

## Sermon-February 17<sup>th</sup> 2019

Grace Street Fellowship, Dr. Jim Burgin, pastor

SERIES: A Faith Worth Holding  
# 2 "Touched by an Angel"

Scriptures – Hebrews 1: 4-14

### OPENING

An Angel at Mission Arlington.

### A FAITH WORTH HOLDING

1. Our nation is losing its spiritual core, and Christianity has fallen out of favor. People have lost faith, and tend toward blaming faithful people.
2. Parts of God's Church are adrift, i.e., off-course. (4 reasons)
  - a. James McDonald, pastor of one of the nation's largest Mega Churches was fired this week;
  - b. The Vatican defrocked Cardinal Theodore McCarrick this week, the first cardinal to be disciplined in this way.
  - c. Christianity Today reported this week "half of Millennial Christians say it's wrong to evangelize." Millennials are overtaking baby-boomers as their generation matures. 47 percent of these committed Christian Millennials believe that evangelism is wrong. One Millennial tweeted that this is the result of the "cultural crisis of secularism bombarding us at every turn." Another suggested the reason is that millennials are being "catechized by their colleges and not their churches."
  - d. In our own city, a group of spiritual leaders tried to convince followers of Christ that they should follow church tradition and spiritual leadership instead of the Bible, because – as they put it – "The church created the Bible." The Bible did not create the church.
3. Spiritual Anemia of Christ-followers in our day. They don't know the Bible. When they do know it, they often don't follow it, especially if it conflicts with their life philosophy.
4. The comparison is almost surreal. The day we are in is comparable to the day the Hebrews were in when this book was written.
  - a. They were persecuted from home – the Jews who criticized them for becoming Christians;
  - b. They were persecuted by the Romans – for being Christians;
  - c. The temptation they felt was to turn from Christ and to return from Judaism.
5. The author of Hebrews speaks to this temptation, reminding them that Jesus is greater than the prophets, greater than Abraham and Moses, greater than the sacrificial system, and as we will see today, he is greater than the angels.

**TRANSITION** – People are interested in angels today too. When you mention angels, or ask about them as I did this week, people have 1 of 2 responses. They make a joke, or they tell you of their experiences with an angel.

Many people have stories of life threatening accidents where the only thing which makes sense is that an angel provided an intervention or rescue.

### WHAT ARE ANGELS LIKE?

1. Angels are created beings. Colossians 1:16 says, “For by him were all things create, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible.
2. Angels are spiritual creatures without a physical body Our text for today calls them ministering spirits. Martin Luther said that they are spiritual creatures without a body created by God for the service of Christendom and the church.
3. How many Angels are there?
  - a. Deut. 33:2 says Ten thousand angels came down on Mt. Sinai to confirm the holy presence of God as He gave the Law to Moses.
  - b. Revelation 5:11 – John sees 10 thousand times 10 thousand angels. (100 million).
  - c. Hebrews 12:22 speaks of a myriad company of angels.
4. They can appear as men or as angels; – Genesis 18 & 19 – angels appear to Abraham as men, and in Sodom. In Luke 1 & 2, Gabriel appears as an angel. Hebrews 13:2 says, “Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.
5. Angels Have Emotions – they worship God – Isaiah 6:3 – Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God almighty. Luke 15:10 says, “There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

### ANGELIC ORGANIZATION

1. Archangel Definition – the head of all angels. Arch – means chief, or greatest. He is the Prime Minister of Angels.
2. The Original Arch Angel –
  - a. Lucifer – the angel of light, the chief angel. But Lucifer rebelled against God, and 1/3 of the angels followed him.
  - b. Michael led God’s war against Lucifer. Revelation 12: 7-10: “*war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. “The great dragon was hurled down- that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.”*
  - c. A Changed Name – Now called the Dragon, the Devil, and Satan – accuses them day and night before God.
  - d. Eventually thrown into the lake of fire with all of his followers for a thousand years – an angel seizes him, binds him, and throws him into the pit – for a thousand years, and then he is let out, and then thrown in again where he will be tormented day and night.
3. The Current Archangel –
  - a. Michael was charged with throwing Lucifer out of heaven (Rev. 12: 7-10).

