

The Envoys Of Heaven

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[0 : 0 0] Well, we're going to be coming back to Luke and to lots of other passages of the Bible, but to begin with this evening, I want us to read from Isaiah chapter 6 and verses 1 to 7. Isaiah 6, 1 to 7, you can see the words there on the screen, and I'll read this remarkable passage as we begin.

In the year that King Uzziah died, I, that's Isaiah, saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and the tain of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim, each had six wings, with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory. And the foundations of the, I said, Woe is me, the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said, Woe is me, for I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said, Behold, this has touched your lips, your guilt is taken away, your sin atoned for.

This evening, we're continuing our short series on the topic of angels. And our title is Christ's Mighty Angels, which comes from 2 Thessalonians chapter 1, verse 7. And this is a fascinating, mysterious, and really quite neglected subject. Because although the Bible mentions angels a lot, it's not something that we think or talk about very much at all. So we're doing a short series over three Sunday evenings to try and learn a little bit more about this fascinating topic of angels.

And we're going to say three things that angels are. We're saying that they're the army of heaven. And we looked at that a couple of weeks ago. Lots of the language used to describe angels in the Bible is military language. And so it's very important to think of that, not to think of angels as sort of soft and floaty and playing harps, but actually to think of an army, an army that protects God's people, an army through which God's judgment is accomplished, and an army that shows us the astonishing power and strength of God. We're also thinking about how angels are the envoys of heaven.

That's what we're thinking about tonight. And then in a couple of weeks' time, we'll think about how the angels are the serving spirits of heaven. And as we look at each of these, we're going to be learning a little bit more about ultimate reality, because that's what the subject of angels is getting us to think about. It's stretching us to the boundaries of what we know about reality.

[3 : 0 2] And we're also looking to learn more about angels themselves. But most importantly of all, we want to be learning more about Jesus. In this study, each sermon, at the start of each sermon, I'm going to just highlight seven key statements that summarize some of the key biblical truths related to angels. These are what we could maybe call our dogmas, our statements of truth regarding angels. One, creation includes a spiritual realm. And so in Genesis 1, it says, in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. And so there is both a physical and a spiritual dimension to creation. That creation is accomplished through God the Son, who created all things visible and invisible. All things visible and invisible were created by him, Colossians 1.16. That spiritual realm that exists alongside the physical realm includes incorporeal creatures called angels.

Incorporeal means does not have a body. Spiritual beings, in other words. Now, there's a lot that we don't know about angels, but the Bible is very clear that they exist. They don't have bodies. They are spiritual, although sometimes they can appear with a bodily form. And we don't know how many there are, but we know that there are many of them, because Revelation 5 speaks of myriads and myriads, thousands and thousands of angels. Within that spiritual realm, number three, there is conflict between good and evil. And that's so important for us to understand that beyond us, there is a bigger reality and a bigger conflict between good and evil. God is good, and his creation is good, but his creatures have rebelled against him. And humanity has fallen, and some angels have fallen.

The Bible speaks of that in 2 Peter 2.4. And so now you have a spiritual conflict between good and evil. That's a reality. And you see the outpouring of that in the news headlines every single week. Number four, the forces of good and evil have different allegiances, different objectives, and different destinies. So angels are loyal to God. Fallen angels, demons are loyal to the devil. Angels want you close to God. Demons want you away from him. Angels are destined to be part of the new creation, Satan, and the fallen angels are destined for eternity in hell. Number five, angels are similar to us, but different from us. So they're rational. They can think. They're moral. They have a sense of good and evil, and like our souls, they are immortal. But they don't have physical bodies. So humanity is what we call a psychosomatic unity. So thought and body together. Angels are not. They're just a spiritual entity. Angels do not bear the image of God in the way that we do. They don't bear the image of God. We do, though. They don't have the blood ties of family that we have. So there's no parent-child relationship. There's no physical bond, and there's no angelicity like there is humanity. And angels, probably most importantly of all, are not the bride of Christ. We are. And so there's important differences. Number six, angels are active and powerful in the physical world, all under the direction of God. And then number seven, angels are not to be worshipped. But in the Bible, in the Old

[6 : 45] Testament, there's a special status given to the angel of the Lord. And as we mentioned last time, there are times in the Old Testament when this figure, the angel of the Lord, is clearly a divine figure. And so many theologians would say that that's an appearance of Jesus prior to his coming into the world. So that's an important thing for us to remember. So these are seven key truths about angels. So if you learn these seven things, then you're going to learn something about angels from this series. Tonight, our title is The Envoys of Heaven. And we're asking three questions in each sermon.

