

"The Superiority of Jesus Christ over the Angels"

Hebrews 1:4-14

Part 3

Introduction: Last week in our study of the book of Hebrews we were looking at chapter 1:4-14 and within these verses the writer is explaining to his readers that Jesus Christ is better than the angels. We will get back into this study tonight but before we do I want to refresh your memory on a few thoughts.

- 1. Everything we look at in this letter must be studied through the "lens" of the theme of the letter.**

The writer, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, had written this letter to Hebrew Christians who were being persecuted for their faith in Christ. They had been ostracized from their communities because they were now followers of Jesus Christ. The pressure was so great within their lives that they were considering going back to Judaism or back to the Old Covenant. The Temple is still standing at the time this letter was written and the sacrificial system was in operation but these Hebrew Christians had been excluded because of their faith in Christ. They were being treated worse than the Gentiles because they were not even permitted to set foot on the Temple grounds. The writer of Hebrews uses this letter to do all he can to pull them forward and to keep them from going back to the Old Covenant. In this letter it is the writer's goal to show his readers that New Covenant and the Mediator of the New Covenant are much better than the Old Covenant. So the theme of the letter is that Jesus Christ and the New Covenant are better than the Old Covenant and all that was connected with it.

So when we look at a passage we must keep in mind that the writer is using the passage to help us to see that Jesus and the New Covenant are better. Our responsibility as students of the Word is to search the passage and see how it was connected with the Hebrew Christians so that we can understand it in the proper context.

2. **The second thought we need to keep in mind (for the section we are in) is the Hebrew's view of the angels.**

These Hebrews held the angels in high esteem because the angels were the mediators of the Old Covenant. Stephen gives us some insight into how the Jewish people viewed the angels in his sermon in Acts 7.

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.

In Galatians Paul also gives us some insight.

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.

A mediator was someone who stood between two parties that were at variance. The angels stood between Moses and God when the Law or the Old Covenant was given. The Hebrews knew this and therefore

they held the angels in high esteem. But there was now a better Covenant and there was a better Mediator who is Christ Jesus. That is the point which the writer is making in Hebrews 1:4-14. The Hebrews were considering going back under the Old Covenant in which the angels were the mediators and the writer is telling them there is a better Covenant and Jesus is the Mediator and He is so much better than the angels.

Now the writer lists the reasons why Jesus is better than the angels.

i. **He has a better name.**

Notice Hebrews 1:4

The first part of verse 4 can be seen as the heading for this entire section. All the verses that follow are given to prove the statement made in this verse which is that Jesus is so much better than the angels.

Notice Hebrews 1:5

The word "angel" means "servant". The angels are servants but Jesus is the Son of God and therefore He is better than the angels.

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

Notice Hebrews 1:6

This verse reaches back into the Old Testament to Psalm 97 which we looked at last week. Psalm 97 points to the reign of Jesus Christ in the coming Kingdom and it will be there that the angels will worship Him. This 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.

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

iii. **His Nature.**

Notice Hebrews 1:7

We looked at this verse last week but we need to be reminded of what the writer is saying here. This verse is 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.*

There are several interesting points which we need to see within this verse.

1. The word "maketh" can mean two things. It can mean "to make" or "to fashion" and it can also mean "to appoint". Both of these meanings apply to the angels. They were created by Jesus Christ and they were appointed to be His servants.
2. The second point we need to see in this verse is that the angels are HIS servants. He created them and they belong to Him.

3. The word "spirits" means "winds". The verse tells us His angels are "winds" and "flames". I believe the idea here is twofold, Jesus is in control of the wind and the fire and both are used by Him to carry out His will. In the same way the angels are under His control and they also are used by Him to carry out His will.

With all of this said we can clearly see why Jesus is so much better than the angels. They were created by Him, they were appointed by Him to be His servants, and they are under His control to carry out His will. In the book of Revelation we can see over and over that angels will be used by God during the tribulation to bring judgment upon the world. Therefore we can understand that Jesus is so much better than the angels because of what is recorded in Hebrews 1:7. But there is more.

Now verses 8-13 will present to us the very best verses on the Deity of Jesus Christ. That is these verses will leave us with no doubt that Jesus was God in the flesh.

