

LESSON 1

CHRIST, SUPERIOR TO THE PROPHETS AND THE ANGELS (PART 1)

The matchless opening to Hebrews (1:1—2:4) pictures Christ in His divine nature and glory. Indeed, He is superior to the angels and the prophets of ages past. Consequently, one who neglects the great salvation offered through the Son will find himself in everlasting destruction. In fact, the underlying design of the whole treatise of Hebrews is to show that the new covenant towers above and takes the place of the old covenant.

CHRIST, SUPERIOR TO THE PROPHETS (1:1–3)

The writer showed the absolute supremacy of the revelation through the Son over the imperfect revelation of Moses and the prophets. God's revelation through Jesus is the final word, the ultimate revelation from God toward which all the other voices of the Old Testament pointed. No message given before the message of the Son is to capture our attention like this final voice of God the Father through Christ.

1. How does the opening verse connect the Old Testament with the New Testament?
2. When are the "last days" mentioned in verse 2?
3. How does understanding that Jesus was present and active at the creation affect your perception of how the creation occurred?
4. In what ways did the author of Hebrews emphasize Christ's divinity in chapter 1?
5. What does the fact that Jesus "sat down at [God's] right hand" symbolize?

CHRIST, GOD'S SON, SUPERIOR TO THE ANGELS (1:4-14)

In verses 4 and 5, the writer spoke of the exalted position and being of Jesus in relation to the angels. His point was that no one should turn back from Christianity, for Christ is greater than the angels as well as the prophets. He drew the contrast through three lines of truth, emphasizing (1) what Christ became, (2) who He is, and (3) His place of honor.

We might ask, "Why argue for Christ's superiority over angels?" In late Judaism, it was thought that they were the most exalted beings and that the ministering priest in the heavenly sanctuary was Michael. The Jews believed this spiritual work required service by the greatest of angels.

Confusion about angels is reflected in uninspired texts among the Dead Sea Scrolls, which present two messianic figures. One of these was to be a kingly personage whose kingly reign would be subordinate to His priestly functions. Both figures were to be under the archangel Michael. In other words, the teaching was that an angelic being would rule in "the world to come."

Since angels participated in the giving of the Law, they were held in high honor among the Jews. This truth about angelic beings is sufficient to require the argument the writer was presenting.

6. How does the position of angels relate to the position of Jesus?
7. What are some privileges of being firstborn? How do they relate to Jesus?
8. What can we conclude about the deity of Christ based on verses 8 through 12?
9. Name some roles that angels were/are given.