Crossroads International Church Dr. Rick Griffith

15 February 2015 Message 2 of 12

NLT 40 Minutes

**Better than Angels**

Title

***Hebrews 1:4–2:18***

**Topic:** Angels

**Subject:** Why worship Jesus instead of angels?

**Complement:** Jesus is *God worthy of worship* and *man worthy to rule.*

**Purpose:** The listeners will worship Jesus instead of any other lesser being

**Reading:** Hebrews 1:4–2:18

**Song:** “In Christ Alone” video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cIojIOplstI

# Introduction

### Interest: Angels are cool. Period. Now we may think *we* are strong but…

Muscle

Cool.

#### Angels are the most powerful beings under God himself.

##### Just read the description of the mighty angel Gabriel in Daniel 10…

Powerful

Dan 10

##### or the mighty angel in Revelation 10 who had one leg on land and one on sea.

Rev 10

#### Angels protect God’s people.

Swoop

Protect

##### Revelation 12 depicts an angel swooping up the baby Jesus from getting killed.

##### Jesus taught that angels guard children.

Guardian

##### You may not feel that your angel is very pleased with you, but…

Hand on Face

##### A 2008 survey by Baylor University’s Institute for Studies of Religion reveals that 55% of all American adults believe a guardian angel protects them.

55%

#### Angels bring God’s messages—to Abraham, to Daniel, to Mary, to Joseph, etc.

Messages

### Need: Do you believe in angels? A Nielsen survey in 2010 showed that nearly 70% of the U.S. population believes in angels.

Do you believe?

#### Do you respect them?

• Respect?

#### Do you give them *too much* respect? Like more than Jesus? I hope not.

• Too much?

#### Sometimes we get our theology of angels from movies like the 1946 film, “It’s a Wonderful Life!” It’s theology says, “Every time a bell rings, an angel gets his wings.” Really?! Do we have chapter and verse for that?

• Bell wings

Film

#### One author gives a good summary of the Bible’s teaching on angels [explain].

Characteristics

### Subject: Why worship Jesus instead of angels? What reasons can we give to hold Christ higher than the angelic host?

Subject

### Background: Why would this question be relevant to readers of the letter to the Hebrews?

Backgrd

#### Many scholars think that the readers had a very high view of angels—and that Jesus couldn’t compare to angels in their eyes.

Too high

##### The readers of Hebrews probably belonged to a Jewish sect emphasizing angels so much that they thought angels were better than Jesus.

##### Perhaps the readers thought, “Well, OK, Jesus supersedes prophets as they were mere men, but angels are far more powerful than any man!”

##### No one really knows the identity of the author, origin, or recipients.

Unknown

###### Last time I noted that this letter was sent to a specific community.

Specific

###### They were under difficulty.

Difficulty

###### Where did they live?

Where?

######  Zane Hodges believes Barnabas wrote the epistle from Rome and sent it to a Jewish community in Cyrene, Libya (BKC, 2:777-79).

Cyrene?

##### However, I think there is good reason for this letter being sent to Israel—and even to a community within Israel—probably to a sectarian group like Qumran.

Israel

##### Note that this group taught that angels would rule the world! "This is the day appointed by Him for the defeat and overthrow of the Prince of the kingdom of wickedness, and He will send eternal succour to the company of His redeemed by the might of the princely Angel of the kingdom of Michael. With everlasting light He will enlighten with joy [the children] of Israel; peace and blessing shall be with the company of God. He will raise up the kingdom of Michael in the midst of the gods, and the realm of Israel in the midst of all flesh” (*The War Scroll* in 1QM 17:5-6).

War Scroll

#### Therefore, just as he had noted Christ as superior to the prophets (1:1-3), so now the writer wisely lays out his case for Jesus as greater than angels.

Superior

### Preview: This text of two chapters has three sections. We will see two ways that Jesus supersedes angels in our first and third section, and what we should do in the middle.

1 2 3

### Text: Hebrews 1:4–2:18 has three reasons to worship Jesus instead of angels.

(The first reason to worship Christ instead of angels is because…)

# I. Jesus is God worthy of worship (1:4-14).

MP

[We should worship only God—and Christ qualifies!]