Notice Hebrews 1:8

The first word of the verse tells us there is a contrast which is coming in this verse. The contrast is between what is recorded in verse 7 and what is recorded in verse 8. Let me show you the contrast.

Hebrews 1:7

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

In this verse God said concerning the angels they were His servants created for His use.

Hebrews 1:8

⁸ ***But*** unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

Here is the contrast. He said the angels were His servants but unto Jesus He said, "Thy throne, O God is forever and ever".

This is the greatest statement concerning the Deity of Jesus Christ. Here we see that the Father calls Him GOD. This is so important for us to understand and to hold onto. There are many religious groups that do not believe that Jesus Christ was God. They believe He was "a god" but they do not believe He was THE GOD. The Jehovah's Witnesses are one such group who deny this Truth. Now I want to tell you something about anyone who denies the Deity of Jesus Christ but at the same time they claim to know Him as their Savior. **THEY ARE NOT SAVED!** They are worshipping a different god or a different Jesus!

The True God became a man in the Person of Jesus Christ and for someone to deny this is to reject the True God. But let me ask some questions and then give you the answers. Is it really that important that Jesus was God? Does it really matter that some teach He was just a "righteous man" but He was not God? Is it not enough to believe that "Jesus the Righteous Man" died for our sins?

The answer to those questions is, "Yes it is very important that Jesus was God and not just a "righteous man"! Let me explain two major problems for those who do not believe in the Deity of Jesus Christ:

1. **One of the problems is they are guilty of suppressing the Truth of God's Word.**

The Bible is crystal clear that Jesus Christ was God in the flesh as we shall see as we continue to work our way through this section of Hebrews. There are also many other verses that speak of His Deity.

Isaiah 7:14

¹⁴ *Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*

Matthew 1:20-23

²⁰ *But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.*

²¹ *And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.*

²² *Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,*

²³ *Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.*

John 1:1-3

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

² *The same was in the beginning with God.*

³ *All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.*

These are just a few verses but we can see that the Bible clearly states that Jesus Christ was God in the flesh. Not "a god" but THE

GOD. Therefore, when people deny this Truth they are guilty of suppressing the Truth of God's Word.

Romans 1:18

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

Those who suppress the Truth are in danger of the judgment of God.

2. **Those who deny the Deity of Jesus Christ take away all hope for the human race.**

Let me explain this to you; if Jesus Christ was just a "righteous man" and He was not God then His death on the cross was all for nothing. You see God required a perfect sinless sacrifice for the payment for our sins. This can be seen in the lamb that was to be used for the Passover.

Exodus 12:5

⁵ Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats:

The lamb was to be "without blemish" which is a picture of the sinless perfection of THE LAMB of God who would die for our sins.

So God required a sinless sacrifice for our sins. Now if Jesus was not God then that means He had to have an earthly father. Just so you know this, Joseph was not His father. He himself even said this.

When Jesus was 12 years old He was separated from His parents in a crowd and when Mary found Him she said something that we need to see.

Luke 2:48-49

⁴⁸ *And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, **thy father** and I have sought thee sorrowing.*

⁴⁹ *And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about **my Father's** business?*

She referred to Joseph as His father but Jesus corrected her and reminded her that God was His Father.

So back to the thought; if Jesus had an earthly father then He would have been born with a sin nature for the sin nature is passed through the seed of the man. Therefore He would have been a sinner just as we are. That would mean that He would not qualify to be the sacrifice for our sins! That would mean that we have no hope because His death would have been no different than any other man that died.

But He was God! God was the only One who would qualify to be our Savior. He is sinless but God is a Spirit and it is impossible for a spirit to die. Death happens when the spirit is separated from the body. So God took upon Himself a human body and was born of a VIRGIN (NO EARTHLY FATHER) and He lived here for 33 years and then He went to the cross and He allowed Himself to be nailed to the cross as our sinless Substitute. He was buried and He rose from the dead on the 3rd day. Now He is alive forever more! Our Hope is alive!

Conclusion:

Notice Hebrews 1:8 again.

God the Father said to the God the Son, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever."

The New Covenant is better than the Old Covenant because Jesus, Who is so much better than the angels, is the Mediator of the New Covenant and He is God. Next week we will get through more of the verses that pertain to the Deity of Jesus Christ.