

Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 17

Hebrews 1:5-14

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The writer of Hebrews builds on his assertions that the particular son of God (Jesus) who was the agent of creation, eternal wisdom, and the essence of God, by comparing him to other supernatural sons of God (angels). But what does a phrase like “You are my son, today I have begotten you” mean? Does this mean Jesus was a created being? This episode notes the use of this phrase and other Old Testament passages utilized by the writer of Hebrews to explore its actual meaning. Along the way, the episode discusses two links in Hebrews 1 to the Deuteronomy 32 worldview and the divine council.

Transcript

TS: Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 176: Hebrews 1:5-14. I'm the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey, Mike, how are you doing?

MH: Pretty good. We have something interesting and exciting to talk about this week, both in terms of the content and something else.

TS: Yeah, actually Faithlife is doing another sponsorship, so we appreciate that. This time they're actually going to do the Logos Mobile Education from Faithlife, which lets you learn from leading Christian scholars like yourself who are teaching from all areas of expertise. Courses offer access and instructions from leading theologians, including you! Naked Bible Podcast listeners are going to receive 40% off your Jewish Trinity course by going to www.logos.com/nakedbiblepodcast. Mike, what is the course about?

MH: This is a really good deal. The Jewish Trinity course is a video course that's really oriented around the idea of God as man in the Old Testament—the Old Testament Godhood material (Two Powers in Heaven sort of stuff). This was one of our early Mobile Ed courses.

Some listeners will know that I was one of the founding people involved in this product line. When we were actually thinking about creating Mobile Ed, one of

the thoughts that went into it was—just as the title suggests—mobile ed. You could get an education no matter where you are. We sort of tried to create it very intentionally. The video segments of my course and all the other courses are short, discreet video lecture segments. And then the content of those in post-production... There are people in the building who take the content and produce a transcript from it, and then they use the transcript to link into other sources, either in the software or, in some cases, out of it. You actually sort of get guidance once you watch the video to other material that expands upon the content of the video. It's designed very deliberately. It doesn't matter what platform you use. It's cross-platform. You can use a mobile device, computer, or desktop.

The neat thing is if you took advantage of the free download (and I think you can still take advantage of that), there are other ways to get the platform on your computer, anyway, for free. And the apps are free, too. If you get this course and let's say you start it on your desktop at one location and you have to stop and then you're off busy doing something and you do something else, if you have your phone with you or a hand-held device, it will sync where you left off on that device and you can just pick up where you left off. There's a real convenience factor to this. I can vouch for the content because it's my content. [laughs] But this is a great way to break into Mobile Ed. I get a lot of questions about how people can learn more and whether I can recommend a book... I can do that, but why not take courses from professors all over—not just the U.S, but all over the world.

Mobile Ed right now has close to, I think it's 150 courses. You get Darrell Bock... I was actually with Darrell a couple weeks ago. He was here to give us another course. He's got a half-dozen courses in here. Craig Evans, Mark Futato... It's all fields. It's not just theology and Biblical Studies and Church History, but we have Counseling, we have Pastoral Leadership Courses... There's just a huge amount of content that people can get, and it's very convenient. It is mobile. It's truly mobile. It's what they're doing in their classrooms. I used to be in charge of inviting people to give us their content and it's like, "Look, we want you to come in here and do exactly what you do in class, except you won't have to talk about assignments that are missed, you won't have to review instructions, you won't have to grade anything, you don't have to talk about the football game... You just go through your material." And that's what we want. So you actually get what these professors are teaching at colleges and seminaries and universities all over the world, right there on your desktop and really, any device. It's a great deal. So this is a good way to break into it.

5:00

TS: And again, that's almost half off. That's 40% off the course today at www.logos.com/nakedbiblepodcast. Go get Mike's Jewish Trinity Course now for 40% off. And we thank them again for supporting us. Please go support them by supporting us and go get that course.

MH: Yeah, it's a great deal. That's a significant discount. It's a good deal.

TS: All right, Mike. Well, good deal. Back into chapter 1! Wrapping up chapter 1 of Hebrews.

MH: Yep. Hebrews 1:5-14. True confessions here... I'm going to basically camp on certain parts of the passage. The parts are going to be verses 5-9. I will say a little bit about verse 13 in sort of a little bonus section at the end. Then in verse 14, there's this comment about angels being ministering spirits. I'm not going to say too much about that. We might pick up some angel-talk when we get into chapter 2 (in fact I know we will, obviously). But for today it's going to be 5-14, but really mostly 5-9 is where we're going to spend our time here.

If you're new to the format, this is what we do. We don't do a verse-by-verse exposition of everything. We do just sort of what's interesting and what I think sort of needs some commentary either for apologetic reasons or exegetical reasons or theological reasons. That's how we do it.

