

# Hebrews

## Chapter 1

### *The Supremacy of God's Son*

**1** Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, **2** but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. **3** He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, **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”? Or again, “I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son”? **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.” **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.” **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”? **14** Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?

**1:1-4** Listen to the Son – He Reveals God.

The very first sentence of Hebrews (1:1-2) tells us that these days, since Jesus has appeared, are the last days. With Jesus' coming, the writer asserts, God's way of speaking has changed. In former times God spoke through prophets. But now, in these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son, Jesus. The writer refers to Jesus' person and work with a series of seven concise statements (vv. 2-4). {a number of spiritual completeness} He declares, concerning Jesus (1) He is appointed heir of all things (at the end); (2) He was God's agent of creation (at the beginning); (3) He is the radiance of God's glory and the imprint-copy of God's being; (4) He upholds the universe by His powerful command; (5) He provided purification for our sins; (6) He sat down at the right hand of God in heaven; (7) He has received a name and inheritance better than the angels. (LL)

With these declarations the writer begins a major point: Jesus, and the new covenant He brought into being, is superior. What we have in Christ is better – far better! Even the disgrace and possible persecution we may be called on to bear for the sake of Christ does not diminish the superiority of Christ and of the covenant that came about through Him. The writer will speak of this superiority throughout this letter. (LL)

**1:1** *long ago*. Prior to Christ's coming, in contrast to “in these last days” (v. 2), the Messianic era inaugurated by the incarnation (see notes on Ac 2:17; 1Ti 4:1; 1Jn 2:18). (CSB)

Writing to people half inclined to turn back to Judaism because of difficulty and danger, the author began with a point with which they could hardly disagree. God had indeed spoken in the past to their forefathers. At many times and in various forms of law, history, poetry and prophecy God had spoken to

them through His prophets from Moses down to Malachi. But the ministry of the prophets had been partial and their message incomplete. More was to come, not to cancel what had been divinely recorded, but to complete it. (PBC)

*in many ways* – God’s prophetic Word was delivered to His people through the prophet’s oral proclamation, written words, and prophetic actions. (TLSB)

*God spoke.* Cf. “he has spoken” (v. 2). God is the ultimate author of both the OT and the NT. (CSB)

God spoke His Word to His people by means of the prophets; the words and deeds of the prophets were full of God’s power and brought about God’s will. (TLSB)

The Bible records many different ways in which God communicated with people. The passages cited refer to three of them: through dreams (Gen. 28:10-13); miraculous signs (Ex. 3:1-4); and prophets (2 Chron. 24:19). God also communicated to people with an audible voice (for example, on Mount Sinai and at Jesus’ Baptism), through visions, and in other ways. (LL)

*to our fathers.* In contrast to “to us” (v. 2). (CSB)

Those who lived by faith in the Savior God had promised. (TLSB)

*by the prophets.* All OT writers are here viewed as prophets in that their testimony was preparation for the coming of Christ; cf. “by his Son” (v. 2), a new and unique category of revelation in contrast to that of the prophets. (CSB)

*at many times and in various ways.* The OT revelation was fragmentary and occasional, lacking fullness and finality. (CSB)

These introductory words set forth the fundamental thought of the entire letter, the supreme article of faith and of the divinity of Christ, as Luther writes, not only on the basis of one fact, but from a large number of facts concerning both the person and the work of Jesus. In stately grandeur the letter opens: In many parts and in many ways God long ago, having spoken to our fathers in the prophets, at the end of these days spoke also to us in His Son. In many ways God spoke of old: He did not give the revelation of the salvation to come at one time and in its entirety, but piecemeal, bit by bit, now showing one fact concerning the coming Messiah and now another, revealing first the fact that He would be born of a woman, then that He would be of the seed of Abraham, then that Judah was to be His progenitor, then that He was to be a son of David: at other times picturing His office in His deepest humiliation, then again in the highest triumph of His exaltation. In many ways God spoke of old: sometimes by the institution of a rite or sacrifice, sometimes by parable, sometimes in a psalm, sometimes in a dream or vision. Thus God spoke to the Jews of old, in the times of long ago. But that was not His final speech and revelation. The perfect revelation, the clear statement of His good and gracious will toward mankind, so far as it is possible for men to know and understand it by the Spirit of God, came at last, at the end of the days or age of prophecy, in the fullness of time. The revelation made in and by Jesus Christ represents the last time and the final manner in which God chooses to speak to us before the Day of Judgment. To us He has spoken who belong to these days, to the Christian dispensation, the subject of the great final revelation being His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, who Himself has made known to us the Father and the Father’s counsel of love. (Kretzmann)

