

“The Unchanging Son”

Fixing Our Eyes On Jesus, Our High Priest

Hebrews 1:7-12

Re. Jeff Stivason

February 16, 2018

Jeff: Our heavenly Father, we are thankful. We're thankful to gather together. We're thankful to have fellowship one to another. But most of all we're especially glad to be here, knowing that the bond that binds us is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. And Father, as we head into that season, that time of year when we will remember not only Your humiliation in all of its ugliness and all of its heinousness, but also in all of its glory, Lord, for You did not remain on the cross or in the grave, but You were raised for our justification. And we thank You for that and praise You, for You are indeed God and there is no other. And Father, we find our forgiveness and the imputation of righteousness in the Lord Jesus Christ. And it's in Him that we stand and in no other.

And so, Father, as we stand before You today, we stand before You in Christ Jesus, not because of anything we have done, not because of anything that we contribute or will contribute to our salvation, but solely on the basis of the Lord Jesus Christ and what He has done on our behalf. So Father, we thank You for the time to gather in the Lord and to spend time reflecting upon the Word. And we pray, Father, that You will not only educate our minds, but that You will warm our hearts. We pray that You will gather us up as whole people. And we pray that You will indeed minister to us by Your Holy Spirit, bringing the Word to bear upon us as whole men, and ministering to us in such a way that we will grow thereby.

Father, we pray not only for ourselves in this endeavor, but we also pray for others. And so, Father, we think about Paul. And we're thankful for the good word that we heard regarding him. And we praise You for that. And we pray, Father, for continued good reports. And we also ask that You'll hear our thanksgiving with regard to Rebecca. Father, thank You for that. And yet just hearing that weighs us down, yet knowing the good news that by Your providence You brought a successful end. We rejoice. And so, Father, continue to enable us to rejoice with the reception of good news regarding her.

We also pray, Father, for our brother Bruce. And we ask that You will continue to strengthen his body and to make him well and give him strength, to help him, Lord, to engage in physical therapy without interruption. And Father, we pray that You will heal him, and we pray that You will indeed raise him up.

Father, we pray for Sarah and give You thanks that she is not at home convalescing, but she is in Hawaii enjoying her family and her time. Father, bless her and strengthen her body. And we're thankful for this good word.

Now Father, we pray that You'll bless us as we turn to Your word. And we ask that You'll strengthen us thereby, for we ask it in Jesus' blessed and precious name. Amen.

Men: Amen.

Jeff: Okay. Let's turn to Hebrews chapter 1. And today we're going to be looking and we're going to be speeding this up, looking at three verses. Just kidding! (*Laughter*) I want you to know that we won't always look at three verses. We'll look at a few more

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than that as we go through. But one of the things that I just want to help you to understand is that we are getting a bolus, as I said to you the last time. And some of you have said that’s a new word for you. We’re getting a large dose of the Lord Jesus Christ in the beginning, and appropriately so. And we are in need of that kind of bolus. And we’ll see again why that is the case as we unpack these verses.

But let’s take our time, patiently working through this opening chapter. And let’s do that by looking at Hebrews 1, verses 10-12. Let me read this to you. It’s the word of God, so give your ear to it. And I think what I might do, just to give us the context, is start in verse 5, but I’ll read to verse 12. 10-12 will be our verses for today.

*“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, O God, is forever and ever;
The scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Your kingdom.
You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness,
Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You
With the oil of gladness beyond Your companions.’*

*“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.’”*

Now you probably notice some carry-over with themes. And we’re going to notice those carry-overs in just a few minutes. But I want us to think about where we’re going as we head through this particular section of verses. First of all we’re going to take our time with an introduction. And I think it’s important when we look at a set of verses like this that we understand not just how they fit in the overall structure, but I think it’s important to understand, if we’re able, insofar as we’re able, why it was that the preacher used these particular verses not only to explain Jesus Christ, but also to minister to a congregation. And that’s exactly what he’s doing. He’s ministering to this congregation. So I’m going to take some time with the introduction.

