

Session 3 The Son Above the Angels

Before the Silence: A Study of Hebrews

Session 3 | Hebrews 1:5-14

The Son Above the Angels (Hebrews 1:5-14)

Session 2 showed that God has spoken by His Son, who is heir, creator, the radiance of God's glory, the exact expression of His person, sustainer, sin-purger, and seated at God's right hand. Hebrews 1:4 then introduced the comparison: the Son is **"so much better than the angels."** Hebrews 1:5-14 proves that claim from Scripture.

This is a natural unit. Verse 4 announces the Son's superiority to angels, verses 5-14 demonstrate it, and Hebrews 2:1-4 will draw the warning from it. If Israel was accountable for the word connected with angels, then Israel is more accountable for the word spoken by the Son. In the late pre-70 setting of Hebrews, this is not an abstract angelology lesson. It presses Hebrews living near the end of the Temple order to recognize the Messiah's name, throne, permanence, and right-hand expectation before the silence.

Hebrews 1:5 - The Son's Unique Name

For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?

- **"For"** connects verse 5 directly to verse 4. The Son has obtained a more excellent name than angels because Scripture never speaks to an angel the way it speaks to the Son.
- The question expects the answer: to no angel did God ever say this.
- **"Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee"** quotes Psalm 2:7, a royal and Messianic psalm. The issue is not the beginning of the Son's deity, but the public declaration of His royal Sonship and inheritance.
- **"I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son"** echoes the Davidic covenant language of 2 Samuel 7:14. Hebrews reads the Davidic promise in light of the Messiah who is David's greater Son.
- Closely related passages:
 - **Psalm 2:6-8** - The Son is set upon Zion and receives the nations for inheritance.
 - **2 Samuel 7:12-16** - The Davidic house, throne, and kingdom are established.
 - **Acts 13:32-33** - Paul connects Psalm 2:7 with the resurrection of Jesus.
 - **Romans 1:3-4** - Jesus is David's seed and declared the Son of God with power by resurrection.
- Text and translation note:
 - No major CT/TR issue here changes the reading.
 - **"Begotten"** in Psalm 2 is royal declaration language in this argument. It should not be pressed into the idea that the Son began to exist on that day.
- **"Son"** is the more excellent name introduced in verse 4. It speaks of identity, rank, inheritance, and royal authority.
- Theological insight:
 - Hebrews begins its proof with Israel's Scriptures, not with philosophical speculation. The Son's superiority is anchored in covenant, kingdom, and Davidic promise.
- Do not read this as saying:
 - Jesus became divine at His resurrection or enthronement.
 - Angels are never called sons of God in any sense. The point is that no angel receives this Messianic, Davidic, royal Sonship.
 - The Davidic kingdom hope has disappeared into a merely spiritual category.

Hebrews 1:6 - The Firstbegotten Worshipped

And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

- **"And again"** continues the chain of Scripture proofs.
- **"The firstbegotten"** does not mean first created. It is inheritance and rank language. The Son is the supreme heir.
- **"When he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world"** fits the public introduction of the Son into the inhabited world. In Hebrews' argument, the Son is not placed under angels; angels are commanded to worship Him.
- **"Let all the angels of God worship him"** is decisive. Worship is not due to a creature as God is worshipped. Angels serve; the Son receives worship.
- Closely related passages:
 - **Psalm 89:27** - David's greater seed is made God's firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth.
 - **Psalm 97:7** - All gods are commanded to worship the Lord.
 - **Deuteronomy 32:43** - In the Greek tradition, the heavenly beings are called to worship.
 - **Revelation 5:11-14** - The Lamb receives heavenly praise with the one who sits upon the throne.
- Text and translation note:
 - The Old Testament source is discussed because the wording closely matches the Greek Old Testament tradition, especially Deuteronomy 32:43, while also standing near the thought of Psalm 97:7.
 - **"Firstbegotten"** is the KJV rendering of a word often rendered firstborn. In Scripture, firstborn language can mark rank and inheritance, not only birth order.
- Theological insight:
 - If angels worship the Son, then angelic mediation cannot be the highest authority. This prepares for Hebrews 2:2-3,

where the word spoken by angels is lesser than the salvation first spoken by the Lord.

