

# **Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Christology, Session 12, Systematics, Virgin Birth, Luke 2, Matthew 1, and the Deity of Christ, Hebrews 1**

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This is Dr. Robert Peterson in his teaching on Christology. This is session 12, Systematics, Virgin Birth, Luke 2, Matthew 1, and the Deity of Christ, Hebrews 1.

We're continuing our lectures on Christology, specifically now Biblical Christology, having laid a foundation in some previous lectures concerning patristic and modern Christology. Our concern now is specifically with the virginal conception, which I'm sad to say will always be called the virgin birth, no matter what.

But we're considering Mary here in Luke 1, and over the years, I have asked seminary classes, especially women in those classes, what would your response be to this angelic announcement from Gabriel that you were going to be the mother of the Messiah? And it was really fun. One time it was really humorous. It was a small class, perhaps an M.A. rather than a Master of Divinity class, and few women were there, but a sweet lady, a sweet older lady, came in and sat down.

I didn't think she belonged in the class. Later, she said she didn't, but the Lord wanted her to go, so she did. It was so funny.

But she was a mother and probably a grandmother at that time, and she was so helpful. She said I would be, first of all, shocked by this angel, probably afraid of a big male-looking angelic warrior, and then I'd be so confused, and she said it would enter my mind that my neighbors might not believe the virginal conception story. That seems to be the case.

Students of the fourth gospel suggest that in John 8, when Jesus is just railing against the Jewish leaders and calling them sons of the devil rather than sons of God, their retort to him, we know who our father is, is a criticism not only of him but indirectly on his mother, Mary. Contrary to what Bultmann taught, first-century types did not believe that virgin births were a dime a dozen and that angelic appearances happened every other day and that kind of a thing. No, this was a unique event and no doubt Mary bore a stigma because of it.

Her attitude is simply commendable. Behold, Luke 1:38, I am a servant of the Lord. Let it be to me according to your word, and the angel departed from her.

She could not have fully understood. She had to, at some point, understand the notion of social stigma that would attach to this, and nevertheless, her attitude is

immediately submission. She is indeed, as the scripture says, calling both Joseph and Mary godly people.

It is true, righteous people, which means godly or pious in the best sense. We go to Matthew chapter 1, and now we do it from Joseph's side, and similar to what I said about the Luke passage, I have asked men in the class, what would you think, all right? I once heard a sermon by a former pastor of mine, and it showed me that I had made an assumption because he made the opposite assumption. I assumed that Mary didn't say anything to Joseph about this.

He said he assumed that she did. He assumed that she did, and Joseph wasn't buying it. I assumed she didn't and that maybe she was starting to show, so Joseph knew something was up, and he would be concerned, to say the least.

For my male students who say, well, let me read, and I'll give you their responses. Matthew 1, 18 through 21. Now, the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way, Matthew writes, when his mother, Mary, had been betrothed to Joseph.

Once again, this is a serious business. It is the first stage in a marriage in Jewish custom, only to be broken with a divorce. It was not technically an actual marriage, which had to be consummated by physical union.

So, commitment, no sex, for it to be broken, it would involve a divorce. Before they came together in sexual union, she was found to be with a child from the Holy Spirit. Twice, Matthew says from the Holy Spirit, not giving the more detailed explanation that Luke gave, but surely it involves similar truths.

Her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. When I've asked male students how they would feel if their Joseph and their lover Mary, the woman they love and want to marry, the woman to whom they have committed themselves, and they thought it was reciprocal, was found to be pregnant, they said they would be angry, upset, so disappointed. The idea that he could have had her stoned was technically true according to the law, but scholars of the gospel say this was hardly ever invoked in actual practice in the first century.

So, Joseph's actions were commendable. They were also godly. He was no doubt crushed.

How could my Mary do this to us? But he resolved to divorce her quietly. Again, a divorce was necessary, and he was brokenhearted and couldn't understand. But as he considered these things, he had a great dream.

Behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, so in both Luke 1 and Matthew 1, angels are God's messengers involved in the announcement of the virginal conception. Joseph, son of David, is again emphasized in that aspect. Jesus, being the son of God, is, first of all, a royal title in the development of the Bible story.

Second Samuel 7, God tells David, and his son Solomon and future descendants of David that God will be their father and these men will be his son in a special way. Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her, same expression again, is of or from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.

