

BETTER THAN ANGELS

Hebrews 1:4-14

When we look back at impressive moments of Scripture, we have a tendency to think: "I wish I could have been there!"

When angels go up & down Jacob's ladder.

When angel appears to Dan, Zech, Mary, Joseph, or shepherds.

Other occasions when God sends angels to communicate with His people.

"If God would just speak to US that way today.

It would solve so many problems.

Then we could know for sure what God wants us to do.

Fascination with angels & supernatural phenomena.

People tell about angels speaking to them, telling them what to do.

We've forgotten warning that Satan sends emissaries dressed as ***"angels of light."***

Hebrews: desire to go back to days when God speaks through angels => iant step *backward!*

If he were here, he'd ask us,

"Why would you want to go back to that?!!"

We have better revelation than spectacular moments!

Jesus brought us BEST revelation of the Father.

He's God's last Word!

Jesus is best revelation, because seeing Jesus is same as seeing the Father.

When Philip asks Jesus to show them the Father =>

"He who has seen ME has seen the Father"

1:1-3—Jesus is better revelation of Father than prophets.

Son revelation is better than prophet revelation!

1:4-14–Jesus is better revelation of Father than supernatural revelation that came by angels.

Son revelation is better than angel revelation!

Hebrews written to Jewish believers, hanging on by fingernails as torrent of persecution swirls around them, threatening to overwhelm them, because of their faith

To escape persecution, many have returned to Judaism.

Others who haven't returned are considering that option.

Wondering if their faith is worth sacrifice, they're starting to drift. Writer wants us to consider implications; urges us not to turn back.

He exhorts us to endure persecution.

Rather than turn back, continue growing in faith.

Begins showing *Jesus is better than Judaism*.

1st evidence: **Jesus presents the best revelation of the Father.**

Best revelation didn't come from O.T. prophets. 1:1-3

Son-revelation is better than spectacular, angel-revelation.

Better than appearance of angels with direct message from God.

[His revelation is...]

BETTER THAN THE ANGELS 1:4-2:18

[...because...]

Jesus has been given a greater name 4-5

“Having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. ⁵For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you”?

Or again, “I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son”?

To make his point, author quotes from Ps. 2 & 2 Sam. 7.

Better name => SON

God never calls any individual angel “son”

He refers to them collectively as “sons”— those He made; never refers to *individual* angel as His “Son.”

Ps 2:7 “*You are my Son; today I have begotten you.*”

Applied figuratively at inauguration of the King.

It includes “*today*.” King wasn’t *born* on this day.

At coronation, King of God’s people is “adopted by God.”

Receives inheritance & titles appropriate to God’s “son.”

God establishes a Father/Son relationship

between King God has placed on His throne & God Himself.

That idea is basis for statement in v. 4,

that He has “become *greater than the angels*,”

not because He previously wasn’t,

basis for declaring Him greater is inheriting greater name.

Theocratic son, *royal descendant of David, is declared superior to angels, because of special Son-relationship with God.*

Being Son is better than being angel!

Words fit all royal descendants of David; true in unique sense of THE royal descendant of David => MESSIAH.

Study of Ps 2 reveals that its message *only* fully applies to Jesus, God’s unique Son.

Heb idea of son = one who is like the Father. *Jesus is like God!*

NO ONE is *like* God.

He shares His glory with NO ONE!

God alone deserves worship. *Jesus is unique!*

No angel is given that position.

Therefore, *Jesus is superior to angels!*

This concept of adoption is affirmed in **2 Sam. 7:14** =>

1:5b “*I will be to him a father, & he shall be to me a son*”

Promise directed to Solomon & David's other descendants

No angel is given that position.

Therefore, **Messiah is superior to the angels.**

Jesus is "Son" in this Davidic sense, like all kings of Judah.

They all point forward to the true "Son" => Messiah

He's "Son" in unique sense nobody else could fulfill.

That's point author makes in next section.

[Not only is Jesus greater than angels because He has a better name, but also because...]

Jesus given greater position 1:6-14

Section does more than show Jesus' superiority to angels.

Series of passages put together=> **demonstrate *Jesus is God!***

Each passage ultimately points to that conclusion.

This is **work of a collector—NOT of theologian.**

As theologian, I want it organized in compact, logical outline.

The writer doesn't cooperate with me!

He's acting like a collector!

Cup collector, coin collector, gun collector, struggle with how to organize collection to show significant facets of collection, historical factors, type of construction, yr of production, etc.,

Writer goes through OT pointing at passages that show Jesus is better than angels— He's **GOD!**

Makes clear that *Jesus is no angel!*

Evidence shows Jesus is *distinct* from & *better than* angels!

1. Angels worship Jesus 1:6 NOT other way around

"When he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, 'Let all God's angels worship him.'"

Superior is always worshiped by inferior.

He's called "firstborn;" some use as evidence that He was *born*.

"*Firstborn*" often points to an *heir*.

Ex 4:22 God calls Israel *His* firstborn.

Ps 89:27 David's declared firstborn of all the kings of the earth.

Neither of these could refer to one *literally* born first,
as by *physical birth*.

Firstborn is heir.

Firstborn receives double inheritance.

Firstborn receives right to rule over father's realm.

Quote from Deut. 32:43 from "Moses' Song."

Phrase isn't included in Heb. text [= > not in our O.T.],
but is from LXX [= > my bias for LXX]

Phrase also supported in Dead Sea scrolls.

Moses' Song summarizes Israel's history, beginning to end.

