

**SHC Hebrews 003 -- 1:4 - 2:18**  
**Jesus is So Much Better Than the Angels**  
2/28/2021

**Introduction**

The original readers of this letter we call "Hebrews" needed encouragement because their faith in Jesus was being stressed by their fellow Jewish brethren who were calling them away from their faith in Jesus as the promised Messiah and back to Judaism -- the faith in God they had practiced before Jesus. The writer seeks to encourage them by setting before them the supremacy of Jesus over all others. Jesus is in fact the Messiah their God had promised them and their forefathers, as was recorded in their Scriptures, and as such He was the best and most ultimate expression of God and the One they had been hoping would come and set all things right. He was and is better in every way and should not be abandoned, but embraced.

We saw last week that Jesus was superior to the prophets to and through whom God had in the past spoken in a variety of times and ways. In the long passage before us today the writer shows that Jesus is also superior to the angles through whom God had spoken and ministered to the people of Israel in the past. Following Pastor Kit's lead, we will look at all of chapters 1 and 2 in an overview today and then take a more detailed look at smaller sections of the passage in the weeks ahead.

We will continue what I hope to maintain as our standard approach throughout this series seeking to first get at the main point of each passage we consider, then play close attention to what the passage says about Jesus, and finally wrestling with the implications to us of both who Jesus is and what God has done in and through Him.

**Read 1:1-4**

**Main Point of Passage**

Jesus is 1) as much better than the angels, as 2) His inherited name (human **Son** to God the Father) is more excellent name than theirs -- and both are true; therefore we should pay careful attention to what we have heard concerning Him (2:1) remembering that the truth of Jesus is the truth of us in our union with Him by faith through His Spirit.

2:1: For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away *from it*.

**What Verse 4 Say About Jesus**

**Jesus is better than the angels!**

**What does "better" mean? It means better!** The Bible and common sense both encourage us to let go of what is inferior if it enables us to grab hold of what is better.

**Common Sense**

Nathaniel upgraded from hobbyist grade band saw to a professional grade band saw when he learned the value of a better saw and had the opportunity to upgrade.

## **Bible**

### **Jesus Parable of Hidden Treasure**

Matthew 13:44 "The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes and sells everything that he has, and buys that field.

### **Jesus Parable of A Costly Pearl**

Matthew 13:45 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, 46 and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold everything that he had and bought it.

Jesus is king of the kingdom of heaven and He Himself is the ultimate "treasure" and "pearl" "found" and valued so highly that it is worth "sell[ing] everything" we have to retain Him.

Jesus is better than the angels and the angels are pretty darn good! Remember the angels in OT the Hebrew readers of this letter would have easily recalled<sup>1</sup>... Remember the angels the 1st century Christians might have seen or heard of in Jesus' time<sup>2</sup>... That Jesus is better than the angels is no small statement saying He is great indeed.

How is it true that Jesus is better than angels?

4b partly explains **how Jesus is better** and partly shows **how much** better He is.

Jesus is better than the angels, and Jesus is as much better than the angels as the "name" He has inherited is better than the name of the angels. This begs that we understand how the name Jesus inherited is better than the name of the angels. Let's look at that.

## **Jesus has inherited a more excellent name than the angels. A closer look at the words, "inherited" and "name"**

### **Regarding the word "name"**

Pastor Kit's notes on p.16, and message number 3 at minute 46 and following give a good description of the OT use of "names." In short God (and others in ancient Israel) assigned names that were descriptive of the person or thing itself. Kit says, "In the ancient Hebrew world, a name served to define, characterize, or express the significance of the person or thing it was assigned to." So when the

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<sup>1</sup> See notes on angels below

<sup>2</sup> Mat 28 -- 1 Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the tomb. 2 And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it. 3 And his appearance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. 4 The guards shook from fear of him and became like dead men. 5 And the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified.

Hebrew writer talks about Jesus inheriting a better name than the angels, he is saying that Jesus Himself is better than the angels.

