

Christ is Superior to the Angels
Hebrews 1:6-7
Part Two

We are back to our study of Hebrews, which was written by an unknown author to a group of Hebrew Christians living in Rome around 67-69 AD in order to strengthen their faith, in the midst of a great persecution, so that they in the midst of that persecution, would not be tempted to turn from Christ back to Judaism.

So how did this author seek to strengthen the faith of these struggling Hebrew Christians? He sought to strengthen their faith by showing them throughout this letter that Christ was superior to anything that they might have left behind in Judaism. In other words, the author wanted his readers to see that Christ was transcendent over everything including what they had left behind, for if they were able to see this, then they would be protected from returning back to Judaism in spite of the intense persecution that they were facing as the followers of Christ.

So how did the author see Christ as superior? First of all, as we have already seen the author of the Book of Hebrews saw Christ as superior to the Old Testament prophets in Hebrew 1:1-4.

So how else did the author of Hebrews see Christ as superior? The author of Hebrews saw Christ as superior to the angels in Hebrews 1:5-2:18. This rather lengthy section of Scripture has been regarded as a single unit consisting of four major paragraphs: **Hebrews 1:5-14; 2:1-4; 2:5-9** and **2:10-18.**

This morning we will continue to consider the first of those paragraphs in which the author of Hebrews explained Christ's superiority to the angels in Hebrews 1:5-14. And it is this explanation of Christ's superiority to angels in **Hebrews 1:5-14** that we began to examine last week and that we will continue to examine this week; but before we begin let me once again read these verses for you.

“For to which of the angels did He ever say, ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You?’ And again, ‘I will be a Father to Him and He shall be a Son to Me’? (6) And when He again brings the firstborn into the

world, He says, ‘And let all the angels of God worship Him.’ (7) And of the angels He says, ‘Who makes His angels winds, and His ministers a flame of fire.’ (8) But of the Son He says, ‘Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the righteous scepter is the scepter of His kingdom. (9) You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness above Your companions.’ (10) And, ‘You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Your hands; (11) they will perish, but You remain; and they all will become old like a garment, (12) and like a mantle You will roll them up; like a garment they will also be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will not come to an end.’ (13) But to which of the angels has He ever said, ‘Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet’? (14) Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?”

So did the author of Hebrews, within these verses, explain to his readers the superiority of Christ to the angels? Yes! This is exactly what he did.

So why would the author at this point in his letter be led by the Spirit to do this? The author, in **Hebrews 1:1-4**, had already very powerfully put forward his case for Christ’s superiority to the prophets. But there was still another group that was even far more highly esteemed by the Jewish people than even their prophets. And who was that group? The angels!

And why did the Jewish people highly esteem the angels, far more highly than even their own prophets? It was because they not only considered the angels to be the highest and most exalted of all of God’s created beings, but they also believed that the angels, under God’s direction, were performing incredibly important tasks, the most important of all, from the Jewish perspective, being the transmission and the mediation of the Mosaic Law.

So hopefully we now understand why the author, after he had powerfully put forward his case for Christ’s superiority to the prophets, was then led by the Spirit to put forward a similar but even a more lengthy case for the superiority Christ to the angels beginning with an explanation of that superiority in **Hebrews 1:5-14**.

So, from what we learned last week, how did the author begin his explanation of Christ's superiority over the angels? The author of Hebrews, quoting the Old Testament, explained that Christ alone should be considered uniquely God's Son and thus superior to all others including the angels (Hebrews 1:5).

So now let us read **Hebrews 1:5** and see if this is not so. **“For to which of the angels did He ever say, ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You?’ And again, ‘I will be a Father to Him and He shall be a Son to Me’?”**

So did the author begin his explanation of Christ's superiority by establishing from the Old Testament that Christ alone should be considered uniquely God's Son and thus superior to all others including angels? Yes! This is exactly what he did.

But the author is not done in explaining to his Jewish readers why Christ is superior to the angels. So how did the author further add to his explanation? The author of Hebrews, quoting the Old Testament, explained that because Christ was being worshipped and served by angels that He should be considered superior to all others including the angels (Hebrews 1:6-7).

