

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

Hebrews 1: 10-14

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the Bible again. Let's continue to read Hebrews chapter 1. We will read verses 10-14 today.

The author of Hebrews uses a comparative method, quoting Old Testament scriptures to demonstrate that Christ is superior to the angels. He proves this from five aspects:

The first aspect is that Christ's name is superior: a person's name reveals who they are and what they do. Following this, the author contrasts Christ and the angels from these two perspectives.

The second aspect is that Christ's status is more exalted: status pertains to who Christ is. In eternity, Christ is the only begotten Son of God. After the incarnation, through His death and resurrection, He became the firstborn of God. Christ's identity as the Son of God, which is inherently connected to His birth, is naturally far more exalted than that of the created angels.

The third aspect is that Christ's actions in His position are far superior: Christ is the anointed King, seating on the throne, exercising royal authority, and governing His kingdom with righteousness, justice, and fairness—this is what He does. In contrast, the angels are His servants, swift as the wind and mighty as fire. They serve Christ, and thus Christ is naturally far superior.

The fourth aspect is that Christ's existence is more perfect.

The fifth aspect is that Christ's victory is more glorious.

Today, let us look at the fourth and fifth aspects. The fourth aspect, that Christ's existence is more perfect, is found in verses 10 to 12.

Verse 10-12: "And You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You remain; And they will all grow old like a garment; Like a cloak You will fold them up, and they will be changed. But You are the same, And Your years will not fail."

These three verses are quoted from Psalm 102:25-27: "Of old You laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You will endure; Yes, they will all grow old like a garment; Like a cloak You will change them, and they will be changed. But You are the same, And Your years will have no end." If we compare these three verses with Hebrews 1:10-12, we find that the first two verses are identical. The third verse, which speaks about the manner in which the heavens and the earth will change, has a slight variation, but the conclusion remains the same. Let us now unfold this step by step.

It begins by saying, "You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands." The phrase "in the beginning" refers to the start of creation. In creation, Christ is the Master Builder who, according to the Father's will, personally executed the work of creating the earth, the heavens, and all that fills the heavens and the earth. Christ accomplished this great work of creation, while angels are merely created beings—how could they compare to Christ? Speaking of creation, Zechariah 12:1 says, "Thus says the Lord, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him:" This verse seems to reveal the order and purpose of God's creation.

The heavens were made for the earth, with the cyclical seasons, pleasant days, gentle winds, and timely rains, enabling all the creatures on the earth to thrive and grow. The earth was made for mankind, and the rich produce of the earth serves to sustain the life of all living beings. Among all creatures, only man was made in the image of God, according to His likeness. Therefore, man is the center of God's will, and the earth was made for man. The most important part of man is the spirit within him. This spirit is the key organ for connecting with God, knowing God, and receiving God. If man does not know or accept God, he truly wastes God's creation. "The heavens and the earth will perish, but You will remain." Both the heavens and

the earth are created beings, and after fulfilling their purpose, they will gradually perish. However, Christ, the Creator, is eternal, for God is self-existent and everlasting.

The lifespan of humans, following the flood, was set at 120 years, and further shortened due to the evil of mankind, leading to wars, plagues, famines, and other calamities, making the average human lifespan even shorter. As a result, Chinese poets often compare human life to the heavens and the earth. For example, the Ming dynasty poet Yang Shen wrote a poem: "The mighty Yangtze River flows eastward, its waves washing away the heroes; right and wrong, success and failure, all vanish in a turn of the head. The green mountains remain, the sunset still red." The achievements of a lifetime are contrasted with the flowing Yangtze River. One by one, heroes with their great accomplishments pass away, yet the river continues to flow eastward, the green mountains remain, and the sunset still glows red. Although the poem encourages not to be overly concerned with trivial matters, it also shows that no matter how great one's life may be, it cannot compare to the enduring Yangtze River, the mountains, or the sunset.

In the Chinese worldview, the heavens and the earth seem eternal. Chen Zi'ang also has a line in his poetry: "I think of the vastness of heaven and earth, and I am filled with sorrow, my tears falling alone." However, the Bible tells us, "The heavens and the earth will perish, but only God will remain forever."

Here, another concept is presented: only that which is eternal can create, while created things have a limited lifespan. True creation is bringing something into existence from nothing, and bestowing upon the created things a specific function and mission. Once a created thing has fulfilled its function and mission, it no longer needs to continue existing. The purpose of the creation of the heavens and the earth is to sustain human life, just like clothing, which serves to sustain life. When clothing is used frequently, it becomes worn out, and the same applies to the heavens and the earth. "The heavens and the earth will grow old like a garment." Perhaps you might object, saying that the lifespan of clothing is only a few years, while the Earth has been around for 4.5 billion years. How can they be compared? This is because you are viewing it from a human perspective.

In comparison to human lifespan, the lifespan of clothing is short, and the Earth's age is long; naturally, clothing cannot be compared to the heavens and the earth. However, if you view it from God's perspective, where God is eternal, meaning infinite, then a few years or even billions of years are insignificant and fleeting in comparison to infinity. Therefore, from God's eternal perspective, the heavens and the earth that He created are already growing old. How will this old heaven and old earth come to an end? Psalm 102:26, the second half, says, "Christ will change the heavens and the earth, as a garment is changed." When clothing becomes old, it needs to be replaced, and similarly, the heavens and the earth will need to be replaced. In Hebrews 1:12, a bit more detail is added: "Christ will roll up the heavens like a cloak, and they will be changed." In our understanding, clothing is soft and can be rolled up, but the heavens and the earth are hard—how can they be rolled up?

To understand how the heavens and the earth will be rolled up, we need to look at 2 Peter 3:10, which says, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up." Peter tells us that when Christ returns, there will be a tremendous explosion, the heavens will disappear, and all the material on earth will be dissolved by intense fire. Then, in 2 Peter 3:12-13, it says, "Looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?"

