

Jesus has the Better Title

Jesus has the highest place of authority above the angels, yet became lower than the angels to bring the highest salvation to the lowest of men.

Hebrews 1:4-2:1

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Good morning – a great week at the pastor’s conference – ready to see how we can make ourselves available for God to use!

Women’s Simulcast with Alissa Childers – This Live-stream event is on November 20th from 11 am to 6 pm in the Chapel. Lunch and snacks will be provided. The cost is \$5.00 per lady, however, if you want to bring your family members, daughters, mothers, sisters, you can for a total of \$10.00.

Second Sunday Prayer – tonight at 6:00

Prayer???

RECAP

Jesus is? Better! ***Jesus was not another Rabbi, radical, or revolutionary.*** Jesus is so much more.

After diving into the first three verses of this book last week, I was utterly overwhelmed by the greatness of our Savior and King. And that was three verses in the first chapter! If we are listening, this time next year, our commitment to and worship for Jesus are going to be deeper and more meaningful than ever before.

The author continues to delve into the depths of Christ's magnificence. Writing to Hebrew Christians who were facing the temptation of moving back into the religion of Judaism and bondage under the law of Moses, rather than forward in Christ, the author's clear intent is to leave the audience with such a biblical and majestic picture of Jesus, that they would never want to turn to anything or anyone else ever again to try and find meaning, salvation, and hope.

We have the tendency to forget the simplicity of our faith. We run after spiritual rabbit trails, and often overemphasize spiritual things that take our focus off Christ.

QUOTE

The best defense against apathy and apostasy is to be confronted with a clear image of Who Jesus is and what He has done.

Josh, Quote

INTRODUCTION

We saw last time that Jesus is the better voice...

- God has never been one to be silent.
- He has spoken throughout the ages, namely through prophets, to His people and humanity.
- But the prophets only provided snippets of the bigger picture. They each provided a piece of the puzzle that Jesus ultimately arranged and completed.
- When the fulness of time appeared, God sent His son, Jesus.

What the prophets foretold, Jesus fulfilled! God has now, in these days, communicated His fullness in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Jesus has the better voice than the prophets because He is the express image of God. Everything God wants us to know about Him and His plan is communicated in Jesus Christ. There is no new revelation, no new prophets, no new church... If you want to know God, start with Jesus.

Last week we saw that in Jesus Christ, God has communicated:

- **His truth**
- **His creative power**
- **His nature**

- His authority.
- His victory.

Not only does Jesus have the **better voice**, today we see that He has **the better title**. The author continues to build the case for the superiority and preeminence of Jesus over all creation, even the angelic hosts.

BIBLE VERSE

Heb 1:4-14 NKJV – having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. 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”? 6 But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: “Let all the angels of God worship Him.” 7 And of the angels He says: “Who makes His angels spirits And His ministers a flame of fire.” 8 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.” 10 And: “You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation 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.” 13 But to which of the angels has He ever said: “Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool”? 14 Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?

ILLUSTRATION

What’s the big deal about a title anyway? What is the meaning of a moniker? Well, titles convey a good deal of information about authority. For instance:

- If you walked into a business and the man who shook your hand introduced himself as the CEO, your response to Him might be different than the man who introduces himself and the part-time clerk.
- The following scenario has never happened to me, but have you ever been on the phone with a representative of a company that sold you a faulty product and they are giving you the runaround? You become frustrated and say, “**Let me speak to your manager!**” Why?

Because the title “manager” means that they have a higher authority than the minion that’s talking to you. (If you’re a telemarketer or customer service agent, no offense!)

APPLICATION

Well, for these Jewish believers, it was essential to establish that Jesus has the highest designation, the most excellent name, and most elevated position of authority. Higher than the prophets, yes, but not only that, higher than the angelic beings.

BIG IDEA

Jesus has the highest place of authority above the angels, yet became lower than the angels to bring the highest salvation to the lowest of men.

CONTEXT

Many scholars believe that the early Hebrew church was dealing with a skewed theology of angels and Jesus.

- Perhaps the thought was floating around that Jesus was merely an advanced angelic being.
- Maybe some were indicating, from the gnostic thought, that Jesus was some form of demigod or lesser divinity.
- Perhaps there was an overemphasis on angels, promoting them to a higher designation than what was appropriate.

APPLICATION: Even today there is can be an unhealthy fascination with angels in some circles. They have been elevated by many as more than what they are, and at times, take the place of Jesus in some people’s faith.

- People now want to communicate with angels, pray to angels, beseech their guardian angel, even to the point of worshipping angels!
- ***Everyone wants to be, “Touched by an angel”, but Hebrews tells us that it’s better to be, “Touched by Jesus” the One who commands and created the angels for His own purposes.***
- Continuing his same thought from the first three verses, the author plunges down the path of Christ’s superiority as the only Son of God, God revealed in human flesh.

