

THE EPISTLES TO THE HEBREWS

HEBREWS 1:1-4:13, THE SUPERIORITY OF THE PERSON OF CHRIST

INTRODUCTION

- A. Outline of Hebrews (to be finalized at completion of Hebrews study)
1. The superiority of the person of Christ (1:1-4:13)
 - a. Christ has the superior message (1:1-2a)
 - b. Christ is the superior person (1:2b-3)
 - c. Christ is superior to angels (1:4-2:18)
 - 1) Evidence from the Old Testament (1:4-14)
- B. Comments on Hebrews 1:4-14
1. William Barclay, *In the previous passage, the writer was concerned to prove the superiority of Jesus over all the prophets. Now he is concerned to prove his superiority over the angels. That he thinks it worth while to do this proves the place that belief in angels had in the thought of the Jews of his day.*
 2. Donald Hagner, *He is the one through whom and for whom everything that exists has been created, the one who sustains the universe, and who is the very expression of God's glory and essence. He is the one with whom not even the angels can compare. The person of Christ is the key to understanding this epistle.*
 3. Zane Hodges, *...the Son's greatness makes preoccupation with angelic dignities entirely unnecessary.*

HEBREWS 1:4-2:18, JESUS CHRIST IS SUPERIOR TO ANGELS

HEBREWS 1:4-14, EVIDENCE FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

- A. Jesus is the superior person - *Son* (4-6)
1. Introductory comments on Paul's comparison of the Son to angels.
 - a. James Moffatt, *The sudden transition to a comparison between the Son and the angels implies that something is before the writer's mind. Were his readers, like the Colossians to whom Paul wrote, in danger of an undue deference to angels in their religion, a deference which threatened to impair their estimate of Christ? Or is he developing his argument in the light of some contemporary belief about angels and revelation?*
 - b. William Barclay, *There was one danger which the writer to the Hebrews wished at all costs to avoid. The doctrine of angels is a lovely thing; but it has one danger. It introduces a series of beings other than Jesus through whom men and women make their approach to God. In Christianity, there is no need for anyone else in between. Because of Jesus and what he did, we have direct access to God.*
 - c. R. Kent Hughes on the importance of dealing with angels, *Why does the writer expound it here? Because some of the Jewish believers to whom he was writing were in danger of compromising Jesus' superiority and lapsing into Judaism. They were under pressure first from the imminent threat of Nero's persecution for being Christians, and secondly, they were pressured because of ostracism by their Jewish countrymen in the synagogue. They were being tempted to compromise. If they would simply agree that Jesus was an angel, perhaps even the greatest of angels, but not God, they would be accepted into the synagogue and escape the awful pressure...It takes only a little thought to identify with this temptation, because the supremacy of Christ brings tension in everyday life. The world bristles at "Jesus only." But one does not have to deny him outright to get along.*
 2. His superiority is based on His relationship to the Father (4-5)
 - a. The Old Testament passages will show the superiority of the Son to angels (4), ***having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.***
 - 1) This is the writer's first use of *superior* which will be used 12 more times as the Son is *superior* to all others.
 - 2) This verse identifies the first main subject of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Son is superior to angels.
 - 3) H. D. M. Spence, *...the sonship assigned to the Messiah carries with it the idea of a relation to God altogether beyond any ever assigned to angels.*
 - 4) The writer of Hebrews will show that what is revealed by the Son is superior to that which was mediated through angels in Hebrews 2:1-4.
 - 6) Thomas Constable, *He was always the pre-existent Son...He became the incarnate Son at His birth...and He became the exalted Son when He returned to heaven.*

