Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Angels: God's Invisible Army, Part 2
Scripture: Selected Scriptures
Code: 1362

Tonight, again, we're going to talk about God's invisible army, the angels. And I want you to have your Bible and pencil and paper handy because there are going to be many things that you'll want to read and write down some of the things we won't have the time to cover in just reading them.

Now what do we know about these fantastic beings? Well, in our last study we began to look at them and we covered the idea of who they are. We talked about the existence of angels, the origin of angels and the nature of angels, and just tried to define for you who angels are. Now I gave you all of that information about their existence, their origin and their nature and...and tonight I want to add one thing that I think is well covered in...in many books and sources and that is there is one other very special angel who doesn't quite fit the mold of all the rest.

In fact, this angel is not like any other angel. He is called the "angel of the Lord," or the "angel of Jehovah." He is very unique. We find this angel only in the Old Testament. He never appears in the New Testament. He begins to appear with Abraham and he ceases from scriptural appearance with Zechariah. So we believe he has to be something very, very special.

Let me introduce him to you. Genesis chapter 16, and this will round out our understanding of angels in terms of who they are. All right, Genesis 16:7; "And the angel of the Lord," and there we're introduced for the first time to this being, "The angel of the Lord found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur. And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, from where camest thou? And where wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai. And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Return to thy mistress and submit thyself under her hands. And the angel of the Lord said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly." Now here was the promise to Hagar, the promise to Ishmael.

All right, let's go, verse 10: "And the angel of the Lord said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly and it shall not be numbered for multitude." In other words, the promise came to Ishmael's seed, that it too would be vast as the promise had come to the seed of Isaac, seed of Abraham. "And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Behold, thou art with child and shalt bear a son and shall call his name Ishmael because the Lord hath heard thy affliction and he will be a wild man. His hand will be against every man, every man's hand against him. He shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren. And she called the name of the Lord who spoke unto her," now watch it, "thou...what?...God seest me." Now here is an interesting thing. This angel of the Lord is called God.

Turn over to Exodus chapter 3, Moses kept the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law the priest of Midian and he led the flock to the west side of the desert and came to the mountain of God, to Horeb, and an angel...No...THE angel. What angel? "The angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked and behold, the bush burned with fire and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt." Listen, "And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush." Now, verse 2 says the angel of the Lord was in the bush. Verse 4 says God called to him out of the midst of the bush. And what did He say? Verse 6: "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob." He was afraid to look upon God. Again the angel of the Lord is called God.

I would like to have you look for a moment at Judges...chapter 6. Judges 6:11, "There came an angel of the Lord, sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite; and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress to hide it from the Midianites. And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him and said unto him, The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor. And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord." Now here again is the angel of the Lord referred to as the Lord.

Look at chapter 13 of Judges, verse 21: "But the angel of the Lord did no more appear to Manoah and to his wife. Then Manoah knew that he was an angel of the Lord. And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die because we have seen...whom?...God." Now here again, and I've shown you four separate incidents, here is an angel, a special angel, called the angel of the Lord who is equated in four places with God.

You say - Well, is this just God? Well, let's find out. Look at Zechariah...that's way over to the end of the Old Testament, next to the last book, Zechariah chapter 1 verse 12: "The angel of the Lord said," listen to this, "The angel of the Lord answered and said, Oh Lord of hosts." Now here you have the angel of the Lord talking to the Lord of hosts. Verse 13: "And the Lord answered the angel." Now here is a conversation going on between the Lord of hosts and the angel of the Lord. And the angel of the Lord is defined as God.

Look at chapter 3, Zechariah verse 1: "And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord. And Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee." Now how interesting. The Lord said - The Lord rebuke thee? Again, here is a conversation between the angel of the Lord and God. Now you say - Who is the angel of the Lord? Well, I believe it's the second person of the trinity, none other than the Lord Jesus Christ as He is known in the New Testament. And here you have a conversation between the second person of the trinity and the first person of the trinity. You have what is called a Christophany, or a theophany, a preincarnate appearance of Christ. Now, mark this, the only member of the trinity who ever manifests Himself at all is the second person. God is a spirit and the Bible says - "No man hath seen God at any

time." The Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, the third person of the trinity is a spirit. He is never manifest. He is never seen. The one person of the trinity who manifests the trinity is..whom?..the second person. In the Old Testament you have a preincarnate revelation, a preincarnate manifestation of Christ as the angel of the Lord. In the New Testament He appears as God in human flesh, the man Christ Jesus. That's why the angel of the Lord never appears in the Bible after the book of Zechariah, because He is now the incarnate Son in the New Testament. This is non other than Jesus Christ.

