JESUS - BETTER THAN THE ANGELS

**Part One**

**DATE: 7/3/2013 Wed.**

**TEXT: Hebrews 1:4-14**

**INTRODUCTION**

The great theme of the Book of Hebrews is the Superiority of Christ

This Superiority is seen in the Declaration that Christ is Better

As the Better or Superior One …

He rises above all creatures in both heaven and earth

**Quote:**  C. J. Rolls wrote -

In the midst of Principalities and Powers,

- He is declared the Blessed and Only Potentate

We are aware that there are millions of illustrious names in the galleries of the great,

- Yet His Name is above every name

Are there not also many kingly heroes recorded in the annals of historic kingdoms?

- Yet He is the King of Kings

Is there not a multitude of renowned Nobles registered in the famous halls of nations?

- Yet He is Lord of lords

Are there not legions of those reverest among the peoples of the earth?

- But He is the God of gods

Indeed Christ is Better! He is Superior!

As we continue our study of Hebrews we see that Christ is Better than the angels

We read in **Hebrews 1:4 –**

***“Being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they”***

The word *Better* speaks of that which is Nobler

As we shall see, angels are noble creatures

But Christ is Nobler

He is the Noblest of the noble

Before we consider why Christ is Better than the angels,

I want to look at the angels Specifically

And after doing so, and seeing just how noble the angels are …

We will understand in far greater detail, just how *Nobler* our Lord & Saviour Jesus Christ really is!

There are 108 references of angels in the OT and 165 in the NT

What Wonderful creatures they are,

Yet so little is Said about them

What Fascinating creatures they are,

Yet so little is Known about them

For some, all they know about angels …

Is what they learned from *Angels in the Outfield* or *Touched by an Angel*

What an awesome ministry angels have

But most often, we’re not even aware of them

The Bible says in **Hebrews 13:2 –**

***“Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares”***

It’s possible that you have had an angelic encounter and didn’t even know it!

**Ill.** Let me share with you an interesting story. Dr. Mitchell was a well-known doctor in Philadelphia. After a very tiring day he went to bed early, but he was awakened by a persistent knocking at the door. It was a little girl, poorly dressed and deeply upset. She told him that her mother was very sick and needed his help. Even though it was a bitterly cold, snowy night and he was bone tired, Dr. Mitchell dressed and followed the girl. He found the mother desperately ill with pneumonia. After treating her, Dr. Mitchell complimented the sick woman on her daughter's persistence and courage. The woman gave him a strange look and said, "My daughter died a month ago. Her shoes and coat are in the closet there." Dr. Mitchell went to the closet and opened the door. There hung the very coat worn by the little girl who had been at his front door.

The coat was warm and dry and could not possibly have been out in the snowy night. Did Dr. Mitchell encounter an angel? You be the judge.

So often angels are in our midst and we aren’t even aware of their presence

More than likely they are with us at this very moment

Let’s think about God’s Heavenly Host

Although the aim of **vs. 4-14** is to show why Christ is Better than the angels

There are many things we can learn about angels from what is said

Let’s pray and think on this thought –

***“Jesus – Better than the Angels”***

But before I can show you How much Better Jesus is than the angels

I must demonstrate just how great the creation of the angels are

So let’s look first at just ***“The Angels”***

**~~~Prayer~~~**

First, notice with me -

**I. THE “CREATION” OF ANGELS**

In our last study we saw that Jesus is the Creator of the heaven and the earth

**Hebrews 1:2** states that ***“He made the worlds”***

In **1:10** we read –

***“And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands”***

In **Acts 17:24** the Bible says that –

***“God that made the world and all things therein”***

Jesus not only created the heaven and the earth …

But also everything that is in heaven and earth,

… This includes the angels

The Bible says in **Colossians 1:16 –**

***“For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him”***

The invisible things include the realm of the angels

So, when the writer spoke of Jesus as Creator …

He’s including, His creation of angels

The Bible informs us that they were created in eternity past

The Bible says in **Job 38:7 –**

***“When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?”***

The context of **Job 38** is the creation of heaven and earth

He states that the angels observed this creation and joined together in a heavenly chorus and shouted for joy

