as we have been forgiven.

And Father, as we stand before You today, we pray that our minds and our hearts would be attentive to Your word. We know that You use this Word accompanied by the power of Your Holy Spirit, the divine Inspirer of it, to form and shape Christ in us. Father, we pray that You would do that this morning and throughout the day, such that we would be different people, even from the type of people, the kind of persons we were this morning. Father, be molding and shaping the graces that are from Christ in us.

Father, we pray and ask that Your hand would be upon us for good, but not only us. We pray for our brother Bruce. We ask that Your hand would be upon him. And Father, we know that there have been many difficult providences that have crossed his path. And yet we know that each one of them is from You. And we know that You are teaching him and molding Christ in him through all of them. And we pray, Father, that he would be taking advantage of them, that he might grow in grace. Father, we also pray that You would be sustaining him throughout. And we pray that You’ll give him that sense of being sustained.

But not only him. We pray for us, his friends. We pray most of all for his family. We think of Becky in particular. And we pray that You’ll encourage her heart as she cares for Bruce these days.

And Father, we ask that You will be with us again today as we open Your word as we give our attention to it. Father, we pray that our hearts and our minds might be fixed upon it, that we might see Christ in it. So we pray these things in His name. Amen.

**Men:** Amen.

**Jeff:** All right. Well I’ve got to tell this story on my son. So he was asked, “Well what do you think of sitting in your dad’s congregation?”, right?

**Participant:** Yes.

**Jeff:** And he heard him. How many years ago was it, Nathan?

**Nathan:** About seven years ago.

**Jeff:** See, he knows that I like to tell this story. *(Laughter)* I always ask him. I said, “What did you think of the sermon today, son?”

And he looks at me and he says to me, “Dad, I hate to be the one to tell you this, but you’re hard to follow.” *(Laughter)* I tell that every chance I get. *(Laughter)*

**Participant:** And it never gets old.

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**Jeff:** It never gets old, especially when he’s around. *(Laughter)* Actually, only when he’s around. *(Laughter)*

Anyway, today we’re going to be looking at the verse we looked at the last time which we didn’t look at. We only got to the introduction. So I’ve hit the rewind button. I want us to look at these verses again. And we’ll have just a few words of introduction today and then we’ll get to the text. But I want us to look at Hebrews 1:4-6. And I’ll read the first set of verses to give us a little bit of context before we do. So listen to God’s word. This is in fact the word of the living God and we ought to give our full attention to it.

*“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. After making purification 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 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.’”*

And we’ll come back to some of those other verses. But let’s just stick with these for right now. I want us to think about *an introduction*. I want us to get back to the question *why angels?* And then I want us to use what we’ve learned to make sense of what we’ve learned about the Son in that reading of the text. So let’s do that.

But before we do that, let me remind you of a couple of things and add a couple of things from the last time. The first thing I want to remind you of that I think is important for us, not just as we look through this introduction, but as we look through the entire book of Hebrews, is to remember *the preacher’s posture*. And this is a sermon, and the preacher is preaching his sermon.

And the interesting thing is—and I’m not going to make mention of these things except in passing along the way—but there are hints that this is a sermon and not necessarily an epistle. There are things embedded in the text that make us think that it’s more for oratory than it is necessarily for reading, as you might read an epistle.

So it’s a sermon. And the preacher has a posture. And that posture that he has, that basic presupposition that he has is the one I reminded you of last time, and it’s this. It’s that *believers are never in the same mental state or spiritual state that they were in prior to their conversion*. And that is so important for any preacher to keep in mind. And it’s important for any believer to keep in mind.

And let me say this. (If I can just grab a drink!) Let me just say it like this. I want to just add an aside. This is crucial for when you’re dealing with people, because what is our tendency when somebody disagrees with us or we see somebody that’s not acting the way they ought to act?

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You know, one of the things that you’re tempted to say is, Oh! Is that person in Christ? Is his profession a solid profession? And one of the things that this kind of posture helps you to maintain as you deal with people is to say, You know what? I’m always going to think of them as better than the day before their conversion. They’re never below that day.