- b. Jesus' superiority is proclaimed by God's declaration of their unique relationship (5)
- 1) The writer begins verse 5 with a question (5a), *For to which of the angels did God ever say,*
 - a) William L. Lane, *The question posed is rhetorical, and calls for a negative response.*
 - b) H. D. M. Spence, *It is not, "When were angels ever called sons?" but to this effect: "To which of them did he ever speak (individually) in the following remarkable terms?"*
 - c) Ray Stedman, *Though the angels collectively were called sons of God, no individual angel ever is given that title, or singled out as having a unique status before God. So the writer demands rhetorically, To which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father"?*
 - d) Zane Hodges, *In a collective sense, the angels are called "sons of God" in the Old Testament (Job 38:7, marg.), but the writer was thinking of the title Son in the sense of the Davidic Heir who is entitled to ask God for dominion over the whole earth (cf. Ps. 2:8). In this sense the title belongs uniquely to Jesus and not to the angels.*
 - e) A similar rhetorical question is asked in Hebrews 1:13, introducing the final question in this section.
 - 2) God the Father's declaration of His unique relationship to the Son (5b), *"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"?*
 - a) The writer used Old Testament references in Hebrews 1:5 which confirm Jesus' superior name.
 - b) The first quotation is from Psalm 2:7, *I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you.*
 - 1] R. Kent Hughes, *Psalm 2 was already a famous Messianic Psalm, understood to be fulfilled in a future day by a descendant of David who would be crowned king... "Son" is Jesus' eternal name that was given exalted declaration in his resurrection and exaltation. No angel ever had that!*
 - 2] *Begotten* refers to the incarnation and Jesus' human nature not His divine nature which is eternal.
 - 3] Thomas Constable, *"Son of God" is a title that refers to one of the Davidic kings (2 Sam. 7:14) and specifically to Jesus Christ, God the Son (Mark 1:11; Luke 1:32).*
 - 4] F. F. Bruce, *The eternal Son of God "... entered into the full exercise of all the prerogatives implied by His Sonship when, after His suffering had proved the completeness of His obedience, He was raised to the Father's right hand.*
 - 5] William L. Lane, *It was apparently the writer's conviction that although Jesus was the pre-existent Son of God, "although he was the Son," he entered into a new dimension in the experience of sonship by virtue of his incarnation, his sacrificial death, and his subsequent exaltation. This new dimension finds expression in the legal formula of recognition, "You are my Son."*
 - c) The second quotation is from 2 Samuel 7:14, *I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son.*
 - 1] The word that ties Psalm 2:7 to 2 Samuel 7:14 is *Son*.
 - 2] The historical reference was to Solomon as a type of Christ.
 - a] Psalm 89:27, *And I will make him the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth.*
 - b] Matthew 12:42, *The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.*
 - 3] R. Kent Hughes, *This is also a quotation from a well-known Messianic passage, commonly called the Davidic Covenant, in which the prophet Nathan told David that after his death his son would build a house for God and establish a royal throne that would endure forever. God's words to the Son—Christ—were, "I will be his Father, and he will be my Son."*
 - 4] Thomas Constable, *Not only is Jesus the Son of God, He is also the promised son of David (Luke 1:32–33, 68–69; Rom. 1:3). Even though Jesus Christ was always God's eternal Son, He became the Son prophesied to rule over David's house. He received permission to rule the whole earth after His ascension (cf. Ps. 2:8).*
 - 5] Jesus is the fulfillment of the David Covenant as announced by the angel Gabriel to Mary in Luke 1:32–32, *He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.*
 - 6] Donald Hagner, *This passage, like Psalm 2:7, was regarded as having a distinctly eschatological significance. Indeed, the combination of these two texts in just such a perspective is encountered in the literature of the covenant community at Qumran on the shore of the Dead Sea, just prior to the NT era.*