So now let me read for you **Hebrews 1:6-7** and see it if this so. **“And when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says, ‘And let all the angels of God worship Him.’ (7) And of the angels He says, ‘Who makes His angels winds, and His ministers a flame of fire.’”** So did the author of Hebrews in these verses quote two Old Testament passages to explain that because Christ was being worshipped and served by angels that Christ should be considered superior to all others, including angels? I believe he did and hopefully this will become very clear to us as we now take a closer look at these verses.

And what is my hope for this message as we look at these verses more closely? My hope is that as we consider how the angels exist to worship and serve Christ, that we also as the followers of Christ would find ourselves challenged to live our lives in the same way, so that not only will God be glorified but also we will be blessed with the kind abundance that Christ has promised to those, who by faith and with sincerity of heart, follow Him. So this is my hope for this message.

So now let us begin to look at these two verses more carefully and we will begin with **verse 6**. So how does **verse 6** begin as translated by NAS? It begins, “**And when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says.**”

So is this translation a good translation? No, it is not a particularly good translation. The words “**and when He again brings the firstborn into the world**” are misleading and gives the impression that what the author is about to quote from the Old Testament will take place at the Second Advent of Christ, or in other words when God “again” brings His firstborn into the world, but this, as we will see, would not be correct.

So where can we find a better translation of this particular introductory phrase? A better translation of the introductory phrase in Hebrews 1:6 can be found in the ESV, “And again, when He brings the firstborn into the world, He says.” This is a better translation than the NAS translation.

This is a better translation for this translation correctly links the word “**again**” not to the word “**brings**” but rather to the word “**says,**” or in other words the author is telling his readers that just as God had prophetically spoken about the coming Christ in the two Old Testament verses quoted in **Hebrews 1:5**, the readers will “**again**” see God prophetically speaking about the coming Christ in the two Old Testament verses the author is about to quote in **verse 6**.

And when would these readers have expected these prophetic statements to be fulfilled according to the **ESV** translation of this introductory phrase? The readers should have expected to see these prophetic statements fulfilled according to the **ESV** translation “**when He [or in other words God] brings the firstborn into the world.**”

So what time period would that be? The words “when He brings the firstborn into the world” as found in the ESV should be understood as referring to the time period of Christ’s resurrection and subsequent exaltation since this would be consistent with the time frame of the fulfillment of God’s prophetic statements in the two Old Testament passages that the author quoted in **verse 5**, or in other words since this would be consistent with the time frame of the fulfillment of God’s prophetic

statements in **Psalm 2:7** and **2 Samuel 7:14** as quoted by the author in **verse 5** as we concluded last week.

And why would this be important to understand? This is important to understand because the author is not trying to communicate to his readers that one day at the Second Advent that God will one day exhort the angels to worship and serve Christ, but rather he is trying to communicate to His readers that God in fact has already done this very thing at the time of His resurrection and exaltation and was even then, at the writing of this letter and even now, being worshipped and served by angels, not in the world as we now know it in terms of “terra firma” but in terms of the heavenly realm, which I believe is reinforced in **Hebrews 2:5** where we find the author of Hebrews using the same word for “**world**” that he uses here in **Hebrews 1:6** to clearly refer to the heavenly realm. This is the point the author is seeking to make for His readers as he continued to try and establish the superiority of Christ to the angels.

So, what Old Testament verse did the author use to show that at the time of Christ’s resurrection and exaltation that it was God’s will that the angels would worship Christ? The author quoted the Greek translation of **Psalm 97:7** to show that at the time of Christ’s resurrection and exaltation that God called all the angels to worship Christ. Let me now read for you that portion of **verse 6** and see if this is not so. “**And when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says, ‘And let all the angels of God worship Him.’**” Again this quotation is not the Hebrew original but rather it is the Greek translation of the Hebrew text. Nevertheless, it expresses the divine mind regarding Christ, and the Holy Spirit had the writer incorporate it into this inspired text in **Hebrews 1:6**.

So, what Old Testament verse did the author use to show that at the time of Christ’s resurrection and exaltation that it was God’s will that the angels would serve Christ?

The author quoted **Psalm 104:4** to show that the angels were not only to be the worshippers of Christ but also the servants of Christ.

May God give us the grace to live our lives to worship and serve Christ, just as the angels live their lives to worship and serve Christ.