

# Christ's Superiority Over the Angels

a sermon in the series  
Hebrews: An Epistle of Encouragement

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## Hebrews 1:4-14

*Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. 5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? 6 And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. 7 And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. 8 But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. 9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. 10 And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: 11 They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; 12 And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail. 13 But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? 14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?*

Today it's my task to shed light on the superiority of Christ above the angels. Needless to say, I am vastly insufficient for this task. For me to shed light on the matchless glories of Christ is like asking a candle to shed light on the sun. Our light is not our own. Like the moon reflecting the sun's light, we are to reflect His light. I humbly submit even now to the great grace of God, and pray He, who is the Master of all Lights, may use me to help us all see Him. Without His light, our lights are inconsequential.

It is my duty as a messenger of the Lord to preach to you a Christ centered gospel, and my text makes it an easy proposition today. How could I do otherwise than preach Christ with this text or any other for that matter? It is said of the apostles that they "ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." As the apostle Paul said, "I determine not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." It is the duty of the gospel preacher to preach the cross of Jesus and not stray far from its shadow. He must uplift the cross' glorious banner by which we have hope of eternal life. In this modern age, preachers have seemingly found a more convenient banner to fly. But I can find no greater hope than in the message of Jesus' death and resurrection. I can find no other source of joy than this . . . that Jesus died, was buried, and he rose again and ascended

to the right hand of the Majesty on high. In this modern age, many preachers become everything else but preachers of the gospel. I exhort us all to remember that there is no greater task for the preacher than to preach a Christ centered gospel. In a day when preachers are expected to be everything from CEOs to administrators to counselors, there is no greater task for the preacher than to preach the good news of Jesus Christ. Let all things be relegated to a subservient place to the gospel message. Rather than take the gospel message and relegate it to the back seat, let all other things pale in comparison to it. Every message ought to be Christ centered. Our passage of study is overflowing with Jesus Christ and His superiority, especially His superiority over the angels.

As today, so it was in the days of our text. Heresies then are heresies today. Human nature has not changed. One of the excesses of Judaism prevalent at that time, that found its way into Christian churches, was the overemphasis upon angels. Today we have an overemphasis on angels. Walk into any Christian bookstore and you will find an overabundance of books on angels, pictures and mementos of angelic images. It seems like we have become enthralled with the concept of angels. How have they appeared in history, and how they have intervened in the human struggle? We are preoccupied with their power and how they make themselves known to people. This problem occurred in the Jewish religion and spilled over into many Christian congregations.

The Jews were not the only ones who had this problem. Among the Greeks there was a teaching called Gnosticism, which taught the worship of angels. As a result there was in the early church a heresy that deified angels. Angel worship was practiced in many congregations. In fact, not unlike today, there were certain teachers teaching Jesus was nothing more than an angel Himself who had been exalted by God to a superior position. It is for this reason that the writer of Hebrews, writing to a Jewish congregation, addresses this fallacy. He desired to prove that Jesus Christ was not an angel. He was and is something far superior to angels.

Now, as we look at this preoccupation with these heavenly messengers, you need to know three things in particular about what the Jews thought about these winged ambassadors. First, the Jews believed that angels administered the affairs of the universe for God. They were His surrogate administrators. They maintained the order of the universe. Second, the Jews believed angels superintended all the affairs of the nations. Each nation as well as city provinces had its own angel. And third, and most important, the Jewish interpretation was that God dispensed the Old Testament law through angels. It was their doctrine that the angels mediated and maintained the Old Covenant. Stephen in his sermon in Acts chapter seven and verse fifty-three cited this belief. In fact, Stephen did not refute it. He says of the Jews, "Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it." It appears that he believed that angelic messengers dispensed the Old Covenant. The Bible is silent on how the angels mediated the Mosaic Law. We know that God gave Moses the Ten Commandments, but how God gave those Ten Commandments we are not privy to. The first tablets of stone were written by God's own hand. These are the tablets Moses broke. The second tablets were written upon stone by Moses' hand as God dictated. Most commentators believe Acts chapter seven and verse fifty-three to mean that angels accompanied God and Moses and watched the giving of the Law. They were much like witnesses to the event.

