

The Book of Hebrews

מְאֹנְשׁ מִנְמָה דָא מִנְהָת אַקְלָא
צְמַאַלְלָא נְתַחְצְרָה דְרַחְסָנָה סָקָה
אַחֲרַ פְּקָלָא תְּסִנְ סְרְבָּאַלְלָה
רַרְתָּא סָקָה תְּאַקְסָנָה דְמַמְצָה
תְּאַתְּפָלָשָׁה נְתַרְדְּנָה הַרְפָּרָה נְרַלְדָה
תְּאַגְּשָׁה רַלְדָה מְלַלְצָה סָסָה תְּלָשָׁה



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Outline of Hebrews

- I. We Have a Definitive and Final Revelation in the Son (1:1-4)**
- II. Don't Abandon the Son Since He is Greater Than the Angels (1:5-2:18)**
 - A. The Son's Nature and Reign Show He Is Greater Than the Angels (1:5-14)**
 - B. *Warning*: Don't Drift Away (2:1-4)**
 - C. The Coming World Subjected to the Son (2:5-18)**

The Son's Nature and Reign Show He Is Greater Than the Angels (1:5-14)

⁵ *For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you"? [Ps. 2:7]*

Or again,

"I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son"? [2 Sam 7:14]

⁶ *And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says,*

"Let all God's angels worship him." [Deut 32:43 or Psalm 97:7]

⁷ *Of the angels he says,*

"He makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire." [Ps. 104:4]

The Son's Nature and Reign Show He Is Greater Than the Angels (1:5-14)

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." [Ps. 45:6-7]

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." [Ps. 102:25-27]

The Son's Nature and Reign Show He Is Greater Than the Angels (1:5-14)

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”? [Ps. 110:1]*

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

The Son's Nature and Reign Show He Is Greater Than the Angels (1:5-14)

- At least ***two*** points become clear in Hebrews 1:5–14:
 - 1) The author continues a number of ***vitally important*** themes he had introduced in the first four verses. These include:
 - God's Speaking
 - Christ as “Son” of God
 - The Son's Role in Creation
 - The Son's Enthronement at the Exaltation to the Right Hand of God
 - 2) The enthronement of the Son as Messiah, God's anointed king, is the ***main*** focus of this section – therefore the quote of Psalm 110:1 in verse 13 is a fitting summary of this chain of Old Testament texts.

The Son's Nature and Reign Show He Is Greater Than the Angels (1:5-14)

- During the era in which Hebrews was written, teachers of Scripture often built support for a theological position by stringing together a number of Old Testament texts.
- Such “chain quotations” offered a defense of the position being taught through the sheer ***quantity*** of support given.
- We see this approach, for example, in the Apostle Paul’s letter to the Romans in 9:25–29; 10:18–21; and 11:8–10.
- The desired effect was to offer ***so much evidence*** that your listeners are forced to nod their heads in agreement with you by the end of these quotations!
- This is the method the author of Hebrews uses in 1:5–14.

The Son's Nature and Reign Show He Is Greater Than the Angels (1:5-14)

- In the text that we are examining today, the writer of Hebrews presents *three pairs* of Old Testament passages, followed by the *final* quotation of ***Psalm 110:1*** – all given in support of the Son's superiority to the angels:
 - **Verse 5** – The *first* pair (Psalm 2:7; 2 Samuel 7:14) proclaims the Son's superiority by virtue of his unique relationship to the Father.
 - **Verses 6-7** – The *second* pair (Deut. 32:43; Psalm 104:4) focuses attention on the angels' positive, but inferior, position and ministry.
 - **Verses 8-12** – The *third* pair declare the Son's eternality (Ps. 45:6–7; 102:25–27).

The Son's Nature and Reign Show He Is Greater Than the Angels (1:5-14)

- In summary, the main flow of thought in our text this morning is as follows:
 - **Verse 5** – The Son's Unique Relationship to the Father
 - **Verses 6-7** – The Inferior Position of the Angels to the Son
 - **Verses 8-12** – The Eternality of the Son's Reign Over His Creation
 - **Verses 13-14** – The Exaltation of the Son Over the Angels

The Son's Unique Relationship to the Father (1:5)

⁴ *having become 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**, today I have begotten you”? [Ps. 2:7]

- The word “*for*” introducing 1:5 indicates that the author is now giving support for what he asserted in the previous verse (1:4) – that the more excellent “*name*” that makes Jesus better than the angels is “*Son*”.
- The author’s goal in verse 5 is to **support** this claim from the OT scriptures.