## Christ has a *better name* than angels since he is called God’s Son (1:4-5).

Better name

### Jesus is higher than angels (1:4).

4

### Jesus is the Son of God (1:5).

5

#### Jesus is the second person of the Trinity.

Trinity

#### No angel is in the Trinity!

## Angels eternally *worship* Christ as God (1:6-7).

Angels worship

### If angels worship Jesus, then he must be higher, right?

6

### Revelation 5 shows angels worshipping the Lamb.

Rev 5

### Angels are amazingly fast—like winds of fire!

7-8

### Yet they still worship Christ!

4 living creatures

## The Father calls Jesus “God” (1:8-12).

Father says “God”

### What better witness to Christ’s identity do you need than the Father?

### The Father calls Jesus “God” in verses 8-9!

8-9

### The Father calls Jesus “Lord” and “Creator” in verses 10-11!

10-11

## Christ is the final *victor* while angels only serve those who will share in that victory (1:13-14).

Victor

### The Father calls Jesus the highest ruler in verse 13!

13

### In contrast, angels are but servants who care for us (1:14).

14

Subject

(The second reason to worship Christ instead of angels is because…)

# II. Warning: Abandoning Jesus brings discipline (2:1-4).

MP

[Turning our backs on Christ makes God have to turn up the heat in our lives.]

Subject

6-8a

8b-10

Results

## We shouldn’t drift away from holding Christ above angels (2:1).

1-2

## God disciplined disobedience to his past teaching through angels (2:2).

## We won’t escape God’s discipline for rejecting his salvation now (2:3a).

3-4

## God proclaimed this salvation through Jesus and eyewitnesses, and then confirmed it through miracles (2:3b-4).

## No penalties are listed here, as in other warning passages (cf. 6:4-7; 10:26-31), but the penalties can’t include hell as the writer was among those who could “drift away” (2:1).

Don’t go back

## The point is not to “drift” but to press on!

Press On!

(The third reason to worship Christ instead of angels is because…)

# III. Jesus is a man worthy to rule (2:5-18).

MP

[The original rule was given to the man, Adam—and only a human could fulfill OT prophecies of Messiah’s reign—and Christ qualifies here too.]

## God never promised angels authority to rule the future world (2:5).

5

## Psalm 8:4-6 promised authority to rule the future world to the man Jesus (2:6-13).

### This future rule of the world will go to a man (2:6-8a).

### This future rule of the world will go to Jesus via His atoning death as our “brother” (2:8b-13).

11-12

## Other wonderful results of Christ’s humanity make Him worthy of worship more than any angel (2:14-18).

Defeated Satan

14-15

16-18

### As a man, Christ defeated Satan’s grip on other men (2:14-15).

### As a man, Christ paid for man’s (not angel’s) sin as high priest (2:16-17).

### As a man victorious in His suffering, Christ helps us defeat temptation (2:18).

Crucified

(So why worship Jesus—not angels? He is fully God and fully man, and…)

Subject

# Conclusion

### Jesus is *God worthy of worship* and *man worthy to rule* (MI). As deity, we should worship him instead of angels—and in his humanity, he qualifies to reign over the world—something that no angel will ever do (restated MI).

MI

### So why worship Jesus—not angels?

Subject

#### Jesus is God worthy to worship (1:4-14).

MPI

#### Jesus is a man worthy to rule (2:5-18).

MPII

#### Abandoning Jesus brings discipline (2:1-4).

MPIII

### He invites you to know him personally.

Invitation

### Press on to worship Jesus instead of any other lesser being!

Press On!

### Prayer

Prayer

### “In Christ Alone” video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cIojIOplstI

Video

# Preliminary Questions

**Verses Questions**

# Context: What did the author record just prior to this passage?

### He started the book by noting that Jesus is better than any of the OT prophets.

### This is because the prophets proclaimed *some* of God’s truth, while Jesus is the *fullest expression* of God’s truth.

# Purpose: Why is this passage in the Bible?

### Perhaps the readers thought, “Well, OK, Jesus supersedes prophets as they were mere men, but angels are far more powerful than any man!”

### Many scholars think that the readers had a very high view of angels—and Jesus couldn’t compare to angels in their eyes.

