

# Christ Revealed in the Old Testament

*The Book of Hebrews*

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**Bible Text:** Hebrews 1:5-14  
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Well, at our evening services we've been proceeding through the first chapter in this most wonderful epistle to the Hebrews and this evening is our last sermon, it must be the fifth now, in chapter 1 and so we take our leave from this mighty chapter which has so much really by way of teaching, teaching about our Lord Jesus Christ. And so tonight the sermon title is "Christ Revealed in the Old Testament." Christ revealed in the Old Testament and we read there those chapters, chapter 1, verses 5 to 14, where in effect were you to subtract the quotations from the Old Testament from that passage, there would be a very shorter chapter 1 of Hebrews because the writer is at pains to show that he's there in the Old Testament, and that the things that are spoken there in the Old Testament all have been fulfilled, come true in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Really this whole lesson is a sustained argument to prove the supremacy and therefore the sufficiency of Christ to be our Savior, entirely, totally without reliance on anything, anyone else because what was happening, well, the people were beginning to rely on other things, beginning to believe that the Aaronic high priesthood which belonged to the old covenant, to the law properly speaking, that this was needed to somehow supplement the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, this writer will have none of it and he's going to remonstrate at times very strongly with the people that were making these mistakes.

So in the first three verses from verse 4 as well, he established the person of Christ, establishes his divinity and therefore the work that proceeds from his divinity, the work of purging us from our sins, a work that only could be accomplished if the person doing that work was divine as well as human, and so that is what he has been at pains to establish. Then last week we saw that in amongst this the people of that day were beginning to think that they needed the kind of intermediary work of angels, that angels were there to sort of give them a leg up into holy understanding and to gain the favor of God. And we saw the place exalted, elevated place of angels and the great work that they do for those who will inherit salvation. There was the question that the writer finishes with in verse 14 speaking of angels, well, this is what they're there to do, not to be worshiped, not to be regarded almost on a par with the Lord Jesus Christ. No, they are ministering spirits and they're sent to help those who will inherit salvation. So there is the place of angels as we saw last week.

Well, now my first heading: answering the case from Scripture. Answering the case from Scripture. Here the writer is trying to show that there is the supremacy of Christ contrasting him with the angels and the angels are always there with us, this is their particular passage, as it were, where the writer is comparing the ministry of angels and the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ and by contrast and comparison and he brings the case to the supremacy of Christ and therefore his sufficiency from the Old Testament. That's significant because, as I've said, these believers were beginning to resurrect the old covenant, beginning to go back to the old priesthood of Aaron, beginning to think there might be some value in all those animal sacrifices after all. And so they were, as it were, eclipsing the place of Christ, setting him aside and now more center stage were coming sacrifices, and so the writer is going to show that if we're looking at the Old Testament and we're looking at the law, if we think we understand that, then let's just look and see what the Old Testament has to say about the Son of God in comparison to the angels, and so this is what he is doing here, answering the case for Christ's divinity, therefore supremacy from the Old Testament using what they and now looking back to the old covenant are beginning to sort of warm up to again and think this has merit here.

Well, surely in its place and in that old economy it did have merit but now things have moved on. The Lord Jesus Christ has changed so much of that now but we can find him there in the Old Testament, in the various worship of the old covenant and that will say to us we're not to worship now and use animal sacrifices for that worship but it will be telling us worship the Lord Jesus Christ and place him as the supreme authority, the Captain of your salvation. So it is to bring those points to bear from the Old Testament. Now that is what he is very much doing there, significant for the people then, significant for us today. How well-versed are we in the Old Testament? How easily can we access perhaps some of the vital key truths about the Savior from there? Not some of the more veiled kind of references to him, they're littered everywhere. You can find references to him but the strong, the clear, the very obvious expressions, we know where to look. We know how to find them, how to use them if we did find them there.

Do we see the significance of the Old Testament already preparing a people for this coming one, the Messiah, the God-man, and do we therefore place the Old Testament as inspired literature because it is inspired seers as we've just been singing about in Wesley's fine hymn, this is all truth. And though we have to interpret the Old Testament in the light of the New Testament and we have to see things in a certain perspective now that Christ has come and the Spirit has come and things have indeed moved on, there is a fulfillment of much, but in other ways we don't understand the New Testament well at all unless we're well-versed, well-grounded in at least the basics, the essentials of what the Old Testament is teaching us.

