

Hebrews 1:4-14 – “Christ’s Superiority Over Angels”

Summary Statement:

This passage highlights the superiority of Christ over angels, emphasizing His divine status and authority as the Son of God, showcasing His unique relationship with the Father.

Outline:

1. Jesus is Greater in His Sonship – 1:5
2. Jesus is Greater in His Status – 1:6-7
3. Jesus is Greater in His Sovereignty – 1:8-9
4. Jesus is Greater in His Stability – 1:10-12
5. Jesus is Greater in His State – 1:13-14

Now it may have been tempting for these Hebrews that were evidently facing pressure to return back to Judaism, to conclude that Jesus was just an angel type being. If they altered their view of Jesus – that He was just an angel – then they could be welcomed back into the Synagogue and do so without ever actually having to deny Christ. Angels after all are messengers of God, and Jesus was sent by God with a message.

But here’s the difference – Jesus wasn’t just sent with a message, He was the message. God *has in these last days spoken to us by His Son* (1:2)!

- Jesus didn’t just come with a message of salvation – He was salvation!

So the author sets out in the remainder of this chapter to show that Jesus isn’t just better than the angels, He is ***so much better than the angels***, because He is not just another messenger, He has a unique relationship with God that is superior over the angels. And it’s not just that Jesus has a unique relationship with God, it’s that He ***is*** God!

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

By inheritance means that He has been given a better name than any angel. The name Jesus is tied to salvation. It’s what His name means (Jehovah is Salvation) and it’s what He’s accomplished.

- **Acts 4:12**, *"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."*

Again, these Hebrews were being challenged on if Jesus was enough. They've heard some good things, but is Jesus really all they say He is? They could look back on their history and see that angels have played a significant role connected to God's plans.

In fact, the Word says that angels were the intermediaries of the law to Moses:

- **Acts 7:53**, *"who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it."*
- **Galatians 3:19**, *"What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator."*

Angels made several appearances in the Old Testament as agents of God:

- Right when Adam and Eve sinned, an angel (cherubim) stood with a flaming sword to guard the way to the tree of life (Genesis 3:24).
- Two angels delivered Lot and his family from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:1, 15).
- Isaiah saw the throne of the Lord and above it he saw *seraphim: each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew*" (Isaiah 6:1-2).
- Within the tabernacle, there was woven into the fabric of the curtains, images of angels. There in the holy of holies, on either side of the ark of the covenant, stood two huge statues of angels with wings outstretched over the mercy seat. And the things of the tabernacle and temple was to be a model of the things in heaven. So as the priest went into the tabernacle or temple, he was reminded of the continual angelic presence that surrounds the throne in heaven.
- Daniel was kept safe in the lion's den by an angel (Daniel 6:22).
- It was an angel that announced the birth of Jesus, and was then surrounded by a multitude of heavenly hosts as the shepherds looked on.

Angels were significant. There was no question they were special. We don't think about angels a lot today. They don't always get seen or thought of perhaps like they did in Bible times.

- I haven't told too many people this, but I encountered an angel back in the 80's. I was fortunate enough to marry her!
- But in Bible times angels were almost a common thing. When Peter was freed from prison and came knocking on the door of the house where

people were praying, Rhoda came to answer the door and was shocked to see Peter. She didn't even open the gate for him and went and told the rest. They didn't believe her and said, *It's probably just his angel* (Acts 12:15). *Really!? Well let's go see that!!* But it didn't even phase them.

However, some of the Jews began to develop an unhealthy fascination with angels even to the point of worshipping them.

- **Colossians 2:18**, *"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,"*

It's interesting that many of the cults today have an unhealthy link to angels; either by receiving a message from an angel, or claiming that Jesus is just an angel. Many have had this wrong elevation of angels.

- Jehovah's Witnesses teach that Jesus is the brother of the archangel Michael.
- Mormon's also put Jesus on the same level as angels claiming Him to be the brother of Lucifer.

