

CHRIST, BETTER THAN THE ANGELS

Hebrews 1:4-14

Introduction:

- All throughout Hebrews we read about Jesus, the superior savior
- The key word is: better
- We often best understand things when they are set in contrast to other things. So the author compares Jesus to the prophets and the verdict- Better. Next he compares Jesus to the angels

I. THE MINISTRY OF ANGELS

- a. There are many unbiblical views of angels today (Christians become angels, angels don't exist, etc.)
- b. The only angels with wings are the cherubim and seraphim
- c. Angels are God's "ministering spirits" - v. 14
 - i. This speaks to God's governance over the universe
 - ii. God is God of order
- d. Created spirit beings
 - i. Angels are higher in order than man (Hebrews 2:7). In eternity saints will rule over the angels (I Cor. 6:3)
 - ii. They were all created holy in nature, but some fell in disobedience in following Satan- Before the fall, angels appear to have had full freedom of choice.
 - iii. After the Fall, the righteous angels were confirmed in their righteousness and the fallen were confirmed in their wickedness.
- e. Messenger- the Greek word angelos means "messenger," one sent with a message, a being who comes from God
- f. The Jews counted it one of their greatest privileges that the Law of Moses was given by these messengers sent directly from God's throne (Heb 2:2-3, Acts 7:53-

Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.,
Gal 3:19)

- g. Angels were the “go-between” or mediator for Moses when he received the Law from God.
- h. As great as angels are, they are creatures not the Creator.

II. THE MORE EXCELLENT NAME OF CHRIST

- a. We only know the names of three angels Lucifer (also known as Satan, Michael, and Gabriel).
- b. But the Lord Jesus Christ has "a more excellent name" than the angels!
- c. Though the Old Covenant came by the hands of angels to Moses, a better covenant came by a better being, Jesus. The gospel came by Jesus, who is superior to the angels.
- d. There was a dangerous tendency to worship angels developing in the early Church (Colossians 2:18, Galatians 1:8). This came from the Jews who were in great awe of them, no wonder John was tempted to worship one in Revelation!
- e. There was also the heretical idea that Jesus Himself was an angel! (JW's today)
- f. V. 4- A more excellent name than they: Jesus' superior status is demonstrated by a superior name, which is not merely a title, but a description of His nature and character.
- g. Philippians 2- Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow...
- h. V. 4- Interestingly, this tells us that Jesus became better than the angels. We could say that He is eternally better than the angels, but He also became better than the angels in the sense of public recognition

III. THE SONSHIP OF CHRIST

- a. (Hbr 1:5) Jesus is superior to the angels because He is the Son of God
- b. You are My Son: God the Father calls Jesus, “Son” – the more excellent name. This shows that Jesus is greater than the angels because no angel was ever given

this great name. Though the angels may collectively be called “sons of God” (such as in Job 1:6), but no angel is ever given that title individually- THE Son of God

- c. Since the book of Hebrews was written to Jewish believers, there are many Old Testament references in the epistle. Many of these OT Messianic passages are not easily recognized as such. For example, II Samuel 7:14 (quoted in Hebrews 1:5) refers to Solomon. Holy Spirit as clearly planted seeds that are now unfolding
- d. The Spirit of God takes this prophecy regarding Solomon and applies it to the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. II Sam. 7:12-16; Psalm 89:33-37).
- e. In the first part of Hebrews 1:5, the author quotes from Psalm 2, a Messianic psalm. Psalm 2:7 says, "The LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee" (cf. Heb. 1:5).
- f. The Great Mystery that God has a Son
 - i. Eternal Sonship- The second Person of the triune Godhead has eternally existed as the Son. In other words, there was never a time when He was not the Son of God, and there has always been a Father/Son relationship within the Godhead.
 - ii. This day have I begotten You: The word begotten speaks of the equal nature between the Father and Son.
 - iii. Begotten- Helps us understand, in part, the relationship between God the Father, and Jesus (union, love, etc.). It means unique, no peer or equal, not in the normal sense of begetting children
 - iv. See John 5:17-18
 - v. Begetting is a metaphor, a picture, that tries to hold two truths together: (1) God the Father is not God the Son and God the Son is not God the Father; they are distinct persons, and can relate to each other. But (2) the Father and the Son are one God not two Gods

- g. The firstbegotten: This word was used as an metaphor. Since the firstborn son was “first in line” and received the position of favor and honor, the title “firstborn” indicated that someone was of the highest position and honor. First in rank.
- h. Many of those not born first in the Bible are given the title “firstborn.” David is an example of this (Psalm 89:27) and so is Ephraim (Jeremiah 31:9). See also Ex 4:22
- i. This is its meaning in Hebrews 11:17 when the writer refers to Isaac as Abraham's "only begotten son" (KJV). Abraham had more than one son, but Isaac was the only son he had by Sarah and the only son of the covenant. Therefore, it is the uniqueness of Isaac among the other sons
- j. These verses refer to our Lord's public recognition as the eternal Son of God.
- k. The words "this day" (Heb. 1:5; Psalm 2:7) refer to our Lord's incarnation and His resurrection. Col 1:18- “firstborn from the dead”
- l. See also Acts 13:33
- m. V. 6 Let all the angels of God worship Him: Jesus is superior because He is the object of angelic worship, not an angelic worshipper. They worship Him; He does not worship them.

Conclusion:

- Understanding how Jesus is better than the angels helps us to understand how He is better than anyone or anything in our life.
- In this sense, the purpose of Hebrews is like the purpose of the Transfiguration of Jesus mentioned in the Gospels. They each cry out and say, “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!” (Mark 9:7)
- Angels could tell us what God is like, and tell us about life- Christ has, and is, the life of God!