

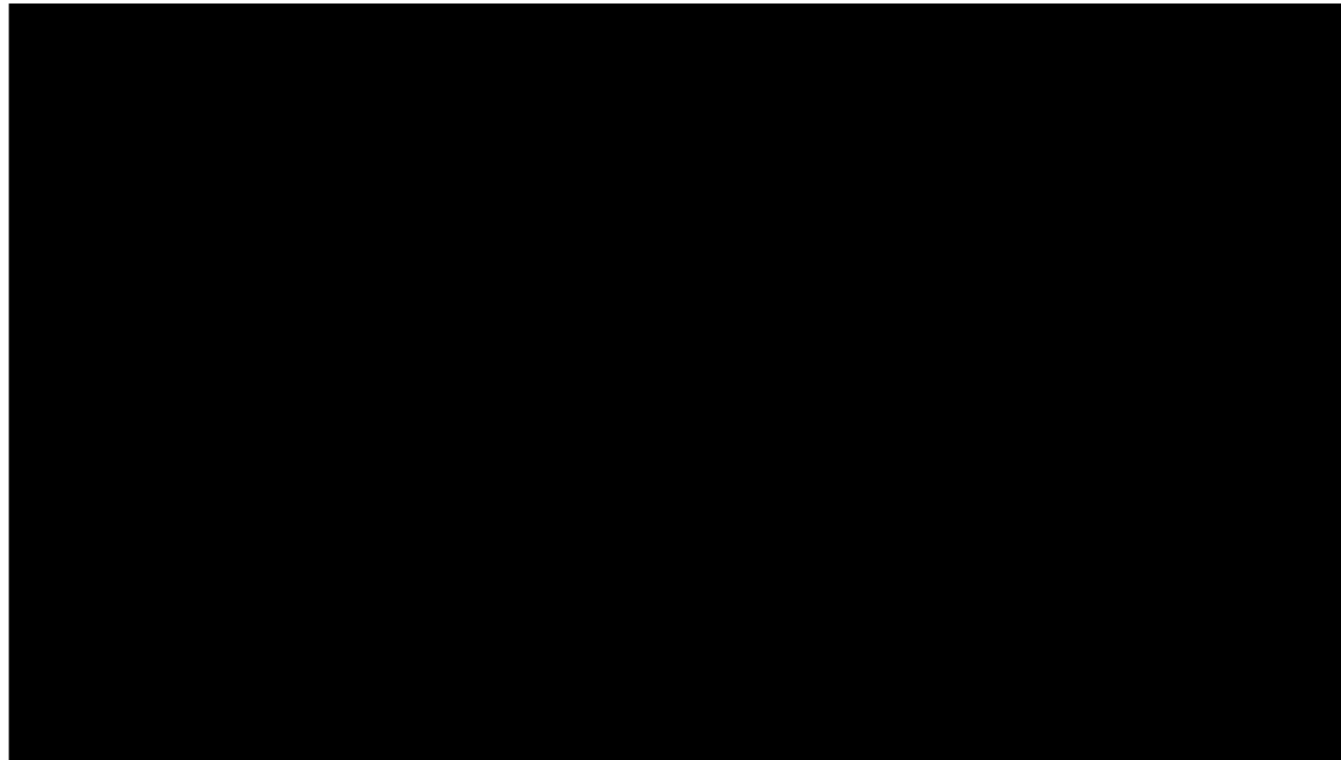
Hebrews



**Promises
Faithfully
Kept**

Heb. 1:5-2:4 (CSB)

Greater than the Angels



All areas of life are to be an expression of our beliefs and should provide opportunities to grow in our faith, reinforcing what we see in Scripture, as the world of the Bible is the real world. But how often do we critically interact with claims about belief? Sadly, we all too often do not question enough how we know what we know regarding doctrinal matters, especially as we take in entertainment. This lack of doctrinal care includes how we understand angels.