Now they may prove otherwise, and the session of a church may excommunicate them. That may be the case. But you’re not the one making that pronouncement on anyone. You’re always looking at people from the grid that he or she is a converted person. And if you start with that mindset, if you start with that posture, what you’re going to do is that you’re going to remember what the Westminster Confession has said. It says that *“believers are never utterly destitute of that seed of God and life of faith, that love of Christ and the brethren, that sincerity of heart and conscience of duty.”*

So that’s a good basic place to start. And you see that in this text. Again, when we look at chapter 5 and 6, one of the things that I said to you the last time was that he talks to them in really hard ways. He calls them “dull” and “sluggish” and “slow to learn.” They should have been far beyond where they are now. Yet he says, “I have better things in mind concerning you, things concerning salvation, though I speak to you in this manner.” So he’s maintaining that posture that we’ve been talking about.

Now there’s a temptation involved. And the reason why is that this is a real-life happening. This is an event that is happening in the life of this congregation. The temptation is—and we’ll learn as we go along—but the temptation is that because of the hardships and the persecutions and all those things, the temptation is to flee back to what was familiar. And what was familiar to them was Judaism. The temptation was to flee to Judaism. And in some ways Judaism had a pass from the government. And though the persecution under some emperors was intense even for the Jews,—Claudius expels those who follow Christos and those Jews who were fighting with those Jews who were fighting with those who followed Christos, and so it wasn’t a carte-blanche pass. But it was in some sense a pass if you were a Jew. And so some of these folks in the church were tempted to go back to Judaism. And so it’s a live situation, a live temptation that he’s talking to them about and talking them through.

Now one of the things that we need to understand is that when we look at these opening verses,—and I’m kind of skimming through this because we’ve already been here,—but one of the things that I just want to mention to you again is that when we look at these verses, oftentimes when we look at these verses, we can see in them all that is going to be in the epistle in a very packed way. And so when we get to chapters 7 and 8, when we read about Jesus as High Priest, one of the things that we realize is that Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father. And He is seated at the right hand of the Father because His priestly work is finished. And His priestly work having been finished, He sits down.

Now in some ways that has to be gripping to these men and women and children who are tempted to leave and to go back to Judaism, because think about it. He’s telling them that if you go back to Judaism, you are going back to something that is unfulfilled. There are sacrifices that have to be made—morning and evening and other sacrifices that have

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to be made throughout the day for you that all point to something beyond them. And he’s saying to them that Jesus is the fulfillment of those things. And you’ve found the fulfillment in Him. He’s seated. He doesn’t offer sacrifices anymore because He Himself was the final sacrifice. So that’s the answer to their temptation. He’s fixing their eyes on Jesus.

**Participant:** Would that lead us to believe that this letter was written prior to the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D.?

**Jeff:** Well you know, I personally think that. Now I know there are others who have different views on both Hebrews and Revelation and different books about their positions in relation to 70 A.D. I take the view that it’s written before that. I actually take the view that this is written during the time of Claudius’ expulsion of the Jews and Christians from Rome in 70 A.D., somewhere around that particular time. That’s my view on where they are.

**Participant:** I was wondering why the writer would talk so much about the sacrifices, and that they don’t really do what needs to be done. Had the temple been wiped out, he might have taken a different tone, right?

**Jeff:** Yes, I think so. But you know, sometimes, Sig, a lot is made of either those kinds of arguments or the silence of not speaking about the temple. And so, depending on where you are with regard to the destruction of the temple, some people like to try to make the arguments fit either way.

I actually think—and I know you’re not doing this!—the partial preterist position. I actually think that a lot of people invest a lot of hermeneutical or interpretive money in the date. And so every book has to be interpreted on the grid of where that date is, 70 A.D. And they sort of use that to interpret things in the Scripture rather than letting Scripture interpret itself, and then letting the chips fall where they may with the 70 A.D. date. I don’t happen to be one of those people who puts a lot of time into thinking about the 70 A.D. date.

I mean there are places where we have to do that—Matthew 24 and Luke’s parallel, where Jesus says that you’ll see a nation surrounding Jerusalem. All those things are obviously important. But in my mind that’s a prophecy about the future with regard to Jesus.

