

April 21, 2024  
Hebrews 1:5-14  
Jesus Is Better Than The Angels

Intro:

Kids can be easily impressed.

Apparently these Hebrew Christians were becoming really impressed by angels. There are several reasons why that may have been the case. Their status is majestic. We think about angels like Precious Moments figurines, but that is not what's going on in the Bible. Every appearance requires that they say "fear not." Angels are impressive. But some of the Hebrew believers let their assessment of angels go beyond being impressed into something bordering on worship and adoration.

In these verses the author quotes 7 different OT passages coming from the law, prophets, and most from the Psalms.

Right out of the gate the author wants to assert Jesus' superiority over creatures that are awesome. We need to recognize the distance between the context of the original writing and our own context. We don't typically think about angels as a temptation for our worship. Rather than pushing away, here are three reasons why we should press in to passages like this to consider deeply.

- Angels are also a symbol of an old way of living for these Christians with a Jewish background. Angels were mediators in giving the law. They acted in miraculous ways to accomplish God's purposes. They rescued Lot from Sodom. They delivered Isaac. They stayed the lion's mouths and kept Daniel alive. They would show up with messages from God and speak God's words to humans, but we saw last week that now God speaks through his Son. The theme of the entire book is don't fall away from Jesus and return to an old way of living. This week on angels is one of many weeks where the author is going to stack arguments together to convince the audience not to fall away from Jesus.
- We can observe the manner in which the author makes the argument for Jesus' superiority. He doesn't make Jesus relatively higher as the result of making the angels lower. *Illus of going into kids classroom to say I'm more athletic by pointing out all the ways that they are unathletic.* The author doesn't aim to make Jesus high as a result of making the angels low - rather he wants to double down on the introduction from last week. Why does he say that the Son is the radiance of God's glory and exact expression of his nature.
- Not likely that many of you are thinking at last - a sermon on why we shouldn't worship angels. However, your heart and mine are constantly latching onto different things and all of them are inferior to Jesus. If we want to train our hearts to only latch onto Jesus, then we need to be clear on his absolute superiority. If I see Jesus as He is in his radiant glory, then I am far less likely to look for glory elsewhere.

We recognize that we are often easily impressed by things of the world: money, possessions, status, desires of the flesh. Our hope through this series is that we are able to see Jesus as He is and be impressed by Him above all.

4 So he became superior to the angels, just as the name he inherited is more excellent than theirs. 5 For to which of the angels did he ever say, You are my Son; today I have become your

Father, or again, I will be his Father, and he will be my Son? 6 Again, when he brings his firstborn into the world, he says, And let all God's angels worship him. 7 And about the angels he says: He makes his angels winds, and his servants a fiery flame, 8 but to the Son: Your throne, God, is forever and ever, and the scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of justice. 9 You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; this is why God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of joy beyond your companions. 10 And: In the beginning, Lord, you established the earth, and the heavens are the works of your hands; 11 they will perish, but you remain. They will all wear out like clothing; 12 you will roll them up like a cloak, and they will be changed like clothing. But you are the same, and your years will never end. 13 Now to which of the angels has he ever said: Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool? 14 Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve those who are going to inherit salvation?

## 1. Jesus Has A Better Name 4-6

In short: Sons are better than servants.

The author asserts in v4 that Jesus is better b/c his name is superior. There is much speculation as to this name - some may say Jesus, others may say Lord, but the passage makes clear that the superior name is that of SON. later in the passage the angels are called servants and ministers. Son is a vastly greater name than servant.

The persistent NT affirmation is that Jesus is the Son of God. We shouldn't be surprised by this, but what do we make of the "today"? What does it mean where the text says "today I have become your father." 3 very brief arguments to cover here:

- The verses at the beginning of this very chapter and then end affirm that Jesus is eternal. We can see that in v3 that Jesus is the exact expression of the Father's nature. He is eternal. And again in v8 - your throne is forever and ever. v12 your years will never end.
- The rest of the NT affirm the eternity of the son -
  - Jesus is declared to be God in his birth announcement by angels, his baptism, and his transfiguration.
  - **John 1:1** "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and Word was God."
  - **Col 1:17** - "He is before all things, and by him all things hold together."
- Going all the way back to the 4th century the church has rebuked the idea that Jesus was born or that he was created. Nicene Creed "**eternally begotten, not made, without beginning, being of one essence with the father.**"

