

The Angels of the Seven Churches

by David A. Huston

This paper is presented as a response to those who say that the angels of the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3 are the pastors of those assemblies.

Note: This article was presented on March 26, 2004 at a symposium on Apostolic beliefs held at the Urshan Graduate School of Theology in Florissant, MO. No written response to this paper was presented. Instead, a panel was formed consisting of David Bernard, Simeon Young, and James Littles to respond verbally. For a free copy of the cassette tape, please email the author.

THROUGHOUT THE BIBLE, from Genesis to Revelation, angels are found intervening in the affairs of men. They appeared to the Patriarchs, assisted the Prophets, delivered the good news of the birth of Christ, attended to Christ during the days of His flesh, and guided the Apostles during the early days of the Church.¹ But nowhere do we read of a greater flurry of angelic activity than in the Book of Revelation. One-fourth of all the biblical references to angels are in this book. Of its twenty-two chapters, all but three contain references to angels.

The word *angel* is derived from the Greek *angelos* (or *aggelos*). This word seems to be the exact equivalent of the Hebrew *mal'ak*, which links to an Ugaritic verb meaning *to send*.² Hence, the word conveys the idea of one who is sent on a mission or with a message. The Septuagint usually translates *mal'ak* with *angelos*.³ Vine says, "The word *mal'ak* denotes someone sent over a great distance by an individual (Genesis 32:3) or by a community (Numbers 21:21), in order to communicate a message. As a representative of a king, the *mal'ak* might have performed the function of a diplomat. We find an example of this in 1 Kings 20:2 where we read that Ben-Hadad, the king of Syria, sent messengers (*mal'ak*) into the city to Ahab king of Israel, and said to him, Thus says Ben-Hadad... ." Vine goes on to say, "These passages confirm the important place of the *mal'ak*. Honor to the messenger signified honor to the sender, and the opposite was also true."⁴

Messengers were not only sent by earthly individuals, but also by God Himself. First, there were the prophets. For example, 2 Chronicles 36:15-16 says, "And the LORD God of their fathers sent warnings to them by His messengers (*mal'ak*),

rising up early and sending them, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place. But they mocked the messengers (*mal àk*) of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets.... Haggai the prophet referred to himself as the messenger (*mal àk*) of the Lord (Haggai 1:13). Clearly both the word *mal àk* and its Greek equivalent *angelos* can, and in the Scriptures do, refer to human messengers sent by either God or some human agency for a specific purpose. More often, however, these words refer to the spirit beings who serve God as His special heavenly messengers. As with many biblical terms, the contextual framework is the determining factor. In the classic sense, an angel is “a spiritual being, subordinate to God, who serves at God’s command and pleasure to deliver his messages, help his people, and punish his enemies.”⁵

The Question

Due to the use of a single word in Hebrew and Greek to signify both human and divine messengers, in some biblical passages a certain amount of ambiguity arises. As with many ancient words, the meaning must be determined by the contextual framework. In the second and third chapters of Revelation, we read of Jesus delivering important messages to seven churches located in Asia (present-day Turkey). Each message begins with the words, “And to the angel (*angelos*) of the church....”⁶ Whether these angels are human messengers or divine messengers can only be determined by carefully examining the biblical context.

In Apostolic circles, the angels of the seven churches are held by some to be the pastors of these churches. For example, Nathaniel J. Wilson writes: “When we begin to look into what is written, we find that, first of all, these letters were written to the angel of each of the churches. This is not speaking of an angelic spirit which brought the message to the churches, but rather to the individual pastors of those particular congregations. Even here, Christ continues to allow us to understand the importance of local church government and order by binding up these congregations very closely with their pastors, and their pastors with them. Here, Christ shows that there is a ministry and an official God-equipped gift to the Christian church of apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers, and that Christ has a pastor for each local body and makes him its representative and head.”⁷

In his commentary on the Book of Revelation, Paul Dugas writes: “The seven stars (of Revelation 1:16) in His right hand are the pastors of the seven churches. The pastor stands between God and His church acting as a messenger.”⁸ On the surface at least, this would seem to establish a pastoral priesthood in the New Testament, an idea which conflicts with the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. Writing somewhat less dogmatically, Marvin D. Treece states, “It has been surmised that

the *aggelos* (messenger) is a reference to the pastor. ⁹”

Apostolics are not the only ones who believe this interpretation. John F. Walvoord, former chancellor of Dallas Theological Seminary, writes, “These messengers were probably the pastors of these churches or prophets through who the message was to be delivered to the congregation. ¹⁰ It is apparent that a certain degree of equivocation exists in this area. The words *surmise* and *probably* are hardly the currency of sound doctrine.

