



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Hebrews 1:4–6

“Angels Worship the Son!”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the word of God and for what it means to us.

We thank Thee for the light that Thou hast given to us and we pray that we have more, if it pleases Thee. We pray that we may be responsive to the truth. Give us, Lord, a diligence in the study of it and then a diligence, also, and responsiveness to the plain teaching of Thy word. We thank Thee for each one present; we pray Thy blessing upon them and upon their families. We ask, Lord, that Thou wilt guide us all in such a way that our lives may be not only pleasing to Thee but glorifying of Thy name. We thank Thee for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who has loved us and given himself for us and who lives now as our great High Priest in Heaven, ever living to make intercession for us. It is, Lord, a very solemn thing to think that at this very moment as we are talking here and thinking about the Epistle to the Hebrews, that He is engaging in his constant ministry of meeting our needs as our priest. We thank Thee for him. We thank Thee that he stands at the head of the covenant that guarantees our salvation. We remember the words of the Apostle John, which were the words of our Lord, ultimately, “I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.” We thank thee for that confidence. Be with us in this hour, we ask, Lord.

For Jesus’ glory and for His Name’s sake. Amen.

[Message] Well, this is the second in our series of studies in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and tonight we are turning to verse 4 through verse 6 of chapter 1. We're taking these verses very slowly but they are very, very significant passages. And, I know, that if you think about them for awhile and reflect upon them, you will surely agree, because they are extremely important. And if we are to understand this author and if we are to understand the condition of those to whom he writes, it's important that we grasp what he is seeking to do and, probably, at the same time we will also learn some of the things that we, ourselves, need to have from the Lord God.

Our subject for this evening is “Angels Worship the Son!” Verse 4 through verse 6 is our study for this evening.

“Having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For to which of the angels did He ever say, ‘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?’ But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says, ‘Let all the angels of God worship Him.’”

The spiritual condition of the Hebrew professing believers is a condition that, I think, in fairness, we could say is widespread in the Evangelical church today. They had lapsed into dullness of ear due to a fading vision of Jesus Christ. Decay had set in. And the author was very disturbed over what had happened to them. I think, there comes to my mind the passage in Galatians chapter 4, in which the Apostle Paul expresses something of the same concern about the Galatians. It is chapter 4 in verse 11, where he says with reference to them, “I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain.”

Now, it's helpful to remember that the people to whom the Epistle to the Hebrews was written, were not young converts needing to be instructed, they were old disciples. And not only were they old disciples, but they had a very worthy history of their own behind them. In chapter 10

in verse 32, the writer of the epistle says to them, "But recall the former days in which after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings." So they are not new believers; these are old believers. And not only are they old believers, but there were features of their past life that were features that glorified the Lord God. They did have a worthy history of their own behind them.

They had been in many trials and troubles and they, too, are referred to in the chapters that follow.

So we're not talking about new Christians, we are talking about old Christians who have lapsed. And as a matter of fact, are in danger of lapsing to the extent that they go back to the old faith; the old faith of Judaism which they had once embraced. So we are talking about individuals who need as one of the commentators has said, "To remove the sluggishness that characterizes them; as well as the indifference, to confirm their hope and patience in the things of the Lord and to rub off the rust which through time and adverse circumstances had brought to them.

Now, I think, if you'll just look around honestly at the professing Christian church, I mean evangelical Church, I'm not talking about the First Unitarian Church, and I'm not talking about some of the first of the well-known middle of the road denominational churches, many of which have gone a long ways from the faith. We're talking about evangelical Christians. And, I think, you can see that what our author talks about is something that's well known to us. We really shouldn't stop there, should we? We should say, is this a characteristic of me? That's something that's immediately important for us. Is this the status in which I'm dwelling at the present time?

So the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, then addresses people whose spiritual condition is, I think, wide spread today. I'm sure that in our own fellowship there are some whose status probably qualifies; maybe more than I would guess or you would guess. And, in fact, don't eliminate me from the ones that you may be observing to find application for the words that I've just said because our past is no indication of what the future is going to be.