CONTEXT

In the Jewish context, angels are the highest forms of created beings.

- There are animals
- Humans
- Angels
- God

Among the ancient Jewish Mystical tradition, there are ten classes or ranks of angelic beings given by the rabbis. These range from awe-inspiring majestic powerhouses to human-like angels.

CONTEXT: Angels were highly revered.

The Hebrew and Greek words for angel simply mean messenger. Angels were the carriers of God's divine messages and sometimes judgments.

- The angels were witnesses of the divine creation of the world (***Job 38 – The angels sang for joy as God laid the foundation of the earth***)
- Various types of angels surround the throne of God
- Some angels are so majestic, powerful and beautiful that they inspired fear and awe in the few humans who have seen them (***Twice in the book of Revelation 19 & 22, John instinctively falls flat to worship angels who rebuke him for doing so***)
- From the angel that guarded the Garden of Eden in Genesis to the angel that preaches the gospel to the world in Revelation, angels are involved in humanity from beginning to end.
- Angels were party to the giving of the law to Moses (***Galatians 3 – appointed through angels / Acts 7 – Stephen indicates the law was delivered by angels / Hebrews 2 – the word spoken by angels.***)
- Angels are warriors involved in spiritual warfare against the demonic forces of Satan.
- Angels have appeared to various prophets and people to bring visions and messages from God.

I also have it on good sources that angels can **earn their wings by helping depressed people** [image 1], and that even California has a few [image 2]!

THE ANGEL OF THE LORD

But then, apart from the various angelic beings we see in scripture, we see on unique Old Testament character that carries the title of, “The Angel of the Lord.”

- What makes Him different, is that every time you see Him, He is communicating on behalf of God in the first person.
- He is the angel of the Lord that appears to Abraham and speaks as God, Who appeared in the burning bush speaking to Moses, the one who came to Gideon, and the one who single-handedly wiped out an Assyrian army of 185,000 men.

This angel doesn’t seem to be speaking a message from God, He seems to be an OT expression OF God, personally speaking, His words and accomplishing His works.

- We believe that He is an Old Testament appearance or expression of the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ.

THE DILEMMA

This creates a significant dilemma for Jewish theology because, as we will learn today, the Old Testament explicitly prophesies of this One who God Himself identifies as surpassing the angels.

- Well, how do you get greater than the angels but less than God? You don’t. What form of power or being is in between the angels and God? There is none.
- So, this ONE the scripture speaks of either is some other form of divinity, which would mean He is another God, or He is another form of the One true God. But what He can’t be is an angel.
- In this chapter, the author argues this point by delineating between the nature and authority of angels, and the character and power of the Son of God.

BIBLE VERSE

Heb 1:4 NKJV – having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

APPLICATION

The most excellent name, the higher authority, describes His *transcendent dignity* above all others.

Philippians 2 tells us that Jesus has been given, ***“The name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”***

The ***“inheritance”*** that Hebrews describes, indicates that Jesus, by way of His very nature, was given a position that the angels could never attain. The reason is that the angels and the Son of God have different **essences**.

Those differences are outlined in the next 10 verses, and we will tackle them in 5 points. FIRST, we will read all the verses so we have the broader context, then look at 4 quick points.

CONTEXT

Here, the author displays his Old Testament prowess. Interestingly, He mostly quotes from the Psalms, except for a quote from Deuteronomy and one from 2 Samuel.

- I’m not 100% sure as to why he uses the Psalms, but I can think of one possibility:
 - The Psalms he quotes are written by King David. King David was the line through whom the Messiah would come. David represents the royal constitution that the Messiah would hold. In the likeness of David, the Messiah would be the eternal king of an everlasting Kingdom.
 - Therefore, the Psalms indicate the royal authority of Jesus, which the author desires to establish.

1

Jesus is Son, angels are servants

BIBLE VERSE

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”?

CONTEXT

Here the author directly quotes from Psalm 2 and 2 Samuel 7 to describe the unique characteristics of Jesus's position as the Son of God.

- There are other designations of "sons of God" given in the scriptures. Angels are called the sons of God, and even we are called the sons of God through Christ. But this needs to be differentiated from "THE Son of God."
- **EXAMPLE: I call many of the men in this church "brother," but I also have a BROTHER. They carry the same title but are different in definition.**

There has never been an angelic being that God himself has designated as the only begotten son.

- **When Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River by John the Baptist, a voice came from the Father confirming the His eternal status. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" were the words that echoed from heaven.**
- In the Jewish mind, to declare to be the unique son was to claim the same nature and DNA. This is why the Jews were so furious with Jesus when He claimed that He and the Father are one. In John 10:33 we read, ***"The Jews answered Him, saying, 'For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God.'"***
- Yet, it was God Himself who prophetically declared that Jesus would carry that title of Son.

