

**CHAPTER 3**  
**The Epistle to the Hebrews**  
**CHRIST SUPERIOR TO ANGELS (Hebrews 1:5-14)**  
by G. H. Lang

5. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, This day have I begotten thee? and again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?
6. And when he again bringeth in the firstborn into the world he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.
7. And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels winds, And his ministers a flame of fire:
8. but of the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; And the sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.
9. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.
10. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands:
11. They shall perish; but thou continuest: and they shall all wax old as doth a garment;
12. And as a mantle shalt thou roll them up, As a garment, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.
13. But of which of the angels hath he said at any time, Sit thou at my right hand, till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet?
14. Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?

The dignity and glory of Christ is next displayed by proving Him to be superior to the most exalted of created beings, the angels. These are greater in power and might than man, but Christ is greater than they. This superiority follows from His heirship as the Son of God: "He hath *inherited* a more excellent name than they." For He is "the Son" by original uncreated derivation from the Father; they are only "sons" (Job 38:7; 1:6; 2:1; Gen. 6:4) by having been created by the Son and given a nature which is spirit and so akin to God Who is spirit.

As the glory of the Son was set forth in a sevenfold statement, so is His superiority to angels enforced by seven quotations from the Old Testament.

I. Ps. 2:7. "*Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.*" To no angel did God ever say this. To Christ only was it said, and to Him in resurrection. It is only of an act *in time* that God could say, "This *day*" have I done this or that. Therefore the eternal rights of the Son by heirship are here renewed to Him in manhood and resurrection. Now no angel has died and been begotten from that state into resurrection life. Christ

only is the “firstborn from the dead” (Col. 1:18), and therefore He is the only Head of that body of persons, the church, which shares in His resurrection through having accepted fellowship with His sufferings and death.

Those who, through grace and faith, have obtained association with Him in that resurrection life share potentially in His superiority to angels, and are to share it actually when actually sharers in body of His resurrection and ascension (1 Cor. 6:3). Being thus seated with Christ above all principalities and powers (Eph. 1:18-23; 2:4-7; 1 Pet. 3:21, 22), it is not for them to relinquish their supreme position and turn to angels with worship (Rev. 19:10; 22:8, 9) or with requests for *their* intercession with God. In Christ the believer is a son of God with a nearer relationship than they who know only their created standing, not a relationship in regeneration and resurrection.

The argument from silence is to be much observed. God did *not* say to or of an angel that which He *did* say to His Son. It is not permissible to read into God’s word what He has *not* said. His silence is to be noted and respected. His Word is perfect (Ps. 19:7), and a work or a statement which is already perfect is spoiled as much by addition as by subtraction. Comp. the same argument from silence at 7:14, and note Gal. 3:16 to the effect that a singular noun must not be treated as a plural. In the Preface to *The Epistles of St. John* Westcott said: “I do not venture to pronounce that any variation is trivial or unimportant. The exact words are for us the decisive expression of the Apostle’s thought.”

2. 2 Sam. 7:14; 1 Chron. 17:13. “*I will be to Him (a) Father, and He shall be to Me (a) Son.*” Darby and Isaacs translate “For father . . . for son.” Thus was declared in advance that the taking of humanity by the Son should not alter the eternal relationship, for in the new status Each should be to the Other what Each had been before it. The emphasis is upon the relationship which Each should bear to the Other. In this relationship no angel ever stood.

The application of this sentence from Old Testament history to Christ is a signal example of how the full, the spiritual intent of many Old Testament statements may go beyond their first application. The words applied firstly to the man Solomon, as is clear from the clause: “If he commit iniquity I will chasten him.” But it is equally plain that some further descendant of David is required for the fulfillment of that portion of the promises which was not fulfilled in Solomon: “I will establish the throne of his kingdom *for ever* . . . thy house and thy kingdom shall be made sure *for ever* before thee; thy throne shall be established *for ever.*” And the words “before thee” demand that the fulfillment shall be in resurrection, for only so can David see it. It is Messiah raised from the dead in and to Whom all shall be accomplished. The next quotation points to the time for this.

