

## **The Epistle to the Hebrews**

March 21, 2021

Hebrews 1:4-14

**Reading:** Hebrews 1:4-14

### **Question Concerning Prophets**

Before we move on to our study of Hebrews - I want to address, **very quickly, very briefly**, some confusion from last week's message. I confess to you I have 2 great fears concerning preaching God's Word; 1<sup>st</sup> that I would preach something that is not consistent with the Word and 2<sup>nd</sup> that what I preach is not clear, for if people are confused what good did the message I do?

I deeply appreciate this being brought to my attention. The question centered around, do prophets today reveal new information concerning God and His plan for salvation? Here is how I understand prophets from the breath of Scripture. Prophets of the Old Testament were inspired by God and revealed His plan and things to happen in preparation for the coming of the Messiah and some things concerning the end times. The last Old Testament prophet was John the Baptist. New Testament prophets revealed things of history that would come about between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Jesus Christ and they give us some glimpses of eternity and heaven and the end times. Jesus was the only perfect prophet as He is God incarnate, but all the prophets inspired by God spoke His truth. The Bible contains the teachings, revelations and prophecies of God for the people of the world, it is complete and nothing will be added. The Bible is meant to reveal to people the Triune God and who we are when we believe in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and gives us guidelines for living in a broken world as we journey through history toward the eternity of heaven.

What about present-day prophets? Some teach that all supernatural gifts ended with Pentecost, but I do not find this in the Bible. However, I am cautious because of the abuse spiritual gifts by false teachers and prophets. Paul teaches, “Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.”<sup>28</sup> And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues.” (1 Corinthians 12:27-28) The Holy Spirit gifts individuals for the glory of Christ and the benefit of His church. Paul wrote to the churches in Ephesus, saying, Jesus Christ<sup>11</sup> “gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,<sup>12</sup> to **equip the saints** for the work of ministry, for **building up the body of Christ**,<sup>13</sup> until we all attain to the **unity of the faith** and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,<sup>14</sup> so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by **every wind of doctrine**, by human cunning, by craftiness in **deceitful schemes.**” (Ephesians 4:11-14) So, the purpose of offices of the church or spiritual gifts, which includes prophecy, is for the glory of Christ, given by God the Holy Spirit for “**equipping of the saints**” bringing “**unity of the faith**” and enabling Christ’s church, that is you and me and all true and faithful churches holding firm to God’s Word, to share the gospel of Christ and stand in spiritual battle against every false “**wind of doctrine by human cunning.**” When a person exercises any miraculous gift, including prophecies it is for God’s glory and it is not how special God has made that person. The gifts are to be used for the good the Christ’s church and not to evaluate a specific person. One thing that helps us see God’s miracles is He often uses the lowly and humble. Question, are there modern-day prophets? Answer, Yes. However, they differ from the Old and New Testament prophets in that the Word of God has been given and the Scriptures are complete. So, whatever, a present-day prophet prophesies it must meet the following criteria or it

exposes them as a false prophet, those that Paul and the other writers, including the writer of Hebrews warned their readers about. 1) Is it about God's glory and not about the prophet. 2) It must be completely in agreement with the Bible. 3) Prophecy must be for the benefit of the church and advancement of the gospel of Christ. 4) It must prove to be 100% true. God is still active in His creation, He still speaks to us in various ways; through the Bible, prayer, preaching of the Word, other believers, prophecies, miracles, visions, etc. God has spoken to me through all of these. However, we must remember these giftings are all for the glory of God and are good, but they must be tested and proven to be of God and not of man. Every good thing from God, without exception, is changed "by human cunning and by craftiness in deceitful schemes" of Satan into deceive, replacing true doctrine with false doctrine to keep people from seeing the truth of God. In addition, when we look at Old and New Testament prophets the main thing, they dealt with, more than predictions of the future, was calling people back to God and preaching against social problems like; Amos, "Hear this, you who trample on the needy and bring the poor of the land to an end." (8:4) Isaiah, "learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause." (1:17) Jeremiah, "Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness." (22:13) and this list goes on and on with Ezekiel, Micah, Zechariah and other prophets. John the Baptist, the last Old Testament prophet, did the same thing, <sup>11</sup> "I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>12</sup> His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." (Matthew 3:11-12) This continued with the greatest and perfect prophet Jesus, "Then he will say to those on his left, "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. <sup>42</sup> For I was hungry and

you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, <sup>43</sup> I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.” (Matthew 25:41-43) Modern day prophets call people back to God and to live out the scriptures, the very words of God and do not reveal new and unique things about God that or His plan of salvation or to show these prophets to be special people of God – His super spiritual believers. I hope this clarifies what I believe the Bible teaches prophets. You may agree or disagree, but this is how I understand. Any questions?