**1:2–3** The superiority of the Son’s revelation is demonstrated by seven great descriptive statements about him: (CSB)

1. *appointed the of all things*. The incarnate Son, having performed the work of redemption, was gloriously exalted to the position of the firstborn heir of God, i.e., he received the inheritance of God's estate ("all things"). See Ro 8:17. (CSB)

2. *through whom he created the world*. See Jn 1:3; Col 1:16. (CSB)

Of this Son, Jesus Christ, the inspired writer gives a marvelous description: Whom He has appointed Heir of all things, through whom He also made the worlds. It should be noted here, as Luther remarks, that everything that is said of Christ's humiliation and exaltation must be ascribed to the man, for the divine nature can be neither humiliated nor exalted. The man Jesus Christ, the Son of God according to His human nature, has been appointed by God the Heir of all things. It was God's will that Christ, also according to His humanity, should be Lord over all, and that all created things, the entire universe, should be subject to Him and be laid at His feet, Ps. 2, 8; 8, 6; 1 Cor. 15, 27; Phil. 2, 9-11. For as the Son of God, also after His incarnation, He is the rightful Heir of the eternal God. That is one proof for the deity of Christ. But this is supplemented by the statement that God made the worlds through Him, created all the parts of the universe as we know it through His almighty power, John 1, 3; Col. 1, 16. Jesus Christ, the second person of the Godhead, distinct from the Father as to person, is nevertheless one with Him in essence, Himself the Creator of the world. (Kretzmann)

3. *radiance of God's glory*. As the brilliance of the sun is inseparable from the sun itself, so the Son's radiance is inseparable from deity, for he himself is God, the second person of the Trinity (Jn 1:14, 18). (CSB)

This meant the whole array of His divine attributes, radiates forth in Jesus. Radiance is an inner brightness which shines out like the sun in the sky with its streaming light. To see that light is to see the sun; to see Jesus is to see the God of glory. (PBC)

Tired under affliction and almost ready to call it quits because of persecution, those Jewish Christians needed such a view of the perfect and victorious Christ. So do we! Struggling to keep the faith in an increasingly hostile world, so often engaged in what seems no more than a holding action, we need eyes lifted to the Lord Jesus, who is God's perfect revelation. May what the author has shown us of his glory prompt us to say, "My Lord and My God!" (John 20:28). (PBC)

4. *exact imprint of his nature*. Jesus is not merely an image or reflection of God. Because the Son himself is God, he is the absolutely authentic representation of God's being (cf. Jn 14:9; Col 1:15). (CSB)

An exact representation is some exact impression made by a tool, like a coin stamped by a die. So Jesus exactly represents the Father. To know Jesus is to know God's nature or glory. "God in focus" we might call Jesus. He expressed it even better when He said in John 14:9, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father." (PBC)

5. *sustaining all things*. Christ is not like Atlas, the mythical Greek god who held the world on his shoulders. The Son dynamically holds together all that has been created through him (Col 1:17). (CSB)

Let the scientists theorize and test; we know who holds all things together and leads them toward their final goal. It is He whose powerful word brought all into being in the beginning. "He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together," says Colossians 1:17. In the strong hands of such a Christ believers are externally secure. (PBC)

6. *making purification for sins*. Through his redeeming death on the cross. (CSB)

This is the heart of the whole matter. The whole letter was written to show that Christ was superior because he had come to “to provide purification for sin.” Sin stains; it defiles and damns. Only one could purify and only once would He need to do it. At Calvary’s cross the Creator and Sustainer became the Sin-bearer. Here is His most amazing glory! [John 12:23, “*Jesus replied, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.”*”] What a staggering thought – the sovereign Lord became the sacrificial Lamb! (PBC)

7. *sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.* Being seated at God’s right hand indicates that the work of redemption is complete and that Christ is actively ruling with God as Lord over all. (CSB)

“Right hand” refers to a position of power and honor; “Majesty in heaven” refers to God and all His awesome greatness. The ascended Lord Jesus holds the scepter in His nail-scarred hands, ruling over all in heaven, earth and hell. What a picture of greatness! [Revelation 1:12-16] (PBC)