BTW: What was the name Jesus inherited? Clearly context indicates it was "Son" See: vv.: 2, 5a, 5b, 6a, 8a... "Son" indicates the identity and character and significance of Jesus -- He was Son in relation to God the Father.

### **Regarding the word "inherited"**

The word "inherited" seems carefully chosen and very appropriate for Jesus the Son of God, as sons are typically the ones who receive inheritances from fathers. But in doing a little research on this word I discovered that it describes the way by which many of the promises of God came/come to those to whom they were promised. The promised land came to Israel (God's covenant son) by way of inheritance; as it was more fully to be realized after Israelite failure and expulsion. Thayer says about inheriting the promised land, "it came to pass that the phrase was transferred to denote the tranquil and stable possession of the holy land crowned with all divine blessings, an experience which pious Israelites were to expect under the Messiah:". Israel of the OT (as the covenant sons of God) expected to inherit the promised land. The NT uses the word "inherited" to refer to many of the highest order possessions that have come to us: eternal life, the Kingdom of God, the promises of God, imperishable life, blessings... and "all things" associated with the new heavens and the new earth spoken of in Revelation 21 (see esp. V. 7).


Sons come to possess what fathers promise them by way of inheritance. Sons inherit what is promised them by their fathers. Jesus the Son of God inherited His better than angel name (Son), from God His Father. Son is better and more excellent than angel. Angels are "ministering spirits" and chapter 1 verse 5 and following make clear that they are clearly less than Jesus as the Son of God.

What I am particularly indebted to Pastor Kit for this week is pointing out the fact that Hebrews 1 and 2 describe Jesus not just as the Son of God indicating His divinity which is of course superior to all created things which the Divine made including angels, but that Jesus is Son with reference to His humanity and His role as human king.

**Sampling of Support (from citations of chapter 1) for Hebrews writer elevating the humanity of Jesus:** The citations of v.5 and following were first given in the context of humans... Psalm 2 and 2 Sam 7 speak of a God-annointed but human king in the line of David who would rule the Kingdom of God. Similarly in v.8 Psalm 110 is cited with first reference to a human king.

Hebrews	OT	Humanity
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<a href="#">1:5a</a>	<a href="#">Psalm 2:7</a>	OT context "son" metaphor for king of KOG. "In the OT context this "sonship" does not speak of divine essence but of a king anointed to rule on God's behalf as vice-regent on earth." <sup>3</sup> JP: a [human] king. NIVBTSB note on Psalm 2:7 also indicates OT context is of human sons of David as "sons" of God and vice-regents of the KOG. <sup>4</sup>
<a href="#">1:5b</a>	<a href="#">2 Sam 7:14</a>	Similar to above. Word's promised to David with first referent to human King David's human king-to-be son Solomon and descendents. David was aware of his own humanity.
1:8	Psalm 110	NIVBTSB -- In its OT context, <a href="#">Ps 110:1</a> speaks figuratively of the special relationship with the Lord that an earthly king in Jerusalem enjoyed and the pledge to extend his rule, manifesting God's kingship over the earth. The psalm's reference to being seated in heaven is a metaphor for how the king represents and expresses the Lord's rule on earth: it is as though the king were sharing directly in God's rule from heaven as his earthly vice-regent. But in the typology of the Bible, what is true of David or an earthly king in OT days foreshadows what is true now of Christ, who intensifies the pattern. Christ, like those earthly kings, is David's anointed descendant, enjoying a special relationship with God, elevated to a heavenly position to exert the rule of God himself on earth.
2:5-8	Psalm 8	See Kit's notes p. 15 indicating that Psalm 8 celebrates mankind and our role in God's creation as vice-regents. Remember <a href="#">Genesis 1:26-28</a> , "..rule over...".

