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## Angels and Us

### Series: Angels! Seriously?

#### The Village Church at Shell Point Evening Service January 28, 2024

#### I. Text

- A. **Hebrews 1:14** (ESV) — 14 Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?

#### II. **Angels and Us**

- A. Norwegian missionary Marie Monsen; North China; autobiography published in 1960
1. Looting soldiers surrounded mission compound, but never entered
    - a. Missionaries happily perplexed
  2. Few days later – one of the men explained that as they were about to enter the compound they saw “tall soldiers with shining faces on a high roof of the compound.”
- B. Morris Plotts – missionary to East Africa
1. 1956 – Mau Mau uprisings
  2. Mau Maus came to village of Lauri, surrounded it, killed every inhabitant (300, including women and children)
  3. Three miles away – Rift Valley Academy, private school attended by missionary children
  4. Natives came to the academy with spears, bows, arrows, clubs, torches
  5. Surrounded the academy in darkness with lighted torches, shouting
  6. Unexpectedly, they stopped, retreated into the jungle
  7. Army was called out and eventually captured the entire band of Mau Mau
  8. At trial the leader was questioned
  9. Judge: “Did you kill the inhabitants of Lauri?”
  10. Leader: “Yes.”
  11. Judge: “Well then, why did you not complete the mission? Why didn’t you attack the school?”
  12. Leader: “We were on our way to attack and destroy all the people and the school... but as we came closer, all of a sudden, between us and the school there were many huge men, dressed in white with flaming swords and we became afraid and ran to hide!”
- C. Clyde Taylor – missionary to head-hunting tribe in South America in 1920's
1. With another missionary, Charlie Marstaller
  2. Living in thatched hut near river
  3. Noticed a dugout being paddled down the river with one man in it

4. Dugout could hold over 40 men; thought was that the dugout would return with warriors and that would be it for them
  5. Took their rifles and ammo and hid in tall grass near the hut waiting and praying all night; hoping that firing a gun would scare them off
  6. Nothing happened that night; continued their term without trouble from that tribe
    - a. Returned home after term
  7. Returned to the tribe 9 years later
  8. Encountered one of the men from that tribe who had become a Christian
    - a. Asked him about that night
  9. Native: "I remember that night, there were 44 of us and we were coming to set fire to your hut. When we got there and surrounded the hut we realized we could not attack because there were hundreds of men, dressed in white, with swords and shields, standing all around your hut and even on the roof. That is why I am a Christian now."
- D. Two miners in Western PA trapped for nearly a week back in the 60's
1. Rescued, in astonishingly good health
  2. Claimed they had been ministered to by men while they had been trapped
    - a. Fed, given water
- E. Want a story closer to home?
1. Friend
    - a. WV mountains hunting with son – miles from any other human contact
    - b. Slipped on leaves off a ledge, fell 10-12 feet on his back, onto rocks
    - c. Was immobile while Paul went to find help several miles away
    - d. Stranger appeared, covered him with his coat, built a fire, made sure he was ok
    - e. Disappeared before his son returned; never said who he was, never knew who he was
- F. Matthew
1. 8 years old
    - a. Lived out in country
    - b. I was at work 30 minutes away at WVU
    - c. Jean took Matt and Katie (4 ish) for a walk down the road beside house, on the way to friends; gravel road
    - d. Matt insisted on riding his bike down the road
  2. About 100 yards down the road
  3. Bike slipped on loose gravel; Matt fell, hit head on hardpan
    - a. Knocked unconscious
  4. Jean told Katie to stay with him; ran back up to the house
    - a. Praying, "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus!" all the way
  5. Got on phone to 911
    - a. While talking on the phone she saw Matt and Katie walking back up toward the house

- b. Matt was walking with his bike
- 6. Jean told the operator that maybe they would need an ambulance
  - a. Operator insisted they send one
  - b. Good that they came; on the way to the hospital, with Jean and Katie in the back of the ambulance with him, Matt had a seizure, vomited, and went unconscious
  - c. While at hospital did all the appropriate tests
  - d. No neurological signs, bleeding on brain, or anything sinister was found
  - e. He was unconscious for 11 hours
- 7. In the time when Matt got back to the house and Jean talked to him, she asked him how he was able to get back up
  - a. He said someone had helped him with his bike
- G. Elisha and his servant
  - 1. King of Aram, at war with Israel – enraged over how Elisha repeatedly foils his plans; sends an army with chariots to Elisha to do away with him
  - 2. **2 Kings 6:15–17** (ESV) —
    - a. 15 When the servant of the man of God rose early in the morning and went out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was all around the city.
    - b. And the servant said, “Alas, my master! What shall we do?”
    - c. 16 He said, “Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.”
    - d. 17 Then Elisha prayed and said, “O LORD, please open his eyes that he may see.”
    - e. So the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

