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Sermon Notes

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## **Christ Greater Than Angels, Part I**

### **Hebrews 1:4-14**

I wonder what would happen to our morning worship if God opened our eyes and showed us the invisible spiritual realms around us. If we could see the angels battling the demons in this very space around our heads, perhaps all of us would be rendered powerless, breathless, panting on the ground from terror and amazement.

The Prophet Daniel had a vision of a heavenly warrior that left him on the ground unable to breathe. He was standing on the banks of the Tigris River, when suddenly an awesome being came and stood before him. This messenger was a radiant being dressed in linen with a golden belt around his waist:

***Daniel 10:6 His body was like chrysolite, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude.***

The men with Daniel could not see the messenger, but they were so terrified that they ran and hid themselves from an invisible presence. Daniel himself fell to the ground as if in a deep sleep... he was breathless, trembling violently, and though the messenger commanded him to stand, he could not do so... he had literally no strength whatsoever in his legs.

***Daniel 10:16-17 "I am overcome with anguish because of the vision, my lord, and I am helpless. <sup>17</sup> How can I, your servant, talk with you, my lord? My strength is gone and I can hardly breathe."***

This awesome being was... an angel. If you saw such a being, you would be tempted to fall on the ground in abject fear and worship this exalted being. The Apostle John did precisely that not once but TWICE in the Book of Revelation: in Revelation 19 and again in Revelation 22. Both times, the angel told John the same thing:

***Revelation 22:9 "Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers the prophets and of all who keep the words of this book. Worship God!"***

Angels are "fellow servants" with us... but they are glorious, holy, heavenly beings... and were we not better instructed, we would worship them if we could see them.

But the holy angels all would instruct us the same way... WORSHIP Christ... for Jesus is immeasurably greater than any angel.

In Hebrews 1, the author's main point is to teach us that Christ is infinitely greater than all angels

## I. Why Does This Passage Exist?

### A. The Overall Purpose of Hebrews

1. Writing to Jewish people who had made some initial profession of faith in Christ
2. Now these Jewish Christians were under great pressure and persecution from unbelieving Jews, and many were being tempted to revert to Old Covenant Judaism
3. Some had forsaken Christian worship and were going back to Judaism
4. In so doing, they were repudiating Christ as Messiah... trampling Him under foot to go back to safety and comfort in their old way of life
5. The author writes Hebrews as a letter or severe warning to these Jews NOT to forsake Christ and the New Covenant, NOT to apostasize, and so to lose their souls
6. His strategy: to declare right from the beginning the greatness of Christ so they will not forsake Him
7. **A superior Mediator—Christ—brings a superior Covenant—the New Covenant—resulting in a superior life... the Christian life of forgiveness and fruitfulness to God**

### B. How Hebrews 1:1-3 Connects with Hebrews 1:4-14

1. Last week, we saw the marvelous opening words, declaring the deity of Christ and His office as final prophet, final priest, final King of the Jews

*Hebrews 1:1-3 In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, <sup>2</sup> but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. <sup>3</sup> The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.*

2. This week, the author extends these initial concepts and begins comparing Christ to angels

*Hebrews 1:4 So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.*

3. The verse shows the clear link with verses 1-3... because Christ is God's final word to the human race, because He is God's Son, because He perfectly radiates with the glory of God and is the exact representation of His nature, because He provided purification for sins and sat down at the right hand of God in heaven, because of all this, He is SUPERIOR TO THE ANGELS...
4. Why specifically does the author want to show the superiority of Christ to the angels? Because it was the angels that brought the Old Covenant to the Jews through Moses... since Christ is the mediator of the New Covenant, he is showing the superiority of Christ and of the New Covenant

#### C. Three Goals of the Author

1. To exalt Christ as the God-Man and promote worship and obedience
2. To exalt the New Covenant (Christianity) over the Old Covenant (Judaism)
3. To exalt Christ as superior to the angels, so the people will not worship angels but will realize the greatness of Christ by comparison

