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Jesus and the Angels

Hebrews 1

The people at my front door wanted to talk about a wonderful new world that was coming some day—a society marked by peace and prosperity. My questions caught them by surprise: “Who is Jesus? Is he God?”

“He’s like God,” they said. “He’s close to God—but he is not God.” I offered the biblical perspective that Jesus and God are one, but I didn’t get very far. The two men walked away convinced I was wrong.

GROUP DISCUSSION. How would you explain who Jesus is to a friend who knew very little about him?

PERSONAL REFLECTION. How do you respond to people who think Jesus is just another man—a prophet or a great soul but certainly not God?

Some people in the early decades of the New Testament were having a struggle with the difference between Jesus and the angels of God. Angels had given the law of God to Moses on Mount Sinai (Acts 7:38, 51-52; Gal 3:19; Heb 2:1-3). The angels were powerful, awesome beings. Jesus, these people said, was a great prophet, even a great angel, but not God. The writer of the book of Hebrews determined to set the record straight once and for all. As wonderful as angels are, they can't compare with Jesus. *Read Hebrews 1.*

1. Which of the facts about Jesus found in verses 1-3 particularly stand out to you and why?

2. Verses 4-5 discuss Christ's name. Several times in the Old Testament angels are called "sons of God" (see Job 1:6; 2:1 NASB). But no angel was ever given the title "Son." What is the distinction between the two titles?

3. What contrast does the writer draw between angels in verse 7 and the Son in verse 8?

4. What do the images of wind and flames of fire (v. 7) convey to you about the character and work of angels?

5. The writer of Hebrews paints a powerful picture of Jesus as the sovereign King of the universe. How does that portrait bring encouragement to you in your present circumstances?

6. What aspects of God's character are emphasized in verses 10-12?

7. How would you describe the place angels hold in God's eternal plan compared to the place Christ holds?

8. Since angels are "sent to serve those who will inherit salvation" (v. 14), would it be wrong to pray to an angel for assistance in a crisis? Explain your answer.

9. In what ways does the presence of angels as "God's ministering servants" encourage you?

10. Based on what you have learned from this study, what are some ways that holy angels might serve or minister to you that you have been unaware of?

Thank God for sending both his Son (Jesus) and his servants (angels) to help us.

Now or Later

Even though Jesus was superior to angels, several times during his ministry on earth angels ministered to him. *Read Mark 1:12-13.* What specific things could angels have done in this situation to help and encourage Jesus?

An angel also came to Jesus' aid near the end of his earthly ministry. *Read Luke 22:39-44.* How do you think an angel could have strengthened Jesus as he faced the cross?