3. Deut. 32:43, LXX; Ps. 97:7. “*And when He again bringeth in the Firstborn into the world He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him.*” I take the force of this to be that when the time shall have come that the Father shall bring the Son again into the created regions He will command all angels to worship Him, i.e. the Son.

i. Since God only is to be worshipped (Deut. 6:13; Matt. 4:10; Rev. 19:10; 22:8, 9), He whom God commands to be worshipped must be God. Thus there must be two (at least Persons in the Godhead, since One commands that the other is to be worshipped. But He who brings forward the Other and commands that He be worshipped must as to relationship be the senior of that Other. See ch. I, above. Again—which is the special point here—He who is to be worshipped must be the divine Superior of those who are to worship Him, the angels.

ii. The occasion of this is to be when the Father shall compel universal subjection to the Son: see on I.13 below. The prophet vision of this is seen in Rev. 5, where all the heavenly order the living creatures, the elders, and the angels are seen worshipping God and the Lamb.

iii. The last-mentioned event takes place in heaven at the installation of the Lamb as supreme Ruler, prior to the opening by Him of the Seals. As when He opens these He is still heaven, it is well before He comes to the earth; which shows that the *oikoumene* of this passage in *Hebrews*, into which the Father will again bring the Son, cannot be limited to this earth. In any case it must include the realm of the angels. See ch. 2, 7, ii above, where it is suggested that the present location of the Son at the right hand of the Father is beyond the created universe.

It is a loss that many have not seen that this word *oikoumene* can mean far more than conceited Greeks and Rome meant, i.e. their own empires. Derived from *oikeo* to dwell, inhabit, it can mean any habitable region, heavenly or earth and it was occasionally so used. In Prov. 8:27-31, Wisdom speaks of having been present at the creation, distinguishes the heavens, the skies, and the earth, and appears to embrace them all in the statement (after the LXX) that God “was rejoicing in His *oikoumene*,’ and especially rejoicing among the sons of men. It is obvious that the whole universe in its original pure and lovely condition must have been a source of joy to its Creator, not only this earth, though for special reasons, connected with His purposes for men, it and they were a special subject of joy when made. Moses (Ps. 90:2) seems to have distinguished the earth from the *oikoumene* by saying that God existed eternally “before (the) earth and (the) world were formed,” where again the LXX used *oikoumene*. The repetition in the LXX of the article (“*the world*”) stresses the distinction. Similarly in the uninspired *Wisdom of Solomon*, in the *Apocrypha* (1:7), a proof of the omniscience of God is His omnipresence: “Because the spirit of the Lord hath filled the *oikoumene*, and that which holdeth all things together hath knowledge of every voice”: therefore let man be

cautious in speech, for, He who is everywhere hears everything. Here *oikoumene* is the equivalent of *ta panta*, the all things, the universe, as in Col. 1; etc.

The necessity of this widest possible meaning will be seen at 2:5.

4. Ps. 104:4. "*Who maketh His angels winds, His ministers aflame of fire.*" Here is information as to the nature of the angelic substance. It is subtle, pervasive, mobile, energetic as wind: it is intense, brilliant, powerful as fire, and can be as destructive, when angels are employed as ministers of the divine wrath. This their nature and service are of Divine appointment. They are created thus, (*ho poion* the One making=the Creator), and they continue thus. Because of this nature they control the elemental forces, wind (Rev. 7:1), fire (Rev. 8:5; 14:18; Acts 7:30). In these activities they are messengers (*angelous*) and "high commissioners" (Isaacs). On this second description (*leitourgous*) Westcott says: "The word seems always to retain something of its original force as expressing a public, social service." See 7, p. 42.

Yet granting the greatness of angels in form and service, they are still infinitely below the Son in dignity, for to *Him* the Father has said:

5. Ps. 45:6, 7: "*Thy throne, O God, is unto the age of the age [=for ever], And the rod [sceptre, as often in Old Testament] the straight [i.e. symbol of rule without crookedness] is the rod of Thy Kingdom.* [Fallen angels rule: Satan is the Prince of this world--John 14:30; and see Dan. 10:13; etc.; but their rod (rule) is crooked: see Ps. 82.]

*Thou lovedst* [aorist: throughout His life on earth, viewed as one complete action] *righteousness and hatedst lawlessness:*

*Therefore God, thy God, anointed Thee* [at His ascension; see Ps. 16:9-11] *with oil of ecstatic delight* [exultation] *above Thy companions*" (*metochoi*).

(1) The Son is addressed by the Father as God: yet impious men deny that He is God. (2) The Father is His God. The Son on earth, in resurrection, owned this: "I ascend unto my Father . . . my God." (John 20:17.) (3) The Son is enthroned, and eternally: but even senior angelic rulers have thrones only temporally: see on 2. 5. (4) The ground of this supreme exaltation and exultation is the state of heart, the inner character of the Son when in this scene and atmosphere of lawlessness: He abhorred it, but loved righteousness. (5) The Son exalted has *companions*. See on 3:14.

