

Hebrews 1:5-14: So Jesus is Superior to Angels, So What?

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I. Introduction

There are many philosophies and religions that people follow. How powerful is the guiding principle you follow? Can it raise the dead? Can it heal the sick? Can it tell you which job is the right one? Can it help you avoid tragedy and achieve success? The Bible has a lot to say about Jesus. It paints Him as superior to every philosophy known to man. He's even better than the angels, why should it matter?

II. Hebrews 1:5-14: Why Should it Matter to Us that Jesus is Greater Than all the Angels?

In times past God had something to say to us and He communicated that message through various others but never completely. However, at last, He's sent someone to tell us the point of it all. But this messenger is different, He's not just another prophet come to tell us another piece of the story. He is the story: He's the creator, sustainer, and superintendent of the entire universe. He made everything and is the heir of everything. That is, He's the Son of God, God become flesh. And He didn't just come with a message; He came to invite us into His presence which is why He sacrificed Himself in order to cleanse us from our sins. And as majestic and powerful as angels are, this Man is far greater than any angel and here's why:

1:5, to prove that Jesus is better than the angels, God quotes seven passages from the Old Testament scriptures. The first two are Psalm 2:7 and 2 Samuel 7:14. They are both designed to point out two things. First, Jesus is *thee* Son of God. Yes, angels are called "sons of God" collectively (Genesis 6:1-4; Job 1:6) and so are we (John 1:12), but no one in scripture, angel or otherwise, was ever singled out as *thee* Son of God; Jesus is the only one (Luke 1:32; 9:35). Second, both of these passages occur in contexts where God appoints Jesus as the Davidic King who will rule over the nations of the world. "You are My Son, today I have begotten You" is not a reference to when Jesus was born or created by God the Father. Jesus was never created; He always existed (John 1:1). The point at which God the Father said to Jesus, "Today I have begotten You" and "I will be to Him a Father and He shall be to Me a Son" was at Jesus' resurrection not His birth (Acts 13:33; Romans 1:3-4). At His resurrection God declared Jesus King of kings and Lord of lords, the one who would rule over Israel and the world from David's throne.

1:6-7, He begins the next two quotes by calling Jesus the firstborn whom He will bring again into the world ("again" is a reference to Jesus' Second Coming). The term "firstborn" is not pointing to Jesus' birth, but His Messianic title as King over all creation (Psalm 89:27; Colossians 1:15) and to His right as heir. The firstborn got a double portion of his father's inheritance (Deuteronomy 21:17). But Jesus is not just a firstborn; He's *thee* firstborn and as such is the heir of ALL THINGS (Hebrews 1:2). The first quote comes from either Deuteronomy 32:43 or Psalm 97:7 both of which say the same thing (but it's a quote from the LXX, the Greek translation of the Old Testament scriptures done in the third century B.C.). The context is that of Jesus/God as the final Judge at His Second Coming, the ruler of heaven and earth who comes to judge Israel's enemies, delivering His people Israel. Thus, He deserves worship even from the angels. He next quotes Psalm 104:4 (also from the LXX), which is a picture of God as creator of heaven and earth and of angles who are His servants. Thus, in contrast to Jesus being the Master who is worshipped, the angels are the Master's servants.

1:8-9, next is a quote from another Messianic psalm, Psalm 45:6-7, which paints a picture of the Messianic King who will be exalted and worshipped above all other beings forever and ever. His throne and Kingdom will last forever and because He loved righteousness and hated iniquity, God anointed Him (not the angels who are His companions/assistants) with His Holy Spirit (Acts 10:38) and position as Messianic King. But that's not all, God addresses Him as God!, showing that Jesus is equal with God.

1:10-12, the sixth quote is from Psalm 102:25-27. The psalm pictures Jesus as the eternal LORD (God) who will bring justice and peace to His people Israel as the kings of the earth bow down and worship Him. He can do so because Jesus is the eternal creator of heaven and earth. In fact, one day the heavens and the earth will be destroyed (2 Peter 3:10); they will grow old like a garment but He will remain forever. Jesus is the eternal God; angels are the ministers of the eternal God.

1:13-14, finally, God quotes Psalm 110:1 another Messianic psalm where God ensures Messiah's Kingdom and glory. When God tells Messiah to sit at His right hand, it is God once again stating that Jesus is His equal. He never said this to any angel; Jesus is the only one who is God's equal and thus greater than the angels. There's one final contrast between Jesus and the angels: they continually minister as guardian angels (Matthew 18:10; Psalm 91:11) to God's children, while Jesus completed His work, which is why He sat down at the right hand of God.

Why does it matter that Jesus is greater than the angels? The reason Hebrews contrasts Jesus with angels is that the Rabbinic Judaism of that day had three pillars: angels (because it was through them that God's Law came, Acts 7:53; Galatians 3:19), Moses, and the Levitical priesthood. The author wants to show his audience, who's contemplating returning to Judaism, that Jesus is much greater than the angels. If an angel appeared before you in all its brilliance and power, what do you think you would do? You'd fall down and worship him (Revelation 22:8-9). The interesting thing about angels, as powerful as they are, they're only messengers. In fact, that's what the original Greek word means, "a messenger." The One who sent the messenger is much greater and more powerful than the angel He sent. Notice who the power is behind angels: Genesis 19:1-29.

Jesus created angels (Colossians 1:16), they are His messengers, His servants who do His bidding. What would you do if Jesus appeared before you? Would you fall down and worship Him? Would you follow His voice, His advice, do what He told you? If the voice you follow is not the voice of the ultimate meaning of life, then it's just one more faulty opinion. But if the voice you follow is of the One who created heaven and earth and everything in between, the One with the power to control this entire universe, then your path will lead to life and peace (Romans 8:6).

III. Conclusion

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.