

# Worship God's Son

Heb 1:1-9

SS Lesson for 12/07/2014

**Devotional Scripture:** Phil 2:5-11

## OUTLINE

### INTRODUCTION

#### OVERVIEW AND APPROACH TO LESSON

*Key Verse: Heb 1:3*

*Commentary from The Bible Knowledge Commentary*

*Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator*

#### LESSON INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

*From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary*

*From the Bible Expositor and Illuminator*

### MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

#### WORSHIP JESUS THROUGH REVELATION (HEB 1:1-3)

##### *Revelation spoken before Jesus (1)*

Revelation starting with Moses (Luke 24:25-27)

Revelation written in the Law (John 1:45)

Revelation through the prophets who testified about Jesus and His power (Acts 10:43)

Revelation through the promise made to David (Rom 1:1-4)

##### *Revelation in Jesus (2)*

In Jesus because Jesus is the spirit of prophecy (Rev 19:10)

In Jesus through the gospel in the Scriptures (1 Cor 15:3-4)

In Jesus because Jesus and God are One (John 14:9-11)

In Jesus because Jesus is God in bodily form (Col 2:9)

In Jesus because Jesus is with and is God (John 1:1)

##### *Revelation through Jesus (3)*

Revelation through Jesus because He came from Heaven (John 3:31)

Revelation through Jesus because Jesus is the glory of God (John 1:14)

Revelation through Jesus because Jesus is the light of the gospel (2 Cor 4:4)

Revelation through Jesus because Jesus is the image of God (Col 1:15)

On the Right Hand (from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

#### WORSHIP JESUS BECAUSE OF HIS SUPREMACY (HEB 1:4-9)

##### *Supremacy above angels (4)*

Supremacy above angels because Jesus has all authority and dominion (Eph 1:20-23)

Supremacy above angels because Jesus has supremacy over everything (Col 1:18)

Supremacy above angels because Jesus is the head over every power and authority (Col 2:10)

Supremacy above angels because angels are in submission to Jesus (1 Peter 3:22)

##### *Supremacy because of being God's Son (5)*

God's Son because God proclaimed it (Matt 17:5)

God's Son because of the miracles Jesus performed (Matt 14:32-33)

God's Son because even demons recognized it (Luke 4:41)

God's Son because the Holy Spirit confirmed it (John 1:32-34)

God's Son because Jesus is the Christ (John 11:25-27)

God's Son because the Bible was written to prove it (John 20:31)

God's Son because it is the truth (Matt 16:16)

##### *Supremacy that deserves worship (6)*

Deserves worship because Jesus is the King (Matt 2:2)

Deserves worship because eventually every knee will bow and tongue will confess Jesus as Lord (Phil 2:9-11)

Deserves worship because Jesus is the slain Lamb worthy of worship (Rev 5:6-9)

Deserves worship because Jesus is the firstborn of God and all should worship Him (Heb 1:6)

Deserves worship because Jesus is the head of all things (Eph 1:9-10)

##### *Supremacy that rules God's Kingdom (7-9)*

Jesus' rule will be one of wisdom and righteousness (Jer 23:5)

Jesus must rule until God puts all His enemies under His feet (1 Cor 15:22-25)

Jesus rules over an eternal kingdom (2 Peter 1:10-11)

Jesus is the eternal King (1 Tim 1:17)

Jesus will reign forever and ever (Rev 11:15)

Jesus was born to have the government on His shoulders (Isa 9:6)

## **CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS**

COMMENTARY THOUGHTS FROM BOB DEFFINBAUGH

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE BIBLE EXPOSITOR AND ILLUMINATOR

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE NIV STANDARD LESSON COMMENTARY

PRACTICAL POINTS FROM THE BIBLE EXPOSITOR AND ILLUMINATOR

# Introduction

## Overview and Approach to Lesson

The lesson teaches why and how we should **Worship God's Son**. The **study's aim** is to give Jesus Christ the position of supremacy in all areas of our lives. The **study's application** is to worship Jesus Christ and live each day with a sense of His awesomeness. (Adapted from *the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary*).

