Erased – Part 4

# The Angels

(Hebrews 1:1-14)

We’re continuing in part four of our message series entitled “Erased” looking at our greatest allies in the spirit realm, spiritual beings, known as angels. This is an incredibly important subject as we’ve been understanding according to the Word of God that there’s so much more than what we see; that outside of the physical world that we can touch and see. There’s a whole other realm of reality called the spiritual world.

In this series we’ve been talking about supernatural things; the Holy Spirit, Satan and the demons, and the believer’s Spiritual Battle. It’s been enlightening, but what concerns me is that we might become so focused on the supernatural that we see demons behind every bush. And so, I want to counteract this spiritual reality with a brief theological look at angels, because so many people today don’t understand who the angels are, and what their roles are in the spirit world as well as in our own lives. And honestly, there are all kinds of misconceptions about angels, many of them coming from sources outside of the Word of God, and others coming from television shows, movies, and our culture itself. And so, what we want to do today, is look to the Word of God, because “the secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever” (Deuteronomy 29:29).

If you’d like to follow along in your Bible, open to the New Testament letter to the Hebrews, and I’m going to begin reading at chapter one, verse one,

“In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven” (Hebrews 1:1-3).

God wasn’t silent about the mysteries of heaven. Verse one tells us that God spoke at many times and in various ways. In other words, at different times and in different ways God has revealed himself. He didn’t remain invisible, shrouded in a mystery of glory, but he revealed himself and the radiance of his glory through his son Jesus Christ. He disclosed himself beyond his creation, beyond the glory revealed to the prophets, and in these last days he spoken to us by his Son; not just in a whisper, but loudly and clearly, almost as if he were shouting. The Bible tells us in Romans chapter 1,

“Since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities — his eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse” (Romans 1:20).

And so, Creation helped to reveal the glory of God, the Tabernacle helped, the Word of the prophets helped, but there was an incompleteness to it all until Hebrews chapter 1, verse two tells us, that he’s spoken to us by his Son Jesus, who is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being. And so, you could say that if God whispered in the past, he’s shouting in these last days. You can’t miss it, it’s unmistakable, the fullness of God is manifested, it’s seen as it was never seen before. Jesus Christ is the radiance of God’s glory; greater than Moses, greater than the priests, judges, or the prophets; even greater than the angels. Hebrews chapter 1, verse four says,

“He became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs. For to which of the angels did God 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"? And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him” (Hebrews 1:4-6).

Wherever you encounter the revelation of God the Father or Christ the Son, you will always find angels worshiping. And so, when God brings his firstborn, when he brings Jesus, born of a virgin, born in a manger; he announces the birth of Jesus and the Bible tells us,

“Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest…” (Luke 2:13-14).

And so, the first thing we’re going to discover is that, number one, angels are worshipers.

## 1. Worshipers

You know, we can’t see, but if we had eyes to see, it’s very likely that there are angels all around us at this very moment. Now you might ask why? And I say that simply because we’re here to worship and the angels are worshipers! That’s what angels do, they worship God. In fact, the Bible says in Revelation chapter 5, the apostle John says,

“I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they sang:

"Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!"

Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing:

"To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power for ever and ever!" (Revelation 5:11-13).

Now that’s a vision of the worship of God in heaven. Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, and to him be praise, honor, glory, and power forever and ever. He is worthy of the worship of angels, being so much superior to the angels. As a matter of fact, Hebrews chapter 1, verse seven says, “In speaking of the angels,” God says,

"He makes his angels winds, his servants flames of fire." But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom” (Hebrews 1:7-8).

And so, verse seven, quoting from Psalm 104:4, gives us a hint as to the nature of angels. That they’re created beings, that Jesus makes them, he created them, they’re his servants and therefore he’s worthy of worship because it’s his throne that will last forever and ever.

It’s interesting that God tells us that “he makes his angels winds” because the word “winds” can also mean spirits. This is significant, because angels are spiritual beings, but also because winds are invisible, powerful, moving rapidly as John mentions in his gospel,

“The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going…" (John 3:8).

And so, God’s angels not only blow like the wind, moving powerfully, rapidly, and invisibly as they carry out his will, but they’re also called flames of fire. And whenever you read about flames of fire it’s usually in connection with divine judgment; which again is very descriptive of the angels, being that they are mighty warriors and often found to be executioners of the justice of God. So, number two let’s look at this concept of angels as flames of fire.

## 2. Flames of Fire

These are powerful spiritual beings, not little naked bald-headed babies playing harps in the clouds like we often see illustrated in cartoons, but fierce warriors who battle on behalf of God. In fact, one time the Bible records that God was disciplining Israel, he was punishing them, possibly for following Absalom in rebellion against King David; but God allowed David to see the spirit world. It’s recorded in first Chronicles chapter 21, where it says in verse 16,

“David looked up and saw the angel of the Lord standing between heaven and earth, with a drawn sword in his hand extended over Jerusalem” (1 Chronicles 21:16).

On another occasion we find mention of a great battle in heaven when Daniel received a vision from God that was so disturbing that all he could do was fast and pray. The Bible says, he couldn’t eat, he was seeking the meaning of this vision, and twenty-one days later as he was standing on the bank of the river an angel of the Lord showed up. Daniel says that a hand touched him and he fell trembling on his hands and knees. In chapter 10, verse five, he said,

“I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of the finest gold around his waist. His body was like chrysolite, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude” (Daniel 10:5-6).

In verse 11, this mighty angel said, "Daniel, you who are highly esteemed, consider carefully the words I am about to speak to you, and stand up, for I have now been sent to you." And when he said this to me, I stood up trembling” (Daniel 10:11).

You see, even the strongest and godliest of men like Daniel can hardly stand in the presence of an angel. He continued speaking in verse 12, as Daniel trembled,

“Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come" (Daniel 10:12-14).

