

**Hebrews 1: 4-7; “Again He Brings the Firstborn”, A Sermon for the Christmas Season,  
Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024,  
in the Morning Worship Service.**

When our Lord Jesus Christ came into this world He was not taken notice of by many people on that night of His birth. Indeed no one knew or understood, except those to whom it was revealed. There were, on that night, certain poor shepherds who were keeping their flocks. And then there was Mary and Joseph. It was the greatest event which the world had ever seen; the entrance of the Son of God into the world; God made manifest in the flesh, and just a few understood. But then, you and I should understand, that the greatest events which the world has ever seen, have often come with little notice from the majority of the people in the world. This is because the greatest events that are done in this world are all done by God. At this time we want to think 1<sup>st</sup> of all – About the more excellent name which Jesus has. (verses 3 and 4) And then, 2<sup>nd</sup> – We want to think about the Father’s actually bringing again the firstborn into the world. (verses 5 and 6) It is my hope that as I relate these things, each of us will truly see the Person and the Work of our Lord Jesus Christ in a greater, more meaningful way, as a result of this message.

**1<sup>st</sup> of all – We want to think about the more excellent name which Jesus has.**

Jesus, the Son of God, had the highest of positions before His Incarnation. But in assuming our nature, except without sin, He became the firstborn of the New Creation. He took the position of a servant in doing so. He was already the firstborn in the sense that He was the only-begotten of the Father. He was of the same essence with Him. The angels are sons of God, and they are servants of God. But they are not sons in the same exalted way that the Logos, the eternal Word of God was, before His Incarnation. They were created; He was uncreated. He was brought forth from the Father in eternity past. He was united to human nature in Mary’s womb in a special work of the creation of His human nature.

The Lord Jesus Christ in His pre-incarnate state was “the firstborn of all creation.” Colossians 1, verse 15 says – “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.” “For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers.” “All things were created through Him and for Him.” And when He came into the world, all the angels of God worshiped Him. When He was raised from the dead, it says in Colossians 1, verse 18– “And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the pre-eminence.”

So, I hope that you can see that the Lord Jesus Christ is not only the firstborn of all creation. He is also the firstborn from the dead; the firstborn of all the redeemed; in that it is in Him and through His resurrection from the dead, that we as His redeemed people, find our glorious resurrection. These are 2 different descriptions of Christ as the firstborn, here in Colossians. And we will need to remember them when we come to our next point. But look now, at Paul’s application of this truth, in relation to angels. Yes, Jesus Christ was made for a little while lower than the angels.

Jesus Christ has the preeminence over angels because of His superiority of Being; He is God the Son. He now has the preeminence in honor over the angels, because He humbled Himself to take upon Himself a human nature; to actually become for a little while lower than the angels, that He might redeem fallen sinful men to God His Father. And now, He has the preeminence over the angels because He has by this means obtained a more excellent name in the sight of God than they. Angels are God’s servants, but Christ became the ultimate servant. He is Lord of lords and King of kings and King of angels as well. But He has, by inheritance, obtained a more excellent name than the angels.

This inheritance He has by the Father’s appointment to it. He was brought forth by the Father as His only begotten, from all eternity. And then it is His inheritance, also, by the right of redemption which He has in relation to His being the Redeemer of all of God’s elect people; all those for whom He came into the world to save; all those whom He suffered and died for, to bring them to eternal glory.

**2<sup>nd</sup> – We want to think more about the Father’s actually bringing again the firstborn into the world.** (verses 5 and 6)

“For to which of the angels did He ever say: ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You?’” “And again: ‘I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son?’” “But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: ‘Let all the angels of God worship Him.’” Commentators differ widely over what this “bringing the firstborn into the world” relates to. Many think that it relates to the time of Christ’s resurrection from the dead, or even His return in judgment at the end of the world. But I believe we have every warrant for believing that it refers first and foremostly to the Father’s bringing Christ into the world in His Incarnation.

The real reason for the confusion over this verse is the use of the word “again” by the Apostle. “When He again brings the firstborn into the world....” If this refers to Christ’s first coming into the world; then why does the Apostle say that there was another time before that, when the “firstborn” came into the world? I believe that the Father’s again bringing the firstborn into the world in verse 6 relates to all that we have already studied concerning verses 1-5. Let’s begin with the first 3 verses. God spoke the Incarnation when He and the Holy Spirit placed the Son of God; fully God and fully man, in the womb of the Virgin Mary.