Demons are often portrayed as ugly and having the power of death and hell (demons are portrayed in Scripture as oppressive and tempting but have no power to send to hell, rather are themselves destined to suffer in that realm; they also play on people's fear of death and shame but have to submit ultimately to God)

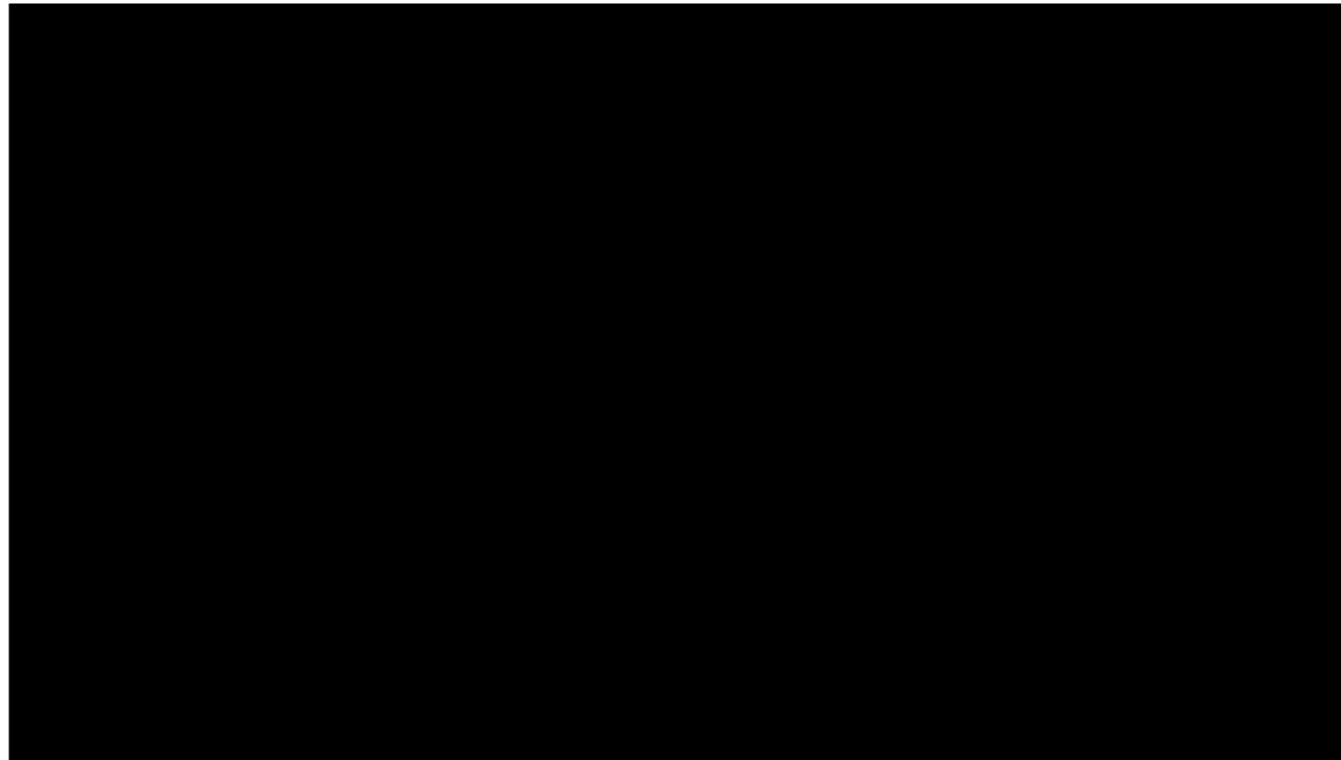


Intro: Since the Renaissance at least, culture has tended to portray angels as Puny and pathetic, even stupid
cf. Cherubs made to look like Cupid, an idol of Roman mythology

Wonderful Life when a bells rings, an angel gets its wings...bad theology

Angels are not dead humans

City of Angels [just legalistic worker who is amazed by the beauty of a woman...but angels are supposed to be present around the throne of God, the most beautiful being and from whom beauty comes]....



But how does Scripture portray angels?

For example, Gabriel speaking to Zechariah and Mary with authority in the Gospels, with Sodom and Gomorrah being devastated by two angels after their treatment of these heavenly beings, the heavenly host with flaming fury coming forth with the Lord in judgment (2 Thess. 1), that even an apostle is tempted to worship them for their greatness in Rev. 22:9, and of whose rank God entrusted with a flaming sword to prevent Adam and Eve from attempting a return to Eden in their fallen state.

