

Record of Sermons delivered during the month of
July 2018

(added progressively after each Sunday)

(see following pages)

Hebrews – Introduction & 1:1-4

per S Olyott

Last week we covered a general introduction of the letter to the Hebrews and started to note the four themes of the letter as introduced briefly in the first four verses.

So far we have seen that the letter starts with the assertion that God is!

And that we can know Him, not by our own efforts, but only through His revelation of Himself.

This revelation begins to be recorded in the Old Testament. ¹ *Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ...* . But it was progressive, in various ways and is essentially incomplete. The Christians who received the letter initially were of Jewish background. The first flush of the new Christian faith (now largely in the second generation) was becoming luke warm. They were tending to be nostalgic for the old ways. The ways of the Old Testament. So this letter, right from the first verse tells them that while this part of God's revelation is important and valuable it is not enough. Especially when it comes to the revelation of God's eternal plan of salvation through, His coming to earth in the Person of Jesus the Son of God.

So we continue to consider the first four verses, to discover the remaining themes that will occupy the rest of the letter:

3. (verse 2) ² *but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son,*
The superiority of Christ as a divine revelation. God has spoken again!
As it is in the Greek: 'at the end of these days'. (ἔσχατου - eschatou) Which means 'last of all'.

God has spoken in such a way as to have nothing more to say to the human race.

So instead of the fragmentary Old Testament we now have the complete revelation. Instead of the temporary we have the permanent. Instead of the preparatory we have the final. Instead of God's Word coming to us by subordinates, it is actually 'embodied' in the One who is supreme.

The Apostle is now stressing and pressing on us the superiority of Christ as a divine revelation. Previous generations have describe this as: Revelation by Christ is Superior in

- Character – because it is complete;
- Time – because it is in these last days;
- Destination – it came to us; and
- Agent – Old Testament came through prophets, this through the Son.

There's a continuity between the Testaments, but also a contrast. Christ is not merely the instrument of God, He is God Himself. And the final Word that God

has to say to the world He has said by the Son.

4. The last of the four points introduced in the first 4 verses is a number of proofs that Christ is superior.
We have seen the **fact** of revelation: God has spoken.
The **reality** of the Old Testament as a divine revelation. God has spoken by the prophets.
The **superiority** of Christ as a divine revelation. God has spoken finally by His Son.

Now we might expect that the Apostle would now, with bated breath, rush on to tell us what God has said by His Son! If God has spoken finally and if I'm being told to listen to what God has said, the next step should be: this is what God has said by His Son.

But he doesn't do that. Instead he bursts into a description of the glories of the Son. To stress to them then, and now to me and you now, that the revelation which came by Christ is really superior. It is totally different from anything which ever came before. Totally superior to anything that has ever been experienced before. He tells us seven things about the Son. And the choice is deliberate because throughout this wonderful letter he is going to stress the perfections of the wonderful Christ.

- **Christ the heir:** Verse 2. ² *but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, ...*
Consider a very rich parent with only one Child – the son. All the riches of the parent go to the son. All the titles and privileges. The son ends up with it all. (And no death duties – our analogy is incomplete – God the Father doesn't die as the parent does.)
The son becomes the focus of attention.
The simple word 'heir' is used to show that Jesus Christ is the Crown of history. The Monarch of eternity.
The climax and consummation of revelation. The whole future belongs to Jesus Christ. Eventually He will gain and possess everything. The day is coming when every eye will be fixed on the magnificence of Jesus Christ. So first of all you are told to see Christ as the 'heir'.
- **Christ the Creator:** Further in verse 2. *... through whom also he created the world.*
“Christ (is heir at) the end, because Christ is the beginning!” (Said Patrick – wrongly called St. Patrick – of Ireland.)
He's the climax and crown of history because He is the creator of history. The Greek actually says – through whom He made the ages. [αἰῶνας aiōnas (ages)] To show that everything in between is also in Christ's hands.
He began everything; He's the climax of everything; and everything in between rests under the government of Jesus Christ. He is the One, by whom, in these last days, God has spoken to us.
- **Christ the revealer:** verse 3. ³ *He is the radiance of the glory of God and*

the exact imprint of his nature,

Having told us Christ began everything and ends everything, the writer, now tells us what Christ is eternally (before the beginning of this material universe). Christ is the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His person. There is nothing in the English language that can adequately express God's glory. Earlier generations used the word *effulgence* – the giving off of blinding, radiant rays of light. *Effulgence* is brightness taken to the extreme. You may be dazzled by it, stunned by it, or even overcome by it.

Christ is the effulgence – the irradiated brightness of God. Because the essence of the Godhead is invisible (spiritual), Deity is invisible. Yet the essence of the Godhead is revealed in the Shekinah¹ glory.

That irradiated magnificence of the Godhead, that effulgence, is Jesus Christ. And He is the express image of God's Person. He is the exact representation of God's very being. Here we again have the example of **Ontological** (equal in nature, essence, and attributes) **Trinity**: The Father is revealed eternally by the Person He is always begetting. You cannot see the Father, but you can 'see' Him by 'looking' at the glorious Second Person of the Trinity who is forever being begotten of the Father. It's a mind bursting truth: the invisible God cannot be seen **essentially**; the invisible God can be seen **perfectly** in Jesus Christ.

That's what the Apostle is telling us.

It is that Jesus Christ: who is the crown, and the creator, and the eternal revealer of the essence of God, who is the One through whom God has spoken to us in these last days.

- **Christ the sustainer** (Verse 3 again) ... *and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.*

Throughout history Jesus has a relation to the physical universe.

Think of this: School level science talks about molecules with atoms and atoms with a nucleus and electrons and so on. Your Jesus Christ has a relation with all of these and every thing else.²

1 Ref Ex 40:34-38: The so called *Shekinah* glory of God: When the glory of the Lord came down and filled the tabernacle for the first time it must have been an awesome spectacle to behold. God was truly pleased with His people, not because of their goodness but because their sins were covered and they were hid in Christ who was to come someday.