The Son's Unique Relationship to the Father (1:5)

⁴ *having become 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, today I have begotten you”? [Ps. 2:7]

- He begins by noting that none of the angels was ever addressed as God's **Son**. Angels are sometimes identified as “*sons of God*” (cf. Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7) but never as “**the Son of God**”.
- Furthermore, the author takes **two texts**, which in their **historical context** address the Davidic **king**, and applies them to Jesus as the Son of God, showing that He is superior to the angels as the **reigning and ruling** Son of God.

The Son's Unique Relationship to the Father (1:5)

⁵ *For to which of the angels did God ever say,
“You are my Son, today I have begotten you”?* [Ps. 2:7]

- The first text comes from Psalm 2:7 – a psalm written by King David (Acts 4:25) and considered by the Jews to be a ***messianic psalm***, that is, a psalm that would ***ultimately*** be fulfilled by the coming promised Messiah.
- In its original context, Psalm 2 speaks of the coordinated rebellion of the nations and their rulers against God and his Anointed One:
 - *Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying, “Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.”* (Psalm 2:1-3)

The Son's Unique Relationship to the Father (1:5)

⁵ *For to which of the angels did God ever say,
“You are my Son, today I have begotten you”? [Ps. 2:7]*

- The psalmist tells us that this rebellion will be smashed by the awesome, overwhelming power of **the King** whom God has enthroned in Mount Zion:
 - *He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, “As for me, I have set **my King** on Zion, my holy hill.”*
 - *I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, “**You are my Son; today I have begotten you.** Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.” Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth.* (Psalm 2:4-10)

The Son's Unique Relationship to the Father (1:5)

⁵ *For to which of the angels did God ever say,
“You are my Son, today I have begotten you”? [Ps. 2:7]*

- Early Christians in the book of Acts (including the Apostle Paul) applied this psalm to Jesus as Messiah and saw in it the promise of victory over those earthly forces opposed to the **church** (e.g., Acts 4:23–31; 13:33–34).¹
- The language of “begetting” does **not** refer to the eternal begetting of the Son by the Father, though this interpretation is rather common in the history of the church. *Nor* is it a reference to the virgin birth.²
- In the context of Psalm 2, “begetting” refers to the appointment of the king and his accession to the throne.²

¹ Guthrie, George H. – *The NIV Application Commentary - Hebrews*; pp. 68-69

² Schreiner, Thomas R. – *Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary - Hebrews*; pp. 64-65

The Son's Unique Relationship to the Father (1:5)

⁵ *For to which of the angels did God ever say,
“You are my Son, today I have begotten you”?* [Ps. 2:7]

- The Psalm then goes on to say that the nations should fear, for God has decreed that the kings of the world will serve His Son.
- The author of Hebrews picks up the sonship theme, identifying Jesus as the Son installed by the Father as the messianic king (cf. Acts 13:33)
- So, to **summarize**: in the context of Psalm 2, the verse that the writer of Hebrews cites here (2:7) is **ultimately** fulfilled in the reign of the messianic king, which the author of Hebrews sees as commencing at Jesus' resurrection and ascension.
- Therefore Jesus is greater than the angels because he now reigns as the messianic king.

The Son's Unique Relationship to the Father (1:5)

*5 For to which of the angels did God ever say,
"You are my Son, today I have begotten you"?*

Or again,

"I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son"?

- The **second** citation in this pair of Old Testament quotations given in verse 5 is 2 Samuel 7:14.
- 2 Samuel 7 is the chapter where God makes a **covenant** with David, a covenant in which he promises David that He will *"establish the throne of [David's] kingdom forever."* (2 Samuel 7:13).
- The chapter begins with David telling the prophet Nathan that he intends to build a house for God to dwell in.
- At first Nathan tells David to *"Go, do all that is in your heart, for the LORD is with you."* (2 Sam 7:3)
- But that night the word of the Lord comes to Nathan and tells him that He does **not** need David to build Him a house.

