

“God’s Angels” (Hebrews 1)(2.9.2020)

Hebrews 1 (NIV84)

1 In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. 3 The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. 4 So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.

5 For to which of the angels did God ever say,

“You are my Son;

today I have become your Father”?

Or again,

“I will be his Father,

and he will be my Son”?

6 And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says,

“Let all God’s angels worship him.”

7 In speaking of the angels he says,

“He makes his angels winds,

his servants flames of fire.”

8 But about the Son he says,

“Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever,

and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom.

9 You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness;

therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions

by anointing you with the oil of joy.”

10 He also says,

“In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth,

and the heavens are the work of your hands.

11 They will perish, but you remain;

they will all wear out like a garment.

12 You will roll them up like a robe;

like a garment they will be changed.

But you remain the same,

and your years will never end.”

13 To which of the angels did God ever say,

“Sit at my right hand  
until I make your enemies  
a footstool for your feet”?

14 Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?

The word of God for the people of God.

Title: “God’s Angels”

LET US PRAY.

INTRODUCTION:

Psalm 91 gives God’s great promises of protection. You may remember that Satan tempted Jesus to misuse these promises.

Psalm 91:9–12 (NIV84)

9 If you make the Most High your dwelling—

even the Lord, who is my refuge—

10 then no harm will befall you,

no disaster will come near your tent.

11 For he will command his angels concerning you

to guard you in all your ways;

12 they will lift you up in their hands,

so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.

An illustration titled: Angel Beneath the Waves

Charles Herbert Lightoller was tall, sun-bronzed, and handsome, possessing a deep, pleasant speaking voice. His mother died during his infancy, his father abandoned him, and he ran off to sea at the age of thirteen. By 1912, he was a respected seaman for the White Star Line and was assigned to the maiden voyage of the greatest ocean liner ever built, the Titanic.

He was just drifting off to sleep on April 14th, when he felt a bump in the ship’s forward motion. Hopping from his bunk, he soon learned that the Titanic had struck an iceberg. As the horrors of that night unfolded, Lightoller finally found himself standing on the roof of the officer’s quarters, the water lapping at his feet, as he helped any and all around him into lifeboats. Finally, there was nothing left for Lightoller to do but jump from the roof into the freezing waters of the North Atlantic.

The shock of the 28-degree water against his sweating body stunned him. As he struggled to regain his bearing and swim away from the ship, he was suddenly sucked back and pinned against a ventilation grate at the base of a funnel that went all the way down to Boiler Room 6. He was stuck, drowning, and going down with the ship.

Suddenly Psalm 91:11 came clearly to his mind: For He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways....

At that very moment, a blast of hot air exploded from the belly of the ship, shooting Lightoller like a missile to

the surface of the ocean. At length, he managed to grab a piece of rope attached to the side of an overturned lifeboat and float along with it until he pulled himself on top of the upside-down boat.

He turned and watched the last moments of the Titanic. Her stern swung up in the air until the ship was in “an absolutely perpendicular position.” Then she slowly sank down into the water, with only a small gulp as her stern disappeared beneath the waves.

There were about thirty men atop the lifeboat, and together they recited the Lord’s Prayer, then Lightoller took command of the boat and guided them to safety.

BODY:

Let me be clear, this first chapter of Hebrews is primarily about the Lord Jesus. It is about the superiority of Jesus over all the prophets and all the heavenly creatures.

With verse 2 the author commences a long listing of the superior characteristics of the Son, and in doing so states the essential equality of the Son with the Father. He lists twelve: Jesus is >

1. The Son of God (vv. 2a, 5)
2. Heir of All Things (v. 2b)
3. Creator of the World (vv. 2c, 10)
4. Radiant Light (v. 3a)
5. The Image of God (v. 3b)
6. Sustainer of the Universe (v. 3c)
7. High Priest of Perfection (v. 3d)
8. Superior to the Angels (vv. 4–7, 13–14)
9. Exalted King (vv. 3–4, 8a)
10. Lord of Righteousness (vv. 8b–9)
11. The Eternal (vv. 11–12)
12. Ultimate Conqueror (v. 13)

At the same time, it would be hard to miss how significant angels are, as this chapter references them several times. Angels are established as a fact and a factor in the cosmic and earthly happenings. The Bible says so much about angels that I could literally preach about different angelic accounts for a whole year. Think about the implications!

