

# High Above the Angels

Hebrews 1:5-14

29 May 2022

Halifax, 10:30 AM

## Introduction:

There are many voices that call to you to listen to them to show you the way.

- Which one should you listen to?
  - Some people listen to their own feelings, but that can certainly go wrong.
  - Some listen to their own reason, but we are so limited in our understanding that we can't even figure out the most basic questions such as why we are here.
  - Some listen the experts—psychologists, but they are always changing; or great philosophers, but their systems of thought unravel within a generation or two.
  - Many just drift along in an aimless way, without direction, going nowhere.

But last week we saw how the epistle to the Hebrews opens:

- The very first verse says:
  - Heb 1:1-2: **“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, <sup>2</sup> has in these last days spoken to us by His Son.”**

This is wonderful.

- If God has spoken, surely, we ought to listen to Him.
  - He told us by prophets that the whole human race is ruined by sin, estranged from Him.
  - Yet, He also promised to those who heard that He would bring forth a Son to save us.

You can see that there are two ways that He is said to have spoken that are contrasted.

- First by prophets, who spoke of the Son that would come.
- Then there was the Son who was the fulfilment of all that God had promised.

But many of the Jews did not recognise Jesus to be that.

- In Hebrews 1:1-4, which we looked at last week, it is asserted that that is what He is.
- In Hebrews 1:5-14, the author gives multiple examples to show that Jesus fulfilled what the prophets had said about the promised Son.
  - In particular, it shows that He was the very Son of God born in human flesh, who restores us to God.
  - It demonstrates what verse 4 asserts, that the Son is superior as God's messengers, the angels, who sometimes helped to deliver the message in the times of the prophets.

But why is there all of this comparison with angels?

- Hebrews compares Him to angels because some of the Jews were not convinced that Jesus was the one through whom God has finally and conclusively spoken.
- They looked back at how God had spoken in the past by angels.
  - On Mount Sinai, there were angels bringing thunder and lightning.
  - They gave the people bread from heaven in the wilderness.
  - They caused the ground to open up and swallow Dathan and Abiram when they rebelled.
  - They had seen all sorts of glorious things, and they did not see that sort of thing with Jesus... sure He healed some people, but there weren't these great cosmic signs from heaven like when God had used angels to deliver His message to them.

- That speaking seemed to be greater than the speaking that Jesus had done.
  - When He spoke, it was nothing like it was when the angels delivered the message.
  - No one dared to oppose them, but Jesus was delivered up and crucified.

So after Hebrews asserts to the Hebrews that Jesus is God's ultimate revelation of salvation,

- it tells us what it is that makes Jesus so superior to all the angels.

Let me read this passage to you now. Hebrews 1:5-14:

- Give careful attention because this is the Word of God...

**Hebrews 1:5-14: For to which of the angels did He ever say: "You are My Son, today I have begotten You"? And again: "I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son"? <sup>6</sup> But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: "Let all the angels of God worship Him." <sup>7</sup> And of the angels He says: "Who makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire." <sup>8</sup> But to the Son *He says*: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom. <sup>9</sup> You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of**

**gladness more than Your companions." <sup>10</sup> And: "You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. <sup>11</sup> They will perish, but You remain; and they will all grow old like a garment; <sup>12</sup> like a cloak You will fold them up, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will not fail." <sup>13</sup> But to which of the angels has He ever said: "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool"? <sup>14</sup> Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?**

May the Lord add His blessing to the reading of His holy word.

Do you see?

- Jesus became everything that God wanted man to be.
- He inherited the glory that God had promised to man in the beginning.

### **I. The first thing we see is that though Jesus was a man, He was still God's Son.**

A. It was to Him alone that God said, "You are my Son, this day I have begotten you."

1. Verse 5 says: **For to which of the angels did He ever say: "You are My Son, today I have begotten You"?**

- And of course the answer is, "To none of them."
  - Sure, they are sometimes called the sons of God, just as we are, but God never singled any of them out and said, "You are My Son."
  - Jesus is God's only begotten Son—a Son that is eternally begotten of Him so that there was never a time when the Son was not.
    - He was not created or made to be God's Son.
      - That is simply what He is and what He always was and always will be.

