

# MARY DID YOU KNOW?

Pastor Colin Rieke ~ December 25, 2015

<sup>1</sup> In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, <sup>2</sup> but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. <sup>3</sup> The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. <sup>4</sup> So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs. <sup>5</sup> 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"? <sup>6</sup> And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him." <sup>7</sup> In speaking of the angels he says, "He makes his angels spirits, and his servants flames of fire." <sup>8</sup> But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom. <sup>9</sup> 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." (Hebrews 1:1-9)

This is the day the Christ child is born, let us rejoice and be glad in it,

Christmas Day is here. At church here, we've been preparing for it during these last few Sundays as we've looked at the different ways God prepared his people. Maybe you've already gone to a Christmas Eve service and heard the story of the baby Jesus being born in a manger, the angels' announcement to the shepherds or that Jesus is the light of the world. So it may come as a small disappointment this morning, that we didn't read the account of the Christmas story again. Instead we heard from the prophet Isaiah about some beautiful feet, we heard the writer to the Hebrews comparing Jesus to angels, and from the gospel of John about Jesus being the Word.

Even though the three readings from God's Word do not tell us the familiar Christmas story we are used to hearing at this time of year, they do tell us about Christmas, they tell us what Christmas is all about, and what response we can have from it. It's true, we all enjoy the story about a baby born in a manger – but it's who that baby was and why he had to come that makes Christmas so special. It was our second Scripture lesson from the book of Hebrews that gives us a beautiful picture and answers the important question of WHO IS THIS BABY?

1. Superior to the angels
2. Equal with God

(1)

If there was any person who could have wondered about who Jesus was, it was the virgin Mary, his mother. Perhaps for this reason the familiar Christmas song came about *Mary did you know?* In that song, questions are asked to Mary about if she knew who her son was and what he would do. Mary did you know that the blind will see, the deaf will hear and the dead will live again? But if you've been

with us the past few weeks, we have gained a pretty clear understanding that Mary did indeed know who exactly her Son was. She was told by the angel Gabriel who her Son would be. But even though she did know who her Son was, the song can provide a good reminder for us who her Son was then and is today. In fact, the third verse lines up quite nicely with the opening words from the book of Hebrews.

The third verse to the song *Mary did you know?* goes like this: “Mary did you know that your Baby Boy is Lord of all creation? Mary, did you know that your Baby Boy would one day rule the nations? Did you know that your Baby Boy is heaven’s perfect Lamb? The sleeping Child you’re holding is the Great, I Am.” Let’s see how that lines up with the second lesson from the book of Hebrews.

**“In the past, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days, he has spoken to us by his Son, who he appointed heir of all things.”** We have taken a look at some of those prophets God used to tell us about himself. In fact, if you look at the entire Old Testament, this is God using his prophets, or messengers to tell us about himself. Christmas changes all of that. God no longer needed to reveal himself through messengers, he could reveal himself through his Son.

**“The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being.”** God’s radiance is seen in Jesus. That little baby in a manger is the exact representation of God. He is a carbon copy. The writer to the Hebrews almost includes as an afterthought what Jesus came down here to do: **“After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.”** This is what Jesus came down to do – to purify us from our sins. He did not come down to purify our spirit or our motivations to give us a chance to purify ourselves. He purified our sins once for all on the cross. And after that he went to sit on the throne of God.

This is where the writer to the Hebrews gets real. WHO IS THIS BABY? This baby is superior to the angels. Just so you know, that’s not a light claim. Angels are servants of God most high, angels are holy and perfect, angels are powerful, much more powerful than you or I. It is true, the Bible tells us that we have angels watching over us, but they are only watching over us because God wants them to watch over us. If we were more powerful than angels, then we would have no need for them.

But this baby born in a manger had angels serving him not just because God wanted them to, but because Jesus is superior to the angels. Think about that. Jesus didn’t need angels watching over him because he made himself weak and lowly – yes they comforted him at times, but the angels couldn’t do what Jesus was going to do. The angels were not able to provide purification for sins. The angels were messengers to people to point people to Jesus, to point people to what Jesus did. And why was Jesus superior to the angels? Because he created them!

(2)

That’s right, the little baby, resting peacefully in a manger in Bethlehem, created the angels. For before he was born in Bethlehem, he existed. This is what the gospel writer John was getting at when he said, **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God”** and then **“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”** The writer to the Hebrews

records, **“through whom also he made the universe.”** The angels are part of the universe, therefore, Jesus Christ, the little baby, God the Son created the angels who serve him.

This makes him not only superior to the angels, but it makes him equal with God. Maybe you caught the several times that was mentioned in our reading from Hebrews this morning. **“The Son is the exact representation of God’s being”** **“But about the Son he says, ‘Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever’** even when he says, **“Let all God’s angels worship him.”** The only one to whom God allows worship is himself.

The one whom the heavens cannot contain is wrapped up in swaddling clothes. The one who gives commands to the angels was once a baby who could only coo. He did not earn this title by what he did, he did it because of who he was, and God exalted him for it. The book of Philippians describes a similar scene, **“Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name.”** He is equal to God, loving righteousness and hating wickedness. **“Therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions.”**

What wonderful news this is that we hear on Christmas Day. Not only is this little baby born in a manger God almighty, because of his humanity, he is also our companion. He is our companion and stands by our side through all life’s troubles. He is our companion and will usher us through death’s door to the other side. That’s what this little baby means. He is the great I Am.

News like this cannot be contained within these four walls, it must be shared, just like the shepherds shared it. For what better news can there be? Isaiah shouts, **“How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, ‘Your God reigns!’”** Because of this baby’s birth, we are a companion with God, our sins are forgiven, and we can spend eternity with him. This is news that you don’t need a degree to share, but simply tell the wonderful news that Jesus is born and what he came to do.

“Mary did you know that your Baby Boy is Lord of all creation? Mary, did you know that your Baby Boy would one day rule the nations? Did you know that your Baby Boy is heaven’s perfect Lamb? The sleeping Child you’re holding is the Great, I Am.” I think we can confidently answer the question this song poses. Yes, Mary did know who her baby boy was. And now, thanks to the message that has been shared every day since his birth, we do too. The baby Jesus is the Great, I Am. Amen.