

“Understanding Good, Better, & Best”

Hebrews 1:1-14

May 20, 2018

INTRO: **VIDEO – “Is He Worthy?”** by Andrew Peterson

- **That song is the perfect intro to our day...**
 - Do YOU think Jesus is worthy?
 - Do you REALLY believe Jesus is worthy?
 - Many lips say yes, while their lives say no...
 - Hebrews is an exhorting declaration of YES!

CONTEXT:

- 2018 = the year of **REVERENCE**
- **Series:** *Hebrews, Leviticus, Hebrews, Amos*
- *Leviticus:* a love letter to restore the rebellious...
- *Hebrews* thus far
 - **Premise:** 1:1-3
 - **Purpose:** 13:22
 - **Pillars:** 5 Warnings
 - **Preview:** *Understanding Good, Better & Best*

We need to know & understand the difference between good, better, & best...

Why?

Because there are times when “good” becomes the ENEMY of “best.”

- While “bad” is always at odds with “best,” sometimes “good” & “better” are arch enemies #1&2!

Here are some examples:

- When trophies take the place of treasures
- When surface pleasantries hide deeper hypocrisies...
- When saying yes to “gathering” is used as an excuse for saying no to “GOing”
- When beautiful-singing hides a lack of genuine-worshipping
- When a polished-performance is substituted for purposeful-passion
- When religious rituals are placed above redemptive relationships
- When following-family is elevated above faithful-following (Luke 14)
- When the hollow-shadow of God is sought over the holy-substance of God.
- When your fellowship defines your worship...

- When distracting, “good” works interfere with doing GOD’s work!
 - Hence the loving warnings from God, His Word, & His people...
 - “If you love Me you WILL obey my commands...” – Jesus (John 14:15)
 - “Pick up your cross daily and FOLLOW ME...” – Jesus
 - “Seek first the kingdom of God...” – Jesus
 - “The one who loses his/her life for My sake finds it, but...” – Jesus
- When rationalized-excuses undermine redemptive-examples...
- Go back to the “Rich Young Ruler” encounter...
- Go back to the “Hidden Treasure” parable!

T/S: Let me give you an Bible Project summary to begin.

VIDEO: *The Bible Project – Hebrews*

T/S: Take a closer comparative awe-inspiring look at Christ!

Keep in mind that the book of Hebrews is written to Jewish people, primarily to Jewish believers but also to Jewish unbelievers. Both groups are pressed with the truth that the New Covenant is better than the Old—that Jesus Christ is the better Priest, and the better Mediator, and that He is the final Priest and the final Sacrifice at the same time. Throughout the book we have comparisons between the New Covenant and the Old Covenant & between Jesus Christ & everyone else, to show that Jesus is superior in every way. – J.Mac

BIG IDEA: Jesus the **Messiah** is always the best **Man, Messenger & Message of God!**

PREVIEW:

1. Jesus is always the best Man-of-God
2. Jesus is always the best Messenger-of-God
3. Jesus is always the best Message-of God

1. He's always the BEST Man of God

¹ *Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets,* ² *but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son,*

- a. See the “good,” the “better” & the “best”

- b. Servants are “good” – sons are better – Son is best!
 - c. Old messages good – new are better... gospel = best
 - d. To our fathers by the prophets = good
 - e. To us thru the Son = better
 - f. To ALL of us thru the Son = BEST
-

g. **See 7 elevations of BEST above better...**

(7 is a biblical “shadow” that represents completeness/completion)

- (1) *whom He appointed the Heir of all things,*
- (2) *through whom also He created the world.*
- (3) *He is the radiance of the glory of God*
and
- (4) *the exact imprint of His (God's) nature,*
and
- (5) *He upholds the universe by the word of his power.*

After

- (6) *making purification for sins,*
 - (7) *He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on High,⁴ having become (a.k.a. “BEING”) as much superior...*
-

➤ **Take a closer look at the good, better, & best:**

- i. **Heir** (of ALL things)
 - 1. He is King
 - 2. We are children & co-heirs
 - 3. Angels = good; kids = better; King = best!

- ii. **Creator** (of the cosmos)
 - 1. He is Creator
 - 2. We are created (and corrupted)
- iii. **Radiance** (of the glory of God)
 - 1. Christ is the radiance
 - 2. Christians are the reflection
- iv. **Exact Imprint** (of God's nature)
 - 1. He is God's imprint ON us and IN us...
 - 2. We live with His indwelling IN us & thru us
- v. **Upholder/Sustainer** (of the universe/cosmos)
 - 1. He is the Upholding-Sustainer
 - 2. We are the upheld & the sustained
- vi. **Purifier/Redeemer** (of sins)
 - 1. He is the Savior
 - 2. We are the sinners
- vii. **Divine-Royalty** (sitting down... Majesty on high)
 - 1. He is the final-Finisher
 - 2. We are the faithfully-refined

T/S: Let us NEVER forget that Jesus is the BEST Man & Messenger of God AND we can trust Him with ALL!