But the author of Hebrews declares that Jesus is superior in every way to angels. But he says something that might trip some people up if we don't give some explanation to it.

He says, ***having become so much better than the angels... and has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they***.

Hasn't Jesus always been better than the angels? Yes! We've already seen in the beginning of the chapter that He is the Creator and upholding all things by the word of His power...

What the author seems to be doing here is referencing the work that Jesus did in taking on humanity, coming to this world as one of us to pay the penalty for our sin. He gave His life sacrificially and He rose again defeating sin and death and providing eternal life to those who believe in Him. That's a significant work! It's a work that only Jesus, being fully God and fully Man, could do!

- He's always been better than the angels, but this redemptive work that He has accomplished just knocked it out of the park!

So to continue to prove that Jesus is greater than angels, the author takes them to their own Hebrew Scriptures to reveal what has always been established.

1. Jesus is Greater in His Sonship – 1:5

He first quotes from **Psalm 2:7** and then from **2 Samuel 7:14**.

1:5 - *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”?*

No angel has ever been called a Son. It's true they are referred to as 'sons of God' in Job 1:6, but that was a reference to the angelic hosts, and it did not refer to their relationship as a son. But Jesus is referred to as the Son of God. This speaks of deity. A son of a cow is a cow. A son of a giraffe is a giraffe. You get the idea right? Son of God then means the Son *is* God. Jesus alone is the Son of God. No angel has ever had that honor bestowed upon them.

Now some try and use this word *begotten* to argue that Jesus was created. We read those long lists in Genesis – *so and so begot so and so*. But Jesus never came into existence at a particular time. He was not begotten in that sense; He's eternal. So what does this mean?

- Paul quotes this same Psalm and attributes it to Jesus' resurrection (Acts 13:33). But it more so has completion in Jesus' ascension to heaven 40 days later when He took His rightful place at the right hand of the Father in glory. That is the day being spoken of and how God was now a Father to Him. It's being spoken of as a position of Christ next to the Father but make no mistake about it, this word *begotten* speaks of equality.

Jesus is God's Son not because he was created or born, but because He stands in a unique relationship of authority and intimacy with God the Father – a sonship affirmed and demonstrated through his resurrection and exaltation.

The next verse is a quote from 2 Samuel 7:14.

God says, *I will be to Him a Father*... God was not a Father to the angels. But He was a Father to the Son.

This verse is linked to the Davidic Covenant; that God would establish the throne of his kingdom forever. That began through David's son Solomon, but it has its ultimate fulfillment in Christ, who was not just the Son of David (an heir to the throne), but the Son of God.

This fulfillment was evident in the angel Gabriel's announcement to Mary:

- **Luke 1:32**, *"He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David."*

"To summarize, the title "Son" refers to Jesus in three separate respects. He was always the pre-existent Son (v. 3a-b; cf. 5:8), He became the incarnate Son at His birth (v. 2a), and He became the exalted Son when He returned to heaven."¹

This title bestows an honor on Jesus that no angel ever has or ever will receive.

2. Jesus is Greater in His Status – 1:6-7

Next the writer quotes from **Deuteronomy 32:43**.

1:6 - *But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: "Let all the angels of God worship Him."*

Now if you read Deuteronomy 32:43 in your Bibles you won't see this reference. That's because the writer of Hebrews is quoting from the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament). The Septuagint says, *Let all the angels of God worship him*. That's speaking of the angels worshipping Yahweh. But here under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that worship is in reference to Jesus. He doesn't give honor to angels, but angels certainly give honor to Jesus!

This verse gives us another word that has tripped up people theologically – Jesus being referred to as the **firstborn**. But this is not a term to mean he was born first. It's used to speak of status – Jesus is in a position of honor because He is Lord over all.

People were being pressured to return to their former things which included worshipping those that worshipped Jesus! How insane. Logically thinking, the inferior always worships the superior!