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And that’s going to lead us to think about the context of the Old Testament verses that we’re going to look at. The striking thing about it is that the verses we are going to look at are verses that are entirely from the Old Testament, from Psalm 102. And we’ll look at those when we get there. But we need to look at the context of those verses.

And then what I want us to do is that I want us to think about how it is that the preacher will use those verses to minister to this particular group to whom he’s writing. So let’s do that. And let’s first of all paint a picture.

I want you to think about what’s going on in Rome. And I want you to think about this. What I want you to do is that I don’t want you to think about a particular time in general, though we’ll be thinking about particular times. I want you to think about the landscape, the chronological landscape if you will. And I want you to try and do the best you can to set yourself in that setting. And try to do the best you can to empathize with these people to whom this pastor is writing.

The first year that I want you to think about is the year 49 A.D. Now the year 49 A.D. is a significant one. Claudius was Emperor. I’ve mentioned this to you before. Claudius was Emperor. And one of the things that you need to know about an Emperor in Rome, and that you need to know about Rome, was that you could do a lot of things in Rome and get away with it. You could do a number of things. And we’ll see that the Emperor gets away with any number of things. You could do a lot of things.

But two things you could not do in Rome and get away with it were *disrupting the pantheon*, or *the peace of the city*. If you did any one of those two things, you were going to find yourself on the outside looking in. And that’s exactly what happens.

Claudius expels the Jews in 49 A.D., and not just in 49. The expulsion was a little longer than that. But that’s the year it begins.

And Suetonius gives us the reason that the Jews were expelled. “*Since the Jews constantly made disturbances at the instigation of Christ*”,--the word is Christos, but historical scholars believe that’s Christ—“*he*”, (Claudius), “*had them expelled.*” Suetonius was a Roman historian.

What was happening was that the Jews were looking at the Christians, seeing them as this deviant sect of Judaism. And they were constantly haranguing them and stirring up trouble in the city. And so intense were those troubles, so violent did they become, that Claudius finally said, “I’ve had enough. We’re going to get rid of all of these folks.” He didn’t distinguish between Jews and Christians, and many Christians were expelled in the expulsion. And so they end up being moved out to the uttermost parts of the empire. And I think that a good case could be made for the fact that when 1 Peter is written, he’s writing to five regions where Claudius has a hand in colonizing those areas in a really significant way. And I think that’s where many of these people find themselves.

Now I think that Hebrews 10:32 indicates or references the Claudian expulsion.

Transcriber’s Note: Hebrews 10:32, ESV. “*But recall the former days, when after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings.*”

Jeff: He says to them, “You remember how it was that you lost your property and you faced humiliation and imprisonment, and sometimes even sympathized with everybody in

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prison,” and all that stuff. He says, “You remember that. I’m telling you to remember those days. Hang on to them.”

Now why would he tell them to remember those days? Remember those days because they were past.

You know, one of the significant things about this, when you think about this practically, is to think about this congregation. Think about the people to whom he’s writing, and imagine yourself in the midst of these people. And you would be sitting back there with your little boy. And you would be tapping him on the shoulder and saying, “See that guy up there? That guy up there lost everything he had in the expulsion. He had to go across the Taurus Mountains, and he settled in a Roman colony. And it wasn’t easy for him. Boy, you should hear the stories!”

Can you imagine being able to take your son and point to somebody in the congregation and say, “That guy lost everything for Christ, and he’s here?” You know, I just think that would be an immensely moving experience.

But you remember that the Christian church is not just made up of heroes. It’s made up of people who struggle, just like us. And so can you imagine the guy sitting in the other corner, who is wondering whether or not he should stay. The guy over there doesn’t mean anything to him. He’s thinking about his own losses. He’s thinking about impending losses. And he’s saying, “Ought I to be here or not?”

So the congregation has this sort of wakeup. Hebrews 10:32 is looking back on that time.

And now I want you to fast forward fifteen years, 15 years to 64 A.D. What happens? *Rome burns*. Six days of burning; ten out of fourteen districts in Rome burn. And rumor had it that Nero burned it down.