You know, the liberals will say, the International Critical Commentary, will say that Matthew was written after 70 A.D. because He couldn’t have known that, because obviously Jesus—

**Participant:** Jesus can’t prophesy.

**Jeff:** Jesus can’t prophesy, right? (*Laughter*)

**Participant:** Jeff, you may want to explain—

**Jeff:** Liberals say that. (*Laughter*)

**Participant:** You may want to explain to the men the importance of the date of 70 A.D. in the first century. Maybe not everybody understands that.

**Jeff:** Yes. Thanks, Ted. So 70 A.D. is the time when Titus destroys the temple and levels Jerusalem. You get the historical accounting of that in Josephus. And a lot of people who fixate on that particular date see that as the judgment of God upon Israel, the

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final closure of that covenantal time with the people of Israel as a nation. And so there’s a real importance that’s placed upon that death in terms of not just a physical destruction for the people of Israel, but also a theological importance, that this is God’s final judgment upon them.

And you know, you can go into this *partial preterist* view that interprets all of the Epistles in light of 70 A.D. So for instance, if you read 2 Thessalonians 2, a partial preterist may have 70 A.D. in mind with regard to the antichrist, and may even have the destruction of Jerusalem in mind in 1 Thessalonians 4. So there are ways to interpret the Epistles in relation to that date, and I don’t follow that way of thinking. Do you want to add anything to that, Ted?

**Ted:** No, I think that’s great. It’s just that when we talk about dates, I’m not sure that everybody understands.

**Participant:** What is a preterist?

**Second Participant:** Well, a preterist is someone who—

**First Participant:** (*mock exasperation*) I was asking Jeff! (*Laughter*)

**Jeff:** I liked his definition better. (*Laughter*)

**Participant:** Someone who stalks priests?

**Jeff:** Someone who stalks priests. (*Laughter*) So a preterist is a person who theologically believes—now this is a *full preterist* position—somebody who believes that all of the prophetic utterances were aimed toward the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem in 70 A.D., such that—is it Stewart Russell who wrote *The Parousia*? I get it confused. It’s either Russell Stewart or Stewart Russell, but I think it’s Stewart Russell. He wrote a book called *The Parousia*. And *The Parousia* is a full preterist position that looks at every prophecy as being fulfilled in 70 A.D., which means that all of the Second Coming prophecies are fulfilled in 70 A.D. And what he says at the end of the book is, you know, the Lord is still probably coming for us. But that’s not something that He has chosen to reveal. So, you know, we’ll just have to trust it.

Now the *partial preterist* will look at many of the texts that we see as Second Coming texts as being focused on the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem in 70 A.D. But, for instance, they’ll say things like this. And R. C. Sproul would say this. If somebody asked him, “Well, is there a promise of Jesus’ return in the New Testament?”, he would say, “Well, yes, in Acts chapter 1, when the disciples are interacting with the angels and they say, ‘You’ll see Him come just as He left.’ That’s a Second Coming prophecy.” And so the partial preterist would say that there are some Second Coming prophecies in the Scriptures. I’m so relieved!

But this is one of these things where we’re not going to get through this again, are we? (*Laughter*) You know, if you guys want to do something on preterism at some point, mixed with some other views of Revelation, we can do that. That would be a great study. But I honestly don’t know. I did *sanctification* when I came, and then I’ve been doing Biblical books. So I don’t know if you do both, or if both are acceptable. Maybe you can give me some feedback on that and we can see about what to do next. But I’m going to turn a blind eye to everyone at this point. (*Laughter*) And talk about the great necessity.

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*(Laughter)* And the great necessity is that we continue to fix our eyes on Jesus Christ, who has been revealed to us in the opening verses.

So that’s the introduction. Let’s think now about the question *why angels?* And let’s think about it like this. When you open up to chapter 1 and verses 5 ff., one of the things that you notice is that there is an inclusio. Now what’s an inclusio? You think about an inclusio in terms of book ends. Think about a word, a phrase or an idea, and how that word, phrase or idea comes at the beginning of a section of text, and then it comes at the end of a section of text.