So, we can eliminate what it doesn't mean, but what does it mean positively? The best interpreter of scripture is scripture. Here in Heb 1 the author is quoting Ps 2. Paul also quotes the same verse in Acts 13 where he is preaching in Antioch. **Acts 13:32-33 32 And we ourselves proclaim to you the good news of the promise that was made to our ancestors. 33 God has fulfilled this for us, their children, by raising up Jesus, as it is written in the second Psalm: You are my Son; today I have become your Father.** Paul connects the Father's recognition of Jesus as Son of God to the event of the resurrection. We also see the same idea in **Rom 1:3-4 3 concerning his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who was a descendant of David according to the flesh 4 and was appointed to be the powerful Son of God according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection of the dead.** In Roman society when a boy came of age, they would hold a ceremony where the father would bestow upon the boy the family name to show that the father approves of his Son. Jesus has eternally been the Son of God, but it's at the resurrection where the Father goes public with his affirmation of the Son. The resurrection is greatest miracle in

human history. It's the most important theological event in the Bible. and it is the way that God has declared definitively that Jesus is my Son.

I will be his Father and He will be my Son. This is a quote from 2 Sam 7 where David tells God he wants to build him a house, but God says no, i'm going to build you a house and your son will sit on the throne forever. That couldn't be in reference to his son Solomon b/c he died. Here our author says it's fulfilled in Jesus from David's family line. He is the promised Messiah. He's the means of God fulfilling old promises.

Verse 6 - when he brings his firstborn into the world - ok so same arguments from just a moment ago. don't get tripped up. the term firstborn does not mean that Jesus became the Son at some point. Firstborn is in reference to his place - his preeminence. Several NT passages that refer to Jesus as the firstborn. **Col 1:18 the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. -- Colossians 1:18**

**Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead and the ruler of the kings of the earth. -- Revelation 1:5**

Jesus is the Son and the firstborn from the dead, so God says let all the angels worship him. The son receives the worship of angels because he has a better name.

SO WHAT? Why should we be impressed with Jesus' better name?

1) The resurrection sets Jesus apart. The reason that there is substance to our hope in Christ is that he is the real deal - he genuinely rose from the dead. No resurrection equals no salvation. No resurrection means that we are still in our sins. We are people to be pitied.

Jesus says He is the resurrection and the life. Therefore, those who put their faith in Him will have this same life. Resurrection life includes eternal life with God in heaven, but it also includes the strength and power to live a full and obedient life in the world today.

CONSIDER: Are you experiencing resurrection life?

2) context of the preceding verses is about how God does his speaking through Jesus - chiefly communicating salvation - repent and believe. So listen to what he is saying especially when he's talking about salvation. this is what we'll see next week - listen to the Son when he's talking.

In salvation the Son communicates more than the method of how to be saved. He communicates himself in salvation. The gospel isn't just good news because our sins are forgiven and we'll make it to heaven - The gospel is good news because we get Jesus. We find and experience true life in God through his son. all because Jesus the Son died in the place of sinners and rose from the grave. In the gospel we experience something that the angels never do - forgiveness, grace, redemption.

**These things have now been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven — angels long to catch a glimpse of these things. -- 1 Peter 1:12** Angels worship in God's presence, but they long to experience what we get when God dwells in us in salvation. Angels can't testify of being brought near by grace. They can't say that the Spirit lives within them. They don't know what it's like to be spiritually dead and then made alive by a sovereign God.

Angels are impressive, but the son is better. None of them are worthy of worship - for they are worshipping the Christ. To which of the angels could God have ever said any of these things?

## 2. Jesus has a better role 7-12

7 And about the angels he says: He makes his angels winds, and his servants a fiery flame,  
8 but to the Son: Your throne, God, is forever and ever, and the scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of justice.

In short: angels serve, but the son rules

Verse 7 - what are angels like - they are like another tool at God's disposal. He deploys them like natural elements in the world to accomplish his purposes. But we see in verse 8 that the Son is much more lofty than a servant because he sits upon an eternal throne. **There have been some world powers through the course of history. Empires that were world powers that were too big to fail: Egyptians, Assyrians, Persians, Romans, Byzantines, Ottomans.** These and more were thought to stand forever, but these and many more like them do not last. Kings die and kingdoms fall. But we'll see in Hebrews 12 that God's kingdom is fixed, it's stable, it is unshakable. The reason why the kingdom can't be shaken is that the king is unshakable.

This unshakable king has a specific characteristic of his kingdom. It is a culture of righteousness and justice. In fact, the king's scepter, the very emblem of his rule and reign is a scepter of justice.