VIDEO – “Come Ye Sinners”

(I was introduced to this hymn at T4G18)

2. He's always the BEST Messenger of God

a. Take a closer comparative look at “good” angels...

b. 7 O.T. quotes to drive home His 5 elevations:

- | | | |
|---------------|---------|---------------------------|
| i. TITLE | v.4-5 | Son vs. servant |
| ii. WORSHIP | v.6 | Worshipped vs. worshipper |
| iii. NATURE | v.7-9 | Divine vs. disciple |
| iv. EXISTENCE | v.10-12 | Creator vs. created |
| v. DESTINY | v.13-14 | Served vs. server |

⁴ *having become / BE-ing / as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.*

⁵ *For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son, (Qt. Psalm 2) today I have begotten you”? Or again, “I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son”? (Qt. 2 Sam. 7:14)*

*** Jesus has Position, Nature, Authority of Son vs servant:

~ **Messiah vs Messenger**
~ **Almighty vs Angelic**

⁶ *And again, when he brings the firstborn (“firstborn = TITLE vs. timing) into the world, he says, “Let all God’s angels worship him.” (Qt. Ps. 97:7 or Deut. 32:43)*

⁷ *Of the angels he says, “He makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire.” (Qt. Psalm 104:4)*

⁸ *But of the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom.*
⁹ *You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.”* (Psalm 45:6-7)

*** God the Father calls Jesus GOD ***

*** Other verses where Jesus is called God:

- ~ John 1:1.... *“In the beginning... the Word was God”*
- ~ John 1:18
- ~ Titus 2:13
- ~ Romans 9:5
- ~ 2 Peter 1:1
- ~ 1 Cor 12:4-6

¹⁰ *And, “You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands; ¹¹ they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment, ¹² like a robe you will roll them up, like a garment they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will have no end./you will live forever & ever”* (Ps 102:25-27)

¹³ *And to which of the angels has he ever said, “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet”? (Qt. Psalm 110:1... & cf. Hebrews 1:1-3)*

¹⁴ *Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?*

T/S: Lastly... to show the purpose of these 7 O.T. quotes, let me make one last point by sharing next week's text (and the very next sentence in the Bible...)

3. He's always the BEST Message of God (see Heb. 2:1)

- a. Hebrews 2:1 (simply to prove the point...)

Therefore, we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.

- b. I want to put this verse into application...

- 1. I'm going to look back & forward now...

VIDEO: C.B. Charles Jr.

Jesus is the BEST Messenger & Message of the Gospel!

We too are to remember our purpose & privilege...
to **BE walking, working, worshipping-warnings**
as we, like Christ, champion the message of the cross!

- c. This is where we will leave off for **next week...**
 - i. **Let's PRAY!**
 - ii. Take this last song with you into your week...
Your walk... Your work... Your WORSHIP!

(In Hebrews ch.1 **Jesus is called Son, LORD, & God!**)

VIDEO – “There Is A Fountain Filled With Blood”

Jesus Christ Superior to Angels ([Hebrews 1:4-14](#))

Having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they. For to which of the angels did He ever say, "Thou art My Son, today I have begotten Thee"? And again, "I will be a Father to Him, and He shall be a Son to Me"? And when He again brings the first-born into the world, He says, "And let all the angels of God worship Him." And of the angels He says, "Who makes His angels winds, and His ministers a flame of fire." But of the Son He says, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the righteous scepter is the scepter of His kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy companions." And, "Thou, LORD, in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Thy hands; they will perish, but Thou remainest; and they all will become old as a garment, and as a mantle Thou wilt roll them up; as a garment they will also be changed. But Thou art the same, and Thy years will not come to an end." But to which of the angels has He ever said, "Sit at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet"? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation? ([1:4-14](#))

In this chapter we are going to be dealing with meat as opposed to milk. I cannot remember a passage on which I have spent more time. To some extent, it is like an iceberg. You can see the top clearly enough, but it may not appear too impressive or meaningful. We will be looking below the surface of this passage into its deep truths. In that sense, [verses 4](#) through [14](#) are not easy to understand. If, even in a small measure, I can help make these truths more understandable, I have succeeded in what I asked God to help me do.

Keep in mind that the book of Hebrews is written to Jewish people, primarily to Jewish believers but also to Jewish unbelievers. Both groups are pressed with the truth that the New Covenant is better than the Old—that Jesus Christ is the better Priest, and the better Mediator, and that He is the final Priest and the final Sacrifice at the same time. Throughout the book we have comparisons between the New Covenant and the Old Covenant and between Jesus Christ and everyone else, to show that Jesus is superior in every way.

In the first three verses Jesus is shown as superior to everything and everyone. After unfolding all of the human "everyones" Christ is superior to, the Holy Spirit teaches us that Jesus Christ is also superior to angels.

Man is a wonderful and amazing creation—certainly higher than the plants and the animals, even the most complex animals. He is higher than any other material creation. But there are created beings even higher than man—the angels. [Hebrews 2:9](#) tells us that when

Jesus became a man He was "made for a little while lower than the angels." After the fall of the rebellious angels under Lucifer the angels remaining in heaven were no longer subject to sin. They are holy, powerful, and wise. They do not have the infirmities that men have. They are specially created spirit beings, made by God before He made man. They were, in fact, watching in the heavens when God created the world. They were of a higher order than man, at least higher than fallen man.

