

## Series: Our Fight

### Text: Heb. 1:14

#### ILLUSTRATION:

**As American Christians we have a tendency to accept two aspects of basic understanding when it comes to the world as we know it.**

- **We can accept some form of what is called - High Religion** - The study of things that pertain to God, Heaven, Eternal Life, Truth, etc.
  - o *Now Americans may not agree on the conclusions about things pertaining to God but the vast majority of Americans associate themselves with some form of religion.*
- **Then we can easily accept - Natural Science** The study of things that can be systematically arranged and observed following the operation of general laws.

**But for most of the world there is a very well defined third category called Low Religion.**

- This is the study of the interaction between God and Man in extraordinary ways.

#### **False Views of Low Religion Include**

- **Eastern Ideas** of – spirits, ghosts, demons, ancestors, earthly gods and goddesses who live in trees, rivers, hills and villages.
- In **medieval Europe** these beings included trolls, pixies, gnomes, brownies, fairies, all of which were believed to be real.

All of these were an attempt to describe very real occurrences in the lives of people that could not be explained by High Religion or Natural Science.

#### **According to Missiologist Paul Hiebert**

*Belief in the middle level began to die in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with the growing acceptance of Platonic dualism and of a science based on materialistic naturalism. The result was a secularization of science and a mystification of religion.*

**Most Americans function on a practical level like the Sadducees of Jesus day**  
**Acts 23:8 says -For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor an angel, nor a spirit...**

They believed in God up in Heaven and the believed in the things they could touch and feel.

**This lack of theology on this middle level presents two major problems for American Christians -**

1. Western Missionaries face a very developed third category that they often don't know how to answer.
  - a. EX. I read where one missionary faced a epidemic of small pox, medicine wasn't stopping the outbreak, so the locals turned to making a sacrifice to a local deity. The Christian Missionary wasn't accustomed to actually praying in such a way as to expect a tangible result.
  
2. Western Christians are facing more and more interactions in this middle realm in our own county that we don't know how to answer.
  - a. As a result believers are turning to astrology, horoscopes, fortune tellers, tarot cards and just pure luck. You see people who claim to be orthodox christians trying to contact the dead and working through mediums – all of which are forbidden as a very dangerous sin in God's Word.

**But the careful student of God's Word doesn't have to turn to television or folk lore to understand this middle category, but rather we see that the middle category is described in vivid detail.**

**BTW, you will face things in this life that you will not be able to explain.**

**ILLUSTRATION:** Some years ago when our nephew was about 4 years old and our niece was around 10, their mother pulled off the main drag in a small Texas town to buy something at a Quick Mart. She left the children in the car and ran into the store. The 4 year old climbed into the front seat and pulled the gear stick into neutral. The car began to slowly move backward onto the major highway where traffic stayed fairly busy. Our niece could not move the stick shift and thus started to scream which caused several people including their mother to take note of what was happening. Suddenly a man opened the driver's door and pushed the gear back into park. When the children's mother reached the car and her daughter explained what had happened, they turned to thank the man who had come to their rescue. He was no where to be found. No one but our niece and nephew had seen this man. We believe this was an angel.

**ILLUSTRATION:**

Another tells the story of a head an impending head on collision where it seems something lifted the car out of the way and sat it down safely, with no so much as a hair disturbed.

**ILLUSTRATION:**

One man tells of an encounter his grandfather had right after his son was enroute to Vietnam. A man appeared to him and told him not to fear that his son would be ok, and then the man disappeared. The son did in fact return unharmed.

**You can expect to interact with Angels and Demons in this middle level on a regular basis.**

The Bible is God's text book when it comes to Angels and Demons it portrays their creation, their interactions with humanity and their ultimate destiny.

**Last week we saw**

- The Bible speaks of Angels 273 times in 34 different books.
- The Bible presents Angels as Created Spirit Beings, they have a spirit body – *much like we will inhabit once we are glorified... who have the ability to visibly manifest.*
- They are not subject to death (Luke 20:36).
- There seems to be a very large number of angels, but sense they do not reproduce their number is static.
- In the order of creation the bible teaches that Angels outrank man.
- Redeemed Humans will one day outrank angels

**1 Corinthians 6:3 (NASB95)**

<sup>3</sup>Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more matters of this life?

- We talked about the Angels ministry to the Father
- We talked about the Angels ministry to the Son while on Earth
- We talked about how Angels have a present ministry to believers in this life
- We warned that Angels have a ministry of judgment to unbelievers.

