Angels of God II New Testament

Michael Heiss-October 6, 2012

Good morning once again, everyone! Before I get into the New Testament, I do want to wrap up a couple of things from last time that I don't think I did properly.

If you will remember, we talked about the battle with the General Braddock in the French and Indian War. I read you part of what that great Indian chief said, but I didn't include the part of prophecy. When I say *prophecy* I'm using the word as actually used by that Indian chief. Just think about prophecy when I read you this:

"Seeing you were under the special guardship of the Great Spirit, we immediately ceased to fire at you. I am old and soon shall be gathered to the great council fire of my fathers in the land of shades, but ere I go, there is something bids me...

What is that something?

...speak in the voice of prophecy. Listen! The Great Spirit protects that man...

pointing at Washington, about 1770, some 15 years after the battle

...and guides his destinies—he will become the chief of nations, and a people yet unborn will hail him as the founder of a mighty empire. I am come to pay homage to the man who is the particular favorite of Heaven, and who can never die in battle."

(therealamericanhis-story/gw.com)

He then went on to say that

Washington was never born to be killed by a bullet! I had seventeen fair fires at him with my rifle and after all could not bring him to the ground! (americanclarion.com)

Amazing testimony that a man who knew nothing about the God of Israel, nothing about Jesus Christ, yet, was moved to say that directly in person to George Washington some 15 years after that battle. Amazing concept! Amazing story!

Angels are agents

The second thing I wanted to wrap up is the concept of *agency*. We talked about this in part one of about the angels who came to Sodom and the angel said:

Genesis 19:13—the angel speaking to Lot: "For we will destroy this place, because great is the cry of it before the face of the LORD. And the

LORD has sent us to destroy it." There you have the angels going to destroy the city.

Verse 24: "Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire, from the LORD out of heaven. And He overthrew those cities..."

- Who did it?
- Did God do it?
- Did the angels do it?

In effect the angels did it! But there's this thing called 'agency.' God uses agents to carry out His will. When God commands someone to do something, you could say God did it, or you could say the angels did it; either way you are correct, because of 'agency.'

One of the funniest stories I ever heard about that is of the little old lady who is very religious and always prayed to God every day. Next door there were a couple of brat-nosed kids always mocking her. One day she's praying for a loaf of bread because she didn't have much money. The kids smiled at each other and ran to the store and bought a loaf of bread and threw it in the window. All of a sudden: 'Hallelujah! Thank You, Lord God.' She's praising God and the kids run up and say, 'Na, na, na, na! We did it, not God!' She then got up and looked at them and said, 'Well, God sent it! Even if He used the devil to bring it!' Agency!

We will see two days from now how, literally, God used the devil to carry out His purpose in dealing with Job. Satan never even knew what God was all about. It's a fascinating story. This is agency! You will see in the New Testament, 'The Spirit said to him...' It was God communicating. God uses the agency of His Spirit. He's composed of spirit—His Holy Spirit, His power. Sometimes Luke—in writing Acts—will say, 'The Spirit said this, or the Spirit did that.' Or you could say that God did it, or the Lord did it; either way it's the same.

Angels are our cheering section

One final comment before we get on to the New Testament, I mentioned the fact that angels are our 'cheering section.' Let's see that, a most inspiring Scripture when you think about it:

Luke 15:4—Jesus speaking: "Which man of you who has a hundred sheep, and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the

wilderness and go after the one that is lost... [and he rejoices when he finds it] ...searching until he finds it?" Verse 7: "I tell you that likewise, there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner who repents. Or what woman who has ten coins, if she should lose one, does not light a lamp and sweep the house, and search diligently until she finds it?" (vs 7-8).

Verse 10: "I tell you *that* in like manner, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents." The angels are watching us! There's no doubt about it! If they're rejoicing—colloquially speaking—if we were to think about it, 'Ata boy, Ata boy! Keep on! Keep going!' They are for us, actively for us!

God's angels in the New Testament

> John the Baptist

God announces the coming birth of John the Baptist, and does so with some power, too, not just with words.

In Luke 1 we find Zacharias and Elizabeth were old. Zacharias, of course, was a priest, they were advanced in years, and according to the chronology of the rabbis Luke would have been about age 60, if they have it right. An angel appears to Zacharias in the temple.

Luke 1:11: "Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. And when he saw the angel, Zacharias was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him, 'Fear not, Zacharias, because your supplication has been heard; and your wife Elizabeth shall bear a son to you, and you shall call his name John'" (vs 11-13).

He goes on to explain about joy, exaltation, how he should not be drinking wine, but notice what Zacharias says to the angel, v 18: "...'By what *means* shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife *is* advanced in years." There was something in Zacharias' voice that did not set well with the angel. It wasn't just an inquisitive question. It was a *doubting* one. Some kind of a deep doubt, because look at what the angel said:

Verse 19: "And the angel answered *and* said to him, 'I am Gabriel... [right off the bat we know who this angel is; not just any angel, this is Gabriel] ... who stands in the presence of God..." (vs 19-20). Gabriel is not a commanding angel; not a warring angel; he's not in detachments. He's at the throne-room of God, perhaps chief of all messengers.