The terms *morning stars* and *sons of God* refer to angels

In understanding that the angels watched the creation of heaven and earth …

We understand they were created before all things as we know it

Angels may be from eternity past but they are not eternal

They have not always existed

They, like everything else that exists, were created

How far back in eternity were they created, only God knows

But angels are among God’s created beings

Let’s look closer and learn more about the creation of angels

First, we see -

**A. The ‘Characteristics’ of Their Creation**

Angels are described as spirit beings

But they have some kind of form

In **Genesis 28:12** Jacob saw angels ascending and descending a ladder to heaven

To see angels, demands they have some kind of form

On the resurrection morning an angel was seen sitting on the stone that had been rolled away

It would appear that this angel appeared in a form much like our own **(Mk. 16:5** describes a ***“young man”***)

When angels are seen, they are seen as men

Angels are always described in the masculine, never in the feminine

Again indicating that even though they are spirit beings, they can take on a human form

In our western mind we think of angels as white creatures with wings sitting on clouds playing harps or cute chubby babies blowing trumpets

We don’t find that description of angels in the Bible

However, in **Isaiah 6** we see a creature with six wings

These creatures are called seraphim

The figures of the two creatures on the mercy seat have wings extended over the mercy seat

On other occasions in the Bible we have descriptions of winged creatures

Their number is innumerable

In **Daniel 7:10**, Daniel saw and spoke of how –

***“thousand thousands ministered”*** unto God

And that ***“ten thousand stood before Him”***

In **Revelation 5:11** John said –

***“And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands”***

In **I Kings 22:19** they are referred to as a ***“host”***

In **Matthew 26:53** Jesus said that He could pray to the Father and He could send ***“twelve legions”*** of angels to assist Him

A legion was a division in the Roman army that consisted of 6,000 men

Jesus was saying that if He asked, the Father could send 72,000 angels

**Hebrews 12:22** refer to angels as an ***“innumerable company”***

There are evidently countless angels

The Bible tells us that they are creatures that never die

In **Psalms 148:2,5,6a** we read –

***“Praise ye Him, all His angels: praise ye Him, all His hosts” “Let them praise the name of the Lord: for He commanded, and they were created”***

***“He hath also stablished them for ever and ever:”***

They were created to live forever and forever

Angels never die

Their number never increases or decreases

Some have concluded that there are at least as many angels as there have been or will be human beings on earth

It would also appear that all angels were created all at one time

Angels are emotional creatures

The Bible says in **Luke 15:10** that –

***“there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth”***

Angels have the ability to speak

Time and time again we read of angels speaking to others in the Bible

The Bible also speaks of them as having great strength

We read in **Psalms 103:20 –**

***“Bless the LORD, ye His angels, that excel in strength”***

**The ‘Characteristics’ of Their Creation**

**B. The ‘Classes’ of Their Creation**

The Bible speaks of different kinds of angelic beings

There are archangels, cherubim and seraphim

Archangels seem to be Highest Ranking angels

The Bible speaks of two archangels, Michael and Gabriel

Cherubim seem to be Protecting angels

It was Cherubim’s that were placed at the entrance of Eden

Seraphim’s seem to be the Keepers of God’s throne

For we often find them surrounding the throne of God

The Bible also speaks of Different Ranks among angels

According to Jewish tradition there were 10 ranks or levels of angels

There are some theologians who believe that the Bible actually describes nine levels of angels -

archangels, angels, powers, authorities, principalities, dominions, thrones, cherubim and seraphim

Although the Bible suggests these classes or ranks of angels …

It does not give us any information concerning the roles of angels in these ranks

I’m sure they fulfill the role they have been assigned by God

There is an order and harmony among the angels

There is a chain of order by which they function and carry out God’s will

**THE “CREATION” OF ANGELS**

**II. THE “CONSECRATION” OF ANGELS**

In **Hebrews 1:6** we read –

***“And again, when He bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him”***

Angels are totally and completely consecrated to an eternal purpose as it relate to God