Now you’ve got to know something about Nero. In the early ‘60s he becomes sort of an unstable fellow, to say the least, right? I mean he does odd things, like killing his family because he’s paranoid about them. He kills his own wife and marries a 14-year-old boy because he looks like the wife that he killed.

He does other things. He goes out on the city streets dressed as a commoner, molesting people, doing all kinds of crazy things. He even gets punched by one of his Senate members because Nero molests his wife on the streets. But the Senate member doesn’t know it’s Nero. He’s a disturbed man. Yes?

Participant: Jeff, excuse me. Did you say he married a 14-year-old boy?

Jeff: Yes.

Participant: Wow!

Jeff: Isn’t that something?

Participant: But the boy looked like his wife?

Jeff: The boy looked like his wife. The boy looked like the wife he killed. Now this is the early ‘60s, a crazy time. A Crazy time. *(Laughter)*

Transcriber’s Note: Jeff shows a picture of a rock group from the 1960s.

Jeff: You know, I knew somebody was going to ask me who that was. I don’t know. *(Laughter)* The caption at the bottom said “Iron Butterfly,” but I don’t know who that is.

Participant: A rock group from the ‘60s.

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Jeff: My uncle used to listen to “Iron Butterfly.” And they apparently played—

Participant: “In A Gadda-da-Vida.”

Jeff: They played a song that was 35 or 28 minutes, or something like that.

Participant: Seventeen.

Jeff: Seventeen minutes long. We know who did what by the length of the song we’re hearing, right? *(Laughter)* “Iron Butterfly,” from the early ‘60s.

Participant: All right. 1968.

Jeff: ‘68, yes, 1968. *(Laughter)*

Participant: Clarification. *(Laughter)*

Jeff: Clarification. I’ll tell you what.

Participant: Go, Don.

Jeff: You know what? Don is this unassuming fellow, but we know the length of his hair and the kind of music he was listening to. *(Laughter)*

Transcriber’s Note: Jeff shows a picture of a statue of Nero.

Jeff: All right. So in the early ‘60s, that’s what was happening. Now in 64 A.D. there is a catastrophe. Rome burns. Now the heat is on Nero, right? The heat is on Nero. So he has to do something to alleviate the heat from himself. And I know you can’t read this, but this is from another Roman historian by the name of Tacitus.

This is what he says. Listen to this. *“To kill the rumors Nero charged and tortured the group popularly known as Christians. In their deaths they were made a mockery. They were covered in the skins of wild animals, torn to death by dogs, crucified or set on fire, so that when darkness fell they burned like torches in the night. Nero opened up his own gardens for this spectacle and gave a show in the arena, where he mixed with the crowd or stood dressed as a charioteer on a chariot. As a result, although they were guilty of being Christians and deserved to die, people began to feel sorry for them, for they realized that they were being killed not for the public good, but to satisfy one man’s madness.”*

Participant: Wow!

Jeff: The Neronian persecution is from 64 to 68. And I would place the letter to the Hebrews in that time. So chapter 10 is reflecting on an expulsion. The letter is addressed to a time of great difficulty for Christians. And the preacher is saying, “Hearken back in your memory to these days and look to Christ, and be firm in your resolve to follow Him.”

Participant: Hey, Jeff?

Jeff: Yes?

Participant: Would it have been safer for a Jew who had become a Christian at that time to go back to Judaism to save his own skin, so to speak?

Jeff: Yes. If the Jews would have learned the lesson of not stirring up trouble in Rome, then they would have enjoyed all of the privileges that they had before. But the Emperor wasn’t going to tolerate that kind of a disturbance of the peace.

So why raise this issue? I mean why am I raising this issue? Well I think it’s because of the very practical question. The practical question is how do you minister to a people in very fearful days? How do you minister to people in fearful times? And I think that’s

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really the question that is at hand when we think about this particular citation from the book of Psalms. I think this has to be the background of our thinking as we move forward, okay? So with that in mind, let’s look at the context.

And what I want you to notice is that I want you to notice that Hebrews 1:10-12 is Psalm 102, verses 25-27. If you turn there, you’ll find that this is the citation.

