

The Father of Spirits

Commentary for June 15, 2018 — Can Spirits Call God Father?

No, the spirits cannot call God "Father," but I noted this intriguing verse the other day:

"Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?"

• *Hebrews 12:9*

God is **"the father of Spirits."** If this phrase refers to angels, then can angels call God Father? Does this verse give evidence that we shall become angels or spirits? No on both.

Angels and Spirits

All angels are spirits. Not all spirits are angels. The word "angel" in both Hebrew and Greek denotes an office. Look at passages that deal with this matter. Psalm 104 reviews YHWH's creation. Verse 4 says it is YHWH, **"Who makes his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire."** This verse is cited in Hebrews 1:7: **"And of the angels he says, 'Who makes his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire'"** (Hebrews 1:7).

Angels are indeed beings composed of spirit who have the ability, at times, to manifest physically on earth. Of course, not all spirits are angels. When the apostle Paul was brought before the council (the Sanhedrin), Luke wrote that there was a distinction between angels and other spirits. The Sadducees believed in neither:

"For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.

And there arose a great cry: and the scribes that were of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, 'We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him, let us not fight against God.'"

• *Acts 23:8–9*

The Sons of God and Angels

Many who examine the interaction of the **"Sons of God"** and the **"daughters of Men"** in Genesis 6:2, and 4 mistakenly believe those Sons were angels. One reason for this belief is because the same Hebrew phrase **"Sons of God"** (בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים) in Genesis is different in Job 1:6, 2:1, and 38:7 in the Septuagint (LXX) Greek translation of the Old Testament. There the phrase is rendered as **"angels of God"** (ἄγγελοι τοῦ θεοῦ). Another major reason is that apocryphal works like the book of Enoch and the book of Jubilees both say that angels married or cohabited with human women.

The text of Hebrews 12:9 above may seem to confirm that God is the Father of all spirits, including angels. This directly contradicts Hebrews 1:5, which expressly states that angels cannot be called sons — ever. I am surprised how many ignore this direct statement of the author of Hebrews and cling to the ideas that the sons of God are angels. One Bible teacher

told me Hebrews 1:5 merely explains Christ's superiority over angels and nothing more.

It is important to remember that for the first two chapters of the "sermon" of Hebrews the apostle Paul (the speaker) corrected serious misunderstandings the audience had about angels. Read three relevant verses:

"Being made so much better than the angels, as he has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, 'You are my Son, this day have I begotten you'?"

And again,

'I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son'?

And again, when he brings in the first-begotten into the world, he said,

'And let all the angels of God worship him.'"

• *Hebrews 1:4–6*

Angels cannot be Sons or be called Sons, nor is God their Father. Angels were not "begotten" as a Son, and finally, angels are to worship the Son of God, Christ.

So, what about Hebrews 12:9 which speaks of God (the Father) being "**the Father of Spirits.**" If you read the larger context of the verses before Hebrews 12:9 (quoted on page 1 above), it is clear that humans were referred to in that verse. Read the contextual verses:

"For whom the Lord loves he chastens, and scourges every son whom he receives. If YOU endure chastening, God deals with YOU as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasten not? But if YOU be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are YOU bastards, and not sons.

[Verse 9] Furthermore WE have had fathers of OUR flesh which corrected US, and WE gave them reverence: shall WE not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness."

• *Hebrews 12:6–10*

Our earthly fathers are fathers of our flesh, but God is the Father of our spirits. The pronouns YOU, WE, OUR, and US show that the spirits referred to are human beings. Paul says the "**spirit of man**" in each human being is under complete control of God the Father. He will protect our spirits, as our fathers on earth protect our flesh. Note these verses:

"The spirit of man is the candle of YHWH, searching all the inward parts of the belly."

• *Proverbs 20:27*

"[T]he word of YHWH for Israel, says YHWH, which stretches forth the heavens, and lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him."

• *Zechariah 12:1*

"For what man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knows no man, but the Spirit of God."

• *1 Corinthians 2:11*