In other words, “Daniel, God heard your prayer the first time you called on him and the heavens were opened...” But Satan who imitates God, this powerful fallen angel, Lucifer, the one who is called the prince of demons had assigned a certain demon to a position of authority over the Persian kingdom. And so, he resisted this holy angel for 21 days, keeping him from delivering this message to Daniel until the archangel Michael, a chief prince who was even more powerful came to assist him. The angel told Daniel, “As soon as Michael came to my assistance I left him there to deal with this prince from Persia and came to you with the answer to your prayer.”

Today, you and I can’t underestimate the power of this; we can’t diminish the reality of this, because there are angels and demon forces that are doing battle in the world today. Therefore, we must remember that what we see with our eyes is not all there is, but that the angels are on our side, they’re worshipers, they’re flames of fire, and number three, we discover that they’re ministering spirits.

## 3. Ministering Spirits

Over and over and over again, as we see angels in Scripture they are serving God’s people. And so, we need to understand that according to the Bible, angels are God’s servants, supernatural beings created by Jesus for God’s glory, and they minister to us, serving us, delivering messages, protecting us and keeping us from danger. You may remember in Genesis chapter 19, how angels grabbed Lot and his family and rushed them out of Sodom before it was destroyed. Or the angel who protected Daniel in the lion’s den. Daniel described it this way in chapter 6, verse 22,

“My God sent his angel and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me…” (Daniel 6:22).

And this is such a wonderful truth to know that angels are ministering spirits, created to serve God and his children throughout eternity. Amazingly, even Jesus said the same thing, even though he’s superior to the angels in every way, he said, “The Son of Man didn’t come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28). Speaking of Jesus, let’s continue reading in Hebrews chapter one, where God speaking about his Son says in verse nine,

“You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy."

“He also says, In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end."

“To which of the angels did God ever say, ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet"?

“Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?” (Hebrews 1:9-14).

And so, Jesus sat down at God’s right hand because it was over. He had served for the joy set before him, enduring the cross, and now he reigns, that's his identity, that’s his destiny. But the angels, they serve because they’re ministering spirits and they'll keep serving forever those who will inherit salvation. That’s us, isn’t it? The Bible says that the angels are going to serve us forever, they’re all around us right now in the spirit world, and yet there are many times when angels show up and they look just like us. As you read the Bible, there are times when people have entertained angels without even knowing it.

For example, in Genesis chapter 18, Abraham was sitting at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day when he looked up and saw three angels standing nearby, but he didn’t recognize them. He assumed that they were travelers, just regular guys passing by and so he offered them his hospitality. In verse four he said,

“Let a little water be brought, and then you may all wash your feet and rest under this tree. Let me get you something to eat, so you can be refreshed and then go on your way..." (Genesis 18:4-5).

Again, in Genesis chapter 19, we find Lot sitting at the gate of Sodom when two angels approached. Thinking that they were travelers with no place to stay, he invited them to stay at his house not realizing that right in front of them were two angels of God. In fact, the Bible actually says this, encouraging us not to…

“Forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it” (Hebrews 13:2).

And so, the angels are ministering spirits sent to serve those who inherit salvation; ministering God’s love, his healing, and his power to us just like they did to Jesus. If you remember, when he was tempted in the wilderness, Jesus was physically and spiritually exhausted and the Bible tells us that,

“The devil left him, and angels came and attended him” (Matthew 4:11).

This word translated “attended” means to minister to or to care for. And so, angels came and waited on Jesus, because they’re ministering spirits created to serve. We see this again when Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane just before his arrest and execution. You see, being God in the flesh, he knew what was coming, he was agonizing over the suffering he was about to face, and so he prayed,

"Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me…” (Luke 22:42, NLT).

And so, he’s like, is there any other way? And the Bible says,

“An angel from heaven appeared to him” And what did the angel do? “and strengthened him” (Luke 22:43).

The angel of God ministered to him and Jesus went on to say these powerful words.

“Father…I want your will to be done, not mine" (Luke 22:42).

And so, this first chapter of Hebrews has brought about such depth in our understanding of angels, that they’re worshipers, they’re flames of fire, and they’re ministering spirits; but also, of the present reality of the spirit world and the superiority of Christ. Yet even now, there may be some of you who have a dream, but you just don’t see how it’s going to happen. But today, even now as you’re praying, the Spirit of God can give you the strength you need to keep going.

Others of you, you may be facing a challenge in your marriage; you may be feeling like you just can’t overcome a certain sin, this temptation, this whatever; and you’re just physically, spiritually, and emotionally exhausted. You don’t even think that you can get through it, but as we pray God will send a ministering angel to give you hope. The Spirit of God will give you the strength to overcome all the temptations of the evil one.

Sometimes, it’s just as simple as crying out, “God help me!” And, suddenly, it’s like this wind overcomes you and an angel of the Lord gives you strength. And so, today we need to recognize that even though we live in this world, we don’t wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not weapons of this world, because our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, and against the powers of this dark world. And so, we need understand that there’s more to this world than our eyes can see.

Therefore, we need to embrace the fact that our prayers are far more powerful than we realize. There may be times when you pray and feel like nothing’s happening, but just like when Daniel prayed, 21 days later an angel appeared to him and said,

“Since the first day that you prayed setting your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them” (Daniel 10:12).

And so, your prayers are far more powerful than you realize; because Jesus Christ is so much more superior than the angels; and in his name we fight from a position of strength; from victory and not for victory. We fight with weapons of the spiritual world. You have the belt of truth. You have the breastplate of righteousness. You have your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. You have the shield of faith. You’re able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. You have the helmet of salvation. You have the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. And you can pray in the Spirit on all occasions calling upon God to send his mighty angels to do battle on your behalf.

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