

# Hebrews

## Christ is Superior to Angels (Part 2)

### Hebrews 1:4-6

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#### INTRODUCTION:

Were we to try to prove to Israel from the New Testament that Christ is a better mediator, they would say, "I don't accept the New Testament," right? And so, the writer says, "Let me prove it to you from your own testament. He must show that Christ, the bearer of the new covenant is better than the old, because Christ is a new mediator, better than the old mediators, who were angels. Christ must, then, be better than angels. And so, the writer sets out to do this, and he does it beautifully in verses 4 to 14, by using - guess what? - the Old Testament.

And thus, the argument is powerful.

Keep in mind that the book of Hebrews is written to Jewish people; primarily to Jewish believers, but also with Jewish unbelievers in mind, to convince them that the new covenant is better than the old covenant. So by using the Old Testament that they know very well, it becomes a very powerful and convincing message to them.

If you were to go down and take these Old Testament passages, and look in the cross reference, and go to the Old Testament and find them, you would find that they are not quoted exactly; that there is slight variation in the quotation. The reason for that is this. By the time epistle of Hebrews was written, there was a book called the Septuagint.

The Septuagint is the oldest surviving Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, traditionally believed to have been written by 72 Jewish scholars sometime during the **third century BC**. Since Greek was the common language of the Roman Empire, the Septuagint was popular among Jews living under Roman rule.

Evidently, the writer of Hebrews was a Greek-culture individual, because when he quotes the Old Testament, he invariably quotes it from the Septuagint, or the Greek translation.

And consequently, it varies slightly from the Hebrew translation. That is one of the reasons we don't believe that Paul was the writer, because he quotes the Old Testament more from the Hebrew than from the Septuagint.

**Now, in what ways was Jesus better than the angels?** The author of Hebrews proves the superiority of Christ over angels by using seven Old Testament passages to verify five different ways in which Christ is superior to angels. **His title was better, His worship, His nature, His eternity, and His destiny.**

This morning we will be looking at **His title** and **His worship** found in verses 4-6.

[All Stand and Read Scripture](#)

## Hebrews 1:4-6 (NASB95)

<sup>4</sup> having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited 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 a Father to Him And He shall be a Son to Me**”? <sup>6</sup> And when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says, “**And let all the angels of God worship Him.**”

## Prayer

Now, I want to give you the text for the sermon. That is in the beginning of verse 4.

“**Having become as much better than the angels**” - That is the text for the sermon that we will see in verses 5 through 14. That is the proposition that he seeks to prove. So, **who has become much better than the angels?** It is Jesus Christ, who is the subject of verses 1-3.

Then he goes on from there, to show proofs and reasons, all **from the Old Testament**, why Christ is better than angels.

Now, I want to point out one thing that has caused problems. A lot of cults, and a lot of other religious groups, at this point deny the deity of Christ. They very often come to this passage to prove that Christ was not God, but that He was a created being. And they start in verse 4, with the statement that you find in some other translations, “**Being made so much better than the angels.**” And they say, “**You see? Christ was made.**”

But the Greek word used here is not **to make or create**; it is a different word meaning **to become**. Jesus Christ always was, but He once again would become better than the angels after God raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand and exalted Him above far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named. His exaltation infers that at one time He had been lower than the angels.

This verse is referring to Christ as the Son. As the Son, He was made lower than angels, but because of His faithfulness, obedience, and the wonderful work that He accomplished as a Son, He was exalted back up above angels, where He was before. So, He became, once again, better than the angels. For a little while He was lower than the angels, but because of His faithfulness in accomplishing God’s work, He became better than the angels, as a Son.

A little later the author of Hebrews quotes from Psalm 8, that the early Christians were very familiar with, that Jesus’ humble state was but temporary: “**for a little while**” He was made lower than the angels.

## Hebrews 2:7-8 (NASB95)

<sup>7</sup> “You have made him for a little while lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, And have appointed him over the works of Your hands; <sup>8</sup> You have put all things in subjection under his feet.”

Keep your Bible open to Hebrews 2:7-8 and let me read to you the quoted verse from Psalm 8:5-6.