The Bible speaks a great deal of angels. There are 108 direct references to angels in the Old Testament and 165 in the New. The primary purpose of their creation was to render special worship and service to God.

What Angels Are and Do

Angels are spirit beings and do not have flesh and bones. But they do have bodies. Whatever heavenly form angels have, they are capable of appearing in human form. In fact, in Hebrews 13:2 we are warned to be careful how we treat strangers, since we might be entertaining "angels without knowing it."

Angels may also appear in other forms. Speaking of an angel at Christ's resurrection, Matthew reports that "his appearance was like lightning, and his garment as white as snow; and the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men" (Matt. 28:3-4). This angel appeared in dazzling, brilliant glory.

Angels are highly intelligent and have emotions. They rejoice, for example, when a sinner is saved (Luke 15:10). Angels can speak to men, as recorded many places in Scripture. The apostle Paul says, "Though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you" (Gal. 1:8).

Angels do not marry and are unable to procreate (Matt. 22:28-30). In light of Colossians 1:16-17, it seems that they all were created simultaneously. **The Bible makes no mention of any angels being added to those of the original creation. God made them all at once, each with a unique identity.**

Angels are not subject to death. Scripture nowhere indicates that they die or can be annihilated. **A third of them fell (Rev. 12:4), but they still exist as demonic spirit beings.** Each is a direct, permanent creation of God and stands in personal relationship to his Creator. Their number, therefore, neither increases by procreation or by additional creation nor decreases by death or by annihilation.

Angels were all created before man, and are therefore countless ages older than men and evidently number in the trillions. **Even after hosts of them fell with Satan, numberless holy angels were left.** In his vision of the Ancient of Days, Daniel saw "thousands upon thousands" attending Him and "myriads upon myriads" standing before Him (Dan. 7:10). In his vision from Patmos, John also speaks of a vast heavenly multitude that included angels. "And the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands" (Rev. 5:11).

According to Mark 13:32 and Jude 6 the unfallen angels live in all of the heavens. The heaven where God resides in a special way is called the third heaven; the second heaven is the spatial, infinite heaven; and the first heaven is around the earth. Today we hear many theories and fanciful stories about extraterrestrial life. Though they are not of the kinds portrayed on TV and in the movies, special beings do indeed inhabit other parts of the universe. They are angels.

Angels are highly organized and are divided into ranks, in what is doubtlessly a very complex organization. The various ranks apparently have supervisory responsibilities over thrones, dominions, principalities, powers, authorities, and such. **Among the special classes of angels are cherubim, seraphim, and those described simply as living creatures.**

They are more powerful than men, and men must call on divine power to deal with fallen angels. We are told in Ephesians 6:10, 12 to "be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might....For our struggle is not against flesh and blood...." but against angels—fallen angels.

Angels can move and act with incredible speed. Sometimes they are pictured with wings, suggesting fast travel. **Some angels have names:** Michael, Gabriel, Lucifer. Michael is the head of the armies of heaven and Gabriel is called "the mighty one." Lucifer is the name Satan had before he fell.

Angels minister to God and do His bidding. They are both spectators and participants in His mighty works, both redemptive and judgmental. They ministered to Christ in His humiliation. At the conclusion of His temptation angels came and ministered to Him. They also minister to God's redeemed by watching over the church-assisting God in answering prayer, delivering from danger, giving encouragement, and protecting children. They also minister to the unsaved, by announcing and inflicting judgment.

Jewish Views of Angels

Because of the Talmudic writings and popular rabbinical interpretations and ideas, **the Jewish people at the time this epistle was written had begun to embellish the basic Old Testament teachings about angels. The writer of Hebrews, therefore, was writing not only against the backdrop of true biblical teaching but also against that of common Jewish misconceptions.**

Most Jews believed that angels were very important to the Old Covenant. They esteemed these creatures as the highest beings next to God. They believed that God was surrounded by angels and that angels were the instruments of bringing His word to men and of working out His will in the universe. Angels were thought to be ethereal creatures made of fiery substance like blazing light, who did not eat or drink or procreate.

Many believed that angels acted as God's senate or council and that He did nothing without consulting them—that, for example, the "Us" in "Let Us make man in Our image" ([Gen. 1:26](#)) refers to this angelic council.

Some Jews believed that a group of angels objected to the creation of man and were immediately annihilated and that others objected to the giving of the Law and attacked Moses on his way up Mount Sinai. Many names for angels were coined. The supposed "presence angels," who stayed in the presence of God at all times, were given such names as Raphael, Yuriel, Phanuel, Gabriel, and Michael. El was a name for God and was used as the ending for each of the angels' names.

