

Title: Like No Other
Text: Hebrews 1:5-14

INTRODUCTION:

—One of the best things we can do as parents or disciple-makers is to share the stories of our lives with those who we are discipling. Sharing stories of our past is important, so that we teach people the right way so that they don't end up making the same mistakes of our past, incurring the same or greater consequences.

—Share that in Acts 7 Stephen, a leader of the early church, taught an OT History Lesson to the zealous Pharisees—connecting The Angel of the Lord of the OT to Jesus.¹ At one point he says, 30 *“Now when forty years had passed, an angel appeared to [Moses] in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in a flame of fire in a bush. 31 When Moses saw it, he was amazed at the sight, and as he drew near to look, there came THE VOICE² of the Lord...”* (Acts 7:30-31). “The voice” was another title, like the title “The Word” which was personified in The Angel of the Lord.

—Stephen's basic message in this OT lesson is: Long ago your forefathers rejected The Angel of the Lord (*the Voice*) in the wilderness and received judgment, and that Angel was the pre-incarnate Christ who you just crucified. What do you expect to happen now!? —As he looks up to heaven, he sees the glory of God and Jesus and proclaims: *“Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”* (judgment language) (vs. 56).

—These folks then dragged Stephen out of the city and stoned him to death, and we know Saul, a young pharisee, was present for all of this (vs. 58). —Luke, the author of Acts, then connects the conversion story of Saul in Acts 9 by emphasizing that Saul encountered “the voice” on His way to Damascus to persecute the Church—and that the voice was Christ (Acts 9:4-7)!

—What's any of this have to do with Hebrews? The author of Hebrews is now writing to Jewish Christians who are relapsing back into some Jewish mysticism where angelic mediation played a large role in their faith (chasing secret knowledge/ pursuing angelic beings to ascend in their spirituality), and their pursuit of angels is becoming enticing to them, and so the author of Hebrews begins to create the argument that Jesus Christ was The Angel of the Lord in the Old Testament, and yet He was far superior to all other angels

—**Hebrews 1:1-4:** *Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his **Son**, whom he appointed the **heir***

¹ Unlike other angels in scripture, The Angel of the Lord receives and accepts worship, pardons sin, and is interchangeably associated with Yahweh in physical form. In the New Testament Christ is associated with the Angel through various terms alluding back to a variety of titles personified by *the* angel. The following are some passages that reveal The Angel being closely associated with God: Gen. 18:1-21; 22:9-14; 32:22-30 (cf. Hos. 12:3-5); Gen. 48:15-16; Ex. 3:2-4 (cf. Acts 7:30-33); Ex. 14:13-14, 19-20, 26-27, 30 (cf. Jude 5). Ex. 23:20-22; Num. 22:22-32; Deut. 32:4-5, 15, 18 (cf. 1 Cor. 10:1-5); Josh. 5:13-15; Isa. 63:7-9. For a more in-depth study of The Angel of the Lord, see Doug Van Dorn and Matt Foreman's book, *The Angel of the Lord: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Study*.

² **The Voice:** This title, “the voice” is found in conjunction with The Angel of the Lord in Ex. 3:3-4 where it is the Angel appearing in the bush, and yet the one who calls out of the bush is God. In the Targums—the Hebrew Bible written in Aramaic—the Jewish interpreters replaced “the voice” in various OT passages (cf. Ps. 106:25; Num. 14:11, 22; Deut. 9:23; Ex. 19:5-6; Jeremiah 7:23) with the title “the word” which was representative clearly of the mediating Divine Angel, who the Apostle John connects to Jesus Christ (Jn. 1; 1 Jn 1:1-2).

of all things, through whom also he created the world. 3 He is the radiance of the **glory**³ of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the **word**⁴ of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the **right hand**⁵ of the Majesty on high, 4 having become as much superior to angels as the name⁶ he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. The terms “glory,” “word,” “right hand,” and “name” were all different titles for the Angel of the Lord. The author wanted the readers to connect the dots that Jesus Christ was that intermediary Angel,⁷ and they can’t afford to make the same mistakes as in the past. There is nothing better than to be found in Christ!!!! –**It’s either Christ or chaos. It’s either His eternal voice leading to life, or other created voices leading to death and destruction**, and the author will take time to show that Jesus is significantly and supremely different from the angels, so worship Him!