2. This is quoted from Psalm 2 where we are told of how the nations band together to oppose God's Son.

- It's not speaking only of extremely wicked rulers, but also of nice ones that care and want to help people—yet within them is a rebellion against God.

- We all have this bent and twisted nature that wants to be free to do our own thing, and we agree together about things that oppose Him... things that we want to do.
  - You all know about this twisted sinful nature that is in you.
3. But in Psalm 2, the Lord said that He was going to establish His Son as King in the world, and that when He does, He will declare of Him,
- Ps 2:7, **“You are my Son, today I have begotten You.”**
  - There is some debate about when God did that, but I think the best explanation is that it does not speak about God constituting Him as His Son, but rather about God declaring Him to be His Son after He became man.
  - We see in the gospels that God declared that He would be the Son of God when the angel spoke to Mary, and then at His baptism and His transfiguration He declared it, but it seems that He made this declaration official when He raised Him from the dead.
    - In Romans 1:3-4, it says: **“concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, *and* declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”**
    - And in Acts 13:33, it says: **“God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm: ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You.’ ”**
- But there is more about Jesus uniquely being the Son of God.
- B. Hebrews 1:5 also asks when it was ever said to an angel, **“I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son.”**
1. That is a quote from the passage we read in 2 Sam 7:14 today.
    - In that passage, God is telling David that He will give him a Son that will sit on his throne and reign forever!
      - David is amazed by this—he says, “You have already done so much for me, but now You are speaking of something that is so much more!”
    - And God says of this Son of David, “I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to me a Son.”
      - This is a promise made to Him when He became a man.
      - God is declaring that He will sustain that relationship with Him as a man where He is a loving Father who gives Him all things and where Jesus is an obedient Son who always pleases Him.
  2. This is very significant.
    - It is telling us that the relationship that Jesus has with the Father will never be disrupted or severed.
    - Though He will come in human flesh, He will continue as the Son in whom the Father delights, in human flesh, and the Father will continue as a loving Father.
    - Do you see?

- Jesus is the man—the only man ever—that was truly acceptable to God on His own account.
  - Men like David or Abraham—or you and me when we are Christians—were and are only accepted through Jesus’ saving work...
    - But He went on as God’s faithful Son and so inherited the glory that God promised to Adam if Adam had been faithful.
    - Jesus inherited God’s glorious kingdom for Himself and for all who come to Him to be saved.
- 3. Though the angels who did not fall did not sin against God,
  - God did not declare to them that “I will be a father to you and you will be a son to me.” He only said that to His Son.
- It is such an amazing thing that even after the eternal Son became also man, as a man, He continued to sustain His relationship to God as His Father.
  - That is what makes Him superior to the angels, and of course to all other men.
  - He remains in personal union with Him as the only begotten Son.
- C. Hebrews 1:6 confirms the superiority of Christ by telling us that even after Jesus comes into the world, the angels are still to worship Him.
  - It says, (Heb 1:6): **But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: “Let all the angels of God worship Him.”**
    1. This is a quote from Psalm 97—it actually says, “let all the gods worship Him,” but the word gods (Elohim) is often used of angels and in the context, it refers to the angels.
      - That’s why the author of Hebrews interprets it this way—the Jews recognise it as a reference to angels too, and translated it that way in the Greek version of the Old Testament.
    2. The idea here is that when the firstborn comes into the world to save His people, God calls the angels to keep on worshipping Him.
      - And they did.
      - We can see example after example of the angels worshipping Him as “the Lion of the tribe of Judah” and as “the Lamb that was slain” in the book of Revelation.
    3. This proves that He is greater—much greater—than the angels.
      - No angel was to worship another angel or a man.
        - When John saw a glorious angel in Revelation and fell down to worship, that angel said,
          - **Rev. 22:9: “See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.”**

TRANS> So you see then, that Jesus is God’s one and only begotten Son—a Son that was begotten, not made—a Son who was always with the Father and who came here.

