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Hebrews 1



Hebrews - Steve Gregg

Steve Gregg provides an examination of Hebrews 1, discussing how God spoke throughout the Old Testament era, particularly during the time of Moses. The writer of Hebrews uses the phrase "In last days God spoken," referring to the end of the old order and the coming of a new covenant. Gregg explains how the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the continuing ministry of Jesus speak to the modern-day church, and highlights Psalm 2 verses 8-9 as an example of God giving Jesus the nations as His inheritance.

Transcript

Alright, we're turning to the first chapter of Hebrews to begin our verse-by-verse treatment. The first four verses we will take as a separate unit, because after that, which is sort of an introduction or prologue, we get into the main argument. Although certainly the prologue sets up the main argument, the main argument is going to be at least through chapter 7, if not further, perhaps we could even say through chapter 10.

We're looking at Christ's superiority over everything significant in the old covenant. And he sets it up with these words, a rather run-on sentence in a way. It says, God who at various times and in different ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by his Son, whom he has appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds, who, being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as he has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

Okay, once he has said that, he's mentioned the angels, he goes into a discussion of the angels and why he has said that Jesus has such a more excellent position and name than they have. He'll defend that statement. But especially the first three verses before he mentions the angels, is talking about the contrast between Christ as a revelation from God, of the mind and the will and character of God, and that which had come prior to Christ.

He says that God had spoken to our fathers through the prophets in times past in various ways. When he says in different ways and various times, he's talking about the whole era of the Old Testament, especially since the time of Moses. Of course, God spoke to our ancestors even before the time of Moses.

Noah, for example, was our ancestor. God spoke to him. But the focus here is, of course, on the legal system instituted by Moses and the prophets who were sent to enforce God's claims on Israel and enforce the rules, as it were.

The prophets were sent to rebuke them when they were not obeying the law and to get them to start doing so. So, his contrast in this chapter and in the whole book is mostly with the Old Covenant versus that which is brought in with Christ. Now, he spoke at various times over the past 1400 years prior to this.

Not all the time. There weren't prophets all the time. He spoke at various times.

He spoke through Moses, and he spoke through Joshua. But during the period of the judges, not so much. Not much in the way of prophets or spokespersons.

Samuel came along, but between Joshua and Samuel was probably a period of more than 400 years. So, there was a period of more or less silence punctuated by seasons of God speaking through prophets. And then Samuel and Gad and maybe a few other prophets in David's day.

David himself, also a prophet, was an example. And then after David's time, there really weren't too many prophets sent either until a later period where Israel was apostate and God began to send prophets to the northern and southern kingdoms. So, God wasn't always speaking through prophets.

He was doing that at various times when he had something special he wanted to get across. What was happening at the other times when God wasn't speaking through prophets? People were supposed to follow what he said last time. Follow his word.

They had the law, after all. If the people had followed the law, there might never have been any prophets. Wouldn't have had to be.

I mean, after Moses. If they had just done the right thing, the prophets wouldn't have had to come to tell them what they were doing wrong. But the prophets weren't there all the time.

God spoke through the law. He spoke through prophets. And in various ways it says.

Some of the prophets received visions. Some of them had dreams. Some of them acted out their prophecies.

In fact, quite a few of them did. Ezekiel especially did. Hosea did by marrying a woman

that his whole life was an acted prophecy.

Jeremiah put an ox yoke over his neck to talk about how God was going to bring the yoke of Babylon upon Israel. I mean, there's different ways that the prophets or God spoke through the prophets and that's what he says. None of those ways, however, were equal to the way that he has now spoken to us.

It says, in these last days. In verse 2. These last days is very characteristic of the way the biblical writers spoke about their own time. On the day of Pentecost when people were questioning what was happening, when the people were all speaking in tongues and such, Peter said, well, this is what was spoken of by the prophet Joel.

And he begins to quote, in the last days, says the Lord, I will pour out my spirit. Peter says, those days that were called the last days, they're now. This is the last days when the spirit is being poured out.

And all the New Testament writers identify their own time as the last days in one way or another. For example, in 1 Corinthians chapter 10 and verse 11, Paul said, now all these things happen to them, meaning the Jews of the Old Testament, as examples and they are written for our admonition on whom the ends of the ages have come. Not the same phrase, last days, but it's referred to as the ends of the ages have come.

Peter used the expression also in 1 Peter chapter 1. 1 Peter 1.20, it says, he indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times. You. So Peter says it's the last days on the day of Pentecost.

And here he says it's these last times. The writer of Hebrews says it's these last days. Paul says the ends of the ages have come.

John uses a term, the last hour. Although I think the King James says the last times. In the Greek it says this, in 1 John chapter 2, verse 18, little children, it is the last hour.

And as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now are many antichrists, by which we know it is the last hour. So for John it's the last hour. For Paul it's the ends of the ages.

For Peter it's the last days and these last times. The writer of Hebrews uses this expression, in these last days God has spoken. What's interesting is that all the New Testament writers spoke of their own days as the last days.