—**Hebrews 1:5:** *For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you”? Or again, “I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son”? –These two quotes are taken from Psalm 2:7 and 2 Samuel 7:11-16. Angels at times are called “sons of God” in the OT (Job. 1:6; 2:1; 38:7; Ps. 29:1; 82:6; 89:6). And in Deut. 32 we’re told that the Lord gave the nations over to these angelic “sons of God” (Deut. 32:8-9⁸; Gen. 11) but that Israel would be His special inheritance (cf. Ps. 82). Psalm 2 reveals Jesus as God’s “begotten son” who will be the inheritor of all the nations, and then in 2 Samuel 7 we discover that His Son’s Kingdom will last forever. In other words, although some angels were given the title “son,” (Ps. 82:6), only Jesus was God’s son in His very nature, inheriting ALL the nations!*

—**Hebrews 1:6** *And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, “Let all God’s angels worship him.”⁹ This portion comes from Deut. 32:43 which speaks about Israel rejecting The Angel of the Lord, referred there as “the rock,” “the name,” “the hand” of the Lord—and towards the end of Deut. 32 it is that rock that the heavenly host is commanded to worship! .*

—**Heb. 1:7-9** *Of the angels he says, “He makes his angels winds (ruah—spirits), and his ministers a flame of fire” (cf. Ps. 104:4) Contrasted with... 8 But of the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. 9 You have loved*

³ **Glory:** Ex. 16:10 (cf. Ex. 14:19, 24); 24:16-17 (cf. Ex. 33:18, 22-23; Isa. 6:1 (targum); Ezek. 1:28; 9:3-4; Zech. 2:5). Compare to NT: Jn 1:14; 12:41; Heb. 1:3; 2 Cor. 4:6 (cf. Jn 5:44; 17:5; Acts 7:2-3; 7:55-56, etc.)

⁴ **The Word:** Gen. 15:1-5; 1 Sam. 3:1-21; 1 Kings 19:9; Jer. 1:4-10 etc. Compare to NT: Jn 1:1; 5:38; 1 Jn. 1:1-2; Rev. 19:13

⁵ **Right Hand/ Arm:** Ex. 15:6; Isa. 59:16; 63:11-12; Ps. 110:1, 5-6 (cf. Isah. 51:9-10; 53:1; 63:5; 1 Chron. 21:13; Zech. 13:7 etc.). Compare to NT: Mt. 22:43-44; Acts 7:55-56 (cf. Mk 12:36; Lk. 20:42-43; Acts 2:34-35, etc.)

⁶ **Name:** Ex. 3:13-14 (cf. Ex. 15:3; Isa. 30:27; ps. 20:1,7; 54:1; etc). Compare to NT: Jn 17:6, 11-12, 26; 8:58; Php. 2:9-10 (cf. Jn 5:43; Acts 5:41; Rom. 10:9, 13; Heb. 1:4; Heb. 13:8 etc).

⁷ Galatians 3:19-20. Yahweh did not directly give the Law to man, but the law and promise were given through a mediator. This mediator was “the Angel of the Lord” (see Gen. 15:1; 22:11, 15-17).

⁸ Although some translations based on the masoretic text state “according to the number of the Sons of Israel,” in Deuteronomy 32:9, other translations, such as the ESV are based off of the Dead Sea Scrolls which are significantly older than the oldest masoretic manuscript, therefore making it a much more accurate and reliable translation. It is within the Dead Sea Scrolls that we discover the distributions of these nations to the “Sons of God” who are angelic in nature (see. Job. 1:6; 2:1; 38:7; Ps. 29:1; 82:6; 89:6).

⁹ This portion comes from Deut. 32 (cf. Ps. 104:4), and Deut. 32 was a song of remembrance for Israel to memorize, and it would serve as a warning to Israel when they rejected The Angel of the Lord (identified by various terms here)# to guide them.

righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions” (Ps. 45:6-7). The Son isn’t just a servant/messenger but a reigning king! (The author continues to separate the Son of God from all other heavenly beings...)

