

Jesus is Better than Angels - Hebrews 1:4-14 **Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading**

Notes from the Sermon

Funny thing happened in our culture a generation or so ago. The secularists were declaring that God was dead and the interest in spiritual things would decline. The belief was that everything could be explained with science, and that naturalistic atheism would prevail resulting in the end of most religious belief and the growing stronghold of reason. Yet, at the same time the American culture's interest in spiritual things took off. Rather than believing the worldview espoused by secular science, we got infatuated with the spiritual, specifically angels and demons. In the 80's and 90's Hollywood put out one movie after another where either the heroes or villains were ghosts, demons, angels, or other spiritual beings. The truth is that we know there are things that cannot be explained, even by science, and we believe there is an unseen reality about our own humanity and in the world around us.

Now, don't over think this. I am not really saying that this was good news. People did not return to the Bible, churches, or belief in Jesus. Rather, we became a culture filled with people who refer to themselves as "spiritual but not religious." In other words, people who believe in spirituality, in an unseen world, in power through unseen beings while at the same time rejecting any notion of a God who can be known or any ultimate truth. We believe in angels, and in that belief have somewhat rejected Jesus. And here is the sad part, so many of the spiritual practices that permeate the spiritual worldview have crept into the church.

First century Israel also had a culture with significant interest in angels. Interestingly, they got much of their belief from the Bible. The scriptures do affirm what spiritual people believe, that there are myriads of beings that exist around us, who have significant beauty and power, and yet are unseen. Angels are mentioned in 34 out of the 66 books of the Bible, with 108 references to spiritual beings in the Old Testament and 165 in the New Testament. We find angels around the throne of God in worship, delivering the Law to Moses, shutting the mouths of lions for Daniel, and showing up as an army for Elisha. Angels guarded the Garden of Eden with flaming arrows after Adam and Eve rebelled, and they opened the doors of jails in the book of Acts. Yet, nowhere in the Bible do angels appear as cute cuddly beings with wings just looking for a mantle to sit on. While being spiritual beings, there are times where God gives angels the ability to take a physical appearance or where people's spiritual eyes are opened so they can be seen. In all cases people are terrified at the appearance of angels as they are confronted with their wickedness and frailty in the presence of beings who bring the power of God and represent His authority. The most common phrase coming from Angels is, "Do not be afraid," for good reason. Furthermore, the Scriptures reveal that at some point in time before the creation of humanity, a large number of angels sought to dethrone God and as a result were cast out, given over to themselves, and became the personification of evil. We call their leader the Devil or Satan, and his minions demons. In this, the Bible is helping us realize that there is an unseen world, and that we have actual spiritual enemies attacking as well as spiritual friends who are protecting us.

We can see why it becomes easy to divert our attention to these spiritual beings, and even begin to worship them. Demons love it, this is their goal. And for so many, the spiritual practices tapping in to the spiritual world is actually the demonic way of having people give themselves over to evil. When we know the truth about angels, it is easy to over-emphasize them and lean toward some type of angelic worship. Yet, any time we do this we are actually ignoring the entire purpose for angels. The author of Hebrews wants the first century Jewish reader to realize that Jesus is vastly superior to angels and is the only One worthy of our worship and allegiance. In this masterful chapter the author pulls from seven passages of Old Testament Scriptures to show the superiority of Jesus name and person. But what binds

these texts together is an Old Testament promise that was fulfilled at a specific time. All Israel knew of the promised King who was the Son of God who would eventually rule Israel and the nations. The author pulls from Old Testament texts pointing to this promise, and then shows us that in the resurrection and ascension of Jesus all of these texts are now true in Him. He is the One whom has the divine name of Son given by the Father, the One who has an eternal throne to rule the nations, the One who both created all things and will outlast all of them, even angels. Angels are created beings, Jesus is the Uncreated One. To worship angels, or in other words, to fall into “spiritual practices” is to completely misunderstand their purpose. Everything angels are and do points us to the glory of Yahweh God revealed in the person of Jesus. They worship Jesus, they are messengers about Jesus, they are servants of Jesus, and they exist for His glory. And they are sent by Jesus to be ministering spirits for us out of His love for us. The best way to honor Jesus is to fix our eyes on Jesus, to love Him deeply and trust in Him alone.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

| Sun | Mon | Tues | Weds | Thurs | Fri | Sat |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------|----------|
| Hosea 5 | Hosea 6 | Hosea 7 | Hosea 8 | Hosea 9 | Hosea 10 | Hosea 11 |

Reading from this past week: Hebrews 1:4-14

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Hebrews 2:1-4

Family Worship

Song - *Rejoice*

https://youtu.be/7Qy1iXZU2g?si=ZpJoX23iBPJ_fP-y

Gospel Project

Unit: God Rules over Creation

Story: The Tower of Babel

Big Picture Question: Who is God?

Answer: God is our Creator and the King of everything.

Scripture: Genesis 11

New City Catechism

Question 40: What should we pray?

Answer: The whole Word of God directs us in what we should pray.

Verse: Ephesians 3:14-21

Scripture

Hebrews 1:4-14

- When you think of angels, what images come to mind? How might our idea of angels be different than the angels who are shown in the Bible?
- What are some ways Jesus is shown to be greater and more glorious than angels in this text?
- If you can, take time to go back and read each of the 7 Old Testament passages in the text. How does each of these passages prepare Israel for their coming King? How does Hebrews show us Jesus as the fulfillment of this promise.
- What is the proper understanding of and relationship to angels according to the Scriptures?

Prayer

*Pray for our ministry to men and the Man-Up breakfast this and next Saturday.

*Pray that we would worship only Jesus.