And we can say this, the writer at the beginning, that first prophecy of the coming of the Messiah in the garden of Eden, of the time of the fall of man, our rebellion and our first parents, and the promise there of this woman giving birth to the seed, there's going to be enmity between her seed and your seed, the Lord said speaking to the serpent, the very representative there of the devil, and telling him, telling the serpent that your head is going to be bruised, he's going to bruise your head so you'll bruise his heel. That is the

prophecy of the Messiah. That is telling us of the Lord Jesus Christ finally defeating there in his own home territory over death and his authority over that and the bondage that people are held in finally defeated on the cross, and by that mighty work and by that resurrection, freeing his people forever.

So it's right there and the promises that are made to Abraham that through your seed all the nations of the earth are going to be blessed. Well, that is a descendant of Abraham but not one in the sense after the flesh, this is the child of promise. This is a supernatural Son. He's going to be after the type of Isaac, an incredible Son. Not one that comes of an ordinary kind of generation and it reaches beyond Isaac finally to the Lord Jesus Christ, truly in whom all the nations of the earth will be blessed. There he is, Genesis 12 and 15 and 17, and various such places.

And we find him already there spoken of by Moses, a prophet who will come after me who will be like unto me. You must listen to him. If you don't listen to him, you'll be cut off from your people, and that speaks of Christ coming. Moses speaking of him and sundry other places.

We can think, can't we, of Isaiah 7, the virgin shall be with child. The promise there God with us, Immanuel will be his name. You have the great prophecies of Christ's crucifixion and sufferings, Isaiah 52, 53. We can add many others to those. Psalm 22, "God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me?" That cry of dereliction that was his to utter upon the cross, they're both spoken of in that Psalm. It's what our Lord Jesus Christ is going to fulfill. And if we speak of the Psalms constant expressions of his experiences to come, of his sufferings and betrayal of those who broke bread with him rising up against him, and all manner of suffering, be able to count his bones and people staring at him and all of these things, they're all spoken of there. And we will see in a moment that there are addresses that are made to God that are here by the writer applied to the Lord Jesus Christ. Places we might not have expected where he draws forth from those, says that those actually apply to the Lord Jesus Christ.

And then and in the context of Hebrews particularly to refer to what we call types and shadows. Types and shadows. Now what now are these? Well, if you want to find the words that go with this, they are actually in Hebrews in Hebrews 8 and there in verse 5, and talking about what Moses there was shown by way of the tabernacle and the sacrifices and it spoke of the Aaronic priesthood, "who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle." The tabernacle which was the special place to worship God and where God's presence was particularly, if you will, localized and could there be experienced and shielded from the people by all of the various curtains and prohibitions upon approaching other than on the Day of Atonement.

And that word there which talks of "copy," a copy, the tabernacle is a copy of heaven in its beauty and in a sanctuary and all that it represents where you meet with God and God's presence is particularly to be known. That word "copy" is the word "type." In Greek if you were to look at it there, "typos," that's the word for "copy." It's like a copy of

something, a picture of something. It's not the actual thing for there the tabernacle was a beautiful construction and ornate and all the various coverings and all the ways in which the frames were made and overlaid with gold or bronze and all the various things were made to such specification but it wasn't heaven itself. It was a copy. It was like showing us a representation of it.

And throughout the Bible there are types of Christ, people and events, happenings which are copies in a smaller sense of what the Lord Jesus Christ himself is going to do. So the sacrifices are types of Christ, that these animals being sacrificed and the blood of these creatures that was necessary to establish fellowship with God under the old covenant are pointing forward, they're like a copy of something in which something more significant is achieved by the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So there are types and then they are shadows. In Hebrews 10 he provides us with the word for that, "For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect." A shadow, that is has an outline but it's not the actual thing itself. Like a shadow, that's not the person. If you stamp on a shadow, well, that's not going to hurt the person. It's just an outline. It's not the actual thing. So what he's saying here in Hebrews 10:1 is the law, the old covenant was an outline of good things to come but it wasn't yet those things, and we know why he's saying that because that's where they're going back to. They're going back to the outline. They're going back to the shadow rather than the substance because the reality, that which the shadow is pointing towards, the better fulfillment, the real substance of that will only be fulfilled in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. Again, the services that are rendered there at the tabernacle and later on at the temple, all the sacrifices that were made, these were shadows, these were outlines of something more significant that was to come and that was to be fulfilled only through the Lord Jesus Christ.

