

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Hebrews 1: 4-6

Peace be with you, brothers and sisters. This is Hwa-Chi. Thank God, it is time again for our Bible reading. We will continue our reading of Hebrews 1, and today we will read verses 4 through 6.

The Hebrew believers have received the salvation of Jesus Christ and become partakers of the New Covenant, which is beyond compare. This is indeed a blessing of immeasurable worth. However, these Hebrew believers still cherished the religious traditions handed down through the generations, rooted in the Old Covenant. These traditions included the laws of sacrifice, the priesthood and the service of the Levites, the rituals of worship in the temple, as well as the laws regarding food and purification, among others. These traditions, which had been passed down for thousands of years, were a source of pride for the Jewish people.

And now, in the New Covenant, all these things must be replaced or fulfilled in Christ. For the Hebrew believers, it was indeed difficult to let go of these traditions, and there was a certain emotional struggle within them. This inner conflict was something they had to face. On the outside, there were those who represented the Jewish religion—the high priests, the Sanhedrin, the scribes, and the Pharisees—who did not believe in Jesus Christ. They persecuted the Hebrew believers, even pressing them to renounce their faith in Christ. If they did not, they would be barred from remaining in Jewish society.

The author of Hebrews knew the plight of the Hebrew believers, and with great wisdom, he used a method of contrast to demonstrate the supremacy of Christ. He sought to show the Hebrew believers that Christ is far more beautiful, higher, better, greater, and surpasses the religious traditions they held dear and clung to so tightly. In this contrast, the author also inserted words of exhortation, encouraging the Hebrew believers to press on and continue forward in their faith.

The first contrast is found in Hebrews 1:4–2:18, where the author seeks to prove that Christ is superior to the angels. The Jewish people placed great importance on angels, for angels were created before humans, and their power far exceeds that of man. Angels are spiritual beings, immortal, and continually stand in the presence of God, sent by God to deliver His messages to humanity. Therefore, the Jews greatly revered angels.

The author, in turn, cites numerous scriptures to demonstrate that Christ is far superior to the angels. Hebrews 1:4-18 speaks of Christ as the Son of God, showing His superiority over the angels. Hebrews 2:1-4 is a passage of exhortation. Then, in Hebrews 2:5-18, the author speaks of Christ as the Son of Man, showing that what He accomplished is also far superior to the angels. Today, we will focus on reading verses 4-6.

Verse 4: "Having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs."

In the comparison between Christ and the angels, the first point the author presents is that the name Christ has inherited is far more excellent and honorable than the name of the angels. Even before Christ was born, the prophet Isaiah had already foretold that a Son would be given to us. In Isaiah 9:6, it is written: "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Every one of these titles is more honorable than the name of the angels.

And at the time of Jesus' birth, God first sent an angel to tell Joseph to name Him Jesus. In Matthew 1:21, it is written, "... for he will save his people from their sins." The name Jesus means "The LORD saves." After Jesus was born, according to God's will, He did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but humbled Himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. Furthermore, to save sinners, He became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

In Philippians 2:9-11, it is written: "Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Because of the redemption accomplished by Jesus Christ, the name of Jesus has become the name above all names. All created beings—whether in heaven, on earth, or under the earth—will bow their knees and confess with their tongues that Jesus Christ is Lord. What a glorious and exalted name this is!

After the ascension of Jesus Christ, His disciples continued His earthly ministry: preaching the gospel, bringing people to salvation, and establishing the Church. Peter, in Acts 4:12, boldly declared, "And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." The name of Jesus Christ is a name that is supreme, a name of great honor, a name of great power, and the only name by which humanity can be saved.

There are thousands upon thousands of angels, but only a few are named, and those that are named are among the most distinguished of all angels. The Bible records at least four such names. The first is Michael, referred to as the archangel in Jude 1:9. He should be the most honorable among angels. Michael's name means "Who is like God?"—he is like God, but he is not God. Even the most exalted angel, Michael, is not as glorious as Jesus Christ.

The second named angel is Gabriel, mentioned in Luke 1:26. Gabriel is the messenger angel, sent to deliver the good news. His name means "The warrior of God," indicating he is a mighty servant of God, engaged in God's service and fighting for His cause.

The third named angel is Cherubim, mentioned in Genesis 3:24. The cherubim were placed to guard the entrance to the garden of Eden after mankind was expelled. The name Cherubim means "The guard of Jehovah," signifying that they are the guardians of God.

The fourth named angel is Seraphim, referred to in Isaiah 6:2. The name Seraphim means "The burning ones," and they are specifically assigned to execute God's judgment.

When we look at the names of the angels, we see that each one reflects the role or function they fulfill in serving God. They are messengers who execute God's commands. As God's messengers, their names, of course, cannot compare to the honor and dignity of Christ.

Next, verses 5 and 6 describe the identity of Christ as far surpassing that of the angels.

Verse 5: "For to which of the angels did God ever say, 'You are my Son, today I have begotten you'? Or again, 'I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son'?"

All the angels are created by God, and therefore, God has never said to any angel, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you." While angels have been referred to as "the sons of God," as in Job 1:6, "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord..."—this refers to the angels standing before God. The term "sons of God" here is used because the angels were created by God, and in a broader sense, they can be considered His "sons." Similarly, Luke 3:38 states, "... *the son of Adam, the son of God*," referring to Adam, who was created by God. In this broader sense, Adam is also called "the son of God," signifying the relationship between the Creator and the created. This is a general term used to describe the relationship between God and His created beings.

