

Bible Study – Hebrews chapter 1:5-14 The Supremacy of God’s Son – part 2

In our first study, the writer shows who Jesus Christ is and his extraordinary attributes. We see him as Creator, as King, as Omnipotent, and as Saviour. The writer also shows that the centerpiece of our faith, Jesus Christ, is supreme over all things. Tonight, we will see how Jesus is supreme over the angels, spiritual figures that were held in high esteem in the Old Testament to the present writing of Hebrews.

Read Hebrews 1:5-14

The writer, having established his basis for why Jesus Christ is supreme amongst creation, now compares Jesus with angels, created beings that are highly intelligent and moral, and were viewed as supreme creatures.

Q. How do the people in the Bible view angels and what are their reactions? (cf. Mark 16:5; Psalm 103:20; 2 Peter 2:11; Daniel 10:2-6; Genesis 18:1-4; Luke 1:26-29; Revelation 19:10) Why do you think those who have seen angels, hold them in such high esteem (cf. Genesis 19:11; 2 Kings 19:35; Daniel 6:22)?

- **Mark 16:5** – Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome sees a ‘young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe’. They are alarmed (not sure if it is seeing the man there or not seeing the body of Christ)
- **Psalm 103:20** – Seen as mighty ones who do his word, as well as obeying it (or obedient ones).
- **2 Peter 2:11** – Seen as greater in might and power. (the ‘them’ in this passage talks about false prophets and teachers).
- **Daniel 10:2-6** – Daniel sees a man clothed in linen, with a belt of fine gold, his body like beryl (a very precious stone), his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sounds of his words like the sound of a multitude
- **Genesis 18:1-4** – Abraham sees the three men standing in front of them and immediately recognizes something supernatural about them. He treats and entertains them, inviting them to sit and to eat with him.
- **Luke 1:29** – Gabriel is sent to the virgin Mary to indicate she has found favour with God and will now bear a son to be named Jesus. She is greatly troubled at Gabriel’s coming. Cf. 1:12-13 – Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist also has the same sort of reaction as Mary.
- **Revelation 19:9-10** – John, after seeing a great vision of hearing the great multitude worship God, falls on his knees to worship the angel, who sharply rebukes him and says that he is a fellow servant and the only one to be worshipped is God himself.
- **Genesis 19:11** – The two angels strike the men with blindness
- **2 Kings 19:35** – The angel of the Lord struck down 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians. Cf. 2 Kings 6:15-17 – Elisha showing his servant, the mountain that was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.
- **Daniel 6:22** – God sent an angel to protect Daniel from the lions by shutting their mouths.
- In the first question, the main reaction is that of fear, though there are some reactions of respect that are recorded. These people recognize that these ‘men’ are from God and so they must be treated with high honour and respect. It is fair to see there is a spectrum of reactions, but fear is most prevalent.
- In the second question, the main reason for why they would hold angels in such high esteem is their power, doing things that no ordinary humans can do.
- **Leader’s Note** – How one sees angels in reality vs. visions can cause a distortion of how angels may truly appear to human eyes. In the Daniel passage, this is a vision, one that makes the angel more ‘supernatural’ than in other examples recorded in the bible. In other examples, angels are not extraordinary in their appearance. Therefore, there is a spectrum of how angels can appear to those in the Bible.

Q. (v.5, 13) What is the writer trying to show with these verses regarding angels and Jesus Christ in relation to God the Father? (quotes cf. Psalm 2:7; 2 Samuel 7:14 or 1 Chronicles 17:13; Psalm 110:1) In v.13, what does it mean to 'sit at my right hand' and why is this a sign of superiority (cf. Romans 8:34; 1 Peter 3:22)?

- The Old Testament writers referred to angels collectively as the “sons of God” to emphasize their greatness, but does not use the ‘singular’ title of “The Son of God” (cf. Job 1:6, 2:1; 38:7, Psalm 29:1)
- The title “Son of God” is a title referred to the Davidic kings (2 Samuel 7:14) and specifically Jesus Christ (Mark 1:11; Luke 1:32)
- Not only is Jesus the Son of God, but he is also the promised Son of David (Luke 1:32-33, 68-69; Romans 1:3)
- Even though Jesus Christ was always God’s eternal Son (in eternity past), in human history He became the Son prophesied to rule over David’s house. He received permission to rule the whole earth after His ascension.
- The title “Son” refers to Jesus in three separate respects:
 - He was always the pre-existent Son (v. 3a-b; cf 5:8)
 - He became the incarnate Son at his birth (v. 2a)
 - He became the exalted Son when He returned to heaven
- To ‘sit at the right hand’ is a term of kingship or having ruling authority
- The reason why this shows a sign of superiority is because angels stand and serve, while the Son sits and rules (Romans 8:34; 1 Peter 3:22)