So here’s an easy one. I told you that Hebrews is built on inclusions. Here’s one right here. Look at chapter 1 verse 5. *“For to which of the angels did God ever say.”* And then look inverse 13. *“And to which of the angels has He ever said.”* That’s what we call an inclusio. The question, the idea, *“To which of the angels did God ever say.”* ... *“To which of the angels did He ever say.”* That’s a book ending. And so what we are to understand is that this cluster of texts is to be held together by those questions.

In other words, what we are to understand is that angels have a pivotal importance in these particular verses. And so we need to ask the question. Well then, why angels? I mean, think about it. Why angels? Why is he dealing with angels? Because he is dealing with them.

If you look after that question in verse 5, he talks about *“let all God’s angels worship Him.”* And then verse 7: *“Of the angels He says.”* And then he speaks about the angels.

And then, even if you go to chapter 1 and verse 14, where he closes things out, it seems like he gives a summary statement of the angels. *“Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?”* So it seems like he’s giving this summary statement about who the angels are.

So why angels? That’s an important question when we look at this text. We could pass over it, or we could say that angels are not as important as Jesus. That’s an easy one, obviously so. But why angels?

I think a clue is given to us in chapter 2 verse 2. Just take a look at it for a minute. In chapter 2 verse 2, notice what it says. *“For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression and disobedience received it’s just punishment”,* the question then that we have to ask ourselves is this. Wait a minute. What was the message given by the angels?

And then we find these two verses. And I want somebody to read Galatians 3:19, and somebody else to read Acts 7:38.

Now before you read it, let me just tell you what we’re doing. One of the things that we’re doing is what’s called *the analogy of Scripture*. When you use other Scripture texts that help you to interpret something in another text that’s not as clear, you are using the analogy of Scripture. You’re allowing Scripture to interpret Scripture. And that’s an important thing; that’s what we need to do. And in this case we do it, and we’re able to figure out an answer to the question *why angels?* So would somebody read Galatians 3:19?

**Participant:** *“Why then the Law? It was added because of transgressions, until the Offspring should come, to whom the promise had been made. And it was put in place*

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*through angels by an intermediary. Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one.”*

**Jeff:** Okay. What’s the message of the angels according to that text? What’s the word?

**Participant:** Their mediator.

**Second Participant:** The Law.

**Jeff:** The Law. They’re intermediaries of the Law. They seem to have some part in communicating the Law from God to Moses. How about Acts 7:38?

**Participant:** I have it, Jeff. *“This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him at Mount Sinai. And with our fathers he received living oracles to give to us.”*

**Jeff:** All right. Again you have that same sentiment expressed. So what we have is that we’re beginning to have an understanding at least that the message given by the angels is named by other Scripture passages as *the Law*. Now I want you to think about this for a minute. Having understood that, we need to understand that *Jesus is better than the angels*. But think about what’s being said here. The next thing he’s telling us, if we go on, is that in chapter 3 He’s more glorious than Moses. Yes, Sig?

**Sig:** Before you get too deep into Moses, didn’t the angels also pronounce who this Christ was to the shepherds on the day He was born?

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Sig:** And wasn’t that an announcement or a message from angels?

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Sig:** Wasn’t that something pretty profound?

**Jeff:** And that’s why we have to ask what the author is doing. That’s why we have to ask the context.

So for instance, Sig says, “Well what about that message? What about the message of the Incarnation?” That’s a great question. Now the thing that we have to think about is well, wait a minute. What about the context to this? What’s the author doing?

And when you think about a context, the etymology of that word is *weaving together*. What is the author of this text weaving together as we think about it? What’s he doing here?

And when you ask that question, you actually have to go beyond the text itself, right? So if you’re studying two verses or three verses or ten verses and you ask about the context, then you have to ask yourself, what’s he doing in chapter 2? What’s he doing now in chapter 3? Or what’s he doing in chapter 4? And really the question becomes what is he really doing in the whole book?

And you see, when you ask what the author is doing, I think that what it does is that it excludes the Luke 2 passages and it invites the Galatians 3 and Acts 7 passages. What do I mean by that? Well think about it. He says that not only is Jesus better than the angels. But He’s more glorious than Moses.