They believed two hundred angels controlled the movements of the stars and that one very special angel, the calendar angel, controlled the never-ending succession of days, months, and years. A mighty angel took care of the seas, while others superintended the frost, dew, rain, snow, hail, thunder, and lightning. Still others were wardens of hell and torturers of the damned. There were even recording angels who wrote down every word men spoke. There was an angel of death and, on the other hand, a guardian angel for every nation and even every child. Angels were so numerous that one rabbi claimed that every blade of grass had its angel.

Many Jews believed that the Old Covenant was brought to them from God by angels. This, above all else, exalted the angels in the minds of the children of Israel. They believed that angels were the mediators of their covenant with God, that angels continually ministered God's blessings to them.

Stephen's sermon indicting Israel alludes to this basic belief.

You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did. Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become; you who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it. ([Acts 7:51-53](#))

Now look at [Galatians 3:19](#): "*Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels* by the agency of a mediator, until the seed should come to whom the promise had been made."

The Old Covenant was brought to man and maintained by angelic mediation. The Jews knew this, and consequently had the highest regard for angels. Some respected angels to such a degree that they actually worshiped them. Gnosticism (see [chapter 1](#)) involved, among other things, the worship of angels. It even reduced Jesus Christ to an angel. The Colossian church had been flirting with Gnosticism and Paul warned them, "***Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels!***" ([Col. 2:18](#)).

So, to the Jewish mind angels were extremely exalted, immeasurably important. If the writer of Hebrews, therefore, was to persuade his fellow Jews that Christ is the Mediator of a better

covenant than that given through Moses, he would have to show, among other things, that **Christ is better than angels—the thrust of 1:4-14.**

Christ must be shown to be better than the bearers and mediators of the Old Covenant—namely, the angels.

Seven Old Testament passages are used to establish this truth.

These quotations in the book of Hebrews vary slightly from the Old Testament texts from which they are taken. The reason is that, **by the time this letter was written, many Jews used a Greek translation of the Old Testament, called the Septuagint. It is from the Septuagint that the quotations in Hebrews are taken.** One reason we do not believe Paul wrote this epistle is that, in the writings known definitely to be his, he quotes more from the Hebrew text than from the Septuagint.

If the writer had tried to prove from Christian writings that Christ is a better mediator, his Jewish readers would have said, "We don't accept these writings as Scripture, as being from God." So he wisely and deftly replies, in effect, "Open up your own Scriptures and I'll show you from them that Christ is a better mediator and that the New Covenant is better than the Old." His argument is powerful and irresistible.

Before we go further, it would be well to point out that a number of cults and other unorthodox religious organizations deny the deity of Christ on the basis of the King James translation ("being made") in verse 4, taking this to mean that Jesus was created. But the Greek word here is not poieō, "to make or create," but ginomai, "to become"—the meaning which most modern translations make clear. Jesus Christ always existed, but He became better than the angels in His exaltation, implying that at one time He had been lower than the angels—the truth that Hebrews 2:9 makes clear. But the reference in 1:4 is to His incarnation as God's Son. As the Son He became lower than the angels. But because of His faithfulness, obedience, and the wonderful work He accomplished as a Son, He was exalted again above the angels, as He had been before. This time, however, He was exalted as the Son. Christ technically did not become the Son of God until He was incarnated. Christ was not the Son of God in eternity past—He was God as the second Person in the Godhead. He became identified as the Son, and as the Son was exalted above the angels. So He became better than the angels again—though for a while He had been lower. We will go into that truth in detail.

This marvelous section shows that Jesus was better than the angels in five ways—in:

1. His **title**,
2. His **worship**,
3. His **nature**,
4. His **existence, and**
5. His **destiny**.

These are the points of the message the Holy Spirit has given us on the text, **having become as much better than the angels.**

Greater Because of Title

Having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they. For to which of the angels did He ever say, "Thou art My Son, today I have begotten Thee"? And again, "I will be a Father to Him, and He shall be a Son to Me"? ([1:4-5](#))

Jesus Christ is better than angels first of all because He has a better title, **a more excellent name**. To what angel had God ever said, "**Thou art My Son, today I have begotten Thee**"? The answer is none. Of no angel had God said, "**I will be a Father to Him, and He shall be a Son to Me.**" **The angels had always been but ministers and messengers. Only Christ is the Son.** **The angels are created servants.** When the eternal Christ came to earth as a servant—indeed as the supreme Servant—He also assumed the title of God's Son. He has therefore obtained a far more excellent name or title than they.

Our culture does not put much stock in the meaning of names. Except for nicknames, there is usually no intended connection between a child's personality and the meaning of his name (which seldom is even known). But in biblical times God often chose specific names that related to the character or some other aspect of a person's life.

