

Hebrews 1:4–2:4

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[0 : 00] 2 verse 4. Since we use the ESV and our text starts with a sentence fragment this week, I will supply the subject from last week's text to put us on solid footing as we enter into our text. Please stand for the reading of God's word.

God's son, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited, is more excellent than theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say, you are my son, today I have begotten you? Or again, I will be to him a father and he shall be to me a son. And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, let all God's angels worship him. Of the angels, he says, he makes his angels winds and his ministers a flame of fire. But of the son, he says, your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom.

You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Therefore, God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions. And you, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning and the heavens of the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain. They will all wear out like a garment. Like a robe, you will roll them up. Like a garment, they will be changed.

But you are the same, and your years will have no end. And to which of the angels has he ever said, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet? Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation? Therefore, we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard. Why, God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Please be seated.

Good morning. Join me in prayer. Oh God, blessed be your name this morning. Thank you for this assembly of your people and the opportunity to proclaim your truth. Thank you for worship that has risen to your name, your great and awesome name. I pray that you would this morning be glorified through the proclamation of your word. Not simply the telling of it, the explaining of it, or even the exhortation that comes from it, but ultimately, Lord, through the living of it, and each of your people here on this day. I pray in Christ's name. Amen.

[3 : 18] Roughly 40 years ago, Shirley and I made our first trip to Denver, Colorado. If you've ever driven there a long I-70, perhaps you've experienced, undoubtedly you've experienced, hitting the point in the road, you sort of turn a curve, and then you're faced with the stunning beauty, the grandeur of the Rocky Mountains. What an awesome sight. The beginning of the book of Hebrews is like that. It doesn't take long, just 17 words in the ESV, 12 in the Greek New Testament, and suddenly the reader is faced with the splendor of God's great son. What we see there is really breathtaking and worship inspiring.

Praise God for the worship this morning that really enabled us to focus on the son and calls us to adore him, to revere him. We expressed it in the song, crown him, with many crowns. Hallelujah. Not just one crown, but many, many crowns. And then we're going to sing a song at the end, there that also all hail the power of Jesus name. Get ready. That's where we're headed. And I would pray this morning that the explanation and the exhortation of God's word would prompt or encourage that kind of response from everyone under the sound of my voice. That's what we see in Hebrews as we have begun already in the series. Here is a passage. Here is a book that is calling us to recognize the worth of God's son, but not simply recognize his worth to respond to his word.

Unlike movies where credits begin to roll when everything is over, it's here in the beginning that the credits begin to roll and God's son gets the credit. The lofty language that we see here reflects the

supremacy of God's son. There's absolutely no one like him. And what the writer of Hebrews does is that he helps us to see Jesus more clearly with the end that you and I would love him more dearly. It reflects the supremacy of God's son. And God's son is God's last day agent for the revealing of the God of heaven to the people of the earth. You want to know what God is like?

Huh? Look at Jesus. Huh? Get a good look at Jesus. Lord, show us the Father. Philip's words in John 14.

[7 : 05] Have I not been with you so long a time, Philip, and you don't know me yet? He that has seen me has seen the Father. You want to get a glimpse of God?

Look at Jesus, huh? He has given you God in living color. Want to know about the compassion of God? Look at Jesus. Want to know about the grace of God?

Look at Jesus, huh? Get a good look. A marvelous look. Hebrews enables us to do that.

The last of the seven credits that roll, as Jim has noted, it ends in chapter 1, verse 3. You see it there? He sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high.

Huh? The reference there is to the ascension of Jesus into heaven's court. Huh? It speaks of his posture.

[8 : 15] Huh? He sat down. It's the posture of one who has accomplished a task. It's something that has been completed. The text also notes his position.

His position is at the right hand of God. A position of honor and power and authority. Oh, there's a stunning snapshot, if there ever was one.

The glorified Jesus in the heavens. But the writer is not finished, is he? Because he takes us into what we know as today's text in chapter 4.

Already, the supremacy of God's Son has been noted as it concerns God's messengers, the prophets. Verse 1. God of heaven has spoken to his people through God-appointed messengers, if you will.

But here, in verse 4, we see another order of beings in the universe, angels, if you will, enter into the picture.

[9 : 31] And not only do they enter here, they will fit prominently into the picture that we see on through chapter 2 and verse 16. Every time that you see the word angels in Hebrews, it is, in fact, in the plural.

Angels, huh? The word is used 13 times in the book and 11 times in the first two chapters. He wants us to know something about angels.

angels. Who are they? And notice I said who and not what. They are beings with personality. The word angel itself means messenger.

And the angels are created spirits. Created beings who worship God and serve his purposes.