### Key Verse: Heb 1:3

*3 who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,*

### Commentary from The Bible Knowledge Commentary

In a majestically constructed opening paragraph, the writer introduced his readers at once to the surpassing greatness of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Son, he declared, is the par excellence vehicle for divine revelation. In asserting this, he implicitly contrasted Him with the prophets of old and explicitly contrasted Him with the angels. The central assertion of the Prologue is made here. Though God has variously (lit., “by various means and in various ways”) revealed Himself in the past, Old Testament prophetic revelation has now received its end-times climax through God’s Son. However highly the readership regarded that former revelation, the writer implied they must now listen most closely to the Son. In a series of subordinate constructions which are part of a single sentence in the Greek, the author set forth the Son’s greatness. The unified structure of the writer’s sentence is hidden by the NIV which breaks it down into several sentences. To begin with (v. 2b), the Son is the designated Heir of all things. This is obviously as it should be since He is also their Maker—the One through whom He made the universe (lit., “the ages,” also rendered “the universe” in 11:3). The reference to the Son’s heirship anticipates the thought of His future reign, of which the writer will say much. But the One who is both Creator and Heir is also a perfect reflection of the God who has spoken in Him. Moreover His Word is so powerful that all He has made is sustained by that Word. And it is this Person who has provided purification for sins and taken His seat at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven (cf. 8:1; 10:12; 12:2). In doing so it is obvious He has attained an eminence far beyond anything the angels can claim. As might easily be expected in the Prologue, the writer struck notes which will be crucial to the unfolding of his argument in the body of the epistle. He implied that God’s revelation in the Son has a definitive quality which previous revelation lacked. Moreover the sacrifice for sins which such a One makes must necessarily be greater than other kinds of sacrifices. Finally the Son’s greatness makes preoccupation with angelic dignities entirely unnecessary. Though the Prologue contains no warning—the writer reserved those for later—it carries with it an implicit admonition: This is God’s supremely great Son; hear Him! (cf. 12:25-27). Drawing heavily on the witness of Old Testament revelation, the writer demonstrated the uniqueness of the Son. The title of Son, and the prerogatives it entails, elevate Him above all comparison with the angels. Those who see in Hebrews ties with sectarian Judaism point to the highly developed angelology of the Dead Sea sect. These verses offer an effective rebuttal against any tendency to give excessive prominence to angels. The two questions in Heb 1:5 show that the name Son belongs to Messiah in a sense in which it never belonged to the angels. Obviously “Son” is the superior name which Jesus “has inherited” (v. 4). But it is clear that the special sense of this name, in its kingly ramifications, is what basically concerns the writer. The quotation in verse 5a is drawn from Psalm 2:7, while the quotation in Hebrews 1:5b comes from either 2 Samuel 7:14 or 1 Chronicles 17:13. Psalm 2 is an enthronement psalm in which God “adopts” the Davidic King as His “Son.” That this is what the writer to the Hebrews understood is confirmed in Hebrews 1:5a by the quotation from the Davidic Covenant. No doubt the “today” in the expression today I have become Your Father was understood by the author of Hebrews to refer to Messiah’s sitting at the right hand of God (cf. v. 3). Of course the Lord Jesus Christ has always been the eternal Son of God. 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. The prerogatives of the One who bears this superlative title are set forth beginning with this verse. Instead of the NIV’s “And again, when God brings His Firstborn into the world, it would be preferable to translate, “and when He again brings the Firstborn into the world.” The reference is to the Second Advent when the kingly prerogatives of the Son will be recognized with open angelic worship (cf. Ps. 97:7 where the lxx rendering “angels” correctly renders the text). In a pair of contrasting quotations, the author juxtaposed the servant-hood of the angels (v. 7) and the

eternal dominion of the Son (vv. 8-9). It is possible that, in line with one strand of Jewish thought about angels (cf. 2 Esdras 8:21-22), the writer understood the statement of Psalm 104:4 (quoted in Heb. 1:7) as suggesting that angels often blended their mutable natures with winds or fire as they performed the tasks God gave them. But in contrast with this mutability, the Son's throne is eternal and immutable (v. 8). The quotation found in verses 8-9 is derived from Psalm 45:6-7 which describes the final triumph of God's messianic King. The writer extended this citation further than the previous ones, no doubt because the statements of the psalmist served well to highlight truths on which the author of Hebrews desired to elaborate. 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). And though this King thus deservedly enjoys a superlative joy, still He has companions in that joy. The reference to "companions" is likewise a significant theme for the writer. The same word *metochoi* ("companions or sharers") is employed in 3:1, 14 of Christians (it is also used in 12:8). Since the King has attained His joy and dominion through a life of steadfast righteousness, it might be concluded that His companions will share His experience by that same means. This inference will later become quite clear (cf. 12:28).