- 3) Concerning the name *Son*
 - a) Verses which emphasize the exalted name *Son*.
 - 1] Philippians 2:9-11, *Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so 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.*
 - 2] Ephesians 1:21, *far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.*
 - 3] Romans 1:1-4, *Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord,*
 - b) The reasons Jesus' name as *Son* is more excellent than theirs may be found in Hebrews 1:1-3.
 - 1] The Son is the superior Spokesman (2a), *but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son.*
 - 2] The Son is the Heir of all creation (2b), *whom he appointed the heir of all things,*
 - 3] The Son is the Creator of the world (2c), *through whom also he created the world.*
 - 4] The Son is the full revelation of God (3a), *He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature,*
 - 5] The Son is the Sustainer of the universe (3b), *and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.*
 - 6] The Son is the Redeemer from sin (3c), *After making purification for sins,*
 - 7] The Son reigns as King of Kings (3d), *he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,*
 - c) Other usages of the name *son*.
 - 1] Christians have received that more excellent name as *sons* by adoption, John 1:12, *But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,*
 - 2] As noted earlier, angels are sometimes called *sons of God* in the Old Testament but this passage marks the distinction between Jesus and angels. Note Job 1:6, *Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them.*
 - d) Comments
 - 1] R. Kent Hughes, *So we see that Jesus is superior to the angels because he always was God's Son and because two Old Testament sonship prophecies were marvelously fulfilled by him at his incarnation and resurrection and exaltation. His name is "Son," while all that can be said of angels is that they are messengers.*
 - 2] William L. Lane, *By joining Ps 2:7 and 2 Sam 7:14 the writer to the Hebrews provides strong biblical support for the assertion that the position of the angels is subordinate to the status of the Son. He alone enjoys the unique relationship with the Father that finds expression in the designation "my Son."*

3. Jesus' superiority is seen in worship of Him (6)

- a. The timing of God's declaration (6a), ***And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world,***

- 1) *And again*
 - a) Some commentators believe *again* refers to this as another quotation supporting the superiority of Jesus.
 - b) Zane Hodges, *...it would be preferable to translate, "and when He again brings the Firstborn into the world.*
 - c) It is probably best to take it as a reference to Jesus' incarnation, His reappearance after His resurrection or His Second Coming.
- 2) *He* in verse 6a is God the Father.
- 3) *the firstborn*
 - a) Colossians 1:15, *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.*
 - b) Romans 8:29, *For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.*
 - c) F. F. Bruce, *He is called 'the firstborn' because He exists before all creation, and because all creation is His heritage.*
 - d) Thomas Constable, *The title describes rank and honor here. The first-born received special blessings (inheritance) from his father.*

- b. Angels are to worship the Son (6b), *he says, Let all God's angels worship him.*"
- 1) The reference comes from Deuteronomy 32:43.
 - a) It is from the Septuagint which is the Greek translation of the Old Testament.
 - b) A fragment including this text was found in Cave 4 at Qumran which provides early witness to its authenticity.
 - c) H. D. M. Spence, *...the main point of it is that the angels in "that day" are not, like the Son, sharers of the throne, but only worshipers.*
 - d) Warren Wiersbe, *God commanded them to do so, which proves that Jesus Christ is God; for none of God's angels would worship a mere creature.*
 - 2) They worship and serve God.
 - a) Psalm 103:20, *Bless the LORD, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his word, obeying the voice of his word!*
 - b) Psalm 148:2, *Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his hosts!*
 - c) Revelation 5:11-13, *Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!" And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!"*
 - 3) They communicate God's messages to man.
 - a) Acts 7:53, *you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it.*"
 - b) Revelation 22:16, *I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.*
 - c) Jews regarded the Mosaic law as being given through angels, Acts 7:52-53, *Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it.*
 - 4) They minister to believers.
 - a) Psalm 34:7, *The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them.*
 - b) Psalm 91:11, *For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.*
 - 5) They will be God's agents in the Second Coming and final earthly judgments.
 - a) Matthew 24:31, *And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*
 - b) Matthew 13:39, *and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels.*
- c. Comments
- 1) Ray Stedman, *He whom the Hebrews thought to be subordinate to angels is the very one whom the angels are commanded to worship as their creator!*
 - 2) R. Kent Hughes, *What awesome beings are angels! And what terrific power they wield! But despite all their cosmic excellencies, their significance dwindles in the presence of Christ.*
 - 3) Donald Hagner, *This quotation is utilized primarily for the reference to the worshiping angels. But if the words spoken to the Lord are referring to the Son, then the deity of the Son (and thus, obviously, his superiority to the angels) is clearly implied.*
 - 4) William L. Lane, *It is because of the surpassing superiority of the Son that the angels were commanded to worship him.*