And if you were to chart the ministry of this angel, the angel of the Lord, you would find that His ministry throughout the Old Testament, and you can make a study of it, parallels the ministry of Jesus Christ in the New Testament toward His people. For example, in the Old Testament the angel of the Lord gives revelation, reveals God's word. He calls. He's the one that called Moses. He's the one that called Gideon. He's the one that called Samson as Christ calls His own in the New Testament. He is the deliverer. He delivers His people through the...the men that He called, Moses, Gideon, Samson, just as Christ is the deliverer, and by His work has delivered His people. He is a protector, in Psalm 34:7 it says, "The angel of the Lord encamps around about them that fear Him and delivers them." And Christ in the New Testament is the one who surrounds us and protects us.

He is even an intercessor. In Zechariah 1, as we read, we find the angel of the Lord interceding for the people of Israel. And Christ is our intercessor in the New Testament. He is the advocate. In Zechariah chapter S, the angel is the one standing before God defending the believers against the attacks of Satan,

precisely what Christ does in the New Testament. In the Old Testament, Genesis 22, the angel of the Lord confirms the covenant with Abraham. And the New Testament, Jesus Christ is the one who sealed the covenant with His blood. In the Old Testament, as we read in Genesis 10, the angel of the Lord comforted Hagar. In the New Testament, Jesus Christ is our comforter.

Now you see here the manifestation of Christ before His incarnation. This is so very important because it proves to us without a shadow of a doubt that the trinity has always existed as the trinity. And it isn't God just playing different parts in history, He's always three in one.

Now having understood that you have the sum of the basic information about the angels. Their nature, their origin, their existence. Now let me take you to the next question - not who are they, but what do they do? What do angels do? What are they doing right now? We're going to get to that. Let's look at the ministry of angels.

And there's a very simple outline that we can follow. It's as clear as it can be. What do angels do toward God, toward Christ, toward believers and toward unbelievers? What is the ministry of angels to God, first of all? Well, first of all, and I'm going to give you several divisions, toward God angels are ministers of worship. Isaiah 6, the angels seraphim, when they were there seeing the vision of the

Lord, said, Holy, holy, holy. They worship God.

In Revelation chapter 4, and here we'll get into their worship precisely. In Revelation 4:6, "And before the throne there was a sea of glass like crystal in the midst of the throne and around about the throne were four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind," and these are very similar to the angelic descriptions given in Ezekiel, he goes to describe them. Tells about their wings and all of that in verse S, and he says they're saying night and day, - Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty who was and is and is to come. That's worship. They give glory, verse 9, and honor and thanks to Him seated on the throne who lives forever and ever.

Now I believe that what you have there is angelic worship. The ministry begins for angels with the worship of God. That's. I believe their primary ministry...is just to adore God, just to worship God.

Chapter 5, verse 8, again the four living creatures and I believe most likely these are cherubim type angels and they join with the four and twenty elders, fall down before the Lamb, every one of them has harps and bowls full of incense and so forth. And verse 9: "They sang a new song. And I beheld and I heard the voice of many angels," verse 11, "round the throne, living creatures and elders, and number ten thousand times ten thousand and thousand of thousands, and their song is worthy is the Lamb," etc. etc. etc.

Now, that's the beginning of their ministry toward God. Because of God's infinite worth, because of God's infinite glory, because of His excellence and because of His beauty. they praise Him without ceasing forever and ever and ever and ever. And I imagine that all the angels do this, but that there are probably some set aside who do nothing but this.

Secondly, angels not only are ministers of worship but of service. And that falls into several categories. Angels are ministers of service. Number one, priestly service. Look at Hebrews 1:7, and this is a lesson in theology, so it will all pull together for you if you hang in there. Going to give you some solid doctrine. Hebrews 1:7, "And of the angels He says, Who makes His angels...your Bible might say spirits, the same word can be translated winds, and I think it would be better....who makes His angels winds and His ministers a flame of fire." The word there for ministers is a Greek word that, well it's the word leitourgos, from which the English word liturgy comes. And it has to do with worship, priestly service. And it refers to something they do in the presence of God and...and it says they're like wind. And I think that's the speed. And they're like fire, and that's the fervency and the intensity. Whatever this priestly service is they're like wind and fire in the presence of God rendering priestly service to Him in His presence.