PSALM 2

In this messianic Psalm, God declares, "You are my son, today I have begotten you." This word begotten can be easily misunderstood. It's essential to understand that begotten doesn't mean created or born. In the Hebrew, it means, "To ring forth." **It indicates the event of the incarnation.**

We know this word from John 3:16: **"For God so loved the world that He gave His only BEGOTTEN son, that whosoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life."**

Begotten there can be phrased like this: For God so loved the world that He gave His only son, WHO CAME IN THE FLESH."

- It speaks to the fact that God, in the right time and place, was manifested to humanity in the flesh.

2 SAMUEL 7

“I will be to him a Father, and he will be to Me a son.”

In the OT passage, God is speaking to David about his son Solomon who would build a house for Him. We read:

2Sa 7:12-14 NKJV – 12 “When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 “He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 14 “I will be his Father, and he shall be My son...”

The kingdom would be established forever through this “son.” Solomon would be the son through whom the Kingdom of David would continue, and would be the son who built the house of God, the first temple.

- But Solomon died, and the kingdom eventually ended.
- The Babylonians destroyed the house of God that Solomon erected.
- So who was the Son that God was prophesying? The Messiah.

The Messiah would live and reign forever: Jesus conquered the grave, is reigning from heaven and will one day return to reign forever and ever physically.

The Messiah would build a lasting house: Jesus has built the church. Jesus said, **“I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”** Paul tells us in Ephesians 2 that we are being built as, **“the dwelling place of God in the Spirit.”**

You see, Jesus is the BETTER SOLOMON, the eternal Son.

APPLICATION

But did an angel ever receive this kind of designation from the Father? NOPE! In fact, in verse 7, he quotes Psalm 104 declaring: **“And of the angels He says: “Who makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire.”**

And in verse 14, we are told, **“14 Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?”**

- Angels don't have the preeminence. They are not the Son, they are the servants. Whatever God bids them, that they do.

2

Jesus is worshipped, angels are worshippers

BIBLE VERSE

Heb 1:6 NKJV – 6 But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: “Let all the angels of God worship Him.”

FIRSTBORN

“Firstborn” is a term that cults use to try and argue that Jesus is a created being, but it's clear in the scripture that firstborn is a title for Jesus, not a description of actual birth or creation.

- Solomon was at least David's 10th son, probably even more than that, yet God gave him the right of the firstborn (*Psalm 89*)
- Jacob was younger than the firstborn Esau, but God made Jacob the firstborn.
- Firstborn means the one to whom the authority and inheritance of the Father belong.
- In this sense, Jesus is the firstborn over all creation. He is the one who has the full authority of the Father.

CONTEXT

Here, the author quotes from the Septuagint version of Deuteronomy 32:43, and also incorporates Psalm 97:7.

And here is this easily missed, mind-blowing conclusion. What was God's very first commandment to His people?

- “You shall have no other Gods before me.”
- God has never allowed much less commanded the worship of anyone or anything else other than Him.

In Isaiah 45, God declares, **“5 I am the LORD, and there is no other; there is no God besides Me.”**

Here we have a clear command from God to the angels saying, “Worship the Son.”

The only logical conclusion that can be drawn is that: the Son is as equal in worth and divine in quality as the Father.

BIBLE VERSE

[Rev 22:8-9 NKJV] 8 Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. 9 Then he said to me, “See [that you do] not [do that]. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.”

3

Jesus commands, angels comply

BIBLE VERSE

8 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.”

APPLICATION

It’s true that the angels surround the throne in heaven, but Jesus is ON the throne of heaven and will be in that place of highest authority FOREVER!

What’s probably more amazing about this reference from Psalm 45, is the fact that God calls the Son God. God, speaking of the coming Messiah, calls Him God (Elohim in the Hebrew, Theos in the Greek).

As God, Jesus doesn’t run with the angels, He commands the angels where to run!

CONTRAST

By the way, are you seeing some of the stark contrast between the theology of Hebrews and the claims of some of the most popular pseudo-Christian cults out there?

Mormon theology would have us believe that Jesus was an angel, specifically the brother of Lucifer. When God saw the plight of humanity, Lucifer and Jesus had a competition to see who could come up with the best plan. Lucifer lost and became jealous of his angelic brother Jesus, and God kicked him out of heaven. Jesus, on the other hand, was sent to earth as a person, earned godhood. Yes, there are multiple gods, and good news, even you, like Jesus, can become a god if you are good enough. From Mormon.org, I quote, ***“When we become humble and rely on our Savior, we come to understand a great truth about ourselves: there is an inherent divinity... in each of us.”***

Jehovah’s Witness theology would have us believe that Jesus is none other than Michael the archangel incarnate. Here’s a quote from their website JW.org, ***“...it is logical to conclude that Michael (the archangel) is none other than Jesus Christ in his heavenly role.”***

Hello! Is anyone reading the book of Hebrews?