- Do not read this as saying:
 - The Son is the first creature God made.
 - Worshipping Christ competes with worshipping God. Hebrews presents the Son within God's own revealed glory and authority.
 - Angels are dishonored by worshipping the Son. Their proper honor is to obey God and worship the one God identifies as Son.

Hebrews 1:7 - Angels as Servants

And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.

- Hebrews now contrasts what Scripture says **“of the angels”** with what it says **“unto the Son”** in the next verse.
- Angels are real, powerful, heavenly servants. They are not dismissed as imaginary or irrelevant.
- **“Spirits”** and **“a flame of fire”** emphasize mobility, power, and service. The point is their ministerial role, not their rule over the Son.
- Closely related passages:
 - **Psalm 104:4** - The verse quoted here in praise of God's power over His creation and servants.
 - **Psalm 103:20-21** - Angels excel in strength and do the Lord's commandments.
 - **Daniel 7:10** - Thousands minister before the Ancient of days.
 - **Luke 1:19, 26** - Gabriel stands in God's presence and is sent with a message.
- Text and translation note:
 - No major CT/TR issue here changes the doctrine.
 - **“Ministers”** means servants. The same broad idea will return in verse 14, where angels are **“ministering spirits.”**
- Do not read this as saying:
 - Angels are weak or unimportant.
 - Angels are the proper object of prayer, trust, or worship.
 - Heavenly beings control Israel's destiny apart from the Son.

Hebrews 1:8-9 - The Son's Throne and Scepter

But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

- **“But unto the Son”** marks the contrast. Angels are ministers; the Son is addressed in royal and divine terms.
- **“Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever”** quotes Psalm 45:6. Hebrews applies the royal psalm to the Son without apology.
- The Son has a **“sceptre of righteousness.”** His kingdom is not merely power; it is righteous rule.

- **“Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity”** describes the moral character of the king. His rule is not arbitrary.
- **“God, even thy God, hath anointed thee”** preserves distinction between the Father and the Son while still addressing the Son in exalted terms.
- **“Above thy fellows”** again stresses superiority. The Son is not one equal among heavenly or royal peers.
- Closely related passages:
 - **Psalm 45:6-7** - The quoted royal psalm.
 - **Isaiah 9:6-7** - The Son reigns upon the throne of David with judgment and justice.
 - **Jeremiah 23:5-6** - The righteous Branch reigns and is called **“THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.”**
 - **Luke 1:32-33** - The Lord gives Jesus the throne of His father David, and of His kingdom there is no end.
- Text and translation note:
 - Some translations attempt to avoid the direct address **“O God,”** but the KJV rightly presents the Son as addressed with divine royal language.
 - **“Sceptre”** is kingdom language. Hebrews does not replace the kingdom expectation; it shows who holds the right to rule.
 - **“Anointed”** is Messiah language. Christ is the anointed King.
- Theological insight:
 - This passage holds together two truths often separated by careless theology: the Son is truly divine, and the Son is also the anointed Messianic King in relation to His God. Hebrews is not embarrassed by either truth.
- Do not read this as saying:
 - The Father and Son are the same person.
 - The Son's kingdom is only an inward moral influence with no future public rule.
 - The Son's righteousness is optional decoration. Righteousness is the very scepter of His kingdom.

Hebrews 1:10-12 - The Son's Permanence Over Creation

And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.

- Hebrews continues speaking **“unto the Son”** from verse 8. The words of Psalm 102 are applied to Him.
- The Son is addressed as **“Lord”** and identified with the one who laid the foundation of the earth.
- Creation is real and good, but it is not permanent in its present form. **“They shall perish; but thou remainest.”**
- The heavens and earth are compared to a garment that grows old and is folded up. Creation is changeable; the Son is not.
- **“Thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail”** gives the readers a fixed point in a collapsing age. The Temple order

could vanish, kingdoms could shake, and the world itself could be changed, but the Son remains.