This has led many Christians to believe that the last days must mean the whole age of the church. And I think this is something that people come to if they're coming out of a background where they thought the last days were simply the end of time. Because popularly in eschatology sometimes the last few years of earth's history are thought of as the last days.

As when someone says, do you think these are the last days? Do you think we're living in the last days? By that they mean, do you think the time is short before Jesus comes back? Because the last days are usually thought to mean the last days before the end of the world. And therefore when people who are raised with that orientation see this kind of usage by the New Testament writers, the last days is their days, then the natural thing for most people is to think, well that must mean if the last days are the last days of the world and they were back in 2000 years ago, the last days must be the whole 2000 years. The whole age of the church must be the last days.

Because they're thinking of the last in relation to the world itself. The end of the world. So the world's been around for 6000 or more years, but the last 2000 years have been the last days.

Now I have a slightly different view of this and a person would be entitled to take the view I just mentioned. It's widely held. My own thought is that the last days refers to the last days not of the world, but the last days of the age that the writers were living in, which was the Jewish age.

All the writers except for Luke were Jews. They had all been raised in the temple system. They had all been raised studying the law and living under the law.

The system they belonged to had been going on for 1400 years. What was going to end in their lifetime? Or at least in the lifetime of some in their generation. And therefore, they were certainly living in the last days.

They were announcing a new era had come. A new order under the Messiah. And with the coming of the new order, it spelled the near end of the old order.

There's an overlap there. It's like when they came out of Egypt with Moses. They were to come into the new order of having a promised land and their own nation there and so forth.

But it was 40 years after they came out of Egypt before they had the promised land. There was a transitional generation. One of the reasons I think for that was that although God had brought Israel out of Egypt, he had not yet gotten Egypt out of Israel.

And I think it took a generation of transition. People who were not raised in the Egyptian culture, but were raised under the law in the wilderness to actually be distinctly enough Jewish to be actually Israel. To be a different kind of people than the Egyptians.

And so there was this transitional period. I think that when God made the new covenant, it was similar. You see, God made a new covenant with Ammon Sinai, but it was 40 years before they came into the promised land.

I think when he made the new covenant in Christ, there was 40 years. A generation also.

It took that long to get Judaism out of the Jewish Christians.

They had been brought out into the new covenant, but they didn't fully understand that. And God's apparently gentle. He shall gently lead those who are without, who are with young, the Bible says.

And so instead of just, you know, totally saying, change everything you've thought now. Now you're saying, okay, we're going to wean you of this whole thing. And at the end of this generation, it's going away.

Forty years after the cross, the temple was destroyed. And then they had come to the end of a transitional generation, I believe. And that transitional generation was the last days of the order that they had been born under and that their ancestors had been in.

The last days of the Jewish system. And I believe that in Hebrews, especially, that's an apt understanding because as I've said in our introduction, I believe the Hebrew Christians to whom this was written were tempted to not see it as the last days of the order, but that the order had some time left in it, that they could maybe go back to it and be part of it. And who knows, you know, maybe it'd go on for a long time.

They said, no, these are the last days. Jesus sent his son to announce the end of the old order and to bring in the new order. So these are the last days of that old order and the revelation of that, those old ways that God spoke.

Now we have to ask ourselves, does this mean there are no prophets since Jesus came? Because obviously the writer's contrasting God speaking through prophets in the old days with speaking through Christ now that he's come. Does that mean the whole idea of prophets is passe? Well, obviously not. Because after Jesus came, there were still prophets in the book of Acts.

After Jesus went to heaven, established his new order. Agabus was a prophet. Philip's daughters were prophets.

Paul spoke about the prophets in the church of Corinth. Some people think, though, that when Jerusalem fell, the prophetic order ended. But there's nothing biblical about that.

The Didache, which was written at the end of the first century after the temple had fallen, speaks frequently of the prophets coming to the churches. In fact, the Didache is an important New Testament writing or early church writing, I should say, church fathers. And it speaks frequently of if prophets come to your church, treat them this way.

And if they do this, they're a false prophet. But if they do something else, they're a true prophet and so forth. So the idea that prophecy still exists in the church, that God still speaks through inspired oracles and spokespersons, was a given in the early church.

They never believed that the fall of Jerusalem brought an end to that. So why does he make this contrast between the old days God spoke through the prophets, but now he spoke through Jesus? Well, the old prophets were, how should we put it? They were occasional. They were occasional spokespersons who came to enforce the old order.

When God sent a prophet, it was always calling people back to obey the law, the old order. Jesus is the final spokesperson, but through the New Testament prophet, Jesus is speaking still through the church. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are the continuing ministry of Jesus through the church, through his spirit.

And therefore there are prophets, but this is not in contrast to Jesus speaking to us. This is Jesus continuing to speak to the church. This is how Paul understood the gifts of the spirit, that the spirit of Jesus was continuing to speak through gifted persons.

And there are many different kinds of gifts, but certainly one of them was prophecy. So the writer of Hebrews certainly did not believe that the coming of Jesus was the end of the prophetic ministry. There are prophets, no doubt.