**Today we answer the Question – So What?**

**What difference does it make? How should we practically think or behave any differently based on this new information?**

## **1. The Bible on a number of occasions uses the presence of the angels as a reason for us to behave scripturally.**

Have you ever thought of that? You ought to obey God's word first and foremost because God has commanded it, but secondly because Angels are watching.

- **Paul alluded to this fact in 1 Corinthians 4:9 (NASB95)**  
<sup>2</sup>For, I think, God has exhibited us apostles last of all, as men condemned to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.

*Paul is speaking of the first century crowds that went to watch the gladiators in vast arena. They performed as they were surrounded by the ready gaze of spectators.*

The Biblical writers seemed to recognize that innate within the heart of humanity is a tendency to respond to an audience.

**ILLUSTRATION:** *Last week I had the opportunity to go and set in on one of my daughters ballet practices. The moment her eyes met mine a huge smile broke out over her face and I swear she jumped high and skipped faster than before.*

**Several times in the scriptures the writers remind us of the steady gaze of our angelic audience.**

- **CORINTH** - There was a real problem of authority at the Church at Corinth. In particular the sisters in the Corinthian Church were getting caught up in a women's liberation movement and refusing to submit to the authority of Pastors or that of their husbands. They symbolized their rebellion by throwing off their head coverings that in the Corinthian context stood as a symbol of submission to proper authority. Paul is telling the ladies that they should follow the male leaders that God has placed over them and that they should wear the coverings on their head... but notice the reasoning he concludes his argument with in **1 Corinthians 11:10**

<sup>10</sup>Therefore the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels.

Paul says for the benefit of the angels, the most submissive of all creatures the woman ought to make her submission clear.

- **Jesus used this line of reasoning in Matthew 18:10 as he defended the place of children in the kingdom** - <sup>10</sup>“See that you do not despise one of these little ones. (Why? What is my motivation?) for I say to you that their angels in heaven continually see the face of My Father who is in heaven.
- **Paul wanted to communicate to Timothy of the weightiness of the command to not show Partiality wrote in 1 Timothy 5:21 (NASB95)**  
<sup>21</sup>I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels, to maintain these principles without bias...
- **Paul argued in Ephesians 3:8-10 (NASB95)**  
<sup>8</sup>To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, <sup>9</sup>and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things;

**Why????**

- <sup>10</sup>so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly *places*.

**ILLUSTRATION:** Last week a family was visiting from North Carolina. They are members of Sinclair Ferguson's Church. You better believe that I was aware of their presence and I wanted my doctrine to be clear and precise. After the service they mentioned that they would give a copy of my CD to Dr. Ferguson.

Well friend there are greater dignitaries present every week at the Capshaw Baptist Church. The High and Holy Angels are hear and they are taking notes concerning the manifold wisdom of God!

Our crowd may be large, our crowd may be small – but never forget that a band of angels is looking on and they expect us to be ready come Sunday!

So, #1 An awareness of Angels should motivate us to behave scripturally...

## **2. An Awareness of Angels should motivate us to Befriend Strangers**

**Hebrews 13:2 (NASB95)**

<sup>2</sup>Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.

Hospitality is not easy for me unless I'm really in the mood. Even then I find it easy to be hospitable to friends and brothers. But here the writer to the Hebrews calls for us to show hospitality to strangers. Why? Some have entertained angels without knowing it.

**ILLUSTRATION:** About 10 years ago I was on my way to work with my oldest daughter who at the time was 1 year old. We lived out here in East Limestone heading into Madison. Just past the intersection of East Limestone Road there is a curve in which I lost control of my car in the fast lane, flipped, crossed the slow lane and finally ended up in the ditch. There was a person who saw the accident and came to our rescue, since my daughter was a baby they pulled her out of the car through the back glass but I was trapped in the car so they could not get me. Since they weren't sure what the car would do they took her to the top of the ditch and let me know that the police had been called. There was a "person" though that stayed with me the whole time holding my neck and talking me through it telling me that everything was okay. I never saw his face since I was not allowed to move my neck but I heard him talking to me, and felt his presence. When the rescue squad showed up to cut me out of my vehicle, I told them that I needed to thank the guy that was by my side the whole time. That is when the informed me that there was no one with me, that the only person they saw was the one with my daughter

**ILLUSTRATION:** One sister tells of having a flat tire on I-65 in the a pouring rain storm, when a man pulled up beside her a voluteered to drive her to the Doctor's office. She write, "I explained that it was downtown and he said he knew where I needed to go. I was never afraid, very at ease and comfortable. He had a briefcase in the front seat between us and was a rather untidy heavy set gentleman.