So the writer takes Scripture as he does here in the passage before us, and he applies it to the Lord Jesus Christ and he shows that the language that is used of the Lord Jesus Christ is far above the language that is used of angels, however elevated that they are. And we saw last time that they are created, he makes his angels spirits and his ministers a flame of fire there in verse 7, a quotation of Psalm 104. He makes them. They're created beings however elevated they are but they're still part of the created order. But his Son isn't. His Son is of a different order. He dwells in a different relationship to God and also to us than the angels.

And he asks here and how we saw this morning in our sermon with the synagogue ruler and the woman bent over double and when he objected to this happening on the Sabbath and the Lord posed an unanswerable question, "Would you not if your ox or your donkey was thirsty, untie it and take it to water to drink?" Which the answer is, yes, he would do that. So why then does he object to what is being done here, this wonderful work of healing? And so a question was put to the synagogue ruler in Luke 13 and questions are put here to these believers. They were beginning to be distracted by angels and their eyes

are being taken off Christ and they're beginning to look at angels and Christ which is to not look at Christ wholly and fully as they should be.

And so he asks them some unanswerable questions, verse 5 and then again in verse 15. Verse 5 first of all, "For to which of the angels did He ever say: 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You?'" Well, that will be one, they will be scratching their heads there. If anybody could give him an answer and say, yes, they could think of an angel, they'd be wrong. There's none. The writer doesn't even stop to provide the obvious answer to the question. It is obvious, none. No angel was ever given this, told that he was, "My Son and today I have begotten You." Or as we see it in verse 13, "But to which of the angels has He ever said: 'Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool?'" Well, if you're trying to fit an angel into that, you're going to be hard-pressed. You're not going to find one. There isn't one. This is why, again, the writer doesn't say, "And of course we know there aren't any," because the answer is obvious. None. And he poses it there and, in a sense, doesn't stop, delay to answer his question because it should be so obvious, shouldn't it? And so he is bringing his readers to understand that it is exceedingly foolish and now moving Christ a little out of the way so that he can put angels in the place and have them as intermediaries to get them to God.

So having asked questions, he also then makes great statements that are made of the Son as reported there in verse 6 and there in verse 8 and there in verse 10 and following, answering the case from Scripture, bringing the claims of Christ, the supremacy of Christ, his dignity and office from the Old Testament. So again, we just rehearsed a few of the key passages there, many others we could have turned to and some more we will turn to in a minute, but how will versed are we? In a sense, the New Testament gives us a clue because quite a few of the references here are quoted more than once in the New Testament, stand out as sort of key references that make an unanswerable case so clear, so pertinent, we don't have to kind of delve around in all the sacrifices and see in the grain offering there or in the sin offering or [unintelligible] offerings something that's typical of Christ or foreshadowing him. No, we can just read straightforward statements and they apply to him.

My second heading: essential Sonship. Essential Sonship. This is in the first way of contrast between Christ and the angels, and it is to do with the Son's essential Sonship, the second person of the Trinity. And we might see that in verse 4 where it says of the Son, "having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." And there is two parts to that, there are two parts to that, that he is so much better than the angels, so what is that speaking of there? Well, perhaps this, his essential Sonship and he has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. There's something there about his work as our mediator, the Son of God, but now also come in the flesh. And so that helps us actually answer perhaps some query we might have about Psalm 2 which we'll come to in a moment and what that actually means because that Sonship, "You are My Son. Today I have begotten You." It's not just referring to what happened at Bethlehem and the birth there of the baby, the child Jesus. It's not just referring to his coming into the world because it would look as if that is more spoken of from verse 6 when he brings the firstborn into the world. But this in verse 5 is

referring to something prior, prior to the Incarnation, coming into the world of the Son of God, his birth at Bethlehem and his growing up and all of the things that happened around that. This is prior to this. In fact, this is something in eternity. This is something essential about the relationship between God the Father and God the Son. But here in Psalm 2 which is where this quotation comes from in the Old Testament which we read a moment ago, it's talking about the place that the Son has elevated, glorious deity, uncreated, not like the angels, elevated and occupying a station that certainly sees anything, the angels, anybody else can lay claim or title to. And this is disclosing his essential being.