**Participant:** Yeah.

**Jeff:** And then in chapter 4 what does he say? He says that in Jesus there’s a Sabbath rest. And then what does he say? He says in chapter 5 that Jesus is a more glorious High Priest. And then what does he say in chapter 7? He says that He’s a better sacrifice.

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And of all of those things I mentioned, what comes to mind?

**Participant:** The Law.

**Jeff:** The Law! The Law comes to mind! And all of a sudden you say to yourself that the bigger argument, the larger argument, is this. He is inviting me to see that Jesus is better than the first covenant, which is what he says later on in the book.

But all of a sudden, as we begin to work our way through the context, as we look beyond our passages, our verses, we can answer the question now. Why angels? The answer is because it is one piece in a larger puzzle to answer the question why angels. Why angels? Because they were part of the delivering of the Law to Moses.

And then let’s talk about Moses. And then let’s talk about the priests established under Moses. And then let’s talk about the sacrifices established under Moses. Jesus is better than all of these things.

So when we ask that question why angels? , we need to say to ourselves that we can’t isolate. You see, this is the danger of just isolating a couple of verses, or even ten verses from a book. You can’t do that. You’ve got to ask yourself what it’s saying in its context. So that’s a great question. Sig, that was a great segwae. Go ahead.

**Participant:** My concern in 21<sup>st</sup>-century America is that we would ask that question why angels? But the readers of this letter, this sermon, which was a predominantly Jewish audience, would they understand that the passages you related to in Acts and Galatians? Would they have understood that the Law was delivered through the angels to Moses, or delivered through the angels to the people of Israel? Is that something they would get right away?

**Jeff:** Yes. I mean I think that would have been part of their basic understanding. So for instance, when Stephen says it in his speech, he says it to Jews, right? And nobody says, “Ho, whoa!” You know what I mean? It would be an understanding that they would have.

**Participant:** Okay.

**Jeff:** Yes, Tom?

**Tom:** I imagine that those people he would be writing to would not have any problem knowing that Christ ascended to the heavenly host. But what he says is that He is seated at the right hand of God. So that sets Him apart from everybody else.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Tom:** It gives Him a relationship to God which He keeps building up. He keeps building on that.

**Jeff:** Yes. I mean throughout the rest of this book one of the things that we’re going to see is that Moses’ glory is derived. Jesus’ is original, which is what we already saw, right? We’re going to see that Jesus sits down after making His sacrifice. Priests don’t sit down. All of those things are gathered up in order to say that Jesus is the better covenant.

**Tom:** But being at the right hand says that He’s unique. He’s very powerful.

**Jeff:** Yes, that’s right. Anybody else? Yes?

**Participant:** In the second half of that verse in chapter 2 of Hebrews, after saying that what was spoken by angels , it talks about every transgression and disobedience.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Participant:** So it almost naturally connects it to what was said the first time.



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**Jeff:** Yes. It invites the idea of purification for transgressions. How does that happen? Right. Is that what you’re saying?

**Participant:** Yes, that’s good.

**Jeff:** Okay, yes. Anybody else? Don?

**Don:** I don’t know if you’re going to cover this, but in verse 5, I believe, it says, *“Again, when He brings the firstborn into the world, He says, ‘Let all God’s angels worship Him.’”* Is there an Old Testament Scripture quotation there?

**Jeff:** Yes. You know what, Don? We’ll get there. I am going to deal with that.

**Don:** Okay.

**Participant:** Just as kind of a note, and what may be a kind of pet peeve of my own, what I have seen over the years interacting with other Christians in Bible studies, taking them to and going through any different passage, letting the whole text kind of help to support, is that we are responsible when we go to Galatians or when we go to Acts to really know the context there as well, because it seems that so many times we use verses to support our position.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Participant:** And that’s just a note. I feel almost compelled sometimes to say that.

**Jeff:** I know what you mean. And you know, there’s a sense in which sometimes, though the verses around the quotation aren’t given, if you go back to the quotation in the Old Testament and you look at it, you begin to understand some assumptions that may be made by the author as he quotes this text. So you’re right. You are responsible.