Well, our author, if I look at this book overall, will say that the remedy is a fresh glimpse of the greatness of Jesus Christ and, specifically, his greatness as our great High Priest. You read through the epistle and that's one of the important things that comes out. He is interested in the

greatness of the Son of God and, specifically, as the great High Priest of the people of God. And he would, I'm sure, say that it is correct to say, that the shining face of the believer in fellowship with the Lord is the product of sacred fellowship with him, in his word and also in our Christian lives.

The author builds his thought around three great contrasts. Everyone who's ever read this epistle knows, around the contrast of the Son to the angels, the Son to Moses, but then spends most of his time on the third great contrast of the Son to Aaron, the High Priest of the children of Israel. And these three great contrasts are like three concentric circles, proceeding from the widest to the narrowest realm, because the angels were looked at as those who had supervision over the world and then Moses' supervision over the children of Israel. And then Aaron, the one who specifically had supervision over the daily life of the children of Israel.

Now, we're looking at the section of the epistle in which the apostles or the author is going to talk about the Son of God as over against the angels. The angels are the head of the old covenant age. You'll notice he makes that point in chapter 2 in verse 2, "For if the word spoken through angels proves steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward." So he thinks of the angels as those who had authority over the Old Testament age. In chapter 1 in verse 5, the contrasts begin, and so now, he's going to talk about how the Son of God is greater than the angels. The proposition is the proposition that the Son is better than the angels, and it's stated in verse 4. "Having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." That that was proposed in the eternal councils, notice verse 2 again, "Has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things." That proposed in the eternal councils has been realized at the resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ. And the Son has now inherited a name that is more excellent than the name of the angels.

Now, therefore, the Son is supreme over the Old Covenant mediators, such as angels, Moses, Aaron; but we're beginning with the angels, particularly. You might ask the question, why was the author concerned about angels? Today, we don't think of the angels as being very significant. But what we know about the children of Israel is that they thought a great deal about the

angelic work. And the ancient world thought a great deal about the angels. After all, the Bible does speak of the angels both in the Old Testament and the New Testament as the Messengers of God. They are, also, in the minds of some thought of as the agents of the Lord God. In fact, there are some in the Evangelical world who might interpret Genesis chapter 1, “Let us make man in our own image, after our own likeness,” as a reference to God and the angelic hosts, discussing the creation. I don’t think that’s right, but there are some who do think of Genesis 1:26 as being a discussion between the Lord and the angels.

We know, of course, the place that the angels did have in carrying out the commands of the Lord God, and at his birth, we have angels. And we have angels in other parts of the word of God, particularly in the Book of Daniel. That comes to my mind, at least, when I think of the angelic servants of the Lord God. But let’s not forget too that there were evil angels, fallen angels, and there was one angel above all, the prosecuting angel, Satan himself, that is a very important character in the word of God.

Among the important or principal archangels were: Raphael, Uriel, Phanuel, Gabriel, Michael. You recognize some of those as important in the word of God. There were destroying angels and, of course, there was Satan. Even children are thought of as having their angels. Our Lord makes reference, perhaps, to that in chapter 18 in verse 10 of the Book of Matthew. “So many were they that the rabbis could even say every blade of grass has its angel.” And I want to say, I’ve cut down a lot of angels since [laughter] that, if that’s really true. I don’t think that particular thing is.

But this is the proposition that the author says; that the Son of God has become so much better than the angels, as he has obtained a “more excellent name than they.”

Now, you might ask, well, what is the name? Well, the common answer to this question is, the name is Son. And that seems to be the major point that our author makes in the words that follow. We read, “For to which of the angels did He ever say, ‘You are My Son.’”

Now, perhaps you will think, well, I do remember in the Bible that the angels were called sons of God. Job in chapter 1, mentions the “sons of God” who came before the Lord, angelic

beings. We have other references in the Old Testament to the angels as sons of God. But the important point is that no single individual angel was ever called "The Son of God." So that's the point or one of the points at least, that he makes when he says, "For to which of the angels did He ever say," no individual angel was ever called, *huios*, the Greek word for "son."

Now, there is a big difference between the prophets and the Son as well. We have mentioned here, in the earlier part of the first chapter that God in time past spoke to the fathers in the prophets but now He has spoken by "His Son." I made reference to the fact that the term "prophet" was a relationship with the Lord God that was purely accidental, in the sense that God appointed individuals prophets. No one could say, "I was born a prophet," or had to be a prophet. God appointed them, so they were accidentally, in that sense, a prophet. And they were offices that the Lord God gave to certain individuals; the office of prophet.

