



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

Hebrews 1: 5-14

Summer 2026

"Greater Than Angels"

TRANSCRIPT

Good morning. We are continuing our study which we just began last week in the Book of Hebrews—and we're looking this morning at the rest of chapter 1. We covered verses 1 through 4 last week, and now it's 5 through 14...and which is mainly quotations from the Old Testament.

There are seven attributes, or qualifications, or descriptions of Jesus in the first four verses that showed how great He is... 'greater than the prophets'. And now we see that He is 'greater than the angels' with seven more statements to that effect, (seven passages of Scripture). So it reminds me of the Book of Revelation, (which we just finished), and the importance of the word *seven*—and so the author of Hebrews is following that same pattern.

We begin with verse 5;

⁵ For to which of the angels did He ever say,

"YOU ARE MY SON,
TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU"?

And again,

"I WILL BE A FATHER TO HIM
AND HE SHALL BE A SON TO ME"?

⁶ And when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says,

"AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM."

⁷ And of the angels He says,

"WHO MAKES HIS ANGELS WINDS,
AND HIS MINISTERS A FLAME OF FIRE."

⁸ But of the Son *He says*,

"YOUR THRONE, O GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER,
AND THE RIGHTEOUS SCEPTER IS THE SCEPTER OF HIS KINGDOM.

⁹ "YOU HAVE LOVED RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HATED LAWLESSNESS;
THEREFORE GOD, YOUR GOD, HAS ANOINTED YOU
WITH THE OIL OF GLADNESS ABOVE YOUR COMPANIONS."

¹⁰ And,

"YOU, LORD, IN THE BEGINNING LAID THE FOUNDATION OF THE EARTH,
AND THE HEAVENS ARE THE WORKS OF YOUR HANDS;

¹¹ THEY WILL PERISH, BUT YOU REMAIN;
AND THEY ALL WILL BECOME OLD LIKE A GARMENT,

¹² AND LIKE A MANTLE YOU WILL ROLL THEM UP;
LIKE A GARMENT THEY WILL ALSO BE CHANGED.

BUT YOU ARE THE SAME,
AND YOUR YEARS WILL NOT COME TO AN END."

¹³ But to which of the angels has He ever said,

"SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND,
UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES
A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET"?

¹⁴ Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those
who will inherit salvation?

Hebrews 1: 5-14

May the LORD bless this reading of His Word and bless our time of study in it
together. Let's bow together in prayer.

Father, we begin the service as we so often do, by saying what a privilege it is to
have Your Word before us and to be able to read it publicly as we have done, and to
consider the meaning of the text—as we say so often at this moment in the service,
'What a privilege it is to be here with Your people'.

It's what You would have us do, (and the author of Hebrews will later in this Book lay great emphasis on the importance of that very thing), that we be together. But it can't be said enough of how great a privilege it is to be with Your people...to be with Your people in a land where we are given the freedom to meet, and whenever we wish. But also to do so as the church has done from the beginning—on the first day of the week, in which we remember every week by doing that the Lord's resurrection, that He's alive, and we have a living Saviour; and we thank You for that.

And as we're reminded in the text, (that we have read in this first chapter of Hebrews), **He is active**. He is not some distant Deity that takes very little interest in His people. He is active at every moment:

The Triune God; You Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit...

The One God in Three Persons, is active in our behalf—and we give You praise and thanks for that.

We pray You would bless us this hour; that You will build us up in the faith. We have on the authority of Scripture the assurance that You will do that...and that You are doing that. What a privilege to possess this Book...this supernatural Book, we thank You for the gift of it.

And it is the basis for the lesson that we look at this morning and the great assurance that the author gives us. This lesson is all based on Scripture, which attests to the greatness...the unmatched greatness of Your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Build us up in the faith, Father.

We have other needs—we have physical and material needs. And we look at this prayer request list that we have in our bulletin...there are many members of Believers Chapel that are going through difficulties that we don't even know about; and there are protracted illnesses and chronic illnesses, and I pray that You would bless those who are in that condition. 'Bless them, encourage them', (they need encouragement). We all need that.

But sometimes we're 'laid-low' by Your will...and You have a purpose in it. But may they know that You're in control of everything, and You are caring for them...and we pray for them.

Bless us now LORD, as we continue our service. And as we consider this great text, open our hearts to receive the ministry of it to us.

And we pray these things in Christ's name,
Amen.