Therefore, it seems through the evidence of Scripture that angels somehow administered the law, but to what degree we do not know.

The writer of the book of Hebrews sets out to prove that Jesus was not an angel. Some modern cults teach today that our Lord Jesus was nothing more than an angel. Did you know that Jehovah's Witnesses teach this very thing? The next time someone knocks at your door and says they are from the Watch Tower Society, do not be deceived because they speak about Jesus Christ and even call Him Lord. The truth is they believe Him to be only a little god. They do not believe Him to be the Eternal Deity. To them He is not the Son of God by position, but rather by creation. They teach a form of the old Gnosticism. According to the Jehovah's Witnesses, God made Jesus as an angel, in fact, they believe Jesus to be Michael the archangel whom God incarnated in the womb of Mary and made Him the man Jesus. That is what they believe; and there were people at the time of the writing of the book of Hebrews who believed such lies. So let's find out the truth, why is Jesus superior?

First of all, verse four and five of chapter one of Hebrews says that Jesus is superior to the angels in sonship. He is superior in sonship. Look at verse four, "Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." In other words, Jesus inherited a better name. Now friends, the only way you can inherit a better name is that you are physically born the heir, or you are adopted into the family and become an heir. Jesus is not the Son of God by virtue of being physically born, although a superficial reading of the text would appear that this is the very idea. The words "being made" which the King James Version uses seem to be saying this. No doubt many ruinous errors have come from an incorrect understanding of these two words. The words "being made" do not mean something being created. In fact the Greek word used here for "being made" is not the common Greek word for "make." The common Greek word for "make" or "create" is poiew (pronounced as poy-eh'-o). Instead, it is the word, ginomai (pronounced as ghin'-om-ahee). This word ginomai means, "to become." The idea is not being created, but rather a process of exaltation. The meaning is clear, that Jesus through the process of being exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on high became better than the angels. Now how has He become better? Was He not always better? If Jesus, as the Son of God, was never created but eternal, He must have always been better than the angels. If He is God, He must always have been superior? When was Jesus ever inferior to an angel?

Hebrews chapter two verse nine gives us the answer. It tells us that Jesus became a human being, which in the order of things, is lower than the angels. Man was created a little lower than the angels, so says the psalmist in Psalms 8:5: "For thou hast made him (man) a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour." Look at Hebrews 2:9, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." So in the process of incarnation (Jesus becoming a man) He made Himself lower in position than the angels. God remedied Christ's self-imposed humiliation in that He has now promoted Him to ascendancy above the angels. He is the Son of God; He is God! Therefore, He has inherited a better name, or in other words, a better title. What is that title? Son. Again look at our text. Verse five, "For unto

which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?"

God has never said this to an angel. Again this is a quote from the book of Psalms chapter two. Every argument from this section is a quotation from the book of Psalms. Very interesting to note, that because the author is writing to a Jewish audience, he must prove every argument from the Old Testament Scriptures. The Old Testament was the only reliable source they would have recognized, and so from the Old Testament the writer of Hebrews shows that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies. Jesus has always had the title as the Son of God. I personally believe in the eternal sonship of Christ; that He has always been God, the Second Person of the Trinity. He is the Son from eternity past. Whether you agree with that or not does not change the fact that He is God and He was made manifest in the flesh. And so the writer of Hebrews says here that He is better than the angels because He alone is the Son of God.

Let us think a moment about the words, "this day have I begotten thee." Could this be referring to the incarnation? Those who believe that Jesus was not always the Son until he was born in Bethlehem of the Virgin Mary believe this to be a reference to the incarnation. They say not until His birth in Bethlehem did He become the Son of God. But I don't think so. In fact, I am quite adamant in my disagreement on that position.