It is the same as in Luke 1, where Mary was told to call him Jesus, so Joseph is. Officially, it would be the father's role, but now God gives more explanation through his angelic messenger. Call his name Jesus, which means the Lord saves, or savior, for he will save his people from their sins.

Here's a direct biblical tie-in of the person and work of Christ. We said that one of the strengths of systematic theology is it separates things out so we can understand them, and one of the weaknesses at the same time is it separates things out so we can understand them. That is, it divides what God has put together, so we have to be careful and put things back together.

If we attend to the passages themselves carefully, we do that very thing. For these four great Christological passages are also atonement passages, with the exception possibly of Philippians 2, which is not as strong in that regard. It goes on to say how this fulfills Isaiah 7.14 and 24, when Joseph, no doubt a happy man, woke from sleep.

He did as the angel of the Lord commanded him. He took his wife but knew her not. I don't know why the ESV does not use that language in Luke 1, where it says, how can this be since I'm a virgin? Literally, it said.

How can this be since I've not known a man? Here, they do it literally. Knew her not until she had given birth to a son, and he called his name Jesus. This language does not insist that they had intercourse later, but it surely implies that in the normal state of affairs.

And contrary to Rome's claim that the brothers and sisters of Jesus given in the Synoptic Gospels are merely cousins and not their children, it's unlikely. And again, Rome has put nature against grace. God works through this humble servant woman of the Lord, servant of the Lord, to bring his son into the world.

And Joseph and Mary were married and no doubt enjoyed what a godly pastor friend of mine called marital communion in love and sexual life after Jesus was born. And

he obediently called his name Jesus. Here we have the male side, if you will, of the virginal conception of our Lord.

God thought this was so important that he had the angel Gabriel reveal to Mary that she would be the mother of the Messiah. An angel is not named in a dream and explains to Joseph that his betrothed was a good candidate for marriage because of this miracle. No doubt Joseph would be very happy and relieved and would think things like, I knew I could trust my Mary.

But once again, contrary to a Bultmanian understanding that these were a bunch of naive country hicks and just stupid people, frankly, who didn't know understand the modern world, they knew where babies came from. And Joseph knew she and Mary, he and Mary had not entered into relations and how relieved he was at this miracle of God. Perhaps it made him think of things like, am I really going to be the father of this child? Church tradition tells us he did act as the father in terms as if Jesus were an adopted child, treating him truly as his own son.

An important question that I have found false answers to over the years is this: why was Jesus conceived free from original sin? I've got two negative answers. Number one, not because sex is inherently sinful. It is not inherently sinful.

We read of Adam and Eve before the fall. Adam knew Eve. It was part of God's creation order for husbands and wives to love each other in their total relationship, including this aspect of the relationship, and to be fruitful and multiply. That is God's will.

Contrary to Christian teaching early on and through the Middle Ages, notions like this, that every time a couple had sexual intercourse, it shortened their life by a day. So, is it contrary to the biblical teaching is not even funny. Jesus was born free from original sin, not because sex is sinful.

Frankly, I've heard that a little bit, but not much. The next one I've frequently heard is, oh, Jesus was kept free from original sin because no sinful father was involved because we know original sin is transferred through the Father and their sinfulness. Well, I got to tell you, time out.

That's not the reason Jesus was conceived free from original sin. It is true Joseph was a sinner, and it's also true he was not physically involved in the conception of this child. But guess what? Contrary to the Roman notion of the immaculate conception of Mary, she, too, is a sinner.

They're both regarded as godly persons, as righteous persons and so they are. To use Pauline's understanding, they would be justified people who are being sanctified. But

as far as sinfulness, they both were sinners. So, the fact that Joseph wasn't involved does not account for the fact that Jesus was born free from original sin.

As a matter of fact, the biblical text itself is general in Matthew. Twice we read, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. That's what Matthew's words describe, but the angel tells Joseph the very words of God through the angel.

Matthew's words are the words of God, too, but now God addresses him: do not fear to take Mary as your wife, Joseph, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. Luke is more specific. Luke uses the words that we are acquainted with in God coming down and doing things in Old Testament Israel to Israelites and to his people.

How would this be? Since I do not know a man, she says to Gabriel, ESV, since I am a virgin. The angel answered her.

