

"The Superiority of Jesus Christ over the Angels"

Hebrews 1:4-14

Part 2

Introduction: Tonight as we come back to our study in the book of Hebrews we are again stepping into some very deep water as we are looking at how the writer is presenting Jesus Christ as so much better than the angels. Last week we started into Hebrews 1:4-14.

Notice Hebrews 1:4

This is the main point of verses 4-14. This verse contains the point which the writer is focused upon and verses 5-14 are all for the purpose of showing why verse 4 is correct.

Now there is something which I need to explain to you that will help you as we come through this book and it is this, we must always look at this book through the main theme because if we don't we will struggle with what the writer is saying. So let me remind you that the theme of this letter is that "Jesus Christ is better". The Hebrew Christians who would receive this letter were considering going back to Judaism because of the persecution which they were facing. It is the writer's goal in this letter to pull them along in their faith and to convince them to go forward instead of backward. Now he does this by showing them that the New Covenant is better than the Old Covenant. That is what we need to keep in mind. That is the writer's goal and we must always look at this letter through the lens of the theme otherwise we will not understand what is being said.

Now with that said I will remind you that in Hebrews 1:1-3 the writer shows us that Jesus was better than the prophets. The prophets were spokesmen for God and were held in high esteem by the Jews but Jesus is better than the prophets because they did not have the entire picture of Him. They recorded some beautiful pictures and types of Jesus Christ but they could not pull the entire picture together. As we had said before their writings were fragmented. But when Jesus came He was the complete fulfillment of all the types and the pictures which the prophets had recorded.

Matthew 5:17

¹⁷ Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

Now for the Hebrews to go back to the Old Covenant be to go back to the rituals and the ceremonies that were incomplete pictures and types of Jesus Christ. There was no longer

a need for those ceremonies and rituals because the Fulfillment was here. Why go through all of what was required under the Old Covenant when they could simply draw closer to Jesus Who was the central theme of the Old Covenant?

Jesus was better because there was no longer a need to go through all the ceremonies and the rituals. They no longer needed to bring a lamb to the altar for a sacrifice because THE Lamb of God had made the ultimate sacrifice.

Now we come to where we were last week.

I. The Exalted Son

Now the writer has set out to show that Jesus is better than the angels. Before we pick up where we left off I need to help you to see these verses through the lens of the theme also. Let me show you a few verses that we looked at last week and then we shall consider the verses before us through the lens of the theme. These verses will show us again the part which the angels had in the Old Covenant.

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.**

Stephen tells us that the Law was given by the disposition of angels. This actually means the angels were mediators in the giving of the Law. That means by giving the Law of God to Moses they stood between two parties that were at variance. The two parties were God and man. We see this in Galatians.

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.*

The angels stood between Moses and God as the mediators when the Law was given.

Now the Hebrews who were reading this letter would have known this and therefore they would have held the angels in high esteem.

But as the writer approaches verses 4-14 he will explain to them that Jesus is a better than the angels for He is the Mediator of the New Covenant. Let me show you some verses that we will look at later in our study of this letter.

Hebrews 8:6

⁶ *But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.*

Hebrews 9:11-15

¹¹ *But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;*

¹² *Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.*

¹³ *For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:*

¹⁴ *How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

¹⁵ *And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.*

From these verses we can see that Jesus is the Mediator of the New Covenant therefore the writer will use 1:4-14 to show why He is a better Mediator than the angels.

1. He has a better name.

Notice Hebrews 1:4

Here the writer tells us that Jesus has a better name than the angels. The next verse will give to us the name.

Notice Hebrews 1:5

We looked in detail at this verse last week but let me just point out that His better name is Son. The word "angel" means "servant" so when Jesus is called Son we can understand that He is better than the angels. The angels are the servants of God but Jesus is the Son of God and that is why He is better than the angels.

Now last week I told you that in verse 5 the writer quotes from the Old Testament. He points to Psalm 2:7 and 2 Samuel 7:14. But the point we need to grasp is the writer uses

the Old Testament to prove His point. In other words the writer goes into the Old Covenant to pull out the Truth which points to Jesus Christ to show that He is better. This is wisdom on the part of the writer for there was no way the Hebrews could deny His words. They came right out of the Old Testament which they held in the highest esteem.