## II. Who Are Angels, and What Do they Do?

***Hebrews 1:4 So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.***

#### A. Christ Compared with Angels

1. Verse 4: a direct comparison... Christ is as much superior to the angels as the name He inherited is superior to theirs
2. Verse 5: for to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son...?"
3. Verse 6: the angels are commanded to worship the Son
4. Verses 7 and 14 establish the angels as merely servants of God, doing His bidding

***Hebrews 1:7 In speaking of the angels he says, "He makes his angels winds, his servants flames of fire."***

5. Verse 7-8 therefore shows a direct comparison between angels and Christ

***Hebrews 1:7-8 In speaking of the angels he says, "He makes his angels winds, his servants flames of fire." <sup>8</sup>But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last forever and ever***

6. Vs. 9 says God set Jesus above His companions... that in context probably refers again to Christ's superiority to angels

7. Finally, verses 13-14 show again a direct comparison between Christ and the angels

***Hebrews 1:13-14 To which of the angels did God ever say, "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet"? <sup>14</sup> Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?***

8. In summary: the author is clearly comparing Christ to angels and is seeking to prove the overwhelming superiority of Christ to angels

#### B. Who Are Angels?

1. Created beings
2. Spiritual in nature... without flesh and bones
3. Able to take visible form, sometimes in human form
4. Sometimes appearing supernaturally
5. Highly intelligent, with powerful emotions
6. Do not marry, unable to procreate
7. Do not age, die or get annihilated
8. Fixed number
9. Huge number
10. Large number of angels rebelled with Satan and became demons
11. Highly organized... different classes and types of angels
12. More powerful than humans
13. Able to move with astonishing speed

#### C. What Do they Do?

1. Created especially to serve God and His people
2. Both spectators and participants in Redemptive History
3. Observers in Revelation of the events on earth
4. Dispatched by God to pour out wrath or rescue believers or do other key tasks

5. Especially involved in the life of Christ... celebrating at the time of His birth, ministering to Him in His humiliation (fasting in the desert, suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane); announcing Christ's resurrection to the women and the apostles

#### D. How Are they Especially Relevant to Hebrews?

1. Because the Old Covenant was mediated to the Jews BY ANGELS

- a. Stephen's speech to the Sanhedrin

***Acts 7:53 you who have received the law that was put into effect through angels but have not obeyed it."***

- b. Paul's message to the Galatians

***Galatians 3:19 The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator.***

- c. The author to Hebrews openly says it in chapter 2

***Hebrews 2:2-3 if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, <sup>3</sup> how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation... was first announced by the Lord***

How? Perhaps on Mount Sinai, when Moses was on the Mount receiving the Ten Commandments from God, it was brought to him by angels. Perhaps the rest of the Old Covenant Law was brought to Moses' mind in a way similar to the Book of Revelation coming to the Apostle John's mind:

***Revelation 1:1 The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John***

So why is it important to prove that Jesus is greater than angels??

- 1. Jesus, the greater messenger, brings us a greater covenant**

#### II. Christ Greater Because of His Name

***<sup>ESV</sup> Hebrews 1:4 having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.***

##### A. What's In a Name?

Romeo Montague and Juliet Capulet meet and fall in love in Shakespeare's lyrical tale of "star-cross'd" lovers. They are doomed from the start as members of two warring families. Here Juliet tells Romeo that a name is an artificial and meaningless convention, and that she loves the person who is called "Montague", not the Montague name and not the Montague family. Romeo, out of his passion for Juliet, rejects his family name and vows

**Juliet:**

"What's in a name? That which we call a rose  
By any other name would smell as sweet."