It is more than interesting that in the thirteenth chapter and verse thirty-three of Acts in Paul's sermon, he quotes this very same passage in Psalms two. Paul says, "God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." Paul interprets the resurrection of Christ as the fulfillment of the David's prophecy. The prophesy in the book of Psalms pointed to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Who has died for the sins of mankind, an angel? No. Who was resurrected from the dead, an angel? No. Angels were sent to be the first messengers of His resurrection, but it was Jesus Christ who was resurrected. Dear friends, a miraculous pronouncement was made on that first resurrection morning. The pronouncement was Jesus was who He said He was . . . the Son of God. The resurrection is very important for it seals the finality of what Jesus did on the cross and vindicates Christ.

A host of other Scriptures such as Romans chapter one and verse three declares the resurrection is the pronouncement of Jesus' Sonship. Paul writes, "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Notice these words and pay close attention. Paul says that the single event in the life of Christ that proved He was the Son of God is the resurrection. God raised Him from the dead and thus sealed the words of Christ's testimony as true. God Himself bore witness to the claims of Jesus to being Deity by raising Him from the dead. God did this says Paul "with power." In so doing, God is in effect saying, "You are my Son. Today I am announcing it to the whole world by the greatest display of my power ever witnessed----the resurrection of Jesus from the dead." Certainly the Father bore witness to Christ's sonship and deity at other times and in other ways. But

it was the resurrection that stands above them all as the most powerful declaration and witness of Jesus as the Son of God.

The second reason Jesus is superior to angels is He is superior in honor. Look at verse six and seven of Hebrews chapter one, "And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire." The first distinction I wish to make under this heading is that Jesus is better than any angel by proof that it is the duty of angels to worship Christ. In verse six, we have the term, "first begotten in the world." Again this is one of the verses used by Jehovah Witnesses, Mormons, and other cultists who do not believe that Jesus has always existed as the eternal Son of God. They refer to this word "firstbegotten" as stating that Jesus was begotten in the sense of created, and He was the first thing God ever made. Well, friends, the word "firstbegotten" is not the same word for being born first. Rather it is a word that means "first in rank or position." It is a different word than the normal word for first born. For example, Esau was born before Jacob; and yet Jacob was considered the first begotten. Although he was not the first born, having the birthright gave him the benefits of preeminence. Therefore, he was first in rank or position above his older brother Esau. He had the birthright. All our text is saying is that Christ is preeminent. He is number one in ranking and superiority. One day He will return to the world and God will instruct all the other angels to worship Him. Were not the angels before His first coming commanded to worship Him? Oh most definitely. But He was not then the God-man. As a man He has been exalted. When He returns to earth He will do so with the heavenly host accompanying Him. Winged seraphim will sing aloud their praises of Him so that the whole will tremble at their sound.

Thus, the argument of the writer of Hebrews is clearly manifested. If angels were created to worship God and Jesus is being worshiped by angels, then Jesus must be God. Let me not fail to say that angels are created. Look at verse seven. "And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire." Remember I said a few moments ago that in the fourth verse the word "made" is not the Greek word poiew. Well, here in verse seven it is. The word "maketh" in verse seven means "to create, to make something." There was a day in which angels did not exist and then came into existence by the hand of God. Jesus has no such day. He is eternal without origin. He is not created; He is the creator, as we will see in just a few moments. There is no day that has been formed that He, Christ, did not form it. No moment to which the fingerprint of the Son of God is not affixed. He is the one who appeared to John on the isle of Patmos as the "Alpha and the Omega." He who is the "Ancient of Days" became a man and was found lower than the angels whom He created. He was despised among the men whom He formed. He could not go any lower than this. And when men sealed His borrowed tomb thinking they were free from such a lowly one, God raised Him from the dead. The resurrection pronounced Him to be far superior to His persecutors, far superior to the fallen angels that danced at His death, far superior than the angels of heaven who wept when He died.

I shall move quickly and spend but a brief moment in stating my second distinction under the idea that Jesus is superior to the angels in honor. It is the duty of angels to serve Christ. He calls

them “ministers a flame of fire.” The word “minister” literally means “a servant.” The angels were created to be the servants of God. They carry out His bidding in the universe. Jesus is superior to an angel because He has a greater honor, a greater position and it is proven by the fact that all the angels serve Him.