(Message) Albert Einstein is quoted as saying, "The world is a dangerous place to live, not because of the people who are evil, but because of the people who don't do anything about it."

It's a complaint against inaction. There is some truth in that, but in fact, it is evil people who have made the world dangerous—and especially for the church. And it's always been that way from the day Cain killed his brother, Abel, and so it is today.

It was in the 1st century, and the Book of Hebrews is written to a community of Christians experiencing hostility—likely Jewish Christians perhaps living in Rome during the reign of Nero. And in support of that is a statement at the end of the letter where the writer sends greetings to them from friends who were with him and who were from Italy; "Those from Italy greet you." (*Heb 13:24b*).

This is, for example, the position of F.F. Bruce who dates the letter to AD 64, just before the outbreak of violent persecution. They needed encouragement, they needed a protector, a sovereign greater than Caesar. The assurance the writer gives them is that they have that in Jesus Christ.

The author has already stated the Lord's greatness in the first four verses, (*Heb 1:1-4*), *He's 'Greater than the prophets!'* And he concludes that by saying, *He's 'Greater than the angels!'* He is the ultimate revelation of God because He is God's Son...God incarnate.

He is the Creator of everything and the Ruler over all. That makes Him greater than the angels—and for a Jew who knew the Bible, that was a captivating claim. (For they revered the angels...and rightly so.)

They knew and they loved the stories of Elijah and Elisha, and the account in 2 Kings, chapter 6, (*vs17f*), of the Syrian army that came to capture the prophet. (*Elisha*). His servant goes out in the morning and he sees this vast Syrian army...and he is struck with terror at the sight of this enemy. And he comes to his master, (to the prophet), and he speaks of that. And so Elisha, who is completely calm and knows what is going on, prayed that God would allow his servant to see the invisible world. When He did, he saw the angelic host with horses and chariots of fire all around them to protect them.

Angels are mighty. The Bible tells us they are glorious and powerful beings; so splendid that when men see them they fall down before them 'as dead men'.

But we have a Sovereign and Savior that is greater than the angels...and in verses 5 through 14, the writer proves that from *seven passages* of Scripture.

Angels are creatures, Christ's creation, who serve Him and worship Him.—That's the lesson. Christ is greater than the angels. He is Almighty. He is unlimited in His power, unlimited in His care and His concern for us, His people.

But what is also instructive in this passage is the way the writer uses Scripture to prove that, and the way in which he interprets the Old Testament. The Bible is his authority. He believed it was 'the very Word of God'—and that's indicated in the way he begins the quotations with the statement, 'He said', (*e.g. vs5*), meaning, "God said"... "God has spoken".

In fact, that's how the Book begins; we have the very 'Word of God', we have divine revelation in this Book, the Bible, all 66 books within it. I guess it's really a library; and it's all the 'Word of God'...'God has spoken'. And so the author of Hebrews cites that; cites His words, cites His statements.

He didn't cite philosophers, he didn't cite rabbis for proof. [Although that might have appealed to some, particularly in this very small congregation, to hear what 'Rabbi Eliezer said'...or some other great Rabbi—Gamaliel; and he could have cited those.]

But he doesn't do that...he quotes Scripture, and he quotes Scripture alone—
because it alone is our basis for truth and the knowledge of God.

The world may say, 'Seeing is believing. We can't trust anything that we don't perceive with our senses. If I can't see it, hear it, touch it, I don't believe it.' —That is totally contrary to the way the people of God live.

And we have an excellent, beautiful, authoritative statement about all of this in Psalm 36, verse 9b, that simply states,

"In thy light shall we see light."

In other words, 'If we want to have light, have truth; if we want to understand reality, what is real and what isn't, we must begin with Scripture...we must **begin with the Word of God.**

We begin by believing it—and when we do that, it explains for us the world—explains for us who we are, who God is, and our relationship to Him.

"We walk by faith, not by sight", the Apostle Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 5:7... a very important statement. That's the reality: We walk by faith. We must!

We're like people in the dark, in absolute darkness...then we light a candle and we're able to see what is around us. Well, that's what Scripture is—Light, Truth...and by it we know truth.

In fact if we want to continue the analogy of the Bible and a candle...the more we study it, the more candles we get, the more Light we have—until we're finally carrying a great candelabra and we can see much more of reality—but we see it 'in light of the truth of God's Word'. That is to say, (and this is to say), 'Scripture is sufficient.' It's God's revelation. It is truth, and 'a lamp to our feet and a light to our path', as the psalmist said in Psalm 119, (vs 105).

