

Jesus is Greater – and why it matters

Hebrews 1:5-2:4

If you look at popular literature and films it would suggest there is a real desire to 'connect' with other-worldly beings: hobbits, elves, vampires, angels even. And yet the writer of Hebrews emphasis on angels seems strange to us.

What would angels have meant to his first hearers? To them, angels were the ones who had given the Law to Moses. And it was to Judaism – back to the Law – that his listeners were considering turning. Which is why the writer wants them to see that Jesus is superior to angels.

Jesus is Greater

The writer uses 7 quotes from the Old Testament to show that the Son, Jesus, is greater than angels. He shows them:

1. His name is greater

The name 'angel' means 'messenger'. But Jesus is called 'Son'. No angel was ever called that by God the Father.

2. Worthy of Worship

The Bible is clear that only God is worthy of worship. And yet, the writer shows that God commands that the Son is worshipped by angels, who are servants. The implication is, if the angels worship Him, shouldn't we?

3. He never changes

The writer uses two quotes to show that the Son is God. But he also wants his hearers to know that in a changing and unstable world, God is the one thing that doesn't change. Christ is the one solid rock you can build your life upon.

4. He Rules

Angels stand before God's presence, but the Son sits at His right hand. One day, all his enemies (he has enemies, which is why Christians still suffer) will be conquered.

The Danger of Drift

Why does it matter that Jesus is greater than angels? Because his hearers were in danger of drifting away, of going back to Judaism and the law, put into place by angels.

What parallels are there for us? Firstly, we may listen to other voices more than to the gospel. Secondly, we may drift away because of good things – not just bad things. Thirdly, there is always the danger of drifting back into Law – of thinking we have to earn and deserve God's love and grace, rather than it being His free gift to us.

So, if that's the danger, how does the writer tell us we can avoid drifting away?

Firstly, by having the humility to recognize (like the writer) that we need to be tied to Jesus as much as anyone else. Secondly, by realizing that there are eternal (and present) consequences of drifting away. But thirdly, by paying much closer attention to the gospel – by soaking in it, and allowing God's love and grace to us in Christ to sink in.