

A Study of the Book of Hebrews
Jesus is Better
Sermon # 2
“Jesus Is Superior to the Angels”
Hebrews 1:4-14

Angels are a hot topic in our world today. I did a search of the Internet for articles relating to Angels I found, I kid you not, 3,700,000 of them. Now obviously I did not have time to investigate what all of those sites had to say about angels. But this much I do know that although the subject of angels may be an intriguing one, it however, is one about which most people are largely ignorant.

Part of the problem is that to many people have “Touched by an Angel” theology Now don’t get me wrong I believe that “Touched by an Angel” was a family friendly show that did more to portray God in a good light than many shows in years. But do not forget it is a Television show written to appeal to the broadest possible audience and to offend no one. The premise of the show is that God loves you and that is true. But it also gives the idea that it does not matter what you believe. It should also be remembered that the executive producer of the show was Marianne Williamson, the writer of the New Age “Course On Miracles.”

Angels are not the chain-smoking, hard drinking, womanizing creatures portrayed by John Travolta in the movie “Michael.” But neither are the little fat cherubs we so often see as figurines. There is nothing wrong with collecting angels figurines as long as they remain just figurines. I collect elephants figurines, but I don’t worship them.

Angels are supernatural creatures created by God before the creation of the world. Before the creation of man, angels were in existence; for when the foundations of the world were laid, Job tells us "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job 38:7). Angels can be the fiercest of warriors and the swiftest of rescuers. Angels are definitely not humans, especially not dead humans who earn their wings as portrayed in Frank Capra's classic movie, "It's A Wonderful Life."

The letter to the Hebrews was being written to believers who are being tempted to compromise their beliefs. If they would just agree that Jesus was an angel, perhaps even the greatest of angels, but not God they would be accepted back into the synagogue.

In a way the arguments to the original readers about Jesus being superior to the Angels is very applicable to our own times. The proponents of New Age beliefs do not dismiss Jesus out right; they merely demote him to the status of an angel, or spirit guide.

These "spirit guides" or "avatars" are in reality angels – fallen angels or demons.

In reality angels are different in from the so called "spirit guides" in that they do not try to run your life. They perform the task assigned to them by God and they fade into the background.

The common New Age practice of "channeling" is nothing more than demons acting through men and women who make themselves available to evil spirits so as to receive supposedly "hidden wisdom" alleged from the past or from other worlds.

Angels are awesome beings who wield terrific power and yet their significance dwindles in comparison to Jesus. Jesus is more than just another angel. Actually today there are still two cults that teach that Jesus was just an angel. The Mormons and the Jehovah's Witness both teach that Jesus was the highest created angel but just an angel. Jesus is more than just another angel.

Why is it important for us to realize that Jesus is better? Because if we do not realize that Jesus is better than anything we could possibly know... there is always the illusion that something out there is better!

Five Reasons that Christ is superior to the angels.

First, Jesus is Superior Because He is the Son (vv. 4-5)

"Having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."

We are given the names of some of the angels. There is "Michael" – who's name means "who is like God" is God's mighty angel. But Jesus is more than mighty, He is Almighty.

And there is "Gabriel" who's name means "God is Great" and acts as the messenger of God. But Jesus is more than a messenger he is "The Message."

And there was "Lucifer" the name of Satan before he fell. His name means "morning star." He was created God most majestic angel, prior to his fall from heaven. But Jesus is more than a shining star. He is the Son.

There are some 256 recorded names in the Bible attributed to Jesus and I suppose that is because he is infinitely beyond All that

any one name could express. But if there is one name that is most important I believe it is captured in verse four, it is **"the most excellent name."** What is that name? It is Son!

Having stated that the Son is infinitely superior to the Angels he sets out to prove it from Scripture. There are in all seven passages that he quotes to support his claim. All of the quotes are from the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) and may have some variation from the English translation of the Old Testament of today.

The first quote is in verse five and is from Psalms 2:7, **"For to which of the angels did He ever say: "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You"?** Angels as a group have been referred to as **"sons of God"** (Job 1:6, 2:1) but no individual angel has ever been called the **"Son of God."**

The second quotation is from 2 Samuel 7:14, **"I will be to Him a Father, And He shall be to Me a Son"** No angel ever had such a relationship with the Father.