Now I don't know what all that means. I just know that that's the significance of that verse in its original meaning.

And so they offer Him priestly service. They're called ministers and that is a very unique word having to do with priestly activity.

And priestly means they attend in worship to the throne of God.

Now, secondly, as ministers of service they not only give priestly service, but they are personal messengers. Paul mentioned earlier that the word angelos means messenger. and he was right.

And the Hebrew word malak, which is the word translated angel in the Old Testament, also means messenger. So basically angels are messengers. They provide a heavenly messenger service. In Psalm 103:20, "Bless the Lord ye His angels," listen. "that excel in strength that do His commandments, hearkening to the voice of His word." They're very strong and they're supremely defined as being obedient. They do His word. In fact, it's apparent that they stand around waiting for orders. Apparently they wait until God has specific orders and sends them in dispatch. Luke 1:19, "And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel." Well, who are you, Gabriel? Well, "I am Gabriel who stands in the presence of God." You know what apparently this means? Gabriel stands in the presence of God until he gets his orders. And then he is dispatched to carry them out. Really a beautiful thought.

And, of course, Gabriel was used here in this chapter to bring the message to Joseph and Mary about the coming of God in flesh. The angels are messengers.

At Mount Sinai, when God brought the law, God came down and - wrote it with His finger in the stone. Remember that? The finger of God etched the ten commandments in stone, Galatians 3:19. "Wherefore then serveth the law." What's the law for? We won't get into that argument, just this one point. "It was added because of the transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made." Now listen, "And it was ordained by angels."

Now you say - Wait a minute. What do you mean it was ordained by angels? What part did angels have in it? Well, let's go a step further. Look at Acts chapter 7, now we've got angels connected with the giving of the law on Sinai. In Acts 7:38, "This is he," talking about Moses, "this is he that was in the church in the wilderness," or the ecclesia, the called out group in the wilderness, "with the angel who spoke to him in Mount Sinai." Now here we're introduced to another situation on Sinai, another indication from Scripture that there were some angels there. Verse 52, talks about the law, the prophets, verse 53: "Who have received the law by the disposition of angels."

Look at Hebrews 2:2, and we'll put it all together. It says this, "For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation," etc.

Now here it says the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and it's referring to the law. In other words, if you couldn't get away with disobedience to the law, how do you think you're going to get away with disobedience to the gospel?

Now here you have at least five references, or four, to the fact that angels are involved in the giving of the law. Apparently, Exodus chapter 31 verse 18, God wrote with His finger and then the angels delivered it to Moses. Now that is one reason why the Jews so highly regarded the angels because the angels were a part of giving the law. They were messengers.

Sometimes God sent them with messages to give verbally. sometimes He sent them with a big piece of rock, and they were involved in both times. Moses went down the first time and got mad and broke it all. Had to go back and God had to rewrite it again. Second edition was delivered by angels as well as the first edition.

And so, the angels offer priestly service toward God and they also offer a messenger service for God. Third thing. and this is very interesting, they are agents of God's rule in the world. God wants to carry out certain governmental things and they are busy doing that. For example, they restrain wickedness. We always think of the Holy Spirit as the restrainer, and I think that that is right. The Holy Spirit is the restrainer. But there are ways in which the angels restrain people. I mean, literally, physically prevent people from doing evil. Whereas the Holy Spirit's restraint might be more internal, an angel might just stop somebody...just slam them in their tracks. Say - What...what gives you that idea?

Well, Genesis 18, there was the meeting of the angels there with Abraham, later on the angels went over to Sodom. And chapter 19, they arrive in Sodom, verse 1: "Two angels came to Sodom at evening. Lot sat in the gate and he met the angels." Now, there was a little bit of interest in the city because the city was given over to homosexuality and the men in the city saw those beautiful angels and said - Let's get those guys. And...and they said - That's not going to happen...Lot pulled them in his house. And the angels said to Lot - We've got to get out of here and we're going to take you with us cause this place is going to be destroyed. And Lot hung around and he hung around. Verse 10:

"The men put forth their hand and pulled Lot into the house to them and shut the door and they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they wearied themselves to find the door."

Now what happened? The angels restrained their evil. The angels smote them and made them blind. Now I don't know how they did it but it might have been just two angelic fingers. Now I don't know how permanent it was but they did it. Now angels restrain wickedness in a very physical way, a very physical way.