Well, there are prophets in the New Testament, let's put it that way. So let's just not draw any false inferences from this. So in these last days, he has spoken to us by his son.

Now, once he mentions the son, he piles on clauses or phrases that describe Jesus in very glowing terms, of course. First, he says he has appointed him heir of all things. Moses was not the heir of all things.

Even Israel was not the heir of all things. They were the heirs of the promised land. They inherited a land, but Jesus is going to inherit everything.

There is no one who has come before Christ except Adam, who inherited all things. And Adam forfeited. Jesus, the second Adam, comes to reclaim it and all things will be his.

It says in Psalm 2, verses 8 and 9, that God says to Jesus, ask of me and I will give you the nations as your inheritance and the most parts of the earth for your possession. It's all going to be Christ's. Now, of course, what's interesting is Paul tells us in Romans 8 that those who endure in this age and suffer with Christ will reign with him.

And it says we are joint heirs with Christ, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, Paul says in Romans. And that being so, it means that when Jesus inherits all things, we're going to inherit all with him. Joint heirs inherit together.

In fact, Jesus said, blessed are the meek, they shall inherit the earth. He meant his disciples. So there is something here, the identity of the church with Christ is not to be missed here.

I mean, the prophets still speak, but that's Christ still speaking through his spirit. There's not an end of the prophets. Christ is the inheritor of all things, but so is the church in him.

We are his body, we're identified with him. What the head inherits, the body inherits with him. And so this is the status that Christ has.

He's the heir of everything, which puts him even above Israel that only inherited something. Israel inherited a land, but Christ inherits the whole world and those who are with him as well. Now, there's more things, of course, said about him.

It says that through whom he has made the worlds and there's more and more than made the earth. He also sustains it, as we'll see a little further down, because it says in verse three, that he upholds all things according to the word of his power. He made the world by his word and he upholds the world by his word.

This is something that is also affirmed in 2nd Peter chapter three. The world is being sustained at this present time through the word of Christ, or that is the authoritative decree of Christ. He decrees that it should sustain, so it does.

Once he decrees it shouldn't, it won't. The idea is that at his word, the world comes into existence and remains in existence. In 2nd Peter chapter three, after it talks about the flood of Noah's day, and in verse six says the world that then existed, that is before the flood, perished, being flooded with water.

The next verse says, but the heavens and the earth which are now, which is of course since the flood, are kept in store, that is they are sustained at the present time, by the same word, that is God's word, reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. So God's word holds the present world in store until it's time for it not to exist anymore, in which case it'll be consumed in fire, as Peter goes on to talk about. Colossians chapter one has a passage very similar to these opening words in Hebrews.

It's a long passage, and we'll deal with it when we study Colossians, but it's another case. In this case Paul heaps phrase after phrase upon his description of Christ. It says in verse 15 of Colossians 1, he is the image of the invisible God.

Well that's like what it says in Hebrews 1:3. He's the express image of God's person, so we've got sort of the same idea there. It says he's the firstborn of all creation. It says for by him, which would mean the heir of all things, really.

Firstborn is the heir. So in Hebrews it says God has appointed Jesus the heir of all things. Paul calls him the firstborn of all creation, which would be the heir of everything, of the whole creation.

And it says for by him all things were created. Well that's also stated in the passage in

Hebrews. That are in heaven and that are earth, visible and invisible.

Paul elaborates more. Whether thrones or dominions and so forth. Then he says in verse 17, and he is before all things and in him all things consist or hold together.

So the same idea. Christ created everything, everything holds together through him. He's the heir of all things.

You can see that Paul has the same concepts about Christ he wants to lay out that the writer of Hebrews does at the beginning. There's probably not a passage outside of Hebrews that is as similar to this passage in Hebrews as Colossians 1 is in this passage. There's so many points of similarity between Hebrews 1 verses 1 through 3 and Colossians 1 verses 15 and following.

Now in the middle of Hebrews 1 3 it says he upholds all things by the word of his power. When he had by himself purged our sins he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high. Now that also is in Colossians 1 that he's the head of the church and he's far above all principalities and powers and so forth.

Colossians says here he's above all those things because he's sitting down at the right hand of God. The majesty on high a typical thing for a Hebrew writer to write to Hebrews namely a euphemism for God. Certainly what he means is Jesus sat down at the right hand of God.

But he doesn't say God because Jews don't like to say God very much. They think God is a very important word not to use lightly and not to use too frequently. So they have these euphemisms like Matthew when he's writing to Jewish people he is the word heaven for God the kingdom of heaven instead of the kingdom of God.

Very typical Jewish thing to do. The prodigal son said father I've sinned against heaven and in your side. He means against God.

The Jews reluctant to cheapen the word God by too frequent usage had various words they used instead. In this case the majesty on high is simply a term for God. And so instead of saying as we would say Jesus sat down at the right hand of God like Mark said at the end of chapter 16 of Mark he's writing to Gentiles.

This writer is writing to Jews so he avoids the word God in this case and simply uses the word the majesty on high. He's already used the word God in verse 1. Too many uses of the word in too short a space might be considered to be excessive. Now it says that Jesus had by himself once purged our sins.

