

- Where Do We Learn the Truth? (Heb 1:5-14, Mark 13:32, John 3:13, Psalm 110:1)

#1. Ministering Spirits (Heb 1:13-14, 1Pet 1:3-5, Jude 6, Dan 6:22, Luke 16:22, Psalm 91:11-12)

- Heirs of Salvation? (Heb 1:14, Rom 8:17, Acts 14:22, Eph 3:3-11)

#2. His Ministers a Flame of Fire (Heb 1:7, Psalm 104:4, 58:3, Eph 2:3, Matt 13:41-42)

- No Wings? (Matt 4:11, 2King 6:15-17, Rev 22:18)

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- Angels as Ministering Spirits? (Heb 1:14, Psalm 91:12, Phil 2:13, 1Pet 4:13-14, Rom 11:33)

Please open your Bibles to the Epistle to the Hebrews 1:5 (2X). The title of this sermon is, "**Ministering Spirits**" (2X). Why did I pick this topic? This is a sermon about angels, because today there is a great deal of superstition about angels. In this chapter of Hebrews we learn a great deal about angels. Where do all the ideas and misconceptions about angels come from? They come out of the churches, because the concept of angels is not an idea that was spawned in the human mind. The existence of angelic beings can only be discovered from the Bible. But churches have made fanciful pictures of beings, which they then called angels, and one error leads to another. Angels are invisible spirits. You cannot make pictures of angels. Today most people in these United States have not the foggiest notion what angels are for they do not read the Bible. No one knows any more what to believe.

- **Where Do We Learn the Truth?** (Heb 1:5-14, Mark 13:32, John 3:13, Psalm 110:1)

From the Bible! Only from the Bible! If you want to learn about angels, quit watching TV programs about angels and start to read the Bible. If it is not in the Bible, leave it alone, and do not believe fanciful stories that are not supported by the Bible. In this sermon we are not going to talk about, "The Angel of the Lord" or about "Cherubim", or about "Seraphim", since these are not angels. I will speak about these in future sermons. Historically this epistle was addressed to the Hebrews. But we should not imagine that this epistle is only for Jewish Christians. Just like the Epistle to the Romans is not just for the Romans, but for us, and the Epistle to the Ephesians is not just for the church at Ephesus, but for us, so this Epistle to the Hebrews is not only addressed to the Hebrew Christians, but it is just as well addressed to us. God used the occasion to set some errors straight among the Jewish Christians. But God taught here some principles that are of lasting value also to us. Heb 1:5-14,

Heb 1:5-14 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he-shall be to me a Son? And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. **But** unto the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness *is* the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, *even* thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: **They** shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail. **But** to which of the angels said he at any time, "Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?" **Are** they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

There are many subject matters touched on in this chapter. Today we will have time only for one: "Angels". You can see that this first chapter of Hebrews emphasizes that the Lord Jesus Christ is superior to the angels. We already knew that. This church believes what the Bible says, and the Bible says that the Lord Jesus Christ is God. Therefore He must be infinitely superior to the angels, no question about it. But there seems to be an apparent contradiction in verse 4. Verse 4 says that Christ was made. Was He made? Yes! The body of the Son of Mary, the carpenter of Nazareth, He was made. He had a beginning, about 2000 years ago. But He was special. When we speak of the

Incarnation we speak of the Person who was made by uniting God the Son, the second Person of the Triune Godhead, with the fruit of the womb from the Virgin Mary. This Person, the Lord Jesus Christ, consists of a Divine nature, from God the Son, and a human nature, with a human soul, from the womb of the Virgin Mary. In His Divine nature we must recognize that He always was and must ever remain as God the Son, the second Person of the Triune Godhead, who with the Father created all there is. But when God says in Mark 13:32, "But of that day and *that* hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father," God speaks of Christ in His human nature, for in His human nature He did indeed not know the day or the hour of His second coming. This must have been revealed to Him at the time of His atonement, for then He had to atone for the sins of the saints down to the very last day. But since God the Son cannot die on a cross, and cannot atone for our sins, Christ in His human nature atoned for our sins and died on the cross. Since man has sinned, man has to atone for those sins. But when we speak of Christ as the eternal Lord God, with no beginning nor ending we speak of Christ in His Divine nature, as God the Son, who walked on earth but was at the same time in heaven (John 3:13).