But the miracles are not yet exhausted: He, being the splendor of His glory and the express image of His nature, bearing everything by the word of His power, having accomplished the purification of our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Christ is the splendor, the effulgence of God’s glory, just as when light-rays come out from a luminous body and form a similar light-body themselves, without, however, diminishing the brightness and power of the original light. It is God’s glory, the resplendent beauty of His majesty, the wonderful essence of God Himself, which the Son reveals. But he that is familiar with the essence of God to such an extent must Himself have penetrated into the innermost mysteries of the divine essence and be true God Himself. He is also an exact impression, the express image of the divine essence and nature, His every quality and attribute identifying Him as true God with the Father. There is in the Father nothing which is not reproduced in the Son; the two persons are identical in essence. Therefore it is also said of Jesus that He bears, upholds, all things by the word of His power. Not only the creation, but also the preservation and government of the world, providence, is ascribed to Him, Col. 1, 17. This function was discharged by Him even during His life on earth; He never ceased to exercise the rights and privileges of King in the Kingdom of Power. More important, however, in the eyes of the believers is the fact that He has also accomplished the purification of our sins by offering Himself as the adequate sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the whole world, Col. 1, 14; 2, 14; 2 Cor. 5, 19, and that His work of reconciliation has been received by the Father, in token of which the Son has been admitted, also according to His human nature, into the full and equal possession of the divine essence and the discharge of its functions, since He sat down at the right hand of the majesty of God the Father, assuming for Himself the sovereign majesty inherent in God, Ps. 110, 1; Eph. 1, 20-22. Christ now exercises the fullness of the divine power and honor, universal dominion over all created beings, also according to His human nature. We have here, then, another proof for the deity of Jesus Christ. (Kretzmann)

**1:2** *in these last days* – The time of the definite revelation of God’s will in Christ (cf. Acts 2:14-21). The distinction between the words of the prophets and of Jesus anticipates the establishment of the Bible as OT and NT. (TLSB)

“We know a little bit about a lot of things.” But if God had not set out to instruct us, there are some things no amount of thought or study or discovery would have revealed. Three of these referred to in the passages listed are (a) salvation is by grace; (b) Jesus is God; (c) God created the universe through Jesus. (LL)

The writer of the epistle makes the point in 1:1-2 that there was a message from God in the OT. Now there is another. Stage 1 is the message delivered by the prophets. Stage 2 is the message delivered by Christ. (LL)

In this phrase indicates that the last and final revelation has already come in Christ. Thus we have absolutely all we need or shall receive to achieve the gift of life. In the light of that promise we must be wary of the false claims of latter-day prophets and non-Christian religions that claim revelations after the NT; e.g., the Mormons, Muslim, TV evangelists, and others who claim they've received new and direct revelations. Instead of being caught up in every new wind of doctrine, or purported additional revelation, we need to go ever deeper in our grasp of Holy Scripture. All we need and everything we ought cherish is ours and fully revealed in God's Word. (LL)

So it happened, just as the fathers had been told. Moses had told them in Deuteronomy 18:15, "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him." And it happened! "In these last days," that the NT period of time is which we live and after which comes only eternity, God has spoken in the person of His Son. (PBC)

Note the stress on inspiration. Through the prophets and now through His Son, God was speaking. They spoke His words. The prophets spoke for God; the Son spoke as God. Now having spoken through His Son, God has nothing more to say to man. His Son, the Redeemer, to whom the OT pointed, is the ultimate Word and the perfect Revelation of God. How foolish for anyone to turn his back on such a revelation for any reason. (PBC)

*appointed the heir* – An heir inherits all that belongs to the parents. Jesus as God's only begotten Son, shares with His brothers and sisters the Father's mercy, forgiveness, and new life. (TLSB)

*through whom also he created the world* – The Son was not created by the Father, but always existed with Him and the Holy Spirit (John 1:1). God the Father, with the Holy Spirit created all that exists, seen and unseen, by His Son, the Word of the Father. (TLSB)

**1:3** *radiance of the glory of God* – God the Father, invisible and dwelling in "unapproachable light" (1 Tim. 6:16), [ Exodus 33:12-23; 34:29-35] has revealed the light of His glory in Christ Jesus.