And secondly, the author of Hebrews interpreted the Old Testament 'Christo-centrally'. What I mean by that is, 'Christ is the center of the Word of God'. 'He is the center of the Old Testament.' (And that's what he is quoting here in our text.)

This is the Bible of the early church, the Old Testament. He is everywhere in the Old Testament. (And I say that based on the authority of Christ Himself...that's what He taught.) In John chapter 5, verse 39, He, (*Christ*), told the Pharisees, [who were scholars, the scholars of their day, 'the biblical scholars of the day'—they knew the Word of God, they studied it, and He acknowledges that. They were His antagonists, but He recognized that they studied the Word of God...but they studied it ignorantly.] He says, "...it is these that testify about Me." (*ibid.*).

And that was His method when He talked to those travelers on the Emmaus road. You'll remember, the Resurrection has occurred and some of the women had been to the tomb and had reported that. But the men weren't believing it.

So these two disciples are walking home on the Emmaus road and they're very discouraged...when Christ comes up to them and begins to speak to them, engages them in conversation—and said to them that, 'They were slow to understand the Old Testament and that's why they were confused about this...that it spoke of Him, it spoke of all of this.' And so He states that 'since the writers had predicted all of this, they should have known this: It predicted the death, predicted the Resurrection.'

And then, Luke (24:27), wrote, "Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures."

From Genesis to Malachi, He is explaining to them that Christ is there, in it all, in explicit statements of the prophecies about Him and in the types and the symbols that are in them.

The author of Hebrews followed that same hermeneutic, that same method of interpretation that our Lord used. He went to the heart of these texts and he brought up Christ. That's what he does in our passage.

He has already stated that Jesus 'has a more excellent name than the angels'.
(vs4).

Then in verse 5, he tells them what that name is,

⁵ "For to which of the angels did He ever say,
'YOU ARE MY SON,
TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU'?"

Christ is God's Son. That has never been said of an angel. [Now, it has been said of the angels collectively; they're called "the sons of God" and you see that in Job 1:6.] But no one in particular has been singled out as 'God's Son'. That special title was given only to Christ—and the proof is these two passages: The first from Psalm 2, and the second from 2 Samuel chapter 7.

Psalm 2 is about the Messiah...and its verse 7 was fulfilled when Christ was resurrected, ascended to heaven, and enthroned at the Father's right hand. —That is when He was "begotten", (ibid.)...not in the sense of created, (Christ is eternal), but in the sense of being exalted to a new position of authority as the triumphant Messiah. 'Born', as it were, 'out of the tomb', 'born the God-man in a glorified, triumphant state'.

Christ, the Word, (the Logos), is God's eternal Son. This relationship has always been. Both Persons share the same divine nature along with the Holy Spirit...that's the 'Triune God'.

But when He was resurrected, He was given a glorified body and began a new stage of existence as the 'Divine King and Mediator'. In that way, He was "begotten" at His resurrection and ascension.

More proof of Christ's superiority to the angels is given in that second quote, this from 2 Samuel, chapter 7, and verse 14, which is another Messianic passage where He is called 'God's Son'. This is where God established His covenant with David and promised that He would build his house, (that He would build David's kingdom), and establish his

throne on which David's descendant would reign forever. And God said, "he shall be a son to Me." (ibid.).

Now, if you go back and study that, you can see that Solomon fulfilled that partially—but failed to fulfill it ultimately; and so did all of the kings of Judah and Israel. It required an eternal person to fulfil the promise of an eternal reign, someone far greater than David and all of the kings of Israel—and any mortal.

It was fulfilled in Christ. Gabriel announced that to Mary when he speaks to her of her giving birth to Christ in the first chapter of the Book of Luke, in verses 32 and 33. He said;

³² "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; ³³ and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end."

'His kingdom will never end.' So, Christ is superior to the angels because He has 'a better name' than they, meaning a higher position. They are great, they are supernatural messengers of God, but Christ is God's eternal Son, "God the Son".

The angels know that, and they worship Him. That's the next proof of His superiority given in verse 6, (*where* the author quotes from *The Song of Moses*, Deuteronomy chapter 32, and verse 43),

⁶ And when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says,
"AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM."