### III. **Nature of Angels, cont.**

- A. **Order in the Angelic World**
  - 1. Angels are not independent beings, each one acting on their own
    - a. They seem to have a rank and order about them
  - 2. **Michael – archangel**
    - a. Title representing authority over other angels
    - b. **Jude 9** (ESV) — 9 But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, “The Lord rebuke you.”
    - c. **Daniel 10:13** (ESV) — 13 The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, **one of the chief princes**, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia...
    - d. Leader of an angelic army

- (1) **Revelation 12:7-8** (ESV) — 7 Now war arose in heaven, **Michael and his angels fighting** against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, 8 but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven.
    - e. Lord will return with the archangel's call
      - (1) **1 Thessalonians 4:16** (ESV) — 16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.
  - 3. Michael is only named archangel
    - a. Are there others?
- B. **Angels with Names**
  - 1. **Michael**
    - a. Already seen Michael
  - 2. **Gabriel**
    - a. **Daniel 8:16** (ESV) — 16 And I heard a man's voice between the banks of the Ulai, and it called, "Gabriel, make this man understand the vision."
    - b. **Daniel 9:21** (ESV) — 21 while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the first, came to me in swift flight at the time of the evening sacrifice.
    - c. **Spoke to Zechariah: Luke 1:19** (ESV) — 19 And the angel answered him, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news."
    - d. **Spoke to Mary: Luke 1:26-27** (ESV) — 26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary.
- C. **Capabilities and Limitations**
  - 1. **Spiritual beings without bodies**
    - a. Sometimes we might consider that an asset rather than a limitation!
    - b. Cannot usually be seen, unless God gives a special ability to see them
      - (1) **Numbers 22:31** (ESV) — 31 Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, with his drawn sword in his hand. And he bowed down and fell on his face.
      - (2) **2 Kings 6:17** (ESV) — 17 Then Elisha prayed and said, "O LORD, please open his eyes that he may see." So the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

- (3) **Matthew 28:5** (ESV) — 5 But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified.”
2. **Moral beings**
  - a. **Sinful angels: 2 Peter 2:4** (ESV) — 4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment...
    - (1) **Jude 6** (ESV) — 6 And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day—
3. **Intelligent beings**
  - a. **Speak to people**
    - (1) **Acts 12:6–11** (ESV) — 6 Now when Herod was about to bring him out, on that very night, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries before the door were guarding the prison. 7 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood next to him, and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him, saying, “Get up quickly.” And the chains fell off his hands. 8 And the angel said to him, “Dress yourself and put on your sandals.” And he did so. And he said to him, “Wrap your cloak around you and follow me.” 9 And he went out and followed him. He did not know that what was being done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. 10 When they had passed the first and the second guard, they came to the iron gate leading into the city. It opened for them of its own accord, and they went out and went along one street, and immediately the angel left him. 11 When Peter came to himself, he said, “Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting.”
  - b. **Praise God:**
    - (1) **Revelation 5:11–12** (ESV) — 11 Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!”
4. **Finite**
  - a. Only one place at a time (not omnipresent)
  - b. **Daniel 10:12–14** (ESV) —

- (1) 12 Then he said to me, “Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words.
  - (2) 13 The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia,
  - (3) 14 and came to make you understand what is to happen to your people in the latter days. For the vision is for days yet to come.”
5. The issue of marriage
    - a. Mentioned last week – angels don’t marry – **Matthew 22.30**
    - b. Some have seen an OT episode as a contradiction, or at least an exception, to that
  6. **Genesis 6:1–4** (ESV) —
    - a. 1 When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them,
    - b. 2 the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose.
    - c. 3 Then the LORD said, “My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years.”
    - d. 4 The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.
  7. Some take the “sons of God” as angels (fallen?) who procreate with “daughters of man” and produce children
    - a. Generate a radically superior race of “humans” – the Nephilim
  8. I don’t take that view
    - a. Genesis 6 follows Genesis 4 (genealogical description of descendants of Cain) and Genesis 5 (genealogical description of descendants of Seth)
    - b. Descendants of Cain were wicked; descendants of Seth were God worshipers
    - c. I take the “sons of God” to be the descendants of Seth
    - d. And the intermarriage was between the wicked line of Cain and the godly line of Seth
    - e. Result – increasingly ungodliness of the human race
    - f. Outcome – Noah and the flood
    - g. Where everyone was wicked, save the family of Noah
  9. And that’s why intermarriage between the people of God and pagans is such a big deal in the Bible

