

Greater than angels, so don't drift away

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[0 : 00] Starting at Hebrews 1 verse 5. 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 sun, he says, your throne, O God, is forever and ever.

The scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Therefore, God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.

And you, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain.

[1 : 09] 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? Well, good morning, everyone.

That was a bit of a delay. You're feeling as sleepy as I am, eh? That's good to know we're in it together. How about we pray for God's help then? Father, we do need your help in our weakness.

[2 : 49] And so I ask that you would help us understand what you're saying. I pray that you would blow our categories of reality, and that you would blow out to a proper proportion our perspective of our hope.

And I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, who has your attention? I'm seeing yawns already. I'm not feeling good.

Who has your attention in this room right now? Wilco's already got us thinking in this way. There's so much going on right now. I don't know if you notice. That's kind of the question, is it?

What are you noticing? Some of you builders are looking at all the repairs in this building going, gee, we've still got some work to do. Some of you are probably, your phone is, you're thinking about those notifications, aren't you?

It's just, you want that dopamine here. It's already been two minutes since you looked at your phone. It's crazy. I can't even hear some cars. I was going to say the cars on Lake Road.

[3 : 56] Probably get sirens going by. Obviously, I'm speaking. There's the person next to you. What are they doing? There's all, that's not even starting with what's going on in your mind, like all the concerns of the week and coming ahead and the week past.

There's so much. Attention is a choice, isn't it? And it's a moral choice. You can't take it all in. You've got to choose. We're choosing all the time and our choice is a value call. You're choosing what's valuable and important.

And you know as well as I do that who has our attention has great power to impact how we view reality and how we live.

Aren't you shocked at the anti-Semitism in our country? What is that? It's irrational. It's abhorrent. But these ideas can just grab people somehow.

[5 : 05] At a social level, attention has power and power to do great damage. I think of the attention of, have you heard someone's story when they're in a conflict situation and they tell you the narrative and they've got your attention and how they explain what happened makes you feel anger at the other person.

You feel disgusted towards them. But then later on, you hear some of the facts. The attention someone can grab hold of you with can change how you view another person.

It's powerful who you give your attention to. It's powerful in society. It's powerful in us. I think that's what Jesus means when he says, Where is your eye?

Where is your eye? Where is your eye? Where is your eye? Where is your eye looking? The eye is the lamp of the body. So if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light.

But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. Whoever we give our attention to has great power to influence us, to see reality, and therefore an incredible power to control how we live our lives.

[6 : 27] Attention is a big deal. It's one of the most precious things we have. So who should you listen to? Now obviously I'm angling for me.

That's what it sounds like, isn't it? That's not what I'm angling for. I want to ask it a bit differently. Who has the most authority in the world?

Whose word is reliable? Who is strong and can actually come good on their word? And their way works, in other words.

That kind of person is worthy of our attention. And I'm going to put it to you that the church that the letter of the Hebrews was written to, I reckon they've got a better answer than most of us often come up with.

Any authority, all the people we listen to on earth, whoever it is, whatever role models, even Rima FM, I don't know, I'm not really having a go at any of these things.

[7 : 40] Whatever you can come up with on earth, whatever political party, whatever influencer, whatever spiritual guru, Hebrews church has a better answer than all those things. They say angels.

Angels. It's a bit weird, isn't it? Angels don't really feature much in my view of reality.

Are you feeling that when the passage is read and even as I say that answer? I think that just shows me that I've got a long way to go still.

Because I don't think the author corrects their misunderstanding of angels. Scripture has a lot to say about angels.

I'm the one who has to change my view of what's really going on here. And this church doesn't have a soft view of angels. Whatever we see in society, like people have tattoos of angels, but I don't know, they're pretty meaningless.

[8 : 52] People talk about guardian angels, but I don't know, they're pretty soft. You can control the guardian angels, they just do whatever you want. Their view of angels is if an angel materialised in this room, you would not be getting out your phone.

You would be hiding under your seat or running for the exits. They don't have a soft view of angels, these people. They don't have a... I can't see anything here that suggests they've got this weird, distorted view of angels.

I want to quickly brainstorm for a second, interacting.

I'm not going to force anyone to speak, but where in Scripture are angels? We've got to keep this snappy because we want coffee at some point. Where in Old Testament, New Testament...

So don't explain it, just really snappy answers. Maybe we should go hands, sorry. Alan? Daniel? Okay, history is...

[10 : 02] Abraham? Angels? Revelation? Yeah. Unfolding God's will, all the scrolls. Mount Sinai?

Yep. Burning bush? I saw some hands, but maybe they've already been answered. Wrestling with Jacob and his dream of Jacob's ladder, ascending and descending.