- He became man, but His human nature was united to the same person who was always divine.

- Jesus was truly God in human flesh, the one and only Son of the Father who always will be God's Son and who was to be worshipped by the angels.
- We are to hear the message God delivered by the angels, but above all we are to see the message God revealed in His Son.
  - It is in Him that the promise of a Son to save us is perfectly fulfilled.

## II. His uniqueness is also shown in that the Son of God reigns in human flesh.

A. In contrast to the angels, He is superior because He reigns.

1. The angels are endowed with glorious powers... to carry out God's will.
  - Verse 7 explains how God speaks of them: **And of the angels He says: "Who makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire."**
    - They can be like wind and fire and put terror in men, but they do not reign like the Son does—they go where God sends them.
2. But the Son is the one who actually reigns.
  - Heb 1:8-9 quotes from Psalm 45: **But to the Son *He* says: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom. 9 You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions."**
  - The one who reigns decides what is to be done; the ones who serve do what they are told.
    - The angels may have grand and glorious tasks, but they are inferior to the Son who reigns.
  - You see that here again, He is said to be God who is reigning even when He is in the form of man—seated, as it were, on the throne of David.

B. These verses show us that God's Son in human flesh reigns in a way that pleases God.

1. First, that He reigns eternally.
  - This is found in the words, **"Your throne, O God, is forever and ever."**
  - He brings forever to human dominion—now that He, the Son of God, is personally united to human flesh—because He does not fail.
  - Adam might have reigned forever had he not sinned, but Jesus the Son of God made flesh will reign forever, just as we saw before that God promised to David—that a Son from his body would reign forever...
    - That is because He is the Son of God from heaven.
      - What stability this gives to redeemed men—we have the Son of God reigning on David's throne forever! Our king will never fail.
2. Second, we see here that that He reigns with a sceptre of righteousness.
  - **A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom**
  - With pain, we read the accounts of all other men on the throne when we see their pride, their selfishness, their injustice, their corruption.
    - As John Owen says, "Among the governments of this world, oftentimes the very laws are tyrannical, unjust, and oppressive; and if the laws are good

and equal, yet oftentimes their administration is unjust, partial, and wicked; or when men do abstain from such exorbitancies, yet frequently they do so upon the account of some self-interest and advantage and are rarely constant.”

- But how beautiful is the Son on the throne—
  - All the laws of His gospel are righteous, holy, just, full of benignity and truth. His administrations are full of mercy and grace, equity and purity. He is gentle and peaceable and out for the happiness of His people.
  - What a delight it will be when His kingdom is fully manifested and He puts down all opposition. How glad we will be under His righteous sceptre!
- 3. Third, the Father is pleased with Him because He reigns as the one who truly loves righteousness and hates wickedness.
  - How unique He is in this!
    - In us, there is something that is always attracted to sin, but in Him there is a pure and holy love for righteousness and a hatred for wickedness.
      - He does not have that twisted nature. He is so lovely.
    - He is impeccable—meaning that it is impossible for Him to sin.
      - In this, He is even different than the elect angels who have never sinned. They are capable of sin, but kept by the power of God.
      - He has within Himself a love for righteousness and an aversion for sin.
    - This is not a description of His reign so much as a description of His qualification to reign.
      - David, as a type, was a man after God’s own heart, but here is the One who actually hates wickedness and who invariably loves righteousness.
    - How glad we ought to be to have Him on the throne. What hope it gives us!