So, the true answer to the question, why was Jesus born free from original sin, is not because sex is sinful. It ain't. It's not because the sinful male was not involved, although he wasn't. A sinful female was involved.

It was because of the Holy Spirit's working within Mary's womb. The Holy Spirit will come upon you. In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit came upon people to perform certain actions and functions, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.

It's God who speaks for Mary. The Holy Spirit's going to do this. You're going to conceive from the Holy Spirit, Matthew's language.

The Spirit will come upon you. I might add, is it a Mormon notion that this language of coming upon is a language of sexuality? That is so absurd. Makes me angry.

No, it's not. The Holy Spirit is a spirit, for one thing. Good grief.

No, it's not the language of sex. But the Spirit is going to come upon her, and God's power in the Holy Spirit will overshadow you, so that this child, the conception of this child, will be the work of God, the Holy Spirit. Here's the result.

The child to be born will be called Holy, the Son of God. Matthew and Luke do not give us a biological explanation. If we need one, here we go.

Mary was a sinner. Mary was truly the mother of our Lord. It's an important point, as the creeds and confessions of the church acknowledge because he was truly human.

Without a father? Yes, without a father. God wanted to show this was a special conception, a supernatural one, and so the Holy Spirit worked. Did Mary not

contribute to her baby? Yes, Mary contributed to her baby, which is what every mother contributes to her baby being born in the history of the world.

DNA and chromosomes. Mary's DNA and chromosomes were in Jesus' little embryonic body. How's that? But wait a second.

If sin is transmitted through the parents or through the parent, wouldn't her contribution have been sinful, tainted by original sin? It's actually a debated point in theology as to how souls are transmitted, and it seems to me we don't have enough information to say for sure how that works. But let's say that is the case, that Mary's stuff was sinful, and that would have been communicated to Jesus, so he would have been conceived sinfully. I'm speaking reverently here, trying to work this through, and it's somewhat speculative, I admit.

Here's my understanding. She was truly his mother. She gave him her DNA and chromosomes, but from the very nanosecond of his conception, her contribution was sanctified.

Now, I'm not saying Jesus was ever a sinful sinner. Mary was a sinner, and her contribution on its own would have been passing on original sin, but it did not, because her sinful contribution from the very second, the very instant God implanted that embryo on her, that egg on her, the wall of her womb, it was holy. The embryo was holy.

Jesus was never a sinner, and we attribute that. The scripture attributes that. It was from the Holy Spirit who came upon her and overshadowed her.

That is the reason Jesus was born free from original sin; it was the Holy Spirit's work. Now, as a matter of fact, the scripture does not give us a Bible, a biological explanation. My vocabulary just got better.

The Spirit sanctified and implanted her fertilized egg by the Spirit supernaturally on her uterine wall. That's the right language. Is that how it happened? I don't know, but maybe so.

Regardless of how it happened, the Holy Spirit was involved, and Mary was really the mother. Those two points are indisputable. The Bible is not interested in the how.

I find a parallel here with the inspiration of Holy Scripture. There, as well, the Bible is concerned with the product of the divine-human interaction, which produces the very words of God. In a similar way, there's divine and human interaction.

There's the Holy Spirit and Mary. The Bible is concerned with the result. An orthodox doctrine of inspiration scripture says it was a matter of concursus.

Here in St. Louis, we had the Missouri and Mississippi rivers flowing together in a concursus, right? One could talk about that in terms of God working, truly working, within real human writers with all their fallibility, corresponding to Mary's sinfulness, to produce his holy word. His holy word is in human words, not God speak. It is in human words, but human words are directed providentially, directed by God, so that the result of their speaking is the very words of God in human speech.

Warfield is right. We need to expand our notion of inspiration to more than the time the writers put the pen to the paper, as it were, or the papyrus or whatever. Yes, papyrus, I guess.

In any case, God providentially directed their whole lives and had Paul study under Gamaliel and had Moses be a member of Pharaoh's court to equip them and the leader in the wilderness wanderings to write the book of Numbers, to equip them so that inspiration involved their whole lives, not merely the time they wrote, but especially the time they wrote. We know little about the psychology or the exact workings of the spirit in the biblical writers. What the Bible emphasizes is that all scripture is inspired of God, or men of old wrote with the result that this was God's very word.

I need 2 Peter 1, and I'm botching it. No prophecy was ever produced; the context speaks of the prophetic word of God, by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. That is, scripture specifically mentions the prophetic aspect of God's word, which is the product of the Holy Spirit carrying along human writers.