What are we learning about ultimate reality? What does this teach us about angels? What does it teach us about Jesus? So first of all, what is all this teaching us about ultimate reality as we think of angels as the envoys of heaven? Well, one of the things that makes angels fascinating is that angels are taking us to the connecting point between the spiritual realm and the physical realm, between spiritual reality, physical reality. And one of the books that I got to help with this series is a book called Angels by Tim Chester. And it has a subtitle that says, Where Heaven Meets Earth. And that's exactly where we are at that point where the spiritual and physical realms are interacting. Angels are the envoys sent by God from the heavenly realm into the earthly realm to carry out his purposes. So before we think in more detail about the specifics of angels' role as God's envoys, this is teaching us some important things about how we understand ultimate reality. And I want to highlight three things. And I wanted to say in all of this that this is where we are stretching ourselves to what we can be certain about, but we can try and understand a little bit more and make things a little bit clearer, even though, like, in everything I'm saying, I'm not saying this is exactly how it is, but I'm saying this is how I think the Bible is teaching us. So we're learning a little bit more. So first of all, we're learning a little bit about where heaven is. So that's a question that we sometimes ask ourselves, where's heaven? So thinking about angels is teaching us a little bit about that. So we're saying angels are envoys sent from heaven to earth. So, well, what's that journey?

Where do they come from? What does the journey look like? Where are they going? And it's probably easy for us to think maybe, and I've certainly often thought like this, to kind of think of heaven here somewhere. I'll just put heaven. You know by now that my handwriting is terrible, but you can see what I mean there. So, and here's earth. And so it's like they're two separate spheres. One's over there, one's over there. And they're kind of like that, distinct. And so we know where earth is because we're on it. We know where the universe is. It's part of that. And heaven is somewhere over there, a different kind of sphere or realm. And we can also kind of imagine that when we think about creation, we think that heaven has always existed and that the earth and the universe was created.

So we kind of think that, you know, for forever, God has been in heaven. And so it's always existed. And then from there, earth and the universe was created.

[10 : 35] I want to suggest that that, what I've just described there, is probably not the right way to think about things. For a few reasons. The key thing that we have to remember is in that in the biblical doctrine of creation, the Bible is very, very clear that in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

So we shouldn't think of God as kind of in there. And we shouldn't think of heaven as always existing. Because in the beginning, heaven was created and earth was created. Both are creations. And what that means is that it's not so much the case that before the universe, there was only heaven and God was there.

It's more the case that before the physical universe and the spiritual heavens, there was only God. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Only God. Nothing else.

And so this means that when we're talking about heaven and earth, we're not really talking about two separate creations, like heaven over here, earth over here. Instead, we're talking about one creation.

[12:10] So heaven and earth. When I say earth, I mean the universe as well. That's all creation. And that was made by the creator, God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

And those two circles is an important, very important theological diagram, what we call the creator-creation distinction. Big circle for the creator. Smaller circle for creation.

But heaven and earth go in that smaller circle. They're both created. The spiritual realm of heaven, angels, the physical realm of people, earth, the universe.

It's all within that circle of what God has created. Only the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is uncreated.

Everything else is created by Him. And this is why it's not quite so helpful to think of heaven and earth as kind of two separate creations, two separate spheres.

[13:22] Universe is here, heaven's there, and angels kind of zip across from one to the other. It's not really what the Bible is presenting to us. Instead, instead of thinking of two separate circles, like on the drawing, I think it's better to think, if we can, of layers.

So, this is you here. And this is the universe. This is the world here.

Planet Earth. It's not quite to scale, my drawing. And then this is the moon and the sun. And this is the stars. And this is the galaxies.

This is the universe created by God. Okay? So, you're in that physical world, the earth, solar system, galaxies, universe.

That's the physical creation of God. And so, where's heaven in all of that? Well, the heavens, the spiritual realm, it's not like heaven's up here, like in a wee corner.

[14:37] Whoops, made a mistake there. Up there. That's heaven. Up there in a wee corner. Mazza, maza, maza. I don't think that that's the right way to think of it. I think it's much more accurate to think of the spiritual realm, the heavens, as here.

As though there's a spiritual realm all around us within which the physical realm also exists.

Now, there's limitations to that drawing, and it's not a full explanation of everything. But I think that that's more accurate than the whole earth circle here and heaven circle over here.

