

DAY 7: THE SUPERIORITY OF CHRIST

Hebrews 1:1–2:9

SUPERIOR TO ANGELS Using seven quotations from the Old Testament, five of them from the book of Psalms, the author argues that Christ is superior to angels. These show that God has never spoken to an angel in the way He addresses Christ. The first quotation, from Psalm 2:7, gives the term “*my Son*” with a significance that surpasses possible fulfillment by any mere human or angel. Jesus Christ is *Son* in a way that no other being is. No angel inherits the name “*Son*” (1:4). Because He is God, only the Son assumes a position of authority at the throne of God.

The second quotation echoes the Lord’s promise to David and His words to Jesus at His baptism and the Transfiguration. Also included is the message of an angel to Mary announcing the impending birth of Jesus, “*He ... will be called the Son of the Most High*” (Luke 1:32-33).

The third quotation comes from the song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32), which was often used in temple services. Hebrews 1:6 speaks of Christ as one whom angels worship. “*Firstborn*,” a title for Jesus, means *prior* and *unique*. Jesus is the pre-existing, eternal Son. The song of Moses originally addressed worship to *Yahweh*. Having established Jesus’ deity, the author includes the Son in worship that belongs to the Father.

The next quotation, from Psalm 104:4, can be interpreted to mean that wind and fire do God’s bidding. Another view suggests that His angels, who are His servants, are as swift as the wind and as powerful as flames of fire. This view places angels above humans, but far below the place of the Son.

Quoting Psalm 45:6-7, the author stresses the Messiah’s sovereign and eternal nature. Unlike earthly kings ruling kingdoms that rise only to fall, God’s Anointed One is the ruler of a kingdom that has no end. Then the following thought is added: “*Uprightness is the scepter of Your kingdom*” (1:8). This is no ordinary kingdom, it is one ruled by righteousness: “*You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness*” (1:9). Because love governs over all, the subjects of such a kingdom need never fear the corruption of power and authority.

Because Christ is this king, God has anointed Him with the “*oil of gladness*” and placed Him above His companions. His anointing does not refer to any particular time, because Jesus Christ is the Anointed One from eternity to eternity. Probably “*your companions*” refers to the “*many sons*” (2:10), whom the firstborn Son calls His “*brothers*” (2:11). They are also the saints, the followers of Jesus. He is the heir, and they are His joint heirs.

THINK ABOUT how Psalm 45:6-7 links Christ’s love for righteousness with His joy (“*gladness*”). Our joy comes from Him. He has promised that those who obey Him will remain in His love. As a result, His joy is in us and is complete (John 15:10-11). This is different from happiness that arises from circumstances. This joy is rooted in our unchanging Lord and His righteousness, while circumstances are subject to change. As our longing for Jesus and His righteousness increases, our sinful desires lessen and the result is joy!

In the sixth quote, the writer applies the reference to God from Psalm 102:25-27 to Christ. What is true of one is true of the other. Verse 10 reminds us that God’s Son was active in Creation and pre-existed as God the Son. What was created can, like a garment, be changed or discarded, but God does not change; He remains forever. The present tense in verse 11 (“*You remain*”) contrasts the permanence of the Son with the passing nature of created things.

The final quotation, from Psalm 110:1, echoes the description of the Son being seated at God’s right hand. Jesus applied those words to Himself at His trial. God will make the Messiah’s enemies powerless. No angel sits in a place of victory and honor at God’s right hand.



Angels serve not only God, but also “*those who are to inherit salvation*” (1:14).

Salvation includes all we have already received in Christ as well as final deliverance when Christ returns. The angels serve Christ's saints, but only the Son can save. The same question begins and ends this series of quotes, bringing us full circle to the answer: God did not speak to any angel in the way He addresses His Son.

A WARNING *Therefore* connects the facts about Christ's greatness to a warning in chapter 2: We are responsible to pay attention to so great a message of salvation. The writer acknowledges that in every person is a tendency to wander. He warns Christians who have heard and accepted the gospel to hold fast to their faith. Like a boat drifting toward rapids, the Christians addressed here were at a danger point. They must resist an enemy ready to distract them from true faith. Jesus suffered and died to become "*the founder of ... salvation*" (2:10). The gift is precious and complete. If we neglect it, we shall not escape the consequence.

The message spoken by angels was first spoken by God and then given to Moses. The New Testament confirms the Jewish tradition of angels mediating the Law. The author wants to show that what came through angels could not compare in value with what came through the Son. The Law, although inferior to the gospel of Jesus, represented a binding agreement between God and His people.

The author proclaims the value of their great salvation so his readers do not let faith slip away. The prophets had preached this salvation, but only in Christ did the promise become the reality. Jesus suffered and died to become "*the founder of ... salvation*" (2:10). The gift is precious and complete.

THINK ABOUT how Hebrews warns against gradual drifting from the life of faith, not against deliberate sin. C.S. Lewis has pointed out that small sins can separate us from God just as well as big sins. Drifting away from God requires only one thing: passive disregard of our great salvation.

CHRIST'S HUMILIATION AND EXALTATION The writer uses Psalm 8:4-6 to show the honor God has given people in the plan of creation. He has made humans a little lower than the angels, yet has given mankind power and control over the earth (Genesis 1:26). But the Fall changed Adam's dominion over creation.

Christ, as the second Adam, fulfilled the psalm's prophetic message by being "*made ... lower than the angels*" (2:7). Christ humbled Himself when He came to earth as a man. This is called the Incarnation. Only in this way could He represent us before the Father. Grace required that Christ suffer and die. Yet, He who was humbled has been received into heaven, crowned with glory and honor. God decreed that—after His work as a servant—all would be subject to Him.

PERSONALIZE this lesson. To accomplish salvation, the Son of God became, for a little while, lower than the angels. He is now crowned with glory and honor because He suffered death for everyone. Revering angels, who are God's servants, dishonors the Son. He became a man, not an angel. He shares our humanity and elevates our value. We must reject any teaching that would place angels or any other created beings as mediators between God and us. "*For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all*" (1 Timothy 2:5-6). He alone is worthy of worship.

REVIEW: THE SUPERIORITY OF CHRIST

15. What specific point from this week's lesson has helped you most? Why?