So let's jump in here to verse 5. We'll just take it as it comes. I'm not going to read through the whole passage because we do have a good bit to cover here, as you can imagine. I've already alluded to this little bonus round at the end. But verse 5 says:

**⁵ For to which of the angels did God ever say,
 “You are my Son,
 today I have begotten you”?**
**Or again,
 “I will be to him a father,
 and he shall be to me a son”?**

If you have not listened to the previous episode, you really need to before you jump in here. We made the point that one particular son was considered eligible for the status of co-ownership/co-possession/co-sharing of "all things" and then the name of God—the special name that is above all names. We talked about how the first four verses indicate the eternity of this son that distinguishes this particular son from all other heavenly sons of God—all other members of the heavenly host and, frankly, all people and all things in heaven and on earth. This particular son is distinct, and those distinctions make him worthy of this status of being co-regent/co-possessor/co-sharer with God himself. After introducing those thoughts and associating the son with Wisdom, which is an eternal attribute of God and is cast as an independent person in the Old Testament, he says "he is the radiance of the glory of God" and "he is the apaugasma" (a very rare term in the Old Testament, it occurs here and only one other place in the Septuagint). So we know what's going on there with that. He's the exact imprint of his nature—the

hypostasis. He is the essence, the intrinsic reality of the Father. After going through all that, then he says, "Okay, as if I haven't made the point already, let's compare in other ways this particular son to these other heavenly beings."

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

Or again,

**"I will be to him a father,
and he shall be to me a son"?**

Now, right away we look at this as moderns and we think father/son and we think, "One's the father and one's the son, and that means one produced the other or one begat the other." We have this language of "begotten" and we tend to have certain things in our heads when we see these terms, and we read them into the passage. That's who we are—we're modern. But there's just a lot more going into it because, frankly, God *did* say this to other angels if it means "I'm your creator." When you go back to the Old Testament, the Old Testament has a heavenly host. They're called "sons of God." There are passages that talk about God creating all the celestial beings—all things in heaven and earth. God did say, "You are the one I have begotten." So this isn't unique. Just that much should alert us to the fact that there's probably something else going on here besides creation and chronology. And there is. There are a number of ways to establish that.

10:00 I'm going to break this down into essentially three things:

1. There's Old Testament usage of the term "firstborn." In verse 6 and again when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says "Let all God's angels worship him." Consider verses 5 and 6 here in tandem, and then we're going to spend a little more time on verse 5. We look at this and we think chronology and point of origin, and it's really not something you can say because God says that to other members of the heavenly host. That's clear in Old Testament theology. We have to ask, "Well how is 'firstborn' used in the Old Testament? Is it ever used anywhere else?" Yeah, it is. We'll talk about that.
2. We have New Testament usage of the term "firstborn." That's going to be something we have to think about.
3. And then I'm also going to make a point about grammar in one respect—one of these passages.

1. Old Testament

Let me just give you one instance here where "firstborn" is used. In your head, you tell me what the problem is for point-of-origin and chronology. Because that's how Jehovah's witnesses want to take this verse and use it to say that Jesus wasn't eternal and he was created at one point and he was the first thing God created and that's why he's unique and elevated, but he's still created... blah, blah, blah.

Exodus 4:22 has Moses in front of Pharaoh demanding that Pharaoh let the people go because this is what God told him to demand. God is instructing Moses what to say.

²² Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD, Israel is my firstborn son...

Here's the question: Is that true? "Well, of course it's true, Mike, Israel's the son of God just like... ah... Adam!" The firstborn son of God is not the one he produced from Abraham. It's not Isaac. It's not the nation. God's firstborn human creation is actually Adam. So this can't... "But wait a minute, Mike, it says 'firstborn!' Firstborn has to mean the first thing created. It has to be chronologically prior!" No, actually, it doesn't. Calling Israel "my firstborn son," frankly, demonstrates that pretty clearly. Israel is not either individually (with Isaac, the first child of Abraham and Sarah) nor collectively the first human beings God is responsible for. It just isn't. So that significantly undermines this whole chronological approach to this term: firstborn. Try to fix this in your mind: Firstborn refers to a special *status*. It doesn't refer to chronological priority or original point of origin. Now, it can in other contexts, but here's the point: don't get misled (by either the Jehovah's Witnesses or somebody else) into thinking the term necessarily is about chronology and initial/original point of origin. It's not. It's not necessarily about those things. If you look at Exodus 4:22, that just can't be in the picture. The meaning of this term actually transcends this chronological stuff. It refers to a specific status. That's what we need to fix in our minds.

2. New Testament

Let's go to the New Testament. "Firstborn" appears in Paul's epistles three times. We have this one in Hebrews (we don't know if Paul wrote Hebrews, and I would say he didn't). But in Paul, he uses this term three places. First, Colossians 1:15:

¹⁵ He [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

Then you've got Colossians 1:18, which says (still talking about Jesus).

¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

Thirdly, you have Romans 8:29:

²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

"Firstborn among many brothers"... Look at the three references:

- Firstborn of creation
- Firstborn of the dead
- Firstborn among many brothers

15:00

You look at the first one and think, "Maybe that's chronological... that means Jesus is the first thing God created." Chronological priority. And then we look at the second one and say, "Jesus was the first one to be raised from the dead," even though you could obviously debate that. Just go with it for now. What does "firstborn among many brothers" mean? It can't mean that he's the first human that would be glorified because you've got lots of other believers... In other words, you're going to try to argue some chronological priority. "He's the first one, the initiator... ah, there we go. We've got chronological priority now." Again, this is how people are going to think about these terms.

I like Hawthorne's little summary here:

The English word *firstborn* is misleading for it normally suggests someone who is born and therefore created. But this cannot be the significance of the term [in Colossians] since the immediately following words...

A Jehovah's Witness is going to show you the reference here to verse 15, but will they show you what follows in verse 16? Hawthorne says this creation can't be chronological because of what follows in verse 16.

