



INTRODUCTION

Hebrews 1:5-14

"The Reverend John G. Paton, pioneer missionary in the New Hebrides Islands, told a thrilling story involving the protective care of angels. Hostile natives surrounded his mission headquarters one night, intent on burning the Patons out and killing them. John Paton and his wife prayed all during that terror-filled night that God would deliver them. When daylight came they were amazed to see that, unaccountably, the attackers had left. They thanked God for delivering them.

A year later, the chief of the tribe was converted to Jesus Christ, and Mr. Paton, remembering what had happened, asked the chief what had kept him and his men from burning down the house and killing them. The chief replied in surprise, "Who were all those men you had with you there?" The missionary answered, "There were no men there; just my wife and I." The chief argued that they had seen many men standing guard - hundreds of big men in shining garments with drawn swords in their hands. They seemed to circle the mission station so that the natives were afraid to attack. Only then did Mr. Paton realize that God had sent His angels to protect them. The chief agreed that there was no other explanation. Could it be that God had sent a legion of angels to protect His servants, whose lives were being endangered?"¹

Watch It  Bible Principles

Watch Bible Principles #2; Heb. 1:5-14 www.villagebible.church/bibleprinciples

Open it

1. What are some of the ways angels are portrayed in our culture, especially in TV shows, movies and commercials?

¹ Billy Graham, *Angels: God's Secret Agents* (Nashville, W Publishing, 1995), 7-8.

Read it

Hebrews 1:5-14

Explore it

2. What word does the author use repeatedly to refer to Jesus?
3. How many different Old Testament quotations can you count in this passage?
4. How are God's angels supposed to respond to Jesus?
5. Where do you see a clear claim to the divinity of Jesus?
6. What does the writer say the angels were created for?

Apply it

7. There are several Old Testament passages quoted in these verses. What does this show us about the importance of spending time in both the Old and New Testaments?

One of the main reasons the book of Hebrews was written was to keep ancient Jewish believers from going back to Judaism. The author is trying to show them that Jesus is superior to their former way of worship. One of the ways he does this is by connecting angels to the Old Testament Law. **Read Acts 7:53, Galatians 3:19 and Hebrews 2:2.** These passages show us that angels were somehow involved in getting the Old Testament Law from God to Moses. We're not exactly sure how God did this. But the writer of Hebrews is trying to help people understand that they shouldn't go back to their old ways. They should keep following Jesus!²

8. Think about your life before you started following Jesus. How is your life different today? Are there things you're tempted to go back to?

9. How does Hebrews 1:5-14 help you continue confidently following Jesus, instead of going back to your former life?

The author of Hebrews designed this section to tell us four things about Jesus. He is royal, the creator, eternal & unchanging, and enthroned in heaven. Each of these facts about Christ were written to remind ancient Christians that Jesus is unique and superior to angels (and the Old Testament ways of worship).³ They're good reminders for us too!

Royalty (verses 5-9)

The Greek word that gets translated as "begotten" in verse 5 is a tricky one. It can describe physical birth (and it is used that way several times in Hebrews 11). This can be confusing in verse 5 because it can make it seem like Jesus did not become the Son of God until He was born. But that's not what this verse is saying.

Read Psalm 2:7. Psalm 2 is describing the coronation of King David, but more importantly it's an allusion to King Jesus. The writer of Hebrews quotes this Psalm to show us that Jesus is the King that was promised throughout the Old Testament. He is royalty.

² Thomas Schreiner, *Commentary on Hebrews* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2015), 59-60.

³ William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8* vol. 47A, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1991), 22.

10. As King, Jesus deserves our total allegiance. Is there anything in your life competing with Him for your affection?

In verse 6, the writer of Hebrews quotes Psalm 97:7 to show us that Jesus is superior to angels because they are called to worship Him. We don't worship human kings or queens, but Jesus deserves it.

11. As we have been disconnected from in-person worship during the pandemic, have you found it difficult to worship Jesus with the same passion as you do when gathered together with other believers? Why or why not?

In verse 8, the author of Hebrews quotes Psalm 45:6-7 to reference King Jesus as having a "scepter of uprightness." Many human rulers use their power for their own corrupt purposes. However, King Jesus always uses his power and authority for the good of His people.

12. Explain how it makes it easier to follow Jesus, even when you don't necessarily like His commands, when you know that He is always righteous in everything He does.

Creator (verse 10)

When we studied Hebrews 1:1-4 last week, we learned that the world was created through Jesus. In verse 10, the author reinforces this by telling us that He “laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning and the heavens are the work of your hands.”

13. What are some things about the way nature works that fascinate you? How can thinking about the way the universe works make us worship Jesus?

Eternal and Unchanging (verses 11-12)

Humans are constantly changing. We grow from newborns to adults. We learn to walk, begin to run, and then we start to slow down. The thin hair of a baby gets thicker, only to get thin again (and sometimes it disappears altogether). Our soft, smooth skin slowly becomes crow’s feet. We constantly change.

But Jesus remains the same. In Hebrews 13:8 we learn that He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. In Hebrews 1:11-12, we see that we will someday live on a new earth, but Jesus needs no renewal. His character, purposes, justice, and power are always the same.

14. How does the fact that Jesus never changes impact the way you read the Bible?

Unlike Jesus, we have a beginning. But our lives will never truly end. When we die, our souls are immediately in God's presence. Our future involves having a restored body and living with God in heaven forever. We will spend eternity with the God whose "years will have no end" (1:12).

15. Describe what goes through your mind when you think about being in heaven with God forever and ever? Why might this be a difficult thing to imagine?

Enthroned in Heaven (verse 13)

The book of Revelation gives us a beautiful, if mysterious, picture of our future. One thing it describes is God the Father sitting on a throne in heaven being worshiped by heavenly creatures and Jesus is on a throne next to the Father (Rev. 3:21). Someday we'll worship God there, too.

The fact that Jesus is enthroned in heaven is vital to helping us believe that He is truly God. There are many people who believe Jesus was a good teacher, but not God. Others believe He is one of many gods. But Christians worship one God in Three Persons, Father, Son, and Spirit.

16. Describe some ways Jesus being God is important to the Christian life?

When someone dies, people often try to comfort one another by saying the person who passed away is now “an angel looking down on you.” We need to be sensitive to the well-meaning person who says or thinks this, but the reality is far better. Humans and angels are distinct beings. In fact, humans are created in a way that is totally different from anything else that has ever been created. They are God’s image bearers.

Hebrews 1:14 tells us that angels were created to serve God’s people. We can’t see them, feel them, or hear them. We don’t know when they’re around or exactly what they’re doing from day to day. But we know they are “ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation.” (Hint: that’s you and me!) Angels were created to help people. They even helped Jesus after He had been in the wilderness being tempted by Satan for forty days (Mark 1:12).

17. Describe the comfort it brings to know God cares enough about you to provide angelic beings to serve you?

18. What are some of the challenges that come from the fact that we can’t see the spirit world where angels are at work?