And there's several reasons for that. One is because this makes sense of the omnipresence of God.

We say that God is present everywhere. And so, he is present in every physical location. And that's why. Because the physical world exists within that spiritual realm of the heavens.

[15:45] And one of the things that we believe about angels is that they are active everywhere.

And so, we don't think so much of angels being active in the sense that they kind of zip from heaven across to earth and back again.

More, it's that they step across from the spiritual realm into the physical realm. And maybe, maybe, maybe, just maybe, Jacob's dream is a glimpse into that in Genesis 28.

Jacob dreamed, and behold, there was a ladder set up on earth, and the top of it reached into heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And so, there's that interface between the physical realm and the spiritual realm.

I think it's teaching us all that actually, just that there's a much more of a kind of layered presentation of things in the Bible than a earth here, heaven here, two separate things.

Now, again, there's limitations there, and it's not a perfect drawing. But, I think it's right, but I shouldn't say that. But, I do think it's, I think it's more right than the kind of two circles drawing.

[16:56] We're also learning a little bit about the discussions of heaven. So, we're saying that angels are envoys sent by God. It's giving us a glimpse into the discussions of heaven.

God sends his envoys to accomplish his purposes. And, just a couple of times in Scripture, we get a glimpse into the kind of planning and deliberations around this.

And, a fascinating example of that comes in 1 Kings 22. Here, we're in the middle of kind of the history of the nation of Israel. By this time, Israel has split in two.

This is around the time of Isaiah the prophet. The king of Israel is Ahab. He's an evil king, married to Jezebel. The king of Judah is Jehoshaphat, who, on the whole, is a good king.

But, not every decision was wise. And, this is an example of an unwise decision from Jehoshaphat. Whereby, Ahab and Jehoshaphat wanted to join forces to try and retake a town from the Syrians.

[17 : 54] Before they go, Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, asks, Well, can we check with a prophet whether God is with us as we go to try and retake this town?

And, so, Ahab brings in 400 prophets. And, they're all like, Of course, go for it. The Lord is with you.

But, Jehoshaphat is not convinced that they're genuine. He's not convinced that they're accurate.

And, he said, Is there not another prophet of the Lord that we may inquire of?

And, there is a prophet, a prophet named Micaiah. And, Ahab thoroughly dislikes him. He says, I don't like talking to that prophet because he only ever says bad things about me. But, Jehoshaphat says, We need to hear them.

Let's get them. And, Micaiah comes in. And, there's a fascinating dialogue in 1 Kings 22. I'm going to pick up the reading at verse 19. Where Micaiah said, Therefore, hear the word of the Lord.

I saw the Lord sitting on his throne. And, all the hosts of heaven standing beside him on his right hand and on his left. There's another. So, host is the word army, as we saw a couple of weeks ago.

[18 : 59] It's another example of the military image of angels. The Lord said, Who will entice Ahab that he may go up and fall at Ramoth Gilead? That's the town that they were going to try and capture. And, one said one thing and another said another.

Then, a spirit came forward and stood before the Lord, saying, I will entice him. And, the Lord said to him, By what means? And, he said, I will go out and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.

And, he said, You are to entice him, and you shall succeed. Go out and do so. Now, therefore, behold, the Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these your prophets. The Lord has declared disaster for you.

Now, it's a fascinating narrative, and there's lots of things to ask and think about that. But, one of the key things to note is that, in all of this, the key thing that God is doing is that he's telling Ahab what's happening.

And, by telling him what's happening, he's giving him a chance to repent. But, of course, Ahab refused to listen, and he eventually went up to battle, and he was killed. The key thing for tonight is that this is just a glimpse into the discussions of heaven.

[20 : 02] And, it's fascinating. Now, how exactly conversations in heaven work, I'm not sure. And, I think it is important to say that Micaiah is not necessarily giving us, like, a definitive description of how heavenly discussions happen.

And, I think, in many ways, the point here is that you've had Ahab and Jehoshaphat on their throne making plans. And, Micaiah is saying, Look, your plans are foolish. I'm going to give you an insight into the throne room of heaven that has planned for your judgment.

And, that's the plans that you need to listen to. And, of course, Ahab doesn't do that. But, whatever's going on here is a fascinating glimpse into how God uses his angels to fulfill his purposes.

And, at the very least, it's telling us that God and his angels know exactly what's going on in the world. They know what is going on in every throne room, every government office, and every square inch of reality.