We understand that from Scripture. In Scripture, their activity included assignments in heaven. They're worshipping. If you want to check that out, look at Revelation.

[10 : 44] Look at some of the other passages. Look at Isaiah chapter 6 where you see them worshipping and crying out, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.

The whole earth is full of his glory. Their assignments on earth varied. First time we see them and they're called cherubim.

That is an order of angels that we see in Genesis chapter 3 verse 24. What was their assignment? They were guarding the way to the tree of life. After man had fallen from his high and holy estate, he no longer had access to the tree of life.

We see them in the New Testament. Acts chapter 12, release Acts chapter 3 and 4, releasing the apostles. Acts chapter 12, releasing Peter from prison. God assigned tasks.

Jesus' teaching included. Teaching as it relates to angels about the role of angels. Normally these beings are invisible to the naked eye.

[11 : 51] I love Dave's message on Easter. talking about empirical evidence. Things that we can see, that we can touch, that we can feel.

There is more to being than we can see and that we can touch. Angels are part of the reality in the universe that normally are not visible to the naked eye.

But they're real. Sometimes they appear in human form and then other times not so. Some years ago, maybe 40 years or so, Billy Graham, great evangelist, respected servant of God, was compelled to write a book about angels and he lists different kinds of stories of people who had

been delivered and though the people who were delivered couldn't see what was going on, those who were going to make victims of them, they were restrained because they had seen forces that those who were being protected did not see.

Angels, friends, are real. Huh? In that day of heightened spiritual awareness, however, you and I must be careful, make sure that we use scripture as our guide regarding these beings from the realms of glory.

Huh? And even that kind of caution was fitting for those to whom the writer of the Hebrews wrote.

Huh? There were certain perspectives in that day as they're related to angelic beings.

[13:47] that held the potential really for getting in the way of the supremacy of the Son of God. In the Jewish mind, angels were held in very high regard and as the highest beings next to God.

Some Jewish sects, in particular in that day, held that the authority of Michael, the archangel, surpassed the authority of the Messiah.

one writer helps us to see what was going on. He said, some came to believe that angels bridged the gulf between God and man. That God spoke to man through angels and that angels carried the prayers of man into the presence of God.

So there was what we might call a high angelology that went really beyond what was right and what was proper given such perspectives.

In Hebrews chapter 1 verses 4 through 14, the writer amounted what could be termed a biblical defense for the superiority of the Son as it related to the angels.

[15:03] Did you notice his thesis statement in verse 4? Having become as much superior that is the Son to the angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

Again, he gives the thesis statement that is the Son is superior to angels. That's his thesis.

And what he's going to do is he's going to give seven biblical proof texts in order to defend what he is saying about the supremacy of the Son.

He is going to do what could be called topical exposition. Again, his thesis is there and he is going to take even a Christ-centered approach.

You're talking about preaching Christ from the Scriptures. That is what he is doing in our text that we've come to on this morning. Notice also the speaking words that we see in the text.

[16:12] Now, notice God who in time past has spoken has in these last days spoken by his Son earlier in the passage on last week. But notice in the text, our text today, the speaking words.

Look at chapter 1, verse 5. did God ever say? Well, notice verse 6. And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he what?

Says. Look at verse 7. Of the angels, he says. And where is he saying that? He's saying it through Scripture. And he's going to give these texts in order to defend his thesis regarding the supremacy of the Son.

Look at verse 8. Of the Son, he says. What does he say? He says it in Scripture. And look at verse 13. And to which of the angels has he ever said?

Again, he's speaking and he is using Scripture. He's taking them as it were to the text of Scripture in order to defend.

[17:26] So this is not just something that's off the top of the writer's head. He said, take me to the Bible. Show me in Scripture where you find that.

Is that just something that you thought of? No. He's got chapter and verse as it relates to these things. Topical exposition to show that the Son is superior changes.

You'll say, well, Pastor J, what text are we talking about? Glad you asked. Not going to take you to them. But using Psalm 2, 7, and 1 Samuel chapter 7, verse 14, the writer notes that the Son is distinguished by the greatness of his name.

He's distinguished by the greatness of his name. superior to the angels as the name is inherited is more excellent than the Son has inherited is more excellent than theirs that is the angels.

Huh? From what we can see in the text, the name appears to be Son or the name, title, the Son.

[18:48] Another equally strong option is the name or title Lord. Though we do not see that explicitly in our text, Son is very explicit there, and we see it throughout, but essentially we're talking about the same thing.

Therefore, at Philippians 2 and 9, God has highly exalted him and bestowed upon him the name that is above every name.