Jesus is Superior Because He is the Son and...

Secondly, Jesus is Superior Because He Is Worthy of Worship (v. 6) **"But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: "Let all the angels of God worship Him."**

The term **"first born"** here does not mean "born first" but refers to rank. Jesus superior rank is seen in that God commands his angels to worship His Son. The command to worship another way of saying that the Son is God, for only God is to be worshipped.

Jesus is never shown worshipping the angels but they are shown worshipping him. You will remember of course that they worshipped at his birth (Luke 2:13). Another place that we read of the angels worshipping Jesus is Revelation 5:11-12, "Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,(12) Saying with a loud voice: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!"

We know that Jesus is superior to the angels because He is the object of their worship!

We are warned by the Apostle Paul not to be deceived into the worship of angels (Col 2:18-19) "Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, (19) and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God."

Any real angel will urge you not to worship them but to worship only God.

Jesus is Superior Because He Is Worthy of Worship and...

Third, Jesus is Superior Because He Is the Anointed (vv. 7-9)

Here he quotes (#3) Psalm 104:4, "And of the angels He says: "Who makes His angels spirits And His ministers a flame of fire." God beckons the angels respond. They do not command they obey.

In verse eight he quotes (#4) Psalm 45, "But to the Son He says: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. (9) You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions."

No angel was ever invited to share God's throne. Satan, the only angel foolish enough to try to usurp that throne was disgraced and thrown out of heaven.

It is not the angels that are anointed but the Son alone. The angels are the ministers of the heavenly kingdom but Jesus is the Monarch.

Jesus is Superior Because He Is the Anointed and ...

Fourth, Jesus is Superior Because He Is The Creator (vv, 10-12)

The sixth quotation found in verse ten is from Psalm 102:25-27 and describes God as Creator. "And: "You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundations of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands (11) They will perish, but You remain: And they will all grow old like a garment; (12) Like a cloak You will fold them up, And they will be changed. But You are the same, And Your years will not fail.

Jesus existed before the universe because He created it. It is not everlasting; He is. Science tells us by the second law of thermodynamics that this universe will eventually wind down. Motion produces friction. Friction produces wear; wear produces disintegration. It is affected by the process of aging. Like a fragile garment susceptible to such things as sunlight, humidity and moths, this physical creation will shrivel, dry out and decay.

But not so the Lord, He remains the same forever. He is eternal. He had no beginning. No angel can say that! Angels are immortal supernatural creatures because they never die. But as created beings they are not eternal because they had a beginning.

Fifth, Jesus is Superior Because He Is the Ruler of the Universe (vv. 13-14)

In verse fourteen we find the final quotation (#7) is from Psalm 110, "But to which of the angels has He ever said: "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool"?"

Remember the statement from verse three and then "He sat down" – his work is finished. "He sat down" – his position is fixed. None of the angels held such a position of honor in heaven. The angels are not seated they are serving. Seated in honor, Jesus remains superior. The Son is now sitting in heaven waiting for His ultimate victory.

Verse fourteen says, "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?" The force of the original Greek is that the angels are perpetually being sent out to help God's people one after another. I want to close with just one such example.

"John Paton was a missionary in the New Hebrides Islands. One night hostile natives surrounded the mission station, intent on burning out the Patons and killing them. Paton and his wife prayed during that terror-filled night that God would deliver them. When daylight came they were amazed to see their attackers leave.

A year later, the chief of the tribe was converted to Christ. Remembering what had happened, Paton asked the chief what had kept him from burning down the house and killing them. The chief replied in surprise, "Who were all those men with you there?" Paton knew no men were present--but the chief said he was afraid to attack because he had seen hundreds of big men in shining garments with drawn swords circling the mission station. [Today in the Word, MBI, October, 1991, p. 18 - www.bible.org/illus/angels]

What an astounding story but is just one of many that could be given. It is a witness not only to the power of angels but to the superiority the Son of God who sent them.