*Imprint of his nature* – As wax mold reveals every detail of a metal seal, Jesus is the exact expression of the Father's nature, being eternally begotten of the Father. He possesses and reveals all that is divine. To see Jesus is to see the Father (John 19:9). Luther: "These two words [imprint nature] lead us to understand that the Father and the Son are of two kinds and distinct according to the Person, but one and undivided according to the substance. The word 'image' indicates that the Son is not the Father, but the image of the Father and a different Person. The phrase 'of his substance' indicates that he is not separate from the Father according to nature, but is together with him in one Godhead and of equal substance, and is thus an image of the Father's substance, not made or having a beginning at a previous time, but having become and been from eternity, just as the divine substance was neither made nor has a beginning but has been from eternity....For the divine substance is eternal, whereas whatever has a beginning is temporal" (AE 34:222) (TLSB)

*word of his power* – Jesus, the Word who called creation into being (Gen. 1), continues to uphold all creation. (TLSB)

*purification for sins* – The blood sacrificed animals cleansed both the OT temple's altar and God's people from the defilement caused by sin (Lev. 16:19, 30). Jesus alone makes the final complete purification of our conscience (Heb. 9:14). Luther: "We should despair of our repentance, of our purification from sins fore before we repent, our sins have already been forgiven. Indeed, first His very purification, on the contrary, also produces penitence in us, just His righteousness produces our righteousness" (AE 29:112). (TLSB)

Meditate on the richness of meaning in the phrase that summarizes Christ’s ministry on earth: He provided purification (cleansing) for sin.” How do the following texts expand on that meaning? Leviticus 16:30; Ephesians 5:25-26; Titus 3:5-7; 1 Peter 3:21. (LL)

The Son accomplishes in His incarnation, suffering, and death what the high priest pictured and signified in his yearly sacrifice of an animal on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:30). Once for all, on Calvary, the Son atones for the sins of the world. He did this out of love (Eph. 5:25), in order to make the church, His bride, holy and perfect. All this He did, not because of our goodness, but because of His mercy – even working in us through His Spirit and Baptism the faith by which we accept His forgiving love (Titus 3:5-7; 1 Peter 3:21). (LL)

*at the right hand* – The right hand of God represents the fullness of God’s authority and glory (cf. Ps. 110:1). (TLSB)

Psalm 110:1 pictures the coming Messiah as a king with defeated enemies at his feet. (As in Joshua 10:24, victorious kings placed their feet on the necks of their prostrate, defeated enemies.) Ephesians 1:20-22 teaches that Christ, as true man, is not only present everywhere, but now fully exercises this divine power over the whole universe for the benefit of His kingdom and the up-building of His church. (Note: This belief, often repeated as we confess our faith in the words of the Apostles’ Creed, should not lead us to picture Christ as far away and inactive but, on the contrary, as our active-for-us Prophet, Priest, and King.) (LL)

**1:4 superior to the angels.** To most Jews angels were exalted beings, especially revered because they were involved in giving the law at Sinai (see note on 2:2)—to the Jews God’s supreme revelation. The Dead Sea Scrolls reflect the expectation that the archangel Michael would be the supreme figure in the Messianic kingdom. Whether the recipients of Hebrews were tempted to assign angels a place above Christ (Messiah) is not known. (CSB)

In the OT the Law was given through angels. In those days angels frequently appeared to God’s people. So Jewish Christians would know and respect the high position of such heavenly beings. Yet Jesus ranked head and shoulders above them. He is eminently “superior” to the angels, the author tells us, using a word that is to appear again and again in Hebrews, thirteen times in all. In fact, Jesus was superior to anything and everything, and He was their Savior. How could they even think of leaving Him? (PBC)

Those Jewish Christians would also be well versed in the OT Scriptures and would readily accept their authority. So the author lets the OT speak. In every chapter of his letter there is at least one quotation from the OT: in this chapter there are seven! Reading the quotations makes us marvel at the depth of the OT. (PBC)

The Messiah was at the heart and center of the whole OT Scripture. He was in passages where we might not have even imagined Him to be. In John 5:39 the Messiah Himself told the Jews about the OT, “You diligently study the Scriptures.... These are the Scriptures that testify about me.” In Acts 10:43 Peter repeated that tremendous thought to Cornelius, “All the prophets testify about Him that everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sin through His name. (PBC)

Angels, although holy and great, were created by God. Jesus, through His suffering and humility, resurrection and exaltation, showed all creation that He was truly the eternal Son of the Father, and that He was and still is far above any creature (cf. Phil. 2:1-11). Hus: “Christ alone is the head of the universal church” (The Church, p. 27). (TLSB)

*name*. To Jews a name stood for the full character of a person in all he was and did. The section that follows indicates that this name was “Son”—a name to which no angel could lay claim. (CSB)

The title “Son” expresses the wonder that Jesus, the Son of Mary, is also the Son of God from eternity. (TLSB)