Now in verse 3 where it says that he's anticipating his discussion of chapter 10. He had by himself purged our sins. That's that one time thing he did and he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high.

In chapter 10 what he's going to be arguing is that in the Old Testament whenever you see the priest you see him really standing up. He's standing at the altar. He's always standing because he's always working.

He's always working because although he just finished one sacrifice there's another one to offer and another and another. He never really finishes because none of the sacrifices he offers are permanently helpful. And the writer of Hebrews brings that out in the opening verses of chapter 10.

He's to point out in the priest in the Old Testament they're just always standing and offering again and again the same sacrifices that never make the worship are perfect. But then he says but this man Jesus offered himself one time and sat down. The contrast between standing and sitting is very strong there.

Jesus sat down at the right hand of God meaning he's not working anymore. That is he's he finished his work. The priest can't sit down.

You know the tabernacle had a lot of furniture at a table and a lamp and things like that but didn't have a chair in it because there's no time for the priest to sit down because the job was never done. They could go home and sit down but not at the tabernacle. The idea that the tabernacle is where you're continually standing was symbolic of the fact that as long as the tabernacle was standing the job was never finished.

But Jesus sat down after he offered himself once and that's what the writer of Hebrews is bringing out here by way of anticipation of his further explanation in chapter 10 verse 4 having become so much better than the angels as he has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. Now to say he's inherited a better name than they have you think well isn't the name of Jesus. I mean wasn't he always better than them.

Why would he have to inherit a better name. The word name here no doubt means title or status or role or dignity. I mean the word name as you probably are aware in the Bible is used much more broadly than we use it.

We use the word name to mean what people call us you know our handle the syllables that are written on our birth certificates that identify us from someone else. That's our name. But in the Bible the name is a far bigger concept.

A name the name means a person's character a person's identity a person's reputation. There's some usage of it like that in our own language. We don't do it too much.

But when you talk about someone's good name was ruined by some slander or something. What means their reputation. We're not talking about their actual syllables of their name.

We're talking about their reputation was destroyed. Their good name that retains a little

bit in our culture of what the Bible means by name. The word name in the Bible speaks of somebody's reputation who they are their identity their whole character everything about them not just the word you call them by.

And to say that Jesus has inherited a better name than they in this case I think it's saying he has obtained a you know a better overall status than the angels have. Now you might say well didn't he have that before he came to earth. Yes but not after he came to earth.

He was above the angels but we're going to read in chapter 2 that he became a little lower than the angels when he came to earth. We're going to be told that in verse 9 of chapter 2 says we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death. See the angels don't suffer death.

So by Jesus becoming mortal in that respect he had less privileges than the angels. He had to die and they don't. So in that respect for the suffering of death he was made a little lower than the angels.

But he says that was only temporary. But he's now crowned with glory and honor. So he is above them now.

He was above them before he was born in Bethlehem. But during the time he walked on earth he was below them in one sense. They still were.

I mean they were they still knew who he was and so forth and would honor him. But he didn't order them around or anything like that when he's on earth. They came when the father did.

He could have called them. Jesus said he could call 12 legions of angels and his father would send them. But he was living below his privileges so to speak as a man.

He put aside his privileges in order to be like us and to live under our handicaps and even be mortal. And in that respect the angels were better off than him because they aren't mortal. They're not going to die.

So he was made for a little while lower than the angels for the suffering of death. But that's over now. He died.

He's risen again and now he's been inherited a name and a status above them once again and even more than before because he was perfect God before. Now he's also perfect man and perfect priest and things that he wasn't before. He's gotten his added dimensions to his his identity that weren't there before.

He was God before. Now he's also the high priest. God in the Bible is never our priest.

God's the one that needs. We need to have a priest to approach. So Jesus has obtained something through his experience on earth through his death and resurrection.

Though he was God before he's actually expended his experience by experiencing what we have. He Paul seems to say something like that over in Ephesians chapter 4 I think because there it says in verse 8 Ephesians 4 8 and following says therefore he says now this he says results in a quote from Psalm 68 18 which says when he ascended on high he led captivity captive or he led a host of captives some say and gave gifts to men. Then Paul explains in verse 9 now this phrase he ascended.

What does it mean but that he first descended into the lower parts of the earth. He who descended is also the one who ascended far above the heavens that he might fill all things. He fills all things more than before because he he always was way above us.

But now he came down to be even below us. He fills the top and the bottom and everything between. Now he has expanded his experience.

God knew everything before but he hadn't experienced everything. He had never experienced temptation. He never experienced death.

In the Bible indicates in fact Hebrews is the book that tells us so that Jesus because he has suffered can be a merciful and compassionate high priest because he knows what it's like. I remember a preacher saying many years ago when I heard you say things the first thing Jesus said when he got back to heaven as well. Those guys have a really rough down there because I mean I'm sure God knew that intellectually.

But once you live a human life and go through that you realize oh wow. So this is what it's like you know. And that's pretty much what the writer of Hebrews.