2. **He receives the worship of angels.**

Notice Hebrews 1:6

This verse is very interesting. It is taken from Psalm 97 which we need to look at to get the meaning here.

Psalm 97:1-7

The LORD reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.

² *Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.*

³ *A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about.*

⁴ *His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled.*

⁵ *The hills melted like wax at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.*

⁶ *The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory.*

⁷ *Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: **worship him, all ye gods.***

The end of verse 7 is the verse which Hebrews 1:6 is referring to. But what does it mean when it says, "Worship him, all ye gods"?

I will answer that in a moment but we need to look at Psalm 97:1-7a and determine the time period when this will be fulfilled. Let's go back and read them again. There is no doubt that these verses refer to the end of the tribulation and the Millennial Kingdom of our Lord. Therefore when the command is given to "Worship him, all ye gods" it is pointing to the end of the tribulation and the establishment of the Kingdom. Let me share another verse that will shed some light on this.

Philippians 2:10-11

¹⁰ *That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;*

¹¹ *And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

There is coming a day when every living creature will worship Jesus Christ. Now when Psalm 97 says "all ye gods" it is referring to all created beings that are under Christ in the created order. That would include all angels.

That is the very point of the writer of Hebrews. When Jesus comes back at the end of the Great Tribulation and sets up His Kingdom all angels will worship Him. Now if the angels will worship that means He is greater than the angels.

Notice Hebrews 1:6 again.

The word "firstbegotten" here is defined by Vine's Expository Dictionary as "firstborn". Now if we look in the Old Testament we can see what the meaning of "firstborn" is.

Genesis 49:3

³ *Reuben, thou art my firstborn, [now he defines the firstborn] my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power:*

Here in this verse we can see that "firstborn" in the Bible refers to position and power. In Hebrews 1:6 when Jesus is referred to as the "firstborn" it is a reference to His position and His power. In other words it means that He is worthy of worship and praise. Therefore, He is greater than the angels and they will worship Him.

Next we see that He is better than the angels because of:

3. His nature.

The remaining verses of Hebrews 1 are far deeper than we can ever imagine. They are the greatest verses in the Bible pertaining to the Deity of Jesus Christ.

Notice Hebrews 1:7

This is a quote from Psalm 104.

Psalm 104:1-5

Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty.

² *Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain:*

³ *Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind:*

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

⁵ *Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever.*

Hebrews 1:7 is taken from Psalm 104:4 which is underlined. The word "maketh" can mean "to appoint" or it can mean "fashioned or made". The context of this Psalm is creation and God's power over creation. Therefore the word "made" can refer to both "created" and "appointed". Jesus Christ did both. He created the angels and He appointed the angels to their ministries.

Notice Hebrews 1:7 again.

Notice the word "his". This helps us to see that the angels belong to Jesus. He created the angels, He appointed the angels to their service and they belong to Him. Therefore based on Psalm 104 we can see that since Jesus created, appointed, and owns the angels we can conclude that He is so much better than the angels.

There is something else here in verse 7 that we will find to be very interesting.

Hebrews 1:7

⁷ *And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.*

The word "spirits" could also be translated "winds". The word "ministers" means "servants". Now this is very interesting. Wind and fire are both tools which our Lord uses to carry out His will. The idea here is that the angels are the servants of Jesus Christ and are used by Him in carrying out the will of God also. He has complete power over the angels just as He has complete power over wind and fire.

Angels are used by our Lord for many things and we will look at some of them next week.

Conclusion:

Let me leave you with something to apply to your life. Since Jesus is better than the angels in that He created them, He appoints them, He owns them, and he is in complete control over them: we can rest assured that He is also in control of all the situations which we face in this life. What a comfort all of this would have been to the Hebrew Christians. They were going through severe persecution but from all of this they would know that

Jesus was in control. So it is also in our lives. There is not one thing that happens that is out of the control of our God.

In 2 Kings 6 the king of Syria sent a large military to capture Elisha. There was with Elisha a young man who became very afraid. Elisha then prayed for him and God did something amazing.

2 Kings 6:15-17

¹⁵ *And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do?*

¹⁶ *And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.*

¹⁷ *And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, **the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.***

They were surrounded and protected by a great multitude of angels. So are we!