For instance, what I’m thinking of is that I just taught a Bible study on Wednesday on Romans 10. And in Romans 10 he talks about the Law. And he quotes from Deuteronomy 30:12 and 13.

**Transcriber’s Note:** Deuteronomy 30:12-13. *“For this commandment that I command you today is not too hard for you, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will ascent to heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart.”*

**Jeff:** And one of the things that I made reference to at that time was that the obedience that they are being told to engage in in that text arises from a circumcised heart. So he’s not making the assumption that this is a covenant of works per se. Do this and live. He’s talking to a converted people, or at least the assumption is a converted people who will obey the Law, but who will confess their sins through the sacrifices as they look toward Jesus Christ. So this isn’t do this and live. This is do what is pleasing to God and rely upon the sacrifices. You know, that was important for that particular passage. But that particular aspect of circumcision, circumcision of the heart, wasn’t quoted in that passage in Romans. But it’s important for us to know that. So you’re right. There’s a responsibility that we have for the full context, not just the immediate context, but the whole context that’s being quoted.

**Participant:** Well, like you said before, you went to Galatians and Acts.

**Jeff:** Yes.

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**Participant:** You’re going to use those passages to help you expound on what’s being said in Hebrews or to support it, to sort of make it more full. You can’t just use a verse from another passage.

**Jeff:** Correct. And so part of the ability that you see is that when Sig asked the question, which was a great question, would they have known that? You know, this was a speech from Stephen to the Jews. The answer is yes. So you can use those contexts in order to bring together what you’re saying.

**Participant:** It’s interesting only to me, probably, *(laughter)*, that he’s starting with angels from the Law, not with angels long before the Law, when God sends messengers to Sodom.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Participant:** They rescue Lot from the middle of a pagan city. He needed rescuing. With these Hebrews you talked about apostasy and their temptation, which was probably from the pagans around them.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Participant:** *(Unclear)*

**Jeff:** Yes. All right, Bill. *(Laughter)* Let me move on.

**Participant:** But Jeff, this emphasizes what you’re saying. It’s not about the angels primarily. The angels are only vehicles to the Law.

**Jeff:** They’re a piece of it, yep.

**Participant:** They’re a piece of it. But the Law is the issue. It’s not Sodom. It’s not the announcement to the shepherds. It’s the Law.

**Jeff:** Yes. Thanks, Ted. I’m going to keep you on the payroll. *(Laughter)* What has he said? *(Laughter)*

So verses 5-14. Now when you look at those, what do you see? Just take a look. 5-14. You see a lot of Scripture texts, right? A lot of Old Testament Scripture texts.

And what does that tell you? I’ll tell you what that tells me. One thing that’s ancillary to what we’re doing here is foundational. One of the things that I look at when I see this is that here is a preacher who is wanting to establish what he’s doing on the basis of Scripture, you know? And there’s a primacy to Scripture that is in view that I think we ought to at least just take note of. And so he has a confidence in the Scriptures, to move forward at this point.

And what is he doing? Well one of the things that I think he’s doing at this point is that he’s saying to these people, look! Where Jesus is proclaimed as the One who is better than any part of the Law and so better than the whole, in fact is seated at the right hand of the Father, because all that the Law pointed to was fulfilled in Him and is now accomplished—where this Jesus is proclaimed, remain. You see, I think that’s what he’s saying.

If all of these Old Testament texts tell us, contributing to the argument that I’m making, that Jesus is better than this part and so the whole, thus the Law, then remain under Him. If you depart and go back to Judaism, you will depart from being under Jesus. You will not remain where He is. And so it plugs into the idea that I told you in the very

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beginning. You need to fix your eyes on Jesus Christ and remain where He is, where He’s proclaimed.

And I think that’s just absolutely crucial. And I would just interject two things at this point to emphasize that. The first one is that in Romans chapter 10, one of the things that you read—I’m going to read it to you, because it’s important. I want you to see it.