He sees Jesus that way that Jesus added something to his experience and even to his understanding of our and his compassion of our situation by becoming one of us. And after that he's re elevated to a high place having inherited a higher position in some sense a more fully orb'd position than even before because he now has a new status toward us as priest and king which he accomplished through his death. Now in verse five it says for to which of the angels did he ever say.

Now this is a rhetorical question. The answer is to none. He didn't say these things to any of the angels.

He's going to quote two verses that God never said anything. Never two verses from the Old Testament that were never addressed to angels but were addressed to Christ apparently. The first of them is you are my son.

Today I have begotten you. That's of course Psalm 2 7. It's quoted in a number of places in the New Testament. In fact it's even quoted again later in Hebrews in chapter five and verse five.

It's quoted again. In fact the quotation of it here and the quotation of it in Hebrews 5 5

are kind of introductory of two major movements of his argument. They are what scholars might call two Christological movements of his argument when he's talking about different aspects of Christ.

Each of them begins with a quotation of this verse here and then in chapter five verse five where he begins to talk about the priesthood of Christ and expound on that a bit. Here he's simply talking about the innate superiority of Christ. He's better than all the angels just inherently.

But he's also got something going for him that they don't have and no one else has because of his special priesthood. And this verse in Psalm 2 7 is quoted in both places. Now you are my son.

Today I have begotten you. And again I will be to him a father and he shall be to me a son. That's second Samuel 7 14.

These two verses are given as examples of how God speaks to Jesus the way he wouldn't speak to any angel. No angel has ever been spoken to this way. Now you might say well aren't the angels sometimes called sons of God.

Yeah. Apparently in the book of Job they appear to be called sons of God and frankly good people are sometimes called sons of God too. But no one but Jesus is called the son of God.

My son uniquely begotten my son. You know Israel thought of God as their father collectively. The Jews would never speak of God as my father individually but they would say our father on rare occasions.

Isaiah spoke of God as Israel's father collectively. What offended the Jews is that Jesus spoke of God as my father. That obviously he was not saying you know God's my father in the same sense he's everybody else's father the way he's Israel's father.

He's my father uniquely. The father son relationship is something that's used a lot of different ways in the Bible too. You got to realize that there's just some some paradigms fit lots of different concepts and in different contexts.

For example when you read about Cain's descendants Jubal and Jabal and Tubal Cain these guys are said to be the father. One of them was the father of everyone who lives in a tent and who who tends sheep. We got one of our students live in a tent but I don't think he's descended from Cain.

But that guy is the father of all who dwell in tents. And another was the father of all people who play the lute and the harp. So all the musicians are descended from that guy right.

But of course it's not saying that he's the biological father. When Jesus said to the Jews you are of your father the devil he didn't mean that he's your biological father. Father son relationships are very differing in different places.

I mean Jabal and Jubal and Tubal Cain are the fathers or we should say the founders of certain ways of life just like George Washington is said to be the father of our country. We're not descended from him. He's involved significantly in the founding of our country.

Father is used lots of different ways but it's only used this way when talking about God's relation with Jesus. The angels may be called sons of God collectively but no angel is ever called the son of God. That's the point that the writers say.

When did God ever say to an angel you are my son. Today I begot you. Now this verse might.

When is this. When does this statement speak to Jesus. When did God make this statement to Jesus.

I will say that I was raised with the impression that this is speaking of Jesus eternal sonship going back before the world was ever made. Jesus certainly existed before the world was made. The Bible says in the beginning was the word.

That's Jesus. And the word was with God. The word was God and he all things were made by him.

So clearly Jesus existed before the world was made. I believe Jesus eternally existed as long as God has existed. Jesus has existed but not as Jesus not as the man Jesus but as the word of God who later was made flesh and became the man Jesus.

But the point is that in the in the traditional rendering of the Trinity doctrine it is often said that Jesus is the eternal son eternally begotten not made by the father. And I was raised making that statement too until I couldn't find it in the scripture. The Bible doesn't ever speak of Jesus as the eternal son.

He is the word. He is God. But the eternal son you don't find that.

In fact you don't find any clear reference to Jesus as the son of God that speaks of him prior to his incarnation. He may have been the son of God before that but the Bible doesn't clearly say so. Now orthodox theology says he was orthodox theology says that he was always the son of God.

He's God the son. But as many of you may know if you've said scripture the term God the son is not in the Bible. It's a theological term also.

But Jesus being called the son in scripture as near as I can tell and I would have no objection if someone showed me otherwise but I've been looking for it for about 35 years

now. I don't think it's in there near as I can tell the Bible never speaks of him as the son of God speaking prior to his incarnation. In fact look at Luke chapter 1 where Mary is being told that Jesus is you know she's going to have a baby with Jesus and so forth.

In Luke 1 34 says then Mary said to the angel How can this be since I do not know a man I'm a virgin. How could I have a baby. The answer comes this way.

The angel answered and said to her verse 35 the Holy Spirit will come upon you. The power of the highest again of God. The highest is a euphemism for God will overshadow you.

