

UNDERSTANDING ANGELS

Hebrews 1:13-14

I. INTRODUCTION-

- a. Today we continue our study... of the book of Hebrews.
- b. The theme of Hebrews is... “Jesus is better”... today we see how Jesus is better than the angels.
- c. Even though there are over 265 verses in the Bible... that speak about angels.
- d. The subject of angels... their involvement in the world... their involvement in God’s work... and their involvement in the life of believers ...is often ignored in the church.
- e. Why should we study about angels?... because if you are a believer in Christ... angels have ministered to you ... and angels have been involved in your life... in ways that you will never fully understand until you go to Heaven.
- f. I assure you that the Lord does not want us to be ignorant... concerning the work and ministry of angels in our life.
- g. Understanding these truths... will give us a greater cause to worship and love our Lord for His goodness, grace, care and protection.
- h. It will give us greater assurance of God’s presence in our life... and it will give us courage and encouragement as we face life in this world that can often be difficult and trying.
- i. A lot of the things that people believe about angels... are not from the Bible.
- j. Many people get their beliefs about angels... from television shows and movies.

- k. No matter the subject... you do not want to base your theology on what Hollywood says or shows.
- l. When it comes to the Bible... Hollywood rarely gets anything right.
- m. Here are three myths about angels... that many people today believe.

II. MYTH #1, ABOUT ANGELS, PEOPLE BECOME ANGELS-

- a. Many people believe that angels are people who have died... but that is not true...the truth is angels are spirit beings created by God.
- b. One of the all-time favorite Christmas movies is “It’s a Wonderful Life”... starring Jimmy Stewart.
- c. In the movie... Clarence is a man who died in the 19th century and went to Heaven.
- d. However... Clarence didn’t earn enough goody-points during his life to get his angel wings... so he is sent to Bedford Falls to help out George Bailey.
- e. According to the movie... Clarence will earn his wings if he is able to help George through all of his troubles.
- f. At the end of the movie... when Clarence has helped George.
- g. A bell on the Christmas tree tinkles... and one of George’s children says... “Look Daddy... teacher says every time a bell rings, an angel gets its wings.”
- h. And, George says... “That’s right”... then he looks up to Heaven and says... “Atta’ boy, Clarence.”
- i. Well... that is a wonderful movie... but its theology on angels is wrong... people never become angels.

- j. Some years ago a woman wrote Decision Magazine... and asked Billy Graham the following question.
- k. “Dear Dr. Graham, my sister lost her small son a little over a year ago... and on the anniversary of his death... she put a poem in the paper to remember him... It said something about him being an angel now... Is that what happens to us when we die and go to Heaven, do we become angels?”
- l. Listen to Dr. Graham’s beautiful answer... “I know your sister was sincere, and I respect her sorrow and her desire to remember and honor her son... but no, we do not become angels when we die and go to Heaven... The truth is, when we die and go to Heaven, we become even greater than the angels!... The angels are spiritual beings, who were created by God to be His servants... and God has given them great authority and power to do His will... While we are in this world...the angels are greater than we are... because according to Psalm 8:5, God made us “a little lower than the Heavenly beings”... But the Bible also says that when we get to Heaven we will be higher than the angels... and the reason is because we will be like Christ...All of that, I know, may seem like theological hairsplitting to you... But don’t lose sight of the central truth... When we know Christ, we know that this life is not all there is...ahead of us is the joy of Heaven...May your sister take comfort in this truth and in the fact that her little son now is beyond all the pain and suffering of this world in the beauty of Heaven ...signed, Billy Graham

III. MYTH #2, ANGELS LOOK LIKE CHUBBY BABIES WITH WINGS-

- a. The fact is...in the Bible... angels most often appear as ordinary men.

- b. Many of the popular depictions and figurines of angels... are fashioned after Cupid... who is actually the short, chubby pagan god of love... who shoots arrows of desire into the hearts of lovers.
- c. But in the Bible angels look nothing like that...in the Bible angels are most often portrayed as men...wearing brilliant white garments.
- d. Ordinary isn't the best adjective to use for angels...because angels are anything but ordinary... they are extraordinary.
- e. But in the Bible...only two special categories of angelic beings are described as having wings...in Isaiah 6... the Seraphim are described as having six wings... and in Ezekiel 10... Cherubim are described as having four wings.
- f. God's "ordinary" angels...are never described as having wings.
- g. In the Bible... most angels who appear to people... look like regular human beings.
- h. In Genesis 18... Abraham encountered three strangers... and he did not realize until later... that they were angels.
- i. In Judges 13... an angel approached Manoah... the father-to-be of Samson... and Manoah thought he was just a man...he even offered to feed the angel a cooked goat... it was not until later that Manoah discovered that the man was an angel.
- j. By the way... nowhere in the Bible does it say that we will have wings in Heaven... either before or after the resurrection of our earthly body.
- k. After the resurrection... the body we will have in Heaven is the body we had on earth... only in Heaven our body will be glorified, cleansed, made perfect, whole and holy.