Locky? Moses? Egypt? Plagues? Yep. Rolling the stone away? Joel? Yeah.

Isaiah's vision? Joel? Acts? Yes. Can you remind me? Oh, yeah.

Breaking Peter out of jail. Yes. Malcolm? Yep. Peter out of prison? Yep. Actually, I was a bit confused, but when you stop and think about it, you think about the Psalms and the prophets, who's the Lord called?

[11:13] The Lord of hosts. He's the Lord of armies. He's the Lord of armies. They're actually everywhere. They're very prominent. And we're told here that God's word, the Old Testament, has been given through angels.

So I assume that's the whole Old Testament. The messengers through the prophets, it's mediated through angels. So we should sit up and listen to this passage, because if you're like me, my view of reality has to shift here.

I've got this too closed view that material is all there is, and I'm still wrestling with that. But more than that, angels is a better answer of who you should listen to than anything you can come up with on earth.

They have the authority of God. So what's the answer? To these people. The problem isn't that their view of angels is too big.

That's not their problem. Their problem is that their view of Jesus is too small. Their problem is not that angels are too big.

[12:27] They are great. They are. But Jesus, Jesus is far, far superior.

For some reason, something's going on here. Either they're lowering Jesus on the same level as angel, or maybe they're focusing on Jesus as only human, and angels are higher, right?

Something is wrong. We saw in the opening last week, the Son is superior to the Old Testament revelation given through angels.

He's superior. He's the full and final word. We're living in the age where all the messages of the prophets, they're fulfilled. We're in the last days.

We are on the brink of history coming to an end and the world to come. We're in the last days. You can't add anything, the author said.

[13:38] You can't add anything to what the Son has told us and what the Son has done. You can't. He's the greatest prophet. God has spoken his final word through a son.

He's the greatest prophet. And he bursts all these categories as well. He's the greatest priest. He's not standing, making sacrifices for your sin.

He's made purification for sin and he's sat down. He's the greatest priest interceding and connecting us to God. He's therefore the only one fitting to be the greatest king.

And he bursts that idea of a David king. He even bursts that category. He's sitting over heaven and earth. So let's get into verses 4 to 14.

And I think what's going on here in these verses is that little word for in verse 5. For. To which of the angels did God ever say?

[14:44] This whole section is just the grounds, the evidence for the claims he's already made. He could have said he's got a higher name than angels.

And go to chapter 2 verse 1. Therefore, we must pay closer attention. He could have done that. But I think what he's doing is he's working within their frame of reference.

He's saying, okay, angels are great. Their word is reliable. Let's see what they've got to say. Let's see what they say through the Old Testament.

And that's what Hebrews does. It is just swimming in the Old Testament. You want to listen to angels? Okay. They all point to the sun. I think that's what he's doing here.

Collectively, verse 4 and 5, angels can be called sons of God. But no individual angel ever is referred to as the sun.

[15:41] If we put ourselves in John's shoes in Revelation, we're shown a glimpse of what's going on in heaven right now.

There's thousands upon thousands of angels so close to the throne of God. They are right there. And they're worshipping God.

They are ready to obey his command and carry it out. Now, as close as they are, as powerful as these creatures are, as reliable their authority, because they're sent by God and they obey.

They're not like us. They obey fully to the letter of God's commands. As close as they are to God's throne, Psalm 2 says, You are my son.

He's speaking to the king. And we've got another quote from the promise to David in 2 Samuel 7. I will be to him a father and he shall be to me a son.

[16:52] This is enthronement language. Angels are so close to the throne of God. But the son is on the throne of God. That is a huge difference.

Angels are mighty servants. They're mediating God to man. They brought God's word. But they're servants.

It's not the father-son family likeness that we saw last week. It's not the light from the son reaching us. It's not a servant coming.

It's the son itself representing God. In a sense, there's no intermediary. God is speaking through himself, through his son.

Angels are so close to the throne of God. But the son is on the throne of God. His title as son is so superior.

[18:02] And then in verse 6, to see how much superior, quotes a song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32. The son is not appear with angels.

He's not on the same level. When he conquered sin, when he conquered Satan, he conquered death, he sat on the throne and the angels are called, acknowledge your Lord.

They are worshipping him right now. Do you remember the Apostle John at the end of Revelation? What does he do after receiving such wonderful visions of what's going on? Do you remember what he does? He is tempted.

He falls on the ground and he's tempted to worship this angel that's showing him all this. The Apostle is about to worship an angel. Angels must be amazing creatures if he was about to do it.

[19:10] He must have been blown away. But what's the angel's response? Stop! No! Don't do that! Don't worship me! Worship God!

