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Hebrews 13

“Entertaining Angels”

Pastor Gary Hamrick

In the closing chapter of Hebrews, the writer ends the book with several short, pithy exhortations. Among all these concluding exhortations, the one that intrigues most people is the one about *“entertaining strangers.”* (**Hebrews 13:2**) When you read these words, it seems like they don’t quite fit, so it catches you off guard.

When you think about it, it’s natural to believe you would say to yourself, “Of course we should *‘keep on loving each other... remembering those in prison’* and honoring marriage.” The obvious answer is, “Yes, we should be doing these things.” But **Hebrews 13:2** jumps off the page because it doesn’t elicit a “Well, of course” reaction. Instead, your reaction is, “Really?” The matter-of-fact way it’s inserted in the list of exhortations is also very interesting, because most people don’t regularly consider whether or not they’ve encountered an angel.

Pastor Gary illustrated this when he remarked that reading this list would be like giving a list of chores to one of his children. The note would say: “I want you to mow the grass, wash the car, dig up the treasure in the backyard, vacuum the basement and clean your room.” If you were that child, imagine what your reaction would be when you read the part about digging up the treasure in the backyard! The writer includes a little treasure buried in this chapter that moves us to realize we have a lot to learn about angels.

A 2007 Gallup Poll indicates that 75% of Americans believe in angels¹ and 55% believe they have been helped by a guardian angel.² When Billy Graham wrote his classic book entitled, *Angels*, in 1975, he wrote that virtually nothing was in print at that time. Today, however, there is quite a lot of fictitious stuff available, none of

¹ <http://www.gallup.com/poll/27877/americans-more-likely-believe-god-than-devil-heaven-more-than-hell.aspx>

² <http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1842179,00.html>

which includes a Biblical foundation. The good news is that the Bible has almost 300 references to angels.

In this study we'll learn about angels, their role and their service, including the fact that part of the reason for their existence is to guard us and serve us. ([Hebrews 1:14³](#))

Angels

1. Angels are an order of spiritual beings created by God and distinct from human beings.
 - a. [Colossians 1:16](#) - *“For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.”*
 - b. Angels were among the first of God’s creation, because they were there rejoicing over the creation of the Earth.
 - i. [Job 38:4-7](#) - *“Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation? Tell me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone - while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?”*
2. Angels are regularly portrayed in Scripture as majestic, mighty, and male.
 - a. There is no truth to the notion that angels are naked, chubby babies with wings and curly hair!
 - b. Almost every time an angel appeared to people in the Bible, the people were struck with fear and awe.
 - i. When an angel appeared to Zechariah about having a son named John the Baptist, he said, *“Don’t be afraid...”* ([Luke 1:13](#))
 - ii. When an angel appeared to Mary concerning conceiving Jesus, he said, *“Do not be afraid.”* ([Luke 2:9-10](#))
 - iii. When angels appeared to the women on their way to the tomb the morning of Jesus’ resurrection, they said, *“Do not be afraid...”* (Matthew 28:5)
 - iv. The angel who rolled the stone away from Jesus’ tomb is described in [Matthew 28:3-4](#).
 1. *“His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were as white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.”*

³“Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?”

- a. Note that the Roman guards were terrified by his appearance; they weren't afraid of naked, chubby little babies with wings!
3. Angels can yield their majestic appearance and assume human form.
 - a. One example is found in [Genesis 18-19](#), when angels appeared to Abraham and Lot before destroying Sodom and Gomorrah.
4. Angels number in the multiple thousands and appear in "orders" or "ranks."
 - a. [Hebrews 12:22](#) - *"But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly..."*
 - b. [Revelation 5:11](#) - *"Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand..."*
 - c. Orders
 - i. Cherubim (89x - winged) - [Exodus 25:20](#)
 - ii. Seraphim (2x - winged) - [Isaiah 6:2, 6](#)
 - iii. Messenger Gabriel - [Daniel 9:21 and Luke 1:26](#)
 - iv. Archangel Michael - [Jude 9](#)
 - d. Ranks
 - i. [1 Peter 3:22](#) - *"[Jesus] has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand - with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him."*
 - ii. In [Ephesians 6](#), Paul tells us there are also rankings in the realm of fallen angels, too.
5. Some angels are good, and some are evil.
 - a. Evil angels who rebelled with Satan are called demons.
 - b. [1 Corinthians 6:3](#) tells us Believers will judge fallen angels.
6. We are not to worship angels or pray to them.
 - a. [Revelation 22:8-9](#) - *"I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And... I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me. But he said to me, 'Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers the prophets and of all who keep the words of this book. Worship God!' "*
7. God has created angels and commissioned them to serve him and us.
 - a. Their service for God includes:
 - i. Worshipping him - [Isaiah 6:1-3](#) - *"In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphs, each with six*

wings: *With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: 'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.'* ”

- ii. Delivering his messages - **Luke 1:26-31** - *“In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, ‘Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.’ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus.’ ”*
 - i. Carrying out his warfare - **2 Samuel 24:16** - *“When the angel stretched out his hand to destroy Jerusalem, the LORD was grieved because of the calamity and said to the angel who was afflicting the people, ‘Enough! Withdraw your hand.’ The angel of the LORD was then at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.”*
 - ii. Doing his will - **Psalms 103:20** - *“Praise the LORD, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word.”*
- b. Their service for us includes:
- i. Guarding us.
 1. **Matthew 18:10** - *“See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.”*
 2. **Psalms 91:11** - *“For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.”*
 - ii. Ministering to us.
 1. **Matthew 4:11** - *“Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.”*
 - iii. Delivering us.
 1. **Acts 5** and **Acts 12** describe times when angels released certain apostles from prison.
 2. **Daniel 6:22** - *“My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions.”*
 - iv. Escorting us into the presence of God when we die.
 1. **Luke 16:22** - *“The time came when the beggar [Lazarus] died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side [Paradise].”*

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read [Hebrews 13:1-9](#) to provide an overview for this study.
3. Spend time talking about some of the myths about angels.
 - a. Why do you think some people believe angels are the spirits of children before they're born?
 - b. Why do you think some people believe they become angels when they die?
4. Read and review the Scriptures (#2 above) that tell the real story about angels being anything but the chubby, naked, winged babies one might find on a Christmas card.
5. Read and review (#7a above) concerning their service to God.
6. Read and review (#7b above) concerning their service to us.
7. Have you or someone you know experienced a situation like the one Pastor Gary mentioned in his message?⁴
8. Are there other experiences you've had when you sensed an angel was guarding you or ministering to you?
9. Close your time with prayer by asking the Lord to help each person sort out fact from fiction when it comes to the subject of angels; thank the Lord for the fact that angels are sent for the purpose of ministering to us, guarding us, delivering us, and escorting us into God's presence when we die.

⁴ Pastor Gary was lost in Washington, D.C. and was trying to find Children's Hospital. He saw a well-dressed, elderly black gentleman standing on the corner of a street in a rough neighborhood. This gentleman came over to Pastor Gary's car and gave him directions and then disappeared!