Next is a quote from **Psalms 104:4**.

1:7 - *And of the angels He says: "Who makes His angels spirits And His ministers a flame of fire."*

God has made **His angels spirits**... This word spirits is *pneuma* in the Greek. It can also be translated as wind. And He makes **His ministers a flame of fire**.

¹ Lane, William L. (1991). *Hebrews 1-8. World Biblical Commentary series*. (p. 25-26). Word Books.

So we have wind and fire – two natural elements that angels are compared to.

“The temporary nature of wind and fire shows also the transitory ministry of angels in contrast to the permanent work of the Savior.” ²

Now let me just make a little side track here. As we discuss angels, I’m not trying to downplay their ability or undermine their power. They are impressive beings! It would be very interesting to encounter an angel, I’m just not so sure I’d be able to handle it. Because they are awesome beings! In Revelation we see one flying in the heavens pronouncing the gospel. Another one comes down from heaven with his face like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire, and he set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the land (Revelation 10:1-2). This is some serious stuff. But of all their power and majesty, they still pale in comparison to Jesus Christ! The angels are far greater than humans, but they are still created beings. Jesus holds a place of supremacy over them as He is infinitely greater in every way.

3. Jesus is Greater in His Sovereignty – 1:8-9

Next is a quote from **Psalm 45:6-7**.

1:8-9 - *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.”*

Now check this out! This is significant. God speaking to the Son (who is Jesus!) says, ***Your throne, O God***... God the Father, calls the Son, God! Because that’s who Jesus is! This is a direct acknowledgment of His deity (something angels don’t come close to). The divinity of Christ is forever without question after a statement like that.

Not only do we see that *Jesus is God*, but we see that *Jesus is Sovereign*. His throne is forever and forever.

- **Isaiah 9:7**, “*Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end...*” What a great thought. His reign will not end.

² Gromacki, R. (2002). *Stand Bold in Grace: An Exposition of Hebrews* (p. 34). Kress Christian Publications.

And His reign will be a righteous one. A **scepter** was a ruler's staff. It was a symbol of authority. And we see that Jesus' rule, His kingdom reign, will be marked by complete **righteousness**, honesty, and integrity.

- We don't see a lot of that from our governments today do we? But when Jesus comes to rule on this earth, this Millennial reign, it's going to be wonderful. It will be perfect. It will finally be a world of peace.

We know this to be so because Jesus is all about **righteousness**. He loves it! And He hates wickedness, or **lawlessness**. Can you imagine living in a day where there's no more crime, no more lawlessness? During that Millennial reign of Christ there just won't be people breaking the law.

So with this kind of rule and righteous reign, God has anointed Him more than any of His **companions**.

- Now who is that speaking of? This could be speaking of His brethren that He ministered to, or with, while on earth. It could also refer to the angelic company that surrounds Him.

Either way, Jesus is far greater and better than any of them. And God acknowledges it as so by anointing Him with the **oil of gladness**.

4. Jesus is Greater in His Stability – 1:10-12

For the fourth proof of Christ's superiority, the writer of Hebrews goes to **Psalms 102:25-27**.

1:10-12 - 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."

This speaks of Christ's immutability, that He will not change.

Now this verse in the Psalms was being written about Yahweh, God.

But now the writer applies this to Jesus here in Hebrews. Because once again, Jesus is God. He is every bit God as He was every bit man when He came to this world. Jesus is complete deity.

So we're reminded that Jesus is responsible for creating the world and all the elements within it. But notice what we read, **they will perish... they will all grow old like a garment...**

Some of you have had some garments that have grown old. They get to a point where you just need to roll them up and say goodbye. Sometimes they just float away by themselves to the great garment resting place in the sky.

- We've all got things that we know are temporal and perishable.
- But do we ever think of this world and the heavens as being perishable?