#### IV. **God’s Purpose and Angels**

- A. To understand the common and disparate characteristics of humans and angels, we see how angels show us the greatness of God's love toward us
- B. Commonalities between angels and humans
  - 1. The only highly **intelligent** creatures God made
  - 2. The only creatures with **moral** inclinations (Schaeffer: moral motions)
- C. Humans – creature **just below angels**
  - 1. **Psalm 8:5–6** (ESV) — 5 Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. 6 You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet... (quoted in Hebrews 2.7-8)
- D. Yet, aspects of human beings are **greater than angels**
  - 1. Humans – made in **the image of God (Genesis 1.26-27)**
    - a. Never said about angels
    - b. Means we are more like God than angels!
  - 2. **Humans will judge angels!**
    - a. **1 Corinthians 6:3** (ESV) — 3 Do you not know that we are to judge angels?...
  - 3. Angels are made to serve humans
    - a. **Hebrews 1:14** (ESV) — 14 Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?
  - 4. **Humans can procreate after their own image**
    - a. **Genesis 5:3** (ESV) — 3 When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth.
    - b. Angels don't marry or procreate
- E. **Greatness of God's Love for Humans**
  - 1. By contrast
    - a. Many angels sinned
      - (1) None saved!
    - b. **2 Peter 2:4** (ESV) — 4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment...
    - c. **Jude 6** (ESV) — 6 And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day—
    - d. **Hebrews 2:16** (ESV) — 16 For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham.
  - 2. By contrast, many (all!) humans sinned
    - a. And God chose to save some
    - b. And not just some – many – a multitude that no one can count!
    - c. **Revelation 5:9** (ESV) — 9 And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation...

- d. **Revelation 7:9** (ESV) — 9 After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands...
  - 3. While angels rejoice whenever a human is redeemed, they can never sing for themselves...
    - a. Redeemed – how I love to proclaim it!
    - b. Redeemed by the blood of the lamb;
    - c. Redeemed through his infinite mercy –
    - d. His child, and forever, I am.
- F. **Angels Remind Us that Unseen World is Real**
  - 1. Countercultural – in our secular world, most are ignorant of anything they can't see
    - a. Existence of angels as taught in scripture is a reminder of the reality of the spiritual realm
    - b. 2 Kings 6
  - 2. **Psalm 148:2** (ESV) — 2 Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his hosts!
  - 3. **Hebrews 12:22** (ESV) — 22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering...
- G. **Angels are Examples for Us**
  - 1. Obedience
  - 2. Worship
  - 3. **Matthew 6:10** (ESV) — 10 Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
  - 4. **Isaiah 6:3** (ESV) — 3 And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!”
  - 5. **Revelation 5:11–12** (ESV) — 11 Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!”
- H. **Angels Carry Out God's Plans**
  - 1. **Angels = messengers**
    - a. Bring messages to God's people
    - b. Gabriel to Mary, Zechariah
  - 2. **Carry out God's judgments**
    - a. **2 Samuel 24:16** (ESV) — 16 And when the angel stretched out his hand toward Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD relented from the calamity and said to the angel who was working destruction among the people, “It is enough; now stay your hand.” And the angel of the LORD was by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.



- b. **2 Chronicles 32:21** (ESV) — 21 And the LORD sent an angel, who cut off all the mighty warriors and commanders and officers in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned with shame of face to his own land. And when he came into the house of his god, some of his own sons struck him down there with the sword.
    - c. **Acts 12:23** (ESV) — 23 Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him [Herod] down, because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and breathed his last.
    - d. **Revelation 16:1** (ESV) — 1 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple telling the seven angels, “Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God.”
  - 3. **Represent God**
    - a. **Zechariah 1:10–11** (ESV) — 10 So the man who was standing among the myrtle trees answered, ‘These are they whom the LORD has sent to patrol the earth.’ 11 And they answered the angel of the LORD who was standing among the myrtle trees, and said, ‘We have patrolled the earth, and behold, all the earth remains at rest.’
  - 4. **Warriors for God**
    - a. **Daniel 10:13** (ESV) — 13 The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia...
- I. **Angels Glorify God**
  - 1. **Psalms 103:20** (ESV) — 20 Bless the LORD, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his word, obeying the voice of his word!
  - 2. **Isaiah 6:2–3** (ESV) — 2 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. 3 And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!”
  - 3. **Revelation 4:8** (ESV) — 8 And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!”
  - 4. **Luke 2:14** (ESV) — 14 “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”
- J. **Witnesses of God’s Redemption**
  - 1. **Ephesians 3:10** (ESV) — 10 so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.
  - 2. **1 Peter 1:12** (ESV) — 12 It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

3. **1 Timothy 5:21** (ESV) — 21 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels I charge you to keep these rules without prejudging, doing nothing from partiality.