Having begun with the object of establishing the superiority of Christ over all created beings in the entire universe, the sacred writer takes occasion to show, first of all, the immeasurable excellence of our Lord when compared with the finest of all creatures, with the good angels: Having become so much superior to the angels as He has obtained (by inheritance a more excellent name than they. The divine excellence of Christ's exalted position corresponds to the superiority of the names which are applied to Him in Scriptures, the latter indicating at once that a real comparison between the divine Christ and the created angels is not to be thought of, since Jesus belongs in a class all by Himself. (Kretzmann)

**1:5–14** Christ's superiority to angels is documented by seven OT quotations (see NIV text notes), showing that he is God's Son, that he is worshiped by angels and that, though he is God, he is distinguished from the Father. (CSB)

Seven passages from the OT (five from Psalms) are used to proclaim Jesus as the Son of God from eternity. (TLSB)

The seventh assertion – that Christ is superior to angels – leads to the next section, where the writer marshals OT passages to tell of the superiority of this exalted and enthroned Son over the angels. This demonstration is important for two reasons. First, some Jews held that various angels were closer to God and more powerful than the Messiah, whom they held to be only a human king (Son of David). Hebrews proves that Christ, the Son of David, who became a human being and made purification for sins, is also truly the Son of God. While Christ humbled Himself and “was made a little lower than the angels” (2:9) for a time, He has been exalted far above all angels. Second, God made use of angels in connection with His revelation of the Law in the OT. Heb. 2:2; Gal. 3:19; and Acts 7:53 all indicate that angels were involved in the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai. Therefore, the Word of God spoken of old was through prophets and associated with angels. But a message brought through angels can never be set above the Gospel revealed in Jesus. Nor is any angel the ruler of the world to come. No angels are ministering spirits, God's servants appointed for the sake of people who are to be served (1:14). (LL)

The author makes this point that Christ is superior to angels with a string of OT passages, with a concluding summary of his own (1:14). He quotes verses (mostly from the psalms) that speak of the Messiah, the Son of David and the Son of God. These passages show that the Son (1) is begotten by God (v. 5); (2) is worshiped by the angels (v. 6); (3) is eternal and upright king (vv. 7-8); (4) is anointed by God to be above His brothers (v. 9); (5) is eternal and unchanging (vv. 10-12); (6) has been commanded to sit at God's right hand (v. 13). Two prominent psalm verses, Psalm 2:7 and 110:4, open and close the chain, testifying to the enthronement of the Messiah. Throughout this collection of Bible passages the angels are shown to be subservient to the Son: they worship Him (v. 6) and are winds and spirits, flickering flames of fire (v. 7). Hebrews concludes (v. 14) that God has created angels to be ministering spirits to help people who are to be saved, not dominating powers to be feared and served by humans. (LL)

That angels serve as agents of God's care of us, His people, is of great comfort and reassurance to us. God's holy angels watch over and guard us, both in spiritual and in physical matters. These invisible servants of God, who surround us every moment, are another evidence that our God loves us and preserves us in all our ways. How grateful we can be to God for the service of the angels, creatures of our God as we are, who obediently serve God by watching over and caring for us. Though holy and more powerful than we, the angels serve us as they carry out God's will in regard to us. (LL)

**1:5** *You are my Son; today I have become your Father.* This passage (Ps 2:7) is quoted in Ac 13:33 as fulfilled in Christ's resurrection (cf. Ro 1:4). (CSB)

*I will be him a Father, and he shall be my Son.* Jews acknowledged 2Sa 7:14 (of which this passage is a quotation) and Ps 2 to be Messianic in their ultimate application (see Lk 1:32–33). This royal personage is neither an angel nor an archangel; he is God's Son. (CSB)

The name "Son" is His also in a special sense. The angel Gabriel referred to it in Luke 1:32 when he told Mary of that child to be born of her, "he will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High." In His incarnation Jesus inherited the name "Son" also according to His human nature. The God-man Jesus is God's Son. At the Jordan where Jesus was baptized and on the Mount of Transfiguration where His glory shone, the Father said it for all to hear, "You are my Son, whom I love" (Luke 3:22, 9:35). (PBC)

With the resurrection the Father placed the exclamation point behind that statement. Read Acts 13:33 to see how Paul used this very verse from Psalm 2 and connected it with Christ's resurrection to show that Jesus was the Son of God. The word "today" refers to the whole matter of the Son becoming man to take away the world's sin, the mission on which the Father had sent Him and which marked Him far superior to the angels. (PBC)

Next follows 2 Samuel 7:14: "I will be his father and he will be my son." Spoken originally about Solomon, these words had deeper meaning. They pointed ahead to David's greater Son, the eternal one whose kingdom would never end. Note how the author doubles the words. It is not enough to call Jesus "Son"; he also calls God "Father." Never was such divine sonship claimed for the angels.