That's the Second Coming. Christ is coming again and the angels will be with Him, serving Him, worshipping Him...**All will**. Paul says that in Philippians chapter 2, verse 10, that, "EVERY KNEEN WILL BOW" to Him in that day, 'those on the earth, those under the earth, those above the earth, all will bow', (ibid.), believer and unbeliever alike.

We worship what is superior to us, (or at least that's pure worship), we worship that which is superior. The angels always worship Christ, and they would never worship anyone who is less than God.

Jesus is far more than an archangel.

He is more than a mere man,

Infinitely more than 'a good teacher' and 'a good example'.

He is all of that, but far more than that, infinitely more,

'He is very God of very God', 'Eternally generated from the Father'.

But He is called, "...the firstborn...."

"And when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says,

'AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM' " (vs 6).

'Well, does not that statement, that description, that title, "firstborn", suggest that He had a beginning?!

The ancient Arians, some of the earliest heretics of the church who stated that 'Christ is a created being...the greatest of all beings, greater than the angels but not God!' —and they cited that as an example..."firstborn."

Well, No! That's a misunderstanding of the title. The title speaks of His 'primacy over the world'. 'The firstborn' was always the heir of the inheritance...he was the inheritor. —And that's the meaning here; everything belongs to Him.

So when He returns, He will come as the rightful Heir of the whole inhabited earth—earth and all of the people who inhabit this globe. And that's the meaning here of the word *world*: 'He will rule over it, rule over its people, and all of the angels will worship Him.'

So, His superiority to the angels is seen in His name and their worship—but also in the vast difference between them, which the author shows from the angels' origin and function. The Son is described as "begotten", but the angels were *made*. The angels are creatures, God's creation, and they serve Him.

And the *fourth* passage cited proves that. It's Psalm 104, verse 4, and here given in verse 7;

⁷ And of the angels He says,
"WHO MAKES HIS ANGELS WINDS,
AND HIS MINISTERS A FLAME OF FIRE."

Angels are spirits, but they could assume the form of men—as in Genesis 18, when two of them, along with the pre-incarnate Lord, visited Abraham...and the Lord stayed with Abraham to speak about Sodom while the two angels went on to Sodom and to the house of Lot. But God can do that, and angels can be transformed into human form...and God can transform them into the elements—here, 'of wind and fire'.

The *seraphim*, the angels before the throne of God in Isaiah 6, get their name from the Hebrew word *saraph*, which means "to burn", so they are 'the burning ones', they are 'the shining ones'...but they're still servants.

Christ is sovereign. He rules over all creation, over all the universe, and in verses 8 and 9, the author cites Psalm 45, verses 6 and 7, for proof;

⁸ But of the Son *He says*,
"YOUR THRONE, O GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER,
AND THE RIGHTEOUS SCEPTER IS THE SCEPTER OF HIS KINGDOM.
⁹ "YOU HAVE LOVED RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HATED LAWLESSNESS;
THEREFORE GOD, YOUR GOD, HAS ANOINTED YOU
WITH THE OIL OF GLADNESS ABOVE YOUR COMPANIONS."

Angels can be changed in the service of God, but the Son is unchangeable. He is immutable. His throne is forever and ever. That is only true of God...not of a mere mortal, or angel—and His character is impeccable, sinless. In fact, **impeccable** means 'not able to sin', and that is Christ. He is righteous and impeccable.

No human king, not even David, who 'loved God and was a man after His own heart', (1Sa 13:14), had the integrity ascribed to this King.

He is perfect...and He is deity. That is made clear in Psalm 45. Did you notice the statement in verse 9 of our text? "...Therefore God, Your God has anointed You."

Well, we might ask, "How can God have a God? How can God have another God over Him? Well, of course He can't in that sense, but as 'the God-man' in His human nature, as a genuine man with a true body and a reasonable soul, which Christ had, and has, His eternal Father was His God over His human nature, and He walked in obedience to Him as a man on this earth. He is the Messiah. He is the Son of David, a real man, "...born of a woman, born under the Law...", as Paul explains in Galatians 4:4—a Man who lived as we live and who lived in perfect obedience to the Law.

So, 'the Son of Man'—but He is also "the Son of God", sent by God the Father, and, 'No mere man'.