2 Much is said these days about the complex chemical actions (mainly with a myriad of proteins) that are going on in even the simplest living cell. Many so called scientists, have a world view that there is no such thing as God, so they must account for the creation of these living cells on the basis of random generation of the required chemicals over enormous periods of time. As impossible as this would be there is yet a further problem for them. Even if we were to somehow start with a 'porridge' of just the right chemicals, in the right concentrations, we would still not have 'life' (without the initiative AND the sustaining of God). The 'natural processes' (that these scientists rely on to account for chemical reactions) cause such a mixture to adjust to a balanced state of **equilibrium**. Where there is no net change, even though balancing reactions are kinetically continuing. This would be the state of a cell that is dead. To be alive a cell has inputs and outputs. And the reactions within are in an intricate, continually changing state called '**steady state**'. To establish (and maintain) such a steady state of so many complicated and interconnected reactions is impossible on the basis of 'natural processes' such as 'tending to equilibrium'. In fact the current 'law' of science that is embedded in the concept of entropy mitigates against such a thing happening 'naturally'.

- Who holds it all together? Who causes it all to adhere? It is all upheld and sustained by the Word of Christ. It's that Jesus: the crown, creator, the eternally begotten Son, the One who is the sustainer of the physical universe, who in verse 3 is preached to us as **Christ the redeemer**. *After making purification for sins, ...*

Marvellous truth! He's not only the revealer of God, He's the redeemer of you and me. Immense truth. He came alone. He came. He purged our sins.

My sins are put away! The record is cleansed. I'm purified. My sins. Our sins. They've been purified by a Person. It's this Person who bled and died, who is also the same Person who is described in His magnificence. It's this Person who is the One through whom God has spoken in these last days.

- We see Him at the end of verse 3 as **Christ the ruler**. ... *he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ...*
No High Priest in the Old testament 'sat down', when performing his duties. At the right hand of the majesty who sat down is the very One of whom we have been speaking. Because His work is completed. In His manhood and as heir in His original and former glory. His work never to be repeated is over. He sat down!
- So in verse 4 we see **Christ supreme**. *⁴having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.*
The angels are only servants. Christ is the Son. He has a rank which is above the rank of every angel. When this great God had come amongst us and purged our sins and returned as the man Christ Jesus to His former glory all the angels of God stood back as He returned to heaven. He went past the lowest ranks of angels and past the highest angel, the arch angel, Michael. He walked to the throne of Yahweh ... and sat down!

So Christ is supreme! Over the angels. He sat there by right.

This is Christ. In verse 2 He is a **prophet**; in verse 3 He is a **priest**; at the end of verse 3 and in verse 4 He is a **king**.

If any have never come to Christ: this is that Christ to which they have never come! If hearts today are cold towards Christ: it is to this Christ they are cold. If there are any who have thoughts about deserting Christ: it's this Christ who is being deserted.

To turn away from Christ is to turn away from a greater to a lesser.

To turn away from Christ is always to turn from the glorious to the shoddy.

To turn away from Christ is to turn your back on the irradiated glory of God. And to

Has even a single cell that has 'died' ever been resuscitated by 'natural processes'?

walk into outer darkness.

The message of Hebrews is: “to bow down before Him; love and adore Him; His Name is wonderful; Jesus my Lord.

[1796]

May it please God that all present, through Jesus Christ, shall have life through His Name.

Four Points of Teaching and two Warnings

per S Olyott

Last week we looked at the first 4 verses of Chapter 1:

The letter was written about 65 AD, to a group of Christians of Jewish nationality, who were becoming rather cold in their Christian faith. They were seriously contemplating walking out on the Christian faith and going back to their Judaism. It was a serious option in their minds.

This letter does us good, because in your heart this morning, it's quite possible that the fire that used to burn very brightly for the Lord Jesus Christ, is not so bright as it was. Perhaps the fire is dampened down and, God forbid, you're about to blow it out!

The whole purpose of this epistle is to stir up and rekindle any dying embers in one's Christian life.

The way to do that is: 'to consider Jesus Christ'.

When you see Jesus Christ, clearly, you'll realise that to walk out on Him is to walk from the great to the shoddy. It is always to turn your back on the light of the glory of God and to walk into outer darkness.

That's why the epistle spends all its time parading before us the great glories of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We come today to Chapter 1, verse 5 through to chapter 2 verse 4. The passage divides into two: 1:5 to the end of the Chapter is teaching and Chapter 2 to verse 4 consists of warning.

In the teaching section there are four points and two points in the warnings.

Teaching:

In verse 4 the Apostle said that, Jesus Christ is better than the angels.

Now he is going to amplify this. He will show to us that through to the end of the Chapter, Jesus Christ, really is superior to the angels. Perhaps you don't actually dispute that this morning, but turn your minds back into the circumstances of those first century Christians. To whom he was writing.

They were Jews and they believed that when the Law (their Law) was given, that angels were involved in the process. That angels mediated between God and Moses and brought the Law to him. In this they were correct. The Old testament doesn't say so, but twice the New Testament does. Stephen

says so in Acts Chapter 7³ and Paul says so in Galatians Chapter 3.⁴

Angels were involved in whatever happened on Sinai. That must have seemed wonderful to these people of Jewish descent. “Our Law! Angels were involved in the giving of our Law. Just think of it. Wonderful heavenly creatures. It's a marvellous thing this Judaism. This Jewish religion.” It seemed so attractive to them that angels had brought 'angelic faith'. This was one of the attractions that caused them to contemplate going back to it.

So the Apostle is now going to show to them that Jesus Christ, whom they are thinking of deserting, is better than the angels. Greater than the angels.

The argument he uses would have been very impressive to Jews. What he does from verse 5 onwards, is that he dips into the Old Testament 7 times and comes up with 7 texts: six from the Psalms and one from 2 Samuel.

By extracting these 7 texts out of the Old Testament he shows to us that Christ is better than the angels. It would have been very powerful to such people who knew and revered the Scriptures as they did.

He makes 4 points:

- The first is in verses 4 & 5:

Angels are merely angels. The word, *ággelos*⁵, means a messenger. That's all angels are! Angels are merely angels but Christ, He's the Son! The Son. We've already been told in verse 4 that Christ has obtained a more excellent Name than the angels.

Now verse 5: never, never, did God say to an angel these words. God never turned to the archangel, Michael, nor the angel Gabriel, nor any of the seraphim, nor any of the 'principalities', 'powers', 'dominions' or any of the other ranks of angels and said: “*You are my Son, Never! And never has He said to them ... today I have begotten you*”.

Begotten!