Romans chapter 10. You know it. *“How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him whom they have never heard?”*

Now what’s the difference between—and it will depend upon your translation, what you have there. But what’s the difference between “believing whom they have heard” and “believing Him of whom they have heard?” The difference is all the difference in the world. It’s the difference in hearing about Jesus versus hearing Jesus. And so the New Testament authors have this idea that when you sit under the proclamation of the Word, where Jesus is really preached, you don’t hear about Jesus. You actually hear Jesus.

Now that’s strengthened in Ephesians chapter 2. Just go there. If you just want to listen that’s fine to, because I’m going to read this fast. In Ephesians chapter 2 he says. Verse 17: *“And He came and preached peace to you who were far off, and peace to those who were near.”* He’s talking about Jesus.

Now the question then is when did Jesus ever go to Ephesus and preach the gospel to them? And the answer is, he didn’t.

**Participant:** Not physically.

**Jeff:** But I’ll tell you what He did do. He sent men who were gifted with gifts of handling revelation, and they preached. And when you look at that in light of Romans 10:17, you begin to understand that they weren’t just preaching about Jesus. But because their proclamation was faithful to the Word, they were hearing the word of Jesus Himself. And so I think that’s the idea that’s being communicated here. Where Jesus is interpreted faithfully through these texts, you are under Jesus and hearing Him. Go ahead.

**Participant:** John 1:1 talks about that Jesus is the Word. I mean, it was all the plan of God—the Word, Jesus, all one and the same.

**Jeff:** Yes, absolutely. Yes?

**Participant:** And then of course Hebrews 2 that you were mentioning, that we are to pay attention to the angels, it goes on to say, *“How shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard.”* But the NIV says, *“by those who heard Him.”*

**Jeff:** Yes. Absolutely. And that whole passage says that you don’t drift away, right? It captures the mind at that point. Absolutely.

Okay. So let’s go to the last point—*making sense of the Son*. Back to our questions, the questions that we started with last week. What does it mean for Him to become better than the angels? Well think about that for just a minute. What does it mean for Him to become better than the angels?

Well think about this first of all in light of what we’ve said in those opening four verses. We’re not talking here about *ontology*, about His being prior to creation. We’re not talking about Jesus in His pre-existent, pre-incarnate state, because Jesus was and is—how do you even talk about eternity using language?—Jesus is eternal. He was

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always with the Father. But even to say that you have to use temporal language. God is, you know? And so Jesus is. So he’s not talking about Jesus’ nature. He’s not talking about ontology.

But He’s better because He brought salvation. His work of salvation, climaxing in Himself as the Substance of the covenant, is what is in view here. And one of the things that you begin to get is that He’s better because the angels never brought salvation. The angels aren’t saviors. They are “*ministering spirits sent to minister to those who are inheriting salvation.*” And so there’s a sense in which what he’s saying is that Jesus is better than the angels in this very narrow context. I mean, you can say that Jesus is better than the angels and everybody would say, “Well, of course He is. They’re created and He’s not. He’s the eternal Son of God and they are not. He’s the Creator; they’re creatures. Of course!”

But according to the argument, you have to remember that He’s better than the angels because He saves and they do not. They simply contributed the Law as a piece of the covenant of grace. He is the fulfillment of the covenant of grace. Remember, He’s the Omega Creator and the Alpha fulfillment of all these things. And so that’s the comparison point. Here is a piece of Judaism. He’s better. And that’s going to be the argument. And here’s another piece of Judaism. By the way, He’s better. Here’s another piece of Judaism. He’s better, and so on.

And so the result of Christ’s work is that He inherits the name of Son. He inherits the name of Son which is better than the angels.

Why do we say this? Again, we need to understand that we’re not talking ontologically. Was Jesus the Son prior to creation? Of course He was!

You know, there are people out there who will say things like this. There were just three individuated beings. And at the time of creation, after the Fall, one of these individuated beings said, “Who wants to be the Father?” (*Laughter*) “I will.”

“Who wants to be the Son?”

“Okay, I’ll be the Son.” That sort of thing. And you know, the short straw gets drawn by the end of it, the being who is the Holy Spirit, right? And that’s not the way it is at all. We talked about this the last time we were together. We said that the personal property of Fatherhood belongs to the Father. It belonged to Him from all eternity. The same with the Son, the same with the Holy Spirit.