Well, that's how the author of Hebrews interpreted it—and if it wasn't plain enough in verse 9, he gives further proof from verse 10 through verse 12, where he quotes from Psalm 102. And here, the Lord is praised as "the Creator", which shows His superiority to the angels...to everything, to the cosmos and all that is in it. He made them all, everything. Verse 10,

¹⁰ And,

"YOU, LORD, IN THE BEGINNING LAID THE FOUNDATION OF THE EARTH,
AND THE HEAVENS ARE THE WORKS OF YOUR HANDS;

¹¹ THEY WILL PERISH, BUT YOU REMAIN;
AND THEY ALL WILL BECOME OLD LIKE A GARMENT,

¹² AND LIKE A MANTLE YOU WILL ROLL THEM UP;
LIKE A GARMENT THEY WILL ALSO BE CHANGED.

BUT YOU ARE THE SAME,
AND YOUR YEARS WILL NOT COME TO AN END."

That Psalm, (102), was especially appropriate for these Hebrews in Rome because it was written by a man in great distress. In fact, that is title of it as you look at Psalm 102, "A Prayer of the Afflicted". His world had crashed around him, and he was crying out to God for help. He was strengthened when he understood God's

permanence. Everything passes away in this world, but the LORD remains. He is forever, and all God's people are under His care...constant care. We are not under the control and dictates of circumstances. God is ruling over us; He is above everything; He is before everything; and He will be after everything.

Someday this world will come to an end, God will fold it up 'like an old garment', the psalmist says. (*Psa 102:26*). That is a picture familiar to all of us, at least if we live long enough it will be. —And I can say I've lived long enough to where I can say I've had some suits that I liked and some shirts that were favorite shirts, but eventually they all wear out. The shirt gets a hole in it, you bend your arm and suddenly it rips and you realize, 'Well, there's my favorite shirt...gone!' Or my suit gets these shiny pants and you realize, 'Okay, it's about had it'...and then you see a couple of moth holes in it, and you fold it up and you give it to Goodwill!

Well, that's a picture that the psalmist writes of the universe that we can all identify with, that men have always been able to identify; the clothes we wear, the things we wear, they wear out.

I don't know how old the universe is. I don't base my understanding of things on science, but let's just take what they say: 'Science says it is 13.7 billion years old', (and maybe it's older now, than when that number was given).

If we take another view, that the world is young—not old... it's still very old regardless of what position you take on that. Our lifespan, maybe 70 years or 80 years, or even 90, (people's longevity is being extended), but even so, that is just a blink.

Regardless of how you date the universe, our lives are over in a moment—and that can be disturbing, can it not? I mean, our mortality reminds us we don't last...we don't last. But the universe, as old as it is, (and it may seem eternal to some people), it won't last. Everything is coming to an end someday...everything.

Not God. He began it all, He will end it...but He will remain.

And the author of Hebrews is telling us that the One who does all of this, who controls all of this, God, who created it all...is the Lord; it is Christ. So, He is certainly greater than the angels.

He is greater than the universe; He created it all and controls it all. —You see that in the Book of Colossians, 'Everything holds together by His work, His power.' (*Col 1:17*). And He is always the same, He doesn't change in His being or in His affections. That's Hebrews 13:8, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."

And that's the encouragement these worried saints needed: He is immovable and reliable; He can and will take care of us through all of the circumstances of life...and forever! Our faith in Him is well placed—but our faith in Him will also be tested.

Soon after Christian fled the City of Destruction and became a pilgrim on his way to the Celestial City, he had to go through 'the Valley of the Shadow of Death'. It was a treacherous place, (as Bunyan describes it), for on one side of the path was a deep chasm...a bottomless pit it seemed. On the other side of this pathway he was on, a ditch of quicksand—and then a burning pit. The path itself was very very narrow, it was as though he was walking on 'the razor's edge'. And he was surrounded by darkness, complete darkness, so that it was impossible to see where he was going, impossible to know where to place the next step he was taking. And all around him, he heard hideous noises, terrifying sounds.

But then he heard the voice of a man before him, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no ill, for Thou art with me." (*Psa 23:4*). And soon the day broke and God turned the shadow of death into morning. (He does that.)

The Lord knows the way through danger, and He leads us safely step by step. Every step is a step of faith. He leads us by faith, and we walk by faith as we obey Him. We may not know what the next step is going to bring, but we walk in obedience. That's the Christian life.

Well, the *seventh* and crowning Old Testament quote is from Psalm 110, and it is really the main Psalm of this book, (we return to it again and again as we progress in our study). It is quoted here to prove, again, Christ's sovereignty. The writer asks in verse 13;

¹³ But to which of the angels has He ever said,

"SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND,
UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES
A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET"?