The writer of Hebrews was well aware of this when he asked the rhetorical question, "**To which of the angels did [God] ever say, 'Thou art My Son, today I have begotten Thee'?** [[Ps. 2:7](#)] **"And again, 'I will be a Father to Him, and He shall be a Son to Me'"?** [[2 Sam. 7:14](#)]. The quotation from 2 Samuel refers, of course, to David's greater Son (cf. [Luke 1:32](#); [John 7:42](#); [Rev 5:5](#); and others). **No single angel had ever been called a son of God. As with Christians, angels collectively are called "sons of God" or "children of God," in the sense that God created them and that, in some ways, they reflect Him. But in Scripture no individual angel is called "son of God."** Nor to any angel had God ever said, "**Today I have begotten Thee,**" **because angels were not related to God in any such way.**

This passage presents to its Jewish readers the awesome truth of Christ as God's incarnate Son. As was noted, Son is an incarnational title of Christ. Though His sonship was anticipated in the Old Testament ([Prov. 30:4](#)), **He did not receive the title of Son until He was begotten into time. Prior to time and His incarnation He was eternal God with God. The term Son has only to do with Jesus Christ in His incarnation. It is only an analogy to say that God is Father and Jesus is Son—God's way of helping us understand the essential relationship between the first and second Persons of the Trinity.**

The Bible nowhere speaks of the eternal sonship of Christ. When His eternity is spoken of in [Hebrews 1:8](#), God says to the Son, "**Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever.**" When talking about Christ's eternity, the title "God" is used; only when talking about His incarnation is He called "Son."

That brings up a question. Did not Christ always have a better name? Why does it say, **He has inherited a more excellent name than they?** Did He not always have **a more excellent name?** Yes, but He obtained another one. He was always God, but He became Son. **He had not always had the title of Son. That is His incarnation title. Eternally He is God, but only from His incarnation has He been called Son.**

This is an extremely important point, one requiring much study to understand. The truth is not easy to follow through Scripture. But it is a truth that will come powerfully to our aid when someone comes to our door and says, "Since Jesus is the Son of God, he is obviously eternally inferior to God the Father. Jesus, therefore, is not God; he is less than God. He is only a *son*."

Christ is never called the Son until His incarnation. Before that He was eternal God. It is therefore incorrect to say the Jesus Christ is eternally inferior to God because He goes under the title of Son. He is no "eternal son" always subservient to God, always less than God, always under God. Sonship is an analogy to help us understand Christ's essential relationship and willing submission to the Father for the sake of our redemption. **As already mentioned, the today of verse 5 shows that His sonship began in a point of time, not in eternity, His life as Son began in this world.**

The quotation in [verse 5](#) from [2 Samuel 7:14](#) (I will be a Father to Him, and He shall be a Son to Me) emphasizes the future—since the words quoted were originally written hundreds of years before Jesus' birth. In [John 1:1-3](#), where Christ's eternity and creatorship are being presented, He is not called the Son but the Word. A few verses later we read that "the Word became flesh" ([John 1:14](#)). Christ is not referred to as Son by John until He is made flesh. **So there is no justification for saying that Jesus Christ is eternally subservient to God or less than God.**

The Son through the Virgin Birth

There are two basic events in relation to which Jesus Christ is Son—His virgin birth and His resurrection.

He was not a son until He was born into this world through the virgin birth. In describing one of the predictions of this birth Luke says, "And the angel answered and said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God'" ([Luke 1:35](#)). Even at that time, less than a year before His birth, His sonship was referred to as future. "He *will* be great, and *will* be called the Son of the Most High" ([v. 32](#)). The sonship of Christ is inextricably connected with His incarnation.

And the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, "Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well-pleased." ([Luke 3:22](#))

Only after Christ's incarnation did God say, "This is My Son."

The Son through the Resurrection

His sonship came to full bloom in His resurrection. He is the Son not only because He was virgin-born into humanity, but also because He was begotten again from the dead. Just as you and I become sons of God in the fullest sense not by being born once but by being born twice, so **Jesus Christ became Son in the fullest sense by being born not once but twice.** This deep truth Paul makes clear in the book of Romans:

Concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord. (Rom. 1:3-4)

He became a Son at birth; He was declared to be a Son in resurrection. The fullness of His sonship comes in His twice birth.

Acts 13:33 ties this truth to the same Psalm, and even to the same verse (2:7), as does the writer to the Hebrews, relating the quotation to the resurrection: "God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, 'Thou art My Son; today I have begotten Thee.'" Jesus is Son in resurrection as well as in birth. It is His *human* title, and **we should never get trapped in the heretical idea that Jesus Christ is eternally subservient to God. He became the Son for our sake—setting aside what was rightfully His, humbling Himself, and emptying Himself (Phil. 2:6-8).**

Angels are indeed excellent creatures—the most excellent of all creatures. Therefore if Christ has **a more excellent name than they**, He must have the *most* excellent name. And He does—Son. So says the writer of Hebrews to the Jews, arguing from their own Scriptures.

Greater Because Worshiped

And when He again brings the first-born into the world, He says, "And let all the angels of God worship Him." (1:6)

Jesus Christ is not only greater than angels because He is God's Son but also because He is worshiped. **Even though Christ humbled Himself, even though He was made for a time lower than the angels, the angels are to worship Him. If angels are to worship Him, He must therefore be greater than they. And if He is greater than they, His covenant is greater than the one they brought—the New Covenant is greater than the Old, and Christianity is greater than Judaism.**

And let all the angels of God worship Him is a quotation from [Psalm 97:7](#). The psalmist predicted that all the angels were to worship the Lord's Christ. **Jews should not have been surprised at the point being made here in Hebrews. The truth, in fact the very words, come right out of their own Scriptures.** Far from matching the incarnate Son in glory, angels are commanded to worship Him.