Let us move to our third reason that the author gives for the superiority of Christ over the angels. He is greater than the angels in that He is superior in His authority. Verse eight says, “But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.” I want you to notice that Christ’s authority is not one given to Him as if He had earned it. His authority is divine, meaning He deserves it because of who He is; He is God. He always had such authority. The text has stated that God declares Jesus to be God. Notice the pronouns, “But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God.” God the Father calls Jesus the Son and He calls Him God. Here again the writer quotes from the book of Psalms. It is a quote from Psalm 45:6, “Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever.” In verse nine of our text the author continues his quotation from Psalm 45 proving the divine authority and position of Christ. This time he cites verse seven of Psalm 45. Hebrews chapter one and verse nine is the quotation, “therefore God, (again we see the Son being called God) even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.”

Now, friends, this is conclusive. The authority that Jesus Christ has was not given to Him because He came to this earth and died on a cross and rose from the dead. Rather, he had authority before He ever came to this earth. His conquering of death and sin is only a sign of the authority that He had before the incarnation in Bethlehem.

He has all authority, as we brought out last week; therefore, He is superior to any angel. No angel has any authority in and of himself. No angel can act under his own authority. He acts under the authority of Jesus Christ. Christ rules, not angels. Unto Christ, and not an angel, is a scepter given. The Bible calls it a “scepter of righteousness.” A scepter was only for the King’s hands. Christ is King.

There has been much discussion since many of the Frank Peretti novels were written and published: This Present Darkness and Piercing the Darkness, just to mention a few of Peretti’s titles. In these imaginative works we see angels in combat with demonic forces. Angels combat the forces of Hell in geographical territories. It seems that the inspiration for the best-selling novels was Peretti’s theology on angels and demons. Clearly he presents the notion that there are demons that have control of certain territories, cities, and even churches. God sends good angels into these demonically controlled areas to do combat with the fallen angels. Whoever is the strongest wins and the area is the prize of the victor. Well, there may be some scriptural truth to some of that. But, may I say, the majority of his books is the imagination of a very creative writer. There is not an angel good or bad that has any authority, including Satan. He has no authority except what God allows him. He can’t do one single thing without divine permission. Glory to God! No angel has authority in and of himself. All authority belongs to our God, who reigns, and His name is Jesus. He rules with a scepter of righteousness.

The fourth reason that our text presents showing the superiority of Jesus over angels is He is better in His existence. This is a crucial point to the writer of Hebrews, and it ought to be to you and me today. There are many claiming there was a time when Jesus did not exist. But we read in verses ten through twelve, “And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.” What is he saying here? He is saying that the Lord Jesus created all that there was and is. Now who is creator but God? There is no other creator. If Jesus created it, then He has to be God; and that makes Him superior in existence to the angels because Jesus has no beginning and He has no end. There is a beginning of every angel made. They may never die. They may never cease to exist, but they had a beginning; and Christ has no beginning. It is the Lord who will superintend the rolling up of this present universe, as you would roll up an old garment to discard it. The garment has fulfilled its purpose and is frayed and tattered. Only the Creator has the superiority to administer the beginning and the end of His creation.

Fifth and last, but not the last of the message . . . Jesus is superior to the angels in purpose. The thirteenth and fourteenth verses share this aspect of our Lord’s greatness. “But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” This tells me that Christ has a better destiny than any angel known. What is the destiny of Jesus Christ? To sit at the right hand of God the Father until God the Father makes all of Christ’s enemies His footstool.

God has never said such to any angel. Never has an angel been told by the Father “I want you to sit down and relax, because you have all authority, and I am going to place all of your enemies under your feet.” Oh no, no. But to Jesus, oh yes, God has spoken. There is an ultimate purpose of God. That ultimate purpose of God, by the way, is not the church. Neither is the ultimate purpose a millennium reign on the earth. God’s purpose is not to vanquish all communism and dictatorships throughout the world.