God never used language like that to the angels. The Apostle, in verse 5, is quoting from Psalm 2. It's a Messianic Psalm. It's a Psalm all about Christ. He's talking there about the great mystery of the the eternal generation of Christ: everything that the Lord Jesus is, He owes to the Father. Although He is God in His own right. It's a mammoth mystery! The Lord Jesus Christ is being, eternally, begotten from the Father. It began before time and is still happening now. It's always been happening and will always happen, because this is the relationship between the Second Person of the Trinity and God the

3 Stephen begins his defence of his living in Christ with a step by step description of God's revelation to mankind in the Old Testament. At verse 38 he says, ³⁸ *This is the one (Moses) who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the **angel who spoke to him** at Mount Sinai, and with our fathers. He received living oracles to give to us.*

Then in summary as he concludes his defence, just before he is stoned to death he says, from verse 51: ⁵¹ “*You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you.*” ⁵² *Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered,* ⁵³ ***you who received the law as delivered by angels** and did not keep it.”*

4 ¹⁹ *Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring* [this offspring being Christ as stated in the previous verse] *should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was **put in place through angels by an intermediary.***

5 *ággelos* – properly, a messenger or delegate – either human (Mt 11:10; Lk 7:24, 9:52; Gal 4:14; Js 2:25) or heavenly (a celestial angel); someone sent (by God) to proclaim His message.

Father. No angel enjoys that relationship.

The Lord never said to any angel what's in the second half of verse 5:

Or again,

*"I will be to him a father,
and he shall be to me a son"?⁶*

Isn't the Scripture simple, while at the same time profound. There are eternal relationships which exist between God the Father and God the Son, that are described in those homely words which you use every day in one form or another. Father and son. But in this case the relationship is unique, between these two Persons of the Godhead. No angel enjoys that relationship.

They are merely angels. They are sent from God. While the Son is the Son of God.

In times past one might receive a telegram, a message, from the Monarch. 100th Birthday say. Impressive as that may be, imagine the glow of receiving such congratulations from the person of the Monarch or even the son of the Monarch.

Angels may be wonderful and bring wonderful news and do wonderful things, but at the end of the day they are God's telegram boys. That's all they are. Jesus Christ is the 'embodiment' of the Godhead who has come amongst us once; is with us by His Spirit; and will come again in Glory. He is the Son of God.

How could you go from the King's Son back to a mere telegram boy? How could you go from a religion that is centred around the Lord Jesus Christ back to a religion where the biggest thing you've got to boast about, is angels?

- The second point, in verse 6, is that angels are merely worshippers. Christ is the worshipped! We have already been told the angels are merely angels while Christ is the Son. Now angels are merely worshippers. Christ is the Worshipped. ⁶*And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him. ..."*⁷

Some people saw Christ before He came into the world. Isaiah did, in that wonderful Theophany – a visible manifestation to humankind of God – in Chapter 6 of Isaiah⁸. It was Christ he saw. Remember from John Chapter 12.⁹ In the beginning of Isaiah Chapter 6: there are the Seraphim who are

6 2 Samuel 7:14

7 A translation of the LXX version supported by some Dead Sea Scrolls: *Deuteronomy 32:43. Rejoice, ye heavens, with him, and let all the angels of God worship him; rejoice ye Gentiles, with his people, and let all the sons of God strengthen themselves in him; for he will avenge the blood of his sons, and he will render vengeance, and recompense justice to his enemies, and will reward them that hate him; and the Lord shall purge the land of his people.* (Brenton)

8 ¹ *In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train[a] of his robe filled the temple.* ¹⁰ *Make the heart of this people dull,
and their ears heavy,
and blind their eyes;
lest they see with their eyes,
and hear with their ears,
and understand with their hearts,
and turn and be healed."*

9 John in referring to Jesus quotes verse 6:10 of Isaiah having said Isaiah spoke about Christ.

looking at Christ truly in amazement.

*“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD¹⁰ of hosts;
the whole earth is full of his glory!”*

That's what they said about Christ before He came into the world.

Now we go to the last book of the Bible, the Revelation, where we see Christ in heaven after He's been in the world. Revelation 5:11/12

11 Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing!”

And so (verse 6, above) even when He first came into the world the angels were commanded: *“Let all God's angels worship him... “*

When that little baby was born all heaven was alive with angels saying: (Luke 2:14) *“Glory to God in the highest,*

and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”

They were talking about Him. They announced His birth.

Again, here He is, the Son of God: sweating and in agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, when the angel of God comes and strengthens Him. (Luke 22:43) He knows He only has to speak the word and legions of angels will appear from everywhere to rescue Him.

Even in the lonely wilderness the angels of God ministered to Him, following the temptations. (Matthew 4:11)

The angels were His servants. And even as He came into the world as a 'man' they continued to be commanded to worship. When the great God, in divine condescension, came into the world: The Word said, *“Let all God's angels worship him.”*

Christ is so much greater than the angels.

- The third point is in verses 7 -12. We have learnt that the angels are only angels and Christ is the Son. Angels are merely worshippers. Christ is the worshipped. Now we see that angels are merely creatures. It's Christ who is the creator.

³⁷ Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him, ³⁸ so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

*“Lord, who has believed what he heard from us,
and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”*

³⁹ Therefore they could not believe. For again Isaiah said,

⁴⁰ *“He has blinded their eyes
and hardened their heart,
lest they see with their eyes,
and understand with their heart, and turn,
and I would heal them.”*

10 Again the use of the particular notation, LORD , signifies the use of the tetragrammaton,, יהוה! Yahweh, and usually denotes a Thephany of Christ.

In verse 7 you will see two concepts: ⁷ *Of the angels he says, "He makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire."*

Notice the words: "*He makes ...*" The angels in all their splendour are none the less made. Made by the Word of Christ. He makes His angels winds (spirits) and His ministers fire. Just like the wind is Gods' servant and like the fire is God's servant so the angels are God's servants. That's the way angels are spoken of in heaven:¹¹ Creatures who are like wind and fire.

How is Jesus Christ spoken of in heaven? (verses 8 & 9)

⁸ *But of the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever, the sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of your kingdom.*

⁹ *You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions."*¹²

Jesus Christ is God wielding a sceptre (symbol of a ruler). He has a kingdom because He is a King. He is God, although God is His God. Because there are distinctions within the Godhead. Although the Father is God and the Son is God, Father and Son are not each other. Therefore the Father is the God of the Son. Although the Son is God.