And, then, thirdly, the third thing we're learning about ultimate reality here is that it's all teaching us about the importance of revelation. And, that's just such an important thing for us to keep coming back to.

[21 : 09] Because, the only way that we can know about ultimate reality is because God is revealing things to us. And, so, for ultimate truth, we're totally dependent on revelation.

And, the general revelation of the creation around us is pointing us to the fact that we have a creator. And, the special revelation of God's word is teaching us more and more about how the created heavens and earth work.

And, what God our creator's purposes for us are. And, it's all reminding us that when it comes to questions of ultimate reality, a step of faith is inescapable.

And, this is so important to remember. It's so many people think, well, I'll believe in God if you give me proof. I'll believe in the spiritual reality of God if you give me physical proof.

And, of course, can you see the contradiction there? You're trying to prove a spiritual reality with a physical evidence. Those two things don't go together. Because, for us to know anything about a spiritual reality, we are totally dependent on revelation.

[22 : 17] Because, we can't step into that realm ourselves and see what's going on. We have to trust what God is revealing to us. And, so, whatever you believe about ultimate reality.

If you believe that there's no God. If you believe that there might be a God. If you believe that there is a God and it's the God of the Bible. Whatever your ultimate worldview is, you can only hold that worldview by taking a step of faith.

Questions of ultimate reality cannot be proved or disproved by physical evidence. And, that's why questions about ultimate reality will ultimately come down to two things.

Imagination or revelation. We'll either rely on what we imagine might be true. About life and death and origins and destiny and time and eternity.

Or, we will believe the revelation that God is giving us in the Bible. And, the Christian faith is grounded on the claim that that revelation is true and reliable.

[23 : 22] So, we're learning lots about ultimate reality as we think about angels. And, I know that I've not answered every question there. But, there's lots of fascinating things to think about.

What are we learning about angels? Well, angels are the envoys of heaven. And, that means that they are God's messengers.

In fact, that's what the two biblical words for angel means. So, the Hebrew word for angel is the word malak. So, like the prophet Malachi, that means my messenger.

Malak means messenger. The Greek word is angelos. Both of these words mean messenger. So, that's really a core aspect of what angels are all about.

And, so that's telling us two important things about angels. Angels are revealed. So, they're an aspect of spiritual reality that is revealed to us.

[24 : 24] But, angels are not just revealed. They are also revealing more truth to us. So, they're both a topic of revelation and a channel of revelation.

And, so angels function as the envoys through which God is revealing truth to us. And, you see that many, many times in the Bible.

Angels come and they deliver a message to humanity that reveals truth about God and about His great work of salvation. And, what you'll see when you look at the Bible is that at key points in redemptive history, redemptive history is the unfolding of God's plan across the ages of history.

At key moments in that history, angels are sent. They're sent as the envoys of heaven. In fact, nearly all of the key people in the Bible encounter angels.

So, Adam and Eve are driven out of the garden. And, an angel is left guarding the entrance. Abraham, at various points, encounters angels.

[25 : 32] Genesis 22 is an example of that. He was about to sacrifice his son. The angel of the Lord called and said, Abraham, Abraham. And, a ram was provided in place of Isaac.

Jacob encountered angels. Genesis 32, Jacob went in his way. The angels of God met him. Later in that chapter, Jacob wrestles with an angelic figure in a fascinating moment in his life.

Moses was keeping the sheep of his father-in-law, Jethro. When he came to Horeb, the mountain of God, and the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of the bush.

And, behold, he looked and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. Joshua, we saw this last time. As he was about to enter the promised land, attack Jericho, he met the commander of the Lord's army.

This fascinating, angelic figure, which we think in so many ways is actually a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ. David also met angels.

[26 : 34] With David, it's a fascinating context because the angel was actually executing judgment because of David's sin. And David sees the angel and he repents for what he's done.

You move into the New Testament. John the Baptist's father, Zechariah, he meets an angel as he goes to burn incense. And then, as we read, Mary met the angel Gabriel, as Luke chapter 1 records.

And in Matthew 1, we see that also Joseph met an angel. An angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. And so at key moments in redemptive history, God sends his angels as envoys.

They're declaring God's message. Now, there's two important points of application here. Number one, don't overestimate the messenger. Don't overestimate the messenger.

Because to meet an angel would be incredible. You think of Abraham, Moses, Jacob, David, meeting an angel, Mary and Zechariah. You think, wow.