But are the angels of the seven churches the pastors of the local Asian assemblies or are they something else? Is there a way to resolve the seeming ambiguity and bring clarity to these verses? Perhaps these questions can best be answered by looking at exactly what was going on in the first three chapters of Revelation.

The Origin of the Message

The Book of Revelation begins with the words, “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants... (1:1). We discover in this opening statement both the origin and the intended recipients of the book’s message. The Mighty God, manifested in the flesh as Jesus Christ, is communicating with His servants. As is common in the New Testament, God is depicted here in both His deity and humanity. But as is always the case, the origin of the message is in the deity, whom the man Jesus referred to as His Father. As John the Baptist explained, “The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand (John 3:35). And as Jesus Himself said during the days of His flesh, “The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does (John 5:19-20). All divine things have their origin in the Eternal Spirit we call God.

This is not to suggest that God has two separate or independent personalities or centers of consciousness. The Son is the Father manifested in the flesh (1 Timothy 3:16; John 14:9). When the Bible states that God gave the Revelation to Jesus Christ, it is simply informing us that it did not originate in humanity but in the omniscient Spirit. We see the same concept depicted when Jesus said, “For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself (John 5:26). Life originates in God, but He imparts it to man through His human manifestation, His Son, Jesus Christ. Understanding this distinction between the Father and the Son is vital to understanding the unity of the one God and how He relates to man in this present age. As Paul explained, “For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus... (1 Timothy 2:5).

Who are the Servants of God?

We see then that the message of Revelation originated in the mind of the Spirit, who imparted it to His human manifestation to show His servants. Who then are these servants of God? Since the Bible often defines its own terms, this question can best be answered by examining how the word servants is used throughout the Book of Revelation. For example, in Revelation 2:20, Jesus calls the people of the church in Thyatira My servants. In Revelation 7:3, the sealed members of the twelve tribes are called servants of our God. In Revelation 11:18, those who receive rewards are called Your servants the prophets and the saints. In Revelation 19:2 those who are avenged by God are called His servants. And in Revelation 22:3, the Bible says that in the New Jerusalem His servants shall serve Him. These servants who dwell in the New Jerusalem are also described as those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life and those who have His name...on their foreheads (21:27; 22:4).

These passages make clear that the servants of God referred to in the Book of Revelation are God's own people, the members of His body, the Church. In the first three chapters of Revelation, the servants of God are specifically the members of the seven local assemblies in Asia. In a broader context, however, the term servants of God applies to all of God's people in all ages. In this sense, the Book of Revelation is for all believers today.

As we have previously seen, some believe that the letters to the seven churches were addressed only to the individual leaders of each church. According to this view, the term His servants refers only to local church pastors. This cannot be an accurate interpretation, however, since both the letters and the entire prophetic book were directed toward the whole body of believers. In fact, each letter concludes with these words: He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says **to the churches**. This shows definitively that the intended recipients of the message of Revelation were not exclusively the seven assemblies in Asia or their leaders, but all the churches.

What was the delivery route?

There is nothing unusual about God delivering messages to the seven churches, since He has communicated with His people ever since His first conversation with Adam in the Garden of Eden. What is unusual and intriguing about the messages of Revelation is *how* they were delivered to these churches. The route these messages traveled took a unique turn which we see no other place in the Bible.

To understand how God delivered the Revelation of Jesus Christ to His servants,

we must continue reading Revelation 1:1, which says, "And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John. As is common in the Bible, God sent His apocalyptic message by means of an angel (other examples of this can be found in Matthew 1:20; Luke 1:19, 26; Luke 2:9-10; Acts 5:19-20; Acts 8:26; Acts 10:3; Acts 27:23). What is unusual in this situation is that Jesus did not send the angel directly to the intended recipients but instead to John, the beloved apostle who was imprisoned on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ (1:9).

According to history, the Romans used the small rocky island of Patmos as a penal colony. It was here that John was sent and put to forced labor in the mines during Emperor Domitian's reign (A.D. 81-96).¹¹ Perhaps this explains why John described himself to his audience as their brother and companion in the tribulation (1:9).