### **Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator**

How would you explain light to a person who has been blind from birth? It is something you can see but not something you can feel. It travels through glass and water but not through concrete or wood. It is all around us, yet it weighs nothing. Its absence is a phenomenon called "darkness." It may sound impossible or even ridiculous. But for a person who has never seen, light may seem incomprehensible. For those who can see, it is something taken for granted, something needed and used every day. But few take the time to learn much about it. Those who give their lives to studying light know much about it, but they still cannot explain or define this amazing phenomenon to one who has not experienced it. Now imagine trying to explain where light comes from to that same blind person. Could you describe the glowing orbs floating around us in space or the fact that many of them are bigger than our entire planet and some are millions of miles away? And yet, you can also get light from the tiny flame on a candle or at the flip of a light switch. It is rather awe-inspiring when you stop and think about it, is it not? It is even more so when you consider that researchers estimate that there are at least 100 billion galaxies in our entire universe, each one home to billions of stars. The largest known star has a radius 1,650 times larger than the sun, an estimated 714,000,000 miles! If the creation is so inspiring, how much more awestruck should we be at its Creator, the One who not only thought of all these wonders but also spoke them into existence and now upholds them by the power of His word! You may never be able to explain light to people born blind, but if you could show it to them, even for a moment, it would change their understanding completely, forever. God did that for us when He sent Jesus, His Son, the "brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person." The one, eternal God, vastly more incomprehensible than the farthest, most complex star, sent the Messiah into the world to show us what God is like. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," Jesus said in John 14:9. Jesus was God in human flesh, with hands and feet. He was God in a way we could understand. If you think of it anew, as if you had never heard it before, is the gospel not even more awe-inspiring than news of galaxies beyond our ability to see or stars beyond our ability to count? We need to renew our awe. The Psalmist David once said, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" (Ps. 8:3-4). The Jesus who created the world and named every star came down to our level to show us God in flesh. The same Jesus who upholds all those stars holds us each day. This week, look around you. Allow yourself to be awestruck by this creation of God called light that we enjoy and need every day. Even more, take the time to be amazed that you can know its Creator, God Himself, through the Light He sent into the world, brighter and more amazing than any star—the Morning Star Himself, Jesus Christ.

### ***Lesson Introduction and Background***

#### **From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary**

Before Jesus came, God told people about himself through prophets, angels, dreams, etc. Sometimes these revelations included visual aids (examples: Genesis 28:12; Exodus 4:1-7). As a visual aid, however, Jesus was in a class by himself. His earthly life was a visible manifestation of God's invisible nature. To see Christ was to see God (John 14:9). Our passage today applies the visual-aid principle to help us understand the significance of Christ and his work. The book of Hebrews is shrouded in mystery, and scholars have debated its authorship, date, and audience. Was it written

by Paul? Luke? Apollos? Barnabas? Timothy? even by Priscilla? Was it written before or after the destruction of the temple in AD 70? Does the traditional title "Hebrews" suggest the first readers to have been Jewish Christians primarily or even exclusively? Not in doubt, however, is the fact that the author of Hebrews wishes to show Christ's superiority. Who the prophets, the angels, etc., were and what they revealed about God pale in comparison with who Christ is and what he in himself has disclosed about God. The implications of this are profound, as we shall see.

### **From the Bible Expositor and Illuminator**

There are several things we do not know about the book of Hebrews. While we can ascertain from the text some information that enables us to reach some educated conclusions, we cannot be dogmatic about who wrote the book, whom it was written to, or when it was written. While many like to believe the Apostle Paul was the author, there are significant differences from his other letters that leave this open to question. Was it written to Gentile believers as well or only to Jewish ones? While it is stimulating to discuss these questions academically, it is more important to focus on the message of the book. It appears from the context that some Jews who had become believers were frightened about the possibility of opposition and persecution and were considering a return to their former practices of Judaism. There was much more to be gained in following Christ than in returning to Judaism. A key word for this book is the word "better." The author repeatedly pointed out various comparisons between Christ and Judaistic teachings and rituals. In every area they considered, they would find Jesus to be superior.