1. But it's not so simple, is it? When we come to theology and the person of God, the name is EVERYTHING!!
2. In the Hebrew mindset, a name represented a person... His attributes, His nature, His position, His achievements

***Proverbs 22:1 A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold.***

3. So God puts everything into making a name for Himself!!

***Daniel 9:15 "Now, O Lord our God, who brought your people out of Egypt with a mighty hand and who made for yourself a name that endures to this day***

4. AND God links our salvation to calling upon that name

***Romans 10:13 "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."***

#### B. Christ's Name Is Greater Than That of Angels

1. What name is that? SON OF GOD!!!

***Hebrews 1:4-5 So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs. <sup>5</sup> For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father"? Or again, "I will be his Father, and he will be my Son"?***

2. Christ's name "SON OF GOD" perfectly sums up His transcendent greatness
3. AND He is as much exalted over the angels as His name is exalted over theirs
  - a. "Angel" means "messenger"... one sent with a message
  - b. Angels are merely servants in God's kingdom
  - c. Christ is the HEIR, the Son of the King, who inherits all of God's Kingdom
4. So the author speaks of Christ INHERITING this name... the name "Son of God" is something He inherited from His heavenly Father

#### C. Christ's Name is the Greatest Name in History

Philippians 2:7-8... because Jesus served God and humbled Himself and was willing to die on a cross to obey His father,

***Philippians 2:9-11 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.***

Jesus' GREAT NAME—SON OF GOD—is infinitely ABOVE that of all created beings

The author asks a rhetorical question:

***“For to which of the angels did God ever say, ‘You are my Son, today I have begotten you?’”***

The answer clearly is NONE!!! There are more than 100 million angels, and none of them were begotten as the Son of God.

Furthermore, there are some angels that are greater than others... not all angels are equal in glory... there are archangels like Michael, who is called in Daniel 10:13

***“one of the chief princes”***... implying there are more than one of these ruler angels...

***To which of even the highest order of angels did God ever say, “You are my son...”***

Not one of the angels has ever been called the “Son of God!”

#### D. The Eternally Begotten Son of God

1. The mystery of Godliness is GREAT!!
2. Christ has eternally existed as God, and Hebrews teaches quite plainly that Jesus NEVER changes

***Vs. 13 “You remain the same and your years will never end.”***

***Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.***

3. And our creed teaches that forever He has been begotten as God the Son

### ***The Nicene Creed***

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.

Sometimes the translation reads “Eternally begotten of the Father”

The word “begotten” comes from the Greek word “monogenes”, translated “only begotten”

<sup>NAU</sup> **John 1:14 ¶ And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.**

The concept is that Jesus has eternally been begotten of the Father

E. BUT TODAY He was Begotten

**Hebrews 1:5 ¶ For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you"?**

1. The idea in verse 5 is that, at a specific moment in time, God the Father acted in such a way to DECLARE Jesus as His Son, which He had been from eternity past
2. I believe that the word TODAY implies a decisive moment in Redemptive History in which Jesus is DECLARED to be the begotten Son of the Father

**To which of the angels did God ever SAY...**

3. I believe it refers to the INCARNATION... the fact that Jesus was fully God but also fully man... and as fully man, He needed a Father...
4. Mary, His mother, was fully human, and from her Jesus received His human nature... but the other 23 chromosomes that normally would have come from a human father to make the fertilized egg that grew in her womb were miraculously supplied by God the Father

**Luke 1:34-35 Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" <sup>35</sup> The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.**

5. Jesus became the Son of the Father in a mysterious and powerful way when He was conceived in the Virgin's womb
6. The second quote emphasizes this same truth:

**Vs. 5 Or again, "I will be his Father, and he will be my Son"?**

- a. This is from the covenant made to David in 2 Samuel 7:14
- b. God promised David that his own descendent, the Son of David, would sit on a throne forever
- c. The only way that could happen was through the miracle of the Incarnation... the Son of God and the Son of David were the same person
7. No angel ever had this honor!!

8. Amazingly, though, the Apostle Paul sees the fulfillment of this quote at the RESURRECTION of Jesus!!

***Acts 13:32-33 "We tell you the good news: What God promised our fathers<sup>33</sup> he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm: "'You are my Son; today I have become your Father.'***

9. The Sonship of Christ was DECLARED to all the world at BOTH the incarnation (His birth by the Virgin Mary) and at the resurrection
10. Both of them are related to Jesus having a human body!!! The declaration of Sonship is tied to Jesus' humanity!