## Psalm 8:5-6 (NASB95)

<sup>5</sup> Yet You have made him a little lower than God, And You crown him with glory and majesty! <sup>6</sup> You make him to rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet,

Jesus is now exalted above all angels, and one day, when Christ returns again, every knee will bow at His name and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

So in what ways is Christ better than angels? The first way is that He is **Greater Because of His Title**.

## **BODY:**

### **I. Greater Because of Title**

#### **Hebrews 1:4-5 (NASB95)**

<sup>4</sup> having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited 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 a Father to Him And He shall be a Son to Me”?

The Holy Spirit here says Jesus is better than angels, first of all, because **He has a better name**. To what angel did God ever say, “You are My Son, Today I have begotten You”? **The answer is, no angel has ever been told that**. To what angel did God ever say, “I will be a Father to Him And He shall be a Son to Me”? **The answer is, once again that no angel has ever been told that**. The angels are ministers and messengers, Christ is the Son. Do you see? The angels are servants, Christ is a Son. There is a great difference between those two relationships. Thus He has obtained a more excellent name than they.

Now, in our culture we don't put a lot of stock in names. You name your kid anything you want. The name rarely makes any connection at all with the character of the child. It is more common for nicknames. We usually nickname somebody something because of some particular characteristic. But very often in the word of God, God has chosen specific names that have to do with character, or have to do with some aspect of the individual's life. And frequently, the outward name spoke of an inward reality.

And so, Jesus Christ has been given a name. And that name is above” – what? - “every name.” It is a better name than angels.

Now, in order to show this, he quotes two Old Testament passages. They are found in verse 5.

#### **Hebrews 1:5a (NASB95)**

<sup>5</sup> For to which of the angels did He ever say, “You are My Son, Today I have begotten You”?

Stay here in verse 5 and let me read Psalm 2:7 that it was quoted from.

#### **Psalm 2:7 (NASB95)**

<sup>7</sup> “I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord: He said to Me, ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.

You see, he is quoting from their own familiar text. Then the second quote in verse 5 is

## Hebrews 1:5b (NASB95)

And again, “I will be a Father to Him And He shall be a Son to Me”?

Once again stay here in verse 5 and let me read 2 Samuel 7:14.

## 2 Samuel 7:14 (NASB95)

<sup>14</sup> I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me;

You remember the prophecy there to David, that David would have a greater son? Now, which angel has ever been called a son? None. Christians and angels are often referred to as "**sons of God**", or "**children of God**", in the sense that God created them, but no one angel is ever called the Son of God. And to no angel has he ever said, "**Today I have begotten You**". And God says that Christ has "**inherited a more excellent name than they**".

Angels are excellent creatures. Of all creatures they are the most excellent. But if Christ has a more excellent name than the most excellent, He must have the most excellent name.

And so, says the writer of Hebrews to the Jews from their own Old Testament, Jesus Christ is greater than angels, because He has obtained a greater name. God never called any angel **Son**.

The second way by which Christ is greater than angels is **Because He is Worshipped by Angels**.

## II. Greater Because Worshipped

### Hebrews 1:6 (NASB95)

<sup>6</sup> And when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says, “And let all the angels of God worship Him.”

We must take our time in going through this opening chapter, because it is foundational to understanding everything. Even though Jesus Christ humbled Himself and was made, for a time, lower than the angels, angels are to worship Him.

And if angels are to worship Him, then He must be what? Greater than they. And if He is greater than they, then His covenant is greater than the one they brought. Thus Christianity is greater than Judaism.

The quote here in verse 6 is a quote from Psalm 97:7. Once again remain here in verse 6 and let me read Psalm 97:7.

### Psalm 97:6-7 (NASB95)

<sup>6</sup> **The heavens declare His righteousness** And all the peoples have seen His glory. <sup>7</sup> Let all those be ashamed who serve graven images, Who boast themselves of idols; **Worship Him, all you gods.**

Even the Old Testament psalmist said that all the angels were to worship the Lord's Christ. That is in the Old Testament. The Jews should not be surprised at this. It comes right out of their own text.

Now, let me give you this thought. You say, “Well, didn’t angels always worship Him?” Yes, they did. They worshipped Him throughout all the time of their existence prior to His incarnation; they worshipped Him as God.