Their great objective and only purpose is to Serve God

**Hebrews 1:6b** is a quotation from **Psalm 97:7 –**

***“Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship Him, all ye gods”***

The word ***“gods”*** is speaking of angels

The chief occupation of angels is worshipping God

**A. They Worship God ‘Continually’**

In **Revelation 4:8** we see angelic creatures surrounding God’s throne as they worship the Lord on His throne

John describes the scene - ***“And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come”***

John said that these angels do not rest from worshipping God

Day and night they worship the Lord

Constantly they surround the throne of God giving praise, glory and honor to God as they worship Him

**They Worship God ‘Continually’**

**B. They Worship God ‘Joyfully’**

In **Luke 2:13, 14** we see the angels rejoicing on the night that Jesus was born

The Bible says - ***“And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,” “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men”***

With one voice, the angels filled the air with their praise

The whole scene is one of a joyful atmosphere

It is quite obvious that the angelic host doesn’t approach their role of worshipping God as mechanical or merely to fulfill a duty

They do so with honor and great joy

**They Worship God ‘Continually’**

**They Worship God ‘Joyfully’**

**C. They Worship God ‘Selflessly’**

To me, one of the greatest scenes in the Bible is found in **Isaiah 6**

Isaiah is granted a vision of the Lord sitting on His throne

And around the throne we see seraphim that are worshipping

We read in **Isaiah 6:2 –**

***“Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly”***

I want to draw your attention to their wings

These particular creatures had six wings

They took two wings to hid their face

They took two wings and hid their feet

And with their final two wings they flew

There is something about their actions that I find interesting

Why do you think they hid themselves?

I have a suggestion

Because, although they are beautiful,

The One upon the throne is infinitely more so

And they were concerned lest at any time their beauty should somehow divert attention from the Lord’s Beauty

So they made it their supreme task to hide themselves with four of their wings …

So that only the Lord on the throne might be seen

Only two of their wings were used for service

There was nothing about the actions of the angels that was about themselves

It was all about the Lord!

They could care less if they got any attention

All they wanted, was for the Lord to be worshipped

As we have seen, angels worship God

**Continually, Joyfully,** and **Selflessly**

Would you not agree that we can learn from this kind of worship?

What a difference it would make in all our Lives

And our Church’s life, if we worshipped God as the angels do

**THE “CREATION” OF ANGELS**

**THE “CONSECRATION” OF ANGELS**

**III. THE “COMMISSION” OF ANGELS**

We read in **Hebrews 1:7 -**

***“And of the angels He saith, Who maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire”***

Angels are created servants, they are called ***“ministers”***

As we have seen, they are servants of God and servants to God

They serve with fervency as indicated by the words ***“flame of fire”***

All they do, they do with Passion

A thrilling truth about angels is that as servants or ministers …

They have been commissioned by God to be servants of God’s children

We read in **Hebrews 1:14 –**

***“Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?”***

Again angels are called servants - ***“ministering spirits”***

They have been sent by God to minister for and to those who have been saved (***“heirs of salvation”***)

How do angels minister to God’s people?

First,

**A. They ‘Watch Over’ God’s People**

**Ill.** The Jews held views about angels that were not always supported by Scripture. For example, they believed two hundred angels controlled the movements of the stars and that one very special angel, the calendar angel, controlled the never-ending succession of days, months, and years They also believe that there was a mighty angel who took care of the seas, while others superintended the frost, dew, rain, snow, hail, thunder, and lightning They even believed that there were angels who wrote down and recorded every word men spoke. There was the belief that there was a guardian angel for every nation and for every child.

