

**HEBREWS**  
**(Lesson 5)**  
**The Superiority of Jesus Continued**

INTRODUCTION

Remember that the main theme of Hebrews is that Christianity is superior to Judaism. And more specifically, Christ is better than all the various elements and officers of Judaism.

**Example: Remember when we were adding on to this building. We had drawings and blueprints. And you would look at the drawings and scratch your head and say, “Now is this the front of the church? Is this where the baptistery is going? What is this line here? But when the renovation was complete, the renovation was much better than the blueprint.**

You see, the blueprint was nothing more than a technical sketch to show us in advance what the building would look like. It was the plan for the building, but it was not the building itself. Now we might show someone on the blueprint where the choir loft would be, but there is no way we could actually fit our entire choir in the four inches on that piece of paper. It was only a drawing. Now it was drawn to scale so that we could see how everything fit together in its proper proportions. But we never intended to have church by all of us standing on the blueprint, did we?

And Christ is the building and all of the rites and ceremonies and all of the religious officers of Judaism were merely the pattern of Christ and Christianity. Christianity is that true spiritual worship of which the earthly worship of Judaism was merely a type.

And so, the writer of Hebrews goes about to prove the superiority of Christ.

Now in the former days God spoke to the Jewish nation through prophets and through angels and it says he spoke in bits and pieces and in different ways.

And we saw in verses one and two that Jesus is better than the prophets. And then, in verse 4 we saw that Jesus is better than the angels.

## How Jesus is better than the angels

1. God has appointed Jesus heir of all things. (v.2)
2. Jesus created the worlds. (v.2)
3. Jesus is the brightness of God's glory. (v.3)
4. Jesus is the express image of his power. (v.3)
5. Jesus upholds all things by the word of his power. (v.3)
6. Jesus purged our sins. (v.3)
7. Jesus sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. (v.3)
8. Jesus has obtained a better name than the angels ("My Son). (v.4)

And now, we see in verse 6,

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

The angels are commanded to worship Jesus. (v.6)

Angels praised Jesus at his birth. (Luke 2:13f)

Angels are gathered around the throne in heaven praising Jesus.  
(Rev.5:11-14)

Note: Hebrews 1:6 is apparently a quotation from Deut. 32:43. However, in some translations, this line is left out.

Jesus is called the firstbegotten (firstborn)

This designation would carry a special significance to the Jewish readers. They attached a very special place to the first born. It was a position of privilege and prestige. The firstborn had an extra portion of the inheritance. And of course Jesus, being not only the first begotten but also the only begotten, has inherited all things.

In this context, verse 6 must surely apply primarily to the incarnation

Some suggest that it applies to the second coming of Jesus because of the word "again." They say, the word again modifies the word bringeth. So, "When he bringeth again the firstbegotten into the world, let angels worship him." However, it is my opinion that this whole context is designed to show

that Jesus in his humanity is better than angels. And thus, his incarnation is in view.

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

This is a quotation from Psalm 104. This Psalm ascribes great praise to God who is the creator and sustainer of all things. He has created the earth and the physical elements.

Notice God's provision and sovereignty over the following:

- v.2 heavens
- v.3 waters
- v.3 clouds
- v.3 wind
- v.5 earth
- v.6 waters
- v.6 mountains
- v.7 thunder
- v.8 valleys
- v.10 springs
- v.11 beasts
- v.12 fowls
- v.13 hills
- v.14 grass
- v.14 cattle
- v.14 herb
- v.14 man
- v.14 food
- v.16 trees
- v.17 birds
- v.18 wild goats
- v.18 rocks
- v.18 conies (rabbits, badgers)
- v.19 moon
- v.19 sun
- v.20 darkness
- v.21 lions
- v.26 leviathan (sea monster)

And God does as he pleases with all the animals and with all the physical elements and with man. And in the middle of that list we have verse 4 which says,

*Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire.*

This is the verse that is quoted in Hebrews 1:7. And we see several things from this reference.

1. Angels are created beings. It is God who makes the angels. Just as God made the heavens and the earth, God also made angels. Angels are not eternal beings. They had a beginning. They owe their very existence to God the Creator. And we see this clearly from this verse which says that God *“maketh his angels spirits.”*

2. Angels are spirits. This verse gives us some indication of the nature of angels. And here it says they are spirits. They are not made primarily for a corporeal world but for a heavenly world. They are not flesh and blood. But they are spirits. They are well suited for God’s heaven, but they are somewhat out of place on the earth.

