

Hebrews - A Letter Addressed to Modern-Day Christians

Part 3

Hebrews 1:4 – Hebrews 2:24

Hebrews 1:4-14 [NIV] *“So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son; today I have become your Father”? Or again, “I will be his Father, and he will be my Son”? And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, “Let all God’s angels worship him.” In speaking of the angels he says, “He makes his angels winds, his servants flames of fire.” But about the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the sceptre of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.” He also says, “In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end.” To which of the angels did God ever say, “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet”? Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?”*

In these next few verses we find the writer of Hebrews compares angels with Jesus Christ.

The writer sets out to show how Jesus is unique and supreme, and on a totally different level to angels.

The writer felt the need to make this point very clear because of the background belief that the Jews had in that day about angels.

Men were becoming more and more impressed with the belief of what is called the Transcendence of God; they believed God was getting farther and farther away, and more unknowable and unreachable.

This belief led to the conception that God was so far away [transcendent] that He could not speak directly to human beings nor could human beings speak directly to God.

The result was they began to look on angels as intermediaries between God and humanity.

They began to think that God only spoke to humans through angels and that angels had to carry human’s prayers to God.

Acts 7:53 [NIV] *“you who have received **the** law that was **put into effect through angels** but have not obeyed it.”*

Law given through angels to Moses then men.

Galatians 3:19 [NIV] *“What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. **The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator.**”*

Isaiah 6:1-4 [NIV] *“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.” At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.”*

1 Kings 22:19 [NIV] *“Micaiah continued, “Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne with all the host of heaven standing round him on his right and on his left.”*

God lived surrounded by angels.

Joshua 5:13-15 [NIV] *“Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, “Are you for us or for our enemies?” “Neither,” he replied, “but as commander of the army of the LORD I have now come.” Then Joshua fell face down to the ground in reverence, and asked him, “What message does my Lord have for his servant?” The commander of the LORD’s army replied, “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did so.”*

Angels looked on as God’s Army.

This extensive use of angels by God had gradually led to un-substantiated beliefs that angels were God’s Counsel and that God did nothing without consulting His angels.

The “*let us*” of **Genesis 1:26** was thought [without any real proof] to refer to God and His Counsel of angels.

There was also beliefs that angels at times remonstrated with God and objected to His purposes.

At first angels were anonymous, then they were given names and particular responsibilities.

All this elevated in the minds of Jews the position and powers of angels as intermediators between man and God.

Hence the writer of Hebrews uses many proof texts to show the error of this belief and superiority of Jesus Christ to angels.

Hebrews 1:4 [NIV] *“The name He [Jesus] has inherited is superior to theirs”* [the angels].

To know how Jesus is superior we need to know how His Name is more superior.

Ephesians 1:19-22 [NIV] *“and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, **which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church,**”*

Jesus is far above power, authority and title.

Philippians 2:9-11 [NIV] *“Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name **that is above every name**, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”*

“The name above every other name”. All created beings bow before Jesus the Christ.

Hebrews 1:5(a) [NIV] *“For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son; today I have become your Father”?”*

A direct quote from the Messianic **Psalms 2:7**

Psalms 2:1-12 [NIV] *“Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One. “Let us break their chains,” they say, “and throw off their fetters.” The One enthroned in heaven*

laughs; the Lord scoffs at them. Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying, "I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill." I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "**You are my Son; today I have become your Father.** Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. You will rule them with an iron sceptre; you will dash them to pieces like pottery." Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him."

This is a very good example of a Messianic Psalm the propheties what Jesus was and would be:-

(a) **presents One who is:-**

- 1 **v2** The Lord's Anointed One or Messiah
[Hebrew word "*mashiach*" – Greek equivalent "*christos*" – Christ the Anointed One]
- 2 **v6** The Lord's King – one who reigns – ascends to the throne
- 3 **v7** The Lord's Son – Hebrew "*ben*" the normal word used for son
- 4 **v12** The Lord's Son – Hebrew word "*bar*" normally only associated with the Messiah, anointed one

(b) **predicts the following:-**

- 1 **v1-3** The rejection of Messiah by earth's rulers – we don't like to be restricted by God
- 2 **v4-5** The Lord's anger at those rulers
- 3 **v6** Messiah anointed as King of Zion, the heavenly Zion, Christ is already anointed as ruler of universe
- 4 **v7** The Lord's acknowledgement of Messiah as Son. "*I*" is the Son speaking, "*He*" the Father, "*Me*" the Son.