Now let’s just stop a minute and ask ourselves the question. What is Psalm 102 about? If you want to go to Psalm 102 and just read down through it and reflect upon it a minute, let’s do that. Psalm 102—just turn there a second. Give yourselves just a minute or two. Just take a glance at it. Don’t read it in detail; there are 28 verses, so I know it’s going to take a second to look down through it. As you do, from just a cursory reading, what kind of Psalm is this? How would you describe it?

Participant: He wants help.

Jeff: It’s a petition for help. That’s exactly right. How else might you describe it?

Participant: A lament.

Jeff: It’s a lament. This is a sad and sober Psalm. Why is it sad and sober? What’s the problem in the Psalm according to the Psalmist?

Participant: The Lord has hidden His face.

Jeff: Okay. The Lord has hidden His face. Who has not hidden their faces?

Participant: His enemies.

Jeff: His enemies, yes. Look at that. Verse 8 explains that the enemies are clearly in front of him. This is a very sad, very lament-oriented Psalm. And it’s that way because not only has the Lord hidden His face, but the enemies are in full view.

Now here’s the question that I have for you. Would you describe this as a personal lament, or would you describe it as something bigger, maybe corporate?

Participant: Corporate.

Jeff: Yes, it’s definitely corporate, isn’t it? If you look, he talks about the fact that Jerusalem seems to be razed. But there’s also some hope in this, isn’t there? And the hope is that God will gather the people.

Look at verses 13 and 22.

“You will arise and have pity on Zion.

It is the time to favor her;

The appointed time has come.”

Now if you think about this as being after 586, after the destruction of Jerusalem, one of the things that you can imagine is that this is an in-gathering of the people of God. And that’s what he has in view. And if you read a little bit about this Psalm, some people even think that the writer of this particular Psalm has been reading or is familiar with Jeremiah’s own work, and so understands that the time of fulfillment is at hand, and God is about ready to restore His people. Seventy years have passed and the punishment is near an end, and God is about ready to act on behalf of His people.

Then verse 22.

“When peoples gather together,

And kingdoms to worship the LORD.”

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So there’s this idea of gathering. And then verses 25-27 occur. God will gather, and then this affirmation of God.

Now the question is this. Why this Psalm? Think about our own context that we just talked about for the book of Hebrews. And now think about Psalm 102 that we just read, and ask yourself why the pastor would use this Psalm here? What, if anything, is the link of commonality?

Participant: Hope for the future.

Jeff: Okay, hope in the future. What else? What else might there be? There is absolutely that. Anything else?

Participant: Restoration.

Jeff: Restoration, the hope of future restoration.

Participant: Enemies.

Jeff: Yes. The enemies, right? If you step back one step from the hope, you need the hope because there are enemies, right? Yes?

Participant: Is this also going against God’s judgment, because if you look at Psalm 102 verse 10, *“because of Your indignation and anger, You have taken me up and thrown me down.”* So God is using the enemies for that correction.

Jeff: Yes, definitely. I mean, if this is the Babylonian captivity, they go into the Babylonian captivity because of their disobedience, because of Israel’s disobedience. So that would be part of the historical context of Psalm 102, definitely so.

And think about this. The writer doesn’t apply it, but you can even apply that to this context. And here are these people who are in this church, thinking about deserting it. And you can think about the fact, and you can read this Psalm and say that God brought His judgment on disobedience and on His disobedient people. And you could infer that if I desert, God is not going to be pleased with that.

But I think that what you have here when you look at this Psalm is genuine uncertainty, genuine instability. And I think that when you compare this Psalm with our text, one of the things that you find that the preacher is using is that he is pointing us to the immutable God, because he brings it back in verses 25, 26 and 27 of the Psalm to say that God doesn’t change, though all of these things are uncertain in my life. Even my own obedience has been unstable, right? And, as a result, I have been thrust into this situation where my home has been ripped from me. Perhaps my family has been ripped from me. I’m in a foreign land. But God has promised to gather.