Some of their views have been adopted in our modern view about angels

Such as, every person having a guardian angel

To be honest, I don’t know if each Christian has a guardian angel or not

It’s possible, but I can’t absolutely say that for sure

**Humor:** If it is, the way I have seen some drive, there are some angels that most likely have ulcers

We do know though, that the angels are watching over us

From **vs. 7** and **14**

They observe our lives

They are watching over and watching out for us

The Bible says in **Psalm 91:9 –11**

***“Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation;” “There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling” “For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways”***

What the Psalmist says seems to indicate that angels have been put in charge of watching over God’s people

**They ‘Watch Over’ God’s People**

**B. They ‘Work for’ God’s People**

Angels work to protect us from the dangers that we face in life

Have you ever heard someone say –

*“Man, I was lucky! If it had been another few feet I would have been in trouble”*

I am convinced that what we think is luck is angels intervening on our behalf

Oftentimes in the Bible, it was in the desperate hours of life that angels appeared

They came to strengthen, guide, and protect

God has commissioned angels to be our servants,

Thus they are always working on behalf of those that are saved

Let me give you a few examples –

**Ill.** John G. Paton was a missionary in the New Hebrides Islands; hostile natives surrounded his mission headquarters one night, intent on burning the Paton’s out and killing them. Paton and his wife prayed all that night. At dawn they were amazed to see the attackers just turn and leave. A year later the chief of that very tribe was converted to Christianity. Paton then asked him what had kept him and his men from burning down the house and killing them that night. The chief asked Paton a return question - *“Who were all those men you had with you there?”* Paton told him there had been no one except his wife and himself, but the chief insisted they had seen hundreds of men standing guard--big men in shining garments with drawn swords.

Who do you think those men were that were standing guard?

Let me give you another example

**Ill.** It happened in 1956 during the Mau Mau uprisings in East Africa. The story was told by veteran missionary Morris Plotts. A band of roving Mau Maus came to the village of Lauri, surrounded it, and killed every inhabitant, including women and children—three hundred people in all. Not more than three miles away was the Rift Valley Academy, a private boarding school where children were being educated while their missionary parents worked elsewhere. Immediately upon leaving the carnage at Lauri the Mau Maus came with spears, clubs, torches, and bows and arrows to the school, bent on destruction. You can imagine the fear of those children at the school. Word had already reached them about the destruction of Lauri. There was no place to flee. The only resource was prayer. Out in the night, lighted torches were seen coming toward the school. Soon there was a complete ring of these terrorists about the school, cutting off all avenues of escape. Shouting and curses could be heard coming from the Mau Maus. Then they began to advance on the school, tightening the circle, shouting louder, coming closer. Suddenly, when they were close enough to throw a spear, they stopped. They began to retreat, and soon they were running into the jungle. A call had gone out to the authorities, and an army had been sent in the direction of the school to rescue the inhabitants.

But by the time the army arrived, the would-be assassins had dispersed. The army spread out in search of them and captured the entire band of raiding Mau Mau’s. Later, before the judge at their trial, the Mau Mau leader was called to the witness stand. The judge asked him, *“On this night did you kill the inhabitants of Lauri?”* The leader replied, *“Yes.”* “*Was it your intent to do the same at the Rift Valley Academy?” “Yes.”* *“Well then,”* asked the judge, *“…why did you not complete the mission? Why didn't you attack the school?”* The leader, who had never read the Bible and never heard the gospel, replied, *“We were on our way to attack and destroy all the people at the school. But as we came closer, all of a sudden between us and the school there were many huge men, dressed in white with flaming swords. We became afraid and we ran to hide!”*

Again, who do you think those huge men were?

You may be skeptical, but I have no doubt they were angels

Angels are ministers who have been sent to minister to those who are saved

As I said in the beginning, angels are wonderful creatures

In …

**THE “CREATION” OF ANGELS**

- We see - What and Who they are

**THE “CONSECRATION” OF ANGELS**

- Their chief occupation was Worship

**THE “COMMISSION” OF ANGELS**

- What they were created to do

However, as we will see in our next study,

As wonderful as they may be,

Jesus is Better!

**Hebrews 1:4 – *“Being made so much better than the angels,”***