The event spoken of here is the resurrection from the dead, predicted by the baptism of Jesus by John when this was announced from heaven.

Mark 9:7 [NIV] "*Then a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and a voice came from the cloud: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!"*"

"Son" Greek "*huios*" signifies relation of offspring to parent reserved by John to title for Jesus Christ.

- 5 **v8-9** Declared ruler over all the earth
- 6 **v10-12** Warning to earth's rulers to submit to Messiah before judgement falls on them; "*rejoice with trembling*" – a good balance
- 7 **v12** Promise of blessing to all who trust Messiah

There are many prophetic Messianic Old Testament passages such as **Psalm 2:1-12** that are referred to Hebrews that will give us the same background knowledge as the original recipients of this letter.

Hebrews 1:5(b) [NIV] "*Or again, "I will be his Father, and he will be my Son"?"*"

Direct quotation from

2 Samuel 7:12-14 [NIV] "*When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men.*"

– a prophetic message sent to King David from God via Nathan the prophet.

Partially fulfilled in Solomon. **Note** “*Kingdom for ever*” only completely fulfilled in Jesus.

Hebrews 1:6 [NIV] “*And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, “Let all God’s angels worship him.”*”

Quote from **Deuteronomy 32:43** [NIV] “*Rejoice, O nations, with his people, for he will avenge the blood of his servants; he will take vengeance on his enemies and make atonement for his land and people.*”

Septuagint text [**Note** not found in most translations as they come from Hebrew (Massoretic) text] which reads “*rejoice you heavens, together with Him, and let all the Angels of God worship Him. Rejoice, you nations, with His People.....*”

Angels worship Jesus.

Only God is to be worshipped, so Jesus must be higher than Angels of God.

Hebrews 1:7 [NIV] “*In speaking of the angels he says, “He makes his angels winds, his servants flames of fire.”*”

Quote from **Psalms 104:4** [KJ] “*Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire:”*

Angels are servants.

The word for spirit and wind are same in Hebrew “*ruwach*”.

We have to decide in context which word to use in English.

Hebrews 1:8-9 [NIV] “*But about the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the sceptre of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; **therefore God, your God,** has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.”*”

Two persons called God in these verses.

Psalms 45:6-7 [NIV] “*Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a sceptre of justice will be the sceptre of your kingdom. You love righteousness and hate wickedness; **therefore God, your God,** has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.”*”

Psalms of Praise to King [Messiah] The word translated “*God*” twice here is same word “*elohiyim*” the normal word for God, a plural word “*iyim*” makes it plural.

Yet scripture throughout confirms only one God.

This passage emphasises the divinity of Messiah [Christ].

- 1 Addressed as God
- 2 He is a King
- 3 Totally committed to righteousness
- 4 This is why His God has anointed Him, thus making Him the Messiah [Anointed One]
- 5 He has “*companions*” but they are **not** His equals.

Hebrews 1:10-12 [NIV] “*He also says, “In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all*

wear out like a garment. You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. **But you remain the same, and your years will never end.**”

Emphasises the eternal unchanging nature of Messiah as Creator of Heaven and Earth.

Psalm 102:25-27 [NIV] *“In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but **you remain**; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded. But **you remain** the same, and your years will never end.”*

This refers to Messiah.

Psalm 102:15-16 [NIV] *“The nations will fear the name of the LORD, all the kings of the earth will revere your glory. For the LORD will rebuild Zion and **appear in his glory.**”*

This points towards the return of Christ in Glory at His Second Coming, could not refer to the Father.

Hebrews 1:13 [NIV] *“To which of the angels did God ever say, “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet”?”*

Emphasises the exaltation of Messiah to God’s Right Hand, a position never offered to angels.

Psalm 110:1 [NIV] *“The LORD says to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.”*

This passage is applied by Jesus to Himself.

Matthew 22:41-44 [NIV] *“While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, “What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?” “The son of David,” they replied. He said to them, “How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him ‘Lord’? For he says, “‘The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.””*

Jews knew that Messiah would come from the line of David, be a Son of David; yet in the Psalm David called His Son [Messiah] Lord, [Hebrew “yehovah” the self existent or eternal one] Also recorded in **Mark 12:36, Luke 20:42-43.**

Hebrews 1:14 [NIV] *“Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?”*

Again emphasises that angels are servants to the heirs of salvation, showing how superior Jesus is to them, as He is the author [source] of salvation [Hebrews 5:9]

This revelation of Jesus shows that He has supremacy over all other created beings.

Colossians 1:18-19 [NIV] *“And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, **so that in everything he might have the supremacy.** For God was pleased to have all his fulness dwell in him,”*

Hebrews 2:1-4 [NIV] *“We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.”*

This is the first passage of solemn warning.

Note “*drift away*” something that happens gradually most likely by what a person does not do rather than what he does do.

To avoid “*drifting away*” anyone who understands boats and boating knows you need an anchor.

Hebrews 6:17-20 [NIV] *“Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged. **We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.** It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest for ever, in the order of Melchizedek.”*

There is a vivid picture in this scripture, the picture of a ship drifting into destruction because the pilot sleeps while the insidious current sweeps the ship past the harbour entrance to be wrecked on the rocks.

There are few people who deliberately and in a moment of time, having come to know God’s Mercy and Love, who turn their backs on Him.

There are many however who day-by-day drift farther and farther away from Him.

There are not many who in one moment of time commit some disastrous sin, there are many who, bit by bit, almost imperceptibly, involve themselves in some situation, and suddenly awake to find they have ruined their lives and brought hurt and shame to others.

We need to be constantly alert to such a peril in our lives.

Our hope in future based on what Jesus has done for us and is willing to do now for us as our High Priest is a sure anchor.

Hebrews 2:1-2 [NIV] *“We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment,”*

The main point of this warning is against ignoring or neglecting the importance of the message from God in Jesus, not a warning against being openly wicked or rebellious but a warning against not paying sufficient attention to what God is saying through Jesus.

The more important the message the greater is the guilt of ignoring it.

Hebrews 2:2 [NIV] *“For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment,”*

We may have ignored the message given to our forefathers under the Old Covenant by angels [**Deuteronomy 33:2; Psalm 68:17; Acts 7:53; Galatians 3:19**], but if we ignore the message brought by Jesus we will **not** have a future message.

Jesus brought the final message from God.

If our forefathers under the Old Covenant ignored the message from God for them given at Sinai and ever violation [Greek “*parabasis*” – to step aside or to step over a mark] or disobedience [Greek – “*parakoay*” – imperfect hearing – or unwillingness to hear] they received just punishment.

Hebrews 2:3 [NIV] *“how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him.”*

If we then neglect this final and more important message how much greater will be our just recompense [punishment].

Justice or just reward in God's Word is two-sided; it includes rewards for those who do well but **also** punishment for those who do evil.

Both are appropriate and just in God's Eyes, but in society today punishment for wrong doing is **not** considered as "*justice*".

A great part of so-called "*justice*" today is treating the criminal better than the victim of his crime, which is a complete mis-application of true justice.

Why is this message from God so much more important?

Hebrews 2:3-4 [NIV] "*how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.*"

a) **Unique in its origin**, it came direct from Jesus Himself, the very voice of God, not a messenger [angel] or some other man [prophet].

b) **Unique in its transmission**, the message came to the people to whom this letter was being written, the Jews. These people had heard the Words of Jesus with their own ears from His Lips.

c) **Unique in its effectiveness**, testified by signs, wonders, miracles and Gifts of Holy Spirit.

John 14:11-12 [NIV] "*Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves. I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.*"

The ultimate object of Christianity is to change people's lives by the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus changed the lives of some 120 people through His preaching and personal example.

We through power of Holy Spirit are able to do far more.

Hebrews 2:5 [NIV] "*It is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking.*"

Note the continued direction of Hebrews is to the future.

Hebrews 2:5 [ILT] "*For no to angels did He subject **the habitable world which is to come** of which we speak.*"

This age has already begun for those who have received the Holy Spirit in their lives.

Hebrews 6:4-5 [NIV] "*It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age,*"

Note "*tasted powers of the coming age*" stated in context of receiving the Holy Spirit.

Our inheritance is being mentioned here, by implication.

Inheritance being one of the key words we find through Hebrews.

We have here something which we can only know by revelation, the human mind could **not** come to such a conclusion, much of Hebrews is revelation of the spirit world unseen by the human eye.

Don't allow our carnal mind, limited to what is understood only through the physical senses, get in the way of our accepting the truth that is going to be shown to us in Hebrews only by Divine Revelation, accepted in faith, not by sight.