B. Jesus has superior responsibilities (7-14)

1. He is Messiah (7-9)

a. Angels are servants (7), ***Of the angels he says, “He makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire.”***

- 1) The writer’s quotation is Psalm 104:4, *he makes his messengers winds, his ministers a flaming fire.*
- 2) The quotation is prefaced by a declaration from God concerning angels.
- 3) God’s description of angels
 - a) *He makes his angels winds*
 - 1] *Winds* may speak to the varied nature of their service.
 - 2] Thomas Constable, *By describing the angels as winds the psalmist was drawing attention to their spirit nature, invisibility, power, and function as servants of a higher Power.*
 - 3] Charles Spurgeon, *Angels are like winds for mystery, force, and invisibility, and no doubt the winds themselves are often the angels or messengers of God.*
 - 4] Donald Hagner, *...an implied contrast between the changeability and transitoriness of wind and fire (and hence of the angels) and the unchanging character and permanence of the Son.*
 - b) *his ministers a flaming fire*
 - 1] *Fire* serves the purposes of man as angels serve the purposes of God.
 - 2] Thomas Constable, *As flames of fire they are God’s agents of judgment and illumination.*
 - 3] R. Kent Hughes, *...angels sometimes spectacularly inhabit wind and fire to do God’s bidding—as when the angel shot up through the flame of Manoah’s sacrifice—but in doing this they are only servants. Note Judges 13:20, And when the flame went up toward heaven from the altar, the angel of the LORD went up in the flame of the altar. Now Manoah and his wife were watching, and they fell on their faces to the ground.*
- 4) Comments
 - a) The Son is superior to angels as He is superior to wind and fire which He created.
 - b) R. Kent Hughes, *...the writer demonstrates the superiority of Christ to angels by contrasting their statuses: the angels are servants, but the Son is sovereign.*
 - c) James Moffatt, *...God can reduce angels to the elemental forces of wind and fire, so unstable is their nature, whereas the person and authority of the Son are above all change and decay.*
 - d) Donald Hagner, *The angels are indeed God’s agents, but they are distinctly subordinate agents, not of central significance, not to be likened to God or the Son.*
 - e) William L. Lane, *The introduction of a quotation concerning the mutability of the angels serves primarily to emphasize the unchangeable, eternal character of the Son...The ephemeral, mutable form of the angels underscores their inferiority to the Son, who stands above the created order and is not subject to change and decay.*

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

- 1) The writer’s quotation is Palm 45:6-7, *Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness; you have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions;*
- 2) As in verse 7, this quotation is prefaced by a declaration from God concerning the Son.
- 3) God’s description of the Son as Messiah
 - a) Messiah will have supreme authority.
 - 1] It is because He is God.
 - a] William Lane, The implication that the Son shares the quality of deity only intensifies the reference to his eternal rule and sharpens the contrast between the unchangeable Son and the mutable angels.
 - b] Donald Hagner, *The Son is not simply the representative of God; he is God by virtue of his nature and function.*
 - c] Oscar Cullmann, *Jesus’ deity is more powerfully asserted in Hebrews than in any other New testament writing, with the exception of the Gospel of John.*