Re: Ps 2:7, 2 Sam 7:14 and Psalm 110:1 -- These promises proved prophetic. **They were not fully realized in the descendants of David** who one and all failed in their day due to their fallen state with its compromised ability to rightly represent God and their perishability/temporality which forced an end to every reign. But **they were realized in the ultimate Messiah they prophesied of, Jesus** who the writer to the Hebrews has just indicated has "sat down at the right hand of the  Majesty on high" (Heb 1:3) and whose resurrection unto never ending life of

<sup>3</sup> [NIV Biblical Theological Study Bible](#)

<sup>4</sup> "You are my son. Recalls God's promise to David regarding his son Solomon: "I will be his father, and he will be my son" ([2 Sam 7:14](#)). The Davidic kings would henceforth be "sons" of God, reflecting the close bond between the divine King and **human kings**. **David's descendants were expected to be vice-regents in God's stead on earth** in a kingdom whose "capital" was Zion (see v. [6](#) and note). Scripture later reflects this many times (e.g., [1 Chr 28:5](#); [2 Chr 13:8](#)). See "Sonship." These words are repeated at Jesus' baptism ([Mark 1:11](#)) and are also applied to his resurrection ([Act 13:33](#)). They also proclaim his superiority to the angels ([Heb 1:5](#)) and his appointment as the new high priest ([Heb 5:5](#))." *ibid*.

the highest order allows for the eternal/"forever" nature of the ultimate KOG.

### **Chapter 2 also explicitly focuses on the human aspect of Jesus**

- Hebrews 2:6ff citing Psalm 8 highlight Christ's humanity by citing a psalm that highlights mankind's greatness.
- Hebrews 2:10ff depicts Jesus as fully associating with humanity even calling human beings, "brethren"
- Hebrews 2:14 reveals that Jesus shared in the humanity of humans indicated by "flesh and blood", "Therefore, since the children share in <sup>(m)</sup>(AK) flesh and blood, <sup>(AL)</sup>He Himself likewise also partook of the same..."

Point: Jesus is superior to the angels, and that superiority is in no small part related to His humanity. It was humanity God created and intended to be His vice-regents in the KOG ruling as sons, an intention that was frustrated up until the time of Christ, but now realized in Him. God the Son took on human flesh (Paul) in the person of Jesus, and God exalted this resurrected human Jesus to the throne of the forever enduring kingdom of God to reign as the forever reigning king. Further when humans hear this good news and believe they are sealed by the Holy Spirit -- the Spirit of Jesus (Romans 8:9) -- and thereby joined to Jesus sharing in his life and likeness and reign! Herein lies some real significance and relevance to us, but let me put the question to you: So what does Jesus being better than the angels mean to you and me?

### **What Jesus Being Better Than the Angels Means to You and Me**

What it means to us should squarely spring out of what it meant to them (the original hearers). The writer meant to encourage his readers in their time of stress when they were being pressured to abandon their faith in Jesus as God's Messiah and return to their pre-Jesus faith in God according to the then current Jewish understanding of it.

The writer to the Hebrews was encouraging Hebrew Christians by setting the truth concerning Jesus in front of them and that truth is that Jesus is the Christ promised in all the Scriptures, and that He is superior to the prophets (1:1-3), and superior to the angels (1:4 - 2:18) -- as much superior to them as His inherited name (Son) is better than theirs.

And further, His inherited name is superior to the name of the angels in as much as He Himself is superior to them. Remember, the "name" given in the ancient Hebrew world indicated the person named -- their inherent quality, nature, substance, significance. [Here see Kits notes on p. 16 and his audio at Minute 46 as to the significance and practice of naming people and places in the ancient Hebrew culture and the practice of God.]

And further still He Himself is shown, in Hebrews chapters 1 and 2, to be superior to them **especially in regards to His humanity.**

God made mankind in His image (Gen 1 and 2) and charged them with kingly and priestly functions (frustrated and not fully served from the Fall to

the incarnation of God the Son = Word in the human person of Jesus), functions which fully carried out in the human person of Jesus the Christ.

