

Hebrews 1:4-14

“Better than angels”

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I. Introduction

The author established a sevenfold superiority of Jesus over the prophets with regards to a communicator of a completed revelation instead of a progressive revelation. Now he focuses upon Jesus superiority over the angels. The abruptness of verse 4 when the author had been just discussing the prophets would cause most of us English readers confusion. “*Why does the author now bring up a comparison between Jesus and the angels.*” The subject matter has been God’s direct desire to communicate with His creation whom we are told has done so at “various times” and “various WAY’S”. The author clearly established the perfection of Jesus as the Son of God as being greater than the imperfection of mere men, the prophets. But the author knows his readers and presupposes a question these Jewish believers would have asked, “*What about God’s use of angelic beings to make himself known to His creation in the 1st testament?*” There are 13 such examples in the First Testament where God revealed Himself in or through angelic form to Israel, without becoming the Son of God, which the author’s readers would have been aware of. (Gen. 18:2-15, 16:7-14, 19:1-22, 28:10-12, Ex. 3:1, Num. 22:31-55, Josh. 5:13-15, Jud. 2:1-4, 6:11-24, 13:6-21, 2 Sam. 24:16, Dan. 6:21, Zech.

2:3) So what we now see is that to the author “**The FOCUS of the subject HAS changed (prophets to angels) while the subject has NOT (Jesus’ superiority as God’s final revelation)!**” The comparison in these next verses is that God no longer accommodated the limitations of mankind with the use of angels because of His Son’s incarnation. The connection between these two sections is still the author showing that superiority of the New Testament revelation from the 1st Testament revelation and this time because the Son is superior to angels. To do this **the author will quote seven 1st testament scriptures that point to Jesus superiority.**

II. Vs. 4-5 Better name

Vs. 4 *The author starts off by saying that Jesus had “become so much better than angels..”*: At issue for the writer is the exact time in which Jesus showed Himself to mankind as greater than angels. The writer is not denying that Jesus has always been better than angels He is talking about when mankind recognized this as John says in 1:14 “*We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father..*” The answer as to when this occurred is the very next words, “*As He by **INHERITANCE** obtained a more excellent name than they.*” Jesus showed himself much better than the angels after his death burial and resurrection where He sat down at the right hand of the Father.

Vs. 5 Staying on this theme the writer of Hebrews asks and answers a rhetorical question, “*For to which of the angels did He ever say: You are My Son, today I have begotten You.*”

The **first quotation** is from **Psalms 2:7**. The word “Son” in the Greek is in the emphatic position which is far different than how the angels as they were sometimes referred to as the “**sons of God**”. In the case of angels this terms “sons of God” is collective as a group where as when applied to Jesus “Son of God” unique and individually, as the words “You

are MY SON” implies. The word “BEGOTTEN” in the Greek does not refer to either Jesus’ eternal generation for the Father or His incarnation in time when He became the Son of Man. Instead this phrase is in the context of the psalm of celebration when Solomon was ascending the throne of his father David. So the “begotten you” has to do with Jesus as the perfect King of Kings. It’s Jesus coronation that was begotten not His physical presence. The writer’s point is NOT Jesus entrance into LIFE but His entrance to His office as King of Kings. The reminder to the readers is “*What angel ever ascended to the throne of God?*” Jesus has a greater relationship with the Father than do angels and “blood is always thicker than water!” C.S. Lewis points out that, “*When we make something with our hands it is always something different than what we are. But when we have children though our bodies they are always dearer to us than what we have made with our hands because they are a part of us.*” **The angels were made; the Son was begotten and what we beget always has the same nature we have.**

The **second quote** in verse 5 is from **2 Sam 7:14** and again is placed into the context of Solomon. But when you look at the history of Solomon the kingdom will become divided where as Jesus’ kingdom is eternal. The writer leaves out a part of this scripture applying only the words “*I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son.*” This was never said of the angels as they were sons of God by creation and Jesus is the Son of God three unique ways:

- By eternal generation: Always has been always will be
- By His incarnation: The only perfect sacrifice to take away the sin of man
- By His relationship as Messiah at His resurrection. Showing that His sacrifice was accepted

This is how Jesus inherited a better name than the angels.