But did not angels always worship Christ? Yes, they had worshiped Him throughout all the time of their existence; but **prior to His incarnation, they worshiped Him as God. Now they are also to worship Him as Son, in His incarnate character.** This Son who became a man is higher than angels. **He is the very God that the angels had always worshiped. It is an absolute sin and violation of the most basic of God's laws to worship anyone but God. So if God Himself says that the angels are to worship the Son, then the Son must be God! In His incarnate Person, even as in His eternal Person, Christ is to be worshiped.**

The Chief One

In this passage Christ is called the first-born. Here again, many sects and cults claim a proof-text to show that Jesus is a created being. "Look! He's first-born! You see? He was born like all the rest of us!" A related supposed proof-text is [Colossians 1:15](#), "And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. But "first-born" (*prōtotokos*) has nothing to do with time. It refers to position. It is not a description but a title, meaning "the chief one." The concept was associated with first-born because the oldest son usually was heir to the father's entire estate.

The first son to be born was not always the "first-born." Esau, for instance, was older than Jacob, but Jacob was the first-born, the *prōtotokos*. [Genesis 49:3](#) gives a good description of first-born: "Reuben, you are my first-born; my might and the beginning of my strength, preeminent in dignity and preeminent in power." Might, strength, dignity, and power—these describe the meaning of first-born. **It is not a time word; it is a right-to-rule word, an authority word.** And **Jesus Christ is the supreme First-born, the supreme *Prōtotokos*, the supreme right-to-rule Son.** **These passages, therefore, do not refer to Christ's birth as such, but to His sovereignty.**

"He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead" ([Col. 1:18](#)). **Jesus was "the first-born from the dead."** **Had anybody been resurrected before Jesus? Yes. Lazarus, the other people that Jesus raised during His earthly ministry, all the Old Testament saints who came alive at the crucifixion—all these and others had been raised from the dead before Jesus!** **The term, therefore, obviously does not refer to time. As first-born, Jesus is the most honored One, the most dignified One, the highest One, the most powerful One. Of all those who have been resurrected, He is far and above the greatest.**

The Meaning of "Again"

The word **again** in [Hebrews 1:6](#) has caused commentators a great deal of difficulty. Before we can understand **again** we need to look at another key word in the passage: **world**. And when He again brings the first-born into the world, He says, "And let all the angels of God worship Him." **The more common Greek word for world (*kosmos*, "the universe") is not used here, but rather *oikoumenē* ("the inhabited earth"). Christ was not the first to be born in the earth, but is the firstborn—the chief One, the most honored One—who came to an already-inhabited earth, where millions had been born before Him.**

[The word order of the King James \("And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world"\) has added to the confusion in interpreting verse 6. As reflected in most modern translations, the Greek word order is "And when He again brings." So in verse 6 **again** refers to God's bringing His firstborn into the world another time. When is this "again" going to happen? The only possible answer is at the Second Coming. God already brought Him once as Son, and He is going to bring Him as Son again—in blazing glory!](#)

It is only at the Second Coming that the fullness of the prophecy, *And let all the angels of God worship Him*, will come to pass. At the present time angels do not understand the whole picture well enough to give the Son full worship. The Old Testament prophets had similar difficulty understanding the full meaning of what they had written. They were inspired by the Holy Spirit but in many cases did not fully understand the messages they were given, "seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow" ([1 Pet. 1:11](#)).

In the next verse the apostle explains that "It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven" ([1 Pet. 1:12](#)). They were looking to see the things that would not be understood until Christ came, the gospel was preached, and the Holy Spirit was manifested. In fact these are mysteries into which the angels still "long to look" ([v. 12b](#)). They do not understand it all yet. Perhaps the "presence angels" around the throne do, but the vast angelic hosts evidently are not yet able to discern everything. **Angels have remarkable intelligence but are not omniscient. When God again brings His first-born into the world He will say to them, in effect, "Now you have the full picture, and your worship can be full and complete."**

And I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, "**Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.**" ([Rev. 5:11-12](#))

Here is angelic worship! Christ is getting ready to come again and to take the earth for Himself. In [5:1](#) the Father is pictured with the title deed to the earth (the little scroll), and those around the throne are saying, "Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?" ([v. 2](#)). John is crying because there is no one to open the scroll, and suddenly one of the elders says, "Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals" ([v. 5](#)). Jesus Christ, the Lamb, then takes the scroll. As He is about to unroll the judgments and take possession of the earth, the angels say, "It's all clear now!" And

countless millions of them, from all over heaven, burst forth in praise, joined by all other creatures of the universe:

And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, he blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever." And the four living creatures kept saying, "Amen." And the elders fell down and worshiped. (Rev. 5:13-14)

This speaks of His Second Coming, where He will be revealed in His full glory as Son—as *Prōtotokos*, the first-born. The angels finally will see it all then, as they see Him come as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Greater Because of Superior Nature

And of the angels He says, "Who makes His angels winds, and His ministers a flame of fire." (1:7)

Jesus is also superior to angels because of His nature. In [verse 7](#) the Holy Spirit shows the basic difference between the nature of angels and that of the Son. The Greek for **makes** is *poieō* ("to create" or "to make"). Since Christ created the angels ([Col. 1:16](#)), He is obviously superior to them. Not only were they created by Him, but they are His possession, **His angels**. They are His created servants, His **ministers**, His **winds** and **flame of fire**.