But this cannot be the significance of the term here since the immediately following words (Col 1:16, beginning with *hoti*, "because"), which provide a commentary on the title, emphasize the point that he is the one by whom the whole creation came into being. There are no exceptions, for absolutely everything in creation has been made by him.

Did you catch the point? Listen to the verse. This is Colossians 1:15, and we'll keep going:

¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶ For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible,

whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷ And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Here's the question: How can Jesus be the source of *all* creation and be created? Isn't he, as a created being, included in "all creation?" If he is! Then he *can't* have been created. It implodes. The thought implodes on itself. Either the text means "all creation" or it doesn't. "Oh, it means all the *rest* of creation!" No, that's not what the text says! It says he is the firstborn of *all* creation and by him *all* things were created in heaven and earth, visible and... It's all-encompassing. It's everything.

So how can you have... It's like having the creator created before there was creation. It implodes on itself. Typically, people like the Jehovah's Witnesses will show you verse 15, but they won't show you verse 16 because you might think about it. [laughs] It's either all creation or it's not, and if Jesus is part of that creation, he had to be around to produce all that creation. He couldn't be uncreated. If you get them into a conversation, this where you say, "Maybe he's an uncreated creator!" "Oh yeah, that helps. That solves the problem." Yeah, that does solve the problem. And if he's uncreated, then he's God. Again, the whole idea just implodes on itself.

Again, "firstborn," even in that passage—"firstborn of all creation"—doesn't really work to establish a beginning point for Jesus. I guess with "firstborn of the dead" you could argue what that means in a resurrective sense. There are obviously unique qualities about the resurrection of Christ because in one passage in the Gospels, he takes up his own life—that sort of thing. There are unique things about that. So I don't want to minimize that. But the question is, must the term "firstborn" imply some chronological priority? Maybe it implies some *qualitative* priority or some *qualitative* point of uniqueness or some *status* uniqueness. Maybe that's the better way to say it.

3. Grammatical Issue

If you go to Colossians 1, you have "firstborn of all creation." If you have a reverse interlinear (Logos Bible Software makes this easy because all the words are linked by hand to the original Greek and Hebrew) and you clicked on the word "of" in "firstborn of all creation" you would notice that there's no Greek word there for "of." It's just supplied by the translator.

20:00

If you've taken a little Greek, this is going to be familiar. What we have here is two nouns next to each other (actually an adjective and a noun) and they're genitive. So we have sort of a chain relationship. We've got a nominative noun, a genitive adjective, and a genitive noun. We've got a little genitive chain here. You say, "Well, thanks for the grammar lesson, that really helps." Well, it actually

does help here, because what a genitive does is it creates this X of Y relationship—the relationship of one noun to the other. Here we have "firstborn" and then "creation." Those are the two nouns. What's the relationship between those two nouns? Well, if you put the word "of" in the middle like English translators do, it makes it sound like the first noun (firstborn) is produced by the second or is part of the second, which is a set produced/created. "Firstborn of creation"—that's the way it sounds to our ear in English. The problem is, you actually don't have a word there. So the relationship of the two nouns is open to interpretation.

If you go to verse 18—"firstborn from the dead"—you don't have this ambiguity. You have a preposition (*ek*)—"firstborn from the dead." And if you go to the one in Romans, you have a preposition there. So this is the only one of the three that has this ambiguous relationship—"firstborn of all creation." If you're interested in Greek grammar and you've had at least one year, then you could handle something like Wallace's second-year grammar. But he talks about the genitive at length. I don't want to say "mind-numbing detail" because if you like languages it's just awesome stuff. But it's very detailed. He talks about the genitive relationships, and there are 15 or 20 just from possible semantic relationships between two nouns when you have a genitive. One of them is called the "genitive of subordination." I'm just going to read you what Wallace says here:

The genitive substantive specifies that which is subordinated to or under the dominion of the head noun. Instead of *of* supply the gloss *over* or something like it that suggests dominion or priority.

So you could very well translate (and, frankly, I would say this makes a whole lot of sense and you should) "firstborn of all creation" as "firstborn *over* all creation." That takes the chronology out of it and it assigns a special status to "firstborn." What I just did is legitimate because we don't have a preposition there. We have two nouns in a genitive relationship. The head noun is "firstborn" and the genitive is "creation." This is what exegesis is. You have to determine these relationships according to the rules of grammar, and that is a distinct possibility and I would say it makes a whole lot of sense.

Back to the problem, if you just look at verse 15 you can think, "Maybe there's a point of origin here." If you look at 16, well... if it's *all* creation, how could he be part of that creation and yet produce all creation? It doesn't make any sense. It implodes. So the general point being made here about the firstborn language is (going back to the whole subject matter of the passage here in verses 5 and 6), don't get tripped up by this "firstborn" language. It is not inconsistent with what we read earlier in the first four verses, where this particular son is identified with God because he's identified with God's true essence—what he is in reality and also his eternal attribute of wisdom. He's eternal; he's not created. This "firstborn" language is not overturning that because "firstborn" refers to a status. It does not,

of necessity, refer to point of origin or chronological precedence. It can be kind of misleading.