- **Jesus is not an angel that became a human that then became a divine being.**
- **Jesus is not Michael incarnate who spiritually resurrected back to His place as God’s head archangel.**
- Hebrews 1-2 declares with precise clarity and confidence, “Jesus is uniquely God! Better than the prophets, more excellent and different than the angels!”
- The author seals up this reality with the rest of chapter 1:

4**Jesus is Creator, angels are created****BIBLE VERSE**

Heb 1:10-13 NKJV – 10 And: “You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation 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.” 13 But to which of the angels has He ever said: “Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool”?

APPLICATION

Here he points out a **PERSON** (LORD – Jehovah), a **TIME** (in the beginning), and an **ACTION** (Laid the foundations).

[1Jo 1:1-2 NKJV] 1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life– 2 the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us–

APPLICATION

If this doesn't seal the deal, I don't know what can.

There might be a slight argument (not a good one) that the previous word used of Jesus for God, could also mean a human ruler or lesser divinity. Well, the context of Psalm 102 when he says, **“You LORD in the beginning...”** clearly communicates the person He is referring to.

- If you were to ask any Jew, **“Who is the Psalmist referring to in Psalm 102 as he describes the creation of the world?”** Their answer would be a quick and confident, **“Yahweh, God, the Almighty, one and only creator!”**

QUESTIONS

What angels can say:

- They laid the earth's foundations
- The universe is the works of their hands
- That they have a life with no beginning or end
- That they have a nature that never changes but stays the same yesterday, today and forever!

BIBLE VERSE

Hebrews 13:8 (CSB)

⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

INTERESTING

One of the three most prevalent scientific theories about the end of the universe is called, “The Big Crunch.” This theory states that once the universe stops expanding, gravity will cause it to “fold in” on itself and collapse. It’s interesting that the Bible uses this language: ***“Like a cloak, you will fold them up, and they will be changed.”***

CONCLUSION

Wow! What a plethora of scriptural evidence pointing to the divine nature of Jesus:

- ***Jesus has a better voice than the prophets!***
- ***Jesus has a better name and place than the angels!***
- So what? Why go through this theological essay? Well, it’s directly connected to chapter 2:1, which states:

BIBLE VERSE

Heb 2:1 NKJV – 1 Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.

QUOTE

“If you don’t fight to stay with Jesus, the natural current of the world will take you away from Him.”

Josh, Quote

APPLICATION

We live in an anti-christ world, in bodies that are already prone to naturally move away from Christ.

- The voices of man-made religion, worldly temptations, comfort and ease, and our flesh are continually trying to move us away from being grounded and centered in Christ Jesus.

- It is only by heeding the voice of Jesus that we can effectively swim against the current!
- Not just heeding, but giving the more earnest heed: this speaks of prioritizing our pursuit of Christ above every other pursuit that might distance us from Him.
 - He's telling His audience, ***"If the forefathers heeded the prophets and the angels, how much more must we heed the Son of God, seeing that He is superior!"***

QUOTE

More spiritual problems are caused by neglect than perhaps by any other failure on our part. We neglect God's Word, prayer, worship with God's people, and other opportunities for spiritual growth, and as a result, we start to drift. The anchor does not move; we do.

Warren Wiersbe, Commentary on Hebrews

ILLUSTRATION

You might recall the famous hymn we still sing today, "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing." One of the famous lines in the song is this, ***"Prone to wander, Lord I feel it, prone to leave the God I love."***

The composer, Robert Robinson, was converted under the mighty preaching of George Whitefield, but that later he drifted from the Lord. He had been greatly used as a pastor, but the neglect of spiritual things led him astray. In an attempt to find peace, he began to travel. During one of his journeys, he met a young woman who was evidently very spiritually-minded.

- "What do you think of this hymn I have been reading?" she asked Robinson, handing him the book. It was his own hymn! He tried to avoid her question but it was hopeless, for the Lord was speaking to him. Finally, he broke down and confessed who he was and how he had been living away from the Lord. "But these 'streams of mercy' are still flowing," the woman assured him; and through her encouragement, Robinson was restored to fellowship with the Lord.

CONCLUSION

I wonder if there is maybe something that you have believed is better than Jesus that has been lading you awry, stealing your affections, and numbing your spiritual senses. Yes, we believe in grace, but we also know that drifting is subtle. Today you might need to repent; not necessarily for drifting, but for thinking that something is better than Jesus and pursuing it. For the Hebrews it might have been angels, but what is it for you? Can I encourage you to put whatever it is in its rightful place, and put Jesus back in His?