To confirm to John that he was to pay close attention to this angel, Jesus made a striking personal appearance and instructed, "What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia" (1:11). The angel was to show John certain future events, and John was to write what he saw in a book. The book that John wrote was to then be sent to the seven Asian churches. Therefore, John's salutation reads: "John, **to the seven churches** which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne" (1:4). Even though John wrote the book, he addressed it as though it were from Jesus ("Him who is and who was and who is to come") and from the **seven Spirits** who are before His throne. "

Who are the seven Spirits?

In Revelation 8:2 John reports seeing the **seven angels** who stand before God.... " In Revelation 4:5 John says that seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the **seven Spirits** of God. Some have said that the seven Spirits of God are actually the sevenfold Spirit of God; that is, seven attributes or expressions of God's one Spirit. But there is no basis for this interpretation from the context, the meaning of the Greek words, or the implications of the words. An accepted approach to interpreting the Bible is to set Scripture beside Scripture. When we do this, we immediately see that there are both **seven spirits** and **seven angels** before God and His throne.

The reference to seven lamps of fire is reminiscent of the seven lamps of the Menorah in the tabernacle of Moses (Exodus 25:37). This suggests that these seven Spirits of God are agents of divine illumination. Yet throughout the Bible, it is the angels of God who serve as divine messengers, communicating God's

messages through dreams (Matthew 2:13), visions (Luke 1:19-22), and by direct appearance and utterance (Matthew 28:2-5). These messengers are sometimes called angels and sometimes spirits. For example, Acts 8:26 says, **Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip**, saying, **Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.** A few verses later we read, **Then the Spirit said to Philip**, **Go near and overtake this chariot** (8:29). The translators have capitalized Spirit because they believe it is referring to the Holy Spirit. But this verse is not speaking of God's Spirit; it is referring to the angel who was directing Philip's evangelistic activities just a few verses before.

Psalms 104:4 says that God makes His angels spirits. Hebrews 1:14 describes angels as ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation (Hebrews 1:14). In Acts 23:9 a group of Pharisaic scribes warned, **If a spirit or an angel has spoken to him, let us not fight against God.** These men knew that to resist the message of an angelic spirit sent from God was equal to fighting against God Himself.

In Revelation 2 and 3, the seven angels are each charged with imparting a portion of the Revelation of Jesus Christ to the churches in Asia. But John wrote that the letter was from both Jesus *and* the seven Spirits who are before His throne. I propose that he wrote his salutation this way because the **seven spirits** (lower case "s") are the **seven angels** who were charged with delivering John's book to the seven churches.

Revelation 1:16 describes Jesus as having in His right hand seven stars. He later explains that the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches (1:20). The Bible frequently uses stars as a symbol of divine beings. For example, Stephen charged the Israelites with worshiping the host of heaven, which included the star of your god Remphan (Acts 7:42-43). The Book of Revelation describes a dragon whose tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth, an apparent reference to the dragon and his angels (Revelation 12:4, 7). At the time of creation, we are told that the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy (Job 38:7). Commenting on this verse, Matthew Henry identifies that morning stars with the blessed angels and explains, *The angels are called the sons of God because they bear much of his image, are with him in his house above, and serve him as a son his father.* ¹²

The term right hand of God is used throughout the Bible as a metaphor for divine authority and power. In His appearance to John, Jesus is letting him know that these seven angels are operating by His power and under His authority. They are not to be ignored. This is not true of all angels, however. For example, Paul warned the Galatian believers, **But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed** ”

(Galatians 1:8). Any angelic messenger that contradicts what God has already established as truth is to be rejected as a false and evil spirit. As Paul cautioned, For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14).

In Revelation 1:19 Jesus instructed John, Write the things which you have seen.... He then told him, To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand... (2:1). Paul Dugas explains these instructions this way: We specifically learn here that the message of the Lord is not given directly to the church laity, but is directed to the angel of the church. ¹³His use of the word *láity* betrays a fundamental flaw in Bro. Dugas' conception of the Church. It was the intrusion of Greek philosophy into Christian thought during the post-apostolic period that gave rise to the division between a so-called clergy and laity. Neither Jesus nor His apostles ever sought to establish such a division. In contrast, they taught that God speaks to local assemblies through a wide variety of spiritual gifts, not a single pastor/messenger.

Revelation 2:1 is not a salutation to an angel or to a person in Ephesus. It is rather an instruction from the Lord Jesus to John to write something down for the angel to deliver. The letter to Ephesus concludes with the words, He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. This statement clearly shows that this letter was specifically for the assembly of Ephesus and in a general sense for all the churches, which precludes the idea that the intended recipient was the angel.

Are angels pastors?

