

## The Angels Are Watching

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Think carefully about what happened when angels sinned.

No negotiation. No second chance. No mediator stepped forward. No plan of redemption was set in motion. The angels who rebelled were condemned immediately and permanently — cast out, their fate sealed, their sentence final. These were ancient beings, created before mankind, who had stood in the presence of God and witnessed things no human eye had seen — beings with a specific and significant role in God’s creation. And when they fell, there was nothing. No offer of grace. No way back.

Now think about what happened when humanity sinned.

God made a way.

Not a small way. Not a barely-sufficient way. A way that cost Him everything and gave us everything. A way that didn’t just restore what was lost but went so far beyond restoration that the word “restoration” can barely contain it. A way that didn’t just return us to what we were before the fall — it brought us into something we were never in before.

His family.

The angelic host has watched all of this unfold. And according to Scripture, they are still watching — still leaning in, still marveling, still trying to understand the depths of a grace they were never offered and cannot fully comprehend.

*“It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they searched and inquired carefully about this grace. Things into which angels long to look.” — 1 Peter 1:12*  
ESV

Angels long to look into the grace given to humanity. These are beings who stand in the presence of God, who have witnessed the creation of the universe, who have seen the full sweep of human history from beginning to end — and they are still leaning in, still astonished, still longing to understand what God did for us.

Let that land for a moment.



**NOT JUST RESTORED — PROMOTED**

Here is what makes this more than just a story about forgiveness.

When Adam and Eve fell, they were God’s creation — made in His image, placed in relationship with Him, given dominion over the earth. That was extraordinary. But they were not yet family in the fullest sense. They were image-bearers. Beloved. Crowned

with glory and honor. But what Jesus accomplished goes beyond recovering what Adam lost.

Through Christ, we have been adopted.

Not restored to servants. Not returned to the position of creation at a respectful distance from the Creator. Brought in. Made sons and daughters. Named as heirs. Co-heirs with Christ Himself — which means that everything belonging to the Son now belongs to us as well.

*“For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ.” — Romans 8:15–17 ESV*

This is not restoration. This is a promotion.

Think about the prodigal son.

He left. He wasted everything. He ended up feeding pigs in a foreign country, hungry enough to eat what the pigs were eating. And when he finally came to his senses and turned for home, he rehearsed what he was going to say: “Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.”

He wasn’t asking to be restored. He was asking for a job.

But the father saw him while he was still a long way off. And he didn’t wait. He ran. He threw his arms around him. He called for the best robe, a ring for his finger, sandals for his feet, and a celebration. Not because the son deserved it. Not because the son had earned his way back. But because the son who was lost had been found.

The son came home expecting to be a servant. The father made him a son again.

That is the picture. But here is what makes the gospel even greater than the parable — because Adam was never a son in the way we are now. Adam was created as God’s regent, His representative, His image-bearer. He walked with God in the garden. The relationship was real and close and extraordinary. But adoption — the legal, permanent, Spirit-confirmed status of being brought into God’s own family as a son or daughter — that was not what Adam had.

We are not being restored to what Adam had. We are being given something Adam never had. The ring. The robe. The name. The inheritance. The Spirit crying Abba, Father from within us. Co-heirs with Christ Himself.

There is something worth pausing on here. In the Old Testament, the term “son of God” referred to beings created directly by God — Adam is called the son of God in Luke’s genealogy for this reason. He was directly formed by God’s hand. The angels are called

sons of God in Job. It was a title of direct creation, not of family relationship in the way we think of it.

Jesus is different. He is the only begotten Son — not created, but eternally the Son of the Father. That relationship is unique to Him and belongs to Him alone.

But here is the miracle of the gospel: because of Jesus Christ, that title — sons and daughters of God — is now extended to us. Not by creation. Not by being formed from dust. But by adoption through the blood of Christ. We are called children of God. We cry Abba, Father. We are co-heirs with the only begotten Son Himself.

Adam was created by God. We are adopted by God. Through Christ, we are brought into a family relationship that Adam — as extraordinary as his design was — never had.

Before the fall, humanity was God's creation made for relationship with Him. After the cross, humanity — those who are in Christ — is God's family. That is not a recovery of lost ground. That is ground that was never occupied before. God's grace didn't just undo the damage of the fall. It accomplished something the fall itself could never have produced.

This is what Paul means when he says that where sin abounded, grace abounded much more. Not the same amount. Much more. The fall was catastrophic. The grace is more so. The loss was devastating. The gain is beyond it.

Think about that. The angels who never fell, who never lost what humanity lost, who never needed redemption — they don't have what you have if you are in Christ. They serve. We are sons and daughters. They minister. We inherit. They stand before the throne. We are invited to the table.

No wonder they are still leaning in.



#### WHAT THE CLOUD OF WITNESSES TELLS US

The writer of Hebrews opens the great faith chapter — the catalog of those who trusted God through impossible circumstances — and then says this:

*“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”* — Hebrews 12:1–2 ESV

The cloud of witnesses in Hebrews 12 is primarily the testimony of the faithful who have gone before — the men and women of Scripture whose finished races surround us like evidence. Their lives are the witness. What they endured, what they trusted God through, what they proved to be true about His faithfulness — that testimony now encircles everyone who runs after them. Scripture doesn't tell us explicitly that they can

see the details of our daily lives, and we shouldn't overstate what the text says. But what it does tell us is that they are fully alive, fully conscious, and fully with God. Their race is finished. Ours is not. And the fact that they finished is itself an encouragement.