As we prepare to dig into God’s Word found in Hebrews, let me pray for clarity and for God to reveal to us more of Him, more of Christ, more of the Holy Spirit and who we are as children of the Living God.

## **Reading of God’s Word – Hebrews 1:4-14**

### **Angel’s Proper Place: Part 1**

#### **Angels and Demons**

Now as we turn our focus to who is Christ and who and what are angels as found in Hebrews chapter 1, I would first like to take you back to the year 2004, Diana Duyser of Florida placed a 10-year-old grilled cheese sandwich with what she claimed was the image of the Virgin Mary on eBay and it sells for \$28,000.00. Encouraged by this Fred Whan of Kingston, Ontario, a town of a little over 100,000 people decided to make some money by auctioning a fish stick he says looks like Jesus. Fred Whan, had kept the fish stick in his freezer since burning it

at dinner a year before, encourage by how much money a grilled cheese sandwich brought, he decided that it was time to thaw it out so he could sell it on eBay. It sold for an undisclosed amount. Where did this craziness begin of buying good luck charms and spiritual icons on food?

It may have started much closer to home than Florida and Canada; back in 1978 when Mario Rubio was cooking a tortilla to make a burrito he noticed skillet burns on a tortilla resembling the face of Jesus Christ. Shortly thereafter, over 8,000 curious pilgrims trek to the Rubio's small stucco house in rural, Lake Arthur, New Mexico to view the sacred icon in just a month. (*Newsweek*, Aug. 14, 1978) Over a 100,000 people visited the Shrine of the Tortilla until disaster struck in 2005. Mrs. Rubio's granddaughter took the Miracle Tortilla into school for Show and Tell, and it was dropped and broken! The shrine has been closed and the tortilla remains were placed in a drawer in the Rubio's home.

As we read of these crazy stories about people seeing the face of Jesus in their food, it is really a sad but an accurate picture of the lack of understanding of the real Jesus. We must all answer the question, who the person of Jesus Christ is. Is He simply some icon found on the wall of a church still hanging on the cross or on a fish stick or tortilla or is He King of the universe?

This is the question the disciples had to answer. Jesus asked His disciples a question that I believe each of us should be able to answer as well. Reading from Mark chapter 8, at verse 27, "Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that I am?'"<sup>28</sup> And they told him, 'John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.'<sup>29</sup> And he asked them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Peter answered him, 'You are the Christ.'" People of the fallen world and even those

seeking answers concerning God from outside Scripture have always had misconceptions concerning the person of Jesus Christ and His deity. Why, because the prince of this world, until Jesus returns, is Satan.

## **Demons**

With the rapid growth and expansion of the early church not every community had copies of the New Testament gospels. Many strange beliefs and false doctrines, false teachers and false prophets could be found. With the circulation of the gospel accounts of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John the church could confront these false prophets, teachers and teachings. Then came the letters by Paul, Peter, John, James, Jude and the writer of Hebrews dealing with the problems of the early churches and dealing with false prophets, teachers and doctrines. As these were circulated, they also put a stop to these false beliefs including just who Jesus was and is.

People's preoccupation with the false is a symptom of not knowing God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit through the Word of God. Another symptom of our lack of understanding in modern culture is the fascination with angels. Like the ancient world, 21<sup>st</sup> Century America has an over active fascination with angels, spirit guides and demons. There are angel and demon pendants that are promised to protect people. You can buy angel figurines for good luck and demon figurines to give curses. Angels are called to bless humans through mediums and demons are used to have power or inflict suffering on others. All this and more are found throughout our culture and the world. Movies add to the confusion by presenting angels and demons in a number of false ways. Most angels are shown as female and with wings, however, scripture present angels as male and

wings are questionable. Demons are shown in ugly and grotesque ways, even though scripture says they can appear as angels of light.