Now notice. The interesting thing is that the whole point of the Psalm is on the immutable God, and not necessarily on the immutable promise. The promise is there. You know you’re going to gather. But he ends the Psalm with the immutable God being the focus.

And so I think that when you think about the context of the use of this particular Psalm, one of the things that you have to take on board is the fact that the writer to the Hebrews is saying, “Look. I know your situation. I know that 49 was hard and 64 is hard for us. And 70, if I were a prophet, is going to be hard too. But I’ll tell you what. God is immutable.” That’s the point thus far. Now we’re going to talk about the preacher’s application of it in just a minute.

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But let me just say this to you, and then I’ll open it up for any questions or thoughts you might have. And you can always ask any time you want, you know that. But let me just say this to you. I think that if we got in our heads that God is an immutable God, unchanging, that most of our life situations would be bearable.

Participant: Amen.

Jeff: You know, I just read this statistic the other day. I’m reading a book on anxiety. I’m really anxious about it. *(Laughter)*

Participant: You’re checking us out, eh?

Jeff: Do you realize—and I did not realize this—that pulled together, American businesses lose 321 million days a year to anxiety? Pulled together, that’s an amazing amount of days!

And I want to be very careful and clear. I believe that there are health conditions that require medication. My family is full of that. *(Laughter)* But I also believe that sometimes it’s a matter of not putting our eyes in the right spot.

Participant: Amen.

Jeff: And I think that the place to begin is putting our eyes in the right spot, putting them on the immutable God. Yes, go ahead.

Participant: Paul was given the same message as the ship was going through the shipwreck prior to Malta. When the Romans wanted to throw everybody overboard, he said, “I have a message from the Lord. If we all stay together, we’re going to be safe.” And that’s exactly what that message is.

Jeff: Yes.

Participant: Trust Me.

Jeff: And the great thing about that example is that Paul says, “I know we’re going to be safe. But no one can leave this ship.” Why? Because God works through means. We need sailors. *(Laughter)* Right?

Participant: Right.

Jeff: So it’s not that we just let go of the controls and say, “I’m going to let go and let God.” No, we hold on to the controls and we say, “God, do Your will.” Anybody else? Is everybody good up to this point? Yes?

Participant: Another thought too is that as your anxiety increases, the more inward you look.

Jeff: Yes.

Participant: I mean the times that you’re angry, the times that you’re frustrated or worried or anything, it’s all inward focused. I didn’t get what I wanted! Things aren’t going my way! Whereas if you look Christ-ward and trust in His sovereignty, then you ask this. Lord, how are You shaping me? How might I grow for Your glory in this? It’s completely different.

Jeff: Yes, absolutely right. Yes, Don?

Don: And Paul reinforces that in Philippians 4 when he says, “*Be anxious for nothing.*” That’s looking inward. “*But in everything with prayer and supplications, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God.*” That’s looking to God. That’s looking outward.

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Participant: Yes, right.

Jeff: Absolutely. Bill?

Bill: Not to take away from Nero, but in the first century in the Roman and Greek world, everybody at least who lived in the city, every man, belonged to a craft.

Jeff: Yes.

Bill: And that craft was called a *guild*, which is where we got our modern-day unions from. Every guild had a god.

Jeff: A titular god.

Bill: And if you were a Christian, and didn't worship the god of the union, you had no job.

Jeff: That's right.

Bill: You couldn't get a job.

Jeff: That's right. You had to worship the titular god, the guardian god of the guild. And that was the problem with the churches in Revelation. Many of them were not eating because they could not worship the guardian god. Somebody else had his hand up. Yes, Bill?

Bill: So for the sake of this discussion, and the preacher's instruction about application, and our view, and the Greek corresponding to Scripture, and the preacher saying that God is immutable and we're finite, and tying that back to the conversation about Paul working through means,--

Jeff: Yes.

Bill: What does that mean for us today in this society, because we can be the same way in this society. I see evangelical Christians many times kind of sitting on the side, saying that we've got to separate ourselves, and all of that.

Jeff: You know, the urge is always within us to withdraw, right? So in the early 20th century, when you really had liberals winning the day, that was back in the days of B. B. Warfield, and Princeton was being taken over. Eventually you had Machin and many other men leave Princeton in 1929 and form Westminster.