The second thing they do as agents of God's rule in the world is to control natural elements. In Revelation chapter 7 verse 2, "An angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God, he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea and said, Hurt not the earth, the sea or the trees till we've sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." Now these angels were getting ready to bring the plagues of Revelation on the world. And they had control of the natural forces, they're about to turn the sea to blood, they're about to turn the...the fresh water to blood, they're about to kill the grass and the flowers, they're about to create chaos in the heavens so that the stars fall. They had control of the elements. They were able to make great huge hailstones come down to the earth. They have control over the elements. In Revelation 8 and 9. you have the angel blowing trumpet. And verse 7 says: "The angel sounded and hail and fire mixed with blood." Verse 8: "The second angel sounded and a great mountain burning with fire cast into the sea." Apparently some kind of...of meteor. And verse 10: "The third angel sounded and a star fell from heaven."

And this pollutes the fresh water. "A fourth angel sounded and the sun was smitten, a third part of the moon, a third part of the stars," verse 12.

And here are these angels and terrible things happen in judgment as a response to the angels power over elements. Revelation 16: "And the second angel poured out his bowl in the sea and it became like the blood of a dead man and every living soul in the sea died. And the angel poured out his bowl in the rivers and fountains of waters and they became blood." Verse 8: "The fourth angel poured his bowl on the sun and power was given to him to scorch men with fire. Fifth angel." verse 10, "poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast and the kingdom was full of darkness and they gnawed their tongues for pain and blasphemed the God of heaven because of the pains and the sores, repented not. The sixth angel poured his bowl upon the river Euphrates and the water was dried up."

Now you can see that angels have power over the elements when it is given to them by God. And they're going to bring about the most terrible things in the tribulation as a result of that power that God gives them. They restrain wickedness and they control natural elements when God so desires.

Now beyond that in governing or helping God to govern, they control nations. Behind the human scene, people, in our country, just like every country in the world, there is a spiritual conflict. Demons are fighting for the control of our...of our country, of our society and of the purposes of history. And angels are counteracting that control. God has holy angels active behind the scene of governments. All you have to do is read Daniel, chapter 4, and that would be a starting place. and you get the idea that this...this is really going on, Daniel chapter 4. Let me read you a couple of verse, you don't need to look them up, write them down, Daniel 4:13, 17: "I saw in the visions of my head, upon my bed, and behold a watcher, even a holy one came down from heaven." Now one of the titles by which angels are called is watchers Angels are called watchers. They watch. Verse 17; "This matter is by

the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones to the intent that the living may know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men and gives it to whomsoever He will and sets up over it the basest of men." If God runs everything, even the worst men are in government because God has allowed it. And angels watch over these governments, carrying out the plan of God. They are active in the unfolding plan of history...holy angels. Now we know demons are active, no less active are God's holy angels.

So, how do they minister to God? Number one, by priestly service, this is their worship aspect. And then by a messenger service. And then in terms of governing, aiding God in carrying out His will in the world. And...and, people, this...this twofold ministry of worship and service also must include judgment which we'll get to in a little while.

Now secondly, the ministry of angels not only toward God, but toward Christ. And this has to be one of the most beautiful and meaningful studies that you would ever do. How do angels or did angels minister to Jesus Christ? And this opens up to my understanding, so very much about the angels.

First of all, they ministered at His birth. They were involved in almost everything that He did. Well, let's face it, if He was the angel of the Lord, He was the commanded-in-chief of the angelic hosts. Right? In fact, at one point in His life He said - If I wanted to I could call many legions of angels as I want...really. Why? Because He was commander-in-chief. Twelve legions of angels is a drop in the bucket. If one angel could kill 185 thousand Assyrians, imagine what 12 legions of them would do. And they were busy attending to Him. He was the angel of the Lord. He had ministered among them.

First of all, they were around His birth. When you read about the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in Luke chapter 1, you read about it this way:

"In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth." Now God dispatches Gabriel who's standing around waiting for orders. He comes zooming out of heaven. He zaps down to this virgin Mary, Joseph and the angel says: "Hail thou who art highly favored, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among woman. And when she saw him she was troubled at the saying and considered in her mind what manner of greeting this should be." What that means is she couldn't quite handle what was going on. She said -What kind of an introduction is this? Hi, Mary. you highly favored, blessed among women. "The angel said, Don't be afraid, Mary, you found favor with God."

