



**But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. -**

**Matthew 15:9**

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## **The Great Shall Serve the Least**

Yesterday my wife brought up a topic sort of “out of the blue.” She wanted to know what Hebrews 1:14 really meant. She had read one translation that suggested to her that angels were created to serve humans.

First, a little context. The book of Hebrews establishes the superiority of Jesus Christ and the effectiveness of his actions to save humanity. In chapter one the author’s point is to demonstrate that Christ is superior to angels. This is important, because there is one angel who claims to be equal to Christ and who further claims that God is being unfair to favor Christ over him.

**Therefore, angels are only servants—spirits sent to care for people who will inherit salvation. – Hebrews 1:14 New Living Translation**

Verse 14 is the final verse of the chapter, concluding that while angels have a role in helping the human race, they are not the race’s savior. In that context, then, the use of the word “only” is understandable. But it’s an unfortunate word choice in another sense.

From a Biblical perspective there is nothing “only” about being a servant. Jesus told his disciples once that he had not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life. (Matthew 20:28) Another time he told them that whoever wanted to be great among them must be the servant of all. (Matthew 23:11, Luke 22:26)

The Bible tells us that God made humanity “a little lower than the angels.” (Psalm 8:4&5, Hebrews 2:5-9) That’s why the angels serve us today; they are greater than we are. Some faith traditions, such as my own, hold that after salvation is consummated humans will be higher than the angels. (Christ’s

Object Lessons, 162) That means we will serve the angels.

Maybe (this is just speculation) we'll continue our connection to the angel that served as our guardian while we were bound to the sinful earth. It will be our joy to serve that individual. I'm not sure what that action would be, but as we learn of all the times that angel prevented our own injury or death, it will be fun to try to "pay them back."

But it won't be out of obligation. It will be something we enjoy doing. That may be hard for us to understand, given the selfishness of our race and culture. We live in a world where those who imagine themselves to be "great" demand the service and respect of their underlings. The kingdom of heaven is NOT like that; it's entirely different.

But while we aren't right with the universe, we can be, and when we are we will relish the idea of being servants to the angels. We will make ourselves available to the less fortunate, because the greater ALWAYS serves the lesser.

If only we could convince more people to live that way on earth. What if our politicians understood that what they are seeking when they seek election is an opportunity to serve those who vote for them? What if those who move up in industry saw their jobs as serving the workers who make the goods or provide the services for which the company is paid? What if Generals....

Sorry, got a little carried away there. But if our country wanted to be really great "again," we would find ways to serve all other countries. We would give to them rather than take from them. Nobody is greater than God, and yet everything God does is to give. He who created this world willingly came to serve and save us; can we not, even a little, serve one another in love?

Elkanah