And in Philippians chapter 2, he's talking about Lord. Now, as beautiful and wonderful as the name, the earthly name Jesus is, that's not what he is referring to.

The name or the title is he has inherited by reason of his finished work on earth. The passage quoted is in Psalm, Psalm 2, notice, you see it there, you are my son, today I have begotten you. Here's the idea. God is the one who brings the Davidic king, and again, that in Psalm 2, that's what's in view, into the royal reign.

[20 : 04] It was used during the time of the coronation of the Davidic kings. The apostles and the New Testament writers saw this as being fulfilled in Jesus.

It applies to Christ. So they applied verse 7 to Christ. The resurrection of Jesus was the fulfillment of this particular psalm.

The second text, 2 Samuel chapter 7 verse 14, that's what he's quoting at the other part of verse 5. I will be to him a father and he shall be to me a son.

The Lord speaks to David regarding one who would come from him. One of his descendants would occupy the throne. While in the second Samuel passage, the immediate reference was to Solomon, David's son, the distant application, and the writer picks up on this and gives a crystal-centric interpretation of both Psalm 2, 7, and 2 Samuel chapter 7 verse 14.

The name, the title, son, speaks of his supremacy, superiority to angels. Their name indicates their function.

[21 : 25] They are messengers. He is the son. they are servants. So, he takes us to scripture, and scripture to support and distinguishes by the greatness of his name, the son from the angels.

He possesses the greater name. He proceeds. He gives, using, or citing Deuteronomy chapter 32 verse 43 from the Greek text, the writer notes that the son is distinguished as one who is worshipped.

You see that there? Look at verse 6. And again, he brings the first born into, when he brings the first born into the world, he says, let all the angels worship him.

Huh? The son is worshipped. The angels are amongst the worshippers in the universe. You see that in various places of scripture.

I mentioned already Isaiah chapter 6. You see that in the throne room, Revelation chapter 4, chapters 4 and 5. You see them, every being in the universe is worshipping before the throne.

[22 : 44] Both the father and the son, the redeemer, the lamb, are worshipped there in those throne room scenes.

Huh? some see this as a reference to Christ's first coming. Huh? You see that there? As we look at, again, when he brings the first born into the world, is he talking about the first coming of Christ and Jesus being Mary's first born?

I don't think so. that's what he's talking about here. Others, and still in a rather unconvincing way, will see this as a reference to his second coming, that is when he returns.

Again, I don't think that that's what is being referenced here. Well, if it's not his first coming or it's not his second coming, what is it?

Good question. I think I have an answer. The first born is a term that speaks, it's a term of preeminence.

[24 : 02] It speaks of one's preeminence. It is a word that indicates rank or priority. And the phrase coming into the world is better seen as Christ coming into this realm, as it were, of divine presence.

That seems to be what's in reference there. And it has the idea of Christ receiving worship once he reenters, having been raised and ascended, being received back into the heavens.

It is at that point having accomplished the work of redemption he is then recognized by angels there.

Do we not see something akin to this when he is worshipped as the Lamb of God in heaven? In Revelation chapter 5? He's received back into the realm of glory after his resurrection and ascension.

The point being, the point that he's making is that the Son is the object of worship. Angels are worshippers. They're commanded to worship the Son.

[25 : 22] And even as in scripture we find angels actually refusing to worship or to receive worship. We see that in passages like Revelation 19 and Revelation 22.

The point that the author is making is that angels are worshippers of the Son. The Son receives worship.

Psalm 2. 2 Samuel 7. Deuteronomy 32. Again, he's putting this chain of scriptures together that support the superiority of the Son.

That's what's known as a katina. It is much like what David and Meredith did so beautifully this morning in their prayer. Putting together a chain of scriptures that speak about the glory, the radiance, the splendor, the excellence of God's Son.

So he uses, he went a lot to the Psalms. Out of all of these seven references, five of them are from the Psalms. Using Psalm 104, verse 4, and Psalm 45, verse 9, and I'm putting a lot of these together, 102, verses 25 and 26, and Psalm 110, again, all the way through, the writer notes that the Son is distinguished by his sovereign rule, his authority, his control.

[27 : 01] He's noted as the divine architect that laid the foundations of the world. I mean, he just sort of rolls on and he shows you the beauty and the excellence of God's Son.

Psalm 45 is a psalm that celebrates the wedding of a royal king. The context in Psalm 45, it's a wedding psalm. It's amazing how, again, the writers of Scripture reach back and grab hold of various things in the Old Testament and have a, sometimes it's just a one word or a couple of words and they click on that and they say, oh, here's Christ.