Movies and society presents angels in many ways, but are they really angels? The answer is Yes, but an angel that is not a messenger and servant of the Lord Jesus Christ is not an angel of God, but are demons. Spiritual messengers that do not call people to Christ are in reality, fallen angels or demonic beings ready and willing to fill the empty place in the hearts and minds of misguided people, deceiving them into accepting them as angels of light.

Ultimately, this leads to the person rejecting the sovereignty of the true God. The LDS church says it was an angel the led Joseph Smith to begin the Mormon Church, but we know it was a demon disguised as angel of light that encouraged Smith to begin a false religion of man that worships a false God, false Christ and false prophets, and currently has about 20 million people thinking they are saved, but in truth are lost. It was demons as an angel of light that told Mohammad's wife Khadijah that the visions, he was experiencing were not nightmares brought on by demons, as Mohammad thought, but were visions of god and calling him to create Islam, the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest religion in the world that believes in a false God, false Christ and false prophet with 1 billion souls lost. Because of problems like these, Paul was determined to hold true to his mission given by Christ in the face of persecution. Paul preached the true gospel and worked to Keep evil men from infiltrating the church, <sup>13</sup>“For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. <sup>14</sup>And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. <sup>15</sup>So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness.” (2 Corinthians 11:13-15) My beloved, this is our mission also; to share the true gospel with the lost and prevent false people and doctrines from coming into the church and engage in spiritual warfare.

## Angels

You have a brief work in your bulletin that speaks about angels and demons. Be encouraged, there are twice as many angels as demons and that should be comforting.

The ministry of the holy angels to the elect includes guiding, providing, protecting, delivering and comforting. The author of Hebrews in verse 14, calls them “[ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation](#)” To “*minister*” means “to do service for.” Holy angels are sent forth to do service for the saints, the elect of God, those going on to perfection and inheriting eternal life. They are here to protect us from sin, accidents or premature death and to help us as children of God that attain eternal life. The ministry of angels to the elect is an inspiring and encouraging proof of God’s care and concern for us and that He is active in the world and carrying out His plan for salvation.

God has commissioned His angels to guide events for the benefit of the elect. In Genesis 24 we have an example of the work angels do. When Abraham spoke to his servant about finding a wife for Isaac, Abraham said, “[The LORD, the God of heaven, who took me from my father’s house and from the land of my kindred, and who spoke to me and swore to me, ‘To your offspring I will give this land,’ he \(God\) will send his angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there.](#)” (Genesis 24:7) Later, the servant repeated Abraham’s instructions to Laban, Rebekah’s father saying, “[The LORD, before whom I have walked, will send his angel with you and prosper your way.](#)” (Genesis 24:40) ***Prosper*** in this context means “to make successful.” Abraham knew that God would send one of His angels to oversee the servant’s efforts of finding a wife for Isaac and make the trip



a success. By using an angel to guide specific events, God provided Rebekah for Isaac.

## **Superiority of Jesus**

As amazing as angels are, the Holy Spirit wants us to realize that Jesus Christ is better. The writer of Hebrews inspired by the Holy Spirit has the same purpose. Last week we learned that Jesus is superior to the Old Testament prophets and superior to everything in all of creation. This week we will see that He is superior to angels. The recipients of this letter accepted the Old Testament, so the writer gives them and us 7 proofs from the Old Testament that Jesus is superior to the angels. He uses the biblical number of perfection or completion, 7 indisputable points made from the Old Testament that Jesus is superior in every way.

**1<sup>st</sup> Proof:** “For to which of the angels did God ever say, ‘You are my Son, today I have begotten you’?” (v.5) (Ps. 2:7; 2 Sam. 7:14 and 1 Chron. 17:13) In Psalm 2 God says to King David, “I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you.” (Psalm 2:7) In Psalm 2, we see that on the initial level King David was promised royal sonship. As David went out to conquer, he went out as a representative of God. In Scripture there is often a dual fulfillment. King David did go out and conquer in the name of Yahweh, but after David, there would be One who would do this in a much greater way and through the New Testament we know that this son of David and Son of God is Jesus Christ.