In Christ we who are united to Him (by faith through the working of the Holy Spirit) find ourselves restored into the position, role, and redeemed nature God ultimately intended for humans, and thus able now in Christ to function as kings and priests. In union with Jesus Christ God's Son and ultimate king of the kingdom of God and ultimate high priest..., we are kings and priests with Christ Jesus in the New Creation Kingdom of God now inaugurated by Him. That is something to process further as I would imagine that not many of us feel like kings and priests. What does that mean about who we are and how we are to live?

Peter says of us, "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;" 1 Peter 2:9.

This is not who we are apart from Christ Jesus, but who we are in Him, i.e., in union with Him. The angels are ministering spirits who seem glorious and superior to humans, but it is humans as they are in Christ Jesus, who are superior to the angels. How so? We are those beings created by God in His image who are intended by Him to be kings and priests to the rest of creation representing Him from the uniquely human position of being sons in the Son -- sons of God by virtue of our being redeemed and united to Jesus the singular "firstborn" Son of God.

Where is the encouragement in this for us? May we be encouraged knowing

- who Jesus is (God's Son come in human form), and
- what God has done in Him (granted Him the name above all names = He has inherited a more excellent name than them (4b)), and further
- THAT, JESUS HAS SHARED HIS LIFE AS SON OF GOD WITH US.

God has brought about all that He intended and promised (setting all things right) in the human person of Jesus who is the Christ and Son of God. Life with God as He intended and promised humanity is bound up in Jesus the incarnate Son of God.

The first century Hebrew Christians and all 21st century Christians of any and every nationality should not abandon the better, superior, most ultimate imperishable... to return to the lesser, inferior, non-ultimate (partial, promissory, temporary), and perishable... Rather, they and we must look to Jesus and carefully note who He is, all things concerning Him, and what God has done in Him and shared with us.

## Conclusion

We must not run away from Jesus back to our former life, rather we must run towards Him! We must not let go of Jesus, we must hold fast to Him and even come to know Him as mature men and women, like we have never known Him before, as He is... How?

In our careful attention to all things concerning Him especially Him Himself as He is revealed with the Spirit's help

- as we read our Bibles in our daily devotions and meditate on what we discover therein about Jesus;
- as we gather to worship Him as we are today pressing in for the meaning of the Bible passages (in person or online);
- as we meet with each other and discuss the truth of Jesus sharing what we discovered from our different vantage points as we all seek Him from our different life situations

Brothers and sisters as the 1st Century readers faced anti-church pressure, pressure to abandon Jesus and those who follow Him, we face not so different pressures in our day. Then and now, there is encouragement to be found in the words of this letter as it discloses the truth of who Jesus is and what God has accomplished in Him, and these things positively impact us! Pause and think about the positive impact of Jesus and give thanks to God.

May we heed the exhortation the writer gave in Hebrews 2:1, "For this reason **we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it.**"

- If you are not doing your daily devotions and journaling, today is a good day to start! Else, keep it up!
- If you started but got knocked out by the challenging reading of Leviticus, know that Numbers is coming, today is a good day to restart. Else, keep it up!
- If you are not attending Sunday services with regularity, start this coming Sunday, oh how I miss you with deep sadness and abiding fond affection when you are not here. Else, a sincere thank you and please and keep it up!
- If you are not dialoguing with your brothers and sisters, start this week. Call, get together, facetime, zoom, text... Else, keep communicating the truths you are discovering concerning Jesus thereby encouraging each other to persevere through the difficulties and pressures you face.

The author of Hebrews will later deliver his famous exhortation in chapter 10,

"**23** Let's hold firmly to the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; **24** and let's consider how to encourage one another in love and good deeds, **25** not abandoning our own meeting together, as is the habit of some people, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more as you see the day drawing near."

The pressure on us at this time is apart -- apart from Christ Jesus, apart from each other.