Transcriber's Note: Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia.

Jeff: When I was doing my research on Warfield, the interesting thing I noticed was that in that early period in the 1900s, Warfield was the only guy, the only scholar, who was still publishing in major academic journals. There had been a major retreat by even the academic evangelicals and the Reformed to sort of move into a holy huddle. And that, I think, is our tendency. Our tendency is to withdraw from culture and not engage it. And I think that we don't engage it because I think it's a frightening thing. And I think it's only getting more frightening as we go.

But what would I say to that? I would say that we need to be engaged in culture with the gospel. We need to be careful not to become social gospellers, thinking that we can change the world by just bringing the deeds of Christ to the world. The only way it's going to really change the world is by bringing the gospel to the world. And when you bring the gospel, deeds will accompany that, because if the gospel has become part of you, if Christ has made you to unite with Him, you'll not only have a forensic justification, but you'll have a renovation in you, and that renovation can't help but come

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out. So you’ll have both. But we need to take the gospel to the world. And sometimes we need to do that by giving the world a cup of cold water. But I think that sometimes the emphasis can be put on the cup of cold water because it’s easier. And it’s less offensive to give somebody a cup of cold water than it is to follow that cup of cold water up with “now let me tell you why I gave that to you.” Yes?

Participant: I’ve been thinking about this a lot, though. If you think about it, the Reformers were really big on the doctrine of work or vocation. And the reason that they were so up on the doctrine of work and vocation was because back then, if you weren’t in the ministry, if you weren’t a pastor or a nun, in other words, if you weren’t a Catholic priest or a nun, then you weren’t considered in the ministry. And the Reformers really put a lot into vocation. And if you look at 1 Peter 4:10, “*as each has received the gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace.*” I think we have to go back and look at the doctrine of work and figure out what God has gifted us with and put that on display in spite of push-back, in spite of everything else and be bold in that, and trust the results to God. But if we’re bold in doing the right things in a Christlike manner, using the gifts that we’ve been given for His glory, I think that’s what we’re really called to do.

Jeff: Anybody else? Okay. Let me press on with *the preacher’s application of this*. I want you to notice that there’s something absolutely crucial here that we need to grab, and it’s *the focus*. Remember, it’s not on the immutable promises. That’s not the bolus. The bolus is on the immutable God. We need to get a big dose of who God is.

And there’s a Trinitarian focus in this Psalm applied here in Hebrews chapter 1. Now the question is this. Where in Psalm 102 is there anything Messianic? I mean this is a call for God to come and help. There’s nothing Christological, at least on the surface here. But the writer of the Hebrews, the preacher—I need to learn just to call him the preacher!—the preacher here has already given us the hermeneutic, the way to interpret Psalm 102.

And he’s done that by saying, Look. Jesus Christ is “*the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of His being.*” In other words, He is God in all of His glory. He’s not like Moses, who had a derived glory. He is original glory, the glory of God, because He is of the same *ousia* of God, the same substance of God, and He is God. But He’s another Person in the Godhead. And so He’s the exact imprint of the Father.

And so he’s already given us the hermeneutic, such that we can look at Psalm 102 and understand that oh! We need to understand that this is the oneness of God. But what he’s doing is he’s exegeting here and helping us understand that in the one God there’s at least one other Person, and in fact there are three Persons. And they can have the attributes of God that are applied to the Father, applied to each one of Them. And so by implication we see the Deity of the Son. In other words, what is said of the Father is, or must be said of the Son in this case. And so if you go back in Hebrews now, this is leading off now in verse 8. “*But of the Son He says, ‘Your throne, O God.’*” What a dynamic and powerful statement about the Son!

But then verse 10. And this is what he also says about the Son. “*You laid the foundation of the earth,*” and so on. “*They will perish, but You remain the same.*” That idea. The Father is saying this of the Son. Do you see that?

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And so what you get is that you get Psalm 102:27.