- b. Michael – In the Old Testament (especially from the book of Daniel), Michael is called Israel’s Prince. He is the protector of Israel.
  - c. Jude cautions us not to make lightly of the devil, because in a dispute between Satan and Michael over Moses, Michael would not rebuke the evil one, but only said, “The Lord rebukes you.”
  - d. Michael will shout as he accompanies Jesus at his second coming. Not only does he proclaim the matchless and exciting news that Jesus Christ returns, but he speaks the word of life to all who are dead in Christ and who await their resurrection. (1 Thessalonians 4:16).
  - e. At the battle of Armageddon, the Lord is seated on a white horse at heaven’s door which is wide open (Rev. 19:11). His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven follow him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Verse 17 – “And I saw an angel standing in the sun who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair. This must be Michael.
4. Other Ranks of Angels – cherubim, seraphim.

### ANGELS CARE FOR THE PHYSICAL & EMOTIONAL NEEDS OF GOD’S CHILDREN

1. The care for the physical and emotional needs of God’s Children
  - a. Elijah’s Discouragement - 1 Kings 19 tells us that the prophet Elijah was overwhelmed by the challenges he faced, and asked God to let him die, so that he can escape his circumstances. Elijah fell asleep under a tree, and an angel of the Lord wakes him up to comfort and encourage him. Get up and eat, the angels says, and Elijah sees that God has provided the food and water he needs to recharge.
  - b. Daniel’s Persecution- Daniel was thrown into a den of hungry lions for not praying to God. The next morning when they opened up the pit and discovered Daniel still alive, he reorted “My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouth of the lions (Daniel 6:22).
  - c. Peter’s Release – Acts 12:3-19 says that Peter was put into prison by King Herod. Under full guard, an angel appeared and Peter walked out of the prison doors.
  - d. Hannah’s pregnancy – Judges 13:3 – You are going to become pregnant.
  - e. Hagar’s Comfort: Genesis 16:7-12 - An angel ministers to Hagar, after Sarai horribly mistreats her.
2. Ken and Suzie Ware were ministers to Lausanne, Switzerland. On a particular Saturday morning, they had no money, and no way to have groceries for themselves and their infant child. Suzie says all she knew to do was to pray. She prayed specifically. Lord, we need five pounds of potatoes, two pounds of flour, pears, carrots, and veal cutlets. Please send them, Amen. That was her prayer. A few hours later, she says that they heard a knock at the door. She opened the door, there was a strange man there in his 30s; there was a radiant glow to his countenance, and he had a bag with him. He said, “I have what you ordered. Suzie said, “What are you talking about? I didn’t order anything. He said, “I brought you what you ordered.” She ushered him in; he emptied the basket, and it was exactly what he had prayed for. She and her husband were so astounded that they went to the apartment window to watch him leave, and

they never saw him exit the apartment building. They opened their doorway and looked out the only hallway, and he wasn't there as well. They experienced the provision of God sent through an angel.

### **GOD USES ANGELS TO GUIDE HIS CHILDREN**

1. Matthew 1:20-21 – an angel revealed to Joseph that he was to take Mary as his wife;
2. It was an angel who revealed to the women that they needed to come to the empty tomb where Jesus had been;
3. It was an angel who guided Phillip to Gaza in Act 8:26;
4. Acts 27, Paul was on a ship headed to Rome; they got involved in a storm, and the people were afraid they were going to die, and it was an angel revealed to Paul that they wouldn't die. It isn't the norm, but sometimes angels are used to reveal God's will to us.
5. 2 Corinthians 11:14 – even Satan can appear as an angel of light. Be careful. Promptings must be measured against the word of God.