Q. (v.6-7, 14) What are the roles of angels within these passages (quotes – cf. Deuteronomy 32:43; Psalm 104:4)?

- Angels are servants by nature
- They also worship the Son, which by the very nature of that act, shows Christ’s superiority over the angels
- Angels are ministering spirits sent by God
- They are to assist (render service for) human beings toward reaching their final deliverance over their spiritual enemies, which includes bringing us to conversion
- This also involves protecting and strengthen believers so they may one day receive their full inheritance with Jesus Christ in glory
- The ministry of service is inferior to the ministry of ruling, which belong to Christ
- **Leaders Note 1:** The title “firstborn” reflects the sovereignty, uniqueness, and superiority of the Messiah (Psalm 89:27). The title doesn’t not always mean ‘chronological birth’, as seen in the example of Solomon, who exercised the sovereignty of the Davidic house as Israel’s king, even though he was the tenth son of David (1 Chronicles 3:1-5)

Q. (v.8-9) What is the writer illustrating regarding Christ’s rule with this quote from Psalm 45:6-7? What did the Psalmist’s write about Jesus Christ that would earn Him the right to rule? (cf. John 8:45-47)

- The Son is addressed as both God and as Lord, which shows that the Son exercises royal power
- This is a reference to the throne of God, at which Jesus sits at the right hand (cf. Hebrews 12:2)
- His ‘throne’ is both eternal (without end) and immutable (unchanging)
- This quote describes the final triumph of David’s Son, the Messiah, who is also God
- The Son is also superior to angels because He is God
- The prophets predicted that Messiah would be ‘righteous’
- Jesus Christ demonstrated this quality perfectly during his earthly ministry (cf. John 8:45-47)

- It is his love of righteousness, manifested in his earthly life, that entitles him to sovereignty
- **Leaders Note 1:** The anointing of the Son is not to be thought of in connection with coronation rites, but as symbolizing the joy of festival occasions, when the practice of anointing was followed
- **Leader's Note 2:** The companions mentioned here probably included all other righteous beings, angelic and human, including faithful Christians (cf. Hebrews 2:10-11; 3:1, 14; 12:8). The term also implies an intimate association with Christ (cf. Luke 5:7). The term 'partakers' can be substituted.

Q. (v.10-12) What is the writer showing about Christ with the quote from Psalm 102:25-27? When looking back at the previous passage set, what is the overarching theme related to Jesus (v. 8, 12)? Why is this important?

- The Son is also Creator (cf. v.2), which is looking to the past
- Leader's note 1: "Lord" means Master, and refers to God in the quoted passage from Psalm
- The writer is illustrating the immutability (unchanging nature) of the Son
- Many in that time, specifically in the Greco-Roman world (e.g. the geographical region that is influenced by the ancient Greeks and Romans), believed that the world and universe were indestructible
- When the present heaven and earth is 'burned' up and the new heaven and earth are created, this shows different 'phases' of the Messiah's endless earthly rule
- The Son's rule will continue eternally, along with His joy
- The overarching theme is the Son's eternal nature
- This is important as it shows that He will always be here while other things come and go
- The attribute of permanence in the Creator corresponds to the durability of his throne and serves to reinforce the contrast between the mutability (changes) of the angels and the stable, abiding character of the Son

The writer of Hebrews shows his readers, in convincing fashion, the superiority of Jesus Christ over the angels in the following seven (7) aspects: 1.) He is the Son of God (v.5a), 2.) He is the promised son of David (v.5b), 3.) He is the supreme authority whom angels worship as Yahweh (v.6), 4.) His ministry is not that of a temporary servant like the angels (v.7), 5.) His ministry is that of the eternal Ruler and King (vv. 8-9), 6.) He is the immutable (unchanging) Creator (vv.10-12), and 7.) He is the supreme authority who will rule over as Victor over all His enemies (v.13).

The writer is setting the basis for the rest of the epistle that by showing the superiority of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour of our lives, that all else that came before or anything that tries to measure up to Him follows terribly short.