Similarly, 2 Timothy 3:16, all scripture is breathed out by God, that is, spoken forth by God, with the result that it is his product. The written word of God is the words of God in inerrant human words, accomplishing infallibly the purposes, all the purposes for which God gave it. In a similar way, although we can't explain the mechanism exactly of how the Holy Spirit worked, perhaps we cannot at all; at least, it's not emphasized, it's not taught, and some theory of that should not become part of the church's doctrine.

I just gave a possibility. The result is plainly taught so that the child to be born will be called holy, the son of God. The incarnation is a great miracle.

It is, along with the sinless life of Jesus, an essential prerequisite for the cross and the empty tomb. God chose to use the virginal conception of our Lord in Mary's womb to bring the Messiah, the promised one, to bring the son of God, the divine King, into the world. We understand it in part; we believe it, we confess it, we teach it, and we rejoice in God's good providence, even special providence in the virginal conception.

We have taken a look at, after our Christological historical theology, the pre-existence of the Son of God, the incarnation of the Son, and now the virginal conception of our Lord, which shall be forever called the virgin birth. I give it up. I can't, and I'm not going to change it.

Next, the deity of Christ is a very critical subject of our study. Nothing is more important, although, ironically, the humanity of Christ is just as important, and evangelical Christians don't seem to understand that. Ultimately, I'm going to work with five key proofs of Jesus' deity, and we're going to find them all in Hebrews 1. Let me just do an overview.

Hebrews 1 teaches, very specially, that Jesus is of the very nature of God. He shares that which makes God to be God. He's the exact representation of the divine essence, nature, essential being, the writer says.

We'll see similar things in Colossians as well. Furthermore, Jesus has the titles of God, Lord, Son of Man, God, Son of God, and two of those, Lord and God, are reflected here in Hebrews 1. We're not claiming that these titles are only and always used for deities. Lord, for example, is used in the New Testament and in the surrounding culture, Greek culture, of human lords and masters with servants.

What we're claiming is, in the way the Bible uses these things, oh my goodness, in Hebrews 1, it's so plain. It's the creator Lord, and it's the Father calling the Son God. These titles are used as divine titles of the Son.

Thirdly, the Son has attributes that belong to God. It's a syllogism. God alone has certain attributes.

A. B. The scripture ascribes those attributes to the Son. C. Ergo, therefore, the Son is God. We saw grace, truth, and glory in John 1. We'll see eternity in Colossians 1 and Revelation 1. We'll see power in Philippians 3. The power Christ has to subdue all things to himself will be exercised in changing our current mortal bodies to be like his glorious immortal body.

That's the power of God. But none of those are in Hebrews 1. Immutability is in Hebrews 1, verses 11 and 12. In contrast to the mutable creation, the Son of God is immutable.

His years know no end, and he remains the same. Most powerfully in scripture, this argument alone is sufficient, this proof alone is sufficient to prove the deity of Christ. Jesus does works that only God performs.

The Old Testament is clear. God alone creates. God alone does the work of providence, maintaining his creation and directing it toward his ends.



God alone redeems. Salvation is of the Lord, Jonah says. God alone judges in the ultimate sense.

God alone will bring things to a consummation. Hebrews 1 astonishingly gives four of those five demonstrations of Christ doing the works of God. He creates, he does the work of providence, he's the Redeemer, and he will consummate all things.

That is incredible. What a passage. The fifth proof occurs here and there in the New Testament.

That is, Jesus receives the worship. That is due God alone. The context is good men receive, refuse worship, excuse me, and good angels refuse worship.

We'll see it in the future from Acts 14. Twice in the book of Revelation, John is overcome by these revelations. He falls down.

Once it gives the appearance of worship, once it says he falls down to worship. Both times the angel says, get up, this is wrong. No, we are both servants of God, whom we worship alone.

Christ receives worship in Hebrews 1 when he enters heaven itself. In his ascension and then sitting at God's right hand, God says, let all God's angels worship him. Jesus is not an angel.

Angels relate to Jesus the way angels relate to God. They worship him. The blind man in John 9 worshipped him.

I'm very slow to say that. Most people prostrating themselves before Jesus are in desperation for a son, a daughter, a servant whom they love, and they're not worshipping. They're crying out to a miracle worker, to a healer, help.

