

# Confidence in Christ – Greater than the Angels

Goldstone Church – 25-Sep-16 10:30am

Hebrews 1:4-14

## Introduction

We are continuing our series in the book of Hebrews, looking at the first 6 chapters. Last time we looked at Hebrews 1:1-3, verses that set the theme for the rest of the book. These 7 great descriptive statements exalt and promote Jesus Christ, providing a glimpse of Jesus' greatness, His superiority, His Godliness, and His daily involvement in our world.

In Bible times, angels were an important part of the Jewish religion, appearing throughout the history of Israel. For example: angels met with Abraham (Genesis 18), Jacob (Genesis 32), Joshua (Joshua 5), Gideon (Judges 6) and Daniel (Daniel 6).

The primary purpose of Hebrews is to show the superiority of Jesus Christ. In Hebrews 1:1-3, the writer explains that Jesus is superior to the Old Testament prophets. Now, he proves that Jesus is superior to the angels.

### 1. JESUS IS THE "SON" (Hebrews 1:4-5)

Although the angels are collectively called '*the sons of God*' (Job 1:6), no angel is ever given the *individual* title. Only Jesus Christ is given this unique title of "Son".

Jesus is the Son of God.

In v.4, there 2 quotations from the Old Testament:

a) "*I will proclaim the Lord's decree: He said to me, 'You are my son; today I have become your father.'*" (Psalm 2:7)

On the face of it, the psalmist seems to be declaring God's *personal* assurance to him, i.e. the promise that he has become part of God's family. But that's not what the psalmist is saying. This is a prophecy of the Son that is to come; it is Jesus who is the Son.

b) "*I will be his father, and he shall be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with a rod wielded by men, with floggings inflicted by human hands.*" (2 Samuel 7:14)

This verse seems to be God promising King David, that God will look on Solomon as His son. But we need to remember that Jesus was the "son of David"; Jesus was descended from King David (Matthew 1). God's promise here to David's *immediate* son, can be equally applied to Jesus, the *ultimate* son of David.

These verses are echoed in the New Testament, on the Mount of Transfiguration: "*A voice came from the cloud, saying, 'This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.'*" (Luke 9:35). In other words, Jesus is the Son that was promised and prophesied about in the Old Testament: listen to Him.

Jesus is superior to the angels.

### 2. JESUS IS THE "FIRSTBORN" (Hebrews 1:6)

There is a difference between "firstborn" and "born first". In the Bible, the word "firstborn" does not always mean "born first".

The phrase “firstborn” has 2 main meanings: (a) the son is *literally* the first son to be born of his father, but more significantly, (b) it is an honourable title, that comes with rank and privilege. The firstborn received the family inheritance and the father’s special blessing. He is the leader of the household.

“*The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.*” (Colossians 1:15) Jesus carries the honourable title of “firstborn” because Jesus has created all things.

When Jesus came into the world, God instructed a multitude of angels to appear and worship Him. “*When God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, “Let all God’s angels worship him.*” (Hebrews 1:6) This proves that Jesus Christ is God - angels wouldn’t worship a mere creature. Angels only worship the firstborn of creation. Jesus is superior to the angels.

### 3. **JESUS IS “GOD”** (Hebrews 1:7-9)

In v.7, the quote is a paraphrase of Psalm 104:4, indicating that angels are created spirits that serve God. In other words, angels minister *before* God’s throne; they do not sit *on* the throne. This is the central truth: angels serve God – and Jesus is God.

In v.8-9, the writer is quoting from Psalm 45:6-7; another Psalm that is looking forward to the Promised Messiah. The psalmist is clearly proclaiming the deity of Jesus: Jesus is seated on the throne in heaven, and is set above all things.

Note v.9b, that Jesus the Son, who is God and King, has been “anointed”. The word “Messiah” means “the Anointed One”, i.e. Jesus Christ is the Messiah – the Saviour of the world.

Angels can, and do praise Jesus, the Messiah, the Anointed One - but they cannot share Jesus’ position or his ‘oil of joy’. Jesus is superior to the angels.

### 4. **JESUS IS THE “LORD”** (Hebrews 1:10-12)

The next quotation comes from Psalm 102:25-27. Note: “O Lord” has been added in the opening phrase: “*In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth*”.

What is translated as “O Lord” in English, is actually a single word in the original Greek text. Most Bible scholars agree that this “O Lord” is the New Testament equivalent of the Old Testament word “Yahweh”.

For devote Jews, the word “Yahweh” is a holy word for God, a word so holy, that many Jews would be reluctant to actually speak the name – and then, only as a whisper. This is Almighty God, Maker, Creator and Sustainer of the Universe – the Holy One, who founded the world - and who also created the angels.

This same name is given to Jesus: Jesus is the eternal Creator. In the beginning, Jesus was there. When the heavens and the earth (and the angels) were created, Jesus was there. As we live our lives today, Jesus is here. When the world comes to an end, Jesus will still be there.

Contrary to what some other religions might suggest, Jesus isn’t “a god”, or any sort of

created being. Jesus *is* God. Jesus is Yahweh!  
Jesus is superior to the angels.

## 5. JESUS IS THE “SOVEREIGN” (Hebrews 1:13-14)

The quote in v.13 is from Psalm 110:1 – the most quoted verse in the New Testament. Note: when the *first* verse of a psalm is quoted in the New Testament, the Jews would have assumed that the whole of the psalm was included.

So, although the writer is only quoting verse 1, the whole of Psalm 110 is inferred and refers to the Messianic reign of Jesus Christ. This reign began when Jesus sat down at the right hand of God. No angel has ever been asked to sit at God’s right hand. This is the ultimate place of honour and authority. Only Jesus, as the Son of God, has been invited to this exalted position. Jesus is truly the Sovereign!

Jesus is superior to the angels.

## CONCLUSION

The book of Hebrews is one of the bridges that connects the Old Testament and the New Testament. Hebrews 1:4-14 uses Old Testament references to prove just how superior Jesus is compared to the angels.

1. Jesus is the **Son** – not the angels.
2. Jesus is the **Firstborn** who receives worship – not the angels.
3. Jesus is **God**, who is enthroned and anointed – not the angels.
4. Jesus is the **Lord** (Yahweh), the eternal creator – not the angels, who are only created beings.
5. Jesus is the **Sovereign**, reigning at God’s right hand – the angels are only ministering spirits.

Our response can only be to bow down in worship and adoration of Jesus Christ, our wonderful Lord and Saviour. Let Jesus (not angels) be the focus of our interest and worship and adoration.

Revelation 5:11-12,

*<sup>11</sup> Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. <sup>12</sup> In a loud voice they were saying:*

*‘Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,  
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength  
and honour and glory and praise!’*

To Him be the glory.

**AMEN**