He then became the Son of Man at that point, in His Incarnation. But we have seen in our previous studies that He was “brought forth”, or “begotten”, as God the Son long before that. Surely at His birth, the Lord Jesus was the “brightness of His Father’s glory”. I am not sure, that at this point in the analysis of the text, whether we remember that God the Son was begotten by the Father before time began. Even before His incarnation He was “the Brightness of His Father’s Glory”. He was “brought forth” as “the Son” from all eternity. He was even then, the One “through whom the worlds were made.” The confusion is furthered by verse 5, where it says, “You are My Son, today I have begotten You.”

This seems definitely to refer back to Christ’s having finished the work of our redemption at the cross, and His having by Himself purged our sins. He was then raised from the dead and ascended to heaven where He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. He was declared at that time to be “the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.” (Romans 1, verse 4) So it might seem natural then, to conclude that verse 6 refers to the resurrection of our Lord instead of His Incarnation. Indeed this seems to be confirmed also by Acts Chapter 13, verse 32, where the Apostle Paul is preaching to the people at Antioch Pisidia and he says to them – “And we declare to you glad tidings – that the promise which was made to the fathers.” “God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus.” “As it is also written in the second Psalm: ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You.’”

This, to some, appears to be decisive in how we should view verse 6 of our study this morning. There is here the linking of the word quoted by the apostle in our text, in verse 5, with Christ’s resurrection directly. But I am not convinced that this is the final word on the subject. We need to remember that Christ’s resurrection was the culmination of all that God the Father intended to do through Christ in the matter of redemption. But it was not where it all began. It began at the Incarnation, and yes, even before that, in the transaction of the Covenant of Redemption, in eternity past, between the Father and the Son in relation to the eternal decrees of God.

The Apostle Paul’s whole point here in Hebrews 1 is to set before the Hebrew people the superiority of Christ to the angels. Their law had been mediated to them by the agency of angels which God employed. Paul knew that they might be tempted to hold on to the law and not go on to find Christ by faith, or to hold to Him as their only Savior and Lord. They might be tempted to think that the eternal Son was only one of the greatest of the created angels. And so, the apostle in verses 1-4 speaks of how it was, that the Father spoke the Incarnation, and how the One who had been begotten of the Father in eternity past, became flesh and purged our sins by the sacrifice of Himself as a Man.

He shows them then that Christ was raised from the dead and He is now at the right hand of God. And so he establishes the superiority of Christ over the angels, not primarily from Christ’s work in purging us from our sins, and His resurrection from the dead, but from His nature and His Person, as

God Himself. It is not as though the resurrection and session of Christ can ever be separated from all that we are speaking of. It is another proof that the apostle is using. But, as we think about verses 4 and 5, we need to remember that it was not to the angels in heaven that God the Father had assigned this work of redeeming His elect to. It was to His only-begotten Son, who was begotten in eternity past.

Verses 1-6 of Psalm 2 are intended to show everyone that this plotting and opposing of God's plans and purposes was a vain thing. Verse 4 says, "He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall hold them in derision." "Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, and distress them in His deep displeasure: Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion." Watch this now – "I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You.'" "Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession." Having read this to you, I hope that you now can see the truth of the matter.

Christ was declaring the decree; that declaration by the Father, which had been made in eternity past, when God spoke and said to Him as God the Son, "Today I have begotten You." That was in the "day" of eternity past. However, the more immediate references are related to the events here mentioned. That is, to the crucifixion, the resurrection, and God the Father's establishing His Christ on His holy hill of Zion, the Church. All of these show us the outworking and the final result of God's having spoken this decree. Acts Chapter 13 declares the outcome of Christ's being brought into the world in His Incarnation. He finished the work which the Father had assigned Him to do; to fulfill the law and to accomplish the work of redeeming a people. He suffered, bled, and died. He was raised from the dead. And then having finished that work, Christ has sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

And He has seen the fulfillment of these words in Psalm 2, of His being able to ask His Father for the nations as His inheritance. His asking this was indeed the culmination of all the Father's plans which were made in eternity past before the foundation of the world, as regards Christ the Son Himself. The rest of the Psalm speaks of how Christ would rule over the nations, and how His rule would come to be established over kings of nations. Perhaps it is true, then, that the Father commanded at that time, that all the angels of God in heaven, worship Him. That is, when the Lord Jesus came into heaven to sit where He now is, at the right hand of the Father. That conclusion should not seem out of place to us at all.