But in the case of the Son of God, we do not have an accidental relationship, for the Son is the eternal son, and, consequently, we have a relationship that is essential, and because eternal, necessary. So even if we think theologically, we can see the greatness of the Son of God who, essentially, and necessarily, by virtue of eternal generation is "The Son of God," whereas, the prophets were accidentally, officially, used by God in the communication of the word of God. Or to put it in another way, the relationship between the Son and the Father is a relationship by nature; that is, by the very being of the Son, for his being is the divine nature, as is the Father's being. They have the same being. So the relationship is grounded in the nature of the person, whereas, with the prophets and, of course, with the angels, it's different.

Now, having set forth the proposition and having justified it, in the sense that no angel was ever called the Son of God, the author launches into an explanation of this justification. And he does it by virtue of seven different citations from the Old Testament. Isn't it interesting? Here is a man who is instructing believers, professing believers, who have a great history but are now lapsed, dull, backslidden, and yet he appeals to them by the word of God. That will probably let us know, immediately, that they were individuals who had respect for the word of God. And since they had

respect for the word of God, in his mind, he appealed to the word of God. And that would give us a clue, a very important clue, that they were professing Jewish believers. That is, they were people who were Jewish professing believers. And, later on, of course, that will become, I think, a bit more evident. And, we'll regard them as that. So seven scriptural texts.

Now, I want to ask you a personal question. What kind of force would this have in an appeal with you? If God should speak to you and give quotations from Scripture, would you be able to respond to them? Would you have to run off and get your Bible and look up in the concordance, perhaps, and find the text? Well, if that's necessary, then your knowledge of the word of God has some deficiency.

He wrote these individuals who didn't have, so far as we know, a concordance, and so, we can assume that they were, he thought, at least, the kinds of persons who would know something about these texts. So he begins by saying: "For to which of the angels did he ever say, [to them] "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You?"

So he'll explain why the Son is better than the angels. First two citations, well-known among Jews and Christians, in fact, so well-known that in the Qumran literature, the literature found you know, as the Dead Sea Scrolls, these two texts that we're going to look at, first of all, were known by them and were known by them to apply to the Messiah. "For to which of the angels has he ever said, "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You?" Where is that found? Well, I know, you've looked in the margin of your Bible, already, so you know it's in Psalm 2, don't you? Well, I think, it would be good for us to read Psalm 2. So let's turn over to Psalm 2 and let's read it.

The Psalmist begins, there is some question of whether he was David, but since our Lord, apparently, regarded a number of the psalms to be from David and since there are, perhaps, some indications that we will take it as one of David's psalms.

"Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying,

‘Let us break their bonds in pieces, and cast away their cords from us.’ [To simplify things, this is the voice of the nations in rebellion against the Messiah. Now, we read in verse 4 through verse 6.] He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision. Then He shall speak to them in His wrath and distress them in deep displeasure, yet I have set My kin, On My holy hill of Zion.’ [Well, evidently, the person who sets his king on the holy hill of Zion, and the king is our Lord, the king must be the Father. So, we have in these verses, the voice of the Father. And now, in verse 7]: I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me, ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession. And You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.’” [That’s the voice of the Son, obviously, because he says, “I will declare the decree; the Lord has said to Me, ‘You are My Son.’”] Now then, there is a final appeal.] ‘Now, therefore, be wise, O kings; Be instructed, you judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.’”

Perhaps, we can say for expository reasons, at least, that this is the voice of the Holy Spirit. So we have the voice of the nations, the voice of the Father, the voice of the Son, the voice of the Holy Spirit. But now, in the midst of it, in verse 7, “I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me, ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.’”

Well, this is a psalm that, if it is grounded in the Davidic Covenant and I take it that way, this is, in a sense, a dramatic presentation of the ideas of the Davidic Covenant. And so what I’d like to do now is to ask you to turn to the passage that has to do with the Davidic covenant.