Angels were entrusted with great messages and responsibilities, even being the first to declare the birth of Jesus to the Shepherds.

**5 For to which of the angels did he
ever say,
You are my Son;
today I have become your Father,
or again,
I will be his Father,
and he will be my Son?**

**6 Again, when he brings his
firstborn into the world, he says,
And let all God's angels worship
him.**

**7 And about the angels he says:
He makes his angels winds,
and his servants a fiery flame,**

**8 but to the Son:
Your throne, God,
is forever and ever,
and the scepter of your
kingdom
is a scepter of justice.**

**9 You have loved righteousness
and hated lawlessness;
this is why God, your God,
has anointed you
with the oil of joy
beyond your companions.**

**10 And:
In the beginning, Lord,
you established the earth,
and the heavens are the works
of your hands;**

**11 they will perish, but you remain.
They will all wear out like clothing;
12 you will roll them up like a cloak,
and they will be changed like
clothing.
But you are the same,
and your years will never end.**

**13 Now to which of the angels
has he ever said:
Sit at my right hand
until I make your enemies your
footstool?**

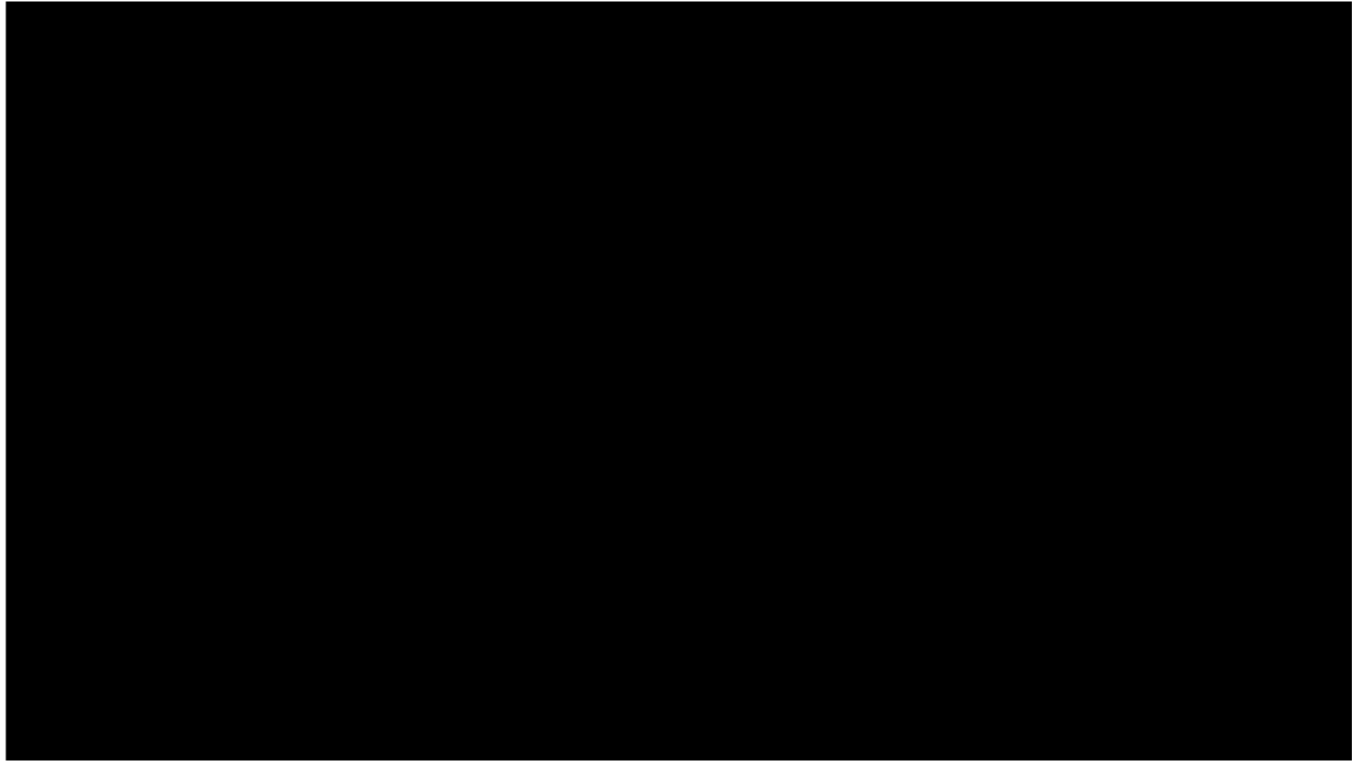
**14 Are they not all ministering
spirits sent out to serve those
who are going to inherit
salvation?**

2:1 For this reason, we must pay attention all the more to what we have heard, so that we will not drift away.

