

“So he became superior to the angels ” Hebrews chapter 1 verse 4

The writer to the Hebrews wants us to understand that Jesus is greater than anyone who came before him. He's already said that Jesus is a better word to us than that given by the Old Testament prophets. Now he says that Jesus is greater than the angels.

Jesus is unique. I often chuckle when people use that word. I often hear people say that someone or something is 'quite unique', or 'very unique'. But 'unique' is an absolute, not a relative word. Something is either unique or it is not. There are no grades of unique.

So there is only one Jesus. He is God, the ultimate spiritual being who became human for our salvation. Hebrews quotes a psalm, applying it to Jesus; *“You made him a little lower than the angels for a short time.”* Paul, writing to the Philippian Christians, tells us about Jesus that, *“existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be exploited. Instead, he emptied himself by assuming the form of a servant, taking on the likeness of humanity.”*

Jesus made a journey from the heights of the glory of deity down through the ranks of the hierarchy of created beings, assuming the mantle of a helpless baby, taking the role of the lowest servant, then enduring the indignity of crucifixion as a condemned criminal. Not stopping there, after his death we are told that he went lower still, to the world of the dead, to preach the good news of salvation to those who had died before his coming opened the doors of heaven. He went down to the lowest place so that the lowest could be lifted up.

Peter tells us that angels long to look into these things. Perhaps there is something about God's amazing plan of salvation that angels just don't get. Perhaps that's one of the reasons that Satan rebelled. Maybe he just didn't understand God's purpose in creating such fragile physical beings for free will, loving relationship with himself. Maybe that's why he still thinks he can oppose God's plans now. Speculation, I know.

But Hebrews makes clear why Jesus is unique among spiritual beings. They are God's servants, messengers and footsoldiers, but God never called any angel “Son”, nor were the angels ever commanded to worship any other angel. Certainly, no angel was ever addressed as “God”, as Jesus is here, and no angel was ever credited with being instrumental in creation. And no angel was ever told by God, *“Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.”*

And which angel ever, after suffering a degrading death, was crowned with glory and honour and had everything subjected under his feet? Jesus did not die for the salvation of angels, but of people, so that we might, by faith in him, share in his glory.

Prayer

Father, your word counsels us to humble ourselves under your mighty hand so that we might be lifted up in due time. May we follow the example of Jesus and not consider personal greatness something to be coveted, but rather submit ourselves in humility to whatever you have ordained in our lives, in the sure knowledge that the day will come when we will enjoy your reward. In Jesus name, amen.

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