#### IV. Christ Greater Because He Is Worshiped

***Hebrews 1:6 And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him."***

##### A. God the Father Commands the Angels

1. The angels, we learn in the next verse, are merely servants... glorious, powerful servants, but servants nonetheless
2. When God the Father commands them to do something, they must obey Him
3. Here, God the Father commands ALL OF HIS ANGELS TO WORSHIP THE SON
4. The word used here is "FIRSTBORN"... Greek is "prototokos"

***Colossians 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.***

***Colossians 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.***

- a. It means firstborn in a patriarchal family... having the position of HEIR
- b. It usually meant the first son to be born, but not always
- c. Jacob was given rights of the firstborn over Esau, even though Esau was born first
- d. Thus Jesus holds the position of preeminence in strength, dignity, power in the family of God

##### B. The Command to Worship

1. Worship is a precious commodity that is reserved ONLY FOR GOD HIMSELF

*Exodus 20:2-5 I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. <sup>3</sup> ¶ "You shall have no other gods before me. <sup>4</sup> ¶ "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. <sup>5</sup> You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God*

*Isaiah 42:8 "I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols.*

*Matthew 4:10 Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"*

2. But here, amazingly, God the Father actually commands His angels to worship His Son

3. And note this is universal: **Let ALL God's angels worship Him!!!**

C. What is the TIMING of this Command to Worship the Son?

*NIV Hebrews 1:6 And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him."*

*<sup>NASB</sup> Hebrews 1:6 And when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says, "AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM."*

1. The tricky part is the word "again"

2. In this first reading, the command for all of God's angels to worship God's firstborn came when He brought Jesus into the world... that is, at his BIRTH

3. Which it seems they did in Luke 2; after the glorious angel had described to the shepherds the significance of the birth of Jesus

*Luke 2:8-14 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."*

4. BUT in all honesty, if you look closely at it, they didn't overtly worship the SON but the FATHER at that time

5. The NASB puts the word "again" in this sense... when God AGAIN (i.e. FOR THE SECOND TIME) brings His Son into the world, He will command the angels to worship Him

6. That is at the SECOND COMING of Christ

*Matthew 25:31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory.*

7. Revelation 5: the glory of the Lamb in taking the title deed to the earth

***Revelation 5:11-12 Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. <sup>12</sup> In a loud voice they sang: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!"***

The drama of Redemptive History is consummated in the finished work of Christ at the cross and in His resurrection

This is the consummation of the Sonship of Christ!!!

## V. Christ Greater Because of His Nature

***Hebrews 1:7 In speaking of the angels he says, "He makes his angels winds, his servants flames of fire."***

A. Angels are Created Beings, Christ is the Creator

***He MAKES His angels winds...***

The word refers to creation and to appointment into their roles

Here I first emphasize their NATURE... **Creatures**; then their OFFICE: **Servants**

A.W. Tozer, The Knowledge of the Holy:

"Forever God stands apart, in light unapproachable. He is as high above an archangel as above a caterpillar, for the gulf that separates the archangel from the caterpillar is but finite, while the gulf between God and the archangel is infinite. The caterpillar and the archangel, though far removed from each other in the scale of created things, are nevertheless one in that they are alike created. They both belong in the category of that which-is-not-God and are separated from God by infinitude itself."

Christ is greater than angels because He is God the Son, and they are NOT!!!

1. Angels, as created beings, are infinitely below Christ as Creator
2. Therefore it also speaks of God's ownership: ***"He makes HIS angels winds..."***
3. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit invented and crafted each of the 100 million or more angels, each of them unique
4. So also God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit SUSTAINS each of these angels... specifically God sustains angels BY THE POWER of Christ

***Hebrews 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.***

5. Two angels have names in the bible: Gabriel and Michael... each with specific responsibilities

***Luke 1:19 "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God***

***Daniel 12:1 "At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise.***

- a. it would be unhelpful speculation to go beyond this to posit other possible angelic names as others have
- b. In Jesus' time, the sect of the Essenes vowed to maintain and propagate each of the secret names of the angels
- c. Catholic theology accepts the apocryphal book of Tobit in which another angel is named—Raphael
- d. cults: Book of Mormon given by the angel Moroni
- e. Present-day: One awful website gives dozens of angel names with astonishing extra statements about what this or that angel did... one angel (with a specific name which I shall not utter here) was believed to have created the tree of life, another angel (with a specific name which I shall not utter here) is specifically tasked with the responsibility of helping people to love themselves so they can love others... this heretical website heads almost toward a pantheon of angels with god-like characteristics