The whole point, again, of this language is to contrast this particular son with the angels. "For to which of the angels did God ever say..." This is what the writer is going to try to do—contrast this particular son of the first four verses with all the other angels. He says in verse 6, "when he brings the firstborn into the world"... If you go back to the wisdom stuff that we talked about last week, he "brings forth wisdom." Wisdom is the co-creator. Very naturally, all the other angels are going to worship him because he is superior. He has this equal status. He is the hypostasis of the deity—of God himself. He is superior. Which of the other angels—the other sons of God—did God ever say this about? Well, the answer, of course, is none.

25:00 Let's go back just to this situation. When you get into verses 5 and 6, and you can probably tell if you have a contemporary translation, you're going to have some of these statements... "you are my son, today I have begotten you," "I will be to him a father, he will be to me a son," "let all the angels worship him." You're going to have all of that stuff indented or set off because these are quotations from the Old Testament. English Bibles have a stylistic way of indicating that. You have a string here of Old Testament quotations that are really kind of interesting.

The question, again, is rhetorical: "For which of the angels did God ever say this to?" Of course, the answer is "none." There's a rhetorical factor here. But he's going to go into a bunch of these Old Testament passages and talk about how this particular son is superior—how this particular son is characterized in some way as qualitatively different... categorized in some way, and the Old Testament passages that he quotes tend to support that.

We'll just take the first two verses:

**“You are my Son,
today I have begotten you”?**

Or again,

**“I will be to him a father,
and he shall be to me a son”?**

Having declared in verse 4 that this exalted son—this particular son—received a more excellent name than the angels. Again, you have these links to eternity. The writer identifies the name as *my* son. Before it was *a* son. We talked about that last time—one particular son. Now it's *my* son. So there's a bit of a title thing going on here, because he's going to quote the second of these quotations:

**“I will be to him a father,
and he shall be to me a son”?**

He's going to quote 2 Samuel 7—the Davidic Covenant. There's a bit of a particularizing in this citation. Verses 5 and 6, though, together he actually quotes two passages from the Old Testament: Psalm 2:7 and then the one I just mentioned, 2 Samuel 7:14. Both are familiar messianic texts. The first one is about ruling the nations with a rod of iron, and then you've got this Davidic Covenant passage in 2 Samuel 7. So this is familiar messianic territory.

Lane, in his Hebrews commentary, writes this:

There is a certain degree of unresolved tension in the writer's designation of Jesus as Son, since the title can be applied to the pre-existent Son (v 3a–b), to the incarnate Son (v 2a, where the use may be proleptic), and to the exalted Son.

What Lane is saying here is you can use this sonship language of Jesus in three different contexts—pre-existence, his existence as a man, and then his exaltation later on after the cross—after the resurrection and ascension. Continuing with Lane:

It was apparently the writer's conviction that although Jesus was the pre-existent Son of God (cf. 5:8, *καίπερ ὢν υἱός*, “although he was the Son”), he entered into a new dimension in the experience of sonship by virtue of his incarnation, his sacrificial death, and his subsequent exaltation.

What he's saying here is that this sonship language applied to Jesus (the particular son)... We need to think of sonship in different aspects, not just creation and chronological priority. The same language can be used of Jesus at three different stages—who he was and then who he is and who he will be. You can still use the same language. Lane is just pointing out that we have to think about the elasticity of the language and not just go in one direction again, like those who want to see Jesus as a created being.

Back to the two quotations: Psalm 2:7 and 2 Samuel 7:14. I'll focus a little bit on Psalm 2 in a moment for some Divine Council implications. That's going to be our little tack-on at the end, especially the Deuteronomy 32 Worldview. There's something going on in Psalm 2 that if you're familiar with the Deuteronomy 32 Worldview, there's something there that's going to jump out at you. But we'll save that until the end.

Here in this context, some take the first statement as indicating Jesus was a created being, by virtue of the word "begotten."

**⁵ For to which of the angels did God ever say,
“You are my Son,
today I have begotten you”?**

30:00

Some take that as indicating Jesus was created or that Jesus *became* the son of God when adopted by God. Usually that's put at his baptism, when the voice of God from heaven says, "This is my beloved son..." So some people say this either means that Jesus was created or that he was adopted by God. But a few things are conveniently forgotten by those who would take either this creation idea or the adoptionist view of Christology. Do we realize that Psalm 2:7...

**The LORD said to me, “You are my Son;
today I have begotten you.**

... is quoted in other passages besides Hebrews 1:5? Believe it or not, that Psalm actually gets quoted in other places. Those other places defy a connection between the word "begotten" and either a creation moment or an adoption at Jesus' baptism. Let me try to illustrate what I mean here. Let's go to Acts 13:33 (beginning at verse 29). This is when Paul is explaining his ministry to the Gentiles to the Jerusalem church. This is Acts 13. It's at the beginning of Paul's ministry, and they want an explanation of what this crazy guy is doing preaching to Gentiles. If you go to verse 29, it says this:

²⁹ And when they had carried out all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. ³⁰ But God raised him from the dead,³¹ and for many days he appeared to those who had come up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people. ³² And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, ³³ this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm,

**“You are my Son,
today I have begotten you.’**

Paul continues:

³⁴ And as for the fact that he raised him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he has spoken in this way,

“I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.’

³⁵ Therefore he says also in another psalm,

“You will not let your Holy One see corruption.’