"...and I was sent to speak to you, and to announce this good news to you. But behold, you shall be silent and unable to speak until the day in

which these things shall take place, **because you did not believe my words**, which shall be fulfilled in their time" (v 20). God didn't command Gabriel to do that. Gabriel, on his own authority did that. He knew his bounds: he knew he had authority from God. He knew that this was in his jurisdiction to do that.

> Jesus Christ

God wasn't through with Gabriel, God sends him again, this time to Mary, v 26: "And in the sixth month of her pregnancy, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the lineage of David; and the name of the virgin was Mary. And after coming to her, the angel said, 'Hail, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you; blessed are you among women." (vs 26-28).

You can read what Gabriel says to Mary and how Mary responds to Gabriel. God used the angel Gabriel twice:

- to announce the birth of John the Baptist
- and that of Jesus Christ

—most interesting!

Angels ministered to Jesus; this is the story of the great temptation with the adversary the devil—Satan. Remember, Jesus hadn't eaten or drunk anything for 40 days and 40 nights. He was weak!

Matthew 4:10: "Then Jesus said to him, 'Begone, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him alone shall you serve." Then the devil left Him; and behold, **angels came and ministered** to Him" (vs 10-11). Jesus was in a weakened physical condition, and no doubt God sent angels to help Him at this state. Not only are they there at the temptation, the night before He was crucified, again, God sent an angel to help Jesus. The night of the Passover:

Luke 22:39: "Then He left *the house and* went, as He was accustomed, to the Mount of Olives; and His disciples also followed Him. And when He arrived at the place, He said to them, 'Pray *that you* do not enter into temptation.' And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw; and falling to *His* knees, He prayed, saying, 'Father, if You are willing to take away this cup from Me; nevertheless, not My will, but Your *will* be done'" (vs 39-42).

Here is Jesus, yes God in the flesh, but a human being suffering the pulls of the flesh, all that we endure. But He did not give in. Just to make sure, God provided some insurance; He provided an angel to Him and this angel appeared to Him:

Verse 43: "Then an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him." Angels were provided by God to strengthen His own Son. He will send angels to strengthen us in the same way.

> Joseph, the husband of Mary

This is most interesting, because the angel appears in a dream. There's something important about dreams. We know that the angel appeared to Mary saying that she was going to give birth, that she was going to become pregnant, that the Almighty would overshadow her (Luke 1). Joseph, at first, wasn't buying it, though—*I don't know about this, something is going on here!*

The birth of Jesus Christ was as follows, Matthew 1:18: "And the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: Now His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph; but before they came together, she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit." To understand the concept of a Jewish marriage at the time of Jesus, it was in two phases: We might think of it as an engagement and then the marriage. But no, the engagement was a marriage—a legally binding marriage—but they were to live apart for one year before they came together to consummate the marriage.

From a secular point of view, to make sure that no 'hanky-panky' was going to occur during that year—you can imagine what Joseph was thinking—God's got to clue him in, because Joseph knows nothing about what's happening.

Verse 19: "And Joseph her husband, being a righteous *man*, and not willing to expose her publicly, was planning to divorce her secretly. But as he pondered these things, behold, an angel of *the* Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary to *be* your wife, because that which has been begotten in her is of *the* Holy Spirit. And she shall give birth to a son, and you shall call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins" (vs 19-21).

Verse 24: "And when Joseph was awakened from his sleep, he did as the angel of *the* Lord had commanded, and took his wife to *wed*." Within the Jewish community at that time, a dream was something special. If God appeared to you in a dream, or an angel appeared to you in a dream, this was magnificent. This was really special. God knew that. He didn't have to appear to Joseph as God or as an angel, just in a dream. The Talmud talks about that one of the best things that could ever happen to you is to have a good dream, meaning *one from God*. This was a dream from God. Again, an angel appears. It's just that way.

We're going to look at the resurrection.

Jesus has been crucified, been in the grave, the women are weeping—they don't know which end is up—so they come:

Matthew 28:1: "Now late on the Sabbath, as the first day of the weeks was drawing near, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to observe the sepulcher. And in the morning suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone from the door, and sat upon it. Now his appearance was as lightning, and his raiment white as snow. And for fear of him, those who were keeping guard trembled, and became as dead men. But the angel answered and said to the women, 'Do not be afraid; for I know that you are seeking Jesus, Who was crucified..." (vs 1-5). God used an angel to address the women who came to Jesus that first day of the week.

> Philip

Now let's see how angels interacted in the preaching of the Gospel, and they were active with Philip; fascinating story!

Acts 8—we know that the first few verses was a great confrontation between Peter, John and Simon Magus. Peter certainly put Simon in his place, but after that episode had occurred, after the apostles had gone through preaching the Gospel in Jerusalem:

Acts 8:26: "Now an angel of *the* Lