

The New Commandment The Nature of God and Man

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As we continue this series on “The New Commandment” we’re at the point of talking about why the nature of God and man must be *the same* in respect to the matter of love. It had to do with the choice that God made concerning who His heirs would be. His heirs would not simply be those who inherited things from Him but who would have *the same nature* as God himself. It’s interesting that when God made humans he gave them a spirit by breathing from himself into them. It meant that the spirit of man is of the same kind and nature as God himself and represents an impartation from the very person of God into the being of man. That is the nature of the human spirit.

Now there are different kinds of spirits. The angels, for example, are a different kind of spirit—they are spiritual beings but there is no indication that the angels were created by this form of God-breathed. It’s apparent that various beings can have a spirit, but the spirit of the human being is a specific and particular impartation from God himself and we know the reason why. **Romans 8:11**... actually beginning at **verse 9** and going through **11** says to us that the Spirit himself testifies with our spirits and it is the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead who dwells in us and gives life to our mortal bodies. (Inserted – actual verse-“**You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.**” – **Romans 8:9-11.**) So the intent of God was to live in man and to fellowship with man spirit to spirit. So the fashion in which humans are meant to resemble God is that of the spirit of man being *like* God—hence the term “the spirits of just men made perfect”. (Inserted-actual verse-“**...You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect,**” – **Hebrews 12:23b**)—the display of the work that God has accomplished when the sons of righteousness come to a state of being ready to be displayed following the work that God has done in them.

But where we left off with the previous broadcast was the recognition that when God chose humans as His heirs a third of the angels rejected His choice and revolted against God—and of course God addressed their rebellion by putting them out of the principle heavens. There are three heavens, as you know; **II Corinthians, chapter 12** tells us that. (Inserted - actual verse—**“I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—God knows.” – II Corinthians 12:2**) There are three heavens; the highest of the heavens is the heavens of God, the second of the heavens is the seat or the situs of the demonic. We know *that* from the book of **Ephesians, chapter 6**, which says, “We do not wrestle against flesh and blood but we wrestle against principalities, powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” (Inserted – actual verse—**“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” – Ephesians 6:12**) The demonic, then, is enthroned in the second of the heavens and, of course, the third heavens are the heavens above the earth.

Having, by force, removed the rebellious angels from the presence of God did not answer the question of whether or not, in His choice of heirs, God was right. It only proved that He was stronger, not necessarily that He was right. Henry of Bracton, an English jurist from the period of 1290 A.D.—commenting on the requirement of the rule of law—observed that the law must not only *be* right but it must also *appear* to be right which means that *simply because you are stronger* than someone else and are able to subjugate them by military or other kinds of forces, *that* does not necessarily mean that you are right. There has to be what he terms: the inevitable triumph of the “right” which is the matter of justice. The justice of God precluded God from simply resorting to force and squashing the rebellion against Him concerning the matter of His choice.

How does God go about establishing justice—that His choice was right because His choice was that which was inevitable? How does He do that? Well the proof has to be that these creatures—as *unlikely* as they were alleged to be, and indeed as they *were* and *are*—these creatures—humans—would have to end up being as the same “kind” and “nature” as God, to be like God in nature. We have decided that, on the basis of Scripture, that to be like God is a continuing reference to the matter of love. But before we go into that direction let’s establish, according to the written Word, all of the things that I have told you about the choice of God regarding humans as His heirs.

Come to the book of **Hebrews, the first chapter**. **Hebrews 1:4** says the following, speaking of the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ who comes into the earth, **“So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.”** Well this immediately suggests that there is a comparison between the Lord Jesus Christ, having come in the flesh, because the context is: God in times past spoke to humans through the prophets but in *these particular times* He has spoken through His Son.

(Inserted – actual verse—**“In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.”** – Hebrews 1:1,2) So the reference is not to Jesus in His position *before* He came into the world but His position *as* He is in the world, which is that position of being clothed in His humanity. So He says that the Son was as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited (He inherited this name through His obedience) is superior to theirs. **“For to which of the angels did God ever say, ‘You are my Son; today I have become your Father’? Or again, ‘I will be his Father, and he will be my Son’?”** (Inserted—Hebrews 1:5)

Now this should strike you very oddly, shouldn't it? All of a sudden the emphasis is a comparison between God calling a human His Son, and saying that He never called the angels His Son. Why bring the angels into the picture? This was not a book *about* angels or *to* angels; this was a book to the Hebrews. Why is this, at the threshold, a comparison between the angelic and humans? But before we get to that question you might observe this: where it says, **“You are my Son; (verse 5) today I have become your Father”**. Some of you Bible students will observe immediately that in the book of **Job**, one of these angels came before God. His name was Lucifer, or Satan, and it says that there was a day (in the book of Job... early chapters) that there was a day when the sons of God came before God and Satan was among them and that Scripture refers to Satan as a son of God... and he's an angel. (Inserted – actual verse—**“Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.”** – Job 1:6; **“Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord.”** – Job 2:1)

So did God really ever say that the angels were not His sons? Well, the answer is very simple. The subject here is: being the heirs of God. Now it is true that angels, like all other creation, may properly claim God as their Father *if* God indeed created them and since God is the creator of *all* things that are created, including the angelic, then it is appropriate to say that God is the Father of the angels. They are *invisible* creation and they are the *prior* creation... prior to the creation recorded in **Genesis 1** and **2**. But the emphasis here is not on being the Father by virtue of creation, the emphasis is on being the Father by virtue of *this* term: **“To which of the angels did He ever say, ‘You are my Son; this day have I begotten thee’”** (Inserted – actual verse—**“For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? – Hebrews 1:5a**). It's about being the “begotten”. **“For God so loved the world,”** (John 3:16 says,) **“that he gave his only begotten Son...”**

To be “begotten” means to be born of God—*not created*, but *born*—born of God. That means that God *issued* you, as it were, from the very womb of God and that's the term actually in Hebrews that we're talking about here. **Hebrews 2:11** says, “Both the one

who makes men holy and the ones who are made holy are of the same family. That is why Jesus is not ashamed to call us brothers” (Inserted – actual verse—**“Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers.” – Hebrews 2:11**) and the word for *brothers* there is the word—*adelphos*—and it literally means to “be of the same womb” and that’s easy enough for humans to understand. If your siblings and you are born out of your mother then *that* is what makes you brothers. To be of the womb of God is what makes us brothers to the Lord Jesus Christ. This therefore is an inherent reference to being “born again” and not merely to have been created. So that’s what’s implied when the Scriptures say, “To which of the angels did God at any time say, ‘You are my Son; this day have I begotten you.’” No angel was born again of the nature and type of God.

Now it goes on to speak specifically about the Son, **verse 6**, **“And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, ‘Let all God’s angels worship him.’”** (Inserted-**Hebrews 1:6**) Now this is one of the most fascinating passages of Scripture because the reference here is not to Jesus in His state *before* He came into the world. According to the gospel of **John, chapter 1**, it opens up with this statement, **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.”** (Inserted – **John 1:1**) So Jesus’ existence *as* God predated His coming into the flesh but this reference is to Him coming into the world through the flesh and it says, **“And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world”**—*that* was the time in which He said—**“Let all God’s angels worship him.”** (Inserted - **Hebrews 1:6**) A clear indication that the intent of God was—when Jesus as the Son of God was to be found in the form of human beings—the intention of God was to have the angels worship Him in His humanity.

Now the angels *ordinarily* worshipped Him in His divinity. “He made all things and without Him was not anything made that was made.” (Inserted – actual verse—**“Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.” – John 1:3**) And in fact, prior to His coming into the world and after His departure out of the world, every knee will bow, as every knee *has* bowed to Him, of things in heaven—obviously the angelic—things on the earth, and every tongue will confess.” (Inserted – actual verse—**“Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” – Philippians 2:9-11**)

So this is not a reference to His *divine* state prior to coming into the world but it is choreographed to be a reference to His state being found in the form of humans and it’s in *that* state that God required the angels to worship Him. This is why Jesus would say, in **Matthew 4**, in the recorded temptations of Jesus when Satan takes Him to the high mountain and says to Him, “If you will fall down and worship me I’ll give you the

kingdoms of the world.” Jesus’ response was—understanding His purpose for being in the world and understanding His status with respect to *this* angel that was tempting Him—He responded by saying to this angel, “You will worship the Lord your God.” (Inserted – actual verse—**“Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. ‘All this I will give you,’ he said, ‘if you will bow down and worship me.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’”** – Matthew 4:8-10) And here He is in human flesh. It was God’s design that when He would come into the world in human form that He would command *all* of God’s angels—fallen or unfallen—all of God’s angels were meant to worship Him when He was to be found in His humanity. Now I could go on about that, but I won’t.

In speaking of angels, God describes the angels this way: **“ ‘He makes his angels winds, his servants flames of fire.’”** (Inserted-Hebrews 1:7) So like the wind serves God and like fire serves God, so the angels serve God but they are *not* creatures of love, they are creatures of service. But about the Son, God says, **“ ‘Your throne, O God, will last forever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.’ He also says, ‘In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the works of your hands. They will perish but you will remain; they will wear out like a garment. You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end.’”** (Inserted – Hebrews 1:8-12) And then He says—and you have to ask yourself this question: why would this even be in the Scriptures?—**“To which of the angels did God ever say, ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.’”** (And here it is in plain language) **“Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation? We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard so that we do not drift away. For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation?”** (Inserted – Hebrews 1:13-2:3)

Now what I want to do is I want to skip **verse 5** of **chapter 2**. There He says, **“It is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking. But there is a place where someone has testified: ‘What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor and put everything under his feet.’ In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.”** (Inserted – Hebrews 2:5-9) Amazing! This is what we’ve been saying: that in **verse 5** it says, simply, that God put the world to come, subjected the world to come—not the

present world, obviously, because the writer is writing from his place in the present world—but in the world to come which has to do with the inheritance of God’s children, the world to come has been subject to God’s children. This is their inherited right, this is what He gives them; He gives them the world to come, so we are clearly speaking about His heirs.

God did not subject the world to come to angels. Why not? Because they were not His choice as heirs. But He subjected the world to come to humans. Why would He do that?

Because they *are* His heirs. So the question is: when you consider that, what is man that God would choose him over the angels? What creature is this... that would allow God to make that choice, over the angels... or the son of man, that God would visit him? That’s the context for that great Scripture.

Then it continues to say that we know that the world to come is subject to the sons of God on this offering of proof: Jesus, who was once made a little lower than the angels—in other words, Jesus was here in all of his humanity together with being here in all of his divinity, but Jesus was here in the realm of being lower than the angels and in the form that was also lower than the angels. But now, where is Jesus? He is risen and he is clothed with divine authority and seated at the right hand of God where all of God’s angels continue to worship Him. That’s our proof that we now, who are the sons like Jesus the Son was lower than the angels—we now are lower than the angels—but *His state will be our estate*. Where He is now will be given to us for it has been given to us to be seated on our Father’s throne at His right hand. Jesus said, “It has been given to me to sit down at my Father’s throne” (Inserted – actual verse—**“To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.” – Revelation 3:21**) and we who are in Christ are the heirs of God; we also will be seated at the Father’s throne...indeed, in spirit we are already seated there in heavenly realms, as Paul speaks to it and as John spoke about it.

So it is very clear from these Scriptures that we are the heirs and that the angels were the alternative possibility but God did not choose the angels. He chose man and in answer to the question, “What is man?” although he is lower than the angels in his status in creation, *what is* man that God would have chosen him over the angels as His heirs? And the answer is: the angels are ministering servants and their service will include serving those who will receive salvation, but it was never in God’s intention as He created the angels to make them to be His children because He did not create them with the capability of loving as He had created humans with the capability of loving. It is in the matter of loving that we are clearly meant to be like God. Therefore, the “new commandment” that requires this standard: “Love one another as I have loved you.”—the same standard for God as it is for man—is not an inappropriate command. Indeed it is the *only command* that could be issued to the children of God because anything short of that would be to accept that God’s children would fail to arrive at the status of being of

the same kind and nature as God himself, and that would be for you to have children who have no possibility of being like you.

God is very serious about having heirs and the standard for His heirs is that they be appropriate to the one who is their Father. To be children of God has to mean more than simply being created. In that sense, if all it meant was to be created, we would be like the angels. But it had to mean more than that. It had to mean that we were like God in nature and the nature in which we were meant to be exactly like God is the nature of love: “Love one another as I have loved you.” (Inserted – actual verse—“**A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.**” – **John 13:34**) Now needless to say, the early rebellion of the angels presented for *us* the future of this drama: that the angels who had lost their estate would seek to destroy humans. That’s why there is an inevitable conflict between the fallen angels and the sons of God. How did God manage to pull this all off? The angels being so superior to humans, how is it that God managed to pull this all off? And in the end will God be proven to be right? The answer of course is yes, God will be proven to be right, but stay with us as we explore “how”. I’m Sam Soleyn and I’ll see you next time. God bless you.

Scripture References

Romans 8:9-11

Hebrews 12:23b

II Corinthians 12:2

Ephesians 6:12

Hebrews 1:4

Hebrews 1:1,2

Hebrews 1:5-2:9

Job 1:6

Job 2:1

John 3:16

Hebrews 2:11

John 1:1

John 1:3

Philippians 2:9-11

Matthew 4:8-10

Revelation 3:2

John 13:34