Now, I don’t have to tell you what passage it is, do I? For you are students of the Bible and you know what passage in the Old Testament, has to do with the Davidic Covenant. Don’t you? Some of you are not looking at my eyes. You look down [laughter] because there may be some question about that. Well, you have three chances because the Davidic covenant is set forth three

times in the Old Testament. It's set forth in 1 Corinthians chapter 17. It's set forth in Psalm 89. And, it's set forth in 2 Samuel chapter 7, verse 12 through verse 17. Now, we're looking at that last passage, 2 Samuel chapter 7. Now, I know you know all about this because you listened when I was expounding the Life of David, and we spent, you remember, don't you, five times on the Davidic Covenant, five times, so you knew exactly what I was going to turn to. And, probably, you know everything I'm going to say, but I'm going to say it anyway because there may be some who may not have been there.

This text, 2 Samuel chapter 7, is prior in history to Psalm 2:7. In other words, this is the passage that gave rise in the poetic section to the statement, "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee." The Covenant came first and then the mediation by the psalmist on the Covenant. And so we are looking at the place at which the Davidic Covenant finds its origin, so to speak, in the word of God. It belongs to the occasion of the giving of the Davidic Covenant in the words of Nathan to David. It's a further step along the way to the fulfillment of the basic biblical promises of the Abrahamic Covenant. We talked a lot about that, no need to talk about it further. But in the Abrahamic Covenant, that covenant gathers around a land and an eternal royal dynasty: Genesis chapter 12, Genesis chapter 17, Genesis chapter 35. All of those things are there in the context.

David, I think, may have been somewhat like Nebuchadnezzar. There came a time when he thought about the future like Nebuchadnezzar did. Nebuchadnezzar, perhaps, lying upon his bed, so Daniel tells us, the thoughts came into his mind, what is going to happen in the last days? The last times, what will happen afterwards?

That's what George Bush was thinking about during the campaign a bit, no doubt. And anyone who has ever held public office like that, will be asking the same question. What's going to follow? But it, particularly, was something that followed for those who were autocratic rulers; who ruled by strength. And I wouldn't be surprised, "Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in Ashkelon," lest the British hear but maybe the Windsors are thinking about what's going to happen to the Windsors.

So I’m suggesting that David was thinking about the future. He was growing old, just as Nebuchadnezzar was thinking about the future and the story is found here. Very simply, David was dwelling in his house. The Lord had given him rest from all his enemies, round about. The King said to Nathan the prophet, “I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells inside tent curtains.” And Nathan, who is a prophet not a son, and so, consequently, his relationship to the Lord God is accidental and official, but not personal, necessary, essential. So what does Nathan do?

Nathan says to the King, “Go, do all that is in your heart, for the Lord is with you.” But it happened, that night that the word of the Lord came to Nathan. The prophet had given some faulty instruction.

“Go and tell my servant David, ‘Thus says the Lord, ‘Would you build a house for Me to dwell in? For I have not dwelt in a house since the time that I brought the children of Israel up from Egypt, even to this day, but have moved about in a tent and in a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about with all the children of Israel, have I ever spoken a word to anyone from the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd My people Israel, saying, ‘Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?’ Now, therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel. And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you, and have made you a great name.’”

Now, that could be translated “will make you a great name” and that, of course, would tie in very well with what Abram was told, that God was going to give him a great name. And he goes on to say.

“Like the name of the great men who are on the earth. Moreover, I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more;

nor shall the sons of wickedness oppress them anymore, as previously, since the time that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel, and have caused you to rest from all your enemies. Also the Lord tells you that He will make you a house. [Now, here is the Davidic Covenant.] When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men.””

That will let you know that there is to be a procession of descendants of David, some of whom will be disobedient and will be chastised. But, nevertheless, the promise still holds true. It is an unconditional promise that David is to have a descendant, sitting upon a throne, a kingdom and a land.

“But [He says] My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever. According to all these words and according to all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David.

What do you think David did? He did what we all should do when God gives us understanding of his word. He got down upon his knees and thanked God for the revelation. In fact, he said, at the end, in order to indicate his trust, verse 28:

“And now, O Lord God, You are God, and Your words are true, and You have promised this goodness [This covenantal goodness is what he is talking about.] to Your servant.”