### **DO CHRISTIANS HAVE GUARDIAN ANGELS**

1. Is there one specific angel that God assigns to each of us to watch out for us? Thomas Aquinas, a 13<sup>th</sup> century theologian, and the Father of Catholic theology, studied angels, and he believed that there was. Let's look at the scriptures together, and I want you to come to your own conclusion.
2. Matthew 18:10 – “See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my father in heaven.” Make sure you don't make anyone stumble, especially a child or a new Christian. We do have angels watching over us, but does it say that there is one angel watching over each child?
3. Acts 12:15 – Peter imprisoned by Herod. Peter released by an angel on a prayer meeting night at church, because they were all praying for his release. Peter knocks at the door, and the servant girl Rhoda opens it, but can't get anyone to believe he is there. Finally, someone says it is just His angel. Why would he look like Peter – probably just saying someone who looked like him.
4. Psalm 91:11-13 – God will give his angels charge concerning you to guard you in all your ways. They will bear you up in your hand, etc. This was what Satan quoted to Jesus. This is a promise God has given to all of us – angels guard our steps in all of our ways. Point is that God has a plan that he is working out, and God uses angels to help accomplish his plan.
5. John Calvin says “Whether or not there is one specific angel assigned to us, really isn't that important.” If anyone doesn't think it enough to think that all of the angels are watching, then what is the gain to know that one angel guards you. A whole legion guards us. See 1 Corinthians 4. Angels are spectators.

### **ANGELS BRING GOD'S JUDGEMENT**

1. The death angel passed over the Hebrews who had placed blood on the doorposts in Exodus, but killed the firstborn of the Egyptians;
2. Just before fire and brimstone fell on Sodom because of its sins, the angels said “For we will destroy this place – the Lord has sent us to destroy it (Gen. 19:13).

3. At the end of time, God will use his angels to cast the devil into eternal punishment. At the Great white throne judgement of Revelation 20, after all have said “Jesus is Lord,” those whose names are not written in the Lamb’s book of Life will be thrown into their eternal punishment by an angel. How do you get your name in the Lamb’s book of Life? By accepting Christ as your Savior. The last thing people being sent to hell will see is the face of an angel.
4. Angels also are involved in delivering God’s people to heaven.

### JESUS IS GREATER THAN THE ANGELS

1. Jesus is God’s Son. Angels are created beings (1:5)
2. The Angels Worship God (1:6)
3. Compared to Jesus, angels are small and inconsequential, but Jesus is the Just King of the Universe; (Verse 8-9)
4. We don’t worship angels.
5. Angels are sent to serve those who inherit salvation.

### CONCLUSION

Dr. S.W. Mitchell, a celebrated Philadelphia neurologist, had gone to bed after an exceptionally tiring day. Suddenly he was awakened by someone knocking on his door. Opening it he found a little girl poorly dressed and deeply upset. She told him her mother was very sick and asked him if he would please come with her. It was a bitterly cold, snowy night, but though he was bone tired, Dr. Mitchell dressed and followed the girl. . . .

As Billy Graham reports the story, the doctor found the mother desperately ill with pneumonia. After arranging for medical care, he complimented the sick woman on the intelligence and persistence of her little daughter. The woman looked at him strangely and said, “My daughter died a month ago.” She added, “Her shoes and coat are in the clothes closet there.” Dr. Mitchell, amazed and perplexed, went to the closet and opened the door. There hung the very coat worn by the little girl who had brought him to tend her mother. It was warm and dry and could not possibly have been out in the wintry night. . . .

### INVITATION

1. Are you saved? When God freed the enslaved Hebrews from Egypt, he used an angel. This angel was called the death angel, and it killed the first born of every Egyptian. Hebrew homes who had the blood of the lamb over the doorposts of their homes were passed by, thus the name “Passover.” Have you accepted the gift of God’s Son by asking him to save you? Will you be saved today?
2. Are you discouraged? Look at the last part of Hebrews 11. God saved so many by their faith, but there were many who were not saved, despite being just as faithful. Scripture says that God had a better plan. Listen to this passage in Hebrews 11:

32 And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, 33 who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. 35 Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection. 36 Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. 37 They were put to death by stoning;[e] they were

sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated— 38 the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and in holes in the ground.

39 These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, 40 since **God had planned something better for us** so that only together with us would they be made perfect.

3. Will you return home? Look how much God love you through the provision of His angels. When you are away from home, you are beaten up and knocked around.
4. Are you sharing God's Love? – the angels make special pronouncements for God, but He has not given them the privilege of proclaiming the gospel message. Why? Perhaps spirit-beings who have never experienced the effects of separation from fellowship with God because of sin would be unable to preach with understanding.

Holy, Holy is what the angels sing,  
And I expect to help them make the courts of heaven ring;  
And when I sing redemption's story, they will fold their wings;  
For angels never felt the joy that our salvation brings.