

Hebrews 1:4-14 Affirmation of Christ's superiority to the angels

First, there is an affirmation (Heb. 1:4–14) of the superiority of Christ to the angels. The proof presented consists of seven quotations from the Old Testament. Second, there is an exhortation (Heb. 2:1–4) that the readers (and this includes us) pay earnest heed to the Word God has given through His Son. Finally, there is an explanation (Heb. 2:5–18) as to how Christ, with a human body, could still be superior to angels, who are spirits.

- There are a few instances in scripture dealing with situations involving angel worship
- Satan desired the worship intended for God alone and was punished along with those who chose to follow him
- When tempting Jesus, Satan demanded the Son of God fall down and worship him
- Twice in Revelation, John mistakenly attempts to worship an angel and is reprimanded

4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

- The angels appear to have played a major role in the delivery of the law to Moses, so many could have argued the supremacy of the Old Covenant over the New which was delivered by men, namely, the Apostles
- In this argument, the writer conveys Jesus' obtaining a more excellent name because His accomplishments in man's redemption perfected, or completed, His inheritance
- Angel worship was as prevalent in the early church as it is today as often some attribute new revelations and visions outside the word of God to a supernatural messenger from Heaven
- Several warnings were given in the New Testament in regards to these "angelic" visitations
- The Gnostic movement also tried to hold these new revelations to a select few or elite believers in the church, but the writer in Hebrews has already stated that, "in the last days, God has spoken to us by His Son".

Colossians 2:16-19

16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:

17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

18 Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,

19 And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

- The Gnostics had a very confused and un-Biblical view of God and His created order, because their beliefs were rooted in pagan polytheism - a belief in many gods. The ultimate form of God is remote, the Gnostics said. The ultimate form of God cannot not be known or accessed directly. But God has many components, the Gnostics said. God takes the form of many lower beings. And so these people were telling the Christians, "You are wrong to think that you can worship God directly. You are wrong to think that you can access God directly in the person of Jesus Christ. That is a proud thought. No, you must be humble. You must approach God by worshipping these other lower beings, these many components and celestial servants of the great and unknowable God. You must worship angels."

5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?

- *Begotten* differs from *created*
- First of all, Christ took part in creation and all creation is sustained by His power
- *Begotten* describes a relationship between two beings of the same essential nature and being, but we *create* things of a different essential being and nature than ourselves. A man *creates* a statue but *begets* a child.
- The writer begins to set the stage for the argument of Christ's authority over that of the angels
- He quotes from Psalm 2
- Paul, in Acts 13:33, points to the day of Christ being begotten

Psalm 2:1-7

- 1 Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?*
- 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying,*
- 3 Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.*
- 4 He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.*
- 5 Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.*
- 6 Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.*
- 7 I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.*

- The first of this Psalm is always quoted prophetically as dealing with the crucifixion until verse 7 where it transitions to the resurrection

Acts 13:33

33 God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.

Diocletian also set up two monuments on the frontier of his empire with these inscriptions:

- *Diocletian Jovian Maximian Herculeus Caesares Augusti for having extended the Roman Empire in the east and the west and for having extinguished the name of Christians who brought the Republic to ruin*
- *Diocletian Jovian Maximian Herculeus Caesares Augusti for having everywhere abolished the superstition of Christ for having extended the worship of the gods*
- *Diocletian has become a minor footnote in history, but Christ is still the Son!*

6 And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

- We have no direct quotation from the LXX (Greek Septuagint) or the Masoretic Text (KJV)
- We do, however, see the sky full of the heavenly host when the announcement was made to the Bethlehem shepherds

7 And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.

- Psalm 103:4 (LXX) and Psalm 104:4 (MT)
- The Son is to be worshipped, but the angels are ministers (servants)
- Notice the difference in the descriptions from verses 6 & 7, the Son is *brought* into the world, but the angels are *made* acknowledging the Son was eternal already yet revealed in this world, but angels are part of the created order

Ephesians 1:19-23

19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Galatians 3:19

19 Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

Acts 7:53

53 Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.

Psalms 68:17

17 The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place.

8 But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

- Psalm 45:6-7
- Scepter or baton of authority

Genesis 49:10

10 The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

10 And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands:

- Christ laid the foundation for creation in the beginning as He is eternal

11 They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment;

- Because of sin, death and decay were invited into the creation by man, yet this decay did not affect the Creator

12 And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.

- Psalm 101:26-28 (LXX) and Psalm 102:25-27 (MT)
- Christ will also usher in a new creation

13 But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?

- Psalm 109:1 (LXX) and Psalm 110:1 (MT)
- No angel has been granted the right to the throne

14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

- The Son is granted a *seated* position, but the angels *stand* before the throne awaiting their next command
- The angelic order is one of service, not dominion
- The angels minister for those who would be heirs of salvation (which is us)

John Paton was a missionary in the New Hebrides Islands. One night hostile natives surrounded the mission station, intent on burning out the Patons and killing them. Paton and his wife prayed during that terror-filled night that God would deliver them. When daylight came they were amazed to see their attackers leave. A year later, the chief of the tribe was converted to Christ. Remembering what had happened, Paton asked the chief what had kept him from burning down the house and killing them. The chief replied in surprise, "Who were all those men with you there?" Paton knew no men were present--but the chief said he was afraid to attack because he had seen hundreds of big men in shining garments with drawn swords circling the mission station.

Angels interacting with Jesus' earthly ministry

- Announcing His birth
- Warning His parents to flee Bethlehem
- Ministering to Him after the wilderness temptation
- Ministering to Him at Gethsemane
- Rolling away the stone
- Appearing after the resurrection
- Appearing at the ascension

Angels interacting with Jesus' current and future ministry

- Around the throne praising the Lamb
- Will return with Jesus at His second coming
- Will separate the lost and saved