All right then, Psalm 2:7 we read, "Thou art My Son, I today have begotten You." The dramatic presentation of the ideas of the Davidic Covenant; the King is to be the Son. Or, we could turn it around and say, The Son that we are talking about is to be the ultimate Davidic king.

Now, the occasion of this particular reference, verse 7, verse 6, I should say. Well, I'm thinking about the covenant. But in Hebrews, verse 5, "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You." The occasion of that is probably the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The reason that we say that is because in Acts chapter 13 in verse 33, that's the way the Apostle Paul interprets this.

He says, verse 32, in his sermon, "And we declare to you glad tidings that promise which was made to the fathers. God has fulfilled this for us His children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the 2nd Psalm, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.'" In what sense could we say that the Lord Jesus Christ was begotten on the day of his resurrection? What possible sense could that be? Well now, we're not talking about the eternal nature of our Lord's being. He was the eternal Son. He was generated in eternity, so far as his person was concerned. His being is eternal. So we're not talking about that. What was it on his resurrection that was different? At which you could say, the Father says to Him, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.'"

Well, of course, we think of illustrations and I'm the father of a son and when my son was born I could look at my son and I could say, "You are my son. I have begotten you." Of course, I begat a son as a sinner. In our Lord's case, it was quite a bit different. "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You."

How, in the world, could the Lord God in heaven say to the Lord Jesus on the time of his resurrection, "You are My Son, I today have begotten You."? Well, it was one important thing that transpired on the resurrection day. What was it? He had for the first time ever in humanity a "glorified" human body. It was the completion of everything to that point. Our Lord glorified, a glorified body, he was born in the manger but not with a glorified body, not a body in which there was sin, but not a glorified body. But at the resurrection, when our Lord's body was given Him, it was a glorified body, the first of all. "He's the first fruits of them that sleep," so Paul said.

So in a specific sense, a specific, particular sense, the Lord God would say at the resurrection of Christ, "You are My Son." The glorification of the Son of God, in the fullest sense, "Today I have begotten You." One of the most marvelous things in the world is the fact that He's going to say to each one of us, when we have a glorified body, "You're My Son." The full completion of the work of the Lord God manifested in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. There he entered into human life in all of the fullness of human life as the glorified Son of God, at the resurrection.

We could say something like this; in eternity there was a birth, eternity, eternal son, but in the resurrection there was a birth from the dead, in with the possession of a glorified body. Now, this it makes him so much greater than the angels. It's hard to compare them, isn't it? But the author of the epistle goes on and now cites the historical text that had to do with the Davidic Covenant. This text is prior in history to Psalm 2 in verse 7. This is the text we read in 2 Samuel 7:14. And it's the text that gave rise to, "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You." What is the text? "I will be to him a Father and he shall be to Me a son." This is, I say, the further step along the way to the fulfillment of the basic biblical promises of the Abrahamic Covenant, a land, an eternal royal dynasty.

We mentioned those three passages in the Old Testament that had to do with the Davidic Covenant, and I've used the illustration, I got it from someone many years ago and I thought it was very good, of the floodlight, the spotlight, and the searchlight. The floodlight, the kind of light that we use in order to see a wide area is 2 Samuel chapter 7. We look at the whole story of the Davidic promises when we read 2 Samuel chapter 7. But then at 1 Chronicles chapter 17 which doesn't mention the possibility of sin in the line, 1 Chronicles chapter 17, if you go back and read that tonight, I know you just can't wait to get home to open your Bible and read it, there we have what may be called a spotlight because it focuses on the Lord Jesus Christ, himself. And then Psalm 89, the lyrical giving of the Davidic Covenant that's the searchlight in which we look into the great principles that govern God's dealing with men through the Davidic Covenant, and it stresses two things: lovingkindness, faithfulness to the promises of the Lord God.

*Chesed* is the great word of Psalm 89, as well as faithfulness. So there, those three passages give us the different aspects of it. And you can see now that the great passage in Genesis chapter 49, verse 10. Do you remember it? Genesis 49, verse 10, “The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; And to Him shall be the obedience of the people.” Jacob’s lion, of the tribe of Judah, is now identified as the lion of the little city of Bethlehem. So Genesis 49:10, finds further reference in 2 Samuel chapter 7, verse 14.