Oh those blasphemous JW's. How they mistranslate this verse: they come to your door with their 'special' bible. There it is in black and white in every other Bible, "*Your throne, O God, ...*". But this offends their 'brainwashing' so they change it to read "God is your throne." This is not found in the manuscripts.

Further see how Christ is described in verse 10. The great Name of God¹³ is given to Christ and there He is in the beginning laying the foundation of the earth. Here are Christ's hands trimming the heavens. And then one day they will perish, folded away like a used garment. That's what will be done with His creation.

*But you are the same, and your years will have no end."*¹⁴

These angels are merely made: wind and fire. Servants. He is God the King reigning over His creation and given divine titles. And divine attributes. He is the creator! Which angel could ever be addressed like that?

- The final two verses of the Chapter reiterate what we have already found: angels are servants; Christ is at the throne¹⁵. The angels are the ministering spirits¹⁶ for that great purpose and the demonstration of God's glory: the

¹¹ See also Psalm 104:4

¹² Psalm 45:6,7

¹³ The tetragrammaton in Hebrew used as the Name for God (Yahweh) is commonly rendered as κύριε or κύριος (kurios) in Greek manuscripts and translated as LORD.

¹⁴ Psalm 102:25-27

¹⁵ Psalm 110:1

¹⁶ Psalm 103:20

adoption of the elect as Children of God. The great Glorifying Gospel of God's grace in Salvation.

[1995]

May it please God that all present, through Jesus Christ, shall have life through His Name.

Four Points of Teaching and two Warnings – pt 2

per S Olyott

Last week we concluded with the final verses of Chapter 1.

We had found that angels are merely angels, Christ is the Son; Angels are merely worshippers, Christ is the worshipped; Angels are merely creatures, Christ is the Creator.

Finally angels are merely servants – underlining what we have learned already. It's Christ who is the King!

¹³ *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”?

No angel was ever invited to sit at the right hand of Yahweh. That's where Christ sits at this very moment as you listen to this sermon.

He is sitting there awaiting His ultimate triumph.

In this first Chapter there are seven Old Testament passages which show a progression:

- the eternal relationships between Father and Son;
- then the coming into the world of the Son;
- God anointed by God – Christ anointed by the Father and ruling;
- Christ creating and ending the world; and
- the last quotation tells us where Jesus Christ is now.

He's seated in heaven at God's right hand in majesty awaiting His ultimate triumph. And His Name is Jesus – so the Apostle immediately takes us to a quotation concerning Joshua (whose name is a variant of the name Jesus).

There was one occasion when Joshua went out to war and he won¹⁷ – as he did normally. He put his foot on the neck of his enemies. It was a sign of complete conquest. Egyptian Pharaohs are depicted as having a footstool with pictures of the vanquished having their necks under the feet of the victor, Pharaoh. Our Lord Jesus Christ sits at God's right hand until the Father makes His enemies his footstool. The complete triumph of Christ is spoken of here.

What are the angels in comparison with that?

Look again at verse 14: ¹⁴ *Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?*

He's a great king ... the enemies will come. He'll put His foot on their necks. The angels are merely the palace servants who race around His throne doing His every will. But they don't only serve Him! (A very comforting thought – verse 14.) ¹⁴ *Are they not all ministering spirits sent out ... ?* On what errands? For the sake of those who are to inherit salvation.

Christians are actually waited on, now, by angels. That's an awe inspiring thought.

There is a ministry of angels. Here is a wicked man. He repents and believes the Gospel so despite all his spite and vice, he's now a Child of God. One of the privileges he enters into from that moment is the ministry of angels. Holy creatures, who have never touched sin, wait, protect and serve him. He is surrounded by them. They really are guardians – sent forth by God.

Angels are wonderful. Daniel saw one¹⁸. The sight nearly struck him dead! The shepherds saw one in particular¹⁹, among the 'heavenly host', and they were terrified. The Apostle John saw one close to him²⁰ and he fell at his feet.

If you and I were to see an angel today we would fall down at the sight of such a glorious creature. But those creatures, glorious though they are, are only the servants of Christ. The present grade of glory is : Christ; the angels; and then us. But it won't always be like that. We're only a 'little lower than the angels', but not for long, because we shall judge angels. In our resurrection glory, when we have the glory of Christ, Christ will be admired in us²¹. The glory of the angels will pale into insignificance, compared with the glory that Christians will come to display.

So the Apostle has made His point of teaching. He's combined these four great steams together. He's convinced us from the Old Testament, that Christ is greater than the angels and so if you walk away from a religion of Christ, to a religion of angels, you walk from the 'all glorious' to what, in comparison, is not glorious at all.

Then Chapter 2: He comes in with his warning.

- Verses 1 to 4.

The danger they faced. *¹Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.*

Look at the danger these Hebrews faced. God has spoken! How? By His Son! This great Son that has just been described. God has spoken by this Son! Surely then everyone in the world will be on the edge of their seat, gazing towards Christ, saying, "If this God has spoken by His Son, what has He said?" Everyone will be anxious and eager to know what God has said through such a glorious Person.

But they weren't. Their attention was actually less than it used to be. And their interest in Christ was actually diminished. They were beginning to drift. We can translate verse 1 correctly like this: Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard. Lest at any time we should drift away.

Here is the picture. The picture is of a river. The current is absolutely torrential. It's a river in flood and the water is going past so fast that you can't believe it. Here tied to the shore is a boat. If that boat's ropes break, it will be swept out to sea. Everybody on it will be lost, because of the current which is sweeping

18 Daniel Chapter 10

19 Luke 2:9

20 Revelation 19:10

21 See statement in 1 John 4:12 ¹² *No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us*. Even in this life, God displays His glory through its reflection in those who obey Him.

everything in front of it.

The choice is, remain tied to where you are tied ... or perish.

Now that being so, what would the sailors do? They would be constantly checking that the ropes were tied properly. They might tie extra ropes and even chains. They would be using all their energies to ensure that that boat would never drift away. Otherwise it's all up with them.

But no! What the Hebrews were doing was this. "Well, we'll probably be safer on the other side of the river." And the ropes have been snapping. One by One. Only one rope left and they don't care. Even then, with that one last rope, the knot is beginning to slip. They don't care because they think they may be better on the other side.