Vs comes at end; refers prophetically to 2nd coming of Christ.

More important than Jesus' superiority to angels

He accepts *their worship*, indicates *He is God!*

Acts 10:25-26 –Peter warns Cornelius not to worship him.

He's just a man—a servant.

Rev. 19:9-10 –John falls down before the angel of God.

Angel responds: "*STOP! Don't do it! I am just a servant!*
Don't worship me!

Angels cry out saying "*Just worship **GOD!!!***"

Hebrews, quoting Moses says:

"*Let all God's angels worship **HIM (JESUS)***

*Do you get it? Jesus is **GOD!***

He'll be worshiped by all God's angels & all creation.

Phil. 2 "*Every knee shall bow ... and every tongue confess that
Jesus is Lord!*"

2. Angels are changeable; Jesus unchangeable 7-8

(Ps. 104:4) *“Of the angels he says, ‘He makes his angels winds, & his ministers a flame of fire.’⁸ But of the Son he says, ‘Your throne, O God, is forever & ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom.’”*

Like winds, angels blow at His command.

They’re variable. They change.

Angels are like flames of fire.

But bright flames, however impressive, eventually burn out!
Winds are variable; flames flicker; but your throne, O God, is forever!

In contrast, to temporary, changeable, nature of angels’ position,
His throne lasts forever Ps. 45:6

The psalm ascribes praise to God because His throne is forever.
Heb says psalm’s talking about Jesus—He’s addressed as **GOD**!

Two persons are referred to as God in this passage.

Heb says God’s talking; Ps. 45:6, 7 tells God that God has established Him!

Isa 48:16 does same thing; includes God’s Spirit as 3rd Person

There’s a mystery here that our poor minds can’t quite grasp.

Moses says there is just one God—Yahweh is **ONE**!

Yet Scripture refers to 2 or 3 as God.

It’s not our purpose to teach about doctrine of Trinity

But Heb’s purpose is clear: **Jesus is GOD**!

3. Angels are servants; Jesus reigns 7-9

*“Of the angels he says, ‘He makes his angels winds, and his **ministers** a flame of fire.’⁸ But of the Son he says, ‘Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom.’⁹ You have loved righteousness & hated wickedness; therefore God,*

your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.”

Same verses point to 2nd contrast.

4. Angels are part of creation; Jesus is Creator 10 *“You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands;”* Ps. 102:25

He stands apart from His creation.

He’s superior to it; before & after it.

Ps 102:21-27 is clearly speaking of God.

He’s addressed as **Lord**.

Writer says this reference to Creator is **talking about Jesus!**

5. Angels are temporal; Jesus is unchangeable & eternal 11-12 *“They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment, ¹²like a robe you will roll them up, like a garment they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will have no end.”*

Continuation of same passage. Ps. 102:26-27

The Psalm continues to describe God.

The author applies it all to Jesus.

When all creation has been rolled up & put away, He’s the same.

He is able to watch creation decay, without growing old Himself.

6. Angels keep serving; Jesus is seated 13 Ps. 110:1

“To which of the angels has he ever said, “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet”?

He’s seated at Father’s right hand, until God subjects everything under His feet.

Every creature that opposes Him will one day bow before Him and serve as a stool for His victorious feet!

[After his collection of quotes, the writer sums up with question:

Ultimately, aren't the angels just HIS servants?]

7. Angels are servants, but Jesus is the Savior/the eternal God. 14 *"Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to **serve** for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?"*

2nd half doesn't come from the verse, but from the context.

However, spirit behind the author's question is clear.

"After all" he says, *"aren't they just His **servants**, sent to serve those to whom He wishes to give wondrous gift of salvation?"*

That's bottom line. Story is *about* Him. *They're just His servants.*

Wants us to walk away with impression: **Jesus is unique!**

He doesn't say this *is* true of us.

He doesn't say it *will be* true of us.

This is a unique position, which only Jesus can fulfill!

We should be starting to see Heb can be studied on two levels:

There's plenty of solid meat here to sink your teeth into.

But there's a simpler, more obvious, level.

Clear message:

Jesus is better than angels; because HE IS LORD!

IMPLICATIONS FOR GOD'S PEOPLE:

Three main points of application for us today:

1 Directly stated: **Pay Attention! Listen to Him!** => 2:1-4

2 Relates to desire for spectacular—special insight or angel revelation.

Don't seek it! Don't look for supernatural revelation or experience.

Last word isn't word of angels!

Jesus is God's Final Word. He's found in THIS Book!

SEEK HIM!

We don't need the word of angels. We have the Son.

This passage screams to us: "FOCUS ON JESUS!"

3 JESUS IS LORD! Worship Him!

Clear message of Hebrews: **TRUST HIM!**

Jesus IS the last word.

We don't need prophets;

don't need angelic voices to guide us.

Don't seek enlightenment from angelic sources;

seek it from God's Final Word.

Don't pray to them, nor worship them.

The angels aren't sitting; they're ministering.

JESUS sits at the Father's right hand!

They're not ruling; they're serving. *JESUS is ruling!*

They're not exalted; they're subordinate. *JESUS is exalted!*

The Son occupies place of highest authority.

He alone is worthy of worship.

Over & over, Hebrews refers O.T. passages to Jesus,
making clear that Jesus is God.

No other understanding adequately explains his use of these
passages to describe Jesus.

He is Lord. He is Lord.

He is risen from the dead, and He is Lord

*Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess,
that Jesus Christ is Lord.*