The first thing the angels did around the birth of Christ was they predicted it. They were God's revealers. They were the first ones to tell Mary and Joseph that the child was coming, that God was coming into the world. They predicted it. And then you know what they did? When it happened, secondly, they announced it. That was exciting. They announced it. And that's in Luke chapter 2. I love this. "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field." Now shepherds are

just plain folks. These guys, you know, they haven't had a whole lot of angelic hosts land in their field. They've just been out there with the sheep, that's all they've ever seen. "And they're looking over their flock at night and all of a sudden an angel of the Lord comes to them." And this is not the angel of the Lord, don't mistake it. The proper rendering is - an angel. "From the Lord came unto them and the glory of the Lord shown round about them and they were panicked." This is very unlike the circumstances they ever knew. And the angel said again - Don't be afraid. Why do the/angels always say that? Because to see an angel was a fearful thing. When they manifest themselves it's remarkable.

Don't be afraid, I have good news for you. For us? And they announced: "Unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior who is Christ the Lord."

"And suddenly," verse 13 says, "there was with that one angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying. Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace toward men of good will."

Here the whole sky is full of glorious angels and these shepherds are just standing there looking at all of it. This is incredible.

The angels not only predicted it, they announced it. They were around at His birth.

Second, they were around during His life. Have you ever studied the life of Jesus Christ to see what the angels did as He lived in the world? They were very busy taking care of Him. I think that one of the most beautiful concepts, one of the most beautiful characteristics of God is the tenderness and the care that God showed toward Jesus Christ in dispatching the angels to minister to Him. And the reason I say that is because that gives me such a confidence that God also dispatches the angels to care for me cause He sees me in Christ as significant even as Christ. But think from the very earliest years in Matthew 2:lg, "When Herod was dead, behold an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt." This is what he said: "Arise and take the young child and His mother and go to the land of Israel, for they are dead who sought the young child's life." It's time you can leave, you don't need to fear anymore.

If you go back to Matthew chapter 2, verse 13, it was an angel of the Lord who appeared and told him to go to Egypt in the first place, to get out of the way of Herod who would destroy Him. So angels warned them to get out, angel came back and told him when it was time. Angels are involved in the protection and the care of Jesus in His life.

I love Matthew 4:8. It says, in the middle of the verse, "The promise of God, He shall give His angels," this is in the mouth of Satan, he was quoting it, but nonetheless it's true. "He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee. In their hands they shall bear Thee up lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against the stone."

The devil said to Him - Hey, You can jump off the temple here because You have a wonderful promise and that is the angels are going to take care of You. He was right. The devil's right, you know. Just when he needs to be...to get his point across.

Later on in Matthew 4:11. after Jesus had been tempted for forty days, it says: "The devil leaveth Him," verse 11, "And behold, angels came and ministered to Him." After the forty days of fasting, here came the angels. You say - Well, what did they do when they got there? I don't have any idea. But I imagine they had a nice banquet for Him. I imagine they brought some food and did whatever needed to be done to comfort and meet His needs...ministering to Him.

In Luke 22:43, it says, and here Jesus is agonizing at the end of His life in the garden, "Father, if You will, remove the cup from Me, nevertheless, not My will but Thine be done. And immediately there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him."

You know, it's an exciting thing just to see that practical ministry of the angels to Jesus. You know, there have been times in my life when I've said - Lord, it's about time that..I..I think maybe I need one of Your angels to come down here and hold me up.

And I think there's probably been times in my life when His angels have strengthened me. So you see, the angels attended Jesus in His birth, and they attended Him in His life. And I love this, too, they attended His resurrection.

Did you know something interesting about what I just said to you? Did you notice the absence of them at His cross? You see, that's when He could have called them. But what? But He didn't. Aren't you glad? Do you know what would have happened if He'd have called 12 legions of angels in the garden and wiped out everybody? You and I wouldn't be here. In fact, we'd be in hell for eternity. I'm glad the angels had a day off that day.

Now after His resurrection, what did they do? Let's look at Matthew 28...they announced it, Matthew 28:1, "In the end of the Sabbath, it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, here comes Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulcher."

And - bang..there was an earthquake. You know why there was an earthquake? Now listen to this. There was an earthquake because an angel of the Lord descended, came and rolled back the stone from the door and sat on it. That's why there was an earthquake.

Angels make earthquakes, sometimes. "His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow, and for fear of him the keepers did shake and became as dead men." They flat-out fainted dead...out like lights. "And the angels answered and said to the women...what?...fear not," again.