- 2] He will rule righteously forever.
 - a] He will reign as King, Jeremiah 23:5, *Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.*
 - b] His righteous rule is based in His divine nature which loves righteousness and hates wickedness.
 - 1] Zane Hodges, *The King the psalmist described had loved righteousness and hated wickedness. This points to the holiness and obedience of Christ while He was on earth, to which reference will be repeatedly made later (cf. Heb. 3:1–2; 5:7–8; 7:26; 9:14).*
 - 2] The place that perfectly reveals the Son's love for righteousness and hatred wickedness is Calvary, 1 Peter 3:18, *For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,*
 - 3] Charles Spurgeon, *Christ Jesus is not neutral in the great contest between right and wrong; as warmly as He loves the one He abhors the other. What qualifications for a sovereign! What grounds of confidence for a people!*
 - c] Donald Hagner, *The throne that will last for ever and ever and will be characterized by righteousness is the promised messianic kingdom...*
- 3] Comments
 - a] Ray Stedman, *The contrast between a royal personage and his servant-companions is the point of the quotation. This king is addressed twice as God; possesses a throne, a scepter and a kingdom; loves righteousness and hates wickedness; has a special anointing of joy; and continues as king forever and ever. No angel could claim these attributes.*
 - b] Charles Spurgeon, *Angels are servants and not kings. They fly upon the divine errands like flames of fire, but they do not sway a scepter, and neither do they have a throne existing forever and ever.*
- b) Messiah will be supremely blessed.
 - 1] *anointed you with the oil of gladness*
 - a] God made a covenant with Messiah, Psalm 89:3, *You have said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant:*
 - b] The anointing probably took place after Jesus' ascension.
 - 1] Warren Wiersbe, *When Christ ascended and entered the heavenly glory, He was anointed for His heavenly ministry with "the oil of gladness" (Heb.1:9).*
 - 2] Hebrews 12:2, *looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*
 - 3] Charles Spurgeon, *God Himself anoints the man Christ Jesus, as He sits at the heavenly feasts—anooints Him as a reward for His work, with higher and fuller joy than any else can know. Thus the Son of Man is honored and rewarded for all His pains.*
 - c] Scriptural references
 - 1] Psalm 89:20, *I have found David, my servant; with my holy oil I have anointed him,*
 - 2] Isaiah 61:1-2, *The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn;*
- 2] *beyond your companions*
 - a] Angels may be seen as partners with the Son in His work but He rules over them.
 - 1] William Lane, *Their function is to serve; his is to rule. They are subject to constant change; he does not change, and his rule reflects a commitment to righteousness, which explains why God has crowned him with joy (cf. 12:2).*
 - 2] R. Kent Hughes, *It is impossible to logically think of Christ and angels as peers, any more than we could of a sovereign and his slaves as equals.*
 - 3] Warren Wiersbe, *Angels minister before the throne; they do not sit on the throne.*

- b] Christians are Jesus' companions who are anointed out of His fullness
 - 1| Hebrews 3:1, *Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession,*
 - 2| Charles Spurgeon, *Jesus is the anointed king, and though we share in the anointing, yet is He far above us. Christ is infinitely greater than Christians. We are right glad to have it so.*

2. He is Creator (10-12)

a. The Son created heaven and earth (10), ***And, “You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands;***

- 1) The writer’s quotation is from Psalm 102:25-27, *Of old you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you will remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will change them like a robe, and they will pass away, but you are the same, and your years have no end.*
- 2) *And*
 - a) It links this verse to verse 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.*
 - b) The writer is strengthening his declaration of the divine nature of the Son.
- 3) The Son is Creator
 - a) Hebrews 1:2, *but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.*
 - b) The Son was not only present at creation but heaven and earth were the work of His hands.
 - c) William L. Lane, *Jewish theology assigned a prominent role to the angels as those who were present at the moment of the creation and who assisted God in the government of the universe (cf. Job 38:7; Rev 7:1; 14:18; 16:5). The writer affirms it is the Son alone through whom God created the universe; it is the Son, not the angels, who upholds it through his sovereign word...*

b. Contrast of the Son to creation (11-12)

1) Creation will change (11-12a), ***they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment, like a robe you will roll them up, like a garment they will be changed.***

- a) Change is part of a temporal creation but the Son remains the same.
- b) Jesus created the universe and will roll it up as a mantle and exchange it for a new one.
- c) Thomas Constable, *After God burns up the present earth and heavens, He will create new heavens and a new earth (2 Peter 3:10–12; Rev. 21–22)...Even though the earth as we know it will end, the Son’s rule will continue eternally and with it His joy.*
- d) Zane Hodges, *But even when the present creation wears out like an old garment and is exchanged for a new one, the Son will remain unchanged. The reference here of course is to the transformation of the heavens and earth which will occur after the Millennium and will introduce the eternal state (2 Peter 3:10–13).*
- e) R. Kent Hughes, *What stupendous thoughts! As a man during his lifetime outlives many successive suits of clothes, so Christ will see and outlive many successive material universes, yet will himself remain eternal and unchanging.*
- f) Charles Spurgeon, *The visible creation, which is like the garment of the invisible God, is becoming old and wearing out, and our great King is not so poor that He must always wear the same robes. Before long, He will fold up the worlds and put them aside as worn out vestures, and He will array Himself in new attire, making a new heaven and a new earth wherein righteousness dwells.*

