

“Better than the Angels” ***Hebrews 1:4***

INTRO:

Last time we listened with amazement and wonder as we heard the writer of **Hebrews** tell us what a wonderful Savior is Jesus our Jesus. **[1]** He taught us about the diversity and unity of God’s revelation, and that the culmination of the revelation is the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, God’s Son. Then in hopes of overwhelming us with the evidence, he presented us with many trees so that we would see the forest of who the Son is. **[2]** He taught us that the Son is the Heir of all things. All things were created for His pleasure. **[3]** Next we learned that the Son is the Creator of all things (even the unseen reality—the angels). **[4]** We discovered that the Son is, always has been, and always will be ***“the brightness of the Father’s glory and the express image of His person.”*** **[5]** The Son ***“upholds all things by the word of His power.”*** He holds all creation together by the power of His will. **[6]** Finally, the Son has seated Himself at the right hand of God the Father after He Himself purged our sins.

Can any created being do all this? The obvious answer is no. He is, was, and always shall be, God, the Son – the second person of the Godhead. This poses a question in our minds, what about the angels? How do they fit into this equation? What are their role in relation to the Son and the work of God? We are going to explore this question in our study today. **Hebrews 1:4** says, ***“having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.”***

Our study will ask and try to answer three questions posed by this statement.

I. Why Are We Concerned about the Angels?

II. How Has the Son Become better than the Angels?

III. How Did Jesus Inherit a more Excellent Name?

I. Why Are We Concerned about the Angels?

A. Why does the writer to the **Hebrews** suddenly become so enamored with angels? The background of the epistle tells us.

B. Jewish writers of the period were intensively interested in the angels.

1. Some writers taught that the angels had a role in creation. This is not taught in the Bible and is specifically denied by the New Testament. All the created reality came into existence because the Son created them. If the angels had a part in creation, who are they? The Lord Jesus created the angels.

2. The Jewish writers also taught the giving of the Law came through the mediation of the angels. This teaching although not specifically found in the Old Testament, appears to be true. The Apostle Paul speaks of this truth in **Galatians 3:19**.

“What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator.”

Angels are said to mediate the giving of the Law in at least two other places in the New Testament.

3. Given these two presuppositions, the angels had a part in the creation and in the giving of the revelation; we can see why the writer is quick to point out the difference between the Son of God Jesus Christ, and the angels.

C. Another reason to make clear the infinite superiority of the Son over the angels is that in incipient Gnosticism some taught angel worship. Paul in **Colossians** teaches against this belief and demonstrates the deity of Christ. The writer of **Hebrews** picks up the same theme here in this section of his book.

II. How Has the Son Become better than the Angels?

A. To the forest of overwhelming evidence for the deity of Jesus Christ, the Writer of **Hebrews** adds one last tree. Our Lord Jesus is superior over the angels; (v4) ***“having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.”***

B. First, the Lord Jesus ***“has become so much better than the angels.”***

1. This phrase brings us up short. After all, we made so much of the verbs that John used in **John 1**. Remember how Jesus is a ***“was?”*** He always existed uncreated as the second person in the Godhead and is thus distinct from the things that ***“came to be”*** in **John 1:3**

2. This verse in **Hebrews** uses the same verb meaning ***“became”*** or ***“came to be.”*** How did the eternal Son ***“come to be”*** so much better than the angels? Wasn't He always better? Was there a time in which the angels were better than He was?

C. While it is true that from eternity past, the Eternal Son was ***“so much better”*** than the angels, indeed, there was a time in history when for a while that was not true.

1. Look a little further down in our text and I think we will find the explanation.
Hebrews 2:6-9.

“But one testified in a certain place, saying: [Psalm 8] ‘What is man that You are mindful of him, or the son of man that You take care of him? You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, and set him over the works of Your hands. You have put all things in subjection under his feet.’ For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not

put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.”

Jesus was made *“a little lower than the angels,”* in order that He might make an end to our sin. Our Lord Jesus was a real condescension.

2. We will never fully comprehend the Lord’s condescension this side of glory. How can we who have never been *“in the form of God”* understand what it is to *‘empty oneself’* and become a slave and die for us?

3. He was only for a while made a little lower than the angels. God the Father raised His Son from the dead and exalted Him by seating Him at His right hand. He once again *became* so much greater than the angels.

III. How Did Jesus Inherit a more excellent Name?

A. Having discovered how He who is, was, and always will be the radiance of God’s essential glory and the express image of His person, became *“so much better”* than the angels, let us seek to discover how He also inherited a more excellent name.

B. The word translated *“by inheritance obtained”* has the same root as the word we ran into in v2;

“Has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things.”

1. His relationship to everything created is that He is the heir. Everything is His by legal right. He has ownership of it all. It is all about Him. Paul put it in these words in **Colossians 1:16-18**;

“For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.”

2. In connection to this creation, He has inherited a name. That name is detailed for us in **Hebrews 1:5**.

“For to which of the angels did He ever say: ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You?’ And again: ‘I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son?’”

He is the Son of God. He is the one who is to be preeminent over all creation (even the angels and the church).

How do we apply all of this to us today? First, we must be clear that angels are not to be worshipped. Nor are they to be seen as equal to the Son of God. He is the second person of the Godhead, uncreated. They are created beings.

Second, we too must recognize our position in relationship to the Son. He is God of all, and we are created beings. By faith we are His people. Therefore, we must serve and glorify Him.