They must have introduced themselves almost every time with that statement. Fear not, it's only us again. Everything is under control. "He's not here," I love it, "He's risen! And the angels said, Come, see the place where the Lord lay." Hey, you know what the angels did around the resurrection?

They announced it. They're great announcers. They had a message and they gave it.

In fact, inside the grave, according to Luke 24, two men stood by in shining garments. They were there right there inside the grave. attending the empty tomb. They announced it.

You know, angels weren't around at the cross. There is the reality that angels cannot personally comprehend redemption since they're not experiencing it, because holy angels have no reason for redemption. They're holy and fallen angels have no possibility of redemption, for they once were holy and forsook it. So they don't really understand. But I think it's kind of interesting, in Revelation, that they do join in the song, because even what they don't understand they can praise God about. We spend a lot of our life doing that, don't we? Why can't they? Do you realize that we praise God for things we don't understand that angels absolutely understand? Why can't they praise God for things we understand that they don't understand? They'd like to know about the cross, I Peter 1 verse 12, "Unto to whom it was revealed that not unto themselves but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Spirit, sent down from heaven." Which things? What things? "The gospel, the angels desire to look into." They love to look into the gospel, to better understand it. And I believe in Revelation ? they join in with us in singing, "Worthy is the Lamb,"

though they can't experience redemption, they can praise God for it.

Now, lastly, related to Christ, they're around at His second coming. It doesn't take much of a Bible scholar to know that. Look at Acts 1:11...having left, ascended into heaven, Jesus is gone and the disciples are standing on the hill looking up. Two men stood by them in white apparel. We know who these are, angels again.

And they say in verse 11: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven, this same Jesus who is taken up from you, shall...what?...so come in like manner as you've seen Him go." Here they are predicting the second coming. Angels predict the second coming. You want to know something else? They not only predict the second coming, they accompany the second coming. Matthew 25:31, "When the Son of man shall come in His glory and all the holy angels with Him." They not only predicted it, they're going to be involved in it. And in Jude 14 it talks about Him coming with His angels. They were there at His birth. They were there at His temptation. They were there through His life. They were available at His death, but He didn't want them. They were there at His resurrection. They were there at His ascension, announcing He would return. They are now worshiping Him and when He comes back they'll be with Him. These are important creatures, friends, these holy angels.

And so they minister to God and they minister to Christ. Thirdly and I'm just going to begin this but I want you to see a few things, they minister to believers. They minister to believers. You say -John, how do they minister to believers? So many ways. Hebrews 1:14 says, "They're sent forth to minister for them who shall be the heirs of salvation." Now we are the heirs of salvation and angels are sent to minister for us. You know something interesting? Did you know that angels love you? You say - Well, what do you mean, how do you know they love me? Well, if we can take Daniel 10:11 and broaden it, the angels said to Daniel, "O Daniel, a man greatly beloved." If an angel could love Daniel. the only way that angel could love Daniel was because God loved Daniel. And if we can assume that angels love what God loves then angels love us. And what does that say? But that their service to us is not unwilling but loving. They minister to believers whom they love. And when I think about this, the fact that I have the Holy Spirit in me, ministering to my spiritual need, and I have angels around me, taking care of the physical, that's kind of exciting.

You say - Well, how do they...how do they minister to Christians?

Number one. and I'll give you several, the first thing they do in regard to believers is just look a lot. They just kind of look at us. And that must be interesting. They're checking us out all the time. They keep watch over us. I don't suppose we ever get out of the watchful eye of angels. First Corinthians 4:9 says: "For I think that God hath set forth us, the Apostles, last, as it were appointed to death, for we are made a spectacle to the world and to angels and to men." We're spectacles to angels, he says, we Apostles. They watch the Apostles. You say - Well, how do you know they watch the whole church? How do you know they watch all Christians? Ephesians 3:10, "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places," those are names of angels, "might be made known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." The angels watch us to see how God is wise. They look down and they say - Look what God did in that life. God is wise. How wise He must be. And they turn and praise Him. They watch us to see manifestations of God's wisdom so they in turn can worship and praise His name. The angels watched the Apostles. They watch the church.

You know what else they watch? They especially watch the women. Did you know that? You say - In what way? Well, it's kind of interesting. First Corinthians 11:3, you knew there would be a verse for this even though you wish there weren't, that says this: "I would have you know the head of every man is Christ, the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God." Now the chapter's about submission, subjection.