What do we have here? Did you notice that in that passage the phrase "today I have begotten you" refers to the resurrection event. So it *can't* be talking about the creation of Jesus. It can't be talking about a creation of the second person of the Trinity or even the birth of Jesus. It has nothing to do with the point of origin of the second person of the Trinity or another divine being or a point of origin of Jesus himself. Why? Because the phrase is *specifically* applied to the moment of resurrection—to the event of the resurrection. It's specifically connected to that event. The point, therefore, is that this phrase is not about chronology. In theory—let's just wonder a little bit because this is going to come back up here—it could be connected to kingship because the resurrection is required for the ascension (when Jesus ascends and sits down at the right hand of the Father). So there's probably a connection to kingship. This phrase "you are my son, today I have begotten you" has nothing to do with his origin. Even if he says it to David, it's not talking about David's point of origin. It's not even talking about Jesus' selection to be king. Here in Acts 13, it's talking about the resurrection! This just defies the way somebody like a Jehovah's Witness would use the phrase.

Let's look elsewhere in the Bible where the phrase is actually used. Here's another one. This one is actually from the book of Hebrews itself. It's a little later in the book—Hebrews 5:5. We'll go back in verse 1. This is the Melchizedek passage. It says this:

For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. ²He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. ³Because of this [the high priest of Israel] is obligated to offer sacrifice for his own sins just as he does for those of the people. ⁴And no one takes this honor for himself, but only when called by God, just as Aaron was.

⁵So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him,

**“You are my Son,
today I have begotten you”;**

⁶as he says also in another place,

**“You are a priest forever,
after the order of Melchizedek.”**

35:00

⁷In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his

reverence. ⁸ **Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered.** ⁹ **And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him,** ¹⁰ **being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.**

We'll leave Hebrews 5 here. The phrase "you are my son, today I have begotten you" isn't connected to any creation point. It isn't connected to any beginning point for a divine being or for Jesus himself. It's not even connected to the resurrection, like it was in Acts 13. It's connected to Christ's *appointment* and his *function* as the great high priest after the order of Melchizedek, which itself is connected to being the sacrifice for sin. In other words, the phrase is connected with becoming the source of eternal salvation. It just has nothing to do with Jesus being a created being. Here it goes to the high priest and him being a sacrifice. In Acts 13 it was the resurrection.

Just one little side-note here, going back to Hebrews 5... Hebrews 5:8 says:

⁸ **Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered.**

Jesus was already a son before the utterance of the phrase "you are my son, today I have begotten you." The phrase is not about chronology. It's not about chronology. Jesus was already a son before we ever get to the point of him offering himself as a sacrifice of sins (like Hebrews 5 connects those two thoughts). And you have to look at these phrases in the ways they're used elsewhere in the New Testament. And in the Old Testament you get the same phrases, as well. You can't just pull one out. Again, this is what cultists do, it's what a Unitarian is going to do, whatever. This is how it's done. You lift out one of these and then you argue the point based on the one that you're focused on. The usage of the same phrase in other places shows that this use—that tactical utilization of the phrase to make one particular point—is not legitimate. You've got to see how the New Testament writers understand these things.

I would say, based on these usages (this variety), that anyone who would connect the phrase "today I have begotten you" with the origin of Jesus—as though he was not pre-existent—is simply guilty of ignoring the scriptural use of the phrase. It's pretty much that simple. The same goes for adoption as Christology. None of these uses are connected to the baptism of Jesus. Did you notice that? None of these uses are connected to the baptism. To argue adoptionism from the phrase "you're my son, today I have begotten you," you would need to argue that God adopted Jesus as his son at the cross or at the resurrection, because that's where the phrases are used. You'd have to argue that God adopted Jesus as his son at the cross or at the resurrection. But you know that's absurd. How do we know that? Because Jesus is referred to as the Son of God many times in the Gospels before either of those events. It just

doesn't work. So you're either going to take the phrase in the context in which it's used, or you're not.

Just because we make these points doesn't mean people aren't going to do it. They are going to do it! They're going to do it every day. You're going to see it on Facebook. You're going to see it all over the place—all over the web. You're going to run into people at work. You'll get into a religious discussion and you'll find someone who rejects the eternality or the pre-existence or the deity of Christ. This is what you're going to get, if they're taught. This is what you're going to get. Next time you get it ask, "You know that phrase, 'you are my son, today I have begotten you' that we're talking about? Where are the other two passages that it's used?" I'll bet they don't know!

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I'm going to offer a simple suggestion here in light of this. We're just camping here on verse 5. Both of the places where it is used—associated with appointment as the high priest after the order of Melchizedek and then the resurrection—both of those are connected to kingship, if you really think about it. Ask yourself, "When did Jesus become king?" When did he (to quote the context of Hebrews 1:3-6) become king? When did he "sit down at the right hand of majesty (1:3)? He did so after he offered himself as a sacrifice. He did so after he was raised from the dead. Jesus became king when he rose from the dead and ascended to the throne of the right hand of God. You say, "So what? Acts 13:33, Hebrews 5:5 describe this chain of events. One of the passages is about him offering himself as a sacrifice for sin and the other is about the resurrection." Well, I'm going to suggest that the phrase "you are my son, today I have begotten you" describes the inauguration of Jesus' kingship. It doesn't describe his creation. It doesn't describe his baptism. It doesn't describe his adoption. It describes the inauguration of his kingship. That's why it's associated with him offering himself as a sacrifice for sin, and it's why it's associated with the resurrection. You need both of those things to happen before Jesus can ascend to the throne at the right hand of the Majesty on High.