But they are now to worship Him as Son. In His incarnate character, they are to worship Him. He is trying to show that this Son, who became a man, was higher than angels. He is the very God that angels have always worshipped. As you know, it is an absolute sin, in violation of all of God’s laws, to worship anybody but whom? **God**. And if God is saying all the angels worship Christ, then He must be God. And He is not only God of eternity, He is Son.

Now, it says that He is the "**firstborn**". Now, this again is where all these people jump up and down, and they think they have found their proof text, that Jesus is a created being. “Look, look, look, He is a firstborn. You see, He was begotten like all the rest.” But what they do not understand the this word for "**firstborn**" is not a word that has anything to do with time. It is a word that has to do with position. It is not a description, it is a title.

### **Colossians 1:15 (NASB95)**

**<sup>15</sup> He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.**

And that’s another one they use, “You see, you see, you see? He was the firstborn in creation. He was the one who was created.” But once again this is not a time word, it is a position word. When it says that He is "**the firstborn of all creation**", it is not talking about the fact that He was begotten or created, it’s talking about the fact that He is the chief of everything.

The reason Christ is connected with the concept of firstborn is because it was the first Son that was usually the heir to everything, and He usually became the "chief one" of the father’s estate. And so, Jesus Christ is the firstborn in reference to position and authority and not to time. I can give you an illustration of that.

There were two brothers in the Old Testament; Jacob and Esau. Who was the oldest? Esau. Who was the "firstborn"? Jacob. It was Jacob. Although Esau was the oldest, Jacob is regarded as the firstborn. Genesis 49 tells us about the character of firstborn and what it means.

### **Genesis 49:3 (NASB95)**

**<sup>3</sup> “Reuben, you are my firstborn; My might and the beginning of my strength, Preeminent in dignity and preeminent in power.**

So there, you have a definition of firstborn. It is an authority word. Jesus Christ has the right to rule.

### **Colossians 1:18 (NASB95)**

**<sup>18</sup> He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.**

Now, that says Jesus was the firstborn from the dead. Had anybody been resurrected before Jesus? Sure.

We know of Lazarus that Jesus resurrected. We know of all the saints who came alive at the crucifixion. There were many Old Testament people who came alive from the dead. So we know lots of people who have been raised from the dead before Jesus. You say, “**Yeah, but it says right there that He was the firstborn from the dead.**” You know what it actually means? He was the chief one of all who had ever been raised. It cannot mean **time**, or that verse would be a lie.

He is the most honored one, the most dignified one, the highest one, the most powerful one. Of all who have been resurrected, He is the greatest. So, the title refers, then, to Christ’s glory, it refers to His dignity, not to the time, and not to the concept of being created before anything else was created.

Now, I want you to notice the word “**again**” here in verse 6. The word *again* is very important.

Before we can understand “again”, let me pick up the word “world” here.

### **Hebrews 1:6 (NASB95)**

**6** And when He **again** brings the firstborn into the **world**, He says, “And let all the angels of God worship Him.”

The word for world here is not the common word for world, it is the word for **inhabited earth**. So this verse is saying that the firstborn is coming to an inhabited earth.

It is not the word “kosmos”, which would be at the time of creation of the whole universe. It is an inhabited earth already when He becomes a firstborn.

Now, I want you to notice the word “**again**”.

God has already brought Christ into the world once as Son and now He is going to bring Him **again**. That has to be future, doesn’t it. Is God going to bring Christ again? Sure! He is coming again in blazing glory. So it will be, then, at the second coming that the fullness of that prophecy comes to pass – “**And let all the angels of God worship Him.**”

The “**again**” is going to happen at the second coming. The angels will not understand the whole picture well enough to give Him full worship until He comes again..

### **1 Peter 1:10-12 (NASB95)**

**10** As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that *would come* to you made careful searches and inquiries, **11** seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. **12** It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—**things into which angels long to look.**

## **CONCLUSION:**

So we have two of the five ways in which the writer of Hebrews uses the Old Testament to prove that Christ is superior to angels. He is Greater because of Title and Greater because Angels worship Him. Next week, Lord willing we will look at the next three.