6. Ps. 102:25-27. "*Thou, Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth,*

*And the heavens are the works of Thy hands:*

*They shall perish, but Thou continuest:*

*And they all shall wax old as doth a garment;*

*And as a mantle shalt Thou roll them up,  
As a garment, and they shall be changed:  
But Thou art the same,  
And Thy years shall not fail.”*

The title “Lord” was inserted by the LXX and continued by the Writer here. The psalm was addressed to the Lord (Jehovah), as the inscription shows, and the great Name is repeated eight times to ver. 22. Now this “Lord” is the One who, as is foreseen by the psalmist when speaking of millennial days, “has built up Zion, and appeared in His glory” (ver. 16) which work and display are elsewhere attributed to Messiah. It is Messiah, as having become man in humiliation, Who cried (ver. 24), “O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days,” and only to Him as man can the words be addressed “Thy years are throughout all generations . . . Thy year shall have no end.” Only God could promise this to His Servant whose life was to be cut short in the midst, at thirty-three years out of seventy: so that it is here the Father Who is answering the cry of the Son in humiliation and weakness. Thus (1) The Son is given by the Father the divine title *Lord* (in LXX—*Jehovah* in Hebrew); and (2) is declared to have been the Creator; and (3) is assured of eternal, unchangeable duration, whereas creation is ever changing and shall be at last completely changed.

No pious Jew ever attributed such divine dignities to angels; but by the time of the Writer there was already developing the deceitful blend of pagan and kabbalistic thought known later as Gnosticism, which sought to combine these false systems with Christianity, for the corrupting and destroying of the last. This satanic attempt persists in our day, exhibited in all those “parliaments of religion” and other endeavors to combine Bible truth with human error and Satanic lies.

Gnosticism taught that the things material were a creation of lower angelic powers, themselves a descending *emanation* from God, not a distinct *creation* by Him and distinct from Him. This pantheistic, soul-blinding system was definitely denied in advance by the psalm before us, and condemned by the psalm being quoted here.

Against this wholly false philosophy Scripture presents the true nature of Christ as being Himself, with the Father, essentially God, and as the sole Creator of all things, and therefore of the angels. The same errors are combated by Paul in Colossians: see 2:18, 19 in the light of the noble presentation of the Son in 1:13-20; and they are silently refuted by John in all his writings, with their exposition of the Son in relation to the Father, and as being personally the eternal life. Really to know Him is salvation from every error, for He is the Truth.

7. Ps. 110:1.  
*“Sit Thou on My right hand,  
Till I make Thine enemies the footstool of Thy feet.”*

The quoting of this sentence completes and clinches the demonstration of the superiority of the Son to angels. The words, and their context in the psalm, grant to the One addressed a *position*, a *service*, and a *future* such as no created being could hold.

i. A *position* of divine glory: “sit at My right hand.” Christ himself pointed out to the opponents of His claim to be divine that, by the sentence preceding those here quoted, God accorded a divine title to the Priest-King addressed: “The Lord said unto my *Lord*”: in Hebrew, “Jehovah said unto my *Adon*” (Matt. 22:41-46).

ii. A *service* in heaven both royal and priestly, such as that of Melchizedek. This will later be made the basis of an exposition and appeal of vast weight. See 4:14---10:39.

iii. A *future* of triumph over all enemies.

No angel could endure that glory, or fill that high office, or secure that universal victory. Their office, noble but subordinate, is to serve the counsels of that Sovereign; and at present these counsels concern chiefly certain objects of the grace of God who are yet to inherit salvation. What is meant by “inheriting salvation” is a principal theme of the New Testament. It is a design and task parts of which require angelic activity and are worthy of it.

---

*Christ Superior To Angels* (Chapter 3) from The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Practical Treatise for Plain and Serious Readers by G. H. Lang.

First Printing, The Paternoster Press, 1951

Second Printing, Schoettle Publishing Company, Inc., 1985

[Schoettle Publishing Company, Inc.](http://www.schoettle.com)

P.O. Box 1246

Hayesville, NC 28904

(706) 896-3333

Special permission has been granted to [InTheBeginning.org](http://www.inthebeginning.org) by Schoettle Publishing Company, Inc. to copy this material from The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Practical Treatise for Plain and Serious Readers by G. H. Lang.

**These pages may NOT be reproduced or altered for any pecuniary or publishing purposes without expressed permission from the publishing company.**

Original document was scanned with an [Epson 636 Expression scanner](http://www.epson.com) using [TextBridge Pro98](http://www.textbridge.com) software as the interface to [WORD97](http://www.word97.com).