### Therefore, the writer wisely lays out his case for Jesus as greater than the angelic realm.

# Background: What historical context helps us understand this passage?

### No one really knows the identity of the author, origin, or recipients.

### Zane Hodges believes Barnabas wrote the epistle from Rome and sent it to a Jewish community in Cyrene, Libya (BKC, 2:777-79).

# Questions

### Does 2:1-4 mean those who fall away will lose their salvation?

### Should we accept as a better translation “what are mere mortals” (2:6 NLT), referring to all men, or is “what is man” (NAU)?

#### Zane Hodges writes, “A portion of Psalm 8 was now quoted. While the psalm as a whole is often read as a general statement about the role of man in God’s Creation, it is clear in the light of Hebrews 2:5 and the application that follows in verses 8b-9 that the author of Hebrews read it primarily as messianic and eschatological. In doing so he stood well within the New Testament perspective on the Old Testament, a perspective directly traceable to Jesus Himself (cf. Luke 24:25-27, 44-45)” (BKC, 2:784).

#### I agree with this as verse 8 applies to Jesus—not to mankind: “But we have not yet seen all things put under their authority.”

##### This was not true of Adam, who did have all the earth originally under his authority.

##### However, while Jesus has all authority now (Matt. 28:19), he does not exercise that full authority over the earth.

##### In fact, the “son of man” (2:6b) is a title for the ruling Messiah in Daniel 2:13.

##### Jesus was put under angels while on earth, but that was only temporary so he could go to the cross. Now, “crowned with glory and honor” (2:9b), he is our perfect “ruler” (2:10b).

# Tentative Subject/Complement Statements

Text

# Possible Illustrations

### The annual Hungry Ghost Festival acknowledges demons (fallen angels) more than it does Christ.

### The USA TV hit “Touched By An Angel” gives accolades to angels but never once mentions Jesus.

# Possible Applications

### Text

**Better than Angels**

***Hebrews 1:4–2:18***

**Exegetical Outline (Steps 2-3)**

# Prologue: The readers may have belonged to a Jewish sect emphasizing angels so that their deficient view of Jesus caused them to value him less than angels.

# *Exegetical Idea*: The reasons to worship Christ as superior to angels is because of his deity, his humanity, and to avoid God’s discipline for falling away (1:4–2:18).

# I. The reason to worship Christ as superior to angels in *His deity* is because of many OT depictions of him (1:4-14).

## Christ has a *better name* than angels since he is called God’s Son (1:4-5).

## Angels eternally *worship* Christ as God (1:6-7).

## The Father *calls Jesus “God”* (1:8-12).

## Christ is the final *victor* while angels only serve those who will share in that victory (1:13-14).

# II. Warning: The warning to these Christian readers if they abandoned their faith for Judaism by putting Jesus lower than angels would be God’s discipline (2:1-4).

## We shouldn’t drift away from holding Christ above angels (2:1).

## God disciplined disobedience to his past teaching through angels (2:2).

## We won’t escape God’s discipline for rejecting his salvation now (2:3a).

## God proclaimed this salvation through Jesus and eyewitnesses, and then confirmed it through miracles (2:3b-4).

## No penalties are listed here, as in other warning passages (cf. 6:4-7; 10:26-31), but the penalties can’t include hell as the writer was among those who could “drift away” (2:1).

# III. The reason to worship Christ as superior to angels in *His humanity* is that the OT says man, not angels, has authority to rule over the world (2:5-18).

## God never promised authority to rule the future world to angels (2:5).

## Psalm 8:4-6 promised authority to rule the future world to the man Jesus (2:6-13).

### This future rule of the world will go to a man (2:6-8).

### This future rule of the world will go to Jesus via His atoning death as our “brother” (2:9-13).

## Other wonderful results of Christ’s humanity make Him worthy of worship more than any angel (2:14-18).

### As a man, Christ defeated Satan’s grip on other men (2:14-15).

### As a man, Christ paid for man’s (not angel’s) sin as high priest (2:16-17).

### As a man victorious in His suffering, Christ helps us defeat temptation (2:18).

**Purpose or Desired Listener Response (Step 4)**

The listeners will worship Jesus instead of any other lesser being

**Homiletical Outline** (Cyclical inductive form)

# Introduction

### Interest: Angels are cool!

### Need: Do you believe in angels?

#### Do you respect them?

#### Do you give them *too much* respect?

### Subject: Why worship Jesus instead of angels?

### Background: The readers of Hebrews probably belonged to a Jewish sect emphasizing angels so much that they thought angels were better than Jesus.