III. Vs. 6 The One worshipped

Vs. 6 **The third quotation** is from **Deut 32:43 and Psalm 96:7**. The phrase “*But when He again brings the firstborn into the world..*” reveals that the writer is speaking of Jesus Second coming and the Greek has it occurring at an indefinite time in the future, but viewed as completed. The word “firstborn” in the Greek speaks of Jesus priority and sovereignty over all creation. The author is speaking of a future time when all the angels will worship Him as Messiah. The return of Jesus to the earth to reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords will be accompanied by a host of angels. Second Thessalonians 1:7 says that “*When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels..*” We are told in 1 Peter 1:12 these are some of the things the angels desire to look into. The argument that the writer is making is that **Jesus is greater than the angels by the demonstration of their worship of Him. We only worship that which is superior to us. The worship of the angels at Bethlehem is testimony to the deity of the babe in the manger.** John Bunyan said, “*If Jesus Christ be not God, then heaven will be filled with idolaters.*” Revelation and Daniel, give us a glimpse into the heavenly realms where, **we see ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of angels engaged in worshipping the Son.**

IV. Vs. 7-9 Better nature

Vs. 7 The **fourth quotation** is from **Psalm 104:4** the word “spirits” is the word winds and the emphasis is upon the variableness of the angelic nature. What are angels? Servants and ministers, depicted by wind and fire. In our daily life wind and fire are two elements which are more than man can handle at times as we can’t always control them, yet they can be made to be servants of men. These symbolize the angels, superior in

being to men, yet servants of men. The point of the writer is to contrast what the angels are to Who Jesus is. They are fitted to their character to special service and as such they are changeable compared to Jesus who is their ruler and unchangeable. Jesus is the creator and Master of the angels, superior to them in every way and as such as the final word better than the 1st testament that the angels were used to make God known.

Vs. 8-9 The **fifth quotation** is from **Psalms 45:6-7** and the twice repeated word “righteousness” in verses 8 and 9 are actually two different words in the Greek: In verse 8 the word means “uprightness” where the second word means that which conforms to the standard of God’s Holy character. The word “anointed” in verse 9 is always used of the Holy Spirit and this quotation is referring to the anointing of the Holy Spirit upon Him for the three-fold office as prophet, priest and king which took place at Jesus’ baptism. The point the writer is making is that Jesus is the ORIGINATOR of all things He is the Lord of all including the angels as He is their Lord and they are His servants.

V. Vs. 10-12 Superior existence

Vs. 10-12 The **sixth quote** is from Psalm 102:25-27 and is used in support of the unchangeable nature, eternal power and majesty of Jesus is best seen in the fact that He is the one who laid the foundations of the earth and fashioned the heavens. **Christ is not only the originator, but the sustainer of the universe, the one behind all things, eternally keeping it going until at last it runs down.** Here in verse 11 described very plainly is what has been called The Second Law of Thermodynamics, the degenerative faculty in the universe. All things will grow old like a garment, but not the one who made them and keeps them, i.e., the Son. The word “THEY” in the Greek refers back not to the earth but the heavens which perish as compared to Jesus who we are told is permanent

which is what Jesus had said in Matthew 24:35 where He said, “*Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.*” The angels being a part of the Son’s creation are subject to change as are the heavens and the earth but Jesus is the Creator and as such as the writer will say in chapter 13:8 is the “*same yesterday, today and forever.*”

VI. Vs. 13-14 Greater destiny

Vs. 13 The **seventh quote** is from **Psalm 110:1** and these words were spoken to a Son never to an angel. Jesus is the One who waits at the end of history, the One for whom all things exist, and toward whom all things are moving, the heir of all things. All things find their purpose and meaning only as they relate to him. The word “sit” in the Greek is a word that means “be sitting” and describes a permanent place. Sitting permanently at the Father’s right hand speaks of royal dignity and position. Now mere created angel could ever sit at the right hand of the Father.

Vs. 14 The author comes back to the purpose and work of angels as servants to do the work of Jesus as He sends them at His will. Jesus is the co-ruler with the Father and angels are His servants appointed to minister to the heirs of redemption.

Next week we take up the warning to these same Jewish believers who had made of profession of faith in Jesus, left the temple sacrifices and embraced Jesus as the Great High Priest that if they renounced this profession and returned back to the sacrifices they were in grave danger.