When we got to the office, he walked me in, holding my elbow and went up to the window with me. I told the receptionist why I was late, apologized for being drenched and told her I would still be on the interstate if it weren't for the man who brought me all the way to the office. She said, "really, who was it?" I said, the man who just brought me in. She said, "you walked through that door alone, noone brought you in.

I turned around and he was gone.

**This seems to be the case in Genesis 18:2-5 where angels appeared to Abraham.**

<sup>2</sup>When he lifted up his eyes and looked, behold, three men were standing opposite him; and when he saw *them*, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth, <sup>3</sup>and said, "My Lord, if now I have found favor in Your sight, please do not pass Your servant by. <sup>4</sup>"Please let a little water be brought and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree; <sup>5</sup>and I will bring a piece of bread, that you may refresh yourselves; after that you may go on, since you have visited your servant." And they said, "So do, as you have said."

Have you ever considered that God is deeply concerned about how you behave to the world?

#### **Consider this –**

- We spend a lot of money on our billboard out of Highway 72.
- We worked very hard to make this campus look nice with landscaping
- Our custodial staff goes to great lengths every week to make sure the building is properly cleaned and ready for Sunday

But I can cause all of that to go down the drain by loosing my temper, mistreating a waitress, failing to tip properly, ignoring someone in need, failing to show kindness to those I pass on the street.

God calls us to show hospitality to strangers and to insure that we take it seriously he says I'm going to send a few angels to disguise themselves and give you an opportunity for kindness.

So, #1 An awareness of Angels should motivate us to behave scripturally...

#2 An awareness of Angels should motivate us to befriend strangers...

### **3. An awareness of Angels should motivate us to Beware of Substitutes**

**Listen: No one goes to the trouble of counterfeiting the worthless.  
Who would counterfeit pennies? No one, why? It's not worth it.  
People counterfeit the valuable.**

**Throughout the Bible and throughout history Satan and Demons have sought to counterfeit Angels, so the Bible is full of warnings against you falling for it.**

**Paul warned the Galatians about this tendency in chapter 1:8 (NASB95)**

<sup>8</sup>But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!

**In 2 Corinthians 11:14 Paul writes (NASB95)**

<sup>14</sup>...even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

**The entire Mormon Religion was Founded on Such a Counterfeit Appearance.**

The Mormons claim that the angel (Moroni) spoke to Joseph Smith and revealed to him the basis of the Mormon religion.

**Now Moroni contradicted scriptural teaching about**

- The Trinity
- The Person of Christ
- Justification by Faith Alone
- And many others...

**But some 5 million Mormons have believed the lie of a false angel.**

**MARTIN OF TOURS... WHERE ARE THE SCARES????**

Martin had a vision of Jesus in his bedroom one night. The man stood at the door of his room clothed in splendor. Yet when he looked closer he saw there were no scars. Does your Christianity have scars???

**Paul warned the Colossians in 2:18 (NASB95)**

<sup>18</sup>Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the **worship of the angels.**

True angels have no desire to be worshipped or to draw any undue attention to themselves. They point you to Christ.

**Such was the case in Revelation 19:10 (NASB95)**

<sup>10</sup>Then I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus; worship God.

**Angels do not want you to pray to them, but to God through Jesus-**

**1 Timothy 2:5 (NASB95)**

<sup>5</sup>For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

*ILLUSTRATION: Familiar Spirits - I have heard many stories of people who interact with familiar spirits. Or angels that have visited them on a regular basis, normally beginning with some traumatic event in childhood. They have conversations with the persons and befriend them, often visiting them when they are lonely or in need of a friend. Often the Angel will warn them again obeying scriptural truths taught by a Pastor or teacher.*

Friend, remember, Angels don't want to hang out with you, they don't want to get into extended conversations with you. They want to do their mission, return to base and further orders.

**Perhaps that is the greatest lesson we can learn from the Angels – they are quick to obey God. Would you be so quick?**

**The Bible teaches that** Luke 15:10 (NASB95)

<sup>10</sup>“In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

I have often wondered... why do they rejoice when a sinner repents? Perhaps it would be wiser for them to wait until the repentant sinner arrives safely in heaven? But no my friend, they understand something we often forget – when you repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ the battle is over, you are saved, sealed and delivered. That could be you today.