In a way, what's in verse 7 explains there the essential being of angels. They're spirits. They're flames of fire. But the Son is to his essential being, he's actually God with all of the infinite majesty, all of the power and wisdom and knowledge, and all of the truth, and all of his light, and all of his essential deity without beginning of days, without end of days. The one who was and is and is to come, who always has been, in that eternal being endowed there as God with infinite and glorious character. That's who this is and therefore that places him in a higher place, a higher plane altogether. The second person of the Trinity.

And when it speaks of him in this particular situation here, we could turn to John 1 and gain there as best we can some understanding of this being. John 1:14, "And the Word became flesh," Word, that's the second person of the Trinity, "and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." John has the Word coming into the world, becoming flesh, but this one who's coming in the flesh was the one who is the only begotten of the Father, pushing it back there in our understanding who he is, into eternity of his essential deity and the relationship he has there with his Father.

Or John 1:18, "No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him." Here he is, the only begotten Son. He said, "You are My Son. Today I have begotten You." That's not saying that there was the Father and then derived from him was some further divine being, the Son, as though somehow in all the complexity of divinity and eternity there was the Father, oh, and then came the Son, otherwise the Son's divinity would be a lesser divinity and a lesser divinity would not be a true divinity. No, he's co-equal. He's co-essential. He is co-divine with the Father and with the Holy Spirit.

So this isn't a literal birth, the Father somehow produced his Son through some act of begetting which has some parallel with our human experience, that once there was no Son, oh, and then there was the Son. But it's talking of something beyond our comprehension, something in eternity, but something that necessarily defines for us the nature of the Trinity. Here we think of the first and the second person, that there is the Father and there is the eternally begotten Son, that there is a relationship between these two persons of the Trinity that makes it appropriate, one to be called the Father and the other to be called the Son. And for those terms not to be somehow interchangeable, as though, imagine it, the Son could beget the Father. Well, no, that can't happen and it's

never described as such. It's always the Father who begets the Son, eternally begotten of the Father.

And this relationship is a sort of fixed constant in eternity, ever coming into being is a relationship between the first and the second person of the Trinity which described here as, "You are My Son. Today I have begotten You, that You stand in affection as My Son, I will ever have regard unto You as My Son, that I relate to You as a Father to a Son." This isn't accidental language. It has huge implications. It has huge implications for family life and how family life is to be modeled and established. It has huge implications for how we are to worship and how we are to speak to God, how we're not to speak to him. And huge implications for [unintelligible] or its validity or its lack of validity. So those are the questions that it opens up to us here.

He is the brightness of God's glory. He's the exact image of his person. So we read in Psalm 2 about his eternal state there, and just reading again that we have it spoken. From verse 4 of Psalm 2, "He who sits in the heavens," having surveyed all the opponents of truth, "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.'" It follows from this now God will speak. He has spoken of his King and now he turns his attention here to his Son. "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."

So whatever is to follow from that position of essential deity, of essential Sonship and Fatherhood, a relation between the first and the second persons of the Trinity, sure in the context of the argument the writer is here sustaining this is far above the angels. In fact, the angels as Psalm 97:7 says, "Let the angels of God worship Him," verse 6 of Hebrews 1:6. Not worship the angels. No, the angels actually are to worship him. They are to worship the Son of God.

But then furthermore, third heading this and there we've seen the essential Sonship which perhaps as we see it in verse 5 helps us understand the context of Psalm 2, but just as Psalm 2 then developed from that, so we have our understanding developed from here. The Son as mediator. The Son as mediator and it's there already, isn't it, something in the whole way in which Father relates to his Son and therefore the Son relates to the Father. And we can see somehow in eternity it was ever to be that the Son, the second person, not the Spirit, not the Father, would come into this world and share in our humanity and that is what we find here.

And these are vital terms. Mediator. This is somebody who represents both God and man, and in the particular situation, the particular necessity of our alienation from God because of sin. So he is the mediator to come between man and all of his sin and the offense he's caused to God and to represent God. All of his glory and the holiness and purity and wrath against sin, and he comes bringing together in himself, in one person, as we've been thinking on our Thursday evenings, in one person is divinity, that essential Sonship,

and now humanity, perfect, pure and excellent humanity. So his divine Sonship, all that he points towards, the Son in obedience sent by his Father as now mediator in the flesh, Incarnation, that links up with that concept, so does concepts like his servant-hood, serving, he's come to serve, the Son in obedience and in all his offices as prophet, priest and king, all parts of what we call his mediatorial work. He's the mediator in the flesh representing God, representing man and, of course, ultimately to bring together both the enmity to be ended by offering his own body on the cross to atone for sin. In the body, human body like ours yet without sin, but also being divine could offer a sacrifice of infinite value to bring to an end our alienation and enmity against God.

