

## Jesus, Higher Than Angels

The Hebrew writer says that Jesus has become *"by so much better than the angels, as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they"* (1:4). After this observation there follows seven quotations from three Old Testament prophets (Moses, Nathan and David) to verify this claim. His first reference is from David's second Psalm. *"Thou art my Son, this day hath I begotten thee"* (2:7). Twice this passage appears in the New Testament; here and in Paul's sermon in Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:33). This passage is sometime understand to be speaking of Jesus' conception in Mary's womb and His birth in Bethlehem but we do not agree. Acts 13:33 can certainly be understood to have reference to His resurrection, and we believe such is the contrast here. Without doubt, the resurrection of Jesus proves His Deity (Rm. 1:1f). The writer's point here is that never were such words spoken of angels but they were of Jesus. He is higher than angels!

The second quotation, *"I will be to him a Father and he shall be to me a Son,"* are Nathan's words from God to David that Solomon would rule in David's stead. This promise (along with Psalms 8:7, *"What is man that thou art mindful of him?"*) are two illustrations of the very few prophecies which are dual in nature. Second Samuel 7:14 finds full completion in David's Greater Son, Jesus; but was a promise that Solomon would be David's successor. In the sense of David's Greater Son, never did God say to an angel, *"I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son."* The next Old Testament passage cited by the writer is from Deuteronomy 32:43 from the Septuagint (Greek) translation used by the Jews in the first century. Hebrew 1:6 reads, *"And when he again bring in the firstborn into the world he saith, and let all the angels of God worship him."* Angels are not objects of worship, but they are commanded to worship the Son. What an evident difference!

The citations of Psalms 110:4 and 13:6 are coupled together as one argument in Hebrews 1:7-9: *"and of the angels he saith, who maketh his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire: but of the Son he saith, thy throne, O God is forever and ever ..."* Jehovah's Witness, because they deny the Deity of Jesus Christ, in their New World Translation, makes this passage read: *"Thy throne is God."* Such a translation is possible, as a footnote from the ASV indicates. Yet, the intent of the writer can be perceived without dispute. First, the writer quotes Psalms 104:4: *"who makes his angels winds and his ministers a flame of fire."* Next, there follows the word *"but"* which marks the beginning of a contrast with what he has just said with what he is about to say. Angels are winds, flames of fire; the Son is identified as *"God"*; unchangeable in nature and character.

*"And thou Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy fingers: they shall perish, but thou continuest, and they shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a mantle shall thou roll them up, as a garment, and they shall be changed. But thou art the same and thy years shall not fail"* (1:11f). This passage from Psalms 102:25f states what earlier was shown: the world was created by Jesus. All created material things, are things which, however permanent they appear to be, will pass away, but he who created them is unchanging, everlasting. This passage, along with the passage which declared, *"thy throne, O God, is forever and ever ..."* emphasizes the eternal, permanent unchanging nature of Christ, contrary to the fact that angels are winds, a flame of fire.

The final passage used to prove that Christ is superior to angels is the familiar text from Psalms 110:1: *"The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet."* Jesus used this passage to silence His questioners in Matthew 22. When He asked them if *"my Lord"* in the text referred to the Messiah, David's son, then why did David call him *"Lord"*? The passage is quoted by Peter on Pentecost affirming the passage to have been fulfilled in that Christ was made Lord and Christ (Acts 2:35f). Paul uses the passage in 1 Corinthians 15 to prove that even Death, man's mortal enemy, will someday be abolished by the Mighty Son of God.

Yes, angels are ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that inherit salvation, but Jesus is the Eternal God who not only made the world, but made the angles as well!

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