

# FIRST SECTION 1. 4-14

## The Son of god More Than the Angels.

### CHAPTER V.

#### THE SON-A MORE EXCELLENT NAME

*1.4. Having become by so much better than the angels, as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they.*

*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?*

**T**HE superior excellence of the New Testament above the Old consists in this, that God has spoken to us, and wrought salvation for us in, His Son. Our whole Epistle is the unfolding of the glory of the person and work of the Son. The more completely we apprehend this, and have our heart permeated by it, the better we shall apprehend the completeness of the salvation God hath now provided for us. To know Jesus Christ in His glory is the great need, the only safeguard, the sure growth of the Christian life.

There is often no better way of knowing a thing than by placing it in contrast with what is less perfect. Our Epistle would teach us the glory of the New Testament by placing it in contrast with the Old, especially with those who were its

great mediators and representatives. It will show us the superiority of Christ over the angels, over Moses, over Joshua, over Abraham and Levi and Aaron.

It begins with the angels. **Having become so much better** (The word “better” is one of the key words of the Epistle. It occurs thirteen times. See References.) **than the angels, as He hath inherited a more excellent name than they.** Though these words belong grammatically to the preceding verses, they are in reality the heading of what follows. They form the transition from the theme to the first part of the argument – the excellence of Christ as Son of God above the angels. The Jews counted it one of their great privileges that the law was given by the ministration of angels (ch. ii. 2; Acts vii. 38, 53; Gal iii. 19), heavenly spirits, who came direct from the throne of God. The manifestation of God had frequently been in the form of an angel: “the angel of the Lord “ had been Israel’s leader. And yet great as was the privilege, it was as nothing to that of the new revelation. Angels were but creatures; they might show signs of heavenly power, and speak words of heavenly truth; as creatures, they could not bring down the life of God itself, nor truly reach into the life of man. They had indeed as a title of honour been called “sons of God” (Ps. 29.1, 79.6); there is but One to whom it was said, *Thou art my Son; this day I have begotten Thee*. He alone, making us partakers of the very life of God, could indeed bring God nigh to us, and us nigh to God.

It is the superiority of the Son to the angels the writer is going to prove in this first chapter by a series of quotations from Old Testament Scripture, We must not, however, only regard these as so many proof-texts for the divinity of our

Saviour, but as a divine revelation of the glory of that divinity in its various aspects. At the very commencement of his argument he will prove how the Old Testament had all along borne witness to the glory of God's Son, as the great thought that in God's revelation to man ever had the first place in God's heart.

Ere we proceed to study the texts themselves, it is of importance that we notice how the writer uses them. When our Lord on earth, or Paul, cites the Old Testament, they say: Moses says, or David says, or the prophets say, Our Epistle mostly quotes the words as coming from the lips of God Himself. In the seven quotations in our chapter it always is, "*He saith.*" Farther on we find more than once, "The Holy Ghost saith." Scripture has two sides, the human and the divine. The knowledge of all that can illustrate the Scriptures as human compositions has its very great value. But it is of still more importance never to forget the divine side, and to be full of the conviction that Scripture is indeed God's word; that God Himself, through His Spirit, spoke in the prophets, and that it has the power of God dwelling in it.

This conviction will teach us two things, absolutely necessary to the profitable study of the Epistle. The one, that we recognize that these words of God contain a divine depth of meaning which the human mind never could have grasped or expounded. The wonderful exposition of Ps. ii. and the Son of God; of Ps. viii. and the human nature of Jesus; of Ps. xcv. and the rest of God; of Ps. cx. and the priesthood of Melchizedek; all prove to us how they were inbreathed by that Spirit of Christ who knew what was to come, and how it was that same Spirit who alone could have taught our writer to apprehend and unfold their divine meaning.

The other lesson is this, that the divine thoughts, thus deposited in the Old Testament as a seed by the Holy Spirit and unfolded by that same Spirit in the New, still need the teaching of the Spirit to make them life and truth to us. It is God who must shine in our hearts to give the knowledge of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ. Christ is the Word, “that was God,” that speaks to us as coming out of the depth of God’s heart, a living person; it is only the heart that yields to be led by the Holy Spirit that can expect to profit by the teaching of the word, and truly to know Christ in His divine saving power. The truths of Christ’s sonship and divinity and priesthood and redemption *were given in charge to the Holy Spirit*; He revealed them from time to time; *He alone can reveal them to us*. To the written words all have free access; our mind can see their purport; but their life and power and blessing, the glory of the Son of God as a power of salvation – this is given to none but those who wait humbly on God’s Spirit to teach them.

*1. The angels brought wonderful messages from God of old: but God is now drawing far nearer to thee, and waiting to speak in a far more wonderful and blessed way, by revealing the eternal Word in thy heart.*

*2. Words and wonders, these angels could bring. But to bring the life and the love of God, and give it in the heart – that the Son alone can do. But He does it. Christ is the divine nature manifesting and communicating itself; I have no contact with Christ or God in Him, but as I receive Him, as the divine nature imparting itself, as manifested In His human life, and will, and character.*

*3. If I were favoured this day with the visit of an angel - what a privilege I would count it. But Christ, the Son at the right hand, will not only visit, but will dwell in me. O my soul, rise to thy privileges: God speaks to thee in His Son.*