This is how you're going to become pregnant. In other words you're not you don't have to know a man. You have God doing a supernatural work in your womb to conceive this child.

He says therefore also what that holy one who is reborn of you will be called the son of God. Why. Why is Jesus called the son of God.

Because of the way that Mary was impregnated because no man was his father but God was his father. He's a man who came to earth without a human father. God you know fertilized Mary's egg so that there would be a person who came that that has the nature of God.

God in the flesh which I'm saying to be. Now I don't want to introduce any new concepts about the Trinity or anything like that. I don't have any interest in doing that.

What I'm saying is that when the Bible uses the term son of God it seems to be saying because Mary became pregnant in this way therefore her child is called the son of God. That therefore means for this reason if Jesus was eternally before that the son of God the angel could have said well he's going to be called the son of God because well that's what he's always been. He is the son of God up in heaven.

I was going to be the son of God on earth. I understand Jesus to be one with God as the word of God prior to his incarnation but the son of God I believe refers to his earthly life and following. He was a he was a mere man not a mere man.

He's a real man in which God but after his resurrection he's a glorified man. He's the son of God from the time he was conceived until forever. But I don't know of him being called the son of God before that.

Now when I brought this up there's a people will often bring up this verse that the writer of Hebrews is quoting. You are my son. Today I've begotten you.

Wasn't that written before Jesus was incarnate. Wasn't that written in the Old Testament that Psalm 2 has written a thousand years before the birth of Christ. So here he is

already being called the son of God before his birth.

True the prophet before his birth spoke of him in those terms but what was he speaking of. He was not speaking of eternity past which is this day I begotten you. There are no days in eternity.

A day is measured by evening and morning and the first day and the second day and so forth. There's a particular historical day that is referred to this day. I have begotten you.

He's not talking about being eternally begotten in a timeless past but it's a specific time. What is that time. Now you might think I'm going to say it's the birth of Jesus.

It's not in this case. This is not referring to his birth. This is referring yet to another sense in which Jesus is called the son of God.

Besides that we know that because Paul quoted that verse and in a context where he said what it means. So it's nice to have an apostle tell you what a verse means directly and he does in Acts chapter 13. Paul is preaching there and in verse 33 well 32 and following Paul says we declare to you the glad tidings that promise which was made to the fathers.

God has fulfilled this for us in their children in that he has raised up Jesus. He means from the dead as it is also written in the second song. You are my son.

Today I begotten you. So Paul quotes this song. You are my son.

Today I begotten you. Jesus is raised from the dead as it says in this song. The day that God begot him to be his son in this other sense was his resurrection.

Now that shouldn't be too surprising if we know the rest of the New Testament because Colossians chapter 1 again and verse 18 says this about Jesus. It says and he is the head of the body of the church who is the beginning the firstborn from the dead that in all things he may have the preeminence. Colossians 1:18 says Jesus is the firstborn from the dead.

When he was resurrected that was like a birth of sorts. God said you are my son. I begotten you this day and Paul says that's a reference to the resurrection of Christ.

Over in Revelation chapter 1 Jesus speaks of himself in the same term. Verse 5 Revelation 1:5 and from Jesus the faithful witness the firstborn from the dead. So Paul calls Jesus the firstborn from the dead.

Jesus calls himself the firstborn from the dead in Revelation 1:5 and apparently David did too. Though David may not have understood it because the prophets didn't always understand the meaning of their terms. The Holy Spirit spoke through him and said you are my son this day I begotten you.

David may have even understood that to be with reference to himself it's hard to say but the New Testament makes it clear this was God speaking to Jesus and the beginning was the resurrection. When Jesus rose from the dead that's when he ascended to the throne. That's when his kingly role began.

That's when he was exalted above the angels. This is the important thing in the argument here. Jesus has a position much higher than the angels.

As a consequence of what? As a consequence of his resurrection. He went through death. He was lower than the angels till he died but then he rose from the dead and he's exalted above principalities and powers.

He's above all angels above all things and this is testified to in the psalm this day I begotten you. That is from the dead. You are my son.

You hold the position of the firstborn heir. Firstborn from the dead. All things are yours.

The angels don't have that status. God doesn't talk to the angels that way. None of them.

Not any of them. And then he quotes as I said 2 Samuel 7 14 in verse 5 he says and again I will be to him a father and he shall be to me a son. The writer of Hebrews is clearly applying this to Jesus although as you look back at the original setting of this actually it seems like it's Solomon.

It's interesting that the writer of Hebrews and other New Testament writers often quote Old Testament verses and apply them in ways that maybe we wouldn't have thought they should be if we had been writing it ourselves. But if you look at 2 Samuel 7 this is the place where God first made the promise to David that the Messiah would come from him. All the Jews understood it that way and Christians do too.

In 2 Samuel 7 12 through 14 it says the prophet Nathan says to David when your days are fulfilled and you rest with your father. So David when you're dead I will set up on your I'll set up your seat after you who will come from your body and I will establish his kingdom. Now at first glance this would seem to apply to Solomon.