**Example: My wife asked me recently if the Bible says that angels have wings. And the answer is that the Bible pictures angels as having wings. Since we cannot comprehend the spiritual realm, often the bible illustrates the spiritual realm with pictures that we can understand. These are called anthropomorphisms. Often, God is said to have bodily parts. His eyes run to and fro in all the earth. Jesus is at the right hand of God. God has a strong arm. And angels are said to have wings. But the only wings we really know about are the wings of birds. And so wings have the meaning of great speed or protection. When a mother hen spreads her wings out over her chicks, she is protecting them. Do angels have wings? No. Angels are spirits. Has God made them with the ability to demonstrate great speed? Yes. Has he given them some protective abilities? Probably.**

3. Angels are messengers. This verse tells us somewhat about the function of angels. The very word angel here is “angelos” which is messenger. And so one of the great functions of angels is to serve as messengers of God.

But we see also in this verse that,

4. Angels serve as ministers. They do God's bidding. Now, God can do anything he wants simply by issuing the word or the command. But, he has chosen to accomplish many of his plans by the ministry of angels. If God wants to hold back the wind, he may send an angel. If God wants to shake the earth with an earthquake, he may send an angel. If God wants to bring wicked sinners to the lake of fire, he may send strong angels to bring them. They are his ministers to do whatsoever he tells them to do.

Here it says these ministers are a flame of fire. Often angels are ministers of God's judgment. They pour our wrath on the wicked.

In Genesis 19:12, 13 we read that two angels told Lot, "We will destroy this place."

In Psalm 78:49, it is said that evil angels came upon Egypt to pour out wrath on them. (Evil angels here, refers to good angels coming to pour out indignation on wicked men. They are angels of judgment.)

He has made his ministers a flame of fire. This may also refer to the terrifying appearance of angels when they appear to men. When they have appeared, they have often appeared in brilliant brightness.

When Balaam saw the angel of the Lord in Numbers 22:31, he fell flat on his face in terror.

When the angel appeared to roll back the stone from the tomb of Jesus, it says his countenance was like lightening, and that for fear of him the keepers did shake and become as dead men. (Mt. 28:3,4)

When an angel came to Peter in prison, it says "a light shined in the prison." (Acts 12:7)

Many times when angels appeared to good men, they would say, "Fear not." This was probably necessary because there was a brilliant fierceness to their appearance.

But the force of this verse is not to magnify the glory of angels but rather to point out their subordinate position to Jesus. They were created

and they were servants of God.

But look at the contrast in verse 8.

(v.8) *But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom.*

Immediately you notice the contrast in the conjunction, “but.” And so you have the stark contrast of the two verses. God spoke of angels in verse 7. But, he spoke of his Son in verse 8.

This is another quotation from the Psalms. (Psalm 45:6f)

1. Jesus has a throne. You will notice here that Jesus has a throne. This has reference to his sovereignty. He is the king. All creatures come before the throne in subjection. But Jesus sits on the throne. And notice this is not some temporal throne. His reign would not last for 3 years like King Asa or for 40 years like King David, but it would be forever and ever.

But you will notice here also that,

2. Jesus is God. Lest we think God has appointed some creature to sit on the eternal throne, we see here in verse 8 that the Father addresses this person on the throne as God! Pink says this is “one of the most emphatic and unequivocal proofs of the Deity of Christ to be found in the Scriptures.” This is the Father himself testifying of the deity of this man Jesus who has been exalted on high and who sits on the throne.

Now notice in verse 6 that the angels are commanded to worship Jesus. And now in verse 8 we see why they are to worship him. It is because this meek and humble man who died an inglorious death is God himself and he now sits on a throne forever. See how much greater is Jesus than the angels.

3. The primary characteristic of Christ’s kingdom is righteousness. It says, “A sceptre of righteousness is the scepter of Thy kingdom.” Jesus is not only a powerful king, sitting on the throne, but he is a righteous king. His judgments are founded on righteousness and justness.

Now this should be the mark of all those who have authority.

*He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.*  
2 Samuel 23:3

Sadly, this is not normally the case with men. You have heard the general rule.

Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

And men tend to use power for their own benefit and to the destruction of others.

But not so in the kingdom of Jesus. His is a scepter of righteousness. Now a scepter was a rod or a staff held by a monarch and it was a symbol of his authority. And if he tipped his scepter in a certain way it might mean "off with your head." Or, if he tipped it another way, it might mean you had his favor. But the scepter of Jesus is one of righteousness and fairness and justness. His kingdom is not exercised arbitrarily but it is exercised with perfect and righteous judgment.

