

ANGELS ARE NOT SEATED AT GOD'S RIGHT HAND (vv. 13-14)

¹³ To which of the angels did God ever say, **“Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet (Psalm 110:1)”**? ¹⁴ Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?

1. The writer of Hebrews ends where he began. Notice the phrase, “to which of the angels did God ever say... (in verse 5 and then again in verse 13).” He employs another coronation hymn. Psalm 110 happens to be the most quoted Old Testament passage in the New Testament. It once again reminds us of the Son’s position at the right hand of God. While the passage might figuratively apply to any Davidic king, it literally applies to the Son. Why do you think the writer of Hebrews keeps coming back to the Son’s position at the right hand of God?
2. How does he describe angels?
3. How would you summarize the ways the Son is superior to angels?
4. While we probably do not share the same fascination with angels that the writer of Hebrews’ original audience does, there is still plenty here for us to take to heart. What are some of your practical take-aways from this passage?

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LOOK TO JESUS

BETTER THAN ANGELS | HEBREWS 1:3-14

Perhaps you’ve been around long enough to remember the popular series, “Touched by an angel.” Della Reese played an older seasoned angel. She offered wise counsel to younger inexperienced angels as they navigated the difficulties of dealing with people. If we have guardian angels, I want to be first in line for Della Reese. She played a tough, no-nonsense, gritty character that made the series. The series ran for the better part of a decade before it eventually ran out of steam.

The series was part of a broader cultural phenomenon. New age thinkers were writing about spirit beings. People were encountering angels and describing their experiences on late-night television. The Black Crows and Amy Grant were writing songs about angels. Billy Graham wrote a book on Angels. So did everyone else. Most churches did series on angels. Angels captured our imagination for a season; then we moved on.

In the 400 years between the close of the Old Testament and the arrival of Christ, Jewish writers shared a similar fascination. Moses spoke of angels descending on Sinai when God gave the ten commandments. They played a significant role in Abraham’s story, and they show up from time to time in the book of Judges. In the absence of a word from God, however, angels became the stuff of legend and endless speculation. Although they played an essential role in Biblical narrative, their role was wildly exaggerated in extra-biblical writings. Paul may have been confronting the same tendency when he warned the Colossians not to get caught up in the worship of angels.

The writer of Hebrews takes on the speculative theology of his day by insisting the Son is far better than anything angels were ever intended to be or anything we might imagine them to be.

ANGELS ARE NOT “THE SON” (v. 5)

⁵ For to which of the angels did God ever say, **“You are my Son; today I have become your Father (Psalms 2:7)”**? Or again, **“I will be his Father, and he will be my Son (2 Samuel 7:14)”**?

1. Israel is described as the son of God. The Davidic kings are also described as sons of God. Angels are referred to as “sons of God” in the book of Job. We, too, have been adopted into sonship. Sonship always describes an intimate relationship with God in which he cares for us as a father would a beloved son. While Israel is described as a son of God, the Davidic kings are described as sons of God, and we can be described as sons and daughters of God, none of us is a Son of God in precisely the way Jesus is a Son. How would you characterize the difference between Jesus’ sonship and ours? How does Jesus’ sonship impact our sonship?
2. The writer of Hebrews drives home his point with two Old Testament quotations. One from Psalms and the other from 2 Samuel. Chronologically the quote from 2 Samuel comes first. God promises David he will be like a father to David’s heirs as they ascend to the throne. Psalm 2 is a coronation hymn, which recalls the promise made to David. In this context, “sonship” has to do with the right to rule and reign over God’s people as God’s co-regent. How was this promise fulfilled in Davidic kings? How is Jesus the ultimate fulfillment of this promise? How does this make him better than angels? How should we respond to Jesus’ rule and reign?

ANGELS ARE NEVER THE OBJECT OF OUR WORSHIP (vv. 6-7)

⁶ And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, **“Let all God’s angels worship him (Deuteronomy 32:43).”** ⁷ In speaking of the angels he says, **“He makes his angels spirits, and his servants flames of fire (Psalm 104:4).”**

1. Once again, the writer of Hebrews drives home his point with a couple of Old Testament passages. If you look these up in your Bible, they will not read the way they do in the book of Hebrews. You’ll have to look at the footnotes. The author of Hebrews is reading from a Greek translation of a much older Hebrew text. The translators were evidently aware of a longer reading that is lost to us. The point, however, is made elsewhere in Scripture. Angels were never intended to be the objects of our worship. Angels, as wonderful as they may be, bow in fear and reverence before the Son. How should the fact that angels bow before

the Son inform our response to the Son? How should it inform our view of angels?

2. How does Psalm 104, as quoted by the author of Hebrews, describe angels? What is their primary role? How does their role differ from that of the Son?
3. What happens when we become overly impressed with minor players (or secondary matters, or lesser things) rather than turning our affections toward the Son and worshiping him with all our being?

ANGELS ARE NOT ETERNAL (vv. 8-12)

⁸ But about the Son he says, **“Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom. ⁹ You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy (Psalm 45:6-7).”**

¹⁰ He also says, **“In the beginning, Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, 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 You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end (Psalm 102:25-27).”**

1. Psalm 45 is interesting. It is a wedding song for a Davidic king. It begins by speaking of the glory and grandeur of the king’s throne and ends with an appeal to the nations’ daughters to rejoice in the king. In verses 6 and 7, the Psalmist refers to the Davidic throne as the throne of God. While Davidic kings come and go, the throne of God endures forever. However, the writer of Hebrews sees in the Son a king who is both a legitimate heir of David and God himself. In him, the rule of God and the rule of men come together. How does Jesus fulfill the Psalmist’s vision of an eternal king? How does the Psalmist describe the character of his kingdom? How has God set Jesus above his companions? Why should all this matter to us?
2. Psalm 102 describes the transitory nature of creation. The heavens and the earth will “wear out like a garment.” While angels are not explicitly mentioned in these passages, the writer of Hebrews still has angels in mind. He seems to be implying that while the Son is eternal, angels are a part of the created order. They are transitory. How does the eternal nature of the Son set him above the rest of creation? What happens when our affections are captured by the temporary rather than the eternal?