

The Traveling Pulpit

Published Quarterly By



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Volume 9, Number 1

January

Winter 2014

The Ministry of Angels

Part I

Heb. 1:4-2:9

Down through the years there has been a growing fascination over the subject of angels. Some people have developed an obsession with collecting ornaments that are said to be descriptive of angelic beings. Many in the secular world have placed a false sense of meaning on these supernatural beings that we call angels. Oftentimes, even Christians misunderstand the ministry of angels and regard them either too highly or too little. When it comes to the modern day angelic fad, FACT must be separated from FICTION. What we believe about angels must be scripturally based or else our speculation can lead to a dangerous fantasy that is void of biblical truth. The most complete account in Scripture about angels is recorded in our text. God's Word makes it perfectly clear that angels are subordinate servants under the Lord Jesus Christ and are never worthy of worship. They are mighty, but they are not Almighty. They are more powerful than humans, but not as powerful as God (Ps. 103:20, II Pet. 2:11). Unfortunately, our society's infatuation with angels is flirting in the realm of the supernatural without acknowledging their proper place in God's creation.

In dealing with the theology of angels, we must realize that there are good angels as well as bad angels. It's believed that angels were created long before the Genesis account of creation (Ezek. 28:13-19). At some point, the head angel, whose name was "Lucifer," led a revolt against God and

apparently persuaded a “third” (Rev. 12:4) of the angels to follow him (Isa. 14:12-17). This resulted in the rebellious angels being disbanded from Heaven with “Lucifer” becoming known as the “devil” or “Satan” (II Pet. 2:4, Jude 6). The name “Satan” means adversary and refers to the prince of evil spirits (Job 1:6, Mk. 1:13, Lk. 10:18, II Cor. 11:14, Rev. 20:2). All the angelic beings that followed “Lucifer” became known as demonic, wicked, seducing, vicious, unclean “spirits” (Matt. 8:28-33). Demons are Satan’s agents used to oppose God’s purpose and afflict God’s people, hindering the spiritual development of believers in any way possible (I Sam. 28:7-20, Matt. 17:5-18, Lk. 13:6, Eph. 6:12). The end result of “the devil and his angels” will be the “everlasting fire” of Hell (Mat. 25:41). It even appears that the saints will have some part in judging these fallen angels, but exactly what, is uncertain (I Cor. 6:3). For the sake of time, this study will concentrate strictly on the good angels who remained loyal to God and serve both Him and His people (I Tim. 5:21).

The Lord of the Angels

“Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him” (Heb. 1:4-6).

Scripture leaves no doubt as to the superiority of Christ over the angels because it declares that He is “made so much better” than they. “Being made” speaks of the INCARNATION of Christ by way of His “virgin” birth (Matt. 1:23). He was the “first begotten ... Son” of God and in fact His “only begotten Son” (Jh. 3:16). In the Old Testament, the phrase “sons of God” (Gen. 6:1-4, Job 1-2) was a term that referred to angels collectively, but not individually. Only Christ deserves the title of being God’s “begotten ... Son.”

It’s Christ and not the angels Who has and will fulfill the Davidic promise of the Old Testament. He alone has a divine relationship with God the “Father” that “made” Him “his only begotten Son” (Ps. 2:7). Angels were created by God, but Jesus Christ is “God” made visible to mortal man and He never had a beginning nor will He ever have an end (Ps. 90:2). There never was a time (Gen. 1:26) when the “Son” didn’t exist, but there was a “time” in history when He became Man to “redeem” the repentant sinner from off the slave market of sin (Gal. 4:4-7). In the Old Testament, there

were numerous pre-incarnate appearances of Christ that frequently referred to Him as “the Angel of the Lord” (Gen. 31:11-13, Ex. 3:2-5). These appearances are called theophanies, but ceased with His incarnation. His Old Testament visible appearance was not that of a normal angel, but as a Divine Messenger from Heaven.

Our eternal inheritance was not made possible by the act of some angel, but by the redemptive work of God the Son. Several months before His birth, angels notified the parents of the Christ-child of the near to be fulfilled event (Mat. 1:20-23, Lk. 1:28-38). On the night Christ was born, the angels of God were sent to worship Him and proclaim that the Savior had come (Lk. 2:9-15).

The Nature of the Angels

“And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail” (Heb. 1:7-12).

In trying to compare angels to Christ, there is really no comparison because the Son of God is so much more superior. Christ alone is equal to God the Father and possesses all divine attributes. Angels are created beings (Ps. 148:5) that do not have physical bodies. Christ is not a created Being, but chose to be clothed in the flesh of man in order to be our Savior (Phil. 2:6-8). Even though angels do not propagate (Matt. 22:30) and are spirit beings, they have been permitted on occasions to appear in the form of animals and humans (Gen. 3:1, 6:4, 19:1, Jud. 2:1, 6:11-22, Matt. 1:20, Lk. 1:26, Jh. 20:12). Contrary to popular opinion, no one becomes an angel at death.

Although angels are frequently portrayed as female, they are sexless creatures, and most of their appearances in Scripture are masculine in nature. We are admonished even in the New Testament to “be not forgetful

to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares” (Heb. 13:2). We have no reason to believe that all angels have wings, even though the “cherubim” and “seraphims” do (Ex. 25:20, Isa. 6:2). “Cherubim” are thought to be guardians to the throne of God; whereas, the “seraphims” are believed to serve as the Lord’s attendants.

Angels are too “innumerable” (Heb. 12:22) for us to count; however, there are various ranks and orders of angelic beings with three prominent angels mentioned in Scripture. First, there is “Michael” that is known as the “Archangel” and a “prince” who is in charge of the angelic army of heaven and whose voice will be heard at the return of Christ to earth (Dan. 12:1, I Thess. 4:16, Jude 9, Rev. 12:7). Secondly, there is “Gabriel” who is the one that announced the birth of John the Baptist to Zacharias and the birth of Jesus to Mary (Lk. 1:19, 26). Thirdly, there is “Satan” who is the chief cherub that fell from his position prior to the creation of man and who became the source of anarchy, rebellion, and sin (Eph. 2:2, I Pet. 5:8, Rev. 12:9).

A Word From The Ministry

For those of you that keep up with us on our website, you will notice new downloads to our audio page in the near future. A message in the Book of Leviticus will return as well as a study in the first chapter of Matthew, the first two chapters of Luke, and the entire Book of Acts. New Bible Book studies will be added in 1st and 2nd Samuel, Jonah, and the first chapter of John. Our annual updates to the publication page will also be made.

We received an unwelcome surprise toward the end of 2013 from WTRU that there would be a 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ % increase in our cost of broadcasting beginning January of 2014. Our response is that we’ll continue as long as God provides and leads us to do so. Radio time is expense; however, we believe Bible Truth is worth it. Also, we have a large area of outreach with WTRU and are pleased with the station’s performance.

With that being said, let me say a special word of “appreciation” to all that support this little ministry. Several years ago, I thought that our end might be in sight, but God has continued to raise up ministry partners and provided the resources to keep us teaching the Word of God over the radio, internet, and printed page. “Thank you” for giving to and praying for COGM. May God use this ministry to call out His elect and build up the body of Christ.

Because of His Sovereign Grace.....BWM