Verse 4 says that Christ was "made so much better than the angels", but in chapter 2:7 God says that Christ was "made a little lower than the angels". How can we understand this? In chapter 1:4 the context speaks of Christ after His resurrection and ascension into Heaven. There He sits at the right hand of the Father, and there He is in body and soul "so much better than the angels". But in chapter 2:7 Christ is spoken of as the Son of Man who came to visit us about 2000 years ago. At that time Christ came to earth as the "Suffering Servant". He came as a man, and so He was "made a little lower than the angels". Now let us move on to verse 13. God says in Heb 1:13, "But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?"

This is a literal quotation from Psalms 110:1, a Psalm of David, which the Lord Jesus quoted when He disputed with the Pharisees. This verse has an ominous ring to it. It speaks about the enemies of Christ being subdued under Christ's feet, particularly on the last day when they shall be cast into the lake of fire. And to which of the angels did God say this? To none of them. God said this only to the Lord Jesus Christ. But of the angels God says in verse 14. "Are they not all **ministering spirits**, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

#1. Ministering Spirits (Heb 1:13-14, 1Pet 1:3-5, Jude 6, Dan 6:22, Luke 16:22, Psalms 91:11-12)

Is that not amazing? The angels who are very superior to mankind, the sinless angels, have been appointed to minister to sinful worms of the earth. This should give us a great sense of wonder, and a great sense of security. The mighty angels, who excel in strength, are serving us who are far beneath them. And no wonder, fallen angels, who are powerful in deception, are attacking us; but God comes to our aid, and God assigned to us more powerful beings who are able to defend us against these invisible enemies. There are 3 things to consider in this activity of the angels who minister to us: **#1**, To whom do the angels minister? **#2**, Why do they minister to us? **#3**, What form does their ministry take? **First**, To whom do the angels minister? They minister to "those who shall be heirs of salvation". The word "heirs" speaks of an inheritance, and an inheritance speaks of someone who has died. And indeed, there is an estate, called "eternal life", unto which God has predestined His people, His elect. God speaks about this inheritance, for example, in 1Peter 1:3-5, where we read,

1Pe 1:3-5 **Blessed** *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, **To** an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, (Who are they?) **Who** are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.

God gave the angels the honor of serving Him by caring for those who are God's elect. God could have done it without the help of angels. There is nothing too hard for God. But God delighted to give the angels this charge, and they took on this honorable assignment with joy. Let me give an example from history. In the days that this earth was ruled by kings and queens, when a prince or princess was born, many trusted servants and nobles surrounded that little infant with their protection and care and they considered it a privilege that they could do this. These ladies and lords of the court were much stronger and far more intelligent than this little infant. But they ministered to this infant because this infant could be heir to the throne. This infant is of royal stock. In the same manner, the heirs of salvation are now in the stage of their infancy. The angels far exceed us in wisdom and in strength, and yet they are our servants because we are born high above them in birth and in rank. We are sons of God, and we are joint heirs with Christ, and we are kings and priests unto God. What an honorable provision God has made for us!

Secondly, Why do they minister to us? Why did God give them this task? God assigned them this task as a test of their faithfulness to God. We can clearly see this in the fallen angels. "They kept not their first estate (lit. their beginning), but left their own habitation" (Jude 6), which means that they left their first assignment, because they despised the goodness of God and they deserted their first vocation. Like military deserters, they left the station in which they had been placed. They were assigned to serve God by ministering to mankind. Instead, they rebelled and did their best to destroy mankind. The elect angels did not fall into this sin, but remained faithful to God and to His assignment to minister to man. They remained faithful not because the angels are filled with sympathy for man, but because the elect angels want to do those things that are pleasing in God's sight. The angels are not just distant spectators of the outworking of God's wondrous plan of salvation, but they have been given an active part in it. And so, the angels are learning in a practical way how much God cares for us. Why do they minister to us? They do it because God gave them this task and they love to obey God.