You see, the world is in a fallen state. It's corrupted by sin. **Romans 8:19–22**, *“For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; ²¹ because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.”*

- The whole world is sitting here waiting for its redemption. It will experience this in the Millennial Reign of Christ. But there is coming an even greater day after the Millennium when the present heavens and earth will pass away and make way for a new heaven and a new earth!
- The old will one day be folded up, and Jesus will be the One doing this.
- Though our surroundings may change, our Saviour stays the same!

I love these verses because when we see the hysteria from people like Greta Thunberg, and the ‘*we’re destroying our planet and we’re all going to die in 10 years*’ indoctrination, these verses reveal that the planet is not meant to remain.

- Now I’m not advocating to just keep your car idling while at church so you can jump into a toasty car for the ride home.
- There’s certainly a place of being good stewards, but we don’t do so out of panic that we’re destroying our planet.

5. Jesus is Greater in His State – 1:13-14

The next verse being pointed to is **Psalms 110:1** (the most quoted vs. in the NT) **1:13-14 - *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?***

God has never said to one of His angels to sit down, your work is finished. But to the Son – to Jesus – He has said to sit. The work Jesus has done is a superior work because it’s a completed work. He now sits at the right hand, that place of honor, prominence, and authority. And one day Jesus will come again and reveal

His rule and authority to all. God will be sure to bring every enemy under the subjugation and universal dominion of Christ.

- What is meant by the term **footstool**?
- It spoke of conquering: **Joshua 10:24**, *“So it was, when they brought out those kings to Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said to the captains of the men of war who went with him, “Come near, put your feet on the necks of these kings.” And they drew near and put their feet on their necks.”*

So unlike Jesus, angels are not sitting with the work finished. On the contrary, they are **ministering spirits sent forth to minister** to us. And that’s a full-time job with many of us! I’m sure some of you have angels saying, *‘Just slow down a little bit. I may be supernatural, but c’mon, this is a little ridiculous even for me!’*

All through the Bible we see how angels have been instrumental in ministering to people:

- Elisha’s servant sees the Host against Syria (2 Kings 6:15-17).
- The Angel of the Lord encamps around them that fear God (Psalm 34:7).
- An angel shut the lions mouth for Daniel (Daniel 6:22).
- An angel opened the prison doors for the Apostles (Acts 5:17-19).
- The beggar was carried to Abraham’s bosom by angels (Luke 16:22).
- An angel (Gabriel) told Mary she was pregnant with the Messiah (Luke 1:26-28).
- Joseph was assured by an angel that Mary conceived of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:20).
- The shepherds at Bethlehem were told of the Savior’s birth by angels (Luke 2:8-15).
- An angel told the women at the empty tomb, ‘Fear not, He’s risen’ (Matthew 28:5).
- Philip was told by an angel to go from Jerusalem to Gaza (Acts 8:26).
- An angel came to encourage Paul and tell him that he must stand before Caesar (Acts 27:23).

The question Hebrews puts before us is this: Is Jesus enough? The answer is an emphatic yes! Though angels are real, they are not greater than Jesus. He is not an angel, not merely a messenger, and not simply one spiritual option among many. He is the eternal Son of God, the righteous King, the Creator who never

changes, and the victorious Lord who sits at the Father's right hand. Everything in this world will eventually pass away, but Jesus will remain forever. So don't settle for anything less than Christ, don't place anything above Christ, and don't allow anything to pull you away from Christ. Jesus is greater than all and He is more than enough for us!

Points to Ponder:

1. Jesus alone is worthy of our highest worship. Nothing else comes even close to being on equal ground. Let us worship Him devotedly.
2. Jesus is reigning with perfect righteousness. His throne is forever and His kingdom unshakeable. What a glorious king we have in Jesus. Let us trust Him emphatically.
3. Jesus is our unchanging hope in an ever-changing world. Everything is temporary but Jesus is eternal. He is the same yesterday, today and forever! Let us rejoice in Him wholeheartedly.