

### Christ is Superior to the Angels

#### Hebrews 2:5-9

Hebrews 2:5-9 - *“For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels. <sup>6</sup> But one testified in a certain place, saying: “What is man that You are mindful of him, or the son of man that You take care of him?*

*<sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> 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.”*

#### Background Notes

Our study of Hebrews 1 revealed that the recipients of the epistle to the Hebrews were primarily Jewish people. In the Jewish mind, angels were very significant beings. Angels appear frequently on the pages of Old Testament Scripture, in various forms and doing a variety of tasks. In fact, God used angels when He gave the Mosaic Law. So the author to the Hebrews went to great lengths to show that Jesus Christ is superior to angels, and most of chapter 1 deals with the subject.

Now, after the warning and exhortation in Hebrews 2:1-4, the author returned to the subject that Christ is superior to angels. If it seems that the writer of Hebrews was belaboring this subject unnecessarily, remember the Jewish audience to whom the author was writing.

You may be wondering why we would even bother to study the epistle to the Hebrews if it's more applicable to the 1<sup>st</sup> century Jewish mind than to the Christian today. Well, doesn't the truth that Christ is greater than the angels have an application for today? As you probably know, there's a great emphasis today on angels. Look at the number of TV programs and popular books that exalt angels, and have angels as their theme. These producers and authors need to read Hebrews 1 and 2!

In Hebrews 1 the emphasis was on the **deity of Christ** – that Jesus Christ is superior to the angels because He is the Son of God. Here in chapter 2 the emphasis is on the **humanity of Christ**. Jesus Christ is superior to the angels – not only in His deity, but also in His humanity.

Try to imagine the Jewish mind of the 1<sup>st</sup> century trying to come to grips with this truth: “What? Jesus Christ, as Man, is greater than the angels?” Yes, that’s the point. So once again, as in Hebrews 1, the doctrinal point is that Christ is superior to the angels, but this time the emphasis is on the humanity of Christ.

## Doctrinal Points

### 1. Christ is superior to the angels even though He became a Man.

To show that Christ is superior to the angels because He is God is a lot easier to do than to show that Christ is superior to the angels even though He is human. By the way, the author of Hebrews didn’t try to prove that Jesus Christ is truly human - that fact is simply assumed here. (I hope your theology on this subject is orthodox!)

Jesus Christ was - and is - both God and Man at the same time. He is fully God and fully Man - 100% God and 100% Man, not 50% God and 50% Man! That’s what the amazing wonder of the incarnation is all about.

But as Man, is Jesus Christ greater than the angels? Yes! The author of Hebrews proved his point with two sub-points.

#### ***a. Christ is superior to the angels even though He became a man because of God’s original plan.***

Verse 5: *“For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels.”*

In God’s original plan, angels were **not** to be greater than humans. And the “*world to come*” will not be subject to angels - but rather to man! The “*world to come*” is in the future, when the Lord returns to this earth and brings in the Messianic Age of worldwide peace and blessing. That great future kingdom will be ruled by man – not by angels. In fact, the Man, Christ Jesus, will rule it. All those great Old Testament passages that prophesy of the earthly kingdom of God will be fulfilled when Jesus Christ returns. And angels will not rule that future world – it will be ruled by man.

In verses 6-8, the author of Hebrews quoted parts of Psalm 8 to prove his point:

*“What is man that You are mindful of him, or the son of man that You take care of him?”*

*<sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> You have put all things in subjection under his feet.”*

Although man is “*a little lower than the angels*” now because of mortality and other frailties, that will not be the situation in the future. At the present time angels have greater knowledge than mankind, greater mobility than mankind, and greater power than mankind - but not in the world to come. This is right in line with God’s original plan when He created mankind.

Right from the beginning, mankind was created in the image of God, and mankind was given dominion over the rest of creation. Although sin came in and messed things up *temporarily*, **God's original plan has not been overturned**. The Man Christ Jesus has come and saved the plan!

Thus, you see, Psalm 8 is really a Messianic psalm. The eternal Son of God was made a little lower than the angels for a little time when He became Man and took on the frailties of humanity. When the eternal Son of God became Man, He became a little lower than the angels in that He took on the frailties of humanity. He took on the weakness of humanity - He had to eat and sleep. Angels don't have to do that. He took on mortality – and He died. But remember, while the eternal Son of God took on humanity and the frailties of humanity, He did not take on a sinful human nature. Thus He was sinless.

Now He is crowned with glory and honor! Not just a little higher than the angels but much higher - and yet He is still Man! Thus God's original plan for mankind is preserved and fulfilled in Christ.

***b. Christ is superior to the angels even though He became a man because of man's original sin.***

Verses 8-9: *"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."*

*"But now we do not yet see all things put under Him..."* Right now, we don't see everything under the dominion of man, as God originally intended it, because of man's original sin. Man - created in the image of God, the apex of God's creation - disobeyed God and sinned.

As a result, man lost his high position of dominion over the earth, and the whole creation was "subjected to futility." Romans 8:20 says, *"For the creation was subjected to futility, and not by its own choice..."* As we look around us now, what do we see? We don't see God's original plan. We see disorder and chaos and a world that is not in subjection under mankind. And it's all the result of man's sin.

***But we see Jesus – crowned with glory and honor!*** I love this second "but" of this passage: *"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."* The eternal Son of God was made a little lower than the angels when He became Man. He did this so that He could die. The penalty for sin is death. Angels don't die. God the Son willingly took a place that was lower than the angels. He became Man so that He could die. He took the penalty of sin for us – that He might *"taste death for everyone."*

“So that He... *might taste death for everyone.*” If Jesus Christ tasted death for **everyone**, does that mean that everyone is saved? No! But it does mean that the death of Christ was comprehensive enough for everyone to be saved. The death of Jesus Christ provided for **unlimited atonement**. It was **provisional** for all, but it is **effective** only for those who believe.

So Jesus Christ is superior to angels, even though He became a Man - because of God’s original plan, and because of man’s original sin.

## Practical Application

### Aren’t you glad that God is “mindful” of you?

Verses 6-8 quote from Psalm 8. Let’s look at Psalm 8:3-5, the verses that come right before those that are quoted in Hebrews 2: “*When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained,* <sup>4</sup> *what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?* <sup>5</sup>*For You have made him a little lower than the angels, and You have crowned him with glory and honor.*” And then come the verses that are quoted in Hebrews 2.

Many times when he was caring for his father’s sheep, David would have been out on a clear night, gazing up at the stars. When he considered the greatness and vastness of God’s universe, he was reminded how small and insignificant he was. How many of you have had that experience? If you have, aren’t you glad that God has told you that He’s “mindful” of you?

One of the displays down at the Adler Planetarium in Chicago is a three-dimensional model of the Milky Way galaxy. An arrow points to a very insignificant small dot, not even near the center of the galaxy, with a sign that reads: “You are here.” It sure makes you feel insignificant! And the Milky Way galaxy is only one of millions of galaxies! How could God possibly care about the little insignificant humans who live on a tiny dot, in one galaxy, among millions of galaxies?

I’m so glad that we have the Bible to tell us that God is “mindful” of us - and that He has visited us! We’d never know it apart from Scripture - and the revelation of God’s love in Jesus Christ.

Aren’t you glad that God is mindful of you?