

Angels Serve; Jesus Rules!  
Hebrews 1:4-14

February 2, 2014

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  - b. Hebrews 1:5b 2 Samuel 7:14
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<sup>A</sup> Psalm 34:7, 91:11  
<sup>B</sup> Luke 1:32, Mark 1:11  
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<sup>D</sup> Revelation 19:9-10  
<sup>E</sup> Revelation 6:14, Isaiah 51:6

A. Introduction

1. An Interest In Angels

- a. over the last 20 years or so there has been quite an interest in angels
  - (A) part of this is probably a result of the today's pseudo-spirituality
  - (B) part out of a continuing involvement in the occult
  - (C) part an outgrowth of new age, scientology and similar religions
- b. the media have taken up this theme
  - (A) In 1994, Linda Vephula became the publisher of the Atlanta based bimonthly, Angel Times, "the first national magazine completely devoted and dedicated to the angelic realm."—{2}.
  - (B) there were such TV programs as "Touched by an Angel"
  - (C) there have been many movies with the same theme, going back to 1946 in the person of "Clarence" an angelic character in the Christmas move, "It's a Wonderful Life"
- c. if you Google with the word "angel" in different phrases you will Internet stories of angels helping people in strange and wondrous ways
  - (A) in fact, there are sites that will set you up with just the sort of angel who will fill your own particular needs
  - (B) and you will find many books, books in secular and Christian bookstores alike
- d. so, what is one to think about all this?
- e. Why is there such interest? « . . . . . Ask »
  - (A) people are attracted to the spectacular (as ever)
  - (B) people would rather walk by sight than by faith

2. Some Historic Happenings

- a. yet the Scripture do affirm, as we read today, that angels do meet up with men and women to help them
- b. and there are specific promises of that help
  - (A) "The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him, And rescues them." (Psalms 34:7)
  - (B) "For He will give His angels charge concerning you, To guard you in all your ways." (Psalms 91:11)

- c. as well as examples such as Lot and Daniel
- d. and in more recent times there are sober records which are difficult to explain other than through angelic intervention:
  - (A) there is the story of the godly Samuel Rutherford of Scotland who as a little boy fell into a well. His playmates ran for help, thinking that he had perished. But when the adults arrived to rescue him they found the young boy out of the well, drenched, and declaring that “a bonny white man” had rescued him.
  - (B) John Patton, the Scottish missionary to the Hebrides Islands in the South Pacific, experienced an unusual deliverance by angels. He and his wife were surrounded by a group of headhunters but as the Patton’s prayed, the headhunters fled. Later the chieftain of the group described to Patton that they had seen a group of men in shining white clothes with drawn swords surrounding their hut; so they left without doing any harm. <sup>-{3}</sup>.

### 3. Seven Superiorities ... Seven Scripture Quotations

- a. last week we looked at seven ways in which God the Son, that is Jesus Christ is superior
- b. and this week the writer of Hebrews quotes seven OT Scriptures
  - (A) you will find the references for each of those passages in your handout, but let me caution you that you may have to work in matching up the words in Hebrews with the OT words, because
    - (1) they were taken from the Greek translation of the OT, while our Bibles are directly from the Hebrew OT
    - (2) the writer, by the Holy Spirit, takes the prophetic, rather than the historic, emphasis from those OT words
  - (B) each of these quotations build one upon the other
    - (1) whereby He shows that the Son – Jesus Christ – is specifically better than the angels
    - (2) for in that day, as in ours, there was a misplaced emphasis on the role of angels, so that Paul in writing to the Colossian church had to warn them against worshipping angels

## B. A Better Title

- 1. The Name of Angel..... 1:4

- a. **having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.**
- b. both the Hebrew word translated angel, and the Greek word, angel have the same underlying meaning: one who is sent; a messenger
- c. in my early days of working in an office, titles had great importance: chief underwriter, unit head, supervisor – a title was a handy thing to be given with only a nominal raise – but those titles for the most part only meant that while you may have directed or advised others, you were nonetheless still just a servant – a glorified office boy; a go-fer
- d. no matter how high up you may achieve – director, vice-president, president – you are still servant to someone else above you
- e. so as we shall see, with all their power, it is the case also with angels

