

### Christ is Superior to Angels Hebrews 1:4-14

Hebrews 1:4-14 - "...having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. <sup>5</sup> 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"? <sup>6</sup> But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: "Let all the angels of God worship Him." <sup>7</sup> And of the angels He says: "Who makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire." <sup>8</sup> But to the Son He says: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. <sup>9</sup> You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions." <sup>10</sup> And: "You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. <sup>11</sup> They will perish, but You remain; and they will all grow old like a garment. <sup>12</sup> Like a cloak You will fold them up, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will not fail." <sup>13</sup> But to which of the angels has He ever said: "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool"? <sup>14</sup> Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?"

#### Background Notes

The first three verses of Hebrew 1 discussed how Christ is superior to the prophets, and the rest of the chapter teaches that Christ is superior to the angels.

Why is it so important for the author of Hebrews to establish the points that Jesus Christ is superior to both the prophets and the angels? The answer is – it was because of the believers to whom the epistle to the Hebrews was written. To whom was Hebrews written? What was their thinking? What were their theological problems?

It doesn't take much insight to realize that the letter was written primarily to Jewish believers. The title "to the Hebrews" does appear in the oldest New Testament manuscript that contains Hebrews, and the early Christian writers called the epistle "Hebrews." And then, of course, the content of Hebrews strongly indicates that this letter was written primarily to Jewish people.

The author clearly assumed his readers knew the Old Testament Scriptures. He assumed that they knew all about the Tabernacle and the sacrificial system of the Old Testament. His overall argument is that Jesus Christ replaced the Levitical priesthood and the offerings, and that the New Covenant had replaced the former covenant.

So we believe the recipients of this letter were primarily Jewish, and this is the reason why this letter begins by showing the superiority of Jesus Christ over angels and the Old Testament prophets. These points would be very important for a Jewish audience to hear.

## **Doctrinal Point**

### **Christ is superior to the angels.**

Verse 4: *“Having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.”* The holy angels were very significant in the Jewish mind. The Law had been given through angels. Man was made a little lower than the angels (Psalm 8:5; Hebrews 2:7). So it was very important for the author of Hebrews to establish the fact that Jesus Christ is greater than the angels.

Even though Jesus was a true Man, He was superior to the angels - because He was the Son of God! In order to prove his point, the author of Hebrews selected several Old Testament passages to show that Jesus Christ, the Messiah, was and is superior to the angels. We'll look at these Scriptures as four sub-points to our doctrinal point.

#### ***a. Christ is superior to the angels because Christ is the Son and the angels are servants.***

Verses 5-7: *“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”? But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: “Let all the angels of God worship Him.” And of the angels He says: “Who makes His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire.”*

Verse 5 is a quotation from Psalm 2. The word *“today”* here refers to the Lord Jesus being crowned as King at His resurrection and ascension. Old Testament kings were considered as one of God's “sons” at their coronation. The main point here is that God does not address angels as “My Son.” Angels are referred to as “sons of God,” but they are never addressed as “the Son” or “My Son.” In verse 5, a quote from 2 Samuel 7:14 is applied to Christ: *“And again: ‘I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son.’* God never spoke this way to an angel.

Psalm 97:7 is quoted in verse 6, where it is applied to the return of Christ: *“But when He again brings the firstborn into the world [the firstborn in rank and honor], He says: “Let all the angels of God worship Him.”* Christ the Son is certainly superior to angels, because angels worship Him, and will continue to worship Him. Angels are really only God's servants. That's the point of verse 7, which quotes from Psalm 104: *“And of the angels He says: “Who makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire.”*

Angels, you see, carry out the Lord's will with the speed of wind and the fervency of fire. Jesus Christ is superior to angels, because Christ is the Son and the angels are servants.

***b. Christ is superior to the angels because Christ is the King and angels are subjects.***

Verses 8-9 quote from Psalm 45, which is a Messianic psalm. The deity of Christ is clearly seen in the first line, which refers to Him as God: *“Your throne, O God, is forever and ever...”*

The Lord Jesus is King forever - and He is the perfect King. He is and has always been characterized by righteousness. As King, He is above all, whether humans or angels. All are subject to Jesus Christ the King. Christ is superior to the angels, because Christ is the King and the angels are subjects.

***c. Christ is superior to the angels because Christ is the creator and angels are creatures.***

Verses 10-12 quote from Psalm 102: *“You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You remain. They will all grow old like a garment. Like a cloak You will fold them up, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will not fail.”*

The point in these verses is that Jesus Christ is the **eternal Creator** and therefore He is immutable - He does not change. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8). Everything else is part of the created world, including angels. Created things are not immutable – they are subject to change. The present heavens and earth will grow old and perish, as we read here. They will be changed. By the way, did you know that in a future day there will be a new heavens and a new earth (2 Timothy 3:13)?

Jesus Christ is superior to the angels because He is the eternal immutable Creator, and the angels are created beings.

***d. Christ is superior to the angels because Christ is now seated and the angels are standing.***

Verse 13 is a quote from Psalm 110, another well-known Messianic psalm: *“But to which of the angels has He ever said: “Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool”?*

Sitting at the right hand of God is the place of highest honor. Having your enemies put beneath your feet, as a footstool, signifies universal dominion. Jesus Christ holds this position of highest honor and universal dominion!

Meanwhile, the angels are standing and serving. Verse 14: *“Are they not all ministering spirits?”* The mission of angels is to keep standing and serve - not to sit down or rule. In fact, the specific mission of angels is to serve believers – *“those who will inherit salvation.”* That’s you and me! The holy angels are serving us. We are special!

However, the main point in these verses is that Jesus Christ is superior to the angels, because Jesus Christ is now seated as Supreme Ruler. Angels are standing by, waiting to serve Him and His redeemed ones.

Jesus Christ is superior to the angels. What a tremendous portion of Scripture this is!

## Practical Application

### Don't try to contact or communicate with guardian angels!

Does the Bible teach that there are guardian angels? I believe it does. We know that angels are spirit beings and that they are sent forth to minister to us and serve us – *“those who will inherit salvation”* (v14).

We don't know all the ways in which angels serve us. They certainly provide protection, among other things. Psalm 91:11 says, *“For God shall give His angels charge over you to keep you in all your ways.”* When we were kids, we always used to joke that an extra squad of guardian angels was sent every time our mother got behind the steering wheel!

I'm sure many believers have experienced the ministry of guardian angels. Years ago I was driving on a narrow and winding deserted road. Suddenly I felt as though a hand was on my head, turning my head slightly to the left. Way off in the distance, I saw a cut in the hilly landscape, and what looked like a large vehicle on the road coming in my direction. I decided to pull off the narrow road and wait. Sure enough, a couple of minutes later a huge oil tanker truck rounded the bend, taking up the entire road, and roared past me! I believe God may have used a guardian angel to direct my line of vision to see that huge truck way off in the distance. Margie and I have had other similar experiences of what we believe was angelic protection.

But here's the point. I did not try to thank the guardian angel, or contact the guardian angel, or talk to the guardian angel. No - I thanked ***the Lord!*** He created the angels who are sent forth to minister to believers.

Some Christians try to contact or communicate with guardian angels. There is no precedent for this in Scripture, and I believe it is unhealthy and wrong to try to contact angels. In fact, attempting to contact the spirit world is dangerous, because there's a world of demonic spirits out there too. The evil angels would be happy if you become involved in trying to contact angels. Why? Because they'd love to jump into this situation, so they can deceive you and lead you astray into grave error.

So God does use guardian angels, and we can thank the Lord for them. But don't try to contact or communicate with guardian angels!