Thirdly, What form does their ministry take? How do the angels minister to us? They are protecting us and delivering us from temporary dangers in this world. If it is not our time to go, then the angels will carry out God's plan to keep us alive and well. Let me give you three examples: When Daniel was put into the lion's den, Daniel was protected from the lions by an angel. King Darius could not sleep all night. Early in the morning, he called to Daniel, and Daniel said in Dan 6:22, "My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me: and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt." In other words: "King Darius, I have done no evil to you or to your kingdom. The lions were hungry, but my God sent His angel to protect me from the lion's mouths". Then the king commanded that Daniel's accusers be cast into the lion's den, and before they hit the ground, the lions had already torn them to pieces. For the second example, we turn to a parable that the Lord Jesus gave about the rich man and the beggar Lazarus. The beggar was a saved man, but

the rich man remained unsaved. We read in [Luke 16:22](#), "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried". Here we see that the angels are around the deathbed of a saved person, waiting for God's command to carry the soul of this saint up from the earth, through Satan's territory, into the Father's house. There they are, ready to perform their last service. Since we know this, because we have read the Bible, why should we have any fear of death? For the third example, we want to look at the plural number of angels in [Psalm 91:11-12](#). There we read, "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in *their* hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone". This is what angels do, every day, because the verse says, "to keep thee in ALL thy ways". Here as well as in [Luke 16:22](#) we see there is a plural number of angels caring for a single person who is a child of God. Therefore the idea that there is a single guardian angel assigned to each Christian is an invention out of somebody's mind, and it is against the Word of God. Now let us look at [Heb 1:14](#) again. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" Who are these heirs of salvation?

- **Heirs of Salvation?** ([Heb 1:14](#), [Rom 8:17](#), [Acts 14:22](#), [Eph 3:3-11](#))

Let me try to explain what it means to be heirs of salvation. Look at the drawing that I have made on the board. You see there 7 steps. The lowest step is indicating the status of plants. Plants are almost the lowest form of life. They are living beings, but they cannot move around and they cannot make sounds. The next step up are bugs, such as insects and caterpillars and spiders. They can move around but they do not make sounds with their mouths. Bugs are a little higher form of life than plants. The next step up are warm-blooded animals, such as dogs and dolphins and donkeys and dromedaries. They can move around, and they can make sounds with their mouth, but they cannot talk. And so, the next step up is mankind. Man is a higher form of life than warm-blooded animals. Man can talk, and man can meditate about love, and joy, and peace, and longsuffering, and gentleness, and goodness, and faith, and meekness, and self-control. Animals cannot do that. But God created a form of life that is even a step higher than man, and that form of life are the angels. Yes, angels do exist. The Bible says that at Jesus' birth the shepherds saw a multitude of angels praising God. Angels not only talk and meditate about things said in the Bible, but the good angels do not sin at all. Now, that is something that cannot be said of any man. Then the next step up is immeasurably higher and is reserved for those who will be "sons of God". Angels are never called "sons of God" in the Bible. But those of mankind who have been chosen by God to be His elect people, the bride of Christ, we will be up there, almost where God is. That is how great a blessing salvation is. Of course, we will be up there, almost where God is, because we will be "joint-heirs with Christ". We can read that in [Rom 8:17](#). Let me read that to you, "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ: if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together". We cannot imagine how wonderful it will be. But we can see from this meager sketch that it will be super glorious. But did you hear what I just read? [Rom 8:17](#) says, "if so be that we suffer with *him*". What was that? Is our salvation conditional? Is our suffering the work that we have to do in order to earn so great salvation? You can immediately sense that this is not right, because we are entirely saved by grace; it is a free gift; "not of works, lest any man should boast". But it is God's plan that every one of His children should suffer for Christ's

sake. For example, we read in Acts 14:22, "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God". Why is it that we must suffer? It is because "the servant is not greater than his Lord". Christ suffered because He brought the true Gospel. We will suffer, because when we bring the true Gospel we shall be persecuted; and that is a certainty. And when we have been truly saved we will share this beautiful Gospel with all who need it. That is why Rom 8:17 says, "if so be that we suffer with *him*". Please turn now about 45 pages to your left to the Epistle to the Ephesians, Eph 3:8 (2X). Did you know, the Bible says that God uses the church as a dramatic instrument to teach the angels His unlimited wisdom, by means of His dealings with men? We read of it in 1 Peter chapter 1 that the angels eagerly desire to look into the amazing program of God with regard to the first and second coming of Christ. You see, angels are also in a learning process. They continue to grow in wisdom as time goes on. We read about that here in Eph 3:8-11,

