

Hebrews: Pursuing the Highest Pleasure

“All About Angels” - Hebrews 1:4-14 – August 28, 2005

Overview of Hebrews

- Audience = A group of Jewish/Hebrew Christians (believers) who were considering abandoning their Christian faith and reverting to Judaism because of the persecution they were experiencing (10:32-36).
- Main Message: Hang in there! Patiently endure the persecution that you are undergoing by fixing your eyes on Jesus who is superior in all ways – He is the highest pleasure (12:1-3).
- Major outline of the Book of Hebrews
 - The Superior Person of Christ (1:1-7:28)
 - Jesus is Superior to the Prophets (1:1-3)
 - Jesus is Superior to Angels (1:4-2:18)
 - Jesus is Superior to Moses (3:1-4:13)
 - Jesus is Superior to Aaron (4:14-7:28)
 - The Superior Work of Christ (8:1-10:18)
 - Our Response to Christ: Faith, Patient Endurance (10:19-13:25)

The Main Point of Today’s Passage (1:4-14)

- Jesus is _____ to the angels
- Background: Jewish/Hebrew people highly revered angels as extremely powerful and exalted beings. Angels were especially revered because they were the intermediaries by whom God gave the Law to Moses on Mt. Sinai (2 Samuel 14:20; Psalm 103:20; Hebrews 12:22). Somehow the thinking about angels had gotten out of hand in the churches that the Book of Hebrews was written to. It’s possible that they were elevating angels to a higher place than Jesus the Messiah.
- Modern Day Parallel: Jehovah’s Witness’ teaching regarding Jesus
- Point of 1:4-2:18 – Jesus is superior to the angels
- Perspective: In order to understand how awesome Jesus is, we need to understand how incredible angels are.

All About Angels: A Survey of What the Bible Teaches

NINE QUESTIONS ABOUT WHAT ANGELS ARE LIKE:

1. What do angels look like?

- a) They are _____ beings (Hebrews 1:14)
- b) They appear...
 - i) in the form of men (Genesis 18:2; 19:1)
 - ii) in the form of women (Zechariah 5:9)
 - iii) in the form of unique creatures (Ezekiel 1:4-5; 10:1-22)
 - iv) in person (Luke 1:11) and in dreams/visions (Matt. 1:20; Isa. 6:1-8)
 - v) as wind and as flames of fire (Hebrews 1:7; 2 Kings 2:11-12; 6:17)
- c) They are awesome in appearance (Ezekiel 1; 10; Daniel 8:15-17; Luke 1:11-13; Revelation 22:8-9). If you saw an angel....

2. Do angels marry, reproduce, and die? _____ (Luke 20:36; Daniel 8:16; Luke 1:26)

3. How many angels are there? _____ (Revelation 5:11; Hebrews 12:22)

4. Do we turn into angels when we die? _____

- a) The Bible speaks as though we are distinct from angels
 - 1. human believers receive resurrection bodies (1 Cor. 15)
 - 2. we are lower than angels now (Psalm 8:4-5)
 - 3. we will be higher than them in the resurrection (1 Cor. 6:3; Rom. 8:17; 1 Peter 1:12)
- b) However, we have many things in common with angels
 - 1. we are both God’s servants (Rev. 19:10; 22:9)
 - 2. we both will not marry in heaven (Mark 12:25)

5. Should we pray to or worship angels? _____

- a) Angels are created beings (Ps. 148:1-5; Rom. 1:25) and...
- b) We have direct access to God because of Jesus (Heb 10:19-22)
- c) We are explicitly told not to worship them (Rev. 19:9-10)

6. What makes angels party? _____ (Luke 15:10)

Immersion baptism service today @ 4pm @ Nicholson’s (maps on name tag table)