## **Major Theme Analysis**

*(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)*

### **Worship Jesus Through Revelation (Heb 1:1-3)**

1 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets,  
2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;  
3 who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

#### **Revelation spoken before Jesus (1)**

*Revelation starting with Moses (Luke 24:25-27)*

26 Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

*Revelation written in the Law (John 1:45)*

45 Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote-Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

*Revelation through the prophets who testified about Jesus and His power (Acts 10:43)*

43 All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

*Revelation through the promise made to David (Rom 1:1-4)*

2 the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures 3 regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, 4 and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.

## Revelation in Jesus (2)

*In Jesus because Jesus is the spirit of prophecy (Rev 19:10)*

10 At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

*In Jesus through the gospel in the Scriptures (1 Cor 15:3-4)*

3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures

*In Jesus because Jesus and God are One (John 14:9-11)*

9 Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. 11 Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves.

*In Jesus because Jesus is God in bodily form (Col 2:9)*

9 For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form,

*In Jesus because Jesus is with and is God (John 1:1)*

1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

## Revelation through Jesus (3)

*Revelation through Jesus because He came from Heaven (John 3:31)*

31 "The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all.

*Revelation through Jesus because Jesus is the glory of God (John 1:14)*

14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

*Revelation through Jesus because Jesus is the light of the gospel (2 Cor 4:4)*

4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

*Revelation through Jesus because Jesus is the image of God (Col 1:15)*

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

*On the Right Hand (from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)*

In the English language the phrase *right hand* is rich in symbolism. It can mean the hand that is normally stronger (than the left). The *Oxford English Dictionary* cites a source from the year 1000 with this connotation. Another meaning is to symbolize friendship or alliance. This connotation is cited as early as 1591. We normally shake hands with the right hand. A third meaning is to indicate a person of usefulness or importance, an indispensable or efficient helper. We use the phrase *right-hand man*, a usage that goes back to 1537. In 1863 General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson's left arm was amputated after a wound (which eventually proved fatal); to this General Robert E. Lee exclaimed, "You have lost your left arm, but I have lost my right!" A similar meaning is that the right hand is the position of honor. This is probably the meaning intended in [Hebrews 1:3](#). After he had fulfilled his task on earth, Jesus ascended

and was seated at the right hand of the Father. Jesus represents the right hand of God in all ways—in strength, in alliance, and in honor. Do we hold Jesus in as much honor as the Father does?

### ***Worship Jesus Because of His Supremacy (Heb 1:4-9)***

4 having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.  
5 For to which of the angels did He ever say: "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You"? And again: "I will be to Him a Father, And He shall be to Me a Son"?  
6 But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: "Let all the angels of God worship Him."  
7 And of the angels He says: "Who makes His angels spirits And His ministers a flame of fire."  
8 But to the Son He says: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom.  
9 You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions."

#### **Supremacy above angels (4)**

*Supremacy above angels because Jesus has all authority and dominion (Eph 1:20-23)*

20 which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. 22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

*Supremacy above angels because Jesus has supremacy over everything (Col 1:18)*

18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

*Supremacy above angels because Jesus is the head over every power and authority (Col 2:10)*

10 and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.

*Supremacy above angels because angels are in submission to Jesus (1 Peter 3:22)*

22 who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand — with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

#### **Supremacy because of being God's Son (5)**

*God's Son because God proclaimed it (Matt 17:5)*

5 While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"

*God's Son because of the miracles Jesus performed (Matt 14:32-33)*

32 And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. 33 Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

*God's Son because even demons recognized it (Luke 4:41)*

41 Moreover, demons came out of many people, shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Christ.

*God's Son because the Holy Spirit confirmed it (John 1:32-34)*

32 Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. 33 I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' 34 I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God."

*God's Son because Jesus is the Christ (John 11:25-27)*

25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; 26 and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" 27 "Yes, Lord," she told him, "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world."

*God's Son because the Bible was written to prove it (John 20:31)*

31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

*God's Son because it is the truth (Matt 16:16)*

16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

## **Supremacy that deserves worship (6)**

*Deserves worship because Jesus is the King (Matt 2:2)*

2 and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him."