V. **Our Relationship to Angels**

A. **Awareness of Angels**

1. God wants us to be aware of angelic activity
2. When we worship, we should be aware that we are worshipping, not just by ourselves, but with many others, including angels!
  - a. **Hebrews 12:22–23** (ESV) — 22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, 23 and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect...
  - b. Should enhance our sense of reverence and joy
3. In our lives, we are being watched! In obedience and disobedience
  - a. Not to take away from our primary motivation being pleasing or displeasing God
  - b. But simply to recognize that we do nothing that is completely secret
4. Even the sense that God sends angels in human form heightens the sense of the angelic observation of human behavior
  - a. **Hebrews 13:2** (ESV) — 2 Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.
  - b. **Genesis 18:2–5** (ESV) — 2 He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth 3 and said, “O Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant. 4 Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, 5 while I bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant.” So they said, “Do as you have said.”
  - c. Also came to Lot in Sodom in Genesis 19

B. **Ministry of Angels to Us**

1. **Hebrews 1:14** (ESV) — 14 Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?
2. Sudden delivery from distress or danger can come by angels
  - a. **Acts 5:19–20** (ESV) — 19 But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, 20 “Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life.”
  - b. Cf **Acts 12:7–11** – deliverance from prison
  - c. **Matthew 4:11** (ESV) — 11 Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

- d. **Daniel 6:22** (ESV) — 22 “My God sent his angel and shut the lions’ mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm.”
- 3. General promise of protection
  - a. **Psalm 91:11–12** (ESV) — 11 For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. 12 On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.
- C. **Guardian Angels?**
  - 1. Aside from the general promise of protection, some have wondered if we all have our own personal guardian angel? Or each Christian? Or at least children?
  - 2. **Matthew 18:10** (ESV) — 10 “See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven **their** angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven.”
    - a. May simply mean that the angels who have charge of caring for the safety of children are always in the presence of God
    - b. Or as Wayne Grudem mentioned, the angels may be playing zone defense rather than man-to-man
  - 3. **Acts 12:15** (ESV) — 15 They said to her, “You are out of your mind.” But she kept insisting that it was so, and they kept saying, “It is his angel!”
    - a. Peter was just released from prison
    - b. The servant girl was stunned to see Peter – didn’t even invite him in
    - c. Thought it was “his angel” – who just happened to look like Peter
    - d. Maybe Peter had an angel guarding him at that point – after all, an angel released him from prison
  - 4. But it’s hard to be definitive about personal guardian angels

## VI. **Cautions Regarding Angels**

- A. **Beware of false doctrine**
  - 1. **Galatians 1:8** (ESV) — 8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed.
    - a. Always keep in mind, there are fallen angels too!
  - 2. **2 Corinthians 11:14** (ESV) — 14 And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.
  - 3. **1 Kings 13:18** (ESV) — 18 And he said to him, “I also am a prophet as you are, and an angel spoke to me by the word of the LORD, saying, ‘Bring him back with you into your house that he may eat bread and drink water.’ ” But he lied to him.
    - a. An old prophet deceive the “man of God” who had confronted Jeroboam with a story about an angelic message which contradicted God’s instruction
  - 4. Contemporary example – Joseph Smith and origin of Mormonism

- a. An angel – Moroni – spoke to Joseph Smith and revealed to him the basis of the Mormon religion
  - 5. Always beware of any teaching which contradicts the teaching of scripture
    - a. Even if from angels!
- B. **Don't worship angels!**
  - 1. Worship of angels was one of the issues in the Colossian community
    - a. **Colossians 2:18** (ESV) — 18 Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind...
  - 2. Worship of angels may have been behind the book of Hebrews
    - a. Essene sect – e.g. Qumran community – had strange theology that included the preoccupation with and worship of angels
    - b. May be why so much of Chapters 1 and 2 is designed to show the superiority of Jesus to angels
  - 3. At the same time, some angelic creatures are so marvelous, it may be tempting to worship them
    - a. **Revelation 19:9–10** (ESV) — 9 And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.” 10 Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God.” For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.
- C. **Don't pray to angels**
  - 1. We are only to pray to God
    - a. Each and every member of the Trinity is appropriate!
    - b. He alone has the sovereignty, omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence to answer prayer
    - c. Certainly not to Mary as the mediatrix
  - 2. **1 Timothy 2:5** (ESV) — 5 For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus...
  - 3. To pray to anyone else other than God is to violate that scripture, ascribe mediatorial authority to anyone other than Jesus
    - a. Or worse, to attribute deity to anyone else other than God