But if the knot slips or that rope breaks, then they are swept away to their eternal doom. The shore to which they are anchored, the only certain place of safety, is the Lord Jesus Christ.

This great Christ who is greater than the angels. If they don't remain moored to Him, it's all up with them. Yet they are in danger of letting it slip.

Here's the warning -- from verse 2 onwards:

"Very well", says the Apostle in verse 2, "the Old testament law was given by the mediation of angels. Inferior Creatures that they are. And that law carried penalties. And those penalties were carried out. However (verse 3) if those who broke that law were punished. How much more will those who depart from the Gospel be punished. Because the Gospel wasn't given by angels, but by the Lord Himself. And the Gospel wasn't confirmed by angels. It was confirmed by those who heard the Lord Himself. When you depart from the Gospel you depart from a greater message, which had a greater giver and greater confirmers. So to depart from a greater message is certainly to depart to a greater punishment. If the lesser brought down divine punishment breaking the greater will certainly bring down divine punishment. How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation,

"Listen", says the Apostle, "you know very well that the Gospel message is true. (verse 4) because God vindicated those early messengers (the Apostles)" ...
⁴ while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

There were marvellous powers and miracles attending the Apostles, vindicating that their message was true. That were heaven sent. That was the purpose of miracles in the New Testament. (And that's why we shouldn't expect them today!)

"If you couldn't ignore the lesser and get away with it, how can you expect to ignore the greater and get away with it.?"

“...³ *how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?* “

To fail to pay increasing attention to the Gospel, is to call down the judgement of God.

Christians and any others who may be in a position to hear the letter to the Hebrews, must recognise the peril of apostasy.

If the Gospel were just one system of belief amongst hundreds of others and you walked out on it it would be of no significance. All you would be walking out on would be just somebody's idea amongst hundreds of others. But the Gospel is not just one idea amongst many ideas of men. God has Spoken finally by His Son! To walk out on the Gospel is to walk out on God's authoritative, final, complete message to the world. To walk out on the Gospel is to walk out on the greatest Person who ever lived. To walk out on the Gospel is to walk out on your Creator. To walk out on your Judge. To walk out on the only One who provides purification for our sins.

Therefore the key question is as always: What is your relationship with Jesus Christ? Are you bound to Christ at all? You are bound to Christ by faith. Has the rope of faith ever been attached to the Lord Jesus Christ? Have you come to Christ – not to a Church, this Church, any Church. To Christ! Do you believe that the life He lived He lived for you. Because you could never live that life, which pleases God. The death He died, He died for you. Because if He didn't die that death, then you must suffer it ... eternally.

Have you bound the rope of faith around Jesus Christ: being ashamed of who you are and what you are. Coming to Him as your only hope. Knowing that if you slip from Him you are lost. But bound to Him you're safe.

That rope of faith is strengthened by the Apostle's doctrine; fellowship; breaking of bread; prayers; and Christian service.

Have you tied the knot tighter this morning, by listening to the Apostle's doctrine? Do you listen with attention to public ministry? Do you read the Bible on your own? Otherwise the knot is slipping!

Then there's fellowship. Fellowship is a shared life with other Christians – part and parcel of your life. Or do you just attend meetings with them. Without these as your closest friends the knot is beginning to slip.

Then there is breaking of bread. When did you last go to the Lord's Table with real preparation of heart? Or was it just a hollow duty? (Perhaps you could think this through for our next Lord's Supper in a fortnight's time.)

How about prayers? The new Testament puts a great emphasis upon corporate prayer. And prayer in your living? Personal prayers up to the Lord throughout the day.

And Christian service: does your faith have hands and feet? Otherwise the knot is beginning to slip.

We shall find throughout this epistle, that there are only two sorts of knot: there are knots that become tighter and those that are loosening. But no knots that stay the same! You either tighten the knot ... or loosen it and perish. It is only as we remain in a relationship with Christ that we remain in a state of grace.

How may you become lost? By one word: it's in verse 3 "neglect"!

[1993]

May it please God that all present, through Jesus Christ, shall have life through His Name.

The Man Jesus Christ is greater than the Angels

per S Olyott

The second chapter of Hebrews from verse 5 to the end. This is a difficult part of the Bible, but it is nevertheless a marvellous passage. We read that the Lord Jesus Christ became the Son of man that we might become the sons of God. We're going to learn this morning that Christ took on our nature. That, in a real sense, we might take on His Nature. We're going to learn that Christ bore our sins that we might have His Righteousness. He came from heaven to earth that we might go from earth to heaven.

He came so that all that we lost from Adam's fall, we would regain – and then even more than Adam had.

It's a marvellous passage and worth surmounting the difficulties.

Briefly let us review what this letter is about. The Apostle is writing about the year 65. He's writing to Christians who were Jews by their previous religion. They had come to the point where they were thinking that they would give up their faith and go back to their Judaism. So he's writing to people who are seriously thinking of giving up the Christian faith. The 'fire' has become very low. It's become dampened down. He's writing to rekindle that dampened fire.

Today, for any who have ever thought of giving up the Christian faith, and all who may look on their Christian life, finding that the 'flame' isn't as high as it used to be, this letter is specially important and necessary.

The way the Apostle works is simply this: he tells us to consider the Lord Jesus Christ. The whole letter parades and extols before us the glory and greatness of Christ. So that you will know that if you ever walk out on Christ you walk out on the all majestic Son of God to the shoddy. You walk away from Him who is the light of God's glory into 'outer darkness'.

He tells us to consider Jesus Christ: in the first four verses of the letter he's told us that Jesus Christ is God's Word. Gods' last word! So why go back on that and go back to the fragmentary, incomplete, revelations of the Old Testament. They're valuable but they're not complete!

He's told us that Christ is God Himself! The highest thing that the Jews were boasting of, at that hour, was that their Law came through the mediation of angels. Why turn your back on God Himself in favour of angels. It's on this theme: that Christ is greater than the angels, that he now continues from Chapter 2 verse 5 onwards.

Many of the Jews would talk like this: "Very well", they might say, "To turn our back on Christ would be to turn our back on God. But Christ had more than the divine Nature. He was not only God, He was man. How can you say that the *man* Jesus was greater

than the angels? If He were a man? How can you say that Christ is greater than the angels, if He were a *suffering* man? How can you say that Christ is greater than the angels if a suffering man went to the death of a *Cross*?”