The writer of Hebrews takes Psalm 2 and applies it to King Jesus. This text is not talking directly about Jesus’ eternal sonship beginning when He is created. Jehovah Witnesses’ claim that Jesus is a created being, Jesus is the highest of angels and this verse proves it. But what is really going on here is that the Holy Spirit wants us to see that at a point in time the eternal Son, Jesus Christ, came to

the earth, took on flesh lived and died and was raised from the grave. Jesus became the Son in a physical sense at the incarnation. This is confirmed by God Himself; at Jesus' baptism, God declared Him to be the Son. At the transfiguration God declared Him to be the Son. At the resurrection God declared Him to be His Son. Luke confirmed this when he wrote, "we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers,<sup>33</sup> this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm, 'You are my Son, today I have begotten you.' " (Acts 13:32-33) Jesus has always been God.

Because of Jesus' successful work on behalf of the elect, God the Father has given Him a superior name. Jesus' perfect life and death qualified Him to be given this divine title. In eternity the Son has always existed, however, in time He would be declared the Son while He was physically in the world. There has never been a time that the Son did not exist. As Paul inspired by God declared Jesus "to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 1:4) Jesus is proven to be superior to the angels because He is God's only Son and He is God eternal.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Proof:** Jesus is superior to angels because He is King David's Son. In Hebrews 1, verse 5 we read, "I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son"? This statement echoes Psalm 2:7, 2 Samuel 7:14 and 1<sup>st</sup> Chronicles 17:13. When the eternal Son came to earth, He was to be given the title Son of the Most-High God. In the 2 Samuel passage we learn that God is making a covenant with David. "I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son." (2 Sam. 7:14) The covenant states that David's heir will rule and His kingship will be eternal. Here in Hebrews and also in Luke we learn who this eternal King really is. Gabriel told Mary,<sup>31</sup> "behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.<sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the **Son of the Most High**. And the Lord God

will give to him **the throne of his father David**,<sup>33</sup> and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of **his kingdom there will be no end.**" (Luke 1:31-33) It is at the point of His birth that Jesus fulfills prophecy and is the Son foretold who has existed eternally. Jesus is superior to the angels because He has inherited a superior name from God the Father. No angel has ever been called the Son of the Most High God. This royal title is reserved for Jesus alone.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Proof:** Jesus is superior to the angels because all the angels worship Him. Reading verse 6, **And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, 'Let all God's angels worship him.'** Here the writer is quoting Deuteronomy 32:43 and Psalms 97:7. For all eternity God commands all the angels without exception to worship the Son. Jesus is the adoration of all angels. Angels worshipped Christ when He was born,<sup>8</sup> **"And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night."**<sup>9</sup> **And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear.**<sup>10</sup> **And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people."**<sup>11</sup> **For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.**<sup>12</sup> **And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."**<sup>13</sup> **And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,**<sup>14</sup> **"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"**

Angels are worshipping as we gather here this morning. When John was given access to heaven, here is what he saw,<sup>11</sup> **"Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands,"**<sup>12</sup> **saying with a loud voice, 'Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and**

wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!” (Revelation 5:11-12) We join in this worshipping as the church of the Living God.

The Holy Spirit’s logic here, goes like this; Angels are to worship Christ because He is infinitely better than they are. Christ does not worship angels. The Word of God also shows what the Jehovah Witnesses believe to be false. If Jesus is simply a created angel then why does the Word of God in the Letter to the Hebrews tell the angels to worship another angel?

It is important for us to see that the writer is moving us along one step at a time so that we can catch a clear glimpse of the eternal Son of God. This Son is superior not only to angels but to all things. We too are called to worship Jesus Christ because of His superior name and superiority of His person, for He is God. Jesus is to reign supreme in all things. He is the eternal Son of God. He is worshipped by all created beings which includes both angels and us. I pray we would see the true Jesus high and lifted up as King and not some angel, icon or idol.

Next Lord’s Day we will finish the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of Hebrews and with what the writer inspired by God has to tell us about angels. Amen!

Now, let us prepare to worship Jesus Christ above all - by coming together to celebrate the Lord’s Supper. Please take a moment to reflect on Christ as your Lord and Savior and Creator of the universe.