**2 For if the message spoken
through angels was legally
binding and every transgression
and disobedience received a
just punishment,**

3 how will we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? This salvation had its beginning when it was spoken of by the Lord, and it was confirmed to us by those who heard him.

4 At the same time, God also testified by signs and wonders, various miracles, and distributions of gifts from the Holy Spirit according to his will.



Pray

Angels deserve our respect but are lesser than God and so not deserving of worship.

- The recipients of the letter were apparently amazed by the concept of angels.
- o [Note an increase in concern with angels increased during the time between the OT and NT]—Tobit; 1 Enoch and the Watchers
 - Such writings made people ask questions like, “Were particular angels assigned to different people as guardians?” “Was the vague reference to sons of God in Genesis 6 to descendants of Seth or to angels?” There was an increase in thought about what angels do.
 - In the letter to the Colossians, Paul wrote against a particular strain of thought that sought to distract people away from Christ Jesus. In addition to an appeal to go back to living according to Mosaic legalism, this tempting appeal for the Colossians’ attention included an over interest in angels, instead of the God whom the angels worshipped.
 - Also, by the time of the NT, it became clear that angels helped mediate the delivery of the Old Covenant to Moses (Gal 3:19 about Deut. 33:2)
- o In the presence of greatness people have been known to swoon, lose their minds, and become like speechless statues but with mouths gaping open. And that is just dealing with other mere human beings with great talents or power.
- o And so people have rightly been amazed and impressed when an angel meets them. Remember: Jacob seeing angels going to and from the presence of the Lord—holy place; the servant with Elisha was amazed by the army of angels; Sennacherib fled in fear after one angel killed his 185,000-man army; Daniel visited by Gabriel—fell down in fear; the shepherds in Luke 2 were terrified.
- o The original audience may have thought: If only we could have such an ecstatic moment like those, then wouldn’t people believe? Wouldn’t they stand amazed in their presence?
- o But doesn’t the hymn get it right, instead, when it leads us to sing, “

I stand amazed in the presence
Of Jesus the Nazarene,

And wonder how He could love me,
A sinner condemned, unclean.

How marvelous! How wonderful!
And my song shall ever be:
How marvelous! How wonderful!
Is my Savior's love for me!

o The significance of angels within our passage is their status and glory in comparison to the Son. Angels pale in comparison.

o When we think of the good news about Christ, we often go straight to talking about Jesus's death, burial, and resurrection, which is not bad. But we fall short if we neglect to communicate that Jesus is the only one worthy to have secured salvation in this way.

o The glorious Son is deserving of all worship, as is true of the Father and Spirit equally.

The Colossians similarly had a strong interest in angels and their activity, but Paul in a called them to focus on the Son instead of the angels who serve the Son. He wrote
15 [The Beloved Son] is the image of the invisible God,
[who has the rights of a] firstborn over all creation.

16 For everything was created by him,

in heaven and on earth,

the visible and the invisible,

whether thrones or dominions

or rulers or authorities—

all things have been created through him and for him.

17 He is before all things,

and by him all things hold together.

18 He is also the head of the body, the church;

he is the beginning,

the firstborn from the dead,

so that he might come to have

first place in everything.

19 For God was pleased to have

all his fullness dwell in him,

20 and through him to reconcile

everything to himself,

whether things on earth or things in heaven,

by making peace

through his blood, shed on the cross.

All the parts of the OT speak to the glory of the Son, not the angels.

Angels are amazing but still merely created servants of the LORD.

- o The author hits us with a barrage of OT verses primarily from the Psalms but also from Samuel and Deuteronomy.

For the Hebrew Christian audience, they should have recognized that the author was appealing to the the three parts of the Hebrew Bible, Law, the Prophets, and the Writings, to speak to the person of the Son.