The statement as to the divine names given to Christ the author now corroborates by a reference to Scriptures: For to which of the angels did God ever say, My Son art Thou; this day have I begotten Thee? And again, I shall be to Him for a Father, and He shall be to Me for a Son? The words of Ps. 2, 7 are a part of a Messianic prophecy, and are therefore addressed, not to any angel, but to the eternal Son of God, whose incarnation in no manner changed His divine essence. The Messiah Himself, prophesying of the days of the coming dispensation, asserts that the Father applied these words to Him. The words of the second passage quoted are not to be referred, as Luther shows, to 1 Chron. 22, 10, but to 2 Sam. 7, 14, where God Himself, in speaking to David, gives him the promise that his great Descendant, whose kingdom would be established forever, would be the Messiah Himself. The Son of God, however, begotten out of the essence of the Father from eternity, is Himself true and eternal God. Cp. Matt. 4, 17; 17, 5; John 5, 17-39. (Kretzmann)

**1:6** *firstborn.* A king's firstborn son would usually succeed to the throne. Because Jesus is the "firstborn" of the Father, the glory, honor, and power of the Father also belong to Jesus. (TLSB)

*Let all God's angels worship him.* Possibly quoted from Ps 97:7. This statement, which in the OT refers to the Lord God (Yahweh), is here applied to Christ, giving clear indication of his full deity. The very beings with whom Christ is being compared are commanded to proclaim his superiority by worshipping him. (CSB)

Do we need more proof that Jesus is superior to the angels? Then look ahead to that great day of judgment when God will again "bring his first-born into the world." On that day Christ will surely stand out as "first-born," first in rank and position, as all angels – not just some here and some there – but all angels bow down before him in worship. In Revelation 5:11, 12, John gives us a preview of the scene: "Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten



thousand times ten thousand...In a loud voice they sang: “Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!” (PBC)

But not only the divine names ascribed to Christ in Scripture establish the fact of His deity and therefore His immeasurable superiority over the angels, but also the fact that the latter are directly commanded to give honor and homage to Him as that due to God Himself: And again, when He introduces the Firstborn into the world, He says, And let all the angels of God worship Him. The Greek text may also be rendered: But when He brings again the First-born into the world. The title “Son” is reserved for Jesus the Messiah, as the writer has shown, and this Son, the First-born of the Father, the angels of God are to worship. The time to which he refers, when Christ was introduced to the habitable world, or will be introduced to the inhabitants of the world for the second time, is either that of the resurrection of Christ, or, more probably, that of Christ’s second advent, His coming to Judgment. With regard to this event the sacred writer quotes an Old Testament prophecy, not that of Deut. 32, 43, but of Ps. 97, 7, where the majesty of the exalted Christ is pictured. All the angels of God, who are in this instance called gods in the Hebrew text, as being creatures of great power and authority, should nevertheless bow down in worship before Him; surely an overwhelming proof of His deity. (Kretzmann)

**1:7** *He makes his angels winds, his ministers flames of fire.* Ps 104:4 speaks of the storm wind and the lightning as agents of God’s purposes. The Septuagint (the Greek translation of the OT), which the author of Hebrews quotes as the version familiar to his readers, reflects the developing doctrine of angels during the period between the OT and the NT. (CSB)

The quote of Psalm 104:4 emphasizes that the angels, although sharing in God’s glory and majesty, are God’s creatures. This contrasts with Jesus’ status as firstborn Son, sharing in the nature of His Father. (TLSB)

Superior in name, the Son is also superior in nature. Quoting Psalm 104:4 the author speaks of “angels,” which means messengers,” and of “servants” a word which referred to people functioning in an office. True, the angels are exalted messengers and function in a high capacity. Fleet as the wind, they carried God’s messages to some; ferocious as fire, they executed his judgment on others. Through the angel Mary heard God’s message in Luke 1:26-38, and through an angel King Herod felt God’s wrath in Acts 12:23. But that’s all the angels can be – messengers and servants under God’s complete control. (PBC)