In that light, it just makes good sense to have the phrase occur here in Hebrews—right after Hebrews 1:3! Hebrews 1:3 is about ascending to the right hand of the Majesty on High. So when we're thinking about Jesus becoming king and then you throw in this phrase ("you're my son, today I've begotten you"), and then what does he quote right after that? "I will be to him a father and he shall be to me a son." Where does that come from? 2 Samuel 7—the Davidic covenant—which is about kingship. It's very consistent. It's coherent. It's logical. All of these things have a context. So again, I'd suggest that "you are my son, today I have begotten you" means... This is Mike's Expanded Paraphrase here. It means: "You have now taken rule of all things. With me. You have now taken rule, you're now co-possessor. You've gone through the incarnation, you offered yourself, you rose from the dead. Now come back home and sit here at my right hand. You are the rightful and only son who is eligible to co-possess and co-share all things with me and to have my name. You have now taken rule of all things with

me, your father. And I'm not being displaced! (God isn't going anywhere. It's not a succession plan.) You have taken possession of your inheritance. Rule over all things with me. When you died, when you rose again and ascended to the throne, now we will rule together as father and son." That's what the phrase means.

And look at what follows. Before we get into verse 8, I want to say one other little thing here. This isn't the bonus round at the end, but I can't let this go. Just real quickly, in verse 6 when he says:

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

Do you know where that comes from? If you have the ESV and you look at the cross-reference there, it will say it's cited from Deuteronomy 32:43. And in the ESV it'll say "in the Greek text." You know where else it comes from? It comes from the Dead Sea Scrolls. Deuteronomy 32:43, which along with Deuteronomy 32:8...

**⁸When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance,
when he divided mankind,
he fixed the borders of the peoples
according to the number of the sons of God.**

...these are the two places (32:8 and 32:43) where the Dead Sea Scrolls has the demonstrable original text. What am I saying? I'm saying that the writer of Hebrews had access to that text. He quoted not just the Greek (the Greek follows the Dead Sea Scrolls here and actually expands a little bit on it), but the writer of Hebrews had access to that Deuteronomy 32 text that some people that you know, when you try to talk to them about the Deuteronomy 32 Worldview and Divine Council stuff, they say, "That's not what my Bible says in verse 8!" You know what? The writer of Hebrews didn't have your Bible [laughs]! He had Deuteronomy 32 according to the reading at Qumran. This is a great verse, as well... I hate to be recommending stuff like this, but I can't resist. This is a great verse for King-James-only people because they don't have this verse back in their Old Testament—Deuteronomy 32. So, like, he's quoting vapor! "Where did he get the quotation?" Well, it's not back in your King James in Deuteronomy 32, I can tell you that. Because the King James in the Old Testament was done using the Masoretic Text—what they had at their disposal at the time. I guess if you're in a needling/cajoling mood with a King James only person, you throw out Hebrews 1:6. But let's just move on. I don't want to spend too much time on stuff like that, but it is interesting.

To back up a little bit (I just couldn't resist throwing that in here), the meaning of the phrase "you're my son, today I have begotten you" is that you have now taken rule of all things with me, your father. You've taken possession of your inheritance. You're going to rule over all things with me. We're going to rule as father and son. Now, if you look at what follows in verse 8:

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**⁸ But of the Son he says,
 "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever,
 the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom.
⁹ You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness;
 therefore God, your God, has anointed you
 with the oil of gladness beyond your companions."**

In verse 10, he'll address the Son as God—as Lord:

**¹⁰ And,
 "You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning,
 and the heavens are the work of your hands;
¹¹ they will perish, but you remain;
 they will all wear out like a garment,
¹² like a robe you will roll them up,
 like a garment they will be changed.
 But you are the same,
 and your years will have no end."**

Why can he say these things? You know why he can say these things? Because of what we talked about last week. Because this particular son has been identified as the Wisdom of God—the attribute of God that must be eternal because you can't have a dumb deity. You can't have a time when God is hopelessly ignorant—especially before creation or it wouldn't have happened! He has identified this particular son with God. He is the *apaugasma*. He has the wisdom attribute—the wisdom description. He has referred to the Son as the hypostasis of God himself—God's essence, what he is in reality. And if you do that, you can say stuff like this. You can look at the Son and say, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth." Well, of course! He was the agent of creation because he is Wisdom (Proverbs 8). You have to have the Old Testament context to pick some of these things out and to kind of make sense of what they're doing. There's just a lot here. Verse 13:

¹³ And to which of the angels has he ever said,

**“Sit at my right hand
until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet”?**

¹⁴ Are they not all ministering spirits...

In other words, the angels have a lesser role. He never said to any of the angels, "Hey, sit here at my right hand. You're the co-possessor of all things. You're the co-ruler." Instead, the angels have a lesser role.

¹⁴ Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?

Now, isn't that interesting? I don't want to get too far ahead (we're going to hit it in Hebrews 2). But think about this: You've got the other sons of God, you've got the other members of the heavenly host there. None of them qualify because they're not God. None of them qualify for this special status of being the co-possessor/co-ruler and all these things. They're assigned a lesser role. Who are they serving? They're serving you and me—they're serving believers. What is the believer's destiny? The believer's destiny is to rule with Christ! They're actually serving us—who will, in the end, be exalted above them. That's what you've got going here. You're going to get a fuller description of it in Hebrews 2. In Hebrews 1, not only is this particular son superior to all the angels, but you and I are going to have a status because of being united to that particular son, where we are all at this elevated/higher level. Just think about that. We'll get into it more in Hebrews 2. If you've read *Unseen Realm*, you probably remember that chapter. But that's kind of an amazing theological statement to make there.

