



Who and What Is Jesus?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, you have given us everything we need. You created the world we live in and provided for our needs. When our ancestors sinned, you carried out a plan to make believers into new creatures who will one day live without sin in our lives. To accomplish this, you sent Your one and only Son, born as a human being, to die for us on the cross. We can never repay the debt we owe to You. We need Your help to tell other people Your great plan for humanity. Give us opportunities to share Your Good News with others, so that they might know of Your love for them and come to believe in Jesus as their Savior. Amen.

⁵ For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you”? Or again, “I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son”? ⁶ And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, “Let all God’s angels worship him.” ⁷ Of the angels he says, “He makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire.” ⁸ But of the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom.” ⁹ You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.” Hebrews 1:5–9 (ESV)

The book of Hebrews was written so that believers would come to know about Jesus so that would be able to hold on tightly to their faith. In the first lesson on the book of Hebrews we identified the key verse for the entire book:

¹⁴ Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. Hebrews 4:14 (ESV)

As we learn more about Jesus, and what He has done for us, our faith can grow stronger. When two people are in love, the same sort of process takes place. When I was in high school my pastor’s son was serving in the military at the Panama Canal. He got engaged to a new Christian. So, he arranged for her to come live with his family. They wrote very long letters to each other, every day. Their love grew stronger with almost every letter. As those who believe in Jesus Christ, we need to grow in our love for Jesus by reading more and more about Him. This what the writer of Hebrews wanted for those who read His letter. If you believe in Jesus, you will want to learn about Him, especially the little details, so that your love for Him will grow. Learning the details of the Father’s plans to bring His Son to earth as a Savior also helps us to love Him more and more.

Let’s review what we’ve been learning about Jesus. The book of Hebrews begins with a sense of excitement and amazement. God always knew what He was going to do. But to humanity, God’s plan was a mystery. He dropped hints throughout the Old Testament that Jesus was going to come as a Savior. The writer of Hebrews knew that Jesus had

come within his lifetime. This was like an overwhelming explosion of God's blessings for those who believed in Him. But instead of focusing on the faith of those who believed, the writer of Hebrews focuses entirely on the object of their faith, Jesus Christ. He is the heir of "all things" and the one who "created the world" (Hebrews 1:2). In the past, God spoke to His people through the prophets, but when Jesus came, God spoke to His people directly, because Jesus is God. Following His death on the cross and His resurrection, Jesus sat "at the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Hebrews 1:3). The term, "Majesty on high" refers to God the Father. Jesus now sits at the Father's right hand (Hebrews 1:3 and Ephesians 1:20). This means that Jesus reigns alongside God the Father. Jesus' title, or "name" is "more excellent than" the angels. This means Jesus' identity is "more excellent" than the identity of the angels. Why mention this? People at this time were aware that angels were great and majestic creatures from heaven. They weren't quite sure whether angels might be more powerful and more important than Jesus. The writer of Hebrews makes it clear that angels do not even come close to the power and majesty of Jesus.

We also looked at the title "son of God" as it applied to Jesus. The angels were sometimes called "sons of God." King David's heirs were called "Sons" of God. As a descendant of David, Jesus inherited David's throne and reigns over His kingdom with the righteousness of God. This special authority was given only to the descendants of David who inherited the throne. Jesus, as a descendant of David, then, is a "son" of God in a very different sense than the angels are "sons of God."

Just in case you might still question whether Jesus is greater than the angels, the writer of Hebrews hasn't finished proving from the Old Testament scriptures that Jesus **is greater** than the angels. This week we will look at three more comparisons between Jesus and angels. All three comparisons show Jesus is superior to angels:

- Angels Worship Jesus
- Angels Are Jesus' Servants
- Jesus Now Sits on a Holy Throne and Reigns Over the Angels

When we read the book of Hebrews, it takes considerable effort to keep track of all the Old Testament passages quoted and mentioned. Why does the writer of Hebrews do this? At the time Hebrews was written most Jewish people sang the words of the Psalms during their worship services in the synagogues and even in the Temple. Because there were no printing presses to make copies of books, people memorized the words so that they could sing the songs together, as a group. The writer of Hebrews mostly used passages from the book of Psalms. The Hebrew people knew these words by heart. Today, if somebody says a few words from a TV commercial everyone immediately knows what they're talking about. That's how it was for the first people who read Hebrews. But even though the Old Testament quotations are difficult for us to understand, it is well worth the effort. The writer has given us what we need to know so that we can grow in our love and appreciation for the greatness of our incredible Savior, Jesus Christ.