Now, when we were expounding the Davidic Covenant, one thing made a great impression on me, I must say that, you know, I’m like anybody else in a lot of things and in some ways I’m not. Those ways I won’t tell you about. But I’m like many of you. I read the Bible and I find things that are difficult to understand and I keep reading the Bible. And then, sometimes I get discouraged and I don’t read the Bible, when I should keep reading the Bible. But some things puzzle me not once, for a month, for a day or a month or a year, but some things puzzle me for years. And all the time I’m spending my time reading the Bible and expounding the Scriptures. But there are things in the back of my little mind that have puzzled me for a long time. The Davidic Covenant used to puzzle me. Now, I read the Davidic Covenant and I read those words that are found there in 2 Samuel chapter 7, just as you do, and my puzzle was something like this: How can I prove that this is a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ? Because, what we read here is of David being told that he’s going to have a throne that will be an eternal throne. He will have a house and a kingdom and they shall be established forever. And “your throne shall be established forever.” Over and over, “forever” but how does that refer to Christ?

You know, sometimes it’s the little things that shock you. And the little thing that shocked me was simply this: David is told that he’s to have an eternal throne, an eternal house, eternal kingdom, and look, if he is to have an eternal throne, an eternal house, an eternal kingdom, and it’s to be David’s, it’s a descendant of David isn’t it who’s going to sit on that throne. Now, what kind of a descendant must David have if he is to have an eternal throne, an eternal house, an eternal kingdom?

Look, if David's descendant is just a man like you and me, it's not going to be eternal. In other words, David's descendants must, one day, run out in an eternal person. Isn't that right? Of course it is. David's descendants must, ultimately, run out in an eternal person if David is going to have an eternal kingdom, an eternal house, and eternal throne.

Now, the Davidic promises then were promises that were promises for a line. Solomon was the first inheritor. He sat on the throne as David's seed. But it wasn't long before it was evident that Solomon was not the one who was to be the eternal Davidic king. He sinned and that verse that had to do with chastisement was applied with reference to Solomon. But, there is coming someone who is the eternal descendant of David and to him, in him, David will get his throne, his house and his kingdom. So he has a posterity that runs out in a person who lives forever and of his kingdom there is no end.

Now, there's one last quotation. See, you could talk forever on some of these things. I'm sparing you. Five messages I gave on the Davidic Covenant. And here we have two texts. I'm sparing you, say thank you! [laughter] But now, the last of the passages. Verse 6, "But when He again brings in the firstborn into the world, He says, 'Let all the angels of God worship Him.'"

Now, you could read this, "But again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, He says, 'Let all the angels of God worship Him.'" In that case, the text might reply to the incarnation, but "again" when he brings the firstborn into the world. But, if we attach the adverb "again" to bring in, then we have implicit two entrances, don't we? At least? When "He again" brings in the firstborn, well, he must have brought the firstborn in at one time previously to it.

Now, the scholars discussed this back and forth and have, ever since the earliest days, all the way back. But there are two or three things that make it very, very, I think, almost certain, that this should be attached to "bringing in the firstborn." And we should read it, "But when He again bring the firstborn in." In the first place, the position of the adverb in the Greek text would support that. The tense of the Greek verb would support it, also, as an indefinite relative clause, referring to the future. And so we're taking it that way. We're taking this as a reference to the Second Advent.

But now, what about the text, “Let all the angels of God worship Him.” This text comes from Deuteronomy 32:43. I didn’t have to tell you that, did I? You are familiar with Deuteronomy 32. If you’re not, go home and read it. Look, this is one of the greatest prophetic passages of the word of God. It’s been entitled by a Jewish Christian as “Divine forecast of the whole history of the Jewish people.” The whole history of the Jewish people, think of that. So we have here a very interesting text that in a sense goes all the way back over the history of Israel and in one of the rabbinic works, well, it’s a Midrashic work, it’s older than the Talmud. The exposition of this chapter closes with the exclamation, “How great is this psalm. In it is to be found the present, the past, the future and the events of the age to come.” And that text, near the end of it, concludes with, “Let all the angels of God worship Him.” So when he brings in the Son in his Second Coming, the angels of God are called upon to worship Him.