At the end of Luke, this was Jesus's methodology to speak about himself. Jesus said to two disciples, "26 Wasn't it necessary for the Messiah to suffer these things and enter into his glory?" 27 Then beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted for them the things concerning himself in all the Scriptures."

- o He said later to a larger number of his disciples, 44b "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled." 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.

- o All of the Scriptures of the OT anticipated the Son coming to us and dying on the cross, being buried, and raising again on the third day. The author also emphasizes that the Scriptures are the very words of God. While there are human authors writing in their own style and vocabulary, the author of Hebrews attributes the words of Scripture to either the Father, the Son, or the Spirit. And he is saying that they were speaking about the Son.

- o The angels may or may not be referred to generally as sons of God, but that does not make them into God or gods. Nor are they born from a sexual relationship God had, which is how Mormons view God and his descendants. It is an obscure reference to show distinction between two groups that merged in Genesis 6.

But the Messiah was recognized as being the unique Son, the only Son, who always existed along with the Father and Spirit as the one Triune God.

God promised to be as Father uniquely to the Son who would rule David's throne according to 2 Sam. 7:14. When David prophetically writes about this Son, He is

acknowledged as being begotten by God himself. The Messiah to come was the Son of God.

o The angels were to worship this Son. Some of our oldest manuscripts of Deut. 32:43 mention explicitly the angels, calling for them to worship YHWH.

o Jesus the Son is fully God and fully man. What is true of YHWH is true of Jesus, for He is God the Son. He is the LORD. God is of one divine essence And yet there is distinction between the persons of the Father and Son, so that the Father can say to the Son, I grant you your throne, which is rightly yours over all creation.

o [READ AGAIN the quotes from vv. 9-10]

o The Son is being equated with YHWH, being rightly referred to as the One having the name that is above every other name. YHWH, the Lord and God over all creation, the only God is King. His angels are but servants in His presence. They are depicted in Ezekiel with the power of wind and fire at their coming, but they are only servants going with the Lord's presence away from the land of Israel. They may be mighty and powerful in our eyes, but they are creations made by the Creator.

o One day all things will be made new. All of creation will be renewed. As the author of Hebrews says, the old garment will be rolled up to allow for the new garment to be put on. All of creation will either be renewed in the presence of God, destroyed, or placed fully and only under God's wrath in hell. The author is reminding the readers that angels do not get to escape that final determination, nor do the hearers of this letter. Everything will be placed at the feet of Jesus one day.

**We have greater accountability
to persevere in Christian faith
than those who previously
interacted with angels.**

- Do not let yourself slip away from faith in Jesus Christ.
- o I believe that the new covenant depiction of salvation is one that is certain for those who are truly saved. If saved, always saved.
- But our affirmation of salvation for one another as part of the church is dependent on evidence. We derive this authority to acknowledge salvation from our Lord himself. We should gladly baptize those who profess faith in Christ for salvation.
- We should rejoice and walk in confidence with those who claim to be our brothers and sisters through faith.
- Yet, we must be humble in doing so. We don't have the full story like God does. Our affirmation of salvation is supposed to point toward eternal salvation . . . at the judgment seat of Christ, but we may be wrong. Only those who endure with faith in Christ truly ever had faith in Christ. So, we get this warning to which **we should pay attention.**
- o Those who eventually deny our common faith in Christ are often those who lose interest in Jesus over time. Don't be like a ring on slick finger. As you go about your day, you use your hands constantly. Unless you are recently engaged or married, you usually don't think about any ring on your finger and how well it is fitting. Sometimes we even might take the ring off but may forget about it. Our lost and found at church over the years has included random jewelry that you would is precious to the owner who misplaced it. I've forgotten my wedding band at home before because I took it off for cooking. I didn't remember my ring until later that day when I habitually went to spin it on my finger. It wasn't there. We need to care more consistently about the health and presence of our relationship with Jesus than our wedding bands.

o Don't be like a boat left untethered to a dock. Waves will rock and move boats even at a dock. The sailors of a boat need to make sure that their vessel is tied to the dock so that that it does not drift. We need to be more aware of our connection to God in Christ than a sailor is aware of the tautness of the ropes keeping his boat in place.