Angels Worship Jesus

Angels are from Heaven. Jesus Christ is also from heaven. How are they different?

The angels worship Jesus. Angels bow down to Jesus. The word translated as "gods" in Deuteronomy 32:43 was translated as "angels" when the Old Testament was translated into Greek in a translation that was widely used at the time of Jesus. The Hebrew word, in the original language, means "heavenly being," so it can refer to God or angels. Keep in mind these words were very familiar to the people who first read the book of Hebrews. Take a look at Hebrews 1:6 and Deuteronomy 32:43.

⁶ And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, “**Let all God’s angels worship him.**” Hebrews 1:6

“Rejoice with him, **O heavens; bow down to him, all gods**, for he avenges the blood of his children and takes vengeance on his adversaries. He repays those who hate him and cleanses his people’s land.” Deuteronomy 32:43

Angels were majestic beings from Heaven. Whenever we read about someone who saw them, they trembled in fear. But angels knew their place. They worshipped Jesus.

Angels are powerful but the greatest power in the universe is God. Jesus is far greater and far more powerful than even the most powerful angel. No power is greater than Jesus. He can deliver you. He can save you from everything that prevents you from being in fellowship with Him. He knows many things keep you separated from Him. Some of these things are beyond your control. Even the things that you can control, are often a problem. If you turn to Him, He has the power to bring you into a warm, loving relationship with Him. His power cannot be stopped, even by angels.

Angels Are Jesus’ Servants

In the Psalms angels are compared to the wind and fire. Think of the damage done by hurricanes and tornadoes. The power of angels is like that. Think of the damage done by fires. Angels have power like that.

The power of angels serves a special purpose. See Hebrews 1:7 and Psalm 104:3-4:

⁷ Of the angels he says, “**He makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire.**”

³ He lays the beams of his chambers on the waters; he makes the clouds his chariot; he rides on the wings of the wind; ⁴ **he makes his messengers winds, his ministers a flaming fire.** Psalm 104:3-4, ESV

Look at these verses. The writer of Hebrews is quoting from Psalm 104: 3-4 but he changes the word “messengers” to “angels”. That is because both words refer to the same heavenly beings. The angels are God’s messengers. Notice that angels are also God’s ministers. The word “minister” often gives us a sense of authority or power, such as a pastor who oversees a church, or a person in government who heads up a division of the government. Both are leaders. What you might miss is that both are also servants. They have authority, but their authority doesn’t come from themselves. In fact, if they only do what they want to do, they aren’t good “ministers.” They are supposed to serve someone other than themselves. A pastor of a church, serves God and the congregation. A governmental “minister of finance,” serves a nation by administering the financial matters of that nation. Ministers have great power, but they must use that power to serve to others.

Angels are ministers. They serve God. The writer of Hebrews points out that they serve Jesus, because He is God. Power and authority on earth is often misused, but in heaven its very different. In heaven power and authority are used exactly as God intends. The angels only use their power to serve God the Father and God the Son.

Every human being struggles to understand when they have authority and when they don't have authority. Many disagreements center on who is in authority and who is not. Somewhere, deep in our heart, we would like to know true authority. We want to know where we can turn to know what is right and what is wrong. We would like to know what is true and what is false. Jesus is the authority we can trust to know what is right. He will never guide us into what is wrong. Even the angels in heaven bow down to serve Him. There can be no better recommendation than that. We can trust Him without reservation.

Jesus Now Sits on a Godly Throne and Reigns over the Angels

Not only do the angels bow down and worship Jesus, but Jesus rules in authority over the angels. It isn't just a matter of the angels recognizing Jesus' power over them. Jesus recognizes His power over them. Look at Hebrews 1:8-12 and Psalm 45:6-7.

⁸ But of the Son he says, **"Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. ⁹ You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions."** ¹⁰ And, "You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands; ¹¹ they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment, ¹² like a robe you will roll them up, like a garment they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will have no end." Hebrews 1:8-12

⁶ **Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness; ⁷ you have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions;** Psalm 45:6-7 ESV

A scepter is a something like a large baton that a king holds in his hand when he sits on his throne. The scepter symbolizes his power as a king. Jesus, as the king of creation, rules with full "uprightness." Whenever He makes a decision, everyone agrees that it was the right decision. That's not just because He is in power. It's because deep in their hearts, they all know that what Jesus did really was the right thing to do.