The Father's Claim of Jesus' Deity

But of the Son He says, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever. (1:8a)

The first part of [verse 8](#) expands on the difference between Christ's nature and that of angels.

Here is one of the most amazing and important statements in all of Scripture: Jesus is God eternal!

Those who say Jesus was just a man, or just one of many angels, or one of many prophets of God, or was but a sub-god of some sort are lying and bringing upon themselves the anathema, the curse, of God. Jesus is no less than God. The Father says to the Son, **Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever.**

God the Father acknowledges God the Son.

I believe this verse gives the clearest, most powerful, emphatic, and irrefutable proof of the deity of Christ in the Bible—from the Father Himself.

Jesus' Own Claim to Deity

The Father's testimony about the Son corresponds to the Son's testimony about Himself. Throughout His ministry Jesus claimed equality with God. "For this cause therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God" ([John 5:18](#)). When He said, "I and the Father are one" ([John 10:30](#)), the Jewish leaders well understood His claim. In light of who they thought He was, a mere man, their reaction was to be expected. "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God" ([v. 33](#)).

The Apostles' Claim of Jesus' Deity

Talking about Israel and all their blessings, Paul wrote, "whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen" ([Rom. 9:5](#)). The Greek text more accurately reads, "God who is over all, blessed forever." The claim is that Jesus Christ is God. In [1 Timothy 3:16](#) the same apostle writes, "And by common confession great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, was vindicated in the Spirit, beheld by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory." Still again Paul declares, "...looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus" ([Titus 2:13](#)).

In his first letter, John says, "And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding, in order that we might know Him who is true, and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life" ([1 John 5:20](#)).

Throughout the New Testament the claim is unequivocal: Jesus Christ is God.

Lover of Righteousness

In [Hebrews 1:8](#) we continue reading, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the righteous scepter is the scepter of His kingdom." **Jesus Christ has an eternal throne, from which He rules eternity as God and King.** He is the eternal King, with an eternal kingdom, and an eternal scepter of righteousness.

*Thou hast loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy companions.
(1:9)*

This verse reveals both Jesus' actions and His motives. He not only acted in righteousness, He loved righteousness. How often do we do what we know is God's will, but do so without joy, in unwilling condescension? Jesus, however, *loved* righteousness. "Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow" ([James 1:17](#)). That is true righteousness. It never varies from what is true, just, good. "And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all" ([1 John 1:5](#)). **God never varies; His motives, His actions, His character never vary. He is total light. He is total righteousness. Displayed in everything Jesus did was His love for righteousness.** Even more than the psalmist could He say, "O how I love Thy law! It is my meditation all the day" ([Ps. 119:97](#)).

Because Christ loves righteousness, He hates lawlessness. If you love God's right standards, you will hate wrong standards. These two convictions are inseparable. One cannot exist without the other. You cannot truthfully say, "I love righteousness, but I also like sin." **When there is true love for God, there will be total love for righteousness and total hatred for sin.** Jesus hated sin just as surely as He loved righteousness. You see it in His temptation. **You see it in His cleansing the Temple. You see it in His death on the cross. And the more we become conformed to our Lord, the more we are going to find that we, too, love righteousness and hate sin. By our attitudes toward righteousness and toward sin, we can tell how close we are to being conformed to Christ.**

In [Hebrews 1:9](#) is the most direct statement of Jesus' superiority to angels: **Therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy companions.** Some commentators believe **companions** refers to men. But angels, not men, are being discussed in the passage. The Greek word simply connotes an association, nothing more. **The point being made here is that Jesus Christ is greater than angels, who are His associates, His heavenly companions.** But they are only messengers of God. **Christ, too, is a messenger of God, but much more than a messenger and therefore much greater than they.** He is exalted, anointed, above all others.

In his sermon in Cornelius' house, Peter tells of God's anointing of Jesus of Nazareth ([Acts 10:38](#)). God had anointed Him and ordained Him. [Psalm 2:2](#) and other places in the Old Testament anticipate this anointing. **Messiah is a transliteration of the Hebrew word for "Anointed One."** **Christ is a transliteration of the Greek word meaning the same thing. In other words, Jesus' supreme title (Messiah, or Christ) means "the Anointed One."** Jesus was God's Anointed. When did this happen? I believe Jesus was officially *anointed* as king when He went to heaven after His resurrection. At that time the Father exalted Him and gave Him a name above every name ([Eph. 1:20-22](#)). **He assumed His kingship at His ascension. Although He has not yet brought all of His kingdom together, someday soon He will.**

Jesus' nature (that is, His deity), like His title and His being worshiped, show His superiority to angels.