So, the character of the king, the nature of his rule, is what comes into view in Psalm 45. And the scepter symbolizes his kingship and governance with its accompanying authority and power. Look at that, what's said, of the Son he says in verse 8, your throne, oh God, is forever and ever a scepter of righteousness, it's a scepter of your kingdom, you have loved righteousness, hated wickedness, therefore God, your God has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your companions.

Ah, the standard of the king's rule, righteousness, he loves righteousness and hates wickedness just as the rule that he is mirroring from heaven on earth and that represents God's rule, your kingdom come, your will be done.

[28 : 38] The major pillars in the kingdom rule of God, justice and righteousness, you see those paired up in scripture again and again as David Marino helped us to see in adult CE in the last term.

And what a model that is friends, for government and leadership today. and all that those who would rule would be so inclined. What a model for those of us who are leaders in the home and in the church, righteous ruling, fair ruling, honorable leadership that's modeled from our great king. Verses 11 and 12, the sovereign control of the son of a creation is implied. You see that there? And you Lord laid the foundation. Here's the divine architect of the earth in the beginning of the heavens or the work of your hands.

And what a marvelous work it is. They will perish but you remain. They will wear out like a garment, like a robe.

You will roll them up again. His sovereign eternal control over things that are at work and established even in this world.

[29 : 55] what is said to and of the son clearly speaks of his superiority, his supremacy.

What is spoken to and of the angels, it speaks of their servant status. Theirs, the writer is helping us to see, is a subordinate role.

And Jesus is the author of eternal salvation. They are those who minister to those that he saved. Look at verse 13. Which of the angels did he ever say? And again, he started going all the way back to bookending with, on the backside with verse three.

Has he ever said, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet? And are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?

[30 : 56] In no uncertain terms, the writer zeroes in on the greatness of God's son. His role is distinguished from that of the angels. And in verse 14, there's the summary.

Ministering spirits, spirit beings, at the beck and call of God for his purposes in all of the universe. And in particular, what comes into view, they're sent out to serve.

Their role is distinguished. They serve those of us who are saved. The saved are those who have been purified by the blood of Jesus. Chapter 1, verse 3.

We notice that it's modified in verse 3. Again, as far as the salvation that is. But it's described in verse 3 of the next chapter as being a great salvation.

So not only do we see a great son, we see a great salvation. Those are the words in chapter 2, verse 3.

[32 : 02] It says that how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? Huh? What are we talking about in this text?

Here's a sentence that I want you to embrace. God's salvation through a great son demands from you and me a great response.

God's salvation through a great son demands as we understand it, it demands a great response from you and me.

Huh? Is that not what we see in chapter 2 and verse 1? Therefore, we must pay much closer attention to what we've heard lest we drift away from it.

Huh? Now, those under the old economy, in the old time, they too had heard, but those in the new day, the last days, that inaugurated by the coming of Christ, which includes you and me, huh?

[33 : 09] Again, the response, huh? that's what, he moves, he goes from explanation from chapter 1 into exhortation in chapter 2, huh?

The last days, the revel, last days, Jesus is the agent of God's revelation, huh? Making him known. He calls for a response.

What kind of response is warranted on our seeing and understanding the greatness of God's Son? A careful response is what's needed. A careful, not casual response. Truth about God's Son demands conscientious consideration and application from you and me.

We must be careful with the truth we've heard regarding God's superior Son. Notice what the text says. We must pay closer attention to what we have heard, huh?

[34 : 20] The word in the text, pay attention, huh? It encourages, it's the kind of response that we see from Lydia in Acts chapter 16 verse 14 where the Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul.

And she saw, she paid attention and guess what happened when she paid attention? She came to faith in that process as she processed what she was hearing from Paul and not writing it all.

She was giving it due kind of consideration and asked you this morning, is that the kind of response that you give to God's word particularly about Christ?

Such a response is warranted given the greatness of who he is. Pay close attention so we won't drift away, huh?

That's the next word, another word in the text. And the idea is to flow past something or to glide by it, huh?

[35 : 32] Or to miss it, if you will. Barclay helps us with these words. The word is used as something flowing or slipping past.

It can be used of a ring that slips off of a finger or a particle of food that has slipped down the wrong way. You understand that one, don't you?

It's particularly used of something which is carelessly or thoughtlessly allowed to become lost. Think about that as it relates to the embrace and the response of God's word.

Continuing, the word can be used of a ship which has been carelessly allowed to slip past the harbor or like a bus that misses its stop, huh? Or a haven because the mariners forgotten to allow for the wind or the current or the tide.

It's a vivid picture of a ship drifting to destruction because the pilot sleeps, huh? End of quote. Have you done that? Have you done that in a physiological kind of slip, a sense?