The answer is, "To none." Typically, angels do not sit, they serve. [Now, some of you know your Bible well enough to say, 'Well, wait a minute. You go to the end of the Book of John and the Resurrection, and they look in the tomb and there are two angels sitting where Christ had been laid, so there are cases where they sit.' And I would say to that, 'Yes, but they're sitting where Christ's body had been laid, and it's almost as if to say, "We served Him while He was here." ']

You see that in Mark 1, (13b), when He's in the desert, and then 'the angels came and ministered to Him'. And they ministered to Him throughout His life. —But now He is glorified, and it's as though they're sitting because their work of ministering to the Son of God is over.

But typically, they don't sit; they stand, they minister. Christ is seated because He is sovereign and they are His subjects. The image of a footstool here,

"SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND,
UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES
A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET"...

reflects the custom among ancient kings of putting their heel on the neck of a defeated enemy to demonstrate their dominion over them.

The British Museum has a magnificent collection of ancient artifacts. You enter into it and there is the 'Rosetta Stone', which was the stone that was found in Egypt in

the 1800s and used to decipher the hieroglyphics...so we can understand them by that Rosetta Stone.

And then, down from there, is the 'Black Obelisk'...very interesting. It's an obelisk on a black stone, and on it is Israel's King Jehu bowing to Shalmaneser III, attesting to what the Scriptures teach.

There is also a stone panel from the palace of the Assyrian king, Tiglath-pileser III, who is carved in stone standing over a prostrate enemy with his foot on his neck. That's the picture in the Psalm. (*Psa 110:1*). Someday, all of the rulers of this world will bow to Christ; they will be His footstool; He will have conquered the world completely and its leaders will be in submission to Him.

So to these Christians who were going through the dark valley, wobbling in their faith and thinking, perhaps, of turning back, even returning to the synagogue, the writer was saying, 'You cannot do that. We are always to be going forward! Those past things, that religion of the synagogue, is finished! There is no going back to it!'

We can only go forward, progressing in the faith toward the goal, toward heaven and the City of God. Christ is the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies:

He is greater than the angels.

He has a better name than they have.

He is "the Son", which indicates He has the nature of the Father.

He is sovereign, He is eternal, He is creator...He is God.

What more can be said? The angels are great, but they're servants. They are "ministering servants"...ministering spirits for us. And that's how the chapter ends: They are, "...all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation." (*vs 14*).

There are lots of missionary stories about that—about Christians in foreign lands, in the New Hebrides, or China, where hostile tribes or armies were frustrated by angels. And I don't doubt those accounts...that's what the Bible teaches. That's what 2 Kings, chapter 6, is about...how the angelic host protected Elisha and his servant in the town of Dothan from this great, powerful Syrian army.

They also ministered to the Lord after His temptation in the wilderness—and we can know from all of this that they minister to us in unseen ways and unknown ways. (And the author of Hebrews will talk about that towards the end, about 'entertaining angels unawares'. (*Heb 13:2*).)

But there is a truth that is even more encouraging than that—and that is that **Christ is protecting us**. He is greater than the angels, infinitely greater than the angels. You can't even measure the difference between them—and He is ministering to us, protecting us.

He is greater than the angels and we are in His hand – that's John 10, (vs28), – and we can never be 'plucked out of His hand' if we are believers in Christ—that's the teaching of the Bible...so we have it on good authority.

What is your authority? What are you basing your life on?

Is it philosophy? Well, which philosophy? Which so-called wisdom of men is it that you follow because there is disagreement among the philosophers—and ultimately their ideas are all speculation with no real authority in them.

Is it science? Well, which science is it that you are holding to—the science of today or the science of yesterday? The science of today is going to soon be the science of yesterday because science is always changing.

Is it popular opinion? Is that what you go by? Well, that's ephemeral...that's always changing.

The authority of the author of Hebrews is Scripture—and that is the Christian's only authority. It never changes, and it is clear:

'Christ is God'.

He is 'God the Son';

He is the second Person of the Trinity;

And He is reliable in the darkest of days.

The Christian life is 'the abundant life', (*Jn 10:10*), it is 'the joyful life', (*Gal 5:22*), but it's not always sailing under sunny skies on a glassy sea. There are difficulties, there are storms that come. In fact Paul, after going through a stoning himself, gave to the saints, (the early converts), a dose of reality, (for they had seen that). —And then he said, "Through many tribulations, we must enter the Kingdom of God." (*Acts 14:22*).