But we notice in verse 9 that his kingdom is administered not just with pure understanding, but also with a pure heart.

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

Remember, this is still the Father speaking to the Son as in verse 8.

1. This is the Father speaking of the character and conduct of his Son during his incarnation. He loved righteousness.

This was in the heart of Jesus every moment of his earthly life. He loved righteousness and he hated iniquity. His greatest love was to do the will of the Father.

When he was a boy of 12, He told his parents, *Wist ye not that I must be about my father's business?"* (Luke 2:49)

And the life of Jesus perfectly reflected that absolute and pure desire to obey the Father. The Bible says, "He became obedient unto death, even

the death of the cross.” Why? Because he loved obeying the Father. His pure heart pounded to do the Father’s will, because he loved righteousness.

The following verses were written by David, but can be applied ultimately to Jesus.

*I delight to do Thy will O God. (Psalm 40:8)*

*O how I love Thy law! It is My meditation all the day. (Psalm 119:97)*

So, you see what Jesus loves. He loves righteousness. But we also see here that Jesus has hate in his heart. He hates iniquity. We often think of Jesus as being full of love. But we should never forget that he is also full of hate. He despises iniquity. And he will deal with it in due time.

Look at Rev.2:15. There was a doctrine in the church at Pergamos that was evil. It was the doctrine of the Nicolaitans.

Note: The doctrine of the Nicolaitans appears to have been a form of antinomianism. (Antinomianism: A belief that is based upon a recognition of the mercy of God as the ground of salvation, but it makes the fatal mistake that man can freely partake in sin because the Law of God is no longer binding. It held the truth on the gratuitous reckoning of righteousness; but supposed that a mere intellectual “belief” in this truth had a saving power. The Apostle James refuted this error in **James 2:19** with the admonition, “The devils also believe, and tremble”; reminding us that true faith is an active principle which works by love and it goes beyond a profession of belief. “But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?” (**James 2:20**) The Bible teaches us that salvation is a free gift, based upon God’s grace alone (**Ephesians 2:8-9**) However, the very next verse tells us that “we are created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” (**Ephesians 2:10**) True faith produce action, as well as a desire for holiness and obedience. (**1 John 3:18, Titus 2:11-15, 1 Peter 1:15-16, Revelation 14:12**)

2. Notice here that the Father expresses that he is the God of Jesus.

God the Father tells Jesus, “I am thy God.”

Now, in verse 8, Jesus is unequivocally called God. But in verse 9, the Father is his God. And enemies of the gospel suppose they have some contradiction here.

How can Jesus be the Supreme Being on one hand, but then be subordinate on the other?

**The Mediator was, in his own person, both Creator and creature, God and man. Once we see it was as mediator, as the God-man, that Christ is here spoken to, all difficulty vanishes. It is this which supplies the key to the whole passage. Much in Hebrews 1 cannot be understood unless it be seen that the Holy Spirit is there speaking not of the essential glories of Christ, but of His mediatorial dignities and honours.**

#### **A. W. Pink**

There are at least two ways in which God the Father may be said to be the God of Jesus:

- A. Christ's human nature was created of God and it is preserved by Him like other creatures.
- B. As the Mediator, Jesus is sent by God (John 3:34) and he subjected himself to God the Father and set himself to do the will of God and such works as God appointed him to do.

Jesus acknowledged that the Father was his God.

Heb. 2:13

Ps. 22:10

My God, My God, Why hast thou forsaken Me?

John 20:17

- 3. Jesus has been anointed.

Kings of Israel were anointed with oil at their coronation. (I Sam.10:1; 16:13; I Kings 1:39) This was to symbolized appointment by the Lord.

4. Jesus is anointed with the oil of gladness.

This refers to his exaltation in glory. This refers to his investment with the Holy Spirit.

5. Jesus is anointed above his fellows.

His fellows here are all other creatures, created by God, especially man and angels. God has created them all, yet, Jesus is anointed above all his fellows.

#### A Summary of the Content of Psalm 45

1. Jesus is God.
2. Jesus is on the throne.
3. Jesus has a kingship.
4. Jesus government is righteous.
5. Jesus was perfect in his humanity.
6. Jesus made himself subject unto the Father in his humanity.
7. Jesus has been rewarded. (anointed)
8. Jesus has been made preeminent. (above His fellows)