What Scripture is more explicit about is the angels. Peter tells us they long to look into the grace given to humanity. Paul tells us God's wisdom is being made known to the principalities and powers through the Church. The angelic host is watching something unfold that they have no category for — a grace they were never offered, a promotion they cannot receive, a love that went further than anything the universe had ever seen.

Every time a believer chooses to trust God in the middle of something that makes no human sense — every time someone forgives the unforgivable, loves the unlovable, perseveres when everything says quit — the angelic host is watching something they are still trying to understand. They are seeing the grace of God on display in human lives. And it astounds them.

But here is what grounds all of this: it is not primarily the angels watching that matters. It is God watching. God, who sees every act of faithfulness. God, who notices every quiet choice to walk in the Spirit when the flesh is screaming. God, who is fully present in every moment of every life that belongs to Him.

The angels watching is the illustration of how astonishing the grace is. God watching is the reality that makes the race worth running.



#### FOR THE JOY SET BEFORE HIM

There is a detail in Hebrews 12 that should stop us cold.

Jesus endured the cross “for the joy set before him.”

Not reluctantly. Not grimly. Not with the calm acceptance of someone doing what must be done. For joy. There was something on the other side of the cross that Jesus saw clearly enough that it made the suffering worth it — that made Him willing to endure the shame, the agony, the weight of every sin ever committed by every human being who would ever live.

What was the joy?

Isaiah gives us a clue. Speaking of the suffering servant centuries before the cross, he writes:

*“After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied.”* — Isaiah 53:11

What satisfies Him after the suffering is the outcome. And on the eve of the cross itself, Jesus made His deepest desire unmistakably plain:

*“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am.”* — John 17:24 ESV

The cross was not the end He was focused on. We were.

We were.

Restored. Adopted. Brought home. Seated with Him in heavenly places. The sons and daughters of God running their race, carrying delegated authority, walking in the Spirit, becoming what He always intended them to be. That was the joy set before Him. That is what He saw when He endured the cross.

You were worth the cross to Him. Not as an afterthought. Not as a reluctant cost. As a joy. As the reason. As the thing He kept His eyes on when everything in the physical realm was saying stop.

*“But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”* — Romans 5:8 ESV

While we were still sinners. Not after we cleaned ourselves up. Not after we proved ourselves worthy. While we were still in the very state that caused the problem — He died for us. Because the joy of what we would become was already worth it to Him. Some will read this and feel uncomfortable. It can sound like pride like we are making too much of ourselves, elevating humanity to a place it doesn't belong. But consider what is actually happening when we minimize what God chose to do for us. We are not being humble. We are disagreeing with God about our worth. True humility is not thinking you are worthless. It is thinking accurately. And God — who needed nothing from us, who was complete and glorious long before any of us existed — looked at broken, fallen, rebellious humanity and said: worth it. That is not our estimation of ourselves. That is His. To reject it in the name of humility is to call Him wrong.

God didn't need us to bring glory to Himself. He was glorious before creation. He chose to love us not because He had to, not because He needed something from us, but because that is who He is. And that love — completely free, completely unearned, completely initiated by Him — is exactly what makes it so extraordinary.



#### **WHAT THIS SHOULD PRODUCE**

All of this — the angels watching in astonishment, the grace that goes beyond restoration into adoption, the cross endured for joy, the promotion into the family of God — has to land somewhere. It cannot simply be information. It has to produce something.

And what it should produce is awe.

Not a casual familiarity with the things of God. Not a Christianity lived primarily for our own comfort and benefit — one that seeks its own interests, follows the patterns of the world, lives for self, and never stops to consider that there might be something more. That kind of life — a life of spiritual minimum effort, of faith as a fallback rather than a

foundation, of Jesus as fire insurance rather than Lord — is a life lived in complete ignorance of what was actually purchased at the cross.

Because what was purchased was not just your escape from hell. It was your adoption into a royal family. It was the restoration of delegated authority. It was the reconnection of the circuit. It was access to the Father. It was co-heirship with the Son. It was the indwelling of the Spirit. It was a calling, a purpose, a destiny, a race worth running.

Angels — magnificent, powerful, ancient beings who have stood in the presence of God since before the foundations of the earth — are leaning in to understand what you have been given.

Live like it matters. Because it does.

*“Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be grateful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe.” — Hebrews 12:28 ESV*



## A CLOUD OF WITNESSES AND A RACE WORTH RUNNING

You are not running this race alone.

You are surrounded. The faithful who went before you — who trusted God when it cost them everything, who endured things you will never face, who kept running when every human reason said stop — they finished their race and passed something on to you. The evidence that it is possible. The testimony that God is faithful. The encouragement that the finish line is real.

And beyond them, the whole created order watches — watches a grace that could not have been imagined, a promotion that could not have been predicted, a love that went further than anything the universe had ever seen.

Lay aside the weight. Lay aside the sin that clings. Not because you have to perform for an audience. But because you finally understand what you’ve been given — and a person who truly understands what they’ve been given doesn’t waste it.

Run with endurance. Look to Jesus. Keep your eyes on the One who ran His race for the joy of seeing you run yours.

*The angels are leaning in. God is watching. And what He purchased for you is worth every step.*