“Alright! To walk out on Christ as far as His Divine Nature is concerned is an awful thing, but at least we can take comfort that when we walk out on Him as far as His human Nature is concerned, we're walking out on someone who is less than the angels.”

The purpose of this passage is to show to you that Christ is great: not only as the Son of God but the Son of man also! He's greater than the angels as God, and He's greater than the angels as man. This is the theme that occupies our passage today and next week.

The man! The man Christ Jesus is greater than the angels.

This passage can be divided into two: verses 5 – 13 and then 14 – 18.

- (5-13) That the greatness and superiority of Christ is not cancelled by the fact that He came amongst us as a man.
- (14-18) That the superiority of Christ is not cancelled by the fact that He suffered for us, as a man.

Should an angel in his normal unveiled glory come amongst us – like Daniel was visited – we would all be bowled over as Daniel was, and others since. Just the sight of one angel. Around Christ's throne are many *angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands*,²² They worship Him and they are not ashamed to use, “*Worthy is the Lamb who was slain*,” to show that He came amongst us as a man of sacrifice. They know Him as a human, with a human genealogy.²³ So not only in His Godhead but also in His humanity He is greater than the most wonderful creature you can imagine.

Verses 5-13: His superiority is not cancelled by His coming amongst us as a man. Consider the passage verse by verse.

Verse 5. He told us in the previous chapter, that angels were servants of Christians. You might think that when this world ends and we enter into the new heaven and the new earth, that the order of things is going to be reversed. Perhaps you think that in the world to come, that the order will be God; angels; men. We've been told that that isn't the way it is at present. That even the glorious angels serve Christians. But not

22 Revelation 5:11 Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, ¹² saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing!” ¹³ And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honour and glory and might for ever and ever!” ¹⁴ And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” and the elders fell down and worshipped.

23 Revelation 5: 5 And one of the elders said to me, “Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.”

even in the world to come will the order be changed. The world to come has not been put into subjection to the angels. Angels do not rule now, and angels will not rule then. Angels will never rule. They will never have any ruling capacity. Throughout the whole history of creation they are always servants and never masters.

To back up his point in verse 5, in verses 6 and 7, he quotes psalm 8.²⁴ Here we see that God's purpose was not that angels should rule but that man should rule. This is clearly taught in the Old Testament. Even a casual observation of the night sky and the knowledge that comes from more deliberate observations, together with the understanding of the origin of Creation by God's Word, draws wonder, exclamation, honour and worship towards that Creator.

Man seems in comparison so puny, so insignificant. Could God notice one person in a city? Could He notice one in a Nation or one in the whole world? The world to us is an immense place. But then the heavens – the rest of the universe! Should God pay any attention to man? Yes He does says Psalm 8!

What is man, that you are mindful of him, Men and women are in God's thoughts!

... or the son of man, that you care for him? (The Greek word used means to care affectionately.) Men and women, boys and girls are cared for affectionately, by God. Man is only for a little while lower in majesty than the angels, says psalm 8. But God's intention is that man should be over everything. That's the original intention. It's been lost at the fall, but in the new heavens and the new earth you will see man elevated to his original position. Everything under his feet with the exception of God.

God's intention is that man – who is the very peak of His creation – should be seen to be the very peak. (This is how God's glory is demonstrated.) Man, by intention, is greater than the angels! Man is made in God's image.

The image is presently very spoiled and defaced. But the image of God is in the process of renewal in believers. Perfectly renewed at resurrection.

God's purposes lie in man! This is the burden of verses 6, 7 and 8. ⁸ ... *At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him.* Man at present is not in that position that God originally intended for him. You don't see 'everything in subjection' to man, today. You see men and women terrified by death – that's not in subjection; men and women enslaved by sin – they've no power over that; men and women oppressed by evil, by the Devil – no power over him. You don't yet see man in the position intended for him.

But now verse 9! If you don't see man, as man, in the position intended for him, you do at least see the representative Man in that position. But we see Jesus – that human name – in the position intended for man. We see a Man – just one. Jesus has

²⁴ Some may wonder at the off hand way the writer of Hebrews refers to the Old Testament passages that he quotes. The *Spirit of the Reformation Study Bible*, suggests that on the one hand his original readers were very familiar with the passages used and also, since the whole of the Bible is inspired and directed by God, the writer doesn't feel it necessary to quote the human agent through whom this form of God's self revelation has come.

come amongst us. Into this valley of humiliation. He's been identified with us as a man. He too has become lower than the angels (briefly). He's experienced suffering and death. Why did He come?

God's grace sent Him. He tasted death! Don't just say that Jesus died. All that death is: He tasted. The humiliation; bitterness of the grave. Jesus Christ knows what death is. He's been through death. And He did it for all types of people²⁵ – not just Jews but also Gentiles and so on.

What happened to this one Man, who came amongst us and tasted the humiliation and bitterness of death? Where is that Christ now? And (still in verse 9) the answer to that, is that Christ is enjoying divine honours. That this Jesus Christ, the Man, is crowned. With what? Glory; honour – the very regal honours that should be placed on the very brow of God, are placed on the brow of the God-man. Christ enjoys His divine honours as the Man, Christ Jesus.

So although you don't yet see mankind elevated, you see the representative Man – who is the head of a new race – in the position which was originally intended for men and women.²⁶

That was a phenomenal truth for the Hebrews to grasp. You know that when the Gospel was preached in the New Testament – when the Cross was mentioned. The Jews couldn't get over that. It was a 'stumbling block'. When the Cross was preached, the Gentiles – the Greeks in particular – they thought the message of the cross was foolish. They just couldn't see that it was fitting that God should save people by a Cross. So it is stressed in verse 10.

“All things exist for God”, he says. “Nothing comes to pass without God.”

God's purpose for the human race is to make many people in the human race His sons. Think on these words! ... And to bring those sons to glory. God's purpose is to bring men and women to where Christ is now.

But how does God bring men and women to glory? The ESV translation uses in verse 10 (and in the added heading) “**founder**” of salvation. However the Greek word, **arxēgós**²⁷, means 'the first in a long procession'. Christ makes the way and we follow one by one. The way He goes is the way we go. He makes the way to go, We go nowhere except where He has gone already!