I'm a servant with you. Don't do that. What's going on here though? The angels are worshipping the Son. This is no fellow servant.

He is the heir of all things. He's the firstborn. He's the heir. God has given the Son all that he has. And so it's right to worship him as God.

Is your view of Jesus big or little? Is your Jesus being worshipped by angels? Is that what we're doing this morning?

Are we worshipping? Are we worshipping Jesus? Are we just paying our respects? Well, verses 7 and 14, it keeps showing us the contrast between angels and Jesus and their authority even more.

[20:30] So verse 7 quotes Psalm 104. He makes his angels winds and his ministers a flame of fire. I'm just going to have a whinge for a second.

You're going to have to put up with me. I'm just reflecting on my weaknesses this week, okay? I strain my back, which is unpleasant. My wrist is strained.

I tried to register for this thing online and it took about 15 minutes. And as I was doing the payment, it crashed. I dropped my laptop and now it's coming up with this blue screen of death.

I tried to put the seatbelt on in my car and it's so jammed I couldn't put it on. Anyway, all I'm trying to say is I'm a weak human being.

And I haven't even got to my attitudes yet. I know often what God wants me to do. And I can rebel.

[21:43] There's weakness there in my heart. I think what this is saying, the angels, they're swift as wind. Nothing stops them.

When God gives a command, angels don't have my weakness. They are amazingly strong. They are like a bushfire. You will not stop them. They shut the mouths of lions.

I think that's the point of these verses. Compared to us, yes. They're powerful. Verse 8.

But. Big contrast. But. Look at the sun. Look what we can say about the sun.

All verses 8 to 12 is framed by this. But of the sun. In comparison to them. He is on the throne.

[22:46] He's the one giving them the commands. His throne is forever. You shouldn't wait until his rule comes to an end for a next authority to come.

That's not going to happen. He's on this throne now and into the world to come. He's the one who laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning.

Who could God address as the maker? This is God speaking. Who is God saying you are the maker of the heavens and the earth? Not angels. Job tells us they were just watching going wow.

They're just celebrating. Hebrews answer is only the sun. Can you say that? He's on the throne. He created all things. His rule won't come to an end.

The creation will. The universe feels so permanent. But it's like this fast piece of clothing.

[24:01] It's going to wear out. It's going to be rolled up. It's going to perish. It's going to be gone. It feels so permanent. It's going to be gone.

But the sun remains. He is on his throne forever and ever, ever. That's how much greater he is even than angels.

And then verse 13, we've got a, it's something of a trump card, I think. Here's one more quote. And Hebrews in the New Testament, they love Psalm 110.

And Jesus himself loves a Psalm 110. When the religious experts attack Jesus, he quotes Psalm 110 because they agree that this is about the Messiah.

And he says, if the Messiah is the son of David, why does he call him Lord? He's putting the pressure on him, saying, you can't have a category of the Messiah that is just human.

[25 : 08] Just a human son. Otherwise, David would be superior. He's claiming to be higher than David himself.

He's claiming to be on God's throne, in other words. And he's going to make every enemy bow before him. Every tongue in heaven on earth will bow the knee to him.

That's who the son is. So what are the angels doing? We've got one more thing. We're told one more thing in verse 14. What is Jesus sending his angels out to do? Verse 14 is wild.

This is so encouraging. If I've lost you, come back, please. Are they not ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?

If your heart is warmed by this idea that Jesus is big, he's so big, if you have faith in Jesus, he is sending his angels out to serve us.

[26 : 31] Isn't that wild? Isn't that wild? These powerful beings are sent to make sure you and I make it to glory.

I've heard people speculate about how they do that. I don't know. I don't want to speculate. I think just knowing this, isn't that encouraging? All the armies of heaven are being deployed for you to make it to glory.

It's encouraging. I think it's a miracle that people continue in faith. Sin, the power of sin against you. The world enticing you away. Satan is against our faith. But heaven's armies are unleashed to make sure we make it.

That's what Jesus is using his authority over angels to do. So we come to the punch of understanding all this.

[27 : 44] All this is leading up to chapter 2. At Kourong, I'm about to have a negative comment here. I'm not having a go at Kourong.

Go to any Christian store. Sorry, Lockie. Working at Kourong. You can get these packs of printed Bible verses with the promises of God.

And you can take one each day and just be uplifted again. The promises of the gospel are amazing. I wonder how they would go if they marketed a warnings box.

Just each day, pick out a warning of the gospel. Don't drift from Jesus.

Don't neglect such a great salvation. I doubt it would sell. But don't we need it?