- Closely related passages:
 - **Psalm 102:25-27** - The quoted text, originally addressed to the Lord.
 - **Isaiah 51:6** - The heavens vanish like smoke, but God's salvation remains.
 - **Matthew 24:35** - Heaven and earth pass away, but Christ's words do not pass away.
 - **Hebrews 12:26-28** - God will shake heaven and earth so that the unshakable kingdom remains.
- Text and translation note:
 - There is a textual variation in verse 12 reflected in some translations, but the central contrast remains unchanged: creation is changeable; the Son remains.
 - **“Vesture”** means garment. The image is not annihilation by accident, but sovereign control by the Lord.
- Theological insight:
 - Hebrews' readers were being asked to trust the Son while visible religious structures still stood. The argument is that even the heavens and earth are less stable than He is. That is a strong word to a Hebrew audience facing the end of the Temple era.
- Do not read this as saying:
 - The material creation is evil.
 - God's promises fail when the present order changes.
 - The Son is merely an agent within creation. He is before it, Lord over it, and unchanged when it changes.

Hebrews 1:13 - The Son at the Right Hand

But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?

- The argument returns to a question: no angel was ever invited to sit at God's right hand.
- The quotation is Psalm 110:1, one of the controlling Old Testament texts for Hebrews.
- **“Sit on my right hand”** speaks of honor, authority, and completed sacrificial work, as Hebrews 1:3 already said.
- **“Until”** matters. The Son is seated now, while the subduing of His enemies awaits its appointed completion.
- **“Thine enemies thy footstool”** is kingdom and victory language. The right-hand session does not cancel the future public defeat of enemies.
- Closely related passages:
 - **Psalm 110:1** - The quoted enthronement text.
 - **Matthew 22:41-46** - Jesus uses Psalm 110 to show that David's Son is also David's Lord.
 - **Acts 2:34-36** - Peter applies Psalm 110 to the risen Christ and presses Israel with the claim that God made Jesus both Lord and Christ.

- **Hebrews 10:12-13** - Christ sits after one sacrifice and waits until His enemies are made His footstool.

- Text and translation note:
 - No major CT/TR issue here changes the meaning.
 - The KJV **“until”** should not be softened. It marks an interval between the present session and the future subjection of enemies.
- Theological insight:
 - Hebrews is written during a period when the Son is exalted but His enemies are not yet visibly subdued. That explains both the confidence and the urgency of the book.
- Do not read this as saying:
 - Christ is inactive while seated.
 - The kingdom hope has already been exhausted in the present age.
 - Angels share the throne equally with the Son.

Hebrews 1:14 - Angels as Ministering Spirits

Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

- Verse 14 states the proper place of angels. They are **“ministering spirits.”**
- **“Sent forth”** shows that angels act under command. They do not rule independently.
- They minister **“for them who shall be heirs of salvation.”** In Hebrews, salvation has a future-facing, kingdom-connected dimension. The readers are being exhorted not to neglect it.
- This does not make angels unimportant. It makes them servants within God's program, not rivals to the Son.
- Closely related passages:
 - **Psalm 91:11-12** - Angels are charged to guard according to God's command.
 - **Daniel 6:22** - God sends His angel and shuts the lions' mouths.
 - **Acts 12:7-11** - An angel delivers Peter from prison.
 - **Hebrews 2:3** - The warning asks how the readers will escape if they neglect so great salvation.
- Text and translation note:
 - No major CT/TR issue here changes the reading.
 - **“Shall be heirs”** is future language. Hebrews will continue to speak in terms of inheritance, rest, kingdom, and endurance.
 - The phrase should be read inside Hebrews' Israel-centered argument, not as a detached promise that invites speculation about guardian angels.
- Do not read this as saying:
 - Every claim about angelic activity should be accepted.
 - Angels mediate salvation apart from Christ.
 - The heirs of salvation are superior to the Son. Angels minister for the heirs, but only the Son is heir of all things.

One-Sentence Summary

Hebrews 1:5-14 proves from Israel's Scriptures that the Son's name, worship, throne, permanence, right-hand position, and kingdom expectation place Him infinitely above angels, who remain honored servants sent for the heirs of salvation.