Nevertheless, we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells." The heavens will be dissolved by fire, and the elements of the earth will melt in the heat. After being melted, they can be rolled up like clothing. After this, new heavens and a new earth will emerge, and righteousness will dwell in them. The heavens and the earth will be changed, but only Christ remains unchanged. Christ's years have no end; He is eternal and will never change. As Hebrews 13:8 says, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." The existence of Christ is eternal, and therefore, He is more perfect than the angels. Now, we will look at the fifth point: Christ's victory is more glorious.

Verse 13: "But to which of the angels has He ever said: 'Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool?'"

Hebrews 1:13 begins by saying, "But to which of the angels has He ever said..." This phrasing is used for the third time in this chapter: the first time when talking about the birth of Christ, the second when addressing the relationship between the Father and the Son, and now the third time when discussing the victory of the Son. The repeated use of this construction emphasizes the vast difference between Christ and the angels, making it clear that Christ and the angels cannot be compared. How did Christ achieve victory? "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool." This phrase is a quotation from Psalm 110:1, "The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'" This was a prophecy by David, inspired by the Holy Spirit, declaring that Christ is the Lord and will conquer His enemies. Jesus Himself quoted the first half of this verse during His trial before the Jewish council in Matthew 26:64, saying, "The Son of Man sits at the right hand of the Power." Jesus describing Himself in this way drove the high priest to rage, tearing his clothes and condemning Jesus for blasphemy.

Peter, in his Pentecost sermon, also quotes this passage in Acts 2:34-35 as the conclusion of his message, explaining that Christ has already accomplished the great work of redemption, "now sitting at the right hand of the Father, waiting for the Father to make His enemies His footstool." After Christ was crucified, He descended to the grave, and on the third day, He broke free from the power of death, rising again. In His resurrection, He defeated the devil, who holds the power of death, as prophesied in Genesis 3:15, "The seed of the woman will crush the serpent's head." This refers to Satan, who holds the power of death, and he has been defeated by Christ. However, Satan has not yet been destroyed, nor has he yet become Christ's footstool, because the time for Satan's ultimate defeat has not yet come. The Father has ordained that Christ sit at His right hand, beginning His heavenly ministry, becoming the high priest of all that is heavenly, interceding for the saints. When the time is fulfilled, and the church matures, Satan will be fully dealt with.

In Revelation 20:10, "The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever." At that time, Satan and his followers will be thrown into the lake of fire, and Christ will have completely triumphed, and it will be a glorious victory. Angels are servants of God, sent by Him to carry out His will faithfully. Yet, God will have Christ rest at the right hand of the throne, and He will make the enemies His footstool. This victory, in resting on the throne, is far more glorious.

Verse 14: "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?"

This verse is the conclusion of Chapter 1, which speaks of Christ as the Son of God, surpassing angels. We can summarize this verse into three points:

The first point is that angels are spirits. Although they have great power and are able to be sent by God to do many things, they cannot do what Christ did—become flesh, undergo death and resurrection to accomplish redemption, so that those who believe in Jesus Christ may have their sins forgiven and receive eternal life. What Christ is able to do, angels cannot, because angels are spirits without bodies.

The second point is that angels are ministering spirits. Angels are sent by God to deliver His messages and carry out His tasks. Even during Christ's time on earth, He often received service from angels. For example, after Jesus was tempted by the devil for forty days and nights in the wilderness, Matthew 4:11 records, "Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him." On another occasion, when Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane, earnestly praying in great anguish, Luke 22:43 records, "Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him." Angels are ministering spirits, serving God. They obey His commands and assist Jesus in fulfilling His duties on earth.

Angels are merely helpers; only Christ can accomplish redemption. Through His death, the sins of mankind are forgiven, and through His resurrection, those who

believe in Him receive eternal life. These are things that angels cannot do; they can only assist from the sidelines.

The third point is that angels are to minister for those who will inherit salvation. Angels not only helped Jesus, but they are also sent by God to minister to the saved saints. In other words, the position of saints is even higher than that of angels. Although angels have more power than humans, they are sent by God to serve and minister to people. Each saint has angels appointed by God to watch over and protect them. Therefore, we should live a life that bears a good testimony for the sake of the angels as well.

Paul in 1 Corinthians 4:9 says, "For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men." He compares the life of the apostles to a play, one that is to be performed for the angels to watch, showing how the apostles suffer for Christ on earth, filling up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ. In 1 Corinthians 11:10, Paul encourages women to cover their heads "because of the angels," as a sign of their submission to authority. This serves as a reminder to the angels to also submit to God's authority, for Satan and his followers were originally angels, but because they did not submit to God's authority, they fell and became demons.

In 1 Corinthians 6:3, Paul reminds the saints that they will judge angels, urging them to make judgments according to righteousness. In Hebrews chapter 1, the author uses many contrasts to demonstrate that Christ is greater than the angels, more honorable, and more glorious. Yet, for our sake, Christ sacrificed Himself. This shows how precious we are in God's eyes. I hope that each of us in our daily lives will be vigilant and worthy of the honorable status and position that God has given us.

Let us pray together: Dear Lord, through the verses in Hebrews chapter 1, we see how precious, glorious, transcendent, and perfect You are. The angels cannot compare to You at all. Yet, for our sake, You sacrificed Your life, shed Your precious blood, and resolved the issue of our sin. You rose from the dead for us, granting us eternal life. You have gathered those who are blessed by grace to become Your

church, which is to be Your body. Help us recognize the immense salvation we have received. Also, help us make a firm decision to live a holy life that is worthy of the grace we have received. Bless the church I belong to. I pray in the holy name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.