Eph 3:8-11 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known ~~by~~ (through) the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

To say in other words: within the unsearchable riches of Christ is found the treasure of the manifold wisdom of God through His dealings with the church, so that this wisdom of God might be known now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places*, which refers to all the angels in heaven. This wisdom is "the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God". If we can all see this treasure of the manifold wisdom of God, we shall experience the fellowship of the mystery. This fellowship of the mystery was the intent of the eternal purpose of God, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord, but this purpose will not be known until we have reached the glory of Last Day. The angels of God must have watched with amazement the wondrous program of God the Father, as it was executed by God the Son during His ministry here on earth. The angels came with Christ to earth to do Him service while here. They predicted His first coming, they ministered to Him after His fasting for 40 days after His temptation, they ministered to Him in His agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, and they declared His resurrection and His ascension. They are now ministering spirits to the people of God and they will be the ministers of judgment on the Last Day. Then it is there that they will be called The ministers of a flame of fire. Xjo:p>

#2. His Ministers a Flame of Fire (Heb 1:7, Psalm 104:4, 58:3, Eph 2:3, Matt 13:41-42)

Please turn again to Heb 1:7 (2X). We are going to focus on two verses in this chapter. First, we looked at verse 14. Now let us take a look at verse 7. Heb 1:7, and of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire". This is a literal quotation from Psalm 104:4. What does it mean that God "maketh His angels spirits"? They already are spirits. They do not be transformed again into spirits. We have to realize that the word "spirits" is the same as "winds". God is describing the qualities and activities of His angels. The angels are here compared to winds. They are invisible, they move with great speed, and they move with great power. We can only see the effect of the wind, but we cannot see the wind itself. Likewise, we can only see the effect of the working of

angels, but we cannot see the angels, because they are spirits, just like we cannot see the wind. But on the Last Day God shall make His angels the ministers of a flame of fire. Fire has to do with Hell. God's wrath rests upon every sin committed by man. God's righteousness demands that every sin be accounted for and every sin must be paid. If you hit a policeman, you go to jail. If you hit the president of the United States, you may go to jail for 5 years. But If you hit God in the face you go to jail for an eternity. Each sin is a transgression of the law of God, and therefore each sin is a slap in the face of God, and therefore each sin bears the penalty of an eternity in Hell. God must punish every sin. Now look at the human race. We all are sinners from birth. The Bible says in Psalm 58:3, "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies". Who are these wicked babies? They are each one of the human race. We all came into the world as those wicked babies, because God says in Eph 2:3 that we all were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. Therefore, the entire human race is in trouble with God. Every one of the human race is on a slippery slide into Hell, and we are not able to help ourselves, because everything we do is tainted with sin. But God provided a way of escape. God sent the Lord Jesus Christ to this earth to pay for the guilt of the sins of a select group of people whom God chose from before the foundation of the world. Obviously Christ did not pay for the sins of everyone in the world, because not everyone in the world is saved. Take for instance the people who died in the flood of Noah's days, and take for instance the people who died when God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah and Admah and Zeboim. God declared all of them unrighteous and that is why they all were destroyed. But God sent the Lord Jesus Christ to this earth, and God imputed on Him the sins of all His elect, and Christ paid for the sins of all His elect the equivalent of an eternity in Hell. God allowed this substitution. This was a surprise to Satan, and as a result Satan was dealt a solid defeat there at the cross of Golgotha. Christ was successful in paying for the sins of all His people, but all other sins still have to be paid on the last day. On the last day shall Christ appear for the second time: He shall rapture every one of His saints to be with Him forever, and He shall command that all the unsaved must be cast into Hell. And who shall be the executioners of His sentence? Right! The angels shall be the ministers of God's wrath, casting into the fires of Hell "all them that know not God and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ". The Lord Jesus told us another parable about the Wheat and the Tares. And when He came to the explanation of this parable He said in Matt 13:41 "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity: And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." Here again, the angels are the executioners of the wrath of God on the last day. Now we can answer a different question. Do angels have wings?

