

Documented Angels

A DEFINITIVE LOOK AT ANGELS AND THEIR MINISTRY IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

“The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.”

(Psalms 34:7)

PREFACE

There are over 313 mentions of angels in the Bible. The ministry of angels throughout the Bible is quite a study and rather exhaustive. In short, angels are used in a variety of ministry such as giving messages to God’s servants, they deliver, they fight battles, they perform judgments, and in certain situations they cook food as was in the case with Elijah (1 Kings 19:5-8). In heaven, there are armies that ride horses (Rev. 19:14) and even divisions that ride in chariots (Psa. 68:17). Remember, it was a fiery chariot that picked up Elijah, taking him to heaven (2 Kings 2:11). In the book of Revelation, we see that angels differ in size and ability (Rev. 18:1,21). We also see that there are angels that can stand in the sun and not be affected by the natural power of its energy (Rev. 19:17).

In Abraham’s life, the Lord and two angels walked into his camp and dined with him (Gen. 18:1-2). These two angels looked like men, ate like men, and were the size of normal men. But, as the residents of Sodom found out, they were not normal men. They had been given authority to call down fire and brimstone upon the whole region (Gen. 19:22-24). These heavenly ministers obey the commands of the Lord, listening to the voice of His word and do what has been directed from the throne – whether in blessing or in judgment.

In short, the creation of angels and their ministry came forth from the heart of a loving God. Though out of the artistry of a loving creator came forth these beings, the creation of man was different and brought forth a depth of God’s love that creation had never seen. Man, who hasn’t seen the face of God was created in the image of God to be the sons of God, yes, His children. Without seeing the face of God, man was given a planet (earth) to learn to develop and to harness the power of its wealth, and by faith, love the Lord, walking pleasing before Him. As we delve into this study it is important to understand that angels marvel at the creation of man. The great psalmist penned the words, “*what is man that you are*

mindful of him” (Psalms 8:4). What did the angelic armies think as the creator took on flesh and blood, became a man, and then died at the hands of those He had created in order to purchase them back from death. In other ways, I think that angels also marvel at the strength in man who believes and worships God whom they have never seen with their natural eyes. Angels are real. When we get to heaven we will see and know with perfection the reality of God’s creation called angels. Without further adieu, let us study angels in the book of Acts.

References in Acts

(Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria)

Acts 1:10 Acts 5:19 Acts 8:26 Acts 10:3 Acts 12:7
Acts 12:23

(To the Uttermost Parts of the Earth)

Acts 27:23

ANGELS A CLOSER LOOK

(Acts Part I: Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria)

1) Two Angels, Standing with the Disciples, Deliver the First Message to the Apostles Concerning the Lord’s Return.

Acts 1:10-11

*“And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men -- stood by them in white apparel;
Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven?
this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.”*

Note: Jesus declared at the beginning of His ministry that angels would be ascending and descending upon the son of man (John 1:51). It is interesting to note that Jesus did not say, “*upon the son of God*”. He came and ministered as a man, and thus made it clear that the angels would come and go, bringing help from the throne of God to Him - as a man. Even so it is with the body of Christ, we are men, and the angels are sent to assist the Lord’s body in the earth.

In this first chapter of church history, two angels were standing with the Lord as He commissioned His disciples. Thus, we see that heaven was not trying to hide the ministry of angels and their role in assisting the church. As the Lord ascended, the disciples stood there with their mouths open in wonder and amazement. It was in this moment that the angels performed their first act of ministry to the newly formed church. With the Lord taking His rightful place in heaven, the angels and the church were established on the earth to perform His will. The angels had been ministering with the Lord for three years of extremely exciting, but intense, battles against the powers of darkness. Now, the Lord was returning and these battle proven angelic ministers delivered an extremely important message to those standing there (as well as to all who were to come), *“He is coming back exactly as you watched Him go.”* I have seen pictures of the cloud created by an atomic explosion. I have a feeling that the cloud that received Jesus in Acts 1 as well as the cloud that returns Him to the earth was and will be more dramatic in glory and in size. Jesus had conquered and the Father’s plan was in motion, and the angels of God were set to help the church as they had helped Jesus during His earthly life and ministry.

2) Dramatic Deliverance and Direction

Acts 5:19-20

“But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, Go, -- stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.”