2) The Son will never change (12b), ***But you are the same, and your years will have no end.”***

- a) Hebrews 13:8, *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*
- b) William L. Lane, *The attribute of permanence in the Creator corresponds to the durability of his throne and serves to reinforce the contrast between the mutability of the angels and the stable, abiding character of the Son.*
- c) Zane Hodges, *The writer definitely taught that Messiah’s kingdom would survive the final “shaking” of the creation (cf. Heb. 12:26–28).*
- d) James Moffatt, *...the world wears out, even the sky (12:26) is cast aside, and with it the heavenly lights, but the Son remains...nature is at his mercy, not he at nature’s.*

3. He is Conqueror (13-14)
 - a. The writer quotes Psalm 110:1, *The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool."*
 - b. He begins with a question (13a), ***And to which of the angels has he ever said,***
 - 1) He uses a rhetorical question as he did at the beginning of this section in verse 5.
 - 2) The questions demands a negative response.
 - 3) Jesus has been proven to be superior to angels in His person and work.
 - 4) William L. Lane, *In v 3 it implied that the divine Son seated himself at God's right hand (cf. 8:1; 10:12-13; 12:2), but the quotation in v 13 explains that his enthronement was accomplished at the invitation of God.*
 - c. There is a declaration of the Father to the Son (13b), ***"Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet"?***
 - 1) On the importance of Psalm 110:1
 - a) R. Kent Hughes, *That Christ rules supreme is proven by a passage quoted more often in the New Testament than any other (fourteen times). Jesus even quoted it himself and applied it to himself at his trial (Mark 12:36).*
 - b) Donald Hagner, *This verse, describing the vindicating capstone of the Son's completed ministry, serves as one of the basic weapons in our author's arsenal of arguments concerning the superiority of the person and work of the Son.*
 - 2) *Sit at my right hand*
 - a) Jesus' present position at the right hand of the Father concerns His rule over the church,
 - b) Verses to consider
 - 1] Hebrews 12:2, *looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*
 - 2] Romans 8:34, *Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.*
 - 3] Colossians 3:1, *If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.*
 - c) Thomas Constable, *Angels stand and serve, but the Son sits and rules...*
 - d) Douglas Mangum, *The Son, who is superior to the angels, is reigning over all his enemies at the right hand of God.*
 - 3) *until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet*
 - a) R. Kent Hughes, *Christ's absolute rulership is dramatically seen here in that it was the custom for a defeated king to prostrate himself and kiss his conqueror's feet (see Psalm 2:12) and for the victor to put his feet on the captive's neck so that the captive became his footstool (see Joshua 10:24).*
 - b) Charles Spurgeon, *The sight of Jesus enthroned in divine glory is the sure guarantee that all things are moving onward toward ultimate victory. Those rebels who now stand high in power shall soon be in the place of contempt; they shall be his footstool.*
 - c) Jesus' future vindication will be at His second coming.
 - 1] Thomas Constable, *The vindication predicted here will take place when Jesus Christ returns at His second advent and at the various judgments of God's enemies that will follow that return.*
 - 2] Philippians 2:10-11, *so 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.*

