DIVING DEEPER DISCUSSION



TEXT SUMMARY

Our Advent series continues with our study of the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. In our text, <u>Hebrews</u> <u>1:4-7</u>, the writer cites four Old Testament texts to demonstrate the superiority of the Son (Christ) to the angels.

(Note: When first century Jews thought about angels, they didn't picture the cute cherubs that popular culture has lodged in our imagination; they revered the mighty angels as mediators of the covenant God made with Moses.)

INTRODUCTION (OBSERVATION):

Use the footnotes in your Bible to trace the source of the OT texts the writer cites. (One of the citations – from the Book of Deuteronomy – is from the "LXX," the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures that NT writers often used.) As you see how the NT writer used the OT texts, you will see the principle of the **"now but not yet"** method of interpretation they sometimes used: the words of the prophets had both a near ("now") meaning and application, as well as a "not yet" meaning that became clear only after Christ came. (See Peter's explanation of this principle in **1 Peter 1:10-12**.)

DISCUSSION (INTERPRETATION):

- 1. Identify the three contrasts the writer makes between the Son and the angels:
 - v. 4-5: Angels are created beings, but Christ is
 - v. 6: When God "brings the firstborn (Christ) into the world, the angels ______.
 - v. 7-8: Angels run errands for God but the Son
- 2. In his address to the synagogue in Antioch in Pisidia (Acts 13:30-33), Paul cites the same text used in Hebrews 1:5. With what event in the life of Christ does Paul associate that text?

DIVING DEEPER DISCUSSION

SO WHAT? (APPLICATION):

Here we move toward first-person pronouns as we begin to consider how we must respond to what God has said in His Word.

- It could be that the commercialization of Christmas is actually a good thing. Every year, people are reminded of the story of the birth of Christ. Along with the seasonal haze of Frosty the Snowman and the ringing of sleigh-bells, there is always the quiet image of the baby in the feeding trough, with the shepherds looking on in awe and the wise men on their way.
 - And yet, just as the Jewish Christians of the first century were tempted to underestimate the priceless gift God had given them in Jesus, we too are tempted to let the cacophony of the Christmas season distract us from the glory of what God gave us that night.
 - What have you and your family done to highlight the serious, life-changing impact of the coming of the Christ Child?
- 2. Thinking of Hebrews 1 during Advent forces us to consider the baby in the manger from a different point of view. It was right and proper for people to adore him not just because he was a newborn (though it's true that we are all in awe of a newborn) but more because he was the King in disguise as the son of a Jewish peasant couple.
 - How are you tempted to let the story of Jesus dissipate into sentimentality and nostalgia?
 - What are some things you can do to ensure that your attention to Jesus during the Christmas season bends toward worship and isn't merely a celebration of prosperity and warm family ties?