2. The Name of Son. . . . . 1:5

- a. **For to which of the angels did He ever say, "You are my son, today I have begotten you"? And again, "I will be a Father to him and he shall be a Son to me"?**
- b. both of these quotations have a historic application:
  - (A) the first in reference to King David as he was facing rebellion from some of the subject nations round about
  - (B) the second in reference to David's son, Solomon, as promised an enduring throne after David
- c. but neither David nor Solomon, anointed as they were to be kings, completely fulfilled the expectation of these promises from God
  - (A) these foretold the future Anointed One, Messiah – the Christ
  - (B) Jesus is that Christ, even as the angel, Gabriel, told Mary: **"He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David"** (Luke 1:32)
  - (C) and as God formally announced at His baptism: **"You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased."** (Mark 1:11)
- d. as Jesus in His parable, the book of Galatians and other Scriptures uniformly show, there is an immense difference in status and power between a son and a servant
  - (A) the angels are servants
  - (B) Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God

C. A Higher Honour

1. The Eternal Heir . . . . . 1:6a

- a. **And when He again brings the firstborn into the world, ...**
- b. that word 'when' has led to a variety of opinions as to the time that this took place
  - (A) at the incarnation on account of the activity of angels
  - (B) at the solemn announcements at Jesus' investiture as Messiah in His baptism by John or in the transfiguration on the mount
  - (C) in His resurrection and ascension to the Father's right hand, due to the reference to Him in Colossians 1:18 as 'firstborn from the dead' – which is, by the way, thoroughly in keeping with the theme in Hebrews of His ministry in heaven
  - (D) and some, reading this as 'when he brings again the first-born into the world' and refer it to Christ's second coming
- c. any of these is possible; however here are two further thoughts
  - (A) both the word 'when' and the verb 'brings' are very indefinite with respect to time – why should we try to make them definite?
  - (B) the phrase, 'brings the firstborn' had a legal reference to the formal introduction of the inheritance to the firstborn
  - (C) so I prefer to view this as taking place at some indefinite instance, the proclamation of the Son's eternal heirship by the Father

2. Son, Object of Worship . . . . . 1:6b

- a. **... He says, "and let all the angels of God worship Him."**
- b. having first shown that Jesus Christ is the Son
- c. it is now declared that as the Son, by right of His Sonship and of His being Heir, He is worthy of worship
- d. more particularly of the worship by angels
- e. angels who themselves are unworthy of worship, being but fellow servants of us as Christians (Revelation 19:9-10) thus praise the Son

3. Angels, Subject to Command . . . . . 1:7
- a. **And of the angels He says, "Who makes His angels winds, and His ministers a flame of fire."**
  - b. note that angels are 'made' ... that is created beings
  - c. already we have noted that 'angel' means messenger
  - d. now a different title, and function, is accorded to them: minister
    - (A) it is preserved in the English words 'liturgy, liturgical'
    - (B) it described those who served in public office, not as a matter of employment or for reward, but as a matter of duty to the state
  - e. in accordance with the purpose of their Creator they take the form for which He has purposed them
  - f. in this they are no different from the natural elements of wind and fire
  - g. indeed, one form of angels were called seraphim, which literally means 'burning or flaming ones'
  - h. regardless, they meticulously carry out the commands of God
  - i. Jesus Christ, Son of God, the One who commands, is better than the angels, subject to commands because they honour Him in worship

D. A Nobler Responsibility

1. No Longer as a Servant

- a. Jesus Christ, the Son, came to earth,
  - (A) 'made a little lower than the angels'
  - (B) He humbled Himself as a man
  - (C) He came to serve, rather than be served,
  - (D) nevertheless, His humiliation was temporary
- b. but angels are servants; from start to finish, but the Son is now

2. Reigning as King . . . . . 1:8-9

- a. **But of the Son He says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the righteous sceptre is the sceptre of His kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore (O) God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your companions."**
- b. now, that Jesus Christ has been shown to be the Son

- (A) and as Son, worthy to receive worship, even from the angels
- (B) giving that worship can only rightfully be given to God
- (C) the writer of Hebrews can take a verse that is addressed to God and apply it equally to the Son
- (D) this is a verse which much confused the Jewish rabbins because it was written celebrating the marriage of an unnamed king in Israel – yet that king in the straightforward reading of the Hebrew is addressed as God – they had two solutions
  - (1) turning the words around to say that God was his throne, that is, that he reigned by God’s command
  - (2) taking ‘god’ in its lesser meaning as judge
- c. but the Son is shown to be completely worthy of being called ‘God’
  - (A) because of the eternal nature of His kingdom
  - (B) because of the righteous nature of His kingdom
  - (C) because of the anointing of joy placed upon Him by God for the occasion – am I reading too much into it if I draw from the wedding setting of the original Psalm, if I suggest that there is here a reference to the joy at the marriage supper of the Lamb?
- d. as to the questions of who are these companions, we shall, Lord willing, return in a few weeks.
- e. this kingdom is an eternal kingdom since Jesus Christ the Son is

