

CHRIST: SUPERIOR TO THE ANGELS

Hebrews 1:4-14 and 2:5-18

Compiled By Dr. Gary M. Gulan, ©1983 (Rev. 92,01,09)

So far in our outline, we have examined the first “superior” theme which was “Christ is Superior to the Prophets: Being a Better Revelator, (Heb. 1:1-3). Now we are looking at the second “superior” theme was “Christ is Superior to the Angels: Having a Better Name, (Heb. 1:4-2:18). Why angels? Because “angels” are messengers and Christ was also a “messenger.” Angels held a great position of importance in the Jewish viewpoint.

1. THE ANGELS

A. The great angels

Michael is the commander in chief of the armies of heaven, (Jude 9; Rev. 12:7).(Phillips, p. 45)

Gabriel was the glorious herald of good news, (Dan. 8:16; 9:21; Luke 1:19,26).(Phillips, p. 45)

Lucifer had the highest privilege among the angels, (Ez. 28:14; Isa. 14:12). (Phillips, p. 45)

B. The ministry of the angels

Angels were created to serve God in continuous worship and praise, (Job 38:7; Psalm 103:20; Isaiah 6:1-3; Rev. 4:8; 5:9-12). (Hughes, p. 35; Phillips, p. 45)

Angels were used at times to communicate God's message to man, (Acts 7:38,53; Dan. 10:10-15; Rev. 17:1; 21:9; 22:16; Matt. 1:19-24; Luke 1:11-28; 2:9-12). (Hughes, p. 35; Phillips, p. 45)

Angels minister to believers, (Psalm 34:7; 91:11-12; Acts 5:19; 12:6-11; Luke 15:10; Heb. 1:14; 1 Thess. 4:16-17). (Hughes, p. 35; Phillips, p. 45)

Angels will be God's agents in the Tribulation's earthly judgment, (Matt. 24:31; 13:39-42; Rev. 19:17-20:3,10). (Hughes, p. 35; Phillips, p. 45)

C. The importance or emphasis of angels to the Jewish community

Jews held angels in high regard. Angels were involved with the giving of revelation to Moses, (Acts 7:38,53; Gal. 3:19; Deut. 33:1-2). (English, p. 59)

Qumran sect in Judaism held that the archangel Michael's authority rivaled or surpassed that of the Messiah. (MacArthur, p. 1897)

D. The limitations of angels (Angels are inferior to Christ)

Angels are “messengers” for God and do not develop the “message,” (Heb. 1:4).

Angels are “worshippers” never to be worshipped, (Heb. 1:6).

Angels are “ministers” on behalf of God and not “ministered” to, (Heb. 1:7-8; 2:5).

Angels are “created” spirit beings, (Heb. 1:7, 10-14).

Angels are “servants” subordinate to God, (Heb. 2:5-8).

Angels were not given aid by the Lord, only mankind, (Heb. 2:9-10, 16)

2. THE GREAT FOCUS ON TIME

A. “having become” (Hebrews 1:4)

“...used here refers to a change of state, not a change of existence....” (MacArthur, p. 1897)

“...in His preexistent deity there was no development involved.” (Kent, p. 39)

“The aorist... suggests that... the exaltation of the Son as a single past event.” (Ellingworth, p. 105)

B. “Today” (Hebrews 1:5)

“The term marks the communication of a new and abiding life....” (Westcott, p. 21)

“... ‘have I begotten thee’ must refer to Christ’s eternal Sonship.” (Hewitt, p. 55)

Hopefully John MacArthur has changed his heretical view on “Sonship.” (MacArthur, MNTC, p. 27-29)

C. “Again brings” (Hebrews 1:6)

The earthly ministry of Jesus Christ was a focal point in history. He will again be coming to this earth to minister, but it is because of His first ministry on earth that He is able to come back again.