Note: Angels behold the face of the Father and from the throne of His glory they are sent. In this passage, the angel of the Lord, endued with God’s faith and power, walked into the prison and delivered the apostles out. The apostles did nothing for their deliverance, they simply received the power of God working on their behalf. After delivering the Lord’s apostles, the angel then ministered a word of wisdom to them concerning the direction of God for their ministry, *“go, stand and speak..”* The Holy Spirit also uses these ministers of the Lord in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Truly, the apostles were tasting of the powers of the world to come (Heb. 2:5, Heb. 6:5).

3) Help in the Harvest: Ethiopia

Acts 8:26

“And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go

toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.”

Note: When Nicodemus came to Jesus at night, the Lord began to speak directly to his heart concerning his need (man’s need) of being born again. In His sermon to the ancient scribe of Israel, Jesus likens the work of the Holy Spirit in salvation to the moving of the wind. I am quite sure the Lord remembered walking into the Garden of Eden on the fateful day, seeking Adam and Eve, in order to impart a message of hope concerning their salvation. The Bible says that He came during the cool wind of the day. So it is here, in the life and times of Philip the Evangelist, where a wind of salvation was blowing towards Ethiopia and God needed a man to move in that breath of His Spirit. It is in this operation of salvation that the Lord sent an angel to assist Philip. We often limit our understanding of the preaching of the gospel to the work of the evangelist only and forget that without the ministry of angels and the gifts of the Holy Spirit the harvest of the nations would not successfully come in. Therefore, angelic ministry is a critical part in the harvest of the nations.

“And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits (winds), and his ministers a flame of fire.”

Hebrews 1:7

4) Help in the Harvest: The Gentiles

Acts 10:3

“He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius.”

Note: Though angels are active in the harvest of the nations, they do not preach the gospel directly to men. The role of preaching belongs to man. As mentioned above, the wind of God’s Spirit was blowing for the gentiles, and an angel was sent to assist in making sure that all the pieces and players were put into their proper position. In this passage, we see the ministry of angels and the ministry of men, and the mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit. It is proper to note, that without the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the ministry of angels, this door to the gentiles would never have opened. Thus, making it clear why the Lord commanded His body of believers to be baptized in the Holy Spirit, fire, and power. Everything about a move of God is supernatural. Whether it is the ministry of angels

or the operations of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the Lord's body upon the earth must be clothed in His supernatural ability.

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

Acts 1:8

5) Dramatic Deliverance: Peter

Acts 12:7

“And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.”

Note: Standing before the throne of the Father and the exalted Jesus, this angel received an impartation of power for Peter's deliverance. Remember, the church was in constant, fervent prayer for his release. As the angel entered the prison, the light of his countenance lit the prison up, while the guards remained spiritually dumb and blinded to the whole event. The presence of the glory of God upon the angel caused the chains binding Peter to fall off. This story is a testimony of fervent, corporate prayer and the power that belongs to the church - if she will rise up and engage in it.

6) Angels Administer Judgment: Herod Dies

Acts 12:23

“And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.”

Note: The Bible talks about angels with swords (1Chron. 21:16). What a thought! A flaming sword guarded the way to the tree of life in Genesis chapter 3. An angel with a sword was sent to strike Balaam as he rode his donkey on route to curse the Israelites (Num. 22:25). So it is here, except, we see a man who actually was struck by the angel. It must have been an amazing sight to see a king fall off his throne with a slice through his body causing his insides to fall out. There is a God in heaven, and He does rule!

“And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them

that know understanding”

Daniel 2:21

“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 ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.”

Daniel 4:17

(To the Uttermost Parts of the Earth)

7) Dramatic Protection: Paul to Rome

Acts 27:23

“For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve,”

Note: This passage is the first mention of angelic ministry outside the boundaries of Israel. The Bible gives all believers, spread across the nations, the assurance of heaven’s help through the ministry of God’s celestial servants. Paul’s love for the Lord and the assurance of his relationship with the Lord brings a wonderful nuance of understanding concerning the ministry of angels. The presence of the angel, emanating God’s faith and power, brought such encouragement to Paul concerning his relationship with the Lord.

Though this is the last account of the ministry of angels in the book of Acts, it is by no way the last account of their labors on behalf of believers who would come after Paul. Even the writer of this study on Acts has experienced the faithfulness of the Lord’s presence through the help and ministry of angels. Truly, the Lord has never left us as orphans (John 14:18). He is with us (Matt. 28:20).