- d. The writer concludes with the primary purpose of angels (14), *Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?*
- 1) The writer uses another rhetorical question.
 - a) This time the expected response is yes.
 - b) William L. Lane, *The rhetorical question in v 14 is designed to call the hearers to decision. It demands an affirmative answer. They are to recognize that in contrast to the Son, who is invited to share the divine presence and splendor, angels are sent forth on a mission of assistance to those who find themselves oppressed and confused in a hostile world.*
 - 2) Angels are ministering spirits.
 - a) Psalm 91:11, *For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.*
 - b) Thomas Constable, *This ministry of service is obviously inferior to Jesus Christ's ministry of ruling.*
 - c) Ray Stedman, *...such ministry involves protection (Ps 91:11), guidance (Gen 19:17), encouragement (Judg 6:12), deliverance (Acts 12:7), supply (Ps 105:40), enlightenment (Mt 2:19–20) and empowerment (Lk 22:43), as well as occasional rebuke (Num 22:32) and discipline (Acts 12:23). Their service is rendered largely unseen and often unrecognized, but a passage like this should make us watchful for such help and grateful to the gracious Lord who sends angels to our aid.*
 - 2) Angels serve those who are to inherit salvation.
 - a) *serve*
 - 1] Thomas Constable, *God revealed a primary purpose and ministry of the angels in this verse. It is to assist human beings in reaching their final deliverance over their spiritual enemies.*
 - 2] R. Kent Hughes, *This does not mean their serving is a disgraceful vocation. Far from it! It is a sublime privilege. The point here is, however, that it is inferior to the Son's vocation of ruling the universe.*
 - 3] Charles Spurgeon, *They are servants of God and our willing guardians, but they are not to be worshiped. Jesus is Lord of all, and we are bound to adore Him, and Him only.*
 - b) *inherit*
 - 1] Leon Morris, *Inherit is often used in the NT in senses other than the strict one of obtaining something by a will. VIt can mean 'obtain possession of' without regard to the means. It is used of possessing the earth (Matt 5:5), the kingdom of God (1 Cor 6:9–10), eternal life (Mark 10:17), the promises (Heb 6:12), incorruption (1 Cor. 15:50), blessing (Heb 12:17), a more excellent name (v. 4).*
 - 2] Thomas Constable, *This writer spoke of the inheritance of Christians as the Old Testament writers spoke of the inheritance of the Israelites. Our inheritance refers to all that God wants to give His people.*
 - c) *salvation*
 - 1] It should not be considered solely in regard to regeneration.
 - 2] Zane Hodges, *In the Psalms this term occurs repeatedly to describe the deliverance of God's people from the oppression of their enemies and their consequent enjoyment of God's blessings...This meaning is uniquely suitable here where the Son's own triumph over enemies has just been mentioned.*
 - a] Psalm 18:2, *The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.*
 - b] Psalm 37:39, *The salvation of the righteous is from the LORD; he is their stronghold in the time of trouble.*

- c) A tremendous example of angelic service, R. Kent Hughes, *On a dark night about a hundred years ago, a Scottish missionary couple found themselves surrounded by cannibals intent on taking their lives. That terror-filled night they fell to their knees and prayed that God would protect them. Intermittent with their prayers, the missionaries heard the cries of the savages and expected them to come through the door at any moment.*

But as the sun began to rise, to their astonishment they found that the natives were retreating into the forest. The couple's hearts soared to God. It was a day of rejoicing!

The missionaries bravely continued their work. A year later the chieftain of that tribe was converted. As the missionary spoke with him, he remembered the horror of that night. He asked the chieftain why he and his men had not killed them. The chief replied, "Who were all those men who were with you?" The missionary answered, "Why, there were no men with us. There were just my wife and myself." The chieftain began to argue with him, saying, "There were hundreds of tall men in shining garments with drawn swords circling about your house, so we could not attack you.

CONCLUSION

- Zane Hodges, *That the readers were under external pressure there is little reason to doubt... Here the writer reminded them that the final victory over all enemies belongs to God's King and that the angels presently serve those who are destined to share in that victory, that is, to "inherit salvation."*
- William L. Lane on the biblical quotations in this section, *They simply summarize the biblical testimony to Jesus' sonship and rank, and establish his superiority to the heavenly mediators of the old revelation. The quotations thus reinforce the Church's confession (1:2b-4) and prepare for the solemn warning to respect the word of salvation proclaimed by the Lord (2:1-4).*
- R. Kent Hughes, *Our superior Christ has assigned his angels to minister to you. And if he wills, he can deliver you anytime and anywhere he wishes. Christ is superior to everything. He is adequate in your hour of need. You must believe it, and trust him with all you are and have.*