***"Calling an Angel's Name is asking this angelic energy to make itself known to you ."***

- f. Remember Paul's warning against the worship of angels
6. HOWEVER: the fact that two angels are named give us a sense of the uniqueness of every angel... all 100 million!
7. Christ created each of those unique angels, with their unique attributes and unique roles

B. Angels are Servants, Christ is the Ruler

***Hebrews 1:7 In speaking of the angels he says, "He makes his angels winds, his servants flames of fire."***

***Hebrews 1:14 Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?***

1. Though angels have power and are given responsibilities, Christ is ruler over all
2. Hierarchy of angels is a biblical concept
  - a. Some hierarchy is understood from the word “archangel” used of Michael in Jude 9... the word literally means “ruler angel”
  - b. So also we must glean some hierarchical ordering in these words:

***Colossians 1:16 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.***

3. In any case, the point in Hebrews 1:7, 14 is that angels are CREATED BEINGS and SERVANTS, doing the will of God
4. Christ is the ruler over the whole of it, infinitely above any angel
5. The clear contrast is established when you put verse 7 and 8 together:

***Hebrews 1:7-8 In speaking of the angels he says, "He makes his angels winds, his servants flames of fire." <sup>8</sup>But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom.***

6. In verse 14, the author makes it plain that a major purpose of angels is man-centered, specifically directed toward the elect, the church of Jesus Christ

***Hebrews 1:14 Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?***

- a. By bringing the scripture to Moses at Sinai and to John in Revelation (and maybe at other times too), angels have served the church
- b. By protecting the people of God from Satanic attacks (as Michael clearly does in Daniel 12:1), angels have served the church
- c. By warring against Satan generally, defeating his demonic army, casting him down from heaven, and subsequently hindering his actions, as the archangel Michael did in Revelation 12, angels have served the church
- d. By bringing messages, revelations, dreams, answers to prayer as angels did for Daniel, Joseph, Mary, Peter, Philip and others, angels have served the church
- e. By providing food and drink for suffering, exhausted servants like Elijah out in the desert, angels have served the church

- f. By enabling the apostle Peter to escape prison when King Herod wanted to kill him, angels have served the church
- g. By striking down persecutors like the evil King Herod who was about to execute the apostle Peter—Acts 12 says an angel struck Herod down and he was eaten by worms and died
- h. In the future, when angels are dispatched to pour out the wrath of God described in Revelation, angels will serve the church
- i. When Christ comes in His glory and all the angels will be with Him, He will send out His angels to collect the elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other... the RAPTURE... then angels will serve the church
- j. When Christ the Judge condemns the goats at Judgment Day, the angels will be dispatched to tie them hand and foot and cast them into the lake of fire... the angels will thus weed out of Christ's Kingdom all those who are wicked... then the angels will serve the church

***Hebrews 1:14 Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?***

BUT Christ is the one who COMMANDS them to do all these things

C. Angels are Winds and Fire, Christ is God

***Hebrews 1:7 In speaking of the angels he says, "He makes his angels winds, his servants flames of fire."***

- 1. Angels are likened to winds and fire... very spiritual things in this physical world
  - a. You can't see wind, or touch it or grasp it, so it is like a spirit... sometimes the work of the Holy Spirit is likened to the movement of the wind

***John 3:8 The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."***

- b. In fact the Hebrew word for "spirit" and for "wind" is the SAME word!
- c. The original quotation from Psalm 104 could read like this

***Psalm 104:4 "He makes His angels SPIRITS..."***

- d. Angels are pure spirit... able to move like the wind, wherever God wants them to go