- Collins Thesaurus of the Bible (slides 4-13)

The Gospel account of the Word made flesh, Emmanuel, God with us, demonstrates the continuous involvement of God’s angels in the Good News.

- Angels in Jesus Life

Prior to Jesus’ birth, Angel Gabriel appeared to John the Baptist’s father, Zechariah. Then Gabriel appeared to Mary. Then Gabriel appeared to Joseph. Angels appeared to the shepherds (as did the heavenly hosts) announcing Jesus’ birth. Angels warned Mary and Joseph to flee to Egypt to escape Herod’s attempt to kill baby Jesus. Then an angel told Joseph when it was safe to return and for the family to go to Nazareth.

Angels ministered to Jesus in the desert when Satan was tempting Him. Again, in the Garden of Gethsemane, angels strengthened Jesus. Jesus said that there were 12 legions of angels at his disposal. An angel rolled the stone away from Jesus' tomb. Angels greeted the women visiting the tomb on Easter morning. And, two angels were with the disciples when Jesus ascended into heaven to take his place at the right hand of the Father!

What did Jesus teach about angels?

Matthew 18:10 (NIV84)

"See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven." This sounds like a description of Guardian angels to me.

Luke 15:10 (NIV84)

"In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

Matthew 13:37-43 (NIV84) The Parable of the Weeds:

37 He answered, "The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. 38 The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, 39 and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

40 "As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. 41 The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil.

42 They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear."

Matthew 16:27 (NIV84)

"For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done."

These scriptures are not all of Jesus' teaching about angels but they give an excellent overview!

Peter and John were imprisoned for preaching and healing in Jesus' name; but, they were set free by an angel.

An angel of the Lord directed Philip to go and meet the Ethiopian eunuch. The centurion, Cornelius, was told by an angel of the Lord to send for the Apostle Peter. While people prayed, Peter's chains were removed and he was set free by an angel. King Herod was struck down by an angel of the Lord for stealing God's glory.

During a violent storm, an angel assured Paul that he and the ship's crew would survive.

We are told that angels love to look into the gospel and the issues surrounding salvation. The angels watched over the apostles. Paul reminded us that Jesus will return with his powerful angels. And, Paul gives his protégé, Timothy, orders, naming God and Christ Jesus AND the elect angels as witnesses.

CONCLUSION:

Psalms 148:1-2 (NIV84)

1 Praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord from the heavens,

praise him in the heights above.

2 Praise him, all his angels,

praise him, all his heavenly hosts.

What do angels do?

- They come to reassure us and offer hope.
- They come to give us guidance and direction.
- They come to call us to special missions.
- They come to rescue us from some great danger.
- They have been and continue to be involved throughout human history.
- They are engaged in the cosmic conflict between good and evil; between our Savior Jesus and our enemy Satan.
- Angels will participate in the final establishment of God's kingdom, the new heaven and new earth.

In John Wesley's sermon on good angels, he closed like this:

"I cannot conclude this discourse better than in that admirable Collect [Prayer] of our Church:—

"O everlasting God, who hast ordained and constituted the services of angels and men in a wonderful manner; grant that as thy holy angels always do thee service in heaven, so by thy appointment they may succour and defend us on earth, through Jesus Christ our Lord.""

We can be bold in our faith and bold in our kingdom work. First, because we are the children of God. Second, because our Father has commanded His angels to protect and guide us. We, the Church, are God's plan for reaching the whole planet with the good news of Jesus.

As we pray each week in the Lord's Prayer, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.

Amen and amen. Let us pray.