[36 : 41] You dozed off? Anybody ever on a train or a bus and you missed your stop there? Huh? It's one thing to do that while you are being driven.

It's quite another thing when you're driving. It's not a good thing, but sometimes we do that. Huh? A careful, not casual response is essential as it concerns the truth about God's Son.

Perhaps you're here today. And you've been hearing about God's Word, getting glimpses of Him from various angles, huh?

What the writer of Hebrews does, he holds up the sun as a diamond, and he turns it one way, and he turns it another way, and every place that he turns it, the brilliance of the jewel that is Christ comes through.

He's done it through the use of Scripture, and now he's exhorting, given what you've seen, given what I've highlighted here, given what you know about Christ, what is your response to Him?

[38 : 01] Those of you who, as Dave put it on last week, have hit the wall, huh? Those of you who are struggling, don't let this truth about Christ get by you.

Don't let it slip. don't allow yourselves to drift by it, huh? If Revelation, verse 2, under the old order, was met with appropriate and just punishment, what awaits those who fail to embrace the message about God's Son?

Look at verse 2. For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, huh? Tried and proven, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, in other words, those who violated, paid for it, huh?

Then, neglect, huh? The idea seems to be that not attending to something that needs attending to, huh?

In Matthew chapter 22, the neglect was of an invitation, huh? But they paid no attention. and went off one to his farm, another to his business.

[39 : 13] They did not give it the kind of attention, they neglected to give it the kind of attention that it deserved. 1 Timothy chapter 4, verse 14, do not neglect the gift that's been given you, huh?

Given you by prophecy, laying on the hands of the elders, huh? Yeah, the opposite we see in Luke chapter 10. Lord, do you not care?

Again, that's the kind of care that should be given to God's word, huh? How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?

That's the nature of the salvation that comes through the sun, huh? Salvation, deliverance, in its various shapes and forms.

It's great because of its ultimate source, that is God. It's great because of its immediate source, that is Christ, who made a personal appearance.

[40 : 17] While in the past, God sent his messengers, but at the right time, in due time, Christ came and Christ died for the ungodly. The great work of salvation through God's son.

It's great in its scope. It's great in its power. It's great in its impact. It has the power to pick people up and turn them around, causing them to do a 180-degree turn, loving those things that they once hated and despised.

Ah, because they get a glimpse of the greatness of God's son. Huh? Great salvation through a great son demands great response.

What does being careful or not casual involve? Thoughtful head and heart response to God's word. Huh? Disobedience is dangerous and punishable. Listen to what the writer of Hebrews says in Hebrews chapter 10. Anyone who set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witness how much more worse punishment do you think will be deserved by the one who has spurned the son of God and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified and has outraged the spirit of grace.

[41 : 46] Huh? Do you hear that? Great salvation through a great son demands a great response.

son. Embracing this kind of truth for Christians can keep you away from drifting away. And if you find yourself drifting perhaps you need to revisit again what we see in the text.

What here can help you to hold fast when you're tempted to quit or to turn back or to throw in the tile. When you're tempted to say enough is enough. take another look at Jesus friends and look at him in his beauty and grandeur because great salvation through a great son demands a great response.

Oh have we not sung about his grandeur this morning? Crown him with many crowns.

The lamb upon his throne. Huh? Hark how the heavenly anthem drowns all music but its own.

Listen to this and perhaps this is what you should say to your soul this morning.

[43 : 03] Awake my soul and sing. Huh? Is your soul sleeping? Do you have a casual response to Christ?

Huh? Of him who died for thee and hail him. As the matchless king throughout eternity.

No angel in the sky can fully bear the sight. Oh but look at him listen to him downward being there burning eyes and mystery so bright.

God has revealed himself in and through his son. Huh? Recognizes worth love. Huh?

If you don't know him take the next steps in doing so. Huh? And if you're ready on this morning perhaps you can say I've seen enough I'm coming to him.

[44 : 05] Huh? Perhaps you've been examining him for a while and you've seen him and he outshines all the trophies and the trinkets of this world.

He's the treasure that is worth selling everything for. Huh? As the man who found a pearl of great price and found a treasure in the field and he goes and he sells all to buy that field that's Jesus

huh?

That's an appropriate kind of response. then you and I can join the angels in falling before him in worship that we're going to sing in a bit all hail the power of Jesus name let angels prostrate fall bring forth the royal diadence dim and crown him lord of all huh?

Oh that with yonder sacred throne we at his feet may fall we'll join the everlasting song and crown him lord of all we'll join the everlasting song and crown him lord of all great salvation to a great son demands a great response and one of them is worship but let's not let it end there may it be a whole life response in view of his greatness won't you stand with me even as we sing Ž