Now, there are various reasons why, I think, this is a reference to the Second Advent. In the first place, I’ll mention it again, the word “brings into” is a legal term for bringing an heir into his inheritance. And so since he’s already been said previously here to have been appointed heir to all things, it would be natural then to speak of him being introduced to his inheritance. Part of his inheritance is the worship of the angels of God; that is his legal heirship. Part of it.

He is also called “the firstborn.” Now we don’t have time to look at Psalm 89, but that’s what David’s great king is called in Psalm 89. So in other words, this is a little passage, in Deuteronomy 32, that may be tied in to the Davidic Covenant in that way. When he brings the “firstborn” the one who inherits the Davidic Covenant into the world, he says, “Let all the angels of God worship Him.” Firstborn is a term that does not speak temporally so much as it speaks of position. The idea of priority passes into the idea of superiority with heirship and probably, I say, with Davidic associations. You could look at Psalm 89, verse 27, and see that. He also says, “When He again brings the firstborn into the world.” The term for world is the inhabited world. Not cosmos... *oikoumene*, the inhabited world. In other worlds, into this world of which we are a part. This is a term that was even used of the Roman Empire. So it’s the term of the inhabited earth. It is

the term that's used with reference to the birth of our Lord, about how people were enrolled from all over the earth.

Now, the term “worship.” “Let the angels of God worship Him.” All the angelic host is to render him divine worship.

Now, we have just ten minutes. It's too bad because I really have so much to say on this point but we don't have time to do it. We'll have to save that for some other time. But I want you to turn back to Deuteronomy 32.

Now, this passage as I say is a magnificent passage. It does look over the whole history of Israel. Now, just look at the way it begins. It's a psalm Moses was given.

“Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak; [Some of you are still looking that's the Old Testament, the Pentateuch. Okay] Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak; And hear, O earth, [Think how important this is! The heavens are called upon to pay attention. The earth is called upon to listen!] Let my teaching drop as the rain, my speech distill as the dew, as raindrops on the tender herb, and as showers on the grass. For I will proclaim the name of Yahweh; ascribe greatness to our God. He is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; righteous and upright is He.”

This text reminds me of a text Mr. Spurgeon used to refer to in which the Old Testament writer says, “He only,” Yahweh, “He only is my Rock and my salvation.” Mr. Spurgeon used to like to add, “Tell me anything that departs from this and it will be heresy. ‘He only is my Rock and my salvation.’ I have that in capital letters, underlined by red. ‘He only is my Rock and my salvation.’” And then, Mr. Spurgeon said, “I shall find its essence here. Tell me a heresy, I shall find its essence here that it has departed from the great fundamental, this rocky truth. ‘He only is my rock and my salvation.’ Anything that departs from that is heresy. Tell me any heresy and it will depart at that point. ‘He only is my rock and my salvation.’”

Now, we don't have time to read all the way through it. It's a history of Israel. But, let's come to near the end of it, and let's read beginning at verse 36.

“For the Lord will judge His people and have compassion on His servants, when He sees that their power is gone, and there is no one remaining, bond or free. He will say, ‘Where are their gods, the rock in which they sought refuge? [Well, those are the gods of New Age and all the other gods in modern application.] Who ate the fat of their sacrifices, and drank the wine of their drink offering? Let them rise and help you, and be your refuge. Now see that I, even I, am He, and there is no God besides Me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; nor is there any who can deliver from My hand. For I raise My hand to heaven, and say, “As I live forever, if I whet My glittering sword, and My hand takes hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to My enemies, and repay those who hate Me. I will make My arrows drunk with blood, and My sword shall devour flesh, with the blood of the slain and the captives, from the heads of the leaders of the enemy.”’ “Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people; for He will avenge the blood of His servants, and render vengeance to His adversaries; he will provide atonement for His land and for His people.”

Now, mind you, it began with “I proclaim the name of the Lord.” The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews cites from the Greek translation of the Old Testament. Actually, the word is not found in the Hebrew text and so, consequently, for a long time people wondered, well, he cites mainly from the Greek translation of the Old Testament. And here is a citation that doesn't have any Hebrew text in support of it. Until the time of Qumran, and since that time now, there have been justification texturally for the statement that he cites here in verse 6, “Let all the angels of God worship Him.” But, now, I want to ask you a question? Who is this one that the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews refers to when he says in verse 6, “When He again brings the firstborn into the world,” that his second advent, he says, “Let all the angels of God worship Him.” Who is the Him? Why, it's clear that the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews thinks the “Him” is the Son. But

if you turn to Deuteronomy 32 and read through that chapter, the “Him” is Yahweh. People like to say in Deuteronomy 32, it’s “God” but the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews cites the text and refers it to Christ. What justification of this climax of all prophecy with reference to Israel and it issues in a call to worship. “I, even I, am He.” *egō eimi*. First used in that very text, any who. First used with reference to Yahweh there in the Old Testament. And the readers are called to worship Him, Yahweh.

What’s the justification for that? Calvin says, “Is it unreasonable to apply to Christ texts that are spoken of God only?” Notice what he says, “Texts that are applied to God only.” It might be unreasonable to say for an individual to take a text that has to do with the Father and apply it to the Son. But we never forget as Christians, that the term God is applicable to all three persons of the Trinity. What’s the picture of the Yahweh of Deuteronomy 32? You know that, don’t you? I’ve been really belaboring you tonight because I want you to go read the Bible more. You want to read through the Bible, as Dan admonished us on Sunday morning. Read through the Bible in nineteen ninety-three, it will do you good. But, here we are with “Let all the angels of God worship Him.” Yahweh? Yes. But there are three Yahwehs: Yahweh the Father, Yahweh the Son, and Yahweh the Spirit.

Furthermore, this passage, Deuteronomy 32:43, which is very much like Psalm 97, in fact some think it’s derived from Psalm 97. That text. Those two texts are texts that also have to do with God’s manifestation and manifestation in judgment.

Now, who does the Bible say will be the judge of the world in the future? Oh, God? But which of the persons, God the Father? God the Son? God the Holy Spirit? Which one of the three persons is one who may be manifested to human beings? Well, the Son of God, from the beginning is that, the incarnation lets us know that. The texts of the Old Testament make that plain.

What I’m driving at, my Christian friend, is this; that when the Bible refers to Yahweh, or God as God the Son, and speaks of Yahweh as a person who enters into our society and executes

judgment, the reference is to the second person of the Trinity. And the writers of Holy Scripture, guided by the Holy Spirit, are correct in the application.

And Calvin goes on to answer his own question and say, “When you read Psalm 97,” which has essentially the same text. He says, “When you read Psalm 97, you will see that it has to do entirely with the manifestation of the kingdom of God upon the earth.” And that he says, “is proper for the Son of God.”

He didn’t have to tell me that. I knew that a long time ago. But, do you see what we are reading here in the word of God? We are reading that when the Son of God is in our focus, we’re talking about someone who is truly the Lord God of Heaven.

Ethelbert Stauffer in his book, *Jesus in History* commenting on the use of “I am” or “I Am He” which is the New Testament equivalent of “I, I Am He,” of Deuteronomy 32. He says, “This is the historical epiphany of God taking place. It is the boldest declaration. “I Am He.” This meant, where “I am there God is, there God lives and speaks, calls, asks, acts, decides, loves, chooses, forgives, rejects, suffers and dies.” Nothing bolder can be said or imagine than “I Am He.””

And Moses calls upon the children of Israel to worship, in fact, not only the children of Israel. He calls on all of the created universe. Let all the angels of God worship Him. Who? Christ! The Son of God, that’s who!

O, how you and I in our life, in our thought, in our worship, should have as the object of our affection and concern and communion, the one who said, “I Am He, beside Me there is no other.”

Let’s bow in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for these magnificent texts that this man mighty in the Scriptures has given us in his great epistle, inspired by the Holy Spirit. Lord, help us to truly worship Him who said so often when he was here upon the earth, “I Am He,” marking himself out as the eternal God the Son, the second person of the Trinity. Lord, we thank Thee for Him. We

thank Thee for his visit. We look forward to the time when he shall be brought the second time into our world and accomplish those things that the Scripture set forth of judgment and the eternal kingdom to come.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.