The purpose is not your comfort or pleasure. The purpose is not your prosperity or your health. What could God be up to? His purpose is none other than to exalt Jesus Christ above all things. That is the purpose of God in creation. God created everything that exists so that everything that exists would bow down before Jesus Christ. Now, you may say that sounds very egotistical, self-centered, and very selfish at best. But, dear friend, it can’t be. I find it the most loving thing God could do. Without this purpose your existence can’t be. He upholds all things by the word of His power. All things exist by Him and for Him (Colossians 1:16). If this were not the ultimate purpose of our Sovereign, then all things would vanish. If Jesus Christ is not the preeminent one, the superior one, then, dear friend, there is no hope. You had better hope that His ultimate purpose is the glory of His Son.

Listen, Jesus must demand and have all worship and preeminence because there is no one holy like Him. If there is something more holy, something better than Jesus, then Jesus is a liar, and the truth is not in Him, and you ought not to worship Him. But since there is nothing better, and since He is truth, He deserves the worship and allegiance of everything, even His enemies. He is superior in purpose and He has a better destiny.

What is the purpose of angels? As we have already stated, first, angels were made to worship. Second, they were made to be the servants of the Lord God. And third, they were also made to be servants to the heirs of salvation. Look at the text. God made angels to serve those who will become the heirs of salvation.

Who, may I ask, are the heirs of salvation? The church. Every redeemed individual is the heir of salvation that Jesus purchased with His blood. If you are saved this morning, you are an heir of salvation. Hallelujah! God in His eternal purposes ordained a people. I can't explain it, except to tell you in the great omniscient mind of God that purpose existed. I am not ashamed to say that. I am not ashamed to tell you that I believe that in the eternity past, before there was time, God predestined to save you. He did not move throughout the eternal space of time without purpose or reason. My dear friends, Jesus' words shall come to pass, "that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing." Not a one. There is an heir. It is everyone that has believed upon Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins.

The angels are to serve God's heirs. Do you realize that can't be said of Jesus? Jesus is not here to serve you. You and I are here to serve Him. And God in His graciousness has provided superlative creatures to minister to us. I don't know if there are guardian angels or not, but I tend to think perhaps there are based upon this passage. But I tell you whether I have one angel assigned to me or a host (I probably have more than one for it probably takes more than one), whether I have one or one hundred, it matters not. To know that my Father loves me matters more than anything. He loves me enough to make sure I am guarded and provided for by angelic beings. Isn't that an amazing truth? Often we see in the ministry of Jesus where God dispatches angels to strengthen Him. The first time we see it is after the temptation in the wilderness. For forty days and forty nights, He had fasted and hungered. The sacred record states that after the temptation angels came and ministered unto Him and strengthened Him. At another time we see angels coming to support and minister to our Lord on the night of His betrayal as He prayed as He sweated drops of blood. The Bible says again that angels came and strengthened Him. I imagine that as they strengthened our Lord there was a sense of this being a new thing. For since the days of their creation before the worlds were ever formed they had served around the throne in heaven. The environment was different but not the homage. What was different? They whose strength belonged to the Lord's now served the Lord by giving Him strength. It is amazing to think that they who found strength in God were now administering strength to the same. Wonders of wonders!

It is these same heavenly emissaries that attend to us. I do believe there have been times unbeknown to you when an angel ministered to you. How are they dispatched to help us? I think



it depends on the circumstances. I want to share with you one of those instances. Years ago in Readers Digest this story was printed as a feature article on an event that happened one night to a well-known doctor in Philadelphia. Dr. S.W. Mitchell had gone to bed rather late and was extremely tired when he heard a pleading knock at his door. It was a raining, miserable stormy night; and so he unwilling got up and attended to the knock at the door. There was a small girl pleading with the famous doctor to come and follow her. Her mother was desperately sick. She was wet and cold. The doctor tried to persuade the girl to call an ambulance, but she insisted that he follow her to her home just a few blocks away. Dr. Mitchell followed the young girl to the home where he found the mother dying. Time was of the essence. Had an ambulance been called she would have died. She would have never survived. He came in just the nick of time, gave her the relief she needed, and she lived. When the crisis had passed before the ambulance had come to take her to the hospital, Dr. Mitchell complimented the mother on her little daughter. He told her had it not been for the intelligence and the persistence of her young daughter she would have not survived. The lady looked at him puzzled, and said, "what are you talking about?"