Only because He has gone that way already, can we also go that way. The only place we ever get to is the place He's gone to. That's the word the Apostles uses to say how

25 The old 'chestnut' of everyone! But this – though often used – does not refer to every individual person. This goes against the whole teaching of the Word of God. Here (as elsewhere) the writer is stressing that Gentiles as well as Jews are recipients of God's grace in Christ. Elsewhere in the passage we are told that the One who suffered only suffered for the sons who are going to glory. The heirs of salvation who have been saved. The ones He is not ashamed to call brothers. There is no teaching of universal salvation here (or anywhere else).

26 If Adam (before the fall), as federal head of mankind, had passed his period of probation and not introduced sin to himself, his wife and his progeny, would have attained

27 **arxēgós** (ar-khay-gos') (from 746 /arxē, "the first" and 71 /āgō, "to lead") – properly, the first in a long procession; a file-leader who pioneers the way for many others to follow. 747 (arxēgós) does not strictly mean "author," but rather "a person who is originator or founder of a movement and continues as the leader – i.e. 'pioneer leader, founding leader' "

God brings many sons to glory. That's why the verse talks about Christ being made perfect – through suffering. Not that He was imperfect – He is God after all! But He becomes the 'perfect Saviour', that He is, through the Cross.

It's because He has gone the way that He has gone, that He is able to be the Saviour that He is. Because of the way He is, He is able to bring many sons to glory. Christ would have been ineffective as a Saviour if He had not come among us to suffer and to have bled and died and go through the bitterness and humiliation of the grave, before He went to His present position.

He's perfected as a Saviour by going the way that He has gone.

Finally, for today, note that in verse 11, Jesus, who (by His Spirit) sanctifies those who are being sanctified, associates Himself – His human nature with our human nature (*have one source – all are of one*). *Such that He is not ashamed to call them (us) brothers (adelphoi – siblings in a family)*.

Could there ever be a more wonderful Saviour than ours?

[2118]

May it please God that all present, through Jesus Christ, shall have life through His Name.

The Man Jesus Christ is greater than the Angels – Pt 2

per S Olyott

Last week as we began to consider the passage from 2:5 to the end of that chapter, we were exploring the theme that Christ is greater than the angels. Right from verse 5: *⁵Now it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come,,*

Firstly to refute the assertion that while Christ as God was clearly superior to the angels that Christ as a man was not. Verses 5 – 13 Then, that even if Christ the man was superior, how can He be superior in His suffering? Verses 14 – 15.

By verse 10 we had discovered that Christ was the 'file leader' (a military term – but variously translated as captain, founder, author, and pioneer) whose perfection as a Saviour was brought about by his suffering.

We paused last week having finally noted in verses 11 that Christ who sanctifies (makes holy) and those who are being sanctified, are of the same source, that is they are alike – just as siblings of the same family. In this way Christ is not ashamed to call us brothers.

We pick up the explanation now from verse 12 where the Apostle cites three Old testament references which confirm this filial relationship. Culminating in a repeat of the oft mentioned theme in John's Gospel: of the unity that Christ has with those children God has given Him, the elect!

We remember that the Apostle has explained that there is a great link between the Saviour and the saved. He makes them 'set apart' (holy), they are set apart. ¹² ... *he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source.* They are of the same kind – they are one. That is: the same family. Therefore He treats them like brothers. He the elder brother clears the way. The Lord Jesus Christ has cleared away all the obstacles. He's borne all the suffering and pain. He's cleared the path. He's done this because there is a union between Him and those who follow Him. They're members of the same family. He's gone through all that He's gone through because those who are to be saved by His work are as brothers, and He's not ashamed to call them 'brothers'. He's not ashamed to admit that the sinners whom He saves are brothers of the same family.

A marvellous truth! He looks on you this morning in all your sin. The sin, even, of worship, because our worship is far from perfect. But because you are a sinner who has faith in the Saviour – and not in yourself. He looks on you and is not ashamed to call you a brother. A member of the same family.

He's the Son of God by **right**. You're the son of God by **adoption**. He's the Son of God by 'eternal generation'. You're a son of God because you've been born again. Embraced into the divine family. He's the elder brother – the 'first born' of many brethren. We are all the other brothers in the same family.

That's the way Christ regards us and embraces us.

The Apostle proves it by appealing to three quotations:

- “Remember Psalm 22”, he says. Obviously a Psalm about the Messiah and His death. But the Psalm finishes by saying that the Messiah will declare God's Name to His brethren. ¹² ... *In the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise.*”

Even the Old Testament teaches that those who are saved by the Saviour are His brothers.

- Then he quotes Isaiah in verse 13. ¹³ ... *“I will put my trust in him.”* (Isaiah 8:16-18)²⁸ Christ had to put His trust in the Heavenly Father, because He was a man although He was God. The very fact that even Christ had to have faith, immediately proves His identification with the rest of us who have to have faith.
- Again he refers to Isaiah (still in verse 13 of Hebrews): ¹³ ... *“Behold, I and the children God has given me.”* That originally referred to Isaiah and his children. However when our Lord arrives in heaven, He's a 'file leader'. He stands back and into the Kingdom of God, one by one, are entering the people for whom He made the way, through His suffering. On that 'last day' our Lord will stand in front of a great crowd of God's children and Christ will say, “Behold, I and the children God has given me.”

(see footnote for a summary of our progress so far)²⁹

Now to verses 14 -18: This is the second point covered in this passage.

This point is relatively simple. Christ's superiority is not cancelled by the fact that He suffered! For us as a man. This has already been included in the verses above, but the author chooses to re-emphasise it.

There would be some people who would be willing to admit that Christ as man is not inferior to angels, but for Him to die the cursed death of the Cross was too much. Does this then establish that He is inferior?

Not at all! The Apostle will now set out to prove it. Follow him verse by verse through

²⁸ ¹⁶ Bind up the testimony; seal the teaching[a] among my disciples. ¹⁷ I will wait for the LORD, who is hiding his face from the house of Jacob, and I will hope in him. ¹⁸ Behold, I and the children whom the LORD has given me are signs and portents in Israel from the LORD of hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion.