As we have seen, some Apostolics believe that the seven letters were only to the leaders or pastors of the seven assemblies. But the phrase *the angel of the church* cannot refer to a single leader/pastor of the Ephesian church. We know this because Acts 20:17 says that Paul sent to Ephesus and called for *the elders of the church*. The church in Ephesus was led by a group of men called elders, not a single leader/pastor.

Pastoral leadership by teams of elders was the common arrangement in the early Christian assemblies. We see this in Acts 14:23 where Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in every church (Acts 14:23). We also see this practice confirmed in Paul's instruction to Titus to appoint elders in every city as I commanded you (Titus 1:5). Moreover, when giving instructions to those who are sick, James writes, Call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him (James 5:14).

The New Testament uses two words to designate those who lead a local assembly: *elder* (*presbuteros*) and *overseer* (*episkopos*). It never uses the word *angel* (*angelos*). Concerning the Greek word *presbuteros*, W. E. Vine writes: If the

Christian churches, those who, being raised up and qualified by the work of the Holy Spirit, were appointed to have the spiritual care of, and to exercise authority over, the churches. To these the terms bishops, *episkopoi*, or overseers, is applied, the latter indicating the nature of their work, *presbuteroi* their maturity of spiritual experience. The Divine arrangement seen throughout the N.T. was for a plurality of these to be appointed in each church. ¹⁴

The connection between the terms *ēlder* and *bīshop/overseer* can be seen in two letters which were sent to the church in Philippi. When Paul wrote to the church during the first century, he addressed his letter, "To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops (*episkopoi*) and deacons (*diakonoi*)" (1:1). When Polycarp wrote to the same church around the middle of second century, he referred to the leaders as the elders (*presbuteroi*) and the deacons (*diakonoi*).¹⁵ He did not use the term *bīshops* or *ōverseers* (*episkopoi*) as found in the salutation of Paul's epistle. This does not indicate that the Philippians had changed from bishop-leadership to elder-leadership, but that for all practical purposes, the terms *bīshop* and *ēlder* were considered synonymous for the first 100 years of the Church. The writings of Ignatius are the earliest to make a distinction between bishops and elders.¹⁶ The term *pāstor* was not widely used as a title for the single leaders of assemblies until the Reformation.

Since the Ephesian church was shepherded by elders in accordance with the normative pattern established by the first century apostles, there is no biblical basis for concluding that the angel of the church of Ephesus was a pastor, prophet, or any other single individual. This means that it was an angel—a spirit being serving as a carrier of divine messages.

Do churches have angels?

The phrase, "To the angel of the church of Ephesus..." seems to suggest that the Ephesian assembly (and each of the other six Asian assemblies) had its own angel. Is there any biblical reason to believe that God has assigned angels to be in some way associated with the various local assemblies? This idea is not without biblical precedent. For example, we read in Deuteronomy 32:8, "When the Most High divided their inheritance to the nations, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the children of Israel. This is a reference to the separation of the nations at Babel recorded in Genesis 11. The odd thing about the Deuteronomy statement is the reference to the children of Israel, since Israel did not exist as a nation at the time of the Babel incident.

The New English Bible translates this verse: "When the Most High parceled out

the nations, when He dispersed all mankind, he laid down the boundaries of every people according to the number of the sons of God. Rather than referring to the children of Israel, this version uses the words *šōn of God* (*bene haElohim*). This translation is based on the Septuagint and has recently been corroborated by a fragmentary text of Deuteronomy 32:8 found among the Dead Sea Scrolls and now considered to be the oldest copy of this verse in existence.¹⁷

The term *šōn(s) of God* is found only six other times in the Old Testament: Genesis 6:2 and 4; Job 1:6; 2:1; and 38:7; Daniel 3:25. In each of these passages, the term is clearly referring to angels. Though human beings can now become sons of God through the New Birth, in Old Testament days only angels were called sons of God. From a non-Israelite viewpoint, the sons of God were lesser deities or divine beings. Among the pagan nations they were frequently worshiped as their national gods. In Deuteronomy 32:16, the Israelites are said to have provoked the God of Israel to jealousy by worshiping foreign gods. In the New Testament, Paul warns the church against engaging in the worship of angels (Colossians 2:18).

The idea that God positioned angels as spiritual rulers over the nations is brought out in Everett Fox's translation of Deuteronomy 32:8 in which he says, "He stationed boundaries for peoples by the number of the gods."¹⁸ In similar fashion, *The Bible: An American Translation* says, "He assigned the realms of the nations to the various deities. Though perhaps influenced by the author's personal beliefs, the paraphrased *Living Bible* says, "When God divided up the world among the nations, He gave each of them a supervising angel."

