

"The Superiority of Jesus Christ over the Angels"

Hebrews 1:4-14

Part 1

Introduction: In our study of the book of Hebrews we have looked so far at Hebrews 1:1-3. Within these verses the writer of Hebrews has shown that Jesus Christ was superior to the Old Testament prophets. The prophets did not have a full picture of Jesus Christ. The Old Testament prophets were given revelations of the Messiah that were not complete. They were accurate and they were beautiful pictures but none of them were able to put the entire picture together. When Jesus came the Picture was complete. God pulled all of the Old Testament revelations together and the Picture was made complete in Christ. It was like you and I working on a jigsaw puzzle and having parts of it placed together but not being able to fit the small parts into one large picture. Then someone steps in the room and they take the remaining puzzle pieces and they connect it all together and the picture comes into view and we are able to see what we could not see before. That is exactly what God did when He sent His Son into this world. The Old Testament Picture was completed. Therefore Jesus was better than the prophets.

Tonight in our study we are coming to the next section which the writer sets before us and in the section he will explain that Jesus is better than the angels. The section we are about to look at will start in verse 4 and go through verse 14. As we enter into this section we are introduced to the main thought of this section in verse 4 and then the writer will take us on a journey to support his opening statement.

I. The Exalted Son

Notice Hebrews 1:4a

Here is the main thought in this section and it is that Jesus is better than the angels.

Now when I looked at this it made me think about something and begin to ask some questions. Why does the writer feel the need to point out the superiority of Jesus Christ over the angels? This question then made me think about the Hebrew believers. What was their view of angels? Apparently their view of angels was different than ours if the writer (inspired by the Holy Spirit) sees the need to use 11 verses to explain to them that Jesus was better than the angels. Therefore I believe we need to spend some time searching the Scriptures to see if we can somehow get an understanding of the Jewish thoughts on angels. Because we have these 11 verses set forth by the writer of Hebrews to show that

Jesus is better than the angels we can know for sure that the Hebrew believers being addressed see the angels in a place of very high honor. Now let me show you some verses that will help us to see this.

In Acts 7 we have the sermon of Steven and in that sermon he said something we need to look at.

Acts 7:51-53

⁵¹ *Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.*

⁵² *Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:*

⁵³ *Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.*

When Steven was speaking to the religious leaders he points out that the law was given by the disposition of angels. The idea is that angels were present when the Law was given and were witnesses to all that took place.

Deuteronomy 33:1-2

And this is the blessing, wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death.

² *And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints[angels]: from his right hand went a fiery law for them.*

Here Moses reflects back to when he had received the Law on Mt. Sinai and as he does he tells of ten thousands of angels that were with God.

Psalms 68:17

¹⁷ *The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place.*

Here we see that when the law was given on Mt. Sinai there were thousands of angels present.

Galatians 3:19

¹⁹ *Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.*

Here again we are told of the angels who were present when the Law was given to Moses.

So from these verses the Hebrew believers would have regarded the angels as the most exalted of God's creatures. This means that the Hebrews would have esteemed the angels higher than man.

Now because Jesus became a man they would have seen Him as inferior to the angels. This is the very reason why we have this section which we are about to step into.

Notice Hebrews 1:4

The writer here tells us that Jesus was "made" so much better than the angels. Let me show you another verse then we will discuss what is meant when we are told that "He was made".

Notice Hebrews 2:7

Here we are told that He was made a little lower than the angels but in verse 4 we are told that He was made so much better than the angels. How are we to understand these two verses?

In Hebrews 2:27 we are to understand this speaks of His incarnation. Jesus being fully God became a man and in God's created order He became a little lower than the angels. Hebrews 1:4 speaks of His exalted position after His resurrection. Let me show you the words of Adolf Saphir.

"Is it more wonderful to see the Son of God in Bethlehem as a little babe, or to see the Son of Man at the right hand of the Father? Is it more marvelous to see the Counselor, the Wonderful, The mighty God, The Prince of Peace, the ever-lasting Father, a child born unto us, and a Son given unto us—or to see the Son of Man, and in Him the dust of earth, seated at the right hand of God? The High Priest entered once a year into the holy of holies; but who would have ventured to abide there, or to take up his position next to the Cherubim, where the glory of the Most High was revealed? But Jesus, the Son of Man, ascended, and by His own power, and in His own right, as well as by the appointment of the Father, He is enthroned, crowned with glory and majesty. On the wings of omnipotent love He came down from heaven; but to return to heaven, omnipotence and love were not