²⁹ Let us now review the main points made so far:

There is no way that anyone can argue that Jesus Christ is inferior to the angels on the ground that He is a man. Because man, as man, is not inferior to the angels. Christ as man is right now in the place of divine honour! The divine purpose was only fulfilled by Christ becoming a man. How can it be argued that He is inferior to the angels when He perfectly fulfilled God's will by becoming a man? The only reason that there are any men and women in glory is because the Saviour became a man Himself.

Therefore, how can anybody argue that for Christ to be a man means that He is inferior to the angels and so we can justify our walking out on Him on this basis.

the remainder of the passage:

- Verses 14 & 15: The people who Christ came to save were human. Says verse 14. They were flesh and blood. To save them Christ became human. And He died. The man, died.

But by that death He rendered the devil's power ineffective for believers. The amazing truth that Christ, by death, destroyed death! That by death, Christ robbed death of its power and sting and hurt.

We must think about death for a few moments, so that the importance of what the Apostle is saying is clear.

Think about your death. Why is there death in the world? Because our 'first parents' capitulated to the temptation of the devil. Death is a direct result of the devil's activity. Death is a bondage none of us can break. Nobody does! Adam eventually died. He couldn't stop it. Death has tyrannised the human race ever since. Right from the beginning men and women have been terrified of the grave. Right from Eden to Calvary! The devil laughed. Men were terrified. Tyrannised by something that came to damage the 'very good' creation: by the direct result of the devil's activity.

But, since Calvary, all that has changed!.

Christ died a human death. He tasted its bitterness. He tasted its humiliation. He experienced damnation for His people. He died a human death. The 'sting' that should come to me in death came to Him as the substitute. The horror and the bitterness that should come to me came to the Substitute.

So while human death remains (to the end of the world), for a Christian, there is no sting or bitterness in it anymore. Because He took it!
In that way the tyranny of the devil over Christian people has been broken.

Can you see why the Apostle is saying this?

How was the tyranny broken? Think of it! The tyranny of death broken! By an angel? Not at all. By a man. By what sort of man? A suffering man.

How was this most phenomenal victory in history won? By an angel?, By Gabriel? Or even the Archangel Michael? No! By a crucified, bleeding man. How then can it be argued that because Christ became a man, and a suffering man, that this makes Christ inferior to the angels. When angels with all their power could not rob your death of its sting.

Christ alone robbed death of the victory. As the suffering Man.

- Now look at verse 16: To do this great work, Christ didn't become an angel, he became a man. A Jew! That's how the work was done. But the ESV translation

shows that it was more detailed than this. ¹⁶ *For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham.* It's not angels but men and women.

What was the point of Christ coming amongst us? To save angels? No. To save men and women. That's why in verse 17, since Christ came to save man, a High Priest was required. Christ became that High Priest. You need someone who understands you. Christ came as a man. He's compassionate and understands you perfectly. You needed someone to fulfil, from man's side, what God requires from man. Christ was faithful. You needed someone to turn away sins from you. It would have to be a man to bear the punishment of man's sins, So that reconciliation and propitiation could be made.

A Man came and did it. All that Jesus has done, He has done by becoming a man. J E S U S: Jesus Exactly Suits Us Sinners.

- It's precisely because (in Verse 18) Christ has come to this arena of suffering. It's precisely because He has come to the very place of temptation. It's precisely because He suffered temptation Himself. (And to an intensity that you and I will never experience.) It's precisely because He has been where you and I are, that He can help you in the place where you are.

It's precisely because He became a man, that He is the Saviour that He is. So how could you look down on Christ and say that an angel is better. No angel ever became a man.

All the salvation that you need is found in a man. And there would be no salvation if that Man had not come and suffered.

So how could any one say that they would now walk out on Him! To go back to a religion, whose highest claim is that its Law was given by angels.

In conclusion the key concept that the Apostle sought to impress on his readers was the superiority of Christ. He will not tolerate any 'small thinking'.

Our hope is that the establishment of the greatness of Christ has also been achieved here, last week and today.

(a final summary is found in the footnote)³⁰

³⁰ These are the main points:

- The purpose of God in Bunbury and anywhere in the world is to bring *many sons to glory*. (Verse 10) He does it by a 'file leader', who walks the way beforehand and others follow. Christ is that 'file leader', but He is also Brother to everyone who follows Him. He sets us apart; and we are being set apart for a glorious future. So great is His love – so marvellous His love, that He is not ashamed to call any of you who is a believer: brother.
- Our brother, the Lord Jesus Christ has already met all our foes. He's obtained victory over every one of them. Death remains. But death's sting has gone. Death's power has gone.

You ought, as a Christian, to think of death like this:

Here is a glorious city with a gate. Here you are out in the desert, lost and bewildered. But you find at last the path to the celestial city. As you pass through the gate you must inevitably step over a threshold on which a shadow falls. That's all that death is. There's a shadow on the gate, but it is a gate. There's no sting there. Nobody lurking there. No pain there. No terror anymore. It's dark; you can't see the gate too well as you walk through it. But very briefly you just cross the threshold and you are in the glorious city.

It was never like that before Calvary. It's like that now.

If you cleave to Christ your soul is perfectly safe in this life; at the moment of death; and eternally. BUT if you forsake Christ you walk out on the all-glorious One: no sure guide in this life; no certain help in this life; no light at the point of your death; and no light in eternity.

In every Chapter of this letter the Apostle is telling us that if you have Christ you have every thing! Without Christ you have nothing.

That is the message of the letter to the Hebrews.

[1781]

May it please God that all present, through Jesus Christ, shall have life through His Name.

-
- Christ has taken us with a grip from which He will never let us go. So He doesn't only lead us, He holds us. Not just the first in the queue, but holding every one who follows Him. Every temptation you face He's already faced. Every dark path you tread, He's already walked that way. There is nothing that you have to face that He's not faced already. And there is no occasion, when you can't call on Him. You can call on Him whatever you are facing, He's been in that situation already. And consequently can give you help. Whatever it is.
 - Best of all He's fully dealt with your sin. So God's anger is for ever turned away and your cause is borne, successful up to heaven, by One who totally understands you, and is pleasing to God.
 - In comparison with who Christ is and in comparison with what Christ has done, the brightest angel pales into insignificance. The Apostle is telling you that there is none greater than Christ! There is none more to be honoured than Christ. There is none more glorious than Christ .