E. Eternally the Same

1. For He Is Creator

- a. as in some of the previous quotations
- b. the application of these verses to Christ, the Son, because of the seven superiorities which were given in verses 2 and 3
- c. and one of those was was the fact that it was through the Son that He made the world, and moreover, upholds the world; i.e., the universe
- d. thus possessing the attribute of God in that

2. He Is Unchangeable . . . . . 1:10-12

- a. *And, “You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of your*

hands; they will perish, but you remain; and they all will become old like a garment, and like a mantle you will roll them up; like a garment they will also be changed. But you are the same, and your years will not come to an end."

- b. in two words, earth and heavens, as in Genesis 1:1, the whole sweep of the universe is encompassed
- c. everything in that universe upon which we look is ever changing
  - (A) the Son who set them into being
  - (B) like clothes that are put on and taken off, they are being changed
  - (C) with the picture of a mantle, a cloak, a poncho if you will, that is taken off and then folded and rolled up and put away, similarly, eventually that same Son will bring the universe to completion – "The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places." (Revelation 6:14 NAS95), says John reiterating the words in Isaiah
  - (D) "Lift up your eyes to the sky, Then look to the earth beneath; For the sky will vanish like smoke, And the earth will wear out like a garment And its inhabitants will die in like manner; But My salvation will be forever, And My righteousness will not wane." (Isaiah 51:6 NAS95)
- d. salvation will be forever, and righteousness will not diminish because the Saviour remains the same, His years are forever

## F. A King, not Servant

- 1. The Regal Invitation . . . . . 1:13
  - a. But to which of the angels has He ever said, "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet"?
  - b. the answer is, of course, none
  - c. that is where Jesus is right at this instant
    - (A) having fulfilled His work on earth
    - (B) taken the road to the cross, the grave
    - (C) then by the power of God, raised from the dead, ascended
  - d. and under the hand and will of the Father, events are being moved so that He should take up all rule and authority
  - e. here we have 'the complete supremacy of Christ. This attained sovereignty is the gauge of the World's



consummation. The horizon of human history is the perfected rule of Jesus Christ. It is the end for which all things are now' heading. <sup>-{4}</sup>.

f. Christ, the Son, is better than the angels; there is no comparison, for consider finally ...

2. The Angel Role . . . . . 1:14

a. Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?

b. here is the rightful picture of angels: not as bowing to human wishes, but upon the command of God – sent, note that, sent – according to God's purposes on behalf of the heirs of salvation

c. these are the servants who protect and help the people of God in accordance with God's divine will and plan, as 'He works all things together for good to those who are called according to His purpose.'

d. to the matter of that salvation we shall return next week, if God wills.

G. Conclusion – Let us rejoice in praise of this Jesus Christ, our Saviour God.

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WEY     The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

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Barnes – *Notes on the New Testament, et alia*, by Rev Albert Barnes, Gall & Inglis, Edinburgh

BM – *Biblical Museum*, Editor James Comper Gray, ca 1870

EBC – *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, © 1986 Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 49530, Michigan  
*Hebrews*, by Leon Morris

EGT – *The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, Hodder & Stoughton  
*Hebrews*, by Marcus Dods

Gill – *Exposition of the Old Testament, Exposition of the New Testament*, by John Gill, D.D.

Kerux – The sermon & illustration data base compiled by Rev. David Holwick at the web-site, [www.holwick.com](http://www.holwick.com).

NICNT – *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*  
*The Epistle to the Hebrews*, by F. F. Bruce

RWP – *Robertson’s Word Pictures of the New Testament*, by Dr. A. T. Robertson

TYN – *The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*  
*Hebrews*, by Donald Guthrie

2. From an article in © 1994 Christianity Today Online) – Kerux illustrations #3458
3. Adapted from '*Greater than Angels,*' a sermon by Dr Phil Newton, South Woods Baptist Church, Memphis, Tennessee – Kerux sermons #16916
4. EGT, *in loc.*