Those who belong to Christ should rest in the confidence that God keeps you in Christ, but you can only have such confidence if your faith is displayed in your daily life.

It is tempting to disregard Christ and our faith in him for the sake of other matters that seem pressing. We are tempted to treat Jesus as old news for something we think of as more exciting or more self-exalting. We are tempted away from making much of Jesus by things and people who make much of us, or things that at least promise to do so.

o Recently a major publication in England predicted that God is becoming more liberal and centered on the desires of individual humans. In other words, because the church of England is denying the authority of Scripture and God's right to define himself, the church of England is conforming their version of god more and more to their image. Therefore, the church is saying that God does not judge, has no wrath, and therefore we should not worry about living for him or not. Rather, he is a concept just to help us achieve the life we want for ourselves now.

o Sometimes it feels like if only the world would have a burning bush moment or a plagues in Egypt moment, then the world would pay attention to their need to submit to the God, who exists and is revealed by the Scriptures and who is unchanging. The original audience of this letter seemed to have felt this very way about their culture.

o As I mentioned earlier, it appears the Hebrews letter recipients had an interest in angels and how saints of old had interacted with them. It seems plausible that they may have thought, "If only angels could have brought this message of the gospel to us like how they helped deliver the old covenant to Moses. The people people would be amazed by this gospel, this new covenant. Then people would fear and tremble."

o The author again says hold on. Consider the foolishness of what you are asking for when you ask for a burning bush moment or for angels to be mediators. Don't you remember who brought this message of the gospel? Not angels but the Son himself, Jesus our Lord! You don't see God opening up cracks in the earth to swallow people whole because Jesus has stood in the gap in order to offer salvation prior to his second coming. You don't see whole cities burned and ruined because Jesus died for sins, allowing for repentance prior to the final judgment, in which he promises a greater suffering for unbelievers who have heard the gospel than that experienced by Sodom and Gomorrah. You can't get a greater revelation to tell us the good news!

o Jesus once said that if people refuse to listen to the prophets who came before and whose words are recorded in Scripture, then those people will not care even if a person raises from the dead and tells them to repent. Their self-idolatry is so obscuring that it keeps them from even being impressed by the resurrected Lord.

o The problem is not with the message nor with the messenger, but with people who still struggle with sin. A worldwide plague is not even enough to convince people finally of their finiteness and mortality. We are tempted to drift away from truth for the sake of perceived comfort and ease.

o If we have sincere faith in Christ, then we line up with the apostles, who were able to confirm to the writer that his professed faith lined up in every way as theirs. Is our faith lining up with the apostles or with apostates?

o Jesus used miracles to heal and communicate, but God intended for those miracles to point the people beyond the momentary improvements and amazements. The miracles were to testify to Jesus being the Son of God and to what life would be like when all things are made new. But people would prefer a free sandwich over freedom from sin. We have the miracles of Scripture and many of us can testify to God's miraculous grace displayed in our lives.

We have seen more than even those who interacted with angels in the OT.

o When God calls us into a relationship with himself in Christ, he calls us to be part of the church, who all are filled with the Spirit. The Spirit manifests his presence in us in various ways for the building up of the church. That presence within all the people of God is what the Old Covenant saints longed for. They wanted to know what it was like to be in a community filled with Spirit-led people. We have the Spirit of God testifying and ministering through each other. Those who came before the Incarnation did not have that.

We have the very Triune God bearing witness, along with the apostles and all the church.

o We have more accountability for having received the fullness of God's revealed Word. We have had much more than a burning bush. We have a bloody cross and an empty tomb. We have lives changed and set free from sin. We have God's Word with a complete canon. We have the church to communicate the gospel to us. Do not think lightly of what God has done and valued. Do not dismiss what Christ died for.

o Instead of drifting away, let's "pay attention all the more to what we have heard." Let's take in God's Word daily. Let's continue in private and corporate prayer. Let's not neglect the gathering of the body of Christ weekly. Let's seek opportunities to encourage one another in faith and to share with those yet to believe. We need to hear the Word of God, believe it, respond in submission to the Spirit, and obey as God calls according to His Word. Having heard the Word, let it enter your heart and not just your ears. (Mohler, 25)

- Trust Christ now for salvation those who have not yet heard and believed (Evangelistic Appeal)