When David died Solomon a seed of his who came from his body was raised up to sit on his kingdom his throne his kingdom. I will be his father and he shall be my son. That's the verse that the writer of Hebrews quotes.

It says and if he commits iniquity I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. But my mercy shall not depart from him as I took it from Saul whom I removed from before you now it says and your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever now this promise to David was that a seed of his would sit on the throne after him.

Solomon was that seed it even says that he build a house under my name. It says there in verse 13 Solomon did that he built the temple. But Jesus does that too.

Jesus said upon this rock I will build my church and the New Testament says that the church is made up of living stones built into a holy temple in the Lord. The church is a spiritual house built by Christ. In fact the writer of Hebrews in chapter 3 and verse 6 is going to say we are his house.

Hebrews 3 6 he says that Christ is the head over his own house whose house we are. Hebrews 3 6. So this prophecy about Solomon building a house. Solomon apparently is a type and shadow of Christ and even the Jews before the time of Jesus understood this promise that way based on these verses in 2nd Samuel 7 the Jews cherished a hope that the Messiah would come to them.

The Messiah would come through the line of David. And this is the promise that made them think so. They believe that although Solomon in one sense fulfilled it.

It had a further extrapolation to an ultimate son of David of whom Solomon is only a type and a shadow and that would be the Messiah. And it's assuming this to be true that enables the author of Hebrews to quote this statement which on the surface looks like it's about Solomon. And apply it to Jesus.

And he does it as if everyone's going to agree with him. It's not like he's going to make a case for it. He just says listen God doesn't talk this way to angels.

Clearly he said this about Jesus about the Messiah. So in other words he quotes two verses from the Old Testament to establish that the Messiah is called the son. Angels are not.

Now verse 6. But when he again brings the firstborn into the world. He says let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels he says who makes his angel spirits and his ministers a flame of fire.

But to the son he says your throne. Oh God is forever and ever a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness.

Therefore your God has anointed you with the oil of gladness more than your companions. When he brings Jesus in the world he says let all the angels of God worship him. Notice it says in verse 6 when he again brings the firstborn into the world.

Some people think this refers to the second coming. When God brings Jesus back into the world again he'll have all the angels worship him. But the word again in the Greek is positioned at the beginning of the sentence as if it's just saying here's another example.

Here's another example when God brought Jesus into the world. He said let all the angels of God worship him. We know that the angels did because the shepherds heard them.

The shepherds saw them. The angels appeared a choir. Worshiping Jesus and this statement actually comes from Deuteronomy.

Deuteronomy 32.43. But if you look there you'll be perplexed because there's nothing in Deuteronomy 32.43 in our Bible that says this. The reason is he is quoting from the Septuagint. And the Septuagint is the Greek translation of the Hebrew.

Our Old Testaments in our Bible are translated from the Hebrew. And there's a few places where the Septuagint reads a bit different than the Hebrew. And since the writer and his readers were all using the Septuagint he was able to quote this verse where you actually do find the line in the Septuagint.

Let all the angels of God worship him. And he applies that to when Jesus was born. It seems like a stretch especially when we look at Deuteronomy 32.43 and say well that's not even in there.

But there is some question Christians really ought to be wrestling with as to whether the Septuagint might be more accurate than the Hebrew. You might say but the Hebrew is original and the Septuagint is the translation. True but we don't have copies of the Hebrew original.

We have copies of copies of copies of copies of copies of the Hebrew original. Our Hebrew manuscripts are not the earliest possible. And the Septuagint was translated 300 years before Christ.

We don't have Hebrew manuscripts at all. It's possible that the Septuagint in many cases preserves what the original Hebrew said but our existing Hebrew manuscripts have changed because we don't have them quite so ancient as they had when they did the Septuagint. It's hard to know.

In any case when we find the writer of Hebrews quoting the Septuagint and it reads a little different than our Hebrew we can say this much. The writer of the of the book believed the Septuagint at least was saying something that's accurate. Whether it's closer than the Hebrew is to the original it's hard for us to know.

But he at least said this statement in the Septuagint is reliable. God does tell all the angels of God to worship Jesus. Now if God tells the angels to worship Jesus that means Jesus is God.

And because no one's allowed to be worshipped except God. And he points that out by contrasting what is said about the angels and what is said about Jesus. In verse 7 of the angels he says who makes his angels spirits and his ministers a flame of fire.

Now this is Psalm 104 verse 4 and once again, it is the Septuagint and it reads a little different than ours because the word angels in the Hebrew and in the Greek is messengers and the word spirits in the Hebrew and the Greek can be translated winds. And in our if we look up Psalm 104 verse 4 in your Bible, it'll say he makes the winds his messengers. Winds can be translated spirits.

Messengers can be translated angels. He makes the winds his messengers but the Septuagint says he makes the angels spirits. It's a it's a possible translation, but it doesn't seem to make as much sense.

In fact in Psalm 104 that section of the Psalm is talking about how God is sovereign over all the forces of nature. Talks about he rides on the cloud. He makes the winds his servants.