C. The Father is certainly delighted with His reign!

  - Verse 9 says, “**Therefore** [because He has such a beautiful reign] **God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions.**
  - This likely refers to His investiture with the office of king after He had finished His work on the cross and been raised from the dead.
    - It was then that He was given the name above every name and given His everlasting inheritance.
    - It was then that He was, as Peter said, made Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36) and given supreme dominion.
  - The oil with which He was anointed is called the oil of gladness because His reign makes Him glad and because it makes His subjects glad.
    - He brings true happiness and prosperity—peace and wholeness to His people.
    - He does this more than any other king—He is anointed with oil of gladness more than His companions.

- How pleased the Father is with Him. Here He is called His God because though the Son is God, He is God in human flesh—elevating us to the same beauty and perfection as God the Son.

TRANS> Now let's move to the third thing that makes Him so much better than the angels.

### III. See how, as God made man, He is given absolute authority.

A. It actually must be so, for as God, He does not take authority, He has authority.

1. First, we are told that He made everything.
  - Verse 10 says: **And: "You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands."**
  - Everything has its being from this one who is now our flesh, having become part of His creation.
    - He does not take authority, but as the one who made it all, He owns it all.
    - It is all the work of His hands.
    - Therefore it is His to do whatever He wants with—though He will never do anything unjust or unholy.
2. Second, we are told that He will change everything.
  - It seems to speak of purification or redemption of the whole creation.
    - Verse 11 & 12 says of things created: **"They will perish, but You remain; and they will all grow old like a garment; <sup>12</sup> like a cloak You will fold them up, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will not fail."**
  - You see that He is the active agent here—He is the one that will roll up the creation that was corrupted because of man's sin.
    - He turned the creation against us so that we could not control it—so that though we were made of the dust of the ground to rule on earth, we return to the dust and are swallowed up by the earth.
  - But He is going to change on that.
    - He is going to purify the whole creation and bring it into to conformity with His gracious reign over His redeemed people—He will transform it into its true glory and beauty. The curse will be no more.
    - Now that He is reigning, we can be sure that He will restore—once He has finished gathering in His saints and then come to cast out Satan and all who are joined with Him without repentance.
3. You see here in these verses that He is shown to be the one who will remain without alteration.
  - He needs no change because He is already perfected, and He will bring everything else to conform to Him—all of His elect people, and, as we have just seen, the creation itself.
  - Yes, this world will be worn out, but He will never be worn out and He will restore it all again.

- That is our hope for a new heavens and a new earth where righteousness will remain.
- Yes, He reigns because as God the Son, He cannot cease to reign—it is who He is...
- B. But we also see that God gives Him, as the Son made man, all authority.
1. This is shown as the last great contrast between Him and the angels:
    - **v. 13-14: But to which of the angels has He ever said: “Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool”?** <sup>14</sup> **Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?**
    - This is quoted from Psalm 110, a Psalm that is quoted of Jesus over and over in the New Testament because it shows His reign as Messiah—
  2. This is God the Father’s call for Him, as God made man, to sit on His eternal throne.
    - This is not an invitation to sit in a lesser seat beside Him, but a call to join Him on the throne until all opposition to Him is brought to an end.
      - His reign is so pleasing to the Father that He wants His Son’s reign to be absolute.
  3. Here you see the Son’s uniqueness again.
    - It would certainly not be appropriate to give this kind of absolute authority to an angel, but it is appropriate to give it to Jesus the Son of God.
    - The angels have the task of ministering to believers, but Jesus is the One whose task it was to redeem a people for Himself and then to judge us and set up His eternal kingdom of righteousness and glory.
      - He is appointed to reign until all is complete.

**Conclusion:** So you see that though the angels delivered God’s message of old in glorious ways, the Son is superior to them all.

- He is the very embodiment of the message, the One who actually brings salvation and complete restoration to all things.
  - Come to Him if you would be reconciled to harmony with God, with man, and with all creation.
  - Ignore Him, and you will perish with the devil and his angels.