I want to add another thought here. There are just a lot of things that pop into my head when it comes to this phrase, "you are my son, today I have begotten you." If we're going to follow this trajectory that I've suggested here, if this phrase is really about inheriting the throne of the Kingdom and taking possession of what belonged to God—that this is the rightful status of this particular son... That situation could only be enacted or realized after making himself a sacrifice for sin, rising again, and ascending to the Father (because that's where this phrase is used—Acts 13, Hebrews 5). If that's the case, I would say that kind of brings Philippians 2 into a sharper focus. You have the one who was God and was given the name above all names after humbling himself in the incarnation. Just think of Philippians 2 and this whole "let this mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus" and all that. You have him humbling himself in the incarnation, dying on the cross, rising again to take possession of the throne that belonged to him. So God the Son becomes a man, then he resumes his role as God the Son in his resurrected human body. That's just how the resurrection works. At no time did the Son lose the throne. At no time did he lose the name that he had before the foundation of the world. Rather, he surrendered the throne and acquiesced the

limitations of the incarnation. Both of those were necessities to be the sacrifice for sin.

50:00 And I'll add just a little rabbit-trail here... It was also necessary to fulfill the covenants. You've probably heard me say that before, but these things are necessary—this surrendering of all this—to be the sacrifice for sin. And that is key to redemption, and then you have the resurrection, the ascension... The whole thing is a working system. So this comparison in Hebrews 1 is not just idle theological talk. I especially like the connection in that last verse about the angels being ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation. That isn't all we're inheriting [laughs], if you really know the backdrop of the Council idea. But we're going to get into that more in chapter 2.

As far as this little bonus thing I've hinted at a couple times, let's go back to Psalm 2. For those of you who have read *Unseen Realm* and/or you're familiar with the Divine Council Worldview, take that worldview that derives from Deuteronomy 32 and read Psalm 2 in light of that—and, of course, also in light of Psalm 82, which draws on Deuteronomy 32. There are things in the Psalm that really jump out. Just listen to what it says. I'm going to read a bunch of verses here.

Why do the nations rage

and the peoples plot in vain?

²The kings of the earth set themselves,

and the rulers take counsel together,

against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying,

³“Let us burst their bonds apart

and cast away their cords from us.”

Let's just stop there. "The nations." Who are the nations under dominion? Well, consider the sons of God from Deuteronomy 32. They're enslaved by the sons of God—Psalm 82.

²The kings of the earth set themselves,

and the rulers take counsel together...

Are we talking about earthly rulers or supernatural rulers? Ultimately in the Psalm, you're actually talking about both. But typically, you only get a focus on the human ones. If you include the supernatural ones in here, look at the next verse:

**[They] take counsel together,
against the LORD and against his Anointed [MH: Yahweh and his particular son
that we're talking about in Hebrews], saying,
3 "Let us burst their bonds apart
and cast away their cords from us."**

"We've got to get out from under those guys." It's this statement that they want their autonomy. They know that they themselves are under dominion—they're under a greater power. Look at verse 4 in Psalm 2:

**4 He who sits in the heavens laughs;
the Lord holds them in derision.
5 Then he will speak to them in his wrath,
and terrify them in his fury, saying,
6 "As for me, I have set my King
on Zion, my holy hill."
7 I will tell of the decree:
The LORD said to me, "You are my Son;
today I have begotten you..."**

There's the phrase! If it's associated with... what was it? Offering of himself as a sacrifice for sins (Hebrews 5); Acts 13 is the resurrection. God's response to this is to laugh, first of all, and basically say, "You're not getting out from under my authority at all. And in fact, here's my response: I've set my king on Zion, my holy hill. You are my son, today I have begotten you." In other words, they're not going to know what that means. We know what it means in hindsight because of books like Hebrews and books like Acts. We know what it means in hindsight, but basically it's sort of a cryptic way of saying, "You have no idea what's going to hit you. Instead of this release/autonomy you want, you have no idea of how you're going to be judged—both the degree and how it's going to work." If you just read this without the New Testament, it's very earthly-oriented and seems to be just a bunch of random thoughts. But if you read it in hindsight, there's a lot here that really gets into this whole worldview. Verse 8:

8 Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage...

Christ is going to own the nations, and we're going to own the nations with him. Why? Because of this grafting in. We are the reconstitution of the Council. We're going to displace them.

⁹ You shall break them...

Instead of them breaking the bonds over them held by the greater authority, you—this king who is set on Zion, the "today I have begotten you son"... This whole phrase refers to the idea of the inauguration of kingship and the idea of kingship. "You"—the king...

**⁹ You shall break them with a rod of iron
and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.**

Where is similar phrasing used in the New Testament? It's Revelation 2:26. This is Jesus quoting a messianic Psalm of you and me:

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²⁶ The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, ²⁷ and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father. ²⁸ And I will give him the morning star.

If you've read Unseen Realm, you know this stuff. "Morning star" is a reference to messianic authority. Look at what's going on here and read the Psalm in light of the fuller picture. Almost every verse has something really, really neat in it. Verse 10 :

**¹⁰ Now therefore, O kings, be wise;
be warned, O rulers of the earth.**

¹¹ Serve the LORD with fear...