So the inheritance of the name *Son* has to do with redemption, with His mediatorial office as Redeemer. Now do you see this? Yes, go ahead. No?

I just put these up because I want you to see that there is a promise of a Seed from the very beginning. There is the promise of the Seed in Genesis chapter 3, who would come and crush the head of the serpent. That promise is continued out verbally from one generation to the next, such that Lamech names his son Noah because maybe he will grant rest to us because of the curse, on and on and on. And we see that it would be the Seed of David who comes and who brings fulfillment to these covenant promises. And so when we see Him as the inheritor of the name *Son*, what we need to understand is that He’s inheriting the name *Son* in the context of His mediatorial work as Redeemer, not in His ontological status as Son, being pre-existent with the Father.

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And so *He receives worship*. And He receives worship from the angels. Now this is one of the things that I think is important that I wanted to show you.

Notice what it says here. Our text says, “*world*.” And one of the things that you notice is this. “*And again, when He brings the Firstborn into the world, He says, ‘Let all God’s angels worship Him.’*”

When you look at that, you say to yourself, Oh! That must be the Incarnation, when He brings Him into the world. Well, the interesting thing about it is that that word, here translated *world*, is used in 2:5. Just flip over to 2:5 for a minute and notice how it’s translated there. “*For it was not to the angels that God subjected the world to come.*”

And all of a sudden you begin to realize, wait a minute! He’s not talking about the Incarnation. If that’s the same word, one of these translations isn’t quite catching the word. And I’ll tell you what. 2:5 catches the word. It’s the world to come.

And so what’s being spoken of here is not the Incarnation, but the ascension of Christ. So in the world to come He enters. And when He enters, what happens? All of the angels worship Him. That’s not saying that they didn’t worship Him prior to this. They did. There were no angels to worship Him before the creation.

So what’s in mind here? What’s in mind is that He ascends, He’s seated, and they worship Him. And so it’s the world to come that’s in mind.

And so what you have is that you have this framework in 4-6, and I put the Incarnation. But it’s really not the Incarnation. The framework of 4-6 is really the world to come to the Exaltation. But you could say that it’s captured in the life of Christ, and that would be the idea.

So let me just finish really quickly here. *The reason for worship by the angels is the redemptive work of the Son. The church and the angels.* I want you to think about this for just a second. And I want you to think about this because this is really important. And I’ll leave you with this thought.

If the angels, who have absolutely no benefit to derive from redemption, worship Him because of His redemptive work, how much more ought we to worship Him, we who derive every benefit from His redemptive work? I mean there’s a sense in which this text not only teaches us about the redemptive work of Christ, both in relationship to the Jews, but also in relationship to anyone, Jew or Gentile.

But I’ll tell you what else it does. It brings a heavy conviction upon us, doesn’t it? Because you know what? Here’s the deal. For some people Sunday morning is a game time decision. I’ll decide come Sunday morning how I feel and whether I’m going to go and worship. Really? I mean, after reading a text like this one, can worship be a game time decision? It can’t be! Not when you realize that where Jesus speaks He is, and you’re being called to remain under Him, and you’re being called to worship Him, just like the angels who derive no benefit of redemption from Him, but you do. I mean all of these things are heavy upon us, are they not, when we think about the message here. So let me pray with you. I realize we’re over. Yes, Don? Go ahead. You get the last word.

**Don:** In verse 6, I believe, where it says, “*Let all God’s angels worship Him,*” is that an Old Testament verse?

**Jeff:** Yes.

## ***“Worship the Son” part 2***

**Don:** Why don't we find it in our Bibles?

**Jeff:** You know what, Don? That's a great question. But I'm going to answer that next time. So we'll take it up next time.

**Don:** All right.

**Jeff:** Father in heaven, thanks for the day, for the time You've given us. Father, let this message lay heavy upon us, to realize that we need to remain under You and under Your proclamation and where You are. And Father, help us to become faithful in that. And we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

**Men:** Amen. (*Applause*)