**PUSH BACK! DRAW NEAR TO GOD AND EACH OTHER!** This is not a nice idea, it is a passionate and desperate plea seeking from you real action! Let's pray...

## Additional Work Notes

### Text

When He [Son] had made purification of sins,  
καθαρισμὸν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ποιησάμενος  
He [Son] sat down  
Ἐκάθισεν [Verb - Aorist Active Indicative - 3rd Person Singular]  
at the right hand of the Majesty on high,  
ἐν δεξιᾷ τῆς μεγαλωσύνης ἐν ὑψηλοῖς  
4 having become as much better than the angels,  
**As** [NASB 95="to the extent that"]  
He has inherited a more excellent name than they.

### NASB

V.4b translating "as" indicating "in as much as" could be seen as describing **the reason why** Jesus is much better than the angels. But NIV and ESV and a look at the relevant words in Thayers seem to indicate as much better than the angels  
By so much (Thayers) as He has inherited a more excellent name than the angels.

### NIV

4 So he became as much superior to the angels  
as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.  
[2nd phrase describing the degree of Jesus' superiority over the angels; i.e., how much superior is Jesus? He is as much superior to the angels as His name=being is superior]

### ESV

4 having become as much superior to angels  
as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.  
[same type of translation logic as NIV above]

1:4

<b>ΤΟΣΟΥΤΩ</b>	κρείττων <sup>5</sup>	γενόμενος	τῶν ἀγγέλων
By so much	more excellent	having become	the angels

<b>ὄσω<sup>6</sup></b>	διαφορώτερον παρ' αὐτοὺς	κεκληρονόμηκεν	ὄνομα
As	excellent/surpassing	inherited	name

Thayers on **ΤΟΣΟΥΤΩ**:

**dative ΤΟΣΟΥΤΩ, preceded or followed by ὄσω** (as often in the Greek writings from Herodotus down (Winers Grammar, § 35, 4 N. 2)), **by so much: ΤΟΣΟΥΤΩ ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩΝ, by so much better, Hebrews 1:4;**

<sup>5</sup> Κρείττων -- Thayers: "more excellent" -- Should get used to this adjective as it is used multiple times in Hebrews: 1:4; 6:9; 6:9; 7:7; 7:19; 7:22; 8:6; 9:23; 10:34; 11:16; 11:35; 11:40; 12:24

<sup>6</sup> Strongs: **ὄσος hósos**, [pronoun] hos'-os; by reduplication from G3739; as (much, great, long, etc.) as:—all (that), as (long, many, much) (as), how great (many, much), (in-)as much as, so many as, that (ever), the more, those things, what (great, -soever), wheresoever, wherewithsoever, which, while, who(-soever).



**κεκληρονόμηκεν** -- **Inherited** -- Thayers: 2. universally, "to receive the portion assigned to one, receive an allotted portion, receive as one's own or as a possession; to become partaker of, to obtain" (cf. English inherit) (as φημην, Polybius 18, 38 (55), 8; τήν ἐπ' εὐσέβεια δόξαν, 15, 22, 3); in Biblical Greek everywhere with the accusative of the thing; so very frequent in the O. T. in the phrase κληρονομουν γῆν and τήν γῆν, of the occupation of the land of Canaan by the Israelites, as Leviticus 20:24; Deuteronomy 4:22, 26; Deuteronomy 6:1, etc. But as the Israelites after taking possession of the land were harassed almost perpetually by their hostile neighbors, and even driven out of the country for a considerable period, it came to pass that the phrase was transferred to denote the tranquil and stable possession of the holy land crowned with all divine blessings, an experience which pious Israelites were to expect under the Messiah: Psalm 24:13 (Ps. 25:13); Psalm 36:9, 11, 22, 29, 34 (Ps. 37:9,11,22,29,34) Alex.; Isaiah 60:21; Tobit 4:12; ἐκ δευτέρας κληρονομήσουσι τήν γῆν, Isaiah 61:7; hence, it became a formula denoting to partake of eternal salvation in the Messiah's kingdom: Matthew 5:5 (4) (from Psalm 36:11 (Ps. 37:11)), where see Bleek. ζών αιώνιον, Matthew 19:29; Mark 10:17; Luke 10:25; Luke 18:18; τήν βασιλείαν, Matthew 25:34; βασιλείαν Θεοῦ, 1 Corinthians 6:9; 1 Corinthians 15:50; Galatians 5:21; σωτηρίαν, Hebrews 1:14; τάς ἐπαγγελίας, Hebrews 6:12; ἀφθαρσίαν, 1 Corinthians 15:50; ταῦτα (Rec. πάντα), Revelation 21:7; ὄνομα, Hebrews 1:4; τήν εὐλογίαν, Hebrews 12:17; 1 Peter 3:9. (Compare: κατα-κληρονομέω.)

διαφορώτερον Thayers: 2. **excellent, surpassing**, ([Diodorus], Polybius, Plutarch, others): comparative **διαφορώτερος**, Hebrews 1:4; Hebrews 8:6.

## Additional Resources & Notes

### From Pastor Kit Culver

<https://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?SID=1115191615127335>

#### "Sermon Info"

"The writer's goal in his epistle was to encourage his readers by reminding them of who this Jesus is that they'd embraced, what He'd accomplished and inaugurated, and what it means to be part of His New Covenant people. His approach was to demonstrate Jesus' supremacy over all the things that were critical to Israel's life with God, one dimension of which was the ministration of angels. This message provides an overview of that topic and examines the writer's perspective in addressing it."

### Notes Regarding Angels

Genesis 16:7 is the first mention of an angel in the Bible. See helpful NIV Text note re: "the angel of the Lord":

[https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%2016%3A7&version=NASB&resource\\_entry=niv-study-bible/ge-16-7&tab=study](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%2016%3A7&version=NASB&resource_entry=niv-study-bible/ge-16-7&tab=study). See also NIV Biblical Theological Study Bible at:

[https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Gen%2016:7&resource\\_entry=niv-biblical-theology/ge-16-7&tab=study](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Gen%2016:7&resource_entry=niv-biblical-theology/ge-16-7&tab=study)

This mention of "the angel of the Lord" is thought by some to be a pre-incarnate appearance of God the eternal Son/Word. See notes above.

This same angel "the angel of the Lord" Moses said appeared to him "in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush"; and the narrative continues, "4 When the Lord saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." 5 Then He said, "Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." 6 And He said, "I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Then Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God."

"The angel of God" is credited with "going before the camp of Israel" during the Exodus when Egyptians pursued them to the edge of the Red Sea; and that same angel "moved and went behind them" (Ex 14) in conjunction with "the pillar of cloud" (mentioned in Ex 13 in association with Yahweh, "the Lord was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way") effectively protecting the people of Israel from the pursuing army.

Angels accompanied Yahweh and manifested themselves as men when Yahweh appeared to Abram and Sarai in Gen 18 promising them a child by the aged couple. They also warned Abram of the destruction God was eminently bringing on Sodom and Gamorah (Gen 19).

The word "angel" is used 111 times in the NASB translation of the OT and a quick search on the use of this word reveals that JP: Angels seem to coincide with God's presence and with God working out His purposes. The Hebrews in Jesus day who made much of Yahweh as the God who had made covenants with them (via their patriarchs) and delivered them out of Egypt (a redemption they celebrated every year), would have highly regarded angels as valid respected emissaries and instruments God used to advance His purposes. Therefore, for the Hebrew's writer to set Jesus before his predominantly Hebrew readers in verse 4ff as , "having become so much better than the angels, to the [same] extent that He has inherited a more excellent name than they" is an exaltation of the highest order. Jesus is as much better than the angels as He has inherited a more excellent name" than the angels!. And context argues that that "inherited" "name" is "Son" (2,5a, 5b, 6a, 8a...).