The same fact is brought out by the inspired author by means of a second comparison: With regard to the angels indeed He says, Who makes His angels spirits and His ministers flames of fire; but with regard to the Son, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever, and a scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; for that reason God, Thy God, has anointed Thee with the oil of gladness beyond Thy comrades. The angels indeed are messengers and servants of God; He uses them to produce unusual disturbances in nature; they are present in storms and lightnings, whether these are sent as righteous judgments and punishments of God or merely as indications of His almighty power, John 5, 4; 2 Sam. 24, 16, 17; Ps. 78, 48. The characteristic functions of the angels, according to the passage referred to, Ps. 104, 4, consist in serving the Lord, and their form and appearance at such a time depend upon the will of their Master. In the great majority of cases, undoubtedly, the angels carry out their work in their proper, invisible nature: but the Lord often has a reason for making them visible, as men, as lightnings, and in other forms spoken of in Scripture. Powerful and mighty the angels were, as many examples illustrate, and yet they were only servants of God, whose rights and powers were strictly circumscribed, since they are dependent entirely upon their Master above. (Kretzmann)

**1:8-9** Psalm 45 is a royal psalm in which the king receives the promises made by God (cf. 2 Sam. 7:13). Jesus fulfills God's promise to David. He establishes an eternal throne that brings God's own righteousness and joy. (TLSB)

**1:8** *But of the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever."* The author selects a passage that intimates the deity of the Messianic (and Davidic) King, further demonstrating the Son's superiority over angels. (CSB)

Now look at Psalm 45:6-7 and see the supremacy of the Son. "O God," both the Psalmist and the author of Hebrews call him, God whose "throne will last for ever and ever." He is no mere messenger, but the eternal ruler of all. And a perfect ruler! His scepter is "righteousness." There is no partiality or prejudice with Him, as with earthly kings; but a ruling that is straightforward and right. In His heart is love for righteousness and hatred for wickedness as evidence during His life on earth. During those 333 years there was no flaw or failure, but perfect doing of His Father's will. (PBC)

In contrast to these qualities those ascribed to the Son stand out all the more prominently age to which the sacred writer has reference is Ps. 45, 6, 7. There the Messiah, Jesus Christ, is addressed in words which fully describe His majesty and power as true God with the Father. As true God, His throne is one that is established to the age of the age, to all eternity. The conception of eternity is here brought out in the strongest possible way, the author ascribing to Jesus Christ the divine quality of eternity. Having a throne, being entrusted with a rule, the Messiah wields a scepter of uprightness; all His judgments are right and just. (Kretzmann)

**1:9** *loved righteousness and hated wickedness* – It is characteristic of Him, therefore, that He has loved righteousness and hated lawlessness, both qualities fitting Him to be the Ruler of the universe. Whether the scene described is that of a wedding-feast or of the coronation of a king, it is clear, at least, that the Messiah, Jesus Christ, is said to have been anointed with the oil of rejoicing beyond His companions or fellows. The prophets, priests, and kings of the Old Testament were indeed also anointed, but only with perishable oil and for a short term of service. (Kretzmann)

*oil of gladness* – But the Messiah was anointed by the almighty God Himself with the oil of gladness and rejoicing, with the gifts and powers of the Holy Spirit, which are ever intended to bring true and lasting happiness to the hearts of all believers, here in time and hereafter in eternity. Jesus is the true Prophet, High Priest, and King, to whom all the types and examples of the Old Testament point forward. (Kretzmann)

Now "anointed with the oil of joy," a reference to the perfect joy and bliss at God's right hand, the ascended God-man rules in heaven. The Father, overjoyed at the completion and completeness of His Son's work, has set Him far above His "companions," those believers who will share His gladness. (PBC)

**1:10-12** Psalm 102 is the prayer of one suffering from physical distress and derision from enemies. The psalmist contrasts his own vulnerable, transitory life with God's everlasting kingdom. This quote concerning God's unchanging and authoritative power over creation is applied to Jesus, through whom all things were made (v. 2). (TLSB)

**1:10** *you, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning.* As in v. 6, a passage addressed to Yahweh ("O Lord") is applied to the Son. (CSB)

Look at the splendid sunsets, the splashing ocean, the star-studded sky. The Son was there before they existed! He even helped lay their foundations. (PBC)

And still another passage is quoted in support of the deity of Christ: Thou, O Lord, from the beginning didst found the earth, and works of Thy hands are the heavens; they will perish, but Thou wilt endure, and all as a garment will grow old, and like a mantle Thou wilt roll them up, and they will be changed. Thou, however, art the same, and Thy years have no end. Even in Old Testament times the psalm from which this passage was taken, Ps. 102, 12. 25-27, was considered a prophecy concerning the Messiah, and here the sacred writer substantiates this view by applying the words to Christ. It is Christ who, with the Father, created the world, laying the foundations of the earth: He made also the heavens and put them in their place. (Kretzmann)