7. Do the angels have an organizational hierarchy? (Psalm 89:5,7; Revelation 9:11; 12:7)

- a) Archangel Michael (Jude 9)
- b) Prominent angels
 - 1. Michael (Daniel 10:13; 12:1; Jude 9)
 - 2. Gabriel (Daniel 9:21; Luke 1:26)
 - 3. Lucifer (Isaiah 14:12, KJV)
- c) Chief princes (Daniel 10:13)
- d) Governmental rulers (Rom. 8:38; Eph. 2:2; 3:10; 6:12)
- e) Cherubim--guardians of the holiness of God (Gen. 3:24; Ex. 25:17-22; 1 Kings 6:23-29; Ezek 1:4-5; 10:1-22) Satan was a cherub (Ezek 28:11-19)
- f) Seraphim (Isaiah 6:1-7)
- g) Other terms for angels: *holy ones* (Ps.89:5,7) *host* (Ps.89:6,8) *spirits* (Heb.1:14) *sons of God* (Job 1:6; 38:7) *stars* (Isa.14:12; Rev.12:4; Job 38:7) *rulers, authorities, principalities, powers, thrones, dominions* (Col 1:16; 2:15; 1 Peter 3:22)

8. Are all angels good angels? _____

- a) Lucifer before his fall (Ezekiel 28:12-15)
- b) Lucifer’s fall (Ezekiel 28:15-19; Isaiah 14:12-14)
- c) Judgment of Satan
 - 1. expelled from his position (Ezek 28:16-17; Rev 12:4,13)
 - 2. defeat was pronounced (Genesis 3:15; Heb. 2:14)
 - 3. rendered powerless thru cross (Col 2:15; Lk 10:18-19)
 - 4. cast out of heaven with 1/3 of the angels following him (Rev. 12:4,13)
 - 5. will be bound for 1000 years in Abyss (Rev. 20:2-3)
 - 6. will be cast into the lake of fire forever (Rev. 20:7-10)

9. How powerful are angels? _____ (2 Peter 2:11; Daniel 10:13; Daniel 6:22; 2 Kings 19:35; 2 Samuel 24:15-17; Numbers 22:21-35; Joshua 3:13-15; Revelation 20:1-3)

FIVE QUESTIONS ABOUT WHAT GOOD ANGELS DO:

1. What is an angel’s most basic function? _____ (Hebrews 1:14)

2. What do angels do in relation to God?

- a) They worship Him (Psalm 148:1-2; Isaiah 6:3; Heb. 1:6; Rev. 5:11-13; 7:11-12)
- b) They serve Him (Psalm 103:20; Rev. 22:9)

3. What do angels do in relation to Jesus Christ?

- They announced His birth (Luke 1:26-38; 2:8-20)
- They protected Him in infancy (Matthew 2:13,20)
- They ministered to Him after temptation (Matt. 4:11)
- They strengthened Him at Gethsemane (Luke 22:43)
- They announced His resurrection (Matt 28:1-7; Mark 16:6-7; Luke 24:4-7; John 20:12-13)
- They attended His ascension (Acts 1:10)
- They will attend His Second Coming (Matt 25:31; 1 Thess 4:16; 2 Thess 1:7)

4. What do angels do in relation to unbelievers?

- They announce impending judgments (Gen 19:12-13; Rev 14:6-7; 19:17-18)
- They will separate the righteous from the unrighteous (Matt 13:39-43)
- They inflict judgments (Acts 12:23; Rev. 16:1-17)

5. What do angels do in relation to believers?

- They can provide physical protection (Psalm 91:9-12; Acts 5:19; Daniel 6:21). I believe Scripture implies that we do have a _____ (Acts 12:15; Matt 18:10; Psalm 34:7; 91:11).
- They can provide physical provision (1 Kings 19:5-7; Genesis 21:16-19)
- They can provide encouragement (Acts 27:23-25)
- They can provide direction (Acts 8:26; 10:1-23)
- They _____ (1 Corinth 4:9; 11:10; 1 Tim 5:21; Eph 3:10; Luke 12:8-9; Rev 5:8; 8:3-4)
- They assist in answering prayer (Acts 12:1-19; Daniel 9-10)
- They deliver messages (Luke 1-2; Daniel 9-10)
- They carry believers home (Luke 16:22)