“... ‘again’ refers to God’s bringing His firstborn into the world another time. (MacArthur, MNTC, p. 31)

D. “A little lower” (Hebrews 2:7 = man, Hebrews 2:9 = Christ)

“A little’ (brachu ti) can refer to space, time, or degree.” (Kent p. 53).

“In the Hebrew and Greek the word ‘little’ has both a local and temporal significance. It is the latter which is used in our text and ‘for a little while; is preferred.” (Hewitt, p. 66)

3. TERMS USED WITHIN THE TIME OF TRANSITION

These terms have become proof texts for the cults to claim Christ was a created being. (MacArthur, MNTC, p. 30)

A. “Son” (Gr. “huios”)(Hebrews 1:5)

The word "Son" means "a follower of another, a special relationship, shares special privilege, recognition of position," (Jn. 3:16 Heb. 4:14). People of higher responsibility sometimes call others of different position "son."

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B. “Begotten” (Gr. “gegenneka”)(Hebrews 1:5)

“...the expression has to do with public declaration, acknowledgement, or inauguration.” (Kent, p. 41)

The word "Begotten" means “a special relationship, a one-of-a-kind, a unique relationship,” (Acts 13:33; Heb.1:5; 5:5). Paul stated that he had "begotten" Onesimus, who was older than him referring to a special relationship, (Phile. 10)

C. “Firstborn” (Gr. “prototokos,” Hebrews 1:6)

“...the emphasis clearly being upon primacy of position and dignity.” (Kent, p. 42)

“... ‘priority’ and ‘superiority’ are nearly always associated with it.” (Hewitt, p. 56)

The words "First born" mean "a special position, a special relationship, a highly exalted position," (Col. 1:15; 1:18 Heb. 1:6 Rev. 1:5). David was called the firstborn (Ps. 89:19-29) yet he was the youngest of eight children. The president's wife is called the "first lady" yet she is not the first lady of the country.

4. CHRIST IS SUPERIOR TO THE ANGELS

Christ is superior because of several reasons:

A. Christ's inheritance, (Heb. 1:4)

B. Christ is the Son, (Heb. 1:5)

C. Christ receives worship from the angels, (Heb. 1:6)

D. Christ created everything, including the angels, (Heb. 1:7,10)

E. Christ is the anointed one, (Heb. 1:9)

F. Christ is unchangeable, but some angels fell, (Heb. 1:9,11-12)

G. Christ will be king in the Millennial Kingdom, (Heb. 1:8-9, 13; 2:5)

H. Christ is at the right hand of the Father, (Heb. 1:13)

I. Christ is in control of all things, including angels, (Heb. 2:7-8)

J. Christ did not become an angel, (Heb. 2:16)

5. THE FIRST WARNING PASSAGE (Heb. 2:1-4)

There are some important things to consider.

A. The passage has been viewed as addressed to either the (1.) unsaved, or (2.*) the saved.

B. The passage has been applied to (1.) salvation and to (2.*) sanctification.

C. The passage contrasts (1.) “things spoken by angels,” versus (2.) “things spoken by Christ.”

D. The “drifting” (Gr. “pararuomen”) is a nautical term of “slow drifting/anchor loosened” (Guthrie, p. 84)

E. The passage is addressed to “we” (Gr. “hemeis”) emphatic as if talking to believers. (Morris, p. 22)

F. The danger is not that something will slip from us, but we might drift away from it. (Hughes, p. 47)

G. The “giving attention” (Gr. “prosechein”) a nautical term of attaching a boat to the dock. (Gromacki, p. 38)

H. The “ignoring” (Gr. “amelesantes”) is a conditional force of apathy. (Guthrie, p. 85)

I. This is the forgetting how superior Christ really is. (Ryrie, p. 1853)

J. “The things we have heard’ qualify the ‘salvation’ as all that we have in Christ.” (Gromacki, p. 38)

K. “The disaster that threatens is brought in by nothing more than neglect.” (Morris, p. 22)

L. We shall not “escape” the physical consequences of being disciplined. It is not a loss of salvation.

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