Let's see some change here! It's a little bit of a plea. On one hand, it's kind of an empty plea because of Psalm 82. They're not going to change.

**¹¹ Serve the LORD with fear,
and rejoice with trembling.**

He doesn't extend an offer of redemption to them, but it's almost like, "You know what's coming, so don't make it any worse [laughing]!"

**¹² Kiss the Son,
lest he be angry, and you perish in the way,
for his wrath is quickly kindled.
Blessed are all who take refuge in him.**

You get this mixture of earthly rulers and heavenly rulers/figures and so on and so forth, but their fate is sealed—even though you have verses 10 and 11: "Hey, serve the Lord with fear and trembling." Their fate is sealed, though, because of verses 7 and 8. And verse 6. There is going to be a messiah, and he is going to be the son ("today I have begotten you") and that is going to mean offering himself as a sacrifice for sin, and that is going to mean the resurrection—all these things we've talked about. It's just a really, really interesting Psalm.

As a way of wrapping this up in one more point, this is what we're familiar with in Old Testament theology: The nations are ruled by earthly kings (of course), referred to as "rulers." And they're also ruled by divine rulers (the sons of God to whom the nations were allotted, and vice-versa). Hence, the kings here could refer to either or both human or divine rulers. The Psalm is about more than the son of David seeing earthly kings under his footstool/authority. It's also about the gods of the nations being subdued by the son of David (messiah) and being broken under his reign. There is actually a similar situation to this in Ugaritic texts outside the Old Testament.

I'm going to put this article in the folder for newsletter subscribers. It's a short article by Lowell Handy called "A Solution for Many Malkm." It's from an annual journal called *Ugarit-Forschungen*, 1988. You have the same thing happening in Ugaritic texts. In the divine realm, you have more than one king—more than one *mlk*, more than one *melek*. Handy's article does a nice job of showing that different members of the Divine Council were called "rulers." You have multiple rulers in Canaanite religion who are under the authority of the high god, El. They have geographical responsibilities and stuff like this. It's this terminology that doesn't just refer to earthly authorities, but it also refers to supernatural authorities. The same term is used for both, and in both situations. The article goes into the fact that, even in earthly bureaucracies you can have more than one person referred to by *mlk/king*. It just means "ruler"—somebody who has authority. Ultimately, there's a hierarchy—there's a highest authority and all that. But it's just an interesting article that shows that in the wider Semitic/Canaanite world, there's this concept about there being Yahweh, the Most High, and then underneath him you have these other rulers of the earth that are allotted to the nations. They ultimately go corrupt and want their autonomy, but as Psalm 2 says, "You ain't gettin' that. Instead you're going to get judgment."

That whole way of thinking is not contrived. It's something that someone in ancient Israel—an ancient Canaanite—would have been quite familiar with. It would have been just part of their worldview. But we miss that because we're modern. We don't have that stuff in the can, so to speak. We don't have it floating around in our heads.

1:00:00

So that's our little bonus—some Divine Council stuff there, and I even threw in Hebrews 1:6 about Deuteronomy 32:43. But let's not miss the fuller point. Just to wrap up here, this language about "you're my son, today I have begotten you" has nothing to do with point of origin or chronology. This is a statement about inheriting the throne of God. And the only one eligible for that is the one who is eternal. He is wisdom. He is the essence of God. None of the other angels are. Again, a lot of what we talk about in Divine Council stuff and *Unseen Realm* really sort of comes to a head here. You can really see it jump out in Hebrews 1—the difference between this particular son and all the other ones. And it's going to get even more dramatic when we drift into chapter 2. We've already gotten a whiff of it here—that the ministering spirits (those who are given a lesser role, the ones to whom the particular son is being compared) are actually assigned to help/serve human believers who will, in the end, have a superior position to them. Back to Paul's 1 Corinthians 6:3:

³ Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life!

Don't you know that you're going to rule over angels? You get a glimpse of it here in Hebrews 1.

TS: And we wonder why some of them didn't like it and rebelled. [laughter]

MH: Yeah. Is that such a mystery? But there's so much irony in verse 14. "All those other guys we've been talking about that aren't at the level of this one... We know what they do. They serve you guys!" And then in the next chapter it's like, "Hey, you guys are going to end up over them." It's just full of irony.

TS: And I don't know how a layman, or anybody reading through Hebrews, is going to take away anything other than "begotten you"...

MH: The real key is looking up where else the phrase occurs and noticing that it can't have anything to do with creation origin.

TS: I'm going to bet that 99% of people do not do that.

MH: I would imagine that's going to be on target.

TS: Hence, the reason why you need to listen to the Naked Bible Podcast.

MH: There you go. Good mini-infomercial there!

TS: All right, Mike, we appreciate it. Looking forward to chapter 2 next week, correct?

MH: Yep. I don't know how far we'll get, but we'll definitely get into chapter 2.

TS: Sounds good. Again, we want to thank Faithlife for sponsoring the show and remind you to go get Mike's Jewish Trinity Mobile Ed course for 40% off right now at www.logos.com/nakedbiblepodcast. That's how you're going to get almost half off there. We encourage everyone to please go get it.

With that, Mike, I just want to thank everybody for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God bless.