This king of righteousness and justice is worthy of our worship - worthy of our love - worthy of our affections. When we look to things or people to give us our identity or purpose in life we are placing upon them a crushing burden. We can never look to a creature to do what only the creator could do. When I'm doing premarital counseling I tell young couples that Jerry Maguire was a liar. We are not completed by a spouse. We are not empty cups that can only be filled with the love of another. You cannot look to your spouse to give you what only God can provide. Jesus is different. His kingdom is righteousness and justice. He doesn't crumble beneath the weight of our souls when placed on him. When we sing that Jesus is worthy of all praise and honor and glory - we aren't singing empty words.

This king of righteousness is able to complete his work. He will complete his work bringing justice to the world. There are injustices of all varieties in the world right now. So many in fact that it might cause us to question does God really care about righteousness and justice? If his scepter is justice, why are there children being trafficked all around the world? Why are there people enslaved to substance? Why do the strong crush the weak? There are real problems that demand real answers.

The gospel assures us that God is indeed committed to righteousness. If the Father was willing to crush his innocent son by putting the sin of the world on his shoulders, then we can be certain that the righteous king will crush every injustice in the end. Justice may not be instant, but it is certain b/c Jesus is the king of righteousness and his throne is forever and ever.

This king of righteousness is trustworthy to lead. We might be tempted to think the king of righteousness is so pure - so set apart - like he's in a closed off room by himself where nothing unrighteous could infect him. He's so righteous that he can't even look at sin. The son is the king of righteousness, but we are in serious error if we neglect the glorious truth that Jesus stepped into our world as a human. He forfeited glory with the father, emptied himself and really lived in

our world. In his short 3 year ministry - he was known and hated for spending time with sinners. He came up close to really highly infectious people and he healed their diseases by touching them. He invited children to come up close. This king was tempted in every way that we are tempted. SG conversation this week: we can't say to Jesus "you just don't get it." He does get it b/c he lived it also. We'll see this idea repeatedly later in the book - Jesus is a better high priest for us. The king of righteousness is also a shepherd - a shepherd who knows his sheep by name - who leads, provides, and protects.

The king marked by righteousness possesses a kingdom marked by righteousness, therefore his people must too be righteous. Here we are reminded again that the gospel is all of grace. Nowhere does the scripture command to clean yourself up to be accepted by God. Nowhere does it teach to make yourself holy so that God will love you. The gospel is all of grace b/c only God has the power to make alive what was dead. Only a superior love from an everlasting king could win enemies to himself. The king demands righteousness in his people and he supplies the very need by giving his own righteousness. Imagine yourself standing before the king of righteousness very much aware of your unrighteousness. He sees every single flaw - he knows them all. Then he removes this covering from his own back to cover you. If you are a Christian, you are clothed in Jesus' very own righteousness. In the sinless one, our sin is removed. Through Christ's faithfulness, our unfaithfulness is erased. The King of righteousness demands righteousness and he supplies it for his people.

9 You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; this is why God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of joy beyond your companions.

It was common practice to anoint kings with oil when they were installed on the throne. Recently King Charles was installed on the English throne and the Archbishop put oil on his head. Jesus is the same. The father anoints the Son in his royal coronation with the oil of joy.

Joy is another marker of the kingdom b/c it's a marker of the king.

- Jesus endured the cross for the joy set before him
- well done good and faithful, enter into the joy of your master
- 13 Now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy completed in them. -- John 17:13 (CSB)
- 52 And the disciples were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit. -- Acts 13:52 (CSB)

Jesus is breaking categories here. The king of righteousness never does anything wrong - surely is stodgy - no he's got joy.

companions - who is this? This same word is used to describe those that are in Christ in half dozen places. Heb 3:1 the word is used to describe those that share in a heavenly calling. 3:14 "For we have become participants in Christ if we hold firmly until the end the reality that we had at the start." We become participants in Christ by grace through faith. We share in the heavenly calling when our identity is being in Christ.

Michael Reeves wrote "Delighting in the Trinity" A single person God would not know how to relate to his creation. He would have to learn how to love his creation. but our God who is three persons of one single essence they have been loving one another for all of eternity. Father, Son, Spirit are the experts on sharing life, glory, joy, and love because it's literally all they've done forever. So it should come as no surprise to us that Jesus does the same thing for us that he has been doing with the Father forever. He shares himself wholly.