Daniel the prophet was visited in Babylon by a messenger sent from God, who told him, "The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days" (Daniel 10:13). A few verses later he spoke of the prince of Greece (10:20). The context shows that this angel was referring to princes who were spirit being, since an earthly prince would have no power to delay an angel of God. In this same visitation the angel also mentioned Michael, one of the chief princes (10:13). He later identified Michael as "the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people" (Daniel 12:1). This description seems to identify Michael as guardian of the people of Israel. In the New Testament Michael is identified as "the archangel" (Jude 9).

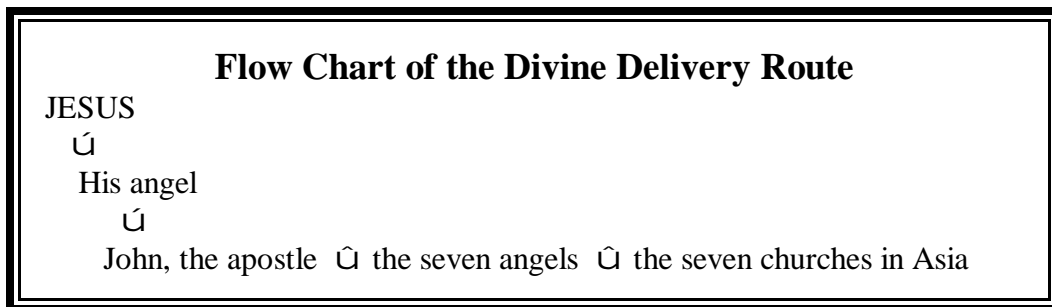
As we look at these passages, we have at least the suggestion that God has assigned angels to be associated with various groups of people. Can we conclude that each New Testament assembly has its own angel? Perhaps we cannot conclude this definitively. But since we do know that the Church is called a "holy nation" and God's "own special people," we cannot rule out this possibility (1 Peter 2:9).

The Divine Delivery Route

Each of the seven letters to the churches begin with the words *And to the angel of the church...* and each concludes with the words *He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.* Clearly, each of the seven angels that stood before God was being dispatched to deliver these divine messages to their seven respective churches.

Let us now put all this together. God sent the Revelation message to the seven churches by sending His angel to John, who was instructed to write down in a book what the angel told him and showed him. Having done this, the words that John wrote down were then to be delivered to the churches by means of the seven angels.

Near the conclusion of this heavenly visitation, John wrote, *Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things (22:8).* Jesus Himself then appeared again and confirmed, *I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches (22:16).* Here is the final confirmation as to who the ultimate intended audience was for this book: not the angels of the churches or the leaders of the churches, but the churches themselves.



Why did God do it this way?

What is particularly unusual and intriguing about the Revelation of Jesus Christ is that it was delivered from God to a man by means of an angel, was written down by the man, and was then delivered from the man to the churches by means of angels. Why did God take the unique step of going through John? Why not simply dispatch the angels directly to the churches or individuals in the churches? To answer these questions, let us establish some background information.

First, by reading the letters to the seven churches, we quickly see that they were in

poor spiritual condition. Only the church of Philadelphia escaped stern warnings from the Lord and even it was said to have little strength and was advised to hold fast to what it had (3:8, 11). Though they had been originally established by apostles, these assemblies may have had no one connected with them at the time of the Revelation who had an apostolic ministry. Let us remember that the Book of Revelation was more than just a message to the seven churches; it was destined to become the concluding book of the Bible.

Second, at the time of the writing of Revelation, John was the last of the Apostles of the Lamb still alive and perhaps the last living apostle who had seen the Lord. He was therefore the best, and perhaps only, man available to complete the New Testament canon. According to the plan of God, the foundational doctrines of the New Testament Church were to be established by the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone (Ephesians 2:20). As the culmination and climactic fulfillment of God's plan for man, the Book of Revelation is an indispensable element of God's foundation of Apostolic Truth.

God certainly could have sent His messages directly to the seven churches by means of the seven angels; but if those messages were to become part of the apostles' doctrine, then they had to be transmitted through an apostle. Peter wrote that we should be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior (2 Peter 3:2). The twelve Apostles plus a few other close apostolic associates such as Mark, Luke, Paul, James, and Jude, carried authority which gave a certain divine credibility to their writings; therefore, the Book of Revelation had to come to the church through the pen and parchment of an apostle. And John was the one who was available and was chosen to accomplish this work.