### Preview: This passage has three sections. We will see two ways that Jesus supersedes angels in our first and third section, and what we should do in the middle.

### Text: Hebrews 1:4–2:18 has three reasons to worship Jesus instead of angels.

# I. Jesus is God worthy of worship (1:4-14).

## Christ has a *better name* than angels since he is called God’s Son (1:4-5).

## Angels eternally *worship* Christ as God (1:6-7).

## The Father *calls Jesus “God”* (1:8-12).

## Christ is the final *victor* while angels only serve those who will share in that victory (1:13-14).

# II. Warning: Abandoning Jesus brings discipline (2:1-4).

## We shouldn’t drift away from holding Christ above angels (2:1).

## God disciplined disobedience to his past teaching through angels (2:2).

## We won’t escape God’s discipline for rejecting his salvation now (2:3a).

## God proclaimed this salvation through Jesus and eyewitnesses, and then confirmed it through miracles (2:3b-4).

## No penalties are listed here, as in other warning passages (cf. 6:4-7; 10:26-31), but the penalties can’t include hell as the writer was among those who could “drift away” (2:1).

# III. Jesus is a man worthy to rule (2:5-18).

## God never promised angels authority to rule the future world (2:5).

## Psalm 8:4-6 promised authority to rule the future world to the man Jesus (2:6-13).

### This future rule of the world will go to a man (2:6-8).

### This future rule of the world will go to Jesus via His atoning death as our “brother” (2:9-13).

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### As a man, Christ defeated Satan’s grip on other men (2:14-15).

### As a man, Christ paid for man’s (not angel’s) sin as high priest (2:16-17).

### As a man victorious in His suffering, Christ helps us defeat temptation (2:18).

(So why worship Jesus—not angels?)

# Conclusion

### Jesus is *God worthy of worship* and *man worthy to rule* (MI).

### So why worship Jesus—not angels?

#### Jesus is God worthy to worship (1:4-14).

#### Jesus is a man worthy to rule (2:5-18).

#### Abandoning Jesus brings discipline (2:1-4).

### Press on to worship Jesus instead of any other lesser being!



**Rick Griffith**

15 February 2015

Message 2 of 12

**Better than Angels**

***Hebrews 1:4–2:18***

# Rick SSD:Users:griffith:Desktop:Angels Characteristics (Robert Jones).pngIntroduction

### Angels are cool!

### Why worship \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ instead of angels?

### The readers of Hebrews probably belonged to a Jewish sect emphasizing angels so much that they thought angels were better than Jesus.

### This text has three reasons to worship Jesus instead of angels.

# I. Jesus is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ worthy of worship (1:4-14).

## Christ has a *better name* than angels since he is called God’s Son (1:4-5).

## Angels eternally *worship* Christ as God (1:6-7).

## The Father *calls Jesus “God”* (1:8-12).

## Christ is the final *victor* while angels only serve those who will share in that victory (1:13-14).

# II. Warning: Abandoning Jesus brings \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (2:1-4).

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## God proclaimed this salvation through Jesus and eyewitnesses, and then confirmed it through miracles (2:3b-4).

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# III. Jesus is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ worthy to rule (2:5-18).

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## Psalm 8:4-6 promised authority to rule the future world to the man Jesus (2:6-13).

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## Other wonderful results of Christ’s humanity make Him worthy of worship more than any angel (2:14-18).

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### As a man victorious in His suffering, Christ helps us defeat temptation (2:18).

*So why worship Jesus—not angels?*

# Conclusion

### Jesus is *God worthy of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_* and *man worthy to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_* (Main Idea).

### Press on to worship Jesus instead of any other lesser being!

**Thought Questions**

1. Read Hebrews 1:4–2:18. Contrast angels and Jesus in as many ways as you can:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Angels** | **Jesus** |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
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1. What aspect of Christ in this text do you need to apply to your Christian experience?

Text