The doctor answered, "Your daughter whom you sent to come and get me."

She said, "My daughter died more than one month ago."

She pointed him towards the closet where he opened the door and saw the very coat that the little girl was dressed in, but it was bone dry. An angel? Probably.

Here is another example of heavenly messengers who minister to the heirs of salvation. Missionary John G. Patton on one of the New Hebrides Islands tells of a frightful night where the villagers, irate and hostile, surrounded the missionary headquarters to burn them out and to kill the entire family. Patton and his wife began to pray, and they prayed all the night through. When the rising of the morning sun had come and dispelled the darkness, they also noticed the hostile villagers were also dispersed. Over a year later, the head chief was converted and Brother Patton asked him about that fearful night. "Do you remember that night, over a year ago, when you came to burn my family out and to kill us all?" Patton inquired.

The chieftain said, "Yes, I do."

Patton asked, "What kept you from doing it?"

The chief, amazed at the question, responded, "What were all of those soldiers around your house?"

Confused, Patton asked, "What soldiers?"

The chief told the missionary that there were men standing in bright shining garments with shields and swords drawn encircling their home. Afraid, the angry villagers left. Angels had been given that night to minister to the heirs of salvation.

Maybe not in this life, but when we stand before God, He will show us time and time again where he sent an emissary of holy hosts to guard and protect us. It will be proven that they often ensured our safe destiny to heaven's peaceful shore.

Now quickly I must make three applications from this text. Number one, if Christ is superior to the angels, then we should give proper homage and worship to Christ, not angels. I fear this over preoccupation with angels that is happening in churches today. I think the angels are troubled by it also. They know that their only purpose is to exalt the King of Kings, not to be exalted themselves. The angel's holy hearts must be grieved that the heirs of salvation's fascination is on them rather than the One with whom the angels themselves are fully fascinated with. John in that sacred vision in the book of Revelation fell down to worship his angelic escort. The angel was very quick to forbid John. His admonition was to worship Jesus. So be careful in your amazement with angels, that it doesn't become homage and worship.

Secondly, if Christ's resurrection is a declaration of His sonship, then His resurrection must also be a declaration of our sonship. I want you to follow me to Romans 6:5, "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." If Jesus' death on Calvary was our death, then the question we must ask is, in what way is His death our death? His death is our death to sin, and sin's control over our lives. If this is true, then His resurrection must also be our resurrection. But is this speaking physically? We know that a day is coming when the dead in Christ will rise from graves strewn throughout cemeteries and centuries. The sea will give up its dead. But is this the meaning of this word? Certainly this application can be made, but I think there is something more here.

The preceding verse says that His resurrection is for the purpose that we should "walk in newness of life." Paul, with the same thought in mind in Ephesians 2:5, says, "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)." The Apostle is just not talking about regeneration, but he is comparing regeneration to the resurrection of Christ. In verse six he says, "raised up together." When was Christ raised up from the dead? Resurrection morning. Dear friend, when were you resurrected from your sins? You were made alive the day Christ saved you. But, should you say that is not a resurrection. Resurrection is to have been alive and then died and now alive again. If this is your insistence I ask, should an infant be born dead and somehow by a miracle the child open its eyes and breathe, would we say a resurrection took place? I think you see my point.

You have never had spiritual life prior to Jesus saving you. You physically lived and existed, but as far as your spirit is concerned it was dead, born dead. Just as Jesus was raised from the dead by that quickening power, so the quickening power of the Holy Spirit enlivened your dead spirit and made it alive unto God. Oh, dear friend, when was your resurrection? I want to be very adamant about this, and I don't want anybody to misunderstand me. I am one of those who believe and adhere to the truth that there has to be regeneration if there is salvation. There has to be a moment in time when you were dead and then made alive. You were lost and then you were saved. You were blind, but now you can see. When were you regenerated and subsequently converted?