Five Ways Jesus is Superior to the Angels (1:4-14)

1) Superior _____: Son of God vs. angel (vv.4-5)

- Psalm 2:7; 2 Samuel 7:14
- Application: Fix your eyes on Him! (Hebrews 12:1-3)
- Note: The author uses 7 OT quotes to show the superiority of Christ.
- Application: Make a decision to make the Bible the authority in your life both in thinking, habits, and living.

2) Superior _____: Worshipped vs. worshipper (v.6)

- Deuteronomy 32:43 (see NIV note re: Dead Sea Scroll/Septuagint)
- Application: Worship Him as a lifestyle.
- Nine different ways Christians draw near to God (Thomas' *Sacred Pathways*):

- Naturalists** – most inspired to love God out-of-doors in natural settings
- Sensates** – love God with their senses and appreciate beautiful worship services that involve their sight, taste, smell, and touch, not just their ears
- Traditionalists** – draw close to God through rituals, liturgies, symbols, and unchanging structures
- Ascetics** – prefer to love God in solitude and simplicity
- Activists** – love God through confronting evil, battling injustice, and working to make the world a better place
- Caregivers** – love God by loving others and meeting their needs
- Enthusiasts** – love God through celebration
- Contemplatives** – love God through adoration

9. Intellectuals – love God by studying with their minds.

3) Superior _____: King vs. servant (vv.7-9)

- Psalm 104:4; Psalm 45:6-7
- Hebrews 1:9** (NAS) – *Therefore, God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy companions.*
- Conclude: Jesus is the happiest being in the universe!
- If you want to know exactly what God the Father is like, then look at Jesus (1:3). Is God mostly mad, sad, or glad?
- Application: Renew your mind to Psalm 16:11. The closer you get to the throne, the more joy you see.

4) Superior _____: Creator vs. creation (vv.10-12)

- Psalm 102:25-27
- God the Son is unchanging and eternal
- Hymn “It is Well with My Soul”: And, Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight, the clouds be rolled back as a scroll; the trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend, even so, it is well with my soul.”
- Application: Trust Him! He is your Creator. He does not change. He is stable.

5) Superior _____: Rules vs. serves (vv.13-14)

- Psalm 110:1 (author quotes from Psalm 110 twelve times in book)
- Note: Although Christ is superior to them, angels do play a significant role. Toward Christ, their role is to worship. Toward people, their role is to serve and help us reach salvation.
- John Piper: “Jesus Christ is infinitely superior to angels. They were created not to compete with Christ, but to worship Christ and honor Him. And the chief way that they do that on earth is by serving us so that we hold fast to Christ and trust Him and love Him and treasure Him and finally reach Him in fullness of salvation. So angels were created for Christ’s everlasting glory and for our everlasting joy.... The heavenly worshippers are all – all of them – sent to serve you and bring you safely home.”
- Application: Ask God to dispatch angels into your situation.
- Application: Worship Jesus Christ!

Discussion Questions with Family, Friends, and Small Group

- Read Hebrews 1:1-14 aloud. What is the main point of this passage?
- Of the 5 ways that Christ is superior to the angels, which one strikes you the most? Read the Hebrews verse that references that superior attribute. Discuss it.
- From the survey of what angels are like and what they do, what was the “coolest” thing you learned about angels? (If possible, read a Scripture verse that talks about this aspect of angels.) How is Jesus Christ even “cooler” than that?
- Anybody got any angel stories? How is Christ even “cooler” than that?
- What’s your worship style? (see “Nine different ways Christians draw near to God”) How do you best connect with God? For your worship style, what are some tangible ways that you can give Christ more worship this week?
- What is the most important thing God is saying to you through this week’s Bible study? What does it look like to apply that to your life this week?