sufficient. It was comparatively easy (if I may use this expression of the most stupendous miracle) for the Son of God to humble Himself, and to come down to this earth; but to return to heaven, it was necessary for Him to be baptized with the baptism of suffering, and to die the death upon the accursed tree. Not as He came down did He ascend again; for it was necessary that He who in infinite grace had taken our position should bear and remove our burden and overcome our enemies. Therefore was His soul straitened to be baptized with His baptism ; and therefore, from the first moment that He appeared in Jerusalem, He knew that the temple of His sacred body was to be broken, and He looked forward to the decease which He should accomplish on that mount Not as He came did He ascend again ; for He came as the Son of God ; but He returned not merely as the Son of God, but as the Son of God incarnate, the Son of David, our brother and our Lord. Not as He came did He ascend again; for He came alone, the Good Shepherd, moved with boundless compassion when He thought of the lost and perishing sheep in the wilderness; but He returned with the saved sheep upon His shoulder, rejoicing and bringing it to a heavenly and eternal home. He went back again, not merely triumphing, but He who had gone forth weeping, bearing precious seed, who Himself had been sown, by His sacrifice unto death, returned, bringing His sheaves with Him. There had been given unto Him in His resurrection the Bride, the Church; she was raised with Him to be seated with Himself in heavenly places. It was when He had by Himself purged our sins that He sat down at the right hand of God; by the power of His blood He entered into the holy of holies; as the Lamb slain God exalted Him, and gave Him a name which is above every name."

This is the thought behind Hebrews 1:4. He is so much better than the angels because of His exalted position at the right hand of the Father.

Hebrews 1:3

³ *Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high:*

Notice the words of Adolf Saphir again:

"The Father said unto Him, Sit thou at my right hand." But it is equally true that the Lord Jesus Himself ascended, entered into the most holy sanctuary, and took His place at the right hand of God. He sat down : this expression shows that it was not merely the exaltation by the Father, but His own act and right ; for Scripture is careful to teach us not only the sub-ordination of the Son, but also His equality with the Father. Thus are we taught that the Father raised up Jesus, and also that Jesus had power to lay down His

life, and He had power to take it again: "The Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep." "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." For this purpose the Son of God came down to earth, that through suffering, and after having purged our sins, He might return to glory, that in His transfigured humanity He should have the glory, which as the Son He had with the Father before the foundation of the world. The cross was the only way to the throne."

Now to help us to understand the exaltation of Jesus we need to consider the excellency of the angels. Let me give you some points about the angels.

1. **Their home is in heaven.**

Matthew 24:36

³⁶ But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

2. **They are extremely powerful.**

Psalm 103:20

²⁰ Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word.

3. **They are God's ministers.**

Psalm 104:4

⁴ Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire:

4. **They surround the throne of God.**

Revelation 5:11

¹¹ And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

5. **They are servants of God to minister to our needs as we pass through this world.**

Hebrews 1:14

¹⁴ Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

The list could go on and on but from these points we can see the excellency of the angels. But the angels in all of their excellency are still in subordination to the MAN Jesus Christ. In His human nature and His glorified human body Jesus has been exalted to the right hand of the Father. The right hand, by the way, speaks of power. The angels are around the throne but He is on the throne! Therefore, He is made so much better than the angels.

II. The Proof

Now the writer is going to give to the Hebrews evidence of why Jesus is so much better than the angels.

Notice Hebrews 1:5

Here in this verse he asks 2 questions:

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

The answer to both of these is that God never called any of His angels "Son", nor did He ever announce that He would be a Father to any. But both of these statements were made concerning Jesus Christ. Let me show you the Scriptures which these are taken from.

1. **For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?**

Psalm 2:1-7

Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?

² *The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying,*

³ *Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.*

⁴ *He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision.*

⁵ *Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.*

⁶ *Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.*

⁷ *I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, **Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.***

2. **And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?**

This statement comes from 2 Samuel 7 where God is giving a message to David through Nathan and in this prophecy God points to Jesus Christ.

2 Samuel 7:12-14a

¹² *And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom.*

¹³ *He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever.*

¹⁴ **I will be his father, and he shall be my son.**

Both of these references point to the coming of a "Son". But there is so much more here. 2 Samuel 7 speaks of Jesus birth. Psalm 2 speaks of Jesus resurrection (Acts 13:33-34). The writer of Hebrews points to the cradle and to the empty tomb. Now listen to this! At His birth the angels sang His praise. When the disciples arrived at the tomb on the morning of the 3rd day after His death the angels announced He was not there but He had risen from the dead and they rolled away the stone so all could see the tomb was empty. Therefore they were His servants therefore He is so much better than the angels.

Conclusion: We must stop here for now but I need to leave you with something to carry home and apply to your life. The writer of Hebrews pointed to verses in the Old Testament which should have been known and probably were known by the readers. But it seems they had never really absorbed the verses. They could most likely quote them but they had never taken the time to study them to get a deeper knowledge of their Lord and for that reason they were shallow believers. This is why it is so important for you and me to learn the Word of God. The deeper the knowledge the better we can endure the tests and the trials of life.