- Jesus is the heir who inherits the world - and he makes us his co-heirs - Rom 8
- Jesus is the king who rules forever - but we will rule with him - 2 Tim 2
- Jesus is seated at the right hand - we are seated in Christ in the heavenly places too Eph 2
- Jesus is the Son - and he calls us sons too John 1 - Jesus by nature us by grace
- Jesus is the king of righteous - we are given his righteousness 2 Cor 5 - he paid the price and we get his prize
- Jesus is anointed with oil - repeatedly he offers joy to us - John 16
- Jesus is the conquering king - he makes us more than conquerors Rom 8
- He gives - he shares - he communicates. And when he communicates salvation to us by experience through the Spirit - Jesus is communicating his very life into ours.

Which of the angels could ever? Who but Christ alone could give so much so freely?

10 And: In the beginning, Lord, you established the earth, and the heavens are the works of your hands; 11 they will perish, but you remain. They will all wear out like clothing; 12 you will roll them up like a cloak, and they will be changed like clothing. But you are the same, and your years will never end.

The Father created the world through the agency of the Son. The creation is like clothing - it won't last forever. Some of the men in the room are probably taking issue with that. I get it. Hollie sometimes will say "you've been wearing that t-shirt since college - it's time to go." but eventually even favorite t-shirts get so threadbare that they have to be thrown out. But Jesus remains because he's eternal - and very significantly - he never changes.

It's hard to image this b/c all we do is change. We are flighty and fickle. **Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Heb 13:8**

The promises that Jesus made yesterday are still true today and will still be good tomorrow and forever. Even promises that seem too good to be true, He will keep them. He doesn't change. And neither do his plans change. He is not tossed by wind and wave. I think Jesus has this in mind when he says he's the rock and we have to build our life on him if we want the house to stand.

Think about the implications of an unchanging savior for our salvation. Most significant **WE HAVE REAL HOPE.**

What on earth would give us reason to say that we will be saved in the end? That is an outrageous claim. The only hope we have is a never changing Savior who started a good work in us and will see it through to the end. He won't stop being your good shepherd. What he has declared over you will always be true. When He says "you're mine-I've got you then he does." There won't be any take backs on him serving as your advocate before the Father. He that gave you His Spirit won't ever take him away from you. We can hope in God who has justified us and will see our salvation through to the end. **"24 Now to him who is able to protect you from stumbling and to make you stand in the presence of his glory, without blemish and with great joy, 25 to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, power, and authority before all time, now and forever. Amen. -- Jude 1:24-25**

Angels are impressive, but Son is better for he is the king who rules w/o end and w/o change.

### 3. Jesus Has a Better Place 13-14

In short: Angels surround the throne, but Jesus sits upon the throne.

13 Now to which of the angels has he ever said: Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool? 14 Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve those who are going to inherit salvation?

Some important things to point out here. First, Jesus is seated because His work is done. The Father gives Jesus the seat of honor and authority - the right hand. Luke 1:19 says the angel Gabriel stands in the presence of God, but no angel could sit on the throne. Second, Jesus has enemies but he's resting his feet on them. Jesus' enemies are the curse of the law, sin, Satan, earthly powers, death, and the grave. The gospels record how Jesus took the fight into enemy territory casting out demons, healing the sick, and opposing false teachers. A day is coming where Rev 11 will be fulfilled "the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever." Jesus will have no enemies left. Rev 20 says Death and Hades will be thrown into the lake of fire. Rev 21:4 "He will wipe away every tear and death shall be no more."

The angels are ministers who worship the Son and minister to the needs of his people. This is stunning - they are sent out by God to help those who are inheriting salvation. They do things to help enable us to reach our heavenly destination. John Calvin found great comfort in this verse. He said, "our salvation being defended by such guardians, is beyond the reach of danger."

In salvation: Reconciled to the Father. Given the Son. Sealed with the Spirit. Made alive and seated in the heavenly places. And top off all those amazing truths we can now add assisted by the angels.

These truths show us that Jesus is a unique savior - He alone fulfills all the promises made centuries before. Only Jesus could actually bring salvation to his people. Further, it shows that he is a sufficient savior for us. Jesus sits on an eternal throne. He is all powerful defeating all his enemies. He is unchanging - always the same. He's righteousness. If all these things are true, what can our souls need that cannot be found in Christ? He is enough for us. All that he demands - he supplies and provides.

When we are facing troubles of all kinds, let us remember that Christ is enthroned in righteousness, wisdom, and love. When we are weary and unsure if we'll make it to the end, remember that death has no hold on you and Jesus will see you to the end.

This Jesus demands a response - so what are you going to do with Jesus?

1. What are you going to do with Jesus?
2. How does an unchanging savior give you hope?
3. In what ways do you need to trust King Jesus?