[27 : 47] But if all you do is marvel at the angel, then you're missing the point completely. And it's interesting, if you look at Isaiah 6, one of the fascinating things here is that the angels here actually cover their faces.

And I think part of the reason for that is because they're not the focal point. The focal point, the focus is always on God. And another example of this, being careful not to overestimate the messenger, actually comes in the very last chapter of the Bible.

John, the one who heard and saw all these amazing things revealed, fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me. And the angel said, you must not do that. Instead, you must worship God.

So angels are not to be worshipped. We must not overestimate the messenger. We must always keep our focus on the message. And there's a really solemn warning in 2 Corinthians 11 where it says that even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

If we go chasing angels, if we go obsessing over angels, if we go marveling at angels, there are times when it might be the devil that we're looking at as he tries to disguise himself before us.

[28 : 55] And the way we'll know the difference is the message. Satan will try to lead us away from the truth that God has revealed. Satan will try to distort the gospel.

Angels will keep pointing us back to God's message. God does not want us to be obsessed with angels. He wants us to be obsessed with the message that teaches us about Jesus.

So don't overestimate the messenger. Second key application here is don't underestimate the recipient. Don't underestimate the recipient.

Because we've been saying angels are the envoys of heaven. They're God's messengers. They're being used to reveal God's truth. And they have an astonishingly important role.

But who is the message for? It's for you. The envoys of heaven are being sent so that you will hear God's message of salvation.

[30 : 02] So that you will know the reality of his amazing grace. Last of all, what does all this teach us about Jesus Christ? Well, the key point here is that ultimately the message is all about Jesus.

The envoys of heaven are coming with a message about God the Son. They're coming at key points in redemptive history. Redemptive history is all about the coming of Jesus. It's all pointing us to Jesus.

And the fascinating thing is that even fallen angels point us to Jesus. Because in the Gospels, you see that when Jesus meets somebody with a demon, they cannot but help cry out before Jesus and identify him.

They can't help but declare his identity. And in all the chaos that they cause, they're constantly reminding us of how much we need a savior. All of the message is focused and directed towards Jesus.

And what I want us to see, just as we kind of draw to a conclusion, is that when we think about the angel's message about Jesus, we can identify five types of message.

[31 : 05] And I'm conscious that I'm bombarding you with information here. Just drink it in. I'm not going to do another series on angels for a long time. So this is my chance to say everything. Five types of message.

One, adoration. So in Scripture, we see angels proclaim, praise, and they magnify and glorify the name of God.

So Isaiah 6 is a great example. Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of his glory. Revelation 5 is another amazing example. John looked and saw around the throne, and the living creatures and the elders, there was the voice of many angels, myriads and myriads, thousands and thousands, saying with one voice, worthy is the Lamb who was slain.

So before Jesus, the angels cry out, holy. And before Jesus, the angels cry out, worthy. And so there is just this magnificent adoration of Jesus among the angels.

And Psalm 103 tells us that the angels, they are the ones, they are among the ones who bless the Lord, who praise him and honor him. There's great adoration among the angels.

[32 : 19] The second type of message is anticipation. We see again and again the angels come anticipating what God is going to do. So you see that in the Old Testament, Exodus 3, angel of the Lord appears to Moses and says, I'm going to go, send you to Egypt, you're going to bring my people out.

Zechariah chapter 2 is another good example of an angel meeting a prophet, teaching about what God is going to do. Where are you going? He says, to measure Jerusalem, to see what its width, see its width and its length.

And the angel came forward, another angel came forward and said, see, Jerusalem shall be inhabited as villages without walls because of the multitude of people and livestock in it. I'll be a wall of fire around her, declares the Lord.

I will be glory in her midst. It's all anticipation of what God is going to do. And so angels are involved in the unfolding of redemptive history.

And among the angels in the Old Testament, there's a sense of anticipation and excitement and longing for the coming of Jesus.

[33 : 26] Third type of message we have is what we could call declaration. So again, Isaiah 6 is a good example of this. Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. It's a great, magnificent declaration.

Another wonderful, wonderful example of this comes in Matthew chapter 7. I forgot to read a passage there.

Anyway, that's more examples of anticipation. Zechariah, you're going to have a son. He'll prepare the way for the Lord. Mary, you're going to have a son. He's going to be the son of the Most High and Savior.

More anticipation. Sorry, that was in the last point. Declaration, there's Isaiah 6. Another wonderful declaration is the most crucial moment in redemptive history of all. Jesus has risen.

And it's angels that announce it. Mary comes to the tomb. There was an angel. And the angel says, do not be afraid.