He makes the fires the flames of fire his his servants and the winds are his messengers. You know, it's talking about these different elements in nature and how God exploits them and uses them whereas the Septuagint kind of divorces this from that context and just says he makes the angels winds and instead of saying he makes the flames of fire his servants as it says in Psalm 104 in our Bible, he says he makes his servants flames of fire. Yeah, well, it's it's kind of a strange reversal of the word order and so forth in the Greek, but but the point in quoting it apparently is this.

He's going to say that Jesus is permanent, but winds, fires, those are not permanent. Those are transient things. Spirits, his angels may be spirits, but they are not God.

His messengers might be flames of fire, but fire isn't permanent necessarily and yet Jesus is and this is pointed out by two quotations he gives. One from Psalm 45 and one from Psalm 102. Psalm 45 verses 6 through 7 is quoted here in verse 8. Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.

A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of your kingdom. Now, this is troublesome because God is speaking to Jesus and calls him God. God says to Jesus, Your throne, O God, and yet in the next verse he says in verse 9, we see it.

You have loved righteousness and hate lawlessness. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your companions. So he calls him God and yet he speaks about his God.

Jesus has a God and Jesus is God. This is God speaking according to this man to the son that is to Jesus. He, that is God, says, Your throne, O God.

Jesus is referred to as God and yet your God, Jesus has anointed you with the oil of gladness. This is a troublesome, but it's just as troublesome in the original of the psalm because the phrases are there too. Now, remember Jesus in John's gospel often spoke of himself as being one with the Father or being if you've seen me, you've seen the Father

or the Father's in me and I'm in the Father.

He is God in one sense, but also Jesus said to Mary Magdalene, and this is also in John's gospel, go tell the disciples, I'm going to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God. Jesus speaks of the Father as his God, no doubt using the language from this psalm. There are mysteries here that the writer of Hebrews only alludes to and doesn't bother to explain.

What does he understand this to mean? Well, one thing he means is Jesus is called God, but the angels aren't. Sure, he is subservient to his Father, but he is still divine himself as well. And so, God calls him God.

And then he quotes Psalm 102, verses 10 through 12 here, and now the and is supplemented in verse 8, to the son he says this, and to the son he says this, you, Yahweh, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth and the heavens are the work of your hands. They shall perish, but you remain and they will all grow old like a garment, like a cloak. You will fold them up and they will be changed, but you are the same.

Your years do not fail. Now, this quote from Psalm 102, verses 25 and 27, is interesting because it's addressed to Yahweh. And the writer of Hebrews says this is addressed to Jesus.

It's very clear, even as it's given here, you, Yahweh, you, Lord, are permanent. And what's the point of quoting this here, if it's not about Jesus? He says it is, to the son he says these two things. Quoting Psalm 45 and Psalm 102, these are things that the Father says to the Son.

God calls him not only God, but Yahweh. So the case mounts. It starts out with the writer saying, Jesus is called by titles, no angel is called by, Son of God.

He gives two examples, but he goes further. He's even called God. He's even called Yahweh.

In other words, it's like a crescendo of labels given to Jesus that show more and more and more how much above the angels he is. But in fact, in the process, also firmly establishes the doctrine of the deity of Christ. I mean, if he's saying that God called Jesus Yahweh, and God called Jesus God, you can't very well make Jesus anything less than God, if God doesn't.

And finally, it says in verse 13, But to which of the angels has he ever said, sit at my right hand till I make your enemies your footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation? So the angels are spirits. They are servant. Ministering means serving.

They are servant spirits. They are not sons. They are not heirs.

They are servants in the household. Christ is the heir. God has never said to any angel, sit at my right hand.

I'm going to give you it all. You sit here and reign next to me until I put all your enemies under your feet. That's not a promise made to angels.

It's made to Jesus. And therefore, the point at this early stage in the argument is to show that although the angels in the mind of the Jew were associated with the giving of the law, which gave the law a greater dignity, because it's not only of human origin, clearly the angels were dispatched to be involved in its transition to Moses some way. Well, that certainly gives it, you know, dignity, but so what? The angels are not anything like Jesus and you've come to him.

No matter how great the angels are, they're not even close to being as great as Jesus is his point. And he gives these various Old Testament scriptures, sometimes using things that we would not think to use, especially, I would not think to use Psalm 102 of Jesus, because it doesn't say Jesus says Yahweh. But the writer of Hebrews, no doubt, is quoting the Old Testament scriptures the way the early church understood them.

He's not defending his use of it. He's using it as a given. Well, you know that God said this to Jesus.

That makes my point. Well, it doesn't make your point unless everyone agrees that that was spoken to Jesus. Obviously, he's assuming Christians have come to understand these scriptures this way.

This is the standard understanding of the Old Testament texts. That they are speaking of Jesus when they speak of God in this way. So, the writer's not done with the angels yet.

They'll come up again in chapter two, but there will be an interruption because the first of his warnings about falling away comes up at the beginning of chapter two. So he interrupts himself briefly for a few verses and he's going to come back and finish out his his argument that Jesus is greater than the angels. You