—**Hebrews 1:10-14** *And, “You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands; 11 they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment, 12 like a robe you will roll them up, like a garment they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will have no end.”* This is found in Ps. 102:25-27—this Psalm not only declares the greatness of God’s “face,”¹⁰ “glory,” and “name,” all titles for the Angel of the Lord, but it also uses covenantal language¹¹ describing the Son as the one to initiate a better covenant (Heb. 8:6-7) than the Mosaic covenant that was passing away (Heb. 8:13). *13 And to which of the angels has he ever said, “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet” 14 Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation? (cf. Ps. 110:1 “The Lord says to My Lord...”)” —These ministering spirits that the Jewish mystics are looking to only point to salvation, but they are not salvation themselves—that is Christ!!! **TRANSITION:** Why does any of this matter? What is the takeaway!*

MOVEMENT 1:

—Some of the recipients of this letter were starting to see Jesus as simply one of many ways to ascend in their spiritual endeavors. Although they might have known his pre-incarnate state as the angel in the OT, *by nature* he was on another level. —The author of Hebrews used exclusionary language to reveal him as much more superior. —The angels might have offered a message, but Christ offered himself. They shared of the salvation to come, but He was salvation!! God isn’t offering you to put faith in an ideology or system of beliefs, He’s offering you His one and unique son!

—For this reason, we must never downplay the supremacy of Christ and who He is: we don’t wear “Jesus is my homeboy” shirts, we don’t display Jesus bobble-head figurines, and we don’t take his name in vain by living a lifestyle that rejects Him, in our vain pursuit to find something better to make our name great! —**Jesus Christ is not one of many, He is the one and only and reigns supreme!**

MOVEMENT 2:

—As people created in the image of God, by nature we ARE worshippers—our existence is to give our attention and hearts to something, so that in turn we find our value and what it means to be human. Specifically, we are ONLY wired to worship God, the creator of all, AND YET our sinful nature pulls us to worship created things which corrupt us—dehumanize us (hateful, greedy, slanderous, selfish, prideful). —**Be careful of what you worship, because there is only one object of worship that will truly produce what you’re designed for!**

¹⁰ **Face:** Gen. 32:30; Ex. 33:11 (cf. Ex. 33:14-15, 20, 23); Isa. 63:9; Ps. 17:2, 15. Compare to NT 2 Cor. 4:6; 2 Thess. 1:9; Heb. 1:3; Jude 5.

¹¹ God establishes relationship with humanity covenantally, and the covenant operates within the cosmos—heaven and earth. The tabernacle (tent of meeting) followed by the Temple, a symbol of a purified heaven and earth where God and man can dwell, played a large role within the covenant relationship with God and his people, and yet it was only a foreshadow of a better covenant to come through Jesus Christ, our Great High Priest who resides in the truth Holy of Holies (Heb. 9:24).

—There are a lot of things luring people these days...materialism is one thing, but mysticism is growing again within our society. We are called to test the spirits (1 Jn. 4:1); and there are deceptive voices that *sound* like the Holy Spirit, but test it against God's word IN THE COMMUNITY OF FAITH!!! We are immersed with human philosophies rooted in paganism as well as lying spirits that can take us captive (Col. 2:8), but we are called to take all thoughts captive and make them obedient to Christ (2 Cor. 10:5)...can He stamp his approval on that thought?

—The belief that there is something more satisfying and secure than Christ and His ways is prevalent in our pagan society, but **stop the dangerous pursuit to find something better! You won't find it!** It is a dangerous thing, when we live as though Christ is not enough to live as though we know better than our Lord!

—THEREFORE: **Jesus Christ IS the only one that deserves your worship!**

CLOSING PASSAGE:

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. 19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. (Col. 1:15-20).

BENEDICTION:

Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, 21 equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. (Heb. 13:20-21)

***For a more comprehensive study of The Angel of the Lord, consider reading Doug Van Dorn and Matt Foreman's book, *The Angel of the Lord: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Study*.

Other books exploring God's special Angel: *Appearances of the Son of God in the Old Testament* by John Owen (edited by Van Dorn), *A Dissertation Concerning the Angel Who Is Called the Redeemer* by Peter Allix (edited by Vandorn), and *The Worship of the Lord Jesus in the Old Testament* by Gerard De Gols (edited by Van Dorn). All three of these authors were French Reformers from the 17th century. Van Dorn takes their original works written in French, translated into old English, and translates it further into contemporary English making it easier to read.