*“But You are the same,
And Your years will not come to an end.”*

That is being said of the Son. And just for emphasis, and for the sake of ministry to this people who are really catching it, look what he does at the end of the letter—Hebrews chapter 13, verse 8. *“Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever.”* Just for good measure he is saying that “the Jesus that I am talking about, the Jesus that I spoke of in chapter 1—by the way, let me just remind you that He is the immutable God.”

Participant: Amen.

Jeff: So really, the book opens with the immutability of God the Son and it closes with the immutability of God the Son. It’s a striking thing.

B. B. Warfield says this. *“The very abundance and persuasiveness of the evidence of the Deity of Christ greatly increases the difficulty of adequately stating it.”* I love that. *(Laughter)* Any takes on that?

Do you ever listen to or come across the person who says, “Well you know, the New Testament really doesn’t say that Jesus is divine.” That’s hogwash! That’s a Latin term; you can look it up later. *(Laughter)* Warfield says, *“The Deity of Christ in Scripture is like the salt in the sea. The sea is present in every bucket of sea water.”*

Participant: “Salt.”

Jeff: Sorry. Yeah! The sea is too. *(Laughter)* The Deity of Christ is present. I mean, it’s not hidden from us.

Participant: Amen.

Jeff: All right. So think about this. *Compared to the angels.* He brings us back. He’s not an instrument of creation, as if creation were just created through Him, though it was. But He is Creator Himself. Creation is mutable, but not without a purpose.

And this is the idea. I’m rushing through this, but let me just say it like this. Let me slow down and say that though creation is mutable, and we see that in Psalm 102, Jesus is immutable. He’s changeless. He’s *“the same yesterday and today, and forever.”* But He created creation. He was the instrument by which His Father created. Everything created was for Him, through Him and to Him. And it has a purpose.

And so we shouldn’t be discouraged. The point is that we shouldn’t be discouraged about creation. The point is that we understand that creation has a purpose. And we see it. Remember the Psalms that he quoted earlier, Psalm 2? This is the Psalm where the Messiah says to the Father,

*“Ask of Me, and I will surely give You the nations as Your inheritance,
And the very ends of the earth as Your possession.”*

Now catch this. Matthew 28:18. *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.”* Rome is under Christ’s authority. It is one of the nations that has been given to the Son.

Now do you see that? I mean, when you weave it all together and understand that Jesus is the immutable God, He created. He is sovereign over creation. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Him. He has asked the Father at the Ascension for

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the nations. The Father has given them to Him. And Rome is one of those nations given to Him.

This is why we should never sit back ever, ever, ever, although sometimes I do. This is why we should never sit back and say, Oh, America! America is so gone!, you know?

Look. If you want to know where we are on the slide, talk to somebody that doesn't live in America, and you'll understand that we're sliding. But we're not as far along on the slide as we could be, as some other nations are.

You know, I was sitting with a pastor who was from Belarus. And we were sitting at a table. There were a bunch of ministers and we were all talking together. And we were lamenting America's situation and how everything has been given over to secularism, blah blah blah. And he was quiet.

And I asked him. I said, “Tell me what you make of our conversation.”

And he said, “You're still getting used to the fact that people aren't listening to you.”

Participant: Amen.

Jeff: He said, “We're already used to that. We're at a much different place on the slide than you are.” And he was absolutely right.

And my point is not to encourage you about America. My point is to encourage you about the God who has control over America.

Participant: Amen!

Jeff: And He is the immutable God. And His Son, who is the immutable Son, has received the nations as His inheritance. And we are to go into the country in which we live, and the other countries in which we do not live. And we are to proclaim the saving gospel. I think that's wonderful! Anyway, I'm going to stop, all right? But that's a wonderful thing. Any questions, comments, thoughts you want to share? No?

All right, let's pray. Father in heaven, thank You so much for this day, for the time You've given. Lord, we thank You for this Word You've given to us about Christ. We ask now that You would bless us and strengthen us throughout the day as we meditate upon the fact that He is the immutable God, and that He has the nations as His inheritance. Thank You, Lord, that we live in Christ's kingdom. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Men: Amen. (*Applause*)