Now look at verse 10: "For this cause ought the woman to have authority on her head," wow, this is a...interesting, "because of the angels." Now what do you mean? The angels are watching, we'll get into this chapter in a few weeks, I'm praying the rapture comes first. But...that's a tough chapter anyway. He says here that women are to be in subjection. Basically the idea is women are to be in subjection to their husbands because the angels are watching for that.

You say - Well, if the angels are watching, what are they looking for? They're looking to see if you're submissive. And what if I'm not? Well, the Lord may give them a message to bring to you. What form will it take? I don't know, only you can tell.

You know something? If you feel bad, ladies, you know who else they watch very specifically? They watch the preacher. They watch me. Now sometimes I don't mind. Paul says to Timothy, Timothy was a preacher, I Timothy 5:21, "I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels, you observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality. Don't ordain anybody too suddenly, just take a little wine for your stomach's sake," etc. etc. etc. He's giving all these orders for how to be a minister. "Elders,rule well, don't muzzle the ox while he treads." That is, you know, you should take care of the preacher and...and take care of his needs, etc. Don't accuse an elder. And he goes on with all this ministerial instruction and says - You better behave because you're doing this before the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels who are watching it all. So the elect angels are checking me out.

You say - Well, what if you don't live up? Well, they'll probably come down with a message for me, too.

And, you know. another thing that the Bible teaches about what the elect angels do is that they're going to witness the reward of believers when we go to the time when the Lord rewards us, apparently they're going to be there looking at it all, checking it out. So they're going to be...they're looking at us now, they're watching the Apostles in the past, they're watching the church now to see the wisdom of God, they're looking for evidence of the woman's subjection to the man' they're watching the preacher and they're witnessing the reward of believers in the future. They're very busy occupying themselves with just looking at us.

Now, in response to what they see, they act in our behalf. In response to what they are aware of, they act. You say - What do they do? Well, I think this is important, first of all they reveal truth. Did you know that most of the book of Daniel, and most of the book of Revelation was delivered by angels? They don't write it, they aren't the authors of it, God is. The Holy Spirit is the inspiration of it. But they're the agents that deliver it. Now the angels revealed the Word to us, let me hasten to add something lest you be confused. The only thing we know that angels ever delivered is here. So if somebody comes up and says - I met an angel the other day, and he gave me a message. Watch out. The angels only delivered THIS word. All right, so angels are...are watching, and angels are revealing.

Thirdly, and this is beautiful, in the life of a believer angels are guiding. For example, Philip was having a big meeting and, I mean. it was packed out, big crowds up there in Samaria, he was preaching away...fantastic things were happening, confrontation with Simon the sorcerer and he was

preaching away and repent, and all of this. And, man, they were having a super time. And it says in verse 26: "And an angel of the Lord said to Philip, Arise and go to the south, to the way that goes down from Jerusalem into Gaza, which is desert."

Now this angel comes to him and says, 'God wants you to go to Gaza.' You know what my reaction would have been? Gaza? That's desert! Right, that's what I just said, that's desert. Why do you want me to go there?

It doesn't say. Just says - Go. And the thing that's amazing to show you the spirit of Philip, verse 27 says: "He arose and went."

How'd he get there? Well, that's interesting. Apparently he just went this time. "Behold a man of Ethiopia," here he is sitting down there in the desert, just looking at his sundial and saying -Well, I'm not too sure I understand that...what's going on. And a man of Ethiopia comes by, a eunuch of great authority and he has this wonderful conversation and he leads him to Christ. How exciting.

An angel guided Philip literally into the place of service for the Lord.

Chapter 10 of Acts, interesting, there was a man named Cornelius, devout man, verse 3: "An angel of God came to him and said, Cornelius, and, of course, when he looked on him he was afraid, and he said, What is it, Lord? He said God heard what you were praying and he wants you to meet a guy named Peter." And the angel gave him the whole message, guided him, told him exactly what to do.

Later on in chapter 11, same thing followed through. Verse 13: "He showed us how he had seen an angel in his house who stood and said, Send men to Joppa, call for Simon, surname Peter," etc. and he'll tell you how to get saved. So angels were used again to guide. In both of those cases though the final specifics of the gospel came by the Holy Spirit...in the case of Philip and in the case of Cornelius. Angels are guides of the believers.