Third, at the time of the writing of Revelation, John was isolated from the Christian community due to his imprisonment on Patmos. This situation presented the need to have his God-breathed Scripture delivered from Patmos to the Asian churches. The method of delivery selected by God was His seven angels.

Can angels do that?

Is it reasonable to believe that angels would be assigned such a task? Why not? In the Old Testament we see angels escorting Lot out of Sodom (Genesis 19:15); slaughtering the enemies of God (2 Kings 19:35); and shutting the mouths of lions (Daniel 6:22). In the New Testament we see them gathering together God's elect from the four winds (Matthew 24:31); rolling away the stone from Jesus' tomb (Matthew 28:2); delivering a sleeping apostle from prison (Acts 12:7-10); and

striking King Herod instantly dead (Acts 12:23). In the Book of Revelation we see what appear to be the same angels who delivered the messages to the seven churches blowing trumpets (8:2) and pouring out vials of divine wrath (16:1). Psalms 103:20 says that angels excel in strength. Is there really any reason to think that God would not use angels to perform a task as simple as delivering a letter?

Is it possible that the angels are not angels?

For some reason, many Bible teachers and commentators have a hard time accepting at face value that the angels of the seven churches are in fact angels. As we have seen, some maintain that they are the pastors of the churches. This teaching is assumed to be correct due to the preconceived notion that each city-wide assembly had but one pastor, who was the head of that church. When this is believed to be the case, it is an easy leap to conclude that the angels are those pastors. But this conclusion is without a biblical foundation: first of all, because nowhere in the Bible are pastors called angels; second, because everywhere else angels are spoken of in the Book of Revelation the reference is clearly to angelic spirit beings; and third, because the local assemblies founded by the apostles were led by teams of men called elders or overseers, not a single pastor. To the original Christians, the head of every local church was Jesus Christ.

*And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence....
And you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.
Colossians 1:18; 2:10*

Endnotes:

1. Genesis 18 and 19; 28:12; 32:1; 1 Kings 19:5-7; Daniel 6:22; Zechariah 2:3; Matthew 1:20-23; Luke 1:30; 2:9-15; Matthew 4:11; Luke 22:43; Acts 5:19; 8:26; 12:8-10; 27:23.

2. *Vine & Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*, Copyright (c)1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers: *mal ak* OT:4397, messenger; angel. In Ugaritic, Arabic, and Ethiopic, the verb *le ak* means to send. Even though *le ak* does not exist in the Hebrew Old Testament, it is possible to recognize its etymological relationship to *mal ak*. In addition, the Old Testament uses the word *message* in Haggai 1:13; this word incorporates the meaning of the root *le ak*, to send. ”

3. *Vine & Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*, Copyright (c)1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers: In the Septuagint the word *mal ak* is usually translated by *angelos* and the phrase *an̄gel of the Lord* by *angelos kuriou*. The English versions follow this twofold distinction by translating *mal ak* as simply *an̄gel* or *messenger*. ”
4. *Vine & Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*, Copyright (c)1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers: under definition of *mal ak* OT:4397.
5. *The HarperCollins Bible Dictionary*, Paul J. Achtemeier, general editor (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1985), p.33.
6. Revelation 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14.
7. Nathaniel Wilson, *The New P.A.S.T.O.R.S. Course*, section on Eschatology, pp. 36-37.
8. Paul Dugas, *Revelation* (Portland, OR: Apostolic Book Publishers, 1983), p.18.
9. Marvin D. Treece, *The Literal Word: Revelation* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, Inc., 1997), p.34.
10. John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1966), p.53.
11. *The HarperCollins Bible Dictionary*, Paul J. Achtemeier, general editor (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1985), p.812.
12. Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1961), p.568.
13. Paul Dugas, *Revelation* (Portland, OR: Apostolic Book Publishers, 1983), p.20.
14. *Vine & Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*, Copyright (c)1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers: under definition of *presbuteros* NT:4245.
15. Polycarp, *The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians*, Chapter VI.
16. Ignatius, *Letter to the Trallians*, 3:1.
17. Ronald S. Hendel, When the Sons of God Cavorted with the Daughters of Men, *Biblical Archaeology Review*, Summer 1987, p.9-10.

18. Everett Fox, *The Five Books of Moses* (New York: Schocken Books Inc., 1995), p.1002.

Note to the reader:

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