IV. MYTH #3, ANGELS ARE SWEET AND GENTLE CREATURES WHO PLAY HARPS ALL DAY-

- a. The truth is... angels are mighty creatures who wield swords.
- b. While the Bible teaches that angels are genderless creatures... they are always depicted in the Bible as masculine... and they are often described as mighty warriors.
- c. In Genesis 3... after Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden of Eden... God posted a mighty angel at the entrance of the garden to keep Adam and Eve from returning.
- d. In Joshua 5... when the children of Israel were poised to enter the Promised Land... Joshua encountered a mighty warrior holding a sword.
- e. Joshua drew his sword and asked... “Whose side are you on?”
- f. The man replied that he was angel... in fact... he was the Captain of the Angelic Army of the Lord... and he did not come to take sides... he came to take over.
- g. In Isaiah 35... one warrior angel went out and killed 185,000 Syrian soldiers.
- h. Angels can be sweet, kind and gentle when they need to be... and angels are protective of the people of God... but don’t think angels are wimps... they are mighty warriors.
- i. In fact... every time you read the phrase... “Lord of Hosts” in the Bible... it literally means Lord of the Angel-armies.
- j. But... as mighty as angels are... as we shall see... the writer of Hebrews says Jesus is better... and far superior to the angels.

V. ANGELS WERE ACTIVE DURING THE EARTHLY LIFE OF JESUS-

- a. The angel Gabriel announced to Mary... that she would give birth to Jesus.

- b. Angels were with Jesus throughout His earthly... from the manger to the empty tomb.
- c. They appeared to the shepherds outside Bethlehem... and announced the birth of the King.
- d. An angel warned Joseph to take the baby Jesus and Mary and go to Egypt because Herod was out to kill Him... and then an angel told Joseph when the coast was clear to return to Nazareth.
- e. The Bible says that after Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness... angels came and ministered to Him. (Matthew 4:11)
- f. The Bible says in the hours before Jesus was arrested... angels came to Him in the Garden of Gethsemane to help Him.
- g. After Jesus arose from the dead... angels rolled the stone away to show the world the tomb was empty.
- h. Then as the disciples watched Jesus ascend back into Heaven... two angels... described in the Bible as men in white clothing appeared to the disciples and said...
- i. *“Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.”* (Acts 1:11 NKJV)

VI. THE ANGELS INVOLVEMENT IN THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER-

- a. Angels are spiritual beings...they have individuality... personalities ... and are capable of emotion... decisions... and communication.
- b. Three angels are named in the Bible...but they all may have names given to them by God.

- c. Angels love what God loves... and that means that they love the children of God... angels love those who have trusted in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.
- d. One of the ministries that God has given to angels... is to minister to and be involved in the life of believers.
- e. *Hebrews 1:14 (NKJV) "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?"*
- f. If you are a Christian... there have been times in your life when angels have ministered to you.
- g. God has used His angels to encourage you...protect you... guide you... and bless you in many ways.
- h. You will not know just how much and how often... angels have ministered to you... until you go to Heaven.
- i. Angels rescued Lot and his family... snatching them out of Sodom ... angels got down into the den with Daniel... and stopped the lions' mouths.
- j. And there have been times when angels have ministered to you... and you did not even know it.
- k. If God uses angels to protect believers... then why does bad stuff happen to believers in this world?
- l. We live in a fallen world...while our soul is saved and secure... our physical body will not be redeemed until the resurrection.
- m. Unless we are alive when the Rapture happens... we are not going to get out of this world alive!
- n. As long as we are in this world... we are going to sick... and bad stuff is liable to happen to us.

- o. There is a lot about the life of the believer in this world that I cannot answer ... but I can tell you this... when we get to Heaven ... we will be amazed at how often God used angels to protect, provide for and bless us.
- p. Out of His grace and mercy... God will even use angels to protect and deliver unbelievers out of dangerous and deadly situations ... to give them another opportunity... to turn from their rebellion and sin and be saved.
- q. If you are not a Christian... it could very well be... that you are alive today... and you are here today... with another opportunity to receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior Christ... because God used an angel to deliver you from a situation that could have taken your life.
- r. God loves you... and He wants you to be saved today.

VII. CONCLUSION-

- a. Angels are marvelous... but Jesus is better and greater.
- b. Yes, angels are real... they live, reside and operate in the spiritual dimension which is just as real as the earthly dimension we live in.
- c. How thankful we should be to God... for the ministry of angels in our life.
- d. And the Bible says that we should be on the lookout for... and aware of... the ministry of angels in our life.
- e. It is interesting... that the first time we will see an angel ... and know it... will be when we leave this world in death.
- f. While believers in Christ have no reason to look fear death ... none of us look forward to the experience of dying.

- g. But for the believer in Christ... the experience of dying... will be one of the most beautiful experiences of our existence.
- h. *Psalm 116:15 (NKJV) "Precious in the sight of the LORD Is the death of His saints."*
- i. This verse means that no believer will die alone... this verse promises that God will be there... when our soul leaves this world for the next.
- j. In fact... the Bible teaches that when a believer leaves this world for the next... God will send an honor guard of angels to take us to Heaven.
- k. In the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus... Jesus said when Lazarus died... he was carried by the angels to Heaven... Luke 16:22.
- l. According to 1 Thessalonians... when Jesus comes for His people in the Rapture...angels will come with Him... to usher believers to Heaven.
- m. If you are a believer... when you die... angels will come to take you to Heaven... and get you settled in your new home.
- n. Until that day comes... let us love, serve, worship and hone the Lord ... with all our hearts.
- o. If you are not a Christian... the Lord and the angels have given you one more day to be saved.
- p. One day your opportunity will be over... be saved today.