- **No Wings?** (Matt 4:11, 2King 6:15-17, Rev 22:18)

Please turn in your Bibles to the Prophecy of Second Kings, 2King 6:15 (2X). You find 2Kings after 1Kings. What are wings for? Birds can fly through the air because birds have wings. The air upholds them in their flight. But birds cannot fly through outer space since there is no air in outer space. So, why do angels need wings, since most of their flight is probably through outer space? They do not need wings. Wings on the angels are an invention of man. You might say, "The Cherubim on top of the Ark of the Covenant had wings; they were designed by God, and their design was given in an instruction to Moses". But the Cherubim are not angels. We can see that clearly when

we read Ezekiel chapter 1 carefully. Nowhere in Scripture do we see angels with wings. For example, after the Lord Jesus was tempted three times by the Devil we read in Matt 4:11, "Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him". Do we read of any wings here? NO! Angels are spirits, and spirits do not need wings to transport them from here to there. Here in 2Kings 6:15 the king of Syria wanted to capture the prophet Elisha, and so he sent a battalion of soldiers to the prophet's hometown, Dothan. 2King 6:15-17,

2Ki 6:15 And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him (to Elisha), Alas, my master! How shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for they that *be* with us *are* more than they that *be* with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD. I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man: and he saw: and, behold, the mountain *was* full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

Here was an entire army of angels protecting the prophet Elisha. How did these angels make themselves visible? They did not! All the servant of Elisha could see were thousands of horses of fire and chariots of fire. The angels remained invisible. God made it known to us so that we will face the world boldly. When we witness of what God has done for us, or when we hand out a tract, remember that an army of God's servants is surrounding us, ready to pounce on anyone who wants to do us harm. We should have no fear in matters like these. But remember also, they have no wings. Wings would slow them down tremendously, and we definitely do not want angels protecting us who are as slow as birds. As an example of how confused people are about angels, let us consider what strange things we get in the mail. Some of you might have received this. It is a bookmark, where "the guardian angel sent from God" is called, "My guardian dear, to whom His love commits me here; ever this day be at my side, to light and guard, to rule and guide. Amen." Can you see how people are going to inhale this? It is a prayer to an angel. By now people are totally accustomed to pray to an angel. Things that the Bible only attributes to God are now also attributed to angels. This is utter abomination to God and this sin will be punished with Hellfire. The irony is that the angels will execute this judgment on the people who prayed to them.

What about "angel visitations"? Do angels appear to man these days? Absolutely NOT! In the past angels were messengers from God, bringing messages that were related in some way to proclaiming the Gospel. But when God dictated the last page of Revelation to the Apostle John, God closed the Book, the Bible, with the statement in Rev 22:18, "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book". Therefore no man should claim that he has received another message from God, and God will abide by His rules. Anyone who claims to have an additional message from God, and anyone who believes that God has given additional messages after Rev 22:18, is subject to the plagues that are written in this Book. What are those plagues? "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever" (Rev 14:11). It is Hell forever more. God gave us this warning. We do well to heed this warning and not go deliberately against it. Be careful when you hear someone say that he has had an angel visitation. God has ceased from bringing messages through dreams, and visions, and angel visitations and tongues. Anyone who

follows these false prophets will also share their condemnation. Please turn at this present time to the Prophecy of Isaiah 63:7 (2X). We read here about the angel of His presence.³

#3. The Angel of His Presence (Isa 63:7-9. Gal 6:16)

You find Isaiah after Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon. In Isa 63 God shows Himself as a God of love, but only for the Remnant. In the first part of this chapter Christ speaks about His crucifixion, and how He had to redeem His people all alone; there was none to help Him in this work of redemption, because there was not one who could qualify as a Lamb of God. Then we read in Isa 63:7; will mention the lovingkindnesses of the LORD, *and* the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of "Israel" which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses.³ What are these lovingkindnesses of the LORD, *and* the praises of the LORD, and the great goodness the Lord has bestowed on them, and what are these mercies of the Lord? Certainly, these could not refer to any material blessings God has bestowed on national Israel. Material goods are no blessings; instead they can be a curse. Certainly these mercies of the Lord must refer to salvation. These are the only blessings that can truly be called blessings, because these are the only blessings that are permanent. But now we run into a problem. Never in the history of the nation of Israel do we read that the majority of them were saved individuals. After they came out of Egypt only a tiny, tiny fraction became saved, and so it was also throughout the years under the Judges, and the years under the Kings, and the years after their return from Babylon. There was always only a tiny, tiny fraction that was truly saved. What then has "Israel" to do with these wonderful words of Isa 63:7? You see, God used the historical nation of Israel only as a type or a figure of the true Israel that was to come. God mentioned in Gal 6:16 the "Israel of God", and God identified the Israel of God with "new creatures", referring to those who became "born again". And so we see that the saints of both Jews and Gentiles are called "Israel", because they are "the Israel of God". Now we read in Isa 63 verses 8-9,

Isa 63:8 **For** he said, Surely they *are* my people, children *that* will not lie: so he was their Saviour.