- e. The wind is frequently seen to be the hidden power of God to influence history, a transformation worked by the hidden power of God like the wind in a ship's sails, or the removal of the waters of Noah's flood, or bringing locusts to destroy Egypt, or removing the locusts after Pharaoh repented, or cutting a path in the Red Sea for the Israelites to cross on dry ground, or bringing quail for the people to eat, or changing a human heart
- f. Wind thus relates to God's control over the hidden forces of nature... the WEATHER...
- g. Therefore the angels are sometimes seen to be controlling weather in the book of Revelation

***Revelation 7:1 After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree.***

- h. God uses angels to do amazing, hidden, spiritual things to control events of the world

2. Angels are also likened to "flames of fire"

- a. Have you ever sat at a campsite and watched a roaring campfire for entertainment? Or on Christmas night looked at the fire in the fireplace and studied it for any length of time?
- b. Fire itself seems spiritual... a dancing flame, sizzling, emitting heat and light, moving with unseen air currents, shaped by gravity into a characteristic point at the top... yellow or red or blue at different parts of the flame...
- c. Fire is notoriously difficult to define... one scientist gives us this:

"Fire is the rapid combination of oxygen with fuel in the presence of heat, typically characterized by flame, a body of incandescent gas that contains and sustains the reaction and emits light and heat."

- d. Flame: a body of glowing gas... dancing and spiritual; so is an angel in God's sight
- e. Seraphim = "burning ones"... the Hebrew verb "seraph" = to burn; the awesome angels surrounding the throne are burning with glory, radiant beings

3. This is the nature of angels... like winds, like flames of fire... they are pure spiritual beings ready to be sent by Christ into the world to bring blessing or wreak judgment

4. BUT Christ is of a higher nature...

“God from God, light from light, very God from very God”... “begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father...”

***Hebrews 1:3 the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being***

Next week:

VI. Christ Greater Because of His Throne

VII. Christ Greater Because of His Anointing

VIII. Christ Greater Because of His Rule over Creation

IX. Christ Greater Because of His Destiny

X. Applications

A. Come to Christ... the Perfect Savior!!

1. This extended meditation on the greatness of Christ is meant to provoke worship and obedience to Him
2. Angels are awesome beings... so vastly more powerful than we are that all of us would be overcome with terror in the presence of the lowliest of these heavenly messengers... we might even be tempted to worship one if we saw him
3. Christ is infinitely greater than all of them
4. This is the very one whom God the Father sent into the world to die on the cross for our sins
5. His blood is infinitely powerful in the conquering of sin
6. Trust in Him... worship Him... obey Him!!!

B. Understand the Author's point

1. The angels brought the Old Covenant and it was serious to violate it

***Hebrews 2:1-3 We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. <sup>2</sup> For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, <sup>3</sup> how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation?***

2. How much worse is it not to believe in Christ? Not to accept the blessings of the New Covenant?

3. Stay with Christ!!! Follow the New Covenant!!! Keep living the Christian life, attending Christian worship, fighting indwelling sin by the power of the Holy Spirit
4. Don't "drift away" from Christ... don't IGNORE such a great salvation
5. Realize that the salvation is great because Jesus Christ is at the center of it

#### C. Worship Christ for His Infinite Greatness

1. Hebrews 1 is written above all to promote worship for Christ
2. It is of the essence of the Christian life to cast aside all burdens and throw yourself into an ocean of praise and worship directed toward Christ
3. Part of the Lord's Prayer: "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven"
4. God the Father has commanded "Let all God's angels worship Him"
5. If all God's angels worship Him, how great must Christ be?

#### D. Meditate on the Sonship of Christ

1. "You are my Son, today I have begotten you"
2. Understand the connection to Christ's existence as a HUMAN BEING
3. Forever Christ has been God, but at a certain moment in time, He became a man (conceived in Mary's womb); and of that moment, God says "You are my Son, today I have begotten you"; and also at His resurrection, when He took up forever a resurrection body, the statement is made again by God the Father: "You are my Son, today I have begotten you."
4. Jesus will be forever the Son of Man because He is begotten by the Father
5. Therefore, Christ is fully human and fit to be your savior AND your merciful High Priest

***Hebrews 4:15-16 we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are - yet was without sin. <sup>16</sup> Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.***