The last phrase in Psalm 45:7 helps to explain how this Psalm foretold Jesus' role as Messiah: "Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness". Let me give a little background information about this psalm. It was written as part of the wedding ceremony for an unidentified Hebrew king. We don't see this very clearly until we get to verses 10-11, "Hear, O daughter, and consider ... the king will desire your beauty." Then, we are told of the wedding procession of the bride, as she approached the king, "In many-colored robes she is led to the king, with her virgin companions following behind her. With joy and gladness they are led along as they enter the palace of the king" (Psalm 45: 14&15, ESV).

In Psalm 45:7 a narrator or spokesman explains what is happening. If you're thinking of many modern American weddings, this person would be the emcee, or maybe even a wedding singer. In Psalm 45:1, the narrator says, "I address my verses to the king." He's singing a song, with "verses" to the king. Over and over, he tells everyone how wonderful and great the king is. He actually goes so far as to call the king, "God." He says, "Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness". To us that might sound sacrilegious. It would be sacrilegious, except this king has been made king by God, and this king ruled with authority that God had given him. And, these words were inspired by God. When a Hebrew king ruled in obedience to God his actions were considered to be God's actions. We actually do something like this today when a state or federal laws is involved. We might say, "The State of New Jersey says ..." or "Uncle Sam says ..." What we mean is that someone acting on behalf of the state of New Jersey, or someone acting on behalf of the United States. They are not speaking on their own behalf. They are acting on the behalf of the government. When a king of Israel was acting in obedience to God, his actions were considered to be acts of God and his wedding therefore was an act of God.

These words, spoken in honor of the Hebrew king on his wedding day, were inspired by the Holy Spirit. They came to mean far more than the announcer who first wrote them down could have understood. When the words were applied to Jesus, they pointed out that He was the heir to the throne of David. Yet, Jesus was also the Son of God, who was God. His Father, was God the Father. When Jesus died on the cross and rose again, God the Father "anointed" Jesus "with the oil of gladness." Jesus now sits at the right hand of God the Father in Heaven – that's what is meant that He was anointed with the oil of gladness. God the Father raised Jesus up to rule at His side.

Just think how the first Christians, who were raised as Jewish people, would have responded to these words. They had sung the words of this psalm during their worship. These words were sung, most likely, even when they milked their cows, harvested their grain, and did other physical work. They would hum the tune. They would sing the words. These words were familiar to them.

Deep in their hearts and memories, all these things pointed to Jesus as God, Savior, and loving Deliverer.

These thoughts about Jesus may be new to you, but He is the same Jesus. Come to Him and He will receive you and bless you in a way that is more wonderful than you can imagine, and that will last forever.

Please pray these words with me: Holy Spirit, I ask that you will use the words of scripture to touch my heart. Help me to know the greatness of Jesus so that I may know that He can save me from my sins. Let me know the love of Jesus so that I will trust Him in every area of my life. Amen.

The Son Superior to Angels (Hebrews 1:5–14)

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E G T F H A T E D E V O L

For to which of the **angels** did God **ever** say, “You are my Son, **today** I have **begotten** you”? Or **again**, “I will be to him a **father**, and he shall be to me a son”? And **again**, **when** he **brings** the **firstborn** into the world, he says, “Let all God’s **angels** worship him.” Of the **angels** he says, “He **makes** his **angels** **winds**, and his **ministers** a **flame** of **fire**.” But of the Son he says, “Your **throne**, O God, is **forever** and **ever**, the **scepter** of **uprightness** is the **scepter** of your **kingdom**. You have **loved righteousness** and **hated wickedness**; **therefore** God, your God, has **anointed** you with the oil of **gladness beyond** your companions.” And, “You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your **hands**; they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out **like** a **garment**, **like** a robe you will roll them up, **like** a **garment** they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will have no end.” And to which of the **angels** has he **ever** said, “Sit at my right **hand** until I **make** your enemies a footstool for your feet”? Are they not all **ministering** spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?

[\(ESV\)](#)