However, the scripture quoted here is very direct: "You are my Son, today I have begotten you." This is quoted from Psalm 2:7, which speaks of Christ as the Son of God before the foundation of the world. It reveals that Christ has an eternal, life-giving relationship with the Father, not one of creation and creator. In John 1:18, Jesus is described as the only Son who is in the bosom of the Father. Moreover, the Apostle Paul also quotes Psalm 2:7 to affirm the resurrection of Jesus. In Acts 13:33,

it is written: "This he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus." as also it is written in the second psalm, 'You are my Son, today I have begotten you.'"

Why does Paul quote this scripture in such a way? Because after the Word became flesh, Jesus Christ took on the full nature of humanity, possessing 100% human nature. It is precisely because He is fully human that He could become the atoning Lamb, bearing the sins of humanity, being crucified for our sins. After three days, He rose from the dead, and through His mighty power, He clearly demonstrated that Jesus is the Son of God.

In the second half of this verse, God asks, "To which of the angels did he ever say, 'I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son'?" Of course, the answer is none. But God did speak these words concerning Christ: "I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son." This is a reference to 2 Samuel 7:14, where the context is King David, who dwelt in a cedar palace, while the ark of God remained in a tent. David desired to build a house for God, a temple. While God greatly appreciated David's intention, He told him that because David was a warrior king, he was not the one to build the temple. Instead, God declared through the prophet Nathan that it would be David's son, Solomon, a king of peace, who would build the temple. Therefore, God says: "I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son." This refers to Solomon, but Solomon, the builder of the temple, serves as a type or foreshadowing of Christ.

After Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, He began His ministry of building the Church, which was a divine purpose that God had planned before the foundation of the world. This is recorded in Ephesians 1:4-5. When Jesus began the work of building the Church, God declared, "I will be to you a Father, and you shall be to me a Son." Not only this, but after Jesus ascended, His disciples continued in the ministry of building the Church. This work of building the Church has been passed down through the generations, and we, too, continue the work of building the Church today. To every saint who is willing to be separated unto this ministry and join in the work of building the Church, God makes a similar declaration, as stated in 2 Corinthians 6:18: "And I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty."

Verse 6: "And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, 'Let all God's angels worship him.'"

A better translation would add the word "again," emphasizing that when God **again** brings the firstborn into the world, all His angels are to worship Him. The first time Christ came to the world, He came as the only begotten Son of God. As it is written in John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." God gave His one and only beloved Son, Jesus Christ, as a gift to the world, so that through believing in Him, people might receive eternal life.

However, after Jesus fulfilled His earthly ministry, died, and was resurrected, His status changed from the "only begotten Son" to the "firstborn." For in John 1:12, it is written: "But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." Those who believe in Jesus Christ become children of God, and therefore, Christ is no longer the "only begotten Son".

God's will is that every child of God should be conformed to the image of Christ. As it is written in Romans 8:29: "For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers."

When every redeemed saint walks the path of sanctification and strives to imitate the image of Jesus Christ, we are all made brothers and sisters of Christ, and in this way, Jesus Christ becomes the firstborn of God's.

Therefore, this verse speaks not of Christ's first coming, but of His second coming. When Christ returns, it will be a glorious scene. The angels of God and the heavenly hosts will gather to worship Christ. At that time, our lives will be fully matured, and the work of sanctification will be complete. As Hebrews 2:11 says: "For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one origin. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers." At that moment, we will all be conformed to the likeness of Jesus Christ. He will call us His brothers and will not be ashamed of us. He will become the captain of our salvation, as Hebrews 2:10 says, Christ will lead many sons (His brothers) into glory, and we will march in a procession of triumph.

The heavenly hosts will line up to welcome Him, and all the angels will bow down in worship before Christ.

In speaking of the exalted identity of Christ, the author of Hebrews wisely outlines four layers of Christ's identity:

1. First, in eternity, He is the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father.
2. Second, after His death and resurrection, He underwent a divine exaltation, which elevated His humanity. Through the power of His resurrection, it was made manifest that He is indeed the Son of God.
3. Third, after the completion of His redemptive work, He began the ministry of building the Church, which is the Father's eternal purpose. In this role, Christ became the firstborn among many brethren, and the saints in the Church are now children of God, growing in the process of sanctification. One day, all the saints will be fully conformed to the image of God's Son, and Christ will not be ashamed to call them His brothers.
4. Fourth, when the time is fulfilled, Christ will return in His role as the firstborn Son of God. At His second coming, He will be the captain of salvation, leading His brothers (the many sons of God) into glory. At that moment, the heavenly hosts will gather and bow in worship before Christ. Certainly, Christ is far superior to the angels.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You! Through these Scriptures, You once again remind us of the great honor and dignity of the name of Jesus Christ. Not only is it a name of surpassing honor, but it also carries great power, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. Christ not only has an exalted name, but from eternity past, He is the only begotten Son in the bosom of the Father. Yet, for the sake of our redemption, He willingly took on human form, and through His death and resurrection, He displayed with mighty power that He is the Son of God. Because of our faith in Jesus Christ, we become children of God, and Christ becomes the firstborn of God. One day, He will return

as the firstborn to lead His brothers into glory. Help us to seize the time we have now, to undergo the process of sanctification and transformation, so that we may increasingly become like Jesus Christ. That in the end, He may call us brothers and not be ashamed of us. Bless the church where I belong, that we may lift high the precious name of Christ and together experience sanctification as we eagerly await the return of our Lord. We pray this in the precious name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.