**1:11** *they will perish* – And He, the almighty and eternal Creator, will remain, even when the heavens and all creatures become old and perish, when the heavens will be dissolved in fire, and the elements melt with fervent heat, 2 Pet. 3, 12. 13. They will be rolled together and exchanged like a dress, a veil, or a mantle, and the old heavens and the old earth will be known no more. (Kretzmann)

**1:12** *like a robe you will roll them up* – Those foundations, seemingly so solid, will wear out like clothing and will be rolled up to be discarded and replaced. (PBC)

YEARS WILL NEVER END – “But you,” the author quotes Psalm 102:25-27 as referring to Jesus, “you remain the same, your years will never end.” Age cannot touch Him; death cannot breathe upon Him; His years never come to an end. This eternal, unchangeable King is truly “Jesus Christ,” the same yesterday, and today, and forever.” What a ruler He is! His throne starts in a stable; His scepter is held in sinless hands; His kingdom last forever; His brothers share His glad joy. (PBC)

Only He, true God from eternity and to eternity, remains unchanged, and His years will never come to an end. Jesus Christ is not, like the angels, a mere servant of God; neither are His kingdom, office, power, and glory circumscribed, evanescent, temporary, as the works of the angels are: everlasting, all-powerful, unchangeable He stands, elevated above all the petty things of this world, true God forever. (Kretzmann)

**1:13** *Sit at my right hand.* Ps 110 is applied repeatedly to Jesus in Hebrews (vv3,13; 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:3, 11, 17, 21; 8:1; 10:12-13; 12:2). (CSB)

The author concludes with the telling words of Psalm 110:1. No angel ever heard God say, “Sit at my right hand.” That position of power and glory is reserved for the Son. All his enemies lie helpless in the dust before Him as a footstool beneath His feet. All of history becomes his-story, which He writes in the eternal interest of His church. (PBC)

And still another verse of Scripture the inspired author quotes: But to which of the angels has He ever said. Sit at My right hand, till I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet? These words God addressed in the prophecy to the Messiah, Ps. 110, 1, Jesus Himself using the argument against the Pharisees, Matt. 22, 41-46, Cp. Acts 2, 34-36; 1 Cor. 15, 25 The sitting at the right hand of God is described explicitly Eph. 1, 20-23, and there also plainly ascribed to Jesus Christ in His state of exaltation. (Kretzmann)

**1:14** *ministering spirits.* Christ reigns; angels minister as those sent to serve. (CSB)

Jesus’ status as true and everlasting King is contrasted with the status of angels who, though members of the royal court, are servants who obey the word of their Master. (TLSB)

God promises that He will send His angels to watch over and protect us, even from physical harm. The angels are agents of God in caring for us. While we are not to tempt the Lord by putting ourselves deliberately in harm’s way, we can have the confidence and peace that comes from knowing the Lord sends His powerful, invisible army to watch over us. (LL)

The best the angels can do it to be “ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation.” To carry out God’s will for the believers is their task and also their limit. All the journey home even the lowliest believer can have their service, but far better to have Him who is in every way “superior to the angels,” the eternal Savior who promises in 13:5, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” (PBC)

The final complete supremacy of Christ was prophesied of old and is being fulfilled at this time, in His person, not in that of any angel. The status of the latter, as compared with that of Jesus, is briefly and clearly described: Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth for the sake (in behalf) of those who are to obtain salvation? The angels are ministers; they render services to God and to men; they are used by God especially in behalf of those that are to inherit salvation, the believers in Christ. That is the destiny of those that place their trust in Jesus as their Savior, the inheritance of the blessings of heaven. And that is one of their distinctions, that they have the angels, the spirits of light, as their servants under the direction of God. It is a thought which is often overlooked by us, but which should be a source of great comfort to us at all times. At the same time, however, this position and state of service, which the angels occupy, is a definite and unassailable proof for the superiority of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, true God with the Father and the Holy Ghost. (Kretzmann)

*who are to inherit salvation* – As children inherit from their parents, so Christians inherit with Christ all that the Father has to give. Jesus, our elder brother, includes us by grace in His family with its riches. (TLSB)

**Ch 1** Jesus, through whom the Father created all things, and by whose Word all things are sustained, clearly reveals the gracious will of the Father to us. Although Jesus is heavenly like the angels, He is no mere creature. He is the firstborn Son of the Father, who shares with us all that the Father has. He frees us to receive God’s ministry, including the ministry given through the angels. • Lord Jesus, thank You for creating and sustaining me. By Your Word, keep me in true faith, that I may inherit salvation. Amen. (TLSB)