

# Greater Than the Angels

Text: Hebrews 1:4-6

Date: 9-17-23

## Angels, the Jews, and Jesus

What are angels? The word (Greek: *angelos*) means a *supernatural or heavenly being created by God to serve Him*. They often *functioned as messengers* and are said to be *ones who brings a message*.

MacArthur writes, “Angels minister to God and do His bidding. They are both spectators and participants in His mighty works, both redemptive and judgmental”.

Some angels made the choice to rebel against God. Good angels are loyal to God, while bad angels follow Satan (Eph. 6:12).

Satan is the god of this world (II Cor. 4:4), the father of lies (John 8:44), and the author of sin.

Hebrews is written to Jews and the Biblical account is full of angelic impact:

- Passover and the death angel (destroyer) – Ex. 12:23
- The angel of the Lord appears at important junctures in the OT. Abraham on Mt. Moriah – Gen. 23:11.
- Abraham’s servant and Rebekah – Gen. 24:40
- Moses at the burning bush – Ex. 3:2
- The angel brought the people out of Egypt – Num. 20:16
- Balaam and the angel – Num. 22:22ff
- Hezekiah and the defeat of Assyria and Sennacherib - II Chron. 32:21
- The angel’s announcement and details around Jesus’ birth – Matt. 1:20; 24; 2:13; 2:19; Luke 1:38; 2:9;
- At Jesus’ resurrection – Matt. 28:2
- Releasing the apostles – Acts 5:18; 12:7, 11
- Angels helped with Daniel in the lion’s den (6:22).
- Angels obey and worship God (Ps. 103:20; 148:1-2; Luke 2:13-14).
- Angels will participate in Christ’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming (Matt. 25:31).
- They will participate in judgment (Matt. 13:41-42; 49). Ps. 34:7; Dan. 7:10; Rev. 5:11. Psalm 91:1-2 indicate they watch over the faithful.

To any Jew living in the time of Hebrews, angels were important for the formation of their nation and had a significant impact on their deliverance.

To the Jew, angels were crucial to the work of God as well as the most exalted beings closest to God.

The author of Hebrews sets out to demonstrate and prove that Jesus is superior as the Mediator of the New Covenant and superior to angels.

### Transition:

- Angels did not create for they were created by Jesus.
- While angels did speak, they only spoke the message of God. But Jesus was the Word, the very revealer of God Himself.
- Angels are not the heir of all things.
- Angels are not the exact imprint of God.
- Angels are powerful but do not uphold all things.
- Angels did not die for our sins.
- Angels are not seated at the right hand of God interceding for the saints. Therefore, the writer says Jesus is superior to the angels.

The phrase *being made* (Greek: *genomenos*) means *having become* and does NOT mean Jesus was a created being which is a different Greek word. This means Jesus became something He wasn't before and directly refers to Him becoming human flesh and taking our sins away.

Yet, there may be questions on the minds of the Jewish recipients: Weren't the angels already in heaven doing God's work? What makes Christ *better*?

The importance of Jesus being better than the angels cannot be understated. If Jesus is not superior to the angels, then the message of grace over the law is empty.

### 1. Jesus has a more excellent name (Heb. 2:4b-5).

So what is this name that Jesus inherited and has been given at His exaltation?

Verse 5 indicates that it is the name of Son.

This is His name given at His incarnation. The inheritance is that Jesus now possesses Sonship as a result of His redemptive work on the cross.

- God has never said to an angel that they are His Son and certainly not in the capacity as the Son of God.
- He did not say they had been *begotten* or *become a father to you as my son* because angels were not in that type of relationship with God.
- While in the OT *sons* were used to denote *angelic beings*, it was never used for an individual angel or in the way God used it for His Son.
- While angels do God's bidding and are His messengers they are never considered His sons in this manner. Jesus Christ is the only one of whom the Father said these words.
- And while Christ came to this earth as a servant and ministered to the world, He did so as an uncreated God, yet birthed man who was the supreme Servant who became Son. Yet, there is more!
- Who else was crucified, buried, triumphed over death, and rose again proving He was Deity? This man Jesus Christ, the Son of God!
- It was at His resurrection that Jesus completely and fully became that Son! Paul then declares this in Acts 13 and shows that as Son He rose again, ascended on high, and is at the right hand of the Father. He is truly King with full royal membership.
- Therefore, He has obtained a more excellent name on the basis of who He is and what He has done.

### 2. Jesus is worshipped by the angels (Heb. 2:6).

The author of Hebrews makes it clear that all the angels will worship Christ.

If angels worship only God and angels worship Jesus, than Jesus is God! If the angels are to worship Jesus, He must be superior to them! Angels worshipped Him at His first coming (Luke 2:13-14), and if this is a reference to Christ's second coming, then angels will worship Him again!