*Deserves worship because eventually every knee will bow and tongue will confess Jesus as Lord (Phil 2:9-11)*

9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

*Deserves worship because Jesus is the slain Lamb worthy of worship (Rev 5:6-9)*

6 Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. 7 He came and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne. 8 And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9 And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

*Deserves worship because Jesus is the firstborn of God and all should worship Him (Heb 1:6)*

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

*Deserves worship because Jesus is the head of all things (Eph 1:9-10)*

9 And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, 10 to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment — to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

## **Supremacy that rules God's Kingdom (7-9)**

*Jesus' rule will be one of wisdom and righteousness (Jer 23:5)*

5 "The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land.

*Jesus must rule until God puts all His enemies under His feet (1 Cor 15:22-25)*

22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. 23 But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. 24 Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. 25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.

*Jesus rules over an eternal kingdom (2 Peter 1:10-11)*

10 Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, 11 and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

*Jesus is the eternal King (1 Tim 1:17)*

17 Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

*Jesus will reign forever and ever (Rev 11:15)*

15 The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign forever and ever."

*Jesus was born to have the government on His shoulders (Isa 9:6)*

6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

## Conclusion and Other Thoughts

### ***Commentary Thoughts from Bob Deffinbaugh***

Surely we can conclude with the author that the Son is superior to the angels, not only on the basis of the seven-fold description of the Son in verses 1-4, but also on the basis of the seven Scripture texts that are cited in support of this claim. But why this interest in angels in chapters 1 and 2 of Hebrews? Some would say that it was intended to correct an abundance of false or distorted teaching (or practice) related to angels. No doubt the first two chapters of Hebrews do give us a better understanding of angels, but it is not my view that the primary purpose of these chapters is to correct a false or exaggerated view of angels. The author views angels in a positive light. He presents them and their ministry in the highest possible terms. And the reason is so that they can serve as a benchmark, against which to measure the worth and work of the Son. Angels are "as good as it gets" so far as created beings are concerned, and yet the Son is vastly superior. Angels thus serve to show how far superior the Son is, thereby preparing us to pay all the more attention to what He has revealed from the Father (2:1-4). As I seek to draw this lesson to a close, I would point out that the author's "conclusion" (or application if you prefer) comes in the next four verses – Hebrews 2:1-4. There he will exhort us to pay much closer attention to what the Son has revealed, knowing the greatness of the One who has spoken to us.

Chapter 1 of the Book of Hebrews is a rich source of sound doctrine. We should find substantial contributions to our understanding of Christology (the doctrine of Christ), of the Trinity, and of Angelology. The deity of Christ is clearly taught here, and thus this chapter of Hebrews was a text to which the early church fathers appealed when they contended with heresy. And after giving careful attention to these words of Scripture, how could one deny the doctrine of the Trinity? No wonder the author urges us to pay close attention to these words (as well as the rest of the New Testament Scriptures). Something else has happened in the course of considering the message of the first chapter of Hebrews – the author has succeeded in widening the gap between the Son and mere men. If the Son is higher than the angels, then He is vastly higher than men. How can we ever have a relationship with Him? The second chapter of Hebrews will provide us with the solution – the incarnation. The Son of God took on human flesh in order to identify with men and to die for our sins. In order to accomplish this, He must, for a little while, become "**lower than the angels.**" One of the things we can learn from our text is how we should understand and apply the Old Testament

Scriptures. I believe that we should find that the Bible applies to our lives a great deal more than we might think when we look for “correspondence” between the Scriptures and our lives. This is not to say that there is little direct application in the Bible. Most of the Ten Commandments directly apply to us today. We should put God first, above all others. We should not lie or steal, commit adultery, or covet our neighbor’s property. But there are many more areas of application that become apparent when we look for points of correspondence between the Scriptures and ourselves. Thus, the teaching of the Old Testament regarding not muzzling the ox applies to paying preachers of the gospel (as we see in 1 Corinthians 9). The command to have a parapet (a guard rail) around the roof of one’s house<sup>33</sup> instructs us to anticipate danger and to make every effort to protect against injury to others. From observing our author’s use of the Old Testament, we should recognize that there is much there that we would not have seen, apart from an apostle making it clear to us in the New Testament (Ephesians 3:1-6). As Paul put it in 2 Corinthians, Christ is the key that unlocks many mysteries, especially the gospel, which is hidden from the eyes of unbelieving Jews (not to mention Gentiles - 2 Corinthians 3:14-16). Now we need to be careful that we do not “see” too much. We had best let the apostles and inspired authors of the New Testament “unveil” things hidden in the Old Testament, just as our author will do in regard to Melchizedek. When we read the Old Testament, we should seek to see more of Jesus. I can remember Dr. Bruce Waltke telling those of us who were his students at the time, “When I turn to the Old Testament I pray, ‘Help me see more of Jesus.’” That should be our desire as well, especially as we continue our study in the Book of Hebrews, for when it cites Old Testament texts, it shows us more of Him.