That's universal for all of us. Difficulties can be crushing. I'd been made aware recently of how many there are, how many difficulties, (physical ailments and trials), that people in this congregation are going through. That shouldn't shake our faith; that's the Christian life.

And if these Christians were living in Rome in the year 64, then some likely suffered the shedding of blood in martyrdom at the instigation of Nero. But still, we have this encouragement; Christ is God the Son; He is on His throne; He is not detached from the world or the problems that we as His people face—and He is there to protect us.

I'm coming to the end, but let me end with a story that I think illustrates that. It's a story that Dr. Johnson told when he was teaching through the Book of Hebrews, (I think on this passage), and I remember him telling it for I was here when he was telling it, and it impressed me. (And it had impressed him, for he had just recently heard it.)

He had been in Canada, and a friend had told him a story that was originally told by T.T. Shields, who was a Baptist minister in downtown Toronto, and had a long ministry

there. [In fact, Lloyd-Jones, early in his life, came to that church and ministered for a summer, I think it was.]

But he had a long ministry, and he said in this story that in Northern Ontario in the old days, farms had rock fences...walls of stone made of the rocks that were in that region, and they would pile them up on each other and make a wall.

One day a group of children came down the road from school. Among them was a crippled boy who was dragging himself along with his crutches, trying to keep up with the others. As they came near a farmhouse some of the boys began to heckle him. They grabbed his crutches from him, they put him against the rock wall, and they began to toss stones at him. Mr. Shields said of course it hurt and he began to cry...but across the field was a man, a big man, hoeing in the field. When the little boy, hurt and crying, looked off and saw the man, he shouted out in a loud, agonizing cry, "Father!"

When the man recognized the boy, he dropped his hoe, he leapt over the fence, he came to the little boy and held him in his arms, picked up the crutches and gave them to him, kissed him...it was his father.

Then Mr. Shields said, "I've been like that little boy. Satan has been heckling me, stoning me, and I cried that one word, "Father!", and He scattered the demons and delivered me."

Well, what the author of Hebrews is telling us is that Christ is like that. He is the Son of God, very God of very God. We are His body; He is the head of the church. When evil people touch us, they touch Him—and when they do, He cries out to His Father as our High Priest.

The Father always answers His Son—and He embraces us. He is "the Ancient of days", (*Dan 7:9*)—greater than the angels, greater than the evil one, sufficient for all our needs; He is taking care of us—and the Father answers His Son's requests and prayers.

So, what are we to do? We are to trust Him constantly—follow Him, go forward, even if it's intimidating, go forward into "the valley of the shadow of death."

Are you doing that? Have you trusted in Him?

Christ is God's Son who became a man in order to die for helpless sinners—and unworthy sinners. He took our sins upon Himself and bore our punishment in our place. Now, all who believe in Him are saved by faith and faith alone.

And when He finally rolls up this universe and starts over with the new heavens and new earth, we will be with Him. In the meantime, He is watching over us through the darkest of days...we can always rely on Him.

May God strengthen us to do that and to cry out to Him...He always hears and He always comes.

(Closing prayer) We do sing Your praise forevermore, the Three in One,
The Triune God; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we thank You.
Salvation is Your work;
From Your choice of us, Father, from all eternity,
From the work of purchasing us by Your precious blood, Lord Jesus;
And to You, the Holy Spirit, who brought us ineluctably* to Yourself;
It's all Your work...we give You all the praise!

And we can rest in Your faithfulness:

If You saved us when we were Your enemies, what won't You do for us now that we're Your children, Your sons?

There is nothing You won't do for us!

So may we remember that when difficult times come, when we face some kind of persecution or attack from those who don't believe in You; or when we just face the trials of life, like health issues...ultimately, it comes from You to test us and to strengthen our faith.

(**ineluctable*-unable to be resisted or avoided; inescapable)

But You're reliable, and nothing touches us that isn't designed by the all-loving God. Thank you, Father. May we trust in You and praise You more, Father.

Now, we say to ourselves,

The LORD bless you and keep you;

The LORD make His face shine on you,

And be gracious to you;

The LORD lift up His countenance on you,

And give you peace.

In Christ's name,

Amen.

(End of Audio)