Jesus said, “Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3). When were you converted? When was that moment when the Spirit of God came upon you? Not because you deserved it, or because you had earned it by your good deeds. You are not raised to new life by your good church attendance or religious activity. It is by the instrument of grace. He shows you divine favor. Such grace changes you from night into day, from darkness into light.

Dear friends, please make no mistake about it. The Christian life is not one of self reformation, changing your habits, changing your speech, changing your behavior; the Christian life is one where God changes a hopeless sinner. He takes one who has no love of God in him or her and changes their heart, so that now they become lovers of God. When has that happened to you? You may not be able to recite the date or your memory may be a little bit foggy, but there is a moment, if you are saved. There is a moment that stands in your heart when Christ entered you.

Please, please don't think that Christianity means doing your best to please God and at the end, when you die, you can only hope to get into Heaven. No, a thousand times no! It is more definite than that. It is surer than that. There is a Savior that saves. When Jesus appears to you in a way which you can perceive, you will see your position before God. Condemned, guilty, and needing a savior is all you can see. At that moment all seems lost and hopeless. You will think, “If only there was someone who could help me. Oh, is there one who can help the sinner stand before God?”

Charles Wesley said it so beautifully when he penned the words,

*Long my imprisoned spirit lay  
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;  
Thine eye diffused a quick'ning ray,  
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;  
My chains fell off, my heart was free;  
I rose went forth and followed Thee.*

Christ reveals Himself to you as the only hope of repentance, and faith, and forgiveness, and you receive that wholeheartedly trusting Him with your entire life. My dear friend, you can know that you know God, and you can be at peace with God. Through Christ you can be declared righteousness. I ask you, has that happened? Are you missing such a resurrection? If Jesus' resurrection was the pronouncement that he was the Son of God, surely on the day God converted me, it was God's pronouncement that I too am His son. Oh happy day! Our Savior is superior to any creature, angel or man.

How do we know we have this new life in us? Well, here is how you know, and this is the third application. If Christ's nature loves righteousness and hates lawlessness, so will yours. Did we not see this in verse nine? “Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” If it is Christ's nature to love righteousness and to hate lawlessness then so must it be the nature of every one of his

followers. How do you know that you have been resurrected with Christ never to die? Here is how, you love righteousness and you hate lawlessness. Don't be deceived here, you might think you live in righteousness and hate lawlessness because of what you do and don't do. This is not an accurate test.

Everyone thinks you are a pretty decent person, and you might be exactly that. You see yourself better than most people, in that you have not done what most people have done. You see yourself better than those who line the jails and prisons. You see yourself better than those who are publicly scandalous because of their dark deeds. You think you must be righteous because you have not filled your heart with the same sins they have filled theirs. But this does not mean you love righteousness. Let me take you to your most secret moments when no one knows your heart. In the deepest and darkest recesses of your heart what do you love? What is it that you love when you are by yourself? No pretense, no putting on to impress others, it is just you. It's the real you. Look at yourself. What do you see? Look into your heart; do you relish darkness? Do you enjoy sin? Do you love self-gratification, self pleasure, and do you love all the things that God says He hates? And do you hate all those things that God says he loves. Then, dear friend, that new life is not in you. You may be a Sunday school teacher, you may be a deacon, and you may be even a preacher, as I was before I was truly saved, but you are still lost in your sins. If you love the works of darkness more than you love holiness and righteousness you cannot be His. All they that are His take on His characteristics, for God has placed his Spirit within them.

It will not be before an angel that you will give an account; it will be before Jesus Christ the Lord God. The angels of heaven will stand on the side and watch you tremble before God. They will not help you nor will they plead your cause. There you will be before the God who made you. You will stand before the Creator of men and angels. You will stand before the Eternal Son of God. What will you say to Him, but more importantly what shall He say of you? Amen.