So he is brought into the world there in verse 6 and the command that the angels of God worship him, and furthermore from verse 8 and following, we see these particular quotations from the Old Testament that speak of the Son now in the flesh, on earth, hundreds, thousands of years before he comes but speaking about the things that he will do, what he's going to accomplish, what he will fulfill by being here on the earth, the exercise of his various offices. And very much it is he as king, as the eternal being, eternal Son who is spoken of here.

So in verse 8 we'll perhaps quickly recognize that that is a quotation from Psalm 45. Psalm 45, another of the very well-known Psalms that establish clearly the divinity of Christ and speak of him as the one is going to come and accomplish much. Just let me read the first seven verses of Psalm 45. "My heart is overflowing with a good theme; I recite my composition concerning the King; My tongue is the pen of a ready writer. You are fairer than the sons of men." Oh, this is now actually an address to the Lord Jesus Christ by the Father. "Grace is poured upon Your lips; Therefore God has blessed You forever. Gird Your sword upon Your thigh, O Mighty One, With Your glory and Your majesty. And in Your majesty ride prosperously because of truth, humility, and righteousness; And Your right hand shall teach You awesome things. Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies; The peoples fall under You. Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You love righteousness and hate wickedness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions." That is the Lord Jesus Christ being addressed and spoken to by his Father. "Ask of Me. There are the nations, Your possession. There You are a great King. Gird on your sword. Ride forth prosperously on behalf of truth, humility and righteousness. And You will deal with Your enemies, You're going to break them like a potter's vessel. Your enemies there, sharp with be Your arrows in the heart of Your enemies." There is the beauty of his character as a scepter, a small sword, as it were, that represents rule, scepter of righteousness, the scepter of your kingdom because this is your moral character. You love righteousness and hate wickedness. Such holiness of character and endeavor that marks the work, the whole ministry of the Son of God.

And this is spoken of here and all that God is going to anoint you with the oil of gladness more than your companions, every other king that has come like David or Solomon. You're going to have such joy in performing your work, there's going to be something



that is so strong about the way that you conduct your ministry. Your love for it, your gladness in performing it, that is going to mark you out as different from any other.

Incarnate Son. He's going to inherit the throne of his father David as Mary is told when she has the visit from the angel announcing the birth of the son that she is to call Jesus.

Then finally and we just have to be very brief on this, a quotation from Psalm 102 which forms the basis of verses 10 to 12. There in the Old Testament again and in quite an interesting context, look at it at your leisure in Psalm 102. But in a way it's almost unlikely because it's almost there that the Psalmist in anguish, but then his thoughts turn to the everlasting nature of God's kingdom, an everlasting king is actually the Son of God now come in the flesh. Well, everything else is going to perish in the heavens, the work of your hands, they're all going to grow old like a garment but you are the same. Your years will not fail. King. King of kings, the Lord of lords.

He's come as our mediator but in these passages here we're thinking of him as coming as our king and, well, Psalm 110 is the quotation in verse 13. Again there's authority, there's rule, there's a throne and the Son as mediator is going to be raised up into glory by the ascension and he's going to be placed at the right hand of God and the writer in context is saying, "Which of the angels has any of that going for them? Which of the angels has got that kind of title, that kind of name? Have they inherited there or obtained an excellent name as that?" But the Son has. This was given to him. Now occupying his place of lowliness as a servant, coming there meekly and gently, the signature of his divinity, that brilliance of light now veiled in flesh, the Godhead see.

And we therefore have this Christ while they have in their particular context to wean themselves off angels. We perhaps don't have quite that problem facing us perhaps as Christians but we would want to have that Christ, the Christ of Scripture, the Christ actually of the Old Testament breaking forth upon us, a Christ that is able to save us to the uttermost, a Christ that we should trust implicitly, removing everything else. Not works, no endeavor of our own, no obedience to reach up to some height of excellence. Sure, we should be obedient. Sure, we should be a holy people but we can't rest on those endeavors. They will fail us but he won't. This one won't. And so the writer goes about his business of elevating the supremacy of Christ, then we would amen this and we would have him to be our Savior, we'd have this Christ to be the Christ that we will worship in spirit and in truth, in whose name we will pray when we pray and we will lean on him for our hope, for salvation, for eternity, for absolutely everything.