Now listen, part of guiding, and I think you have to realize this, part of guiding is chastening. When the Lord guides us, He may have to whip us a little to get us in line. And in II Samuel, I'll take just a second to show you this, in II Samuel 24...Again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel and He incited David against them to say, Go number Israel. Here's David's big sin, he's going to count how strong his army is, not depending on God but on the number of people he has in his army, so he numbers them. Verse 10: "David's heart smote him after he had numbered the people, and David said to the Lord, I have sinned greatly in what I have done and I beseech You, Lord, take away the iniquity of Thy servant, I have done very foolishly." He was counting on his own military might rather than God. Verse 13: "Gad came to David and told him, Shall seven years of famine come unto thee and thy land or would you rather have three months before your enemies while they pursue you, or would you rather have three days of pestilence?"

You've got a choice. You can have seven years of famine, three months of enemies running you down or you can have three days of pestilence. Which one would you pick? I'd pick the shortest. Right? "And David said, I am in deep distress, I don't want to fall into the hand of a man, I'd rather fall into the hand of the Lord. So, the Lord sent a pestilence on Israel from the morning to the time appointed, and died of the people from Dan to Beer- sheba seventy thousand men." I don't know how many women and children. And listen, how did it happen? "And when the angel stretched out his hand on Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord repented of the evil and said to the angel who destroyed the people, It is enough." Here God had to send an angel to take life, chasten God's servant David.

So, angels watch, angels reveal, angels guide. Let me give you one other thing and then we'll pick it up from here next time.

angels provide. They provide in a physical sense. Hagar in Genesis 21 needed food. The angels provided it. A beautiful passage. and we've already covered that so we won't again. but in Psalm 78 we read about angelic provision for Israel. It says this in verse 23: "Though He had commanded the clouds from above and opened the doors of heaven," and this is the wilderness, wandering "rained down manna on them to eat and given them the grain of heaven, man did eat angels food." You knew that's what they ate in the wilderness. People say - What was manna? It's angel-food cake. That's what it was. Angels' food. That's kind of interesting. The angels were again the agents of delivering physical food.

I love this story. I love this man...Elijah. First Kings 19, verse 5: "He lay and slept under a juniper tree," poor Elijah, just knocked off all the priests of Baal, heard that one woman was after him and he panicked. He beat it out of town and God never meant an 80-year-old prophet to run like that, and he ran out of gas and stopped under a tree and he says: "Lord, take my life, I want to...I want to be dead. I'd rather have suicide.

it is enough," he says in verse 4 - I've had it! "Then he lay down and slept under a juniper tree." He needed to sleep because he's too old to run like that - that's not good. He's sleeping there and an angel touched him and said unto him - Lunch time, arise and eat. And he looked and behold there was a cake, baked on the coals and a cruse of water at his head and he did eat and drink and lay down again. And the angel of the Lord came a second time and touched him and said - Get up and eat again. The journey is too great for thee. And he arose and did eat and drink and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights. Some food. Fantastic. There's ole Elijah, and God sent His angel, tapped him on the shoulder, gave him everything he needs.

Now, people, angels watch us. They have in the past revealed God's truth. They guide us even to the place where if need by they'll carry out an act of chastisement. And when God sends them to meet our needs, they provide for us. That's only the beginning. And you come back next time and we'll see

what else they do. Let's pray.

Our Father, we...we know that everybody does not have the ministry of angels. Some of us who know and love the Son, who know and love the Lord Jesus Christ have the ministry of angels now. There are others in the world who...who will see the angels when they come in judgment, to carry out the execution orders of the God of the universe. We know Jesus Christ is coming in flaming fiery judgment with His angels. We know that the Apostle Paul has said when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, those who will be punished with an everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power. I'm so glad, Father, that instead of having to face the angels as executioners, the angels are looking over my life, caring for me, loving me, that You've sent them as ministers to those who are the heirs of salvation.

That You've placed Your Holy Spirit in me to guide me from the inside, Your angels to lead me from the physical side. And I would pray for anyone, any dear one, whom You love and for whom You died who is here tonight who...who does not know Your own ministry in their life, the ministry of Your Spirit, the ministry of Your angels, but rather faces that terrible day when the angels shall come as executioners. May it not be. We thank You that You made the sacrifice on the cross in the person of Jesus Christ, You've borne our sin, because of that by faith in that one person and His work we fall into the place of everlasting blessing. It's my prayer tonight, Lord, that if there's any person in our midst who has never received Jesus Christ and never known what it is to have this whole universe of spiritual beings ministering to him that that might be the case for them tonight because they would put their faith in Jesus Christ. We pray in His name. Amen.

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