But let's think about this term firstborn, when it says – "He brings the firstborn into the world". The firstborn is a title of privilege and dignity which in this particular case only belongs to God's Son, He who was the only One begotten by Him in eternity past. When the angels were created, God the Son was the One whom they were created by, and for. In Job Chapter 38, when the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, He said to Job in verse 4 – "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?" "Tell Me, if you have understanding." "Who determined its measurements?" "Surely you know!" "Or who stretched the line upon it?" "To what were its foundations fastened?" "Or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"

Here the angels are called "morning stars" and "the sons of God". But they are none of them to be confused with the Son of God. They were there at the creation of the world when God the Father, through His Son, created this world and all things in it. The angels rejoiced at this first "bringing of the firstborn into the world; the only-begotten Son of God." He was their King even then. He was there for them to see and to worship and to adore in the spiritual realm where the angels dwell on high. Daniel Whedon, the commentator says that Christ was called the firstborn, the First-Begotten – Because *He* was eternally begotten."

He says – "For even if God has been eternally engaged in creating, still the Son is in order of nature first." "And when it says, the Son is called First-Begotten, it is implied both that His being begotten is prior in order and superior in nature; for creation and formation are in a lower sense figured as generation." "And it is as First-Begotten that He is, by the divine primogeniture, (that He is made by the Father) heir." (Hebrews 1: 2)" So, let us see that our Lord Jesus Christ is the Firstborn of every creature. (Colossians 1: 18 and Revelation 1: 5) "Here the term stands alone, and it alludes to the day,

that “day” primordially, (in order from before the foundation of the world), it is said – “Today have I begotten Thee”, as God manifest, prior to and above all created things.” (end of quote) But you will say to me – How is the pre-incarnate Son brought into the world at this time of the creation of the world? Well, I think that He was brought into the world, both in relation to His work at the creation, as I have said. And also in relation to the first man Adam’s sin and fall from his original righteousness.

It says in Genesis Chapter 3, verse 8 – “And they (Adam and Eve after they ate of the fruit and sinned) heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.” This was a physical appearance because they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden. This, I believe, was the Father bringing Him forth, or sending Him into the world in the form a Theophany. In doing this, He would be introducing His Son to mankind, introducing Him to Adam and Eve, because they were the parents of all mankind.

Here, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Person of the Divine Trinity temporarily assumed human form, “walking in the garden in the cool of the day”, coming to deal firmly but gently with them over the sins which they had committed. Yes, He did come to render judgments, and He did render them. But He also came to give Adam and Eve the promise of His own Incarnation. Genesis 3: 15 – “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.” I think that we need to see that it was the Logos, the very Word of God who was walking in the cool of the day in the garden at that time. It was actually “the voice of the Lord God”, our Lord Jesus in Pre-Incarnate form. He was the One who was speaking there.

And this is what the word “again” relates to. Looking back, as the apostle relates it in Hebrews 1: 6: “But when He again brings the firstborn into the world....” It relates to the Father who brought (or sent) the firstborn into the world. He sent Him into the garden in this Pre-Incarnate form to bring to our first parents the promise of His future first Coming and His Incarnation. And in Micah chapter 5, verse 2 Micah speaks of His coming forth – “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose going forth are from old, from everlasting.”

And so, this then, was when the Father actually did bring His firstborn into the world in the Incarnation, He says, “Let all the angels of God worship Him.” To conclude, this was exactly what happened on the night in which Jesus was born. Luke 2: 13 – “And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace goodwill toward men!” God the Father, on the night in which the Lord Jesus came into this world, commanded that all the angels of God worship Him. It was commanded of them because they surely did not understand this; the greatest of mysteries – How God could take on human flesh and become a man?

How could He grow up to redeem the fallen race of men? When Lucifer had rebelled and had taken so many angels with him, to oppose God and His purposes of salvation, God did not spare them. Lucifer’s fellow angels were cast down to hell, and God delivered them to chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment. Why should men be any different, the holy angels thought? The Apostle Peter writes differently of the holy angels in 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 1: 10. “Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.”

“To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven.” “These are things which the angels long to look into.” God made his angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire. Their burning spirits are designed to burn for the glory of their great King – our Lord Jesus Christ. They do not seek after their own glory, but Christ’s. They are zealous to worship Him and to do His bidding. We must ask ourselves this day, if this is what we are zealous to do as well.