It's not Trinitarian worship. But good grief, in John 9, I think the former blind man is doing something pretty much akin to Christian worship. It's astonishing.

I guess it shouldn't surprise us since John is more developed theologically than the other gospel. Thomas worships Jesus when he says, my Lord and my God, to a fellow Jewish man. John 20:28, all will bow before Jesus in the eschaton.

Philippians 2:10, and 11, all of that is not worship, however. The unsaved will bow unwillingly. All of those five proofs are packed into one passage.

You guessed it. Hebrews chapter 1. John 1 teaches the deity of Christ, as we have seen. Colossians 1 teaches it.

Philippians 2 teaches it at the beginning and end of that great passage in verses 6 through 11. But none of them have all four, none of them has all four of these proofs, which is exactly what Hebrews 1 does. I'd like to read Hebrews 1 and continue on to chapter 2:1 to 4. Remember, the chapter divisions are not inspired.

And if you want to read about that story, it's a fascinating story. The study of the Bible in the Middle Ages or the making of the Bible in the Middle Ages by Benedict the Ward is a fascinating read. Schoolmen in Paris, the professors in Paris in the 1200s or so, were rivals in trying to put chapters in the Bible.

They sort of had a contest, and one guy won out, and that's where we got our chapter divisions. But they're not always good. I had a wonderful and venerable Old Testament professor, Alan McRae, who taught his students, well, many things, although he was past his classroom time when I was under his tutelage as he was president of the school, to which I was just a lowly seminarian, but he taught us by example.

If ever he read from the Bible, he would never stop at the end of a chapter. He'd always go in the next one. Now, sometimes that was not fortuitous, but he made his point.

We shouldn't be boxed in that way. In this case, he's right because Philippians 2:1 to 4 is the application of, sorry, Hebrews 1:1 to 4 is the application. I'll say it again, and maybe I'll get it right.

Hebrews 2:1 to 4 is the application of Hebrews chapter 1. Long ago, the writer wrote, I agree with origin; only God knows for sure who wrote this book; at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days, he has spoken to us by his son. The most fundamental division in God's word is not between Old and New Testaments, which the two verses I just read reflect. The most fundamental theological division in God's word is pre-fall and post-fall because everything changed.

Nevertheless, the second most fundamental division is the Old and New Testaments, and here we have it set forth in a series of contrasts with one underlying fundamental similarity. Long ago, the Old Testament, and in the last days, the New Testament. At many times and in many ways, in or by his son is the correspondent to that.

God spoke to our fathers. God spoke to us as a New Testament counterpart. By the prophets, Old Testament.

By his son, New Testament. Great contrasts. What is the commonality in both Old and New Testaments? God spoke to our fathers.

God has spoken to us by his son. In both Testaments, he is the speaking God. The word of God is exactly that.

The words of the living God, who spoke and who spoke in New Testament times as well. Concerning his son, boy, we see that divine title in John 1. It's not the first word and light that precedes, but then the son is there. We see it in Colossians 1. We see it here in Hebrews 1. His son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, everything will go to Jesus Christ in the end.

Oh, I understand 1 Corinthians 15. And then the son, in fact, will give all things over to the father. I get it, but that's not what it says here.

It doesn't give the full picture because it's exalting the son. The son is the heir of all things through whom also God created the world. The son is the heir.

He's the end. The son is the agent of the father's creation. He's the beginning.

My goodness, the son is all in all. This is similar to Isaiah's words, which are quoted in Revelation more than once. God is the first and the last, the alpha and the omega.

He, the son, is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact representation of his nature. And he upholds the universe by the word of his power after making purification for sins. In that little clause, the writer to the Hebrews introduces the major topic of chapters 7, 8, 9, and 10, the sacrificial picture of the work of the son of God.

Just a few words. Having made purification for sins or after making purifications for sins. He teaches that Christ's work is finished, and therefore, because it was ordained by the Father and accepted by the Father, it is perfect.

It cannot be added to, and because it's finished and perfect, it is effective for anyone who believes in the son. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high. Having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

What name is that? It is the name son as the unfolding verses reveal. For to which of the angels did God ever say, you are my son, Psalm 2, today I have begotten you. Or again, I will be to him a father, he shall be to me a son, 2 Samuel 7. And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, let all God's angels worship him.