[34 : 24] But I know you seek Jesus who was crucified. He's not here. He has risen. That's the message that the whole Christian faith stands on. It's the angels who came to declare it.

So we've got adoration, anticipation, declaration. Fourth example is celebration. And this is one of my favorite examples of this is Luke 2, the passage that we read with the shepherds.

There's a sentence in which there's announced anticipation and declaration here, but there's also celebration. The whole sky is filled with a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, saying glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among those with whom he's pleased.

Another interesting passage that talks about this is Hebrews 12. It's a slightly complicated passage, but I'm going to explain it to you very, very quickly because it's actually amazing. I'll just read it and explain it as we go.

So Hebrews 12, in many ways, this is talking about a church service, okay? So it's saying, you've not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest, and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages would be spoken to them, for they could not endure the order that was given.

[35 : 47] If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned. Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, I tremble with fear. So that's a description of Mount Sinai when the Ten Commandments were given and the whole mountain was shaking and the command to Israel was, God's presence had come down into the mountain and the command to the people was, don't come near.

And the writer to the Hebrews is saying, to be part of the Christian church is not like that. You've not come to that. That's what it says at the start. You've not come to that. Instead, you've come to Mount Zion.

Now, Mount Zion's there being used in the language of the church as the city and people of God.

And as you come to worship, you've come to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to innumerable angels in festal gathering, to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, to God, the judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

Now, there's lots and lots and lots going on in that passage, but the key point it's saying is this.

When we come together as God's people to worship, it's not just us who's gathering.

We're not just coming to our church building. We're actually coming into the presence of God as His people, assembling, like in the Old Testament, they used to assemble at Jerusalem, now assembling as the Lord's people all across the world.

[37 : 27] And as we assemble, there are innumerable angels feasting and celebrating in heaven as we share in this beautiful assembly and community that is being established in the name of Jesus.

And so, when the church of Jesus Christ meets, as every new week begins, we are joining with angels in celebration.

And so, they're gathering like it's a feast, festival gathering, as you can see there in verse 22. And we are gathering to celebrate with the angels and with all of those whom the Lord has taken home to celebrate anew that Jesus is risen.

The angels deliver a message of celebration. So, we've got adoration, anticipation, declaration, celebration. And then, there's one more fascinating type of message that comes from angels, but it comes at an important point in redemptive history.

It comes after the resurrection and it comes after Pentecost when the Holy Spirit is poured out. And this is a message from the angels that delivers delegation.

[38 : 49] So, adoration, anticipation, declaration, celebration, and then delegation. And you see it in Acts. An angel of the Lord said to Philip, Rise, go to the south, to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.

And he rose and he met an Ethiopian eunuch. Acts 10, an angel appears to Cornelius and says, Go, send for Peter, get him to come. And the key point is this.

An angel doesn't give the gospel to the Ethiopian eunuch. He sends Philip to do it. And an angel doesn't explain the gospel to Cornelius.

He tells him to get Peter to come and do it. And the whole reason for that is because God has delegated to us the role of proclaiming His message.

In fact, the good news that we have is the news that angels long to look into. Peter speaks about that. We could maybe even say that our proclamation goes even further and deeper than what the angels were able to declare.

[40 : 00] Another great example is Revelation 1. Revealed to John. He's the one who has to write it down. An angel appears to him, reveals it, and he's the one who has to write it down so it can be communicated to others.

Again and again and again in the New Testament, angels come with a message of delegation. We are now being sent out with the good news of Jesus. In other words, the envoys of heaven have been sent to tell us to fulfill our role as ambassadors for Christ.

And all of this is teaching us a crucial point that when we think about angels, it's so easy to think that we are here and angels are superior to us.

And there's maybe some senses in which that's true. Psalm 8 talks about being made lower than the angels and there's definitely a sense in which sin has brought us further down.

But the key point is that in the depths of our sin, that's where Jesus meets us. And by faith, we are united to him. And as his people, we are taken to be his beloved bride.

[41 : 12] And that means that you are taken to a place and a level that angels will never reach. You might marvel at the thought of an angel.

The truth is, if you're a Christian or you become a Christian, it's the angels who marvel at you. And that's all because of Jesus' determination to make you his.

And he's commissioned his mighty angels to be the envoys of heaven who would come and reach you. And he's reaching for you again tonight.

He's calling you to him again tonight. How are we going to respond to that? Amen. Let's pray. Thank you.