[28 : 43] I need it. It's just, whenever you're tempted to think, what would it be like to let go of Jesus? Just have a little look over that negative side.

And we need those warnings. Notice what's at stake here.

The language changes from this full and final word to such a great salvation. The angels are serving us so that we inherit salvation, so that we make it.

We see this again in just the next verse after our passage, verse 5 of chapter 2. What we're talking about here is the world to come.

Jesus didn't come to give us a better religion in this age. Old Testament, they've got their laws and their sacrifices, but oh, isn't it great?

[29 : 52] We don't have to do those nasty sacrifices anymore. That's not the main point. There's implications for worship today in Hebrews. But the main point of Hebrews is Jesus is heir of the world to come, and he's sharing this world to come with you and me.

He's sharing it. He's done everything to give it to us, this great salvation. This age we're living in is going to come to an end.

That word drift is like, apparently like a raging river, and it's headed towards a cliff. If this creation is the river heading towards this cliff into an abyss, and our toes are under the solid ground of Jesus, if you keep going down that stream and just drift, there is no more exit point.

There's no more. Jesus is that solid ground into the world to come. All you have to do is just pay attention.

Notice God doesn't say, work for me. Do more for me. The Christian life in Hebrews repeats this. Just stand on Jesus.

[31 : 21] Just pay attention to what he's done. Don't let anything move you away from him. The word pay much closer attention, it's be obsessed with him. He's given such a great salvation into the world to come.

It's crazy. Whatever is tempting us to move our eyes away from Jesus and just drift downstream in this world, it's a crazy idea.

Don't do it. What a great salvation we've got. We see this repeatedly in Hebrews.

Consider Jesus. Exhort one another every day. Rest from your self-saving works in Christ's finished work.

He's brought us into rest. Hold fast our confession. Don't throw away your confidence. Look to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith.

[32 : 27] He's done everything to give us this great salvation. And he's calling us, why would we drift? Don't drift away from that. Don't let anything move you from that. So let anything let you have a smaller view of Jesus.

It's not, it's drifting away from the world to come. It's drifting away from God. He's worthy of our full attention.

So can I urge us not to let any other claim of authority move your attention away from such a great salvation?

I'm just going to list a few possible ways that we can be tempted to drift and have such a small view of Jesus. Any claims of needing to do more?

It's just pay attention to Jesus. Any claims that you need to add to his salvation? Don't listen to it.

[33 : 43] Those claims of tradition and sacrament and cathedrals that give you this sense of feeling of connection with God. No.

If you trust the word of the Son, he is on the throne of God. You belong to him. That's transcendence. Anything that claims that you need to add something to Jesus, his message is full and final.

He's made purification for sins. He's sat down. He's giving his inheritance. Anything that says you need to do this, this, this, don't drift away from the gospel.

Don't let any fine-sounding arguments intimidate or confuse you about the Son. He is God and man.

Don't let any fine-sounding arguments confuse you. There's a pretty easy response to anyone who says Jesus is just human.

[34 : 59] Well, angels are worshipping him. If angels are worshipping him, we should too. If Jesus feels irrelevant to your hopes and dreams.

I heard a survey of reasons why people stop coming to church. It's just a survey. It's just a survey, so I'm not sure how much authority this has got, but I'm using it, obviously.

The survey said it wasn't this big decision that made people stop coming to church. Most people, it was a good thing. A promotion at work.

They moved city. They had children. They got married. They, I don't know, some invested. It was a good thing. And just didn't come one week.

And not come back. Consider afresh this great salvation. If this creation and all our hopes in this age, they're going to be rolled up like a garment.

[36 : 12] And he's giving us the world to come that can't be shaken, that will never be rolled up. But let's not be torn away from what we can have here and now.

If you're questioning how God is really for you, if life is so painful, aren't you encouraged sometimes? Sometimes I'm just having a bad day.

And just, it's a very simple thought. Picks me up. Well, God's giving me heaven. I know this isn't a profound thought, but he's giving us the age to come.

Don't let whatever pain you're going through, don't let it make you drift away from doubting God's love for you and Jesus. It's easy to drift downstream, but when we see who he is and all he's giving us, he's worthy of our obsession, our full attention.

Will you pray with me? Let's pray. Lord, I'm aware that we've been soaking in just some really high truths of reality this morning.

[37 : 41] I pray that you would balance that with what your word is going to speak to us next week, that such a great son knows our weakness, has become one of us.

He knows our temptation and is able to help. Lord, help us as a church. Keep those, a big view of Jesus, that everything will worship him and bow the knee to him, and yet he's right here, ready to give us daily grace in our weakness.

Lord, I pray this so that we might rely on you and that nothing will move our eyes off of you. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen.