

EXPOSITION OF HEBREWS

Message #3

Hebrews 1:5-14

Dr. Ray Stedman made an interesting point when he said that when Ronald Reagan was President, the world was shocked to learn that his wife, Nancy, tried to influence him by consulting with an astrologer. I'll bet if the truth were known in many churches we would be shocked to learn how many people regularly consult horoscopes, or who have gone to a Ouija board, or séances in an attempt to gain information from the spirit world. This kind of thing is demonic, but it certainly is not new.

There is no question that God's people have always had a fascination with, a real interest in, and high regard for angels, and well they should. After all, the subject of angels shows up in the Old Testament more than 100 times and in the New Testament over 160 times.

Angels are so vast in numbers that they are too numerous to count (Revelation 5:11).

Angels have amazing power (Genesis 19:10-11; II Kings 19:35).

Angels are present at the throne of God and worship and praise God (Revelation 4:8; 5:11; 7:11).

Angels are ministering spirits to God's people (**Hebrews 1:14**).

Angels specifically are involved in the well-being and safety of God's people (Genesis 19:1ff.;

I Kings 19:5; Psalms 34:7; 91:11; Daniel 6:22; Matthew 2:13, 19; 4:11; Luke 22:43; Acts 5:19; 12:7-10).

Angels will be used in a mighty way in God's final judgments on this world (Matthew 24:31; Revelation 19:17-20:3, 10).

Angels, for the most part, are invisible in that we never see them, but every once in awhile God does permit someone get a glimpse of them (Genesis 28:12; II Kings 6:17; Luke 2:13).

If an angel were to appear today in the Grace Age, it would probably be in human form and we would not even know it (Hebrews 13:2).

Angels have always been viewed as heavenly emissaries who minister to God's people.

In the first century, some actually elevated angels and worshipped them and some false religious teachers said Jesus Christ was nothing more than an angel or less than an angel. However, as mighty and as impressive as these angels are, **God wanted His people to realize they are nothing compared to His Son. Hebrews begins by saying proper theology begins by elevating your Christology!** Jesus Christ is greater than everything and everyone and you never compromise the superiority of Jesus Christ. Hebrews begins by saying God's people need to know just exactly who Jesus Christ is:

JESUS CHRIST IS GOD'S ONLY EXALTED KING-SON AND HE IS FAR BETTER THAN ALL HEAVENLY ANGELIC SPIRIT BEINGS WHO HAVE EVER EXISTED.

Hebrews begins with a comparative analysis between God's highly exalted Divine Son-King and the angels. He does this in order to show Christ's superiority.

In Hebrews, the word “better than” or “superior” show up thirteen times (1:4; 6:9; 7:7, 19, 22; 8:6, 6; 9:23; 10:34; 11:16, 35, 40; 12:24). The rare word “more excellent” is used two times (1:4; 8:6). These words are used to describe the magnitude of the superiority of Jesus Christ over everything.

When believers find themselves struggling, it is good to think of the fact that God has angels ministering in our behalf; but what is far better than this is to realize that we have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, who is the God-Son-King who is sitting on His eternal, unchanging throne, who is at the right hand of God interceding on our behalf.

There are at least five Christological superiorities given to us in these verses:

CHRISTOLOGICAL SUPERIORITY #1 – Jesus Christ has a superior Sonship . 1:5

In this section, there are seven Old Testament passages which are cited and specifically related to Jesus Christ, which are identified as God speaking (v. 5). Don't overlook this; **God speaks in the present to the world through the written Scriptures**. Notice how many quotes God uses in **verses 5-14**: **1) Hebrews 1:5** = Psalm 2:7; **2) Hebrews 1:5** = II Samuel 7:14; **3) Hebrews 1:6** = Deuteronomy 32:43; **4) Hebrews 1:7** = Psalm 104:4; **5) Hebrews 1:8-9** = Psalm 45:6-7; **6) Hebrews 1:10-12** = Psalm 102:25-27; **7) Hebrews 1:13** = Psalm 110:1.

Now the purpose of using these quotes is to show that Jesus Christ is the only One to whom these things refer. W. H. Griffith Thomas says that the order of the quotes take us from Christ's incarnation until His coronation and culmination of all things (*Let Us Go On*, p. 26). **God's first point is this, to which of the angels did God the Father ever say were His only begotten Son, to which all of the passages in the O.T. pointed?**

No angel has been called by God the Father, God's only begotten Son. This idea of God begetting His Son comes from two O.T. texts, Psalm 2:9 and II Samuel 7:14, which speaks of a Davidic Son who is the God-King who will judge the world.

Now it is true that angels, generally speaking, are “sons of God” in the sense they were created by God. This point is revealed in Scripture (Genesis 6:2, 4; Job 2:1; 38:7; Psalm 29:1; 89:6). **However, no angel is called “the only begotten Son of God” and Biblically identified by the Father as the One He has begotten in direct reference to O.T. prophecy.**

There was no angel ever created that God the Father pointed out and said this is “My anointed One, My only begotten Son.” **What God the Father is saying is that only Jesus Christ is God's uncreated, eternal Son.** All angels have been created and, therefore, no angel is equal to Jesus Christ. No angel could claim eternity, nor could any angel claim they had been raised from the dead, proving sonship.

When God says He has begotten Him “today” (σημερον), He uses a quote that comes from Psalm 2:7. This word “today” is used multiple times in Hebrews (**1:5**; 3:7, 13, 15; 4:7; 5:5; 13:8). God does not want His people living in the past, but focused on today. Various views have been suggested as to what this word “today” refers:

- 1) Some say it is a reference to the angels who recognized the eternity of the Son.
- 2) Some say it is a reference to the birth of Jesus Christ.
- 3) Some say it is a reference to the perpetuity of the incarnation - God becomes human forever.
- 4) Some say it refers to the baptism of Jesus Christ.
- 5) Some say it refers to the exaltation and enthronement of Jesus Christ.
- 6) Some say it refers to the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Paul uses the same quotation in Acts 13:33 and he uses the word “today” to refer to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, which proves He is the Savior and Israel’s Messiah. No angel can save people from sins or provide justification which is proved by the resurrection (Romans 4:25). No angel will reign over Israel. No angel ever came into the world physically as Davidic King and was raised from the dead - only God’s eternal Son, Jesus Christ.

The Davidic Sonship and Kingship of Jesus Christ are declared by God the Father. **Of what angel did God ever say these things? The answer is NONE.**

CHRISTOLOGICAL SUPERIORITY #2 – Jesus Christ receives superior worship. **1:6**

In verse 5 we learn that no angel is ever called God’s Son, and in verse 6 we learn that all angels must worship the Son. The Godhead Father-Son coequal relationship is seen in living color in this verse. God will not ever share or give His glory or worship with any created thing or being (Isaiah 42:8; 48:11). God does not sanction the worship of angels, and angels of God absolutely refuse to receive worship (Revelation 22:8-9). **God demands that all angels worship Jesus Christ.** In fact, Jesus said that the Father demands that all honor the Son at the same level as they honor the Father (John 5:23).

The term “firstborn” refers to the fact that Jesus Christ is the first of all creation, that is, He is the first of everything (Colossians 1:15). He gave birth to everything created. He created the angels and He created the humans and the angels worship the Creator.

There are discussions among Bible interpreters as to what the adverb “again” actually refers. Some say it is another in the list of superiorities, as in **verse 5**; others suggest it refers to Christ’s First Coming at His incarnation and others suggest it refers to His Second Coming at His coronation. Actually all three are true. Jesus Christ has always been worshipped by angels and we know that when He comes everyone will bow and worship Him (Philippians 2:10-11).

When He came into the world the first time, “angels” worshipped Him (Luke 2:13) and when He comes into the world again, angels will again worship Him (Revelation 5:11-12; 19:3-6).

The point of this is that no angel has ever received worship like this. God the Father never demanded that angels be worshipped, but He does demand that “all angels” worship His Son.

Angels are not ever to be worshipped as they too are part of those who worship God.

CHRISTOLOGICAL SUPERIORITY #3 – Jesus Christ has superior rank . 1:7-9

All angels are ministering and serving spirits, but God's Son is ruling King. Angels are servants , but Jesus Christ is Sovereign .

There are three critical points God brings out:

(Angelic Point #1) - Angels were created to be used for God's temporal purposes. 1:7

In **verse 7**, we learn that angels have different ways they may carry out assignments at different times. One way is by the wind and another way is by fire. Angels are supernatural beings who are at God's disposal to do whatever God wants them to do.

(Christological Point #2) - Jesus Christ forever reigns as God on His eternal throne. 1:8a

We learn here that God the Son sits on God's throne and that throne is eternal not temporal. **Do not overlook what is said in verse 8; God the Father is specifically pointing out and identifying the fact that God the Son, Jesus Christ, who is sitting on the throne, is God.** This quote that God uses comes from **Psalm 45:6-7** and two times in these verses the King is specifically called God. **God the Father specifically says His Son is God!**

When Jesus Christ was here on earth, He called Himself God (John 5:18; 10:30). The apostles identified Him as God (Romans 9:5; Titus 2:13; I John 5:20). **Right here in Hebrews 1:8, God the Father specifically says that Jesus Christ is God and His throne is forever and ever.** God cannot state Christ's Deity any more clearly than He does right here. God has never or will ever say any such thing concerning any angel.

(Christological Point #3) - Jesus Christ rules by righteousness, loves righteousness, and hates lawlessness. 1:8b-9

The word "righteous" (εὐθους) in **verse 8** is different from the word "righteous" (δικαιοσύνη) in **verse 9**. In **verse 8**, the word has to do with staying on a straight, direct, upright course (Smith, p. 186). In **verse 9**, the word has to do with a righteousness that conforms to the righteous standards of God (*Ibid.*, p. 116). **Combined, these words show that there was no possible way that Jesus Christ could ever waver as God from perfect righteousness.** When Satan tempted Jesus Christ, He could not waver from righteousness and the temptation proved it. Everything about Jesus Christ is pure righteousness. But the same cannot be said for the angels.

When Satan tempted the angels they could waver and many rebelled, which shows how inferior they are to Jesus Christ. Some of the angels chose not to rebel, but the potential for rebellion was there. **Angels could and did sin. Jesus Christ never could sin and never did sin.** He has always existed in total and complete righteousness, loving righteousness and hating any violation of God's law. **No angel can say that and certainly no human can say that.**

When God the Son was anointed by God the Father to ultimately reign in total righteousness, it was a glad moment for Him even though He knew He would need to be the righteous sacrifice for sinners. Christ viewed His appointment and anointing with gladness, even though it meant He would have to come into this world and suffer and die. What a glad happy day it will be when Jesus Christ reigns on this earth. It will be a reign that loves righteousness and hates lawlessness. No angel could fulfill this role. No angel has His level of righteousness.

CHRISTOLOGICAL SUPERIORITY #4 – Jesus Christ is superior as Eternal, Immutable
Creator . **1:10-12**

God's King-Son created the heavens and the earth. He actually laid the foundations of the earth. The heavens and the earth are works of His hands. No angels did that. Jesus Christ will ultimately discard and destroy the heavens and earth like an old garment and He will create a new heaven and new earth. No angel is able to do that.

All creation is temporal but Jesus Christ is eternal. All creation is transitory, but Jesus Christ is permanent. All of us live with an awareness that we are swiftly passing away and the older you get the more you realize it. Compared to the heaven and the earth, we are nothing in time. Compared to Jesus Christ, the heaven and earth are nothing in time. God's program changes in time. There will be changes to the heavens and earth and there will be changes in the angelic assignments. But Jesus Christ will never change. Paul Ellingworth said, "The Son will change one order of creation for another as easily as a human being changes one cloak for another, while remaining himself unchanged" (*The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 128).

God's King-Son will continue to exist unchanged even when creation changes.

CHRISTOLOGICAL SUPERIORITY #5 – Jesus Christ is superior in His work . **1:13-14**

Jesus Christ is presently at the right hand of God the Father, waiting for the moment when the Father says it is time to make a footstool out of your enemies. Jesus Christ now reigns and rules and all angels serve and minister. This does not mean that angels are not important; they are very important. What this means is that angels are inferior to Jesus Christ. He is the Son and they are His servants. He is the King and they are His subjects. He is the Creator and they are His creatures. God's Son rules the universe and angels are used by Him to carry out His will in His universe.

Notice carefully from **verse 14** that Jesus Christ sends His angels out to minister to those who "will inherit salvation."

In **verse 14**, we come for the first time to a key word of the book, "salvation." This word shows up seven times in Hebrews: **1:14**; 2:3, 10; 5:9; 6:9; 7:25; 9:28. In Hebrews it is used in connection with those who are already saved rather than the unsaved. So this book is not specifically calling unsaved people to salvation so that they will not experience the wrath of God. This book calls saved people to keep focused and moving forward in their salvation so they can inherit the full rewards of God.

Now all of the spirits are under the control of Jesus Christ and all are connected to those who will inherit salvation. What is at stake in this angelic action is the believer's inheritance. Angels monitor us and assist us in ways we probably don't know, and they certainly will be in a position to testify as to whether or not we deserve an inheritance.

When a person believes on Jesus Christ, he is guaranteed everlasting life. At that very moment he receives eternal salvation that saves him from all of his past, present, and future sins and guarantees he will not receive the condemnation of God. But after the person believes, he starts the process of laying up eternal treasures and an eternal inheritance. That is something we can lose and angels will be and are connected to the inheritance.

When your world is falling apart, it is good to know that Jesus Christ sits on His throne and rules over everything. He sends out His angels to do His work concerning His people.

You can be comforted by knowing that your Savior is Sovereign God and He assigns angels to do various things in regard to you. They can protect you (Psalm 91:11), guide you (Genesis 19:17), encourage you (Jude 6:12), deliver you (Acts 12:7), supply your needs (Psalm 105:40), enlighten you (Matthew 2:19-20), and empower you (Luke 22:43). God can use angels to rebuke you (Numbers 22:32) and even discipline you (Acts 12:23).

What God's people may always know is that God's Son is always looking out for His family and He sends His angels to help us and assist us.

All an unsaved person has to do to be saved is to look one time to Jesus Christ.
All one already saved has to do to be rewarded is to look all the time at Jesus Christ.