Greater Because of Superior Existence

Thou, Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Thy hands; they will perish, but Thou remainest; and they all will become old as a garment. And as a mantle Thou wilt roll them up; as a garment they will also be changed. But Thou art the same, and Thy years will not come to an end. ([1:10-12](#))

The fourth way in which Jesus is superior to angels is in His existence. In this quotation from [Psalm 102](#) the Holy Spirit reveals that Christ is better than angels because He exists eternally. **If Jesus was in the beginning to create, He must have existed before the beginning and therefore be without beginning. "In the beginning was the Word" ([John 1:1](#)).**

Just as you would roll up and throw away an old, worn-out garment when you are done with it, Jesus one day will discard the heavens and the earth. One day "the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up" ([2 Pet. 3:10](#)). "And the sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places" ([Rev. 6:14](#)). During the Tribulation, as if the heavens were to be stretched to the limit and the corners then cut, they will roll up just like a scroll. The stars are going to fall, come crashing down to earth, and every island and mountain will move out of its place. The whole world will fall apart.

The things that we can see and feel seem so permanent... Like the people Peter warned, we are tempted to think that "all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation" ([2 Pet. 3:4](#)). **But all these are going to perish, and the Lord is going to create a new heaven and a new earth. The creation will be changed, but not the Creator.** "Thy years will not come to an end." Christ is eternal. He is immutable; He never changes. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever" ([Heb. 13:8](#)).

Men come and go. Worlds come and go. Stars come and go. Angels were subjected to decay, as their fall proves. But **Christ never changes**, is never subject to change, is never subject to alteration. He is eternally the same. He is therefore superior to angels in title, in worship, in nature, in existence, and finally in destiny.

Greater Because of Superior Destiny

But to which of the angels has He ever said, "Sit at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet"? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation? ([1:13-14](#))

Here, within only the first chapter, is the seventh Old Testament quotation, from [Psalm 110:1](#). It climaxes the teaching of the full superiority of Christ to angels.

First we see the destiny of Christ, and then that of angels. **No angel has ever been promised a place at God's right hand. Only the Son will sit here. The destiny of Jesus Christ is that ultimately everything in the universe will be subject to Him.** "At the name of Jesus every knee [will] bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth" ([Phil. 2:10](#)).

Jesus Christ, in God's plan, is destined to be the ruler of the universe and everything that inhabits it. "Then comes the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet... And when all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all" ([1 Cor. 15:24-25, 28](#)). **He is subordinate to the Father, but only in the relationship of Son. The son of a king may be the equal of his father in every attribute of his nature, though he officially subject to his father. So the eternal Son is equally divine, though He is officially in subjection.** And under His feet are placed all the kingdoms and authorities and powers of the world. When does that happen? At His Second Coming, when He comes in glory.

Revelation 19:15-16 gives a vivid picture of His next coming: "And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, 'KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.' The destiny of Jesus Christ is eternal reign over the new heavens and the new earth.

Notice the destiny of God's angels: Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation? **Jesus' destiny is to reign. The angels' destiny is to serve forever those who are heirs of salvation. What a wonderful, awesome prospect for Christians! In addition to being forever in God's presence, our destiny is to be served by angels forever.**

Elisha and his servant were once menaced by the king of Syria and had no way to defend themselves. *"Now when the attendant of the man of God had risen early and gone out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was circling the city. And his servant said to him, 'Alas, my master! What shall we do?' So he answered, 'Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.' Then Elisha prayed and said, 'O Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.' And the Lord opened the servant's eyes, and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha"* ([2 Kings 6:15-17](#)). **Who were riding the horses and chariots? Angels.** Angels protect and deliver the believer, the saint, from temporal danger. **Angels rescued Lot and his family, snatching them out of Sodom. Angels got down into the den with Daniel and stopped the lions' mouths.** What a marvelous, comforting truth to know that angels minister to us! **Their destiny is to continue to minister to us throughout eternity. But Jesus' destiny is to reign.** He is therefore immeasurably superior to the angels.

So we find that the Son of God is superior to angels in every way, with each of His superiorities having been described in the Old Testament. **Jesus is Messiah. He is God in the flesh.** He is the Mediator of a New Covenant, a covenant better than the Old.

In this brief fourteen-verse chapter, we see the deity of Jesus Christ established by divine names. He is called Son, Lord, and God.

By divine works He creates, sustains, governs,
redeems, and purges sin.

By divine worth He is the one to be worshiped by the
angels and all other creatures in the universe.

By divine attributes He is omniscient, omnipotent,
unchanging, and eternal.

In all these ways the superiority of Jesus Christ is proclaimed.

Why are these truths so important? The next passage gives the answer. "For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" ([Heb. 2:1-3](#)).

*If God expected such a positive response to the law,
which came through the angels, what response does He
expect concerning the gospel, which came through
Jesus Christ?*

- MacArthur New Testament Commentary