*(Adapted from URL: <https://bible.org/seriespage/higher-angels-hebrews-14-14>)*

### **Concluding Thoughts from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator**

When Jesus came into the world for redemptive purposes, He also came to reveal the Father to us. To view Jesus is to see God, for He was and remains the very image of God. Our Lord revealed the Father in both His words and His works. Before Jesus came and revealed the Father, the Father also revealed His Son to the world by means of words, the words of His prophets. At various times in the preceding generations, God had raised up prophets, through whom He addressed the Israelites concerning sin and the need for a right relationship with God. Prophets were those who both proclaimed the word of God and foretold events to come. Usually, the forthtelling was a more prominent feature of their ministry than the foretelling, but a number of them did prophesy about a coming Messiah who would deal with sin. As to the "sundry times" that God spoke by means of prophets, one can say it was usually at a time when the spiritual climate of Israel was at a very low point. A prophet then was very much like a revivalist or even an evangelist (perhaps a combination of the two). If a person reads the Old Testament prophets in their historical setting as found in Kings and Chronicles, he will see that God's people were usually committing spiritual harlotry, being far away from God. The diverse manners by which God spoke to Israel would of course include the obvious—words—but also such things as wars, famines, pestilence, and the like, as foretold by His prophets. There is no one way that God uses to communicate with His people. Sometimes words are sufficient, but often it takes a sickness, an accident, or some other tragic event to awaken backsliders to their true condition. There is nothing like a severe illness, injury or being in harm's way to confront the soul that needs confronting. The author of Hebrews was saying that although God spoke in many ways at many times in the past, He had in the writer's own recent past spoken to His people by means of His Son. The One prophesied had come and by means of His works and His words had spoken clearly to a nation that was far from Him. Jesus spoke in various manners too. He spoke by His sinless life, by His sterling character, by His kindness and mercy, by His miracles, and by His teaching, just to name a few. Jesus' teaching was distinct, clear, forceful (see Matthew 5:21 and similar verses in that chapter), and challenging. He made it clear who He was and invited people to believe in Him. He affirmed the prophets of old and gave new teaching designed to lead people to see several things. By hearing Jesus, a person could see himself and his sins more clearly. He could see how to escape the judgment that is coming by placing faith and trust in Jesus who was always trying to awaken in His listeners a sense of sin consciousness that could lead to repentance, faith, and salvation. For those in the first century, as well as for us in the twenty-first century, the application is the same. We have the testimony of both godly men and the Son of God Himself. What else can God say? Who else can He send? There is no one greater than the Son of God.

### **Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary**

Western culture shows a curious fascination with angels. Charms, pendants, bumper stickers, decorative figurines, and Christmas ornaments bearing images of angels are readily available. Numerous books and websites promise to help the

reader get in touch with a “guardian angel” or to harness the power of angels in everyday life. While the Bible does teach that angels are real and active, it is important to stress that they should not be viewed as objects of devotion, etc. (see Revelation 19:10; 22:9). The fact that Christ receives their worship in Heaven underlines his unique status: he relates to God and reveals God in ways like no other. As the very image of God himself, and as the one who is exalted in Heaven because he died for our sins, Christ and no angel deserves our worshipful praise.

***Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator***

1. We can learn to know who God is through His Word (Heb. 1:1)
2. Through Jesus, God has made Himself accessible to us (vs. 2)
3. Jesus portrays God accurately because He is God (vs. 3)
4. We do not have to fear any created being, for Jesus is above even the angels (vs. 4)
5. We should worship Jesus, just as the angels do, because God has given Him all authority (vss. 5-7)
6. We can trust Jesus to do what He says because He will reign forever (vs. 8)
7. Jesus is greater than any other prophet, priest, or king (vs. 9)