



Daily Bible Habit

The Letter To The Hebrews

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Focus Points...*For Hebrews 1*

Stop And Consider...

* Jesus is God's greatest Revelation to us.

Look...

* At how Jesus is superior to angels who are merely servants.

Listen...

* To the testimony of the "forefathers" (1:1) whose witness points to Jesus Christ as God's appointed Messiah.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ, You are the greatest revelation of God. As God's "Word made flesh," I thank You for fulfilling God's plan of salvation. As I read the Letter to the Hebrews, help me to see how Your incarnation, sacrifice, death and resurrection is nothing less than the total fulfillment of God's plan of salvation for all people in every age. In the name of Jesus, the Great High Priest, I pray. Amen.

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Commentary:



The Letter to the Hebrews is a "General Epistle." Not addressed to a particular person or city, it is a general letter written to the "Hebrews," that is, those of Jewish decent. Like so many other New Testament books, such as Matthew, Acts and Romans, its target audience is Jews.

The purpose of this letter is simple: to present the Jews with God's chosen One, Jesus, as the true Messiah. For unbelieving Jews, the challenge which the writer of Hebrews faced was also simple: to demonstrate that Jesus is greater than any—and every—Old Testament figure and institution...without exception. Jesus is greater than Moses, the Old Testament Levitical Priesthood, and even angels.

Jews who thoughtfully considered Jesus' superiority were left with one simple, inescapable conclusion: Jesus was, indeed, God's chosen Messiah promised in the Scriptures.

Hebrews was also written to encourage Christians. At the time of its writing (ca. 60-65 AD), Christians were experiencing persecution from zealous religious Jews

and unbelieving Gentiles. Christians in the early churches also needed to be encouraged to godly living, respect their leaders and, most importantly, to remain faithful (cf. Hebrews 13).

Though we do not know who the writer of Hebrews was, this letter has been included in the New Testament by the early church because of its unwavering focus on the greatness of Christ. Using an abundance of Old Testament references, Hebrews stands out as one of the most remarkable New Testament books.

In chapter one Hebrews wasted no time demonstrating the superiority of Christ. Of all the ways God spoke to His covenant people in the Old Testament, none was greater than Jesus.

Jesus, Hebrews noted, is “radiance of God’s glory” and the “exact representation of God’s being.” He is God’s greatest Revelation who sat down at the “right hand of the Majesty in heaven” (1:1-3).

In the Old Testament God used prophets like Moses and Elijah to declare His Word. But they were only sinful human beings. “In the past” God also used angels to bear His Word to His people. But the angels were merely servants. In 1:4-14, Hebrews gives a simple, yet pointed, argument of Jesus’ superiority: Jesus is superior over the angels.

Jesus is superior in that, unlike the angels...

- * Jesus has inherited a greater name than the angels (1:4);
- * God has claimed Jesus as His “Son” (1:5);
- * God directed all creation—including angels—to worship Jesus, His firstborn (1:6);
- * God has given His Son the eternal throne and unlimited dominion as promised to David (cf. II Samuel 7);
- * Jesus laid the foundations of the earth and created the heavens (1:10);
and
- * Jesus’ reign is eternal. His years will “never end” (1:11-12).

As for angels, they are merely “plastic” creatures. God changes and transforms them as He needs. He can make them “winds.” He can make these servants “flames of fire” (1:7).

As chapter one concludes, the writer of Hebrews reminded his audience that angels were not the Messiah. They were not to be worshiped. As for angels, they are merely “ministering servants sent to serve those who will inherit salvation” (1:14).

Chapter one challenges the readers to address this key issue of faith: To what should faith be directed...to mere angels or Jesus, the superior Son of God sitting on God's throne?

For anyone versed in the Old Testament Scriptures, the answer was clear. Faith is directed only to Jesus, the eternal Son of God.

Prayer:

Father God, as I consider how You sent Jesus to be the final answer to sin, how can I but thank and adore You! I don't need to believe in angels. I don't need to believe in my works. I don't need to trust in *anything* earthly that will ultimately be worn out or destroyed. All I need is to trust You—the unchangeable, eternal Lord of All, Jesus Christ.

As I read through Hebrews, send Your Holy Spirit to build my faith. When I am discouraged, when I am overwhelmed, direct me to trust in Your eternal Son. Father, keep me in Your grace today that I may, as the angels, serve You and You alone. Amen.

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Picture: "The Angels' Song And Shepherds' Visit"

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TFF 4/09