Deuteronomy 32. Of the angels, he says, he makes his angels wind and his ministers a flame of fire, Psalm 104. But of the son, he says, your throne, oh God, is forever and ever.

The scepter of righteousness is the scepter of your kingdom. This is from Psalm 45. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness.

Therefore, God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions, who are they? Earthly kings. It's the oil of the anointing of kingship. And he is the heavenly king who is to become the heavenly earthly king on the new earth.

And you, Lord, quoting Psalm 102, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain. They will all wear out like a garment; like a robe, you will roll them up, and like a garment, they will be changed.

But you are the same, and your years will have no end. But to which of the angels has he ever said, sit at my right hand, Psalm 110, until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet? Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation? The answer implied yes. What's going on here? What's this elaborate contrast between the son and angels? As a matter of fact, it's even a more elaborate contrast than that.

If you take into account verses one and two, the son is contrasted to Old Testament prophets in one and two. What the prophets have to do with angels? A lot. In this context, they are both intermediaries of revelation.

They're both mediators of revelation. Prophets, oh, I get it. They brought the word of God.

There's no question about that. But angels? It's hinted at in Deuteronomy. It's made explicit twice by Stephen in Acts 7, and it is taught by Paul himself in Galatians 3. I should really write these things down sometimes.

But in Galatians 3, we read that Moses, I think it doesn't even use the name, but it's very plain. What, then, is the law? Galatians 3:19. It was added because of transgressions until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made. And it was put in place through angels.

Deuteronomy talks about myriads on the mountain of Mount Sinai, and this tells us there were angelic myriads by an intermediary. Every commentary I've ever seen says that is Moses. He's the intermediary.

He's talking about the law. Now, an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one. I don't even need Moses.

I need this put in place through angels. The angels were involved in the giving of the law. So, the contrast is between prophets and angels and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The great prophet and the one superior to angels in every way. They worship him. What's the point? The point is that the revelation he brings is the same word of God that they brought to that that they brought, but it is more powerful.

That is, the gospel is even more important than the law. It has better promises, but it brings more severe warnings. With this background in mind, saying Hebrews 1 is many things.

It is the best place in scripture to show that Jesus is a prophet, priest, and king. He's a priest in verse 3, made purification for sins. He is a prophet in verse 2. In these last days, God has spoken to us by his son.

Supremely, Hebrews 1 is about his coronation as king as he has ascended and sat down at God's right hand. As the whole chapter, from verses 4 to the end, demonstrates. But Hebrews 2:1 to 4 applies the distinction between prophets and angels and Jesus between Old Testament revelation and new in this way.

Therefore, we must pay closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from us. The first of Hebrews great warning passages. Since the message was declared by angels, we now know what that is. That's the law, which proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution.

How shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, plainly the meaning is Jesus, and it was attested to us by those who heard the apostles, while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will. So, in terms of literary context, Hebrews 1, 1 to 2, 4 is a unit. The son is vastly superior to Old Testament prophets and angels who brought the word of God, especially when the law is in view.

Therefore, the gospel is even more important than the law. Don't misunderstand me. Law and gospel are just as equally inspired of God and are his very words.

But if the law brought judgment, the writer says, what would it be like if we turned away from the living God? What he says later on is our God is a consuming fire. What's the point? What's the historical context? We've worked with the literary context pretty carefully, at least in a general way. Historical context: Hebrews is written to profess Jewish Christians who are being persecuted, and we should have

empathy for them in that, to turn away from Jesus to return to Judaism, the pressure might be off them.

Don't do it, the writer says, right out of the box. With this great high Christology in chapter one being applied in two on the four, don't do it. To do it is to commit spiritual suicide.

Jesus is the mediator, the only mediator of the new covenant, which you'll say later in Hebrews more than once, as promised in Jeremiah 31. To turn from him is to turn from the true gospel into the wrath of God. This is at least a general outline of Hebrews one.

In our next lectures, Lord willing, we will continue to think about the deity of Christ from this great passage, seeing the five great historical proofs, and then we will corroborate them by looking at the other Christological passages for each point. May the Lord bless you, and thank you for your good attention.

This is Dr. Robert Peterson in his teaching on Christology. This is session 12, Systematics, Virgin Birth, Luke 2, Matthew 1, and the Deity of Christ, Hebrews 1.