Isa 63:9 **In** all their affliction he was afflicted, and "the Angel of His Presence" saved them, in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.

Who is "the Angel of His Presence"? It is the Messenger of His Presence, because the word "angel" and the word "messenger" is the same word. Can an angel save? NO! Only Christ saves. Therefore "the Angel of His Presence" can only be the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ was speaking in verse 8. In all the afflictions of His people He was afflicted, meaning that He took upon Him the suffering that was coming to us, for our sins. In His love and in His pity Christ redeemed us, and He bare us, and carried us through all the days of old that we thought were so tough. His grace and His mercy sustained us, because we are His people, the sheep of His pasture. This is what we want to remember of "the Angel of His Presence".

- **Angels as Ministering Spirits?** (Heb 1:14, Psalm 91:12, Phil 2:13, 1Pet 4:13-14, Rom 11:33)

When we read in the Bible the fact that angels are ministering spirits to the elect of God, and we further seek to understand why this earth is a vale of tears, for the messengers of Satan are always surrounding us, we ask the Lord

for wisdom. For how can we believe that God has sent His angels to minister unto us if we always are facing some kind of trouble? What is the purpose of our suffering in the presence of the angels? God says in [Heb 1:14](#), [Heb 1:14](#) Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

And then we also recall that God says in [Psalm 91:11-12](#), 'For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in *their* hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.' We know from the narrative Gospels in Matthew and Luke that this passage applies to the Lord Jesus Christ, but does it also apply to us? Well, if we are among the elect, then we are in Christ, and then these promises also apply to us. But then, are the angels not doing their jobs, for we are still troubled every way in this life? Please turn again to the Epistle of 1Peter, [1Pet 4:13](#) (2X). Actually we have ourselves to blame, for most of our troubles are of our own making and we suffer the consequences thereof. And when the angels relieve us from some of these troubles, do we thank the angels, or do we thank God? Definitely we thank God, not the angels, for angels are only the instruments God uses to accomplish His purposes, and God works out His plan through the sins of mankind. Angels are not doing more, and not doing less, than what God commands them to do. And so, it is God which worketh in us, both to will and to do according to His good pleasure ([Phil 2:13](#)). And so, it is God's purpose that we suffer in this vale of tears, whether it is in the presence of the angels or not. We read in [1Pet 4:13-14](#),

[1Pe 4:13-14](#) **But** rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. **If** ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy *are ye*; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

Do we then understand from this passage in 1Pet 4 that our sufferings, which are a consequence of our sins, are upon us for the purpose of Christ's glory? Indeed that is what 1Pet 4 tells us. For the elect, our sins are not able to condemn us, for they have all been atoned for by the Lord Jesus; but God uses those sins and those sufferings to bring us chastening, which helps to bring us glory, for it is through chastening that we grow in the grace and the knowledge of the Lord; and God uses those sins and those sufferings to bring glory to Him, for God says in 1Pet 4 that when we are partakers of Christ's sufferings we bring glory to Him, 'For the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon us.' Now this is an amazing piece of the puzzle how God, in His wisdom, designed that our sufferings would be an essential part of His creation and of His plan of salvation. Gradually, as time goes on, we see more and more pieces of His creation and His salvation fall into place. How the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out! ([Rom 11:33](#)). And so, what have angels to do in all of this? What is the task that God has charged unto the angels? According to [Psalm 91:11-12](#) the angels are protecting us from those harms that are not helpful in our growing in grace, and they leave in place those sufferings that are to our benefit one way or another, and that are to the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. His glory is God's goal above all others. Therefore, on the last day when we shall see Christ coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, we may be glad also with exceeding joy. So, while we are here and suffer, do not blame the angels, but blame yourselves, and trust that God will bring it all to a blessed end.

AMEN.

Let us turn to the Lord in prayer.