The Son's Unique Relationship to the Father (1:5)

⁵ Or again,

"I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son"?

- The Lord then instructs Nathan to say to David:
 - *Thus says the LORD of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel... Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.* (2 Sam 7:8; 11-16)

The Son's Unique Relationship to the Father (1:5)

⁵ *Or again,*

"I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son"?

- Like Psalm 2, 2 Sam. 7 was considered by many Jews to be a ***messianic prophecy*** (cf. John 7:47).
- ***Some*** aspects of the prophecy were fulfilled in David's ***immediate*** descendant, Solomon (i.e., the building of the original temple).
- Other aspects of the prophecy, were fulfilled by Solomon and David's later descendants (e.g. being "disciplined by the rod of men" when he "commits iniquity").
- But the ***ultimate*** fulfillment of this prophesy – a Davidic descendant whose ***throne*** would be ***established forever*** – occurred at the exaltation of Jesus to the right hand of the throne of God.
- Thus this passage proves that Jesus is superior to the angels because He is the ***ultimate Son of God who now reigns as the ultimate messianic king.***

The Inferior Position of the Angels (1:6–7)

⁶ *And again, when he brings the **firstborn** into the world, he says, “Let all God's angels worship him.”*

- The term “*firstborn*”(*protokon*) continues the idea of sonship established thus far in Hebrews.
- In the ancient world this term most often referred to the (human or animal) child first born to a mother.
- Furthermore, it had strong religious overtones in the consecration of the firstborn to Yahweh (e.g., Ex. 13:2, 15; 22:29; Lev. 27:26; Num. 3:13).
- A firstborn son had a special place in the heart of his father (e.g., 2 Sam. 13:36–37; 1 Chron. 3:1), shared the father's authority, and inherited the lion's share of his property.

The Inferior Position of the Angels (1:6-7)

⁶ *And again, when he brings the **firstborn** into the world, he says,
“Let all God's angels worship him.”*

- The reference to “*firstborn*” (*prototokon*) may be an allusion to Psalm 89:27 which refers to God exalting David above the kings of the earth.
- Significantly in light of Hebrews use of Psalm 2:7 and 2 Sam. 7:14 in 1:5, God says in Psalm 89 that David will call Him “*Father*” and He will make David the “*firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth*”. (Psalm 89:26-27).
- This, then, continues the theme of the unique relationship of the Messiah as God's Son, that the writer of Hebrews has been seeking to establish to this point.

The Inferior Position of the Angels (1:6–7)

⁶ *And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says,*

“Let all God’s angels worship him.”

⁷ *Of the angels he says,*

“He makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire.”

- “*World*” (*oikoumenen*) refers not to planet earth, but rather to the ***heavenly realm***.
- This interpretation is reenforced by the author’s use of the same word speaking of the heavenly realm in 2:5 and fits well in the immediate context, which focuses on the exaltation of the Son to the right hand of God.

The Inferior Position of the Angels (1:6–7)

⁶ *And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says,*

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⁷ *Of the angels he says,*

“He makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire.”

- Verses 6–7 present the angels in **two** activities that imply their subordination to the Son.
 - With the quote of Deut. 32:43 (or possibly Psalm 97:7) they are exhorted to “*worship*” the Son, an act that implies the Son’s deity.
 - Psalm 104:4 expresses their role as servants of God—a theme made more clear by the author’s use of this passage later in Hebrews 1:14: “*Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?*”

The Inferior Position of the Angels (1:6–7)

⁶ *And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, “Let all God's angels worship him.”*

⁷ *Of the angels he says,*

“He makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire.”

- In the Scriptures angels are created, heavenly beings, who primarily function as messengers for God, revealing his will or announcing key events (e.g., Gen. 19:1–22; Ex. 3:2–6; Judg. 2:1–5; Matt. 1:20–24).
- They also serve to protect God's people (e.g., Ex. 14:19–20; 1 Kings 19:1–8; Acts 12:7–11).
- In contexts accentuating God's power and majesty, angels worship him or attend his throne.
- It is therefore of no small significance that they here are said to **worship** the Son, an implicit affirmation of His deity.

The Eternality of the Son's Reign Over His Creation (1:8–12)

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."

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."

The Eternality of the Son's Reign Over His Creation (1:8–12)

- The author of Hebrews *third* pair of Old Testament texts returns full attention to the Son, celebrating both his status as the divine, eternal, anointed King (1:8–9) and his role as builder and terminator of the cosmos (1:10–12).
- These two passages focus on *three* overarching themes.
 1. They speak of the Son's **authority**.
 - The Son sits on a “*throne*,” has a “*scepter*,” and has a “*kingdom*” (1:8).
 - Furthermore, he has been anointed “*beyond [his] companions*” as king (1:9).
 - He is also the one with the authority to lay “*the foundations of the earth*” and to mold “*the heavens*” with his “*hands*” (1:10).

The Eternality of the Son's Reign Over His Creation (1:8–12)

- The preacher's third pair of Old Testament texts returns full attention to the Son, celebrating both his status as the divine, eternal, anointed King (1:8–9) and his role as builder and terminator of the cosmos (1:10–12).
- These two passages focus on ***three*** overarching themes.
 2. The author's use of these texts draws attention to the Son's **eternal nature**.
 - As promised to his ancestor in the flesh, David, the Messiah's kingdom is one that "*is forever and ever*" (1:8).
 - The Lord was there "*in the beginning*" (1:10), and his "*years will have no end*" (1:12).
 - By contrast, the created order changes, becoming old and perishable. Like worn-out clothing the Son will fold it up at the end of the age (1:11–12), but He remains "*the same*" (1:12).

The Eternality of the Son's Reign Over His Creation (1:8–12)

- The preacher's third pair of Old Testament texts returns full attention to the Son, celebrating both his status as the divine, eternal, anointed King (1:8–9) and his role as builder and terminator of the cosmos (1:10–12).
- These two passages focus on three overarching themes.
 3. In addition to the affirmation of the Son's deity implied in these creation statements, Hebrews 1:8 has one of the most ***explicit*** references to Jesus as God found in the entire New Testament – the writer of Hebrews tells us that ***Jesus is addressed by God as God (!): “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever...”***

The Exaltation of the Son Over the Angels (1:13–14)

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”?*

- The Author's string of Old Testament quotations comes to its zenith with his quote of Psalm 110:1: “*Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.*”
- You may recall from our previous lesson that the author of Hebrews **alluded** to Psalm 110 in Hebrews 1:3.
- The difference between the **allusion** to Psalm 110:1 found in Hebrews 1:3 and the **direct quotation** of Psalm 110 in our present text (1:13) is that the quotation here includes the **duration** of the “sitting”: “*until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.*”
- As with the references to Psalm 2:7 (in verse 5) and Psalm 45:6–7 (in verses 8–9), the enthronement of the Son has a corresponding implication—**defeat** for the enemies of God and of God's Anointed.

Summary

- The author of Hebrews marshals these Old Testament quotations to provide a clear picture of the status of the angels relative to the Son.
- The Son sits at the preeminent position in the universe, with the angels in an inferior position as the servants who worship him.
- The Son has an eternal throne, from which the angels are sent out to minister.
- God has never spoken such proclamations as found in 1:5, 8–13 to the angels.
- Rather, his proclamations concerning them (1:6–7) show the angels' inferiority.
- The Son alone is the favored object of divine decrees expressing royalty.
- By the end of this string of texts, no one in the author's audience can doubt the superiority of the Son over the angels.

Class Discussion Time



*Class Discussion Time

- Today's passage provides a number of very clear statements that establish the deity of Christ beyond any reasonable doubt. These texts can be useful in engaging groups like the "Jehovah's witnesses" who deny Christ's deity. Have you ever had difficulty in encountering someone from such a group? Do you think what you heard today will be helpful future encounters with them?
- Are you surprised at how New Testament passages see and interpret Old Testament prophesies? Specifically, I am speaking of passages that in their original context had reference to a ***physical situation*** in the Old Testament, but are seen as finding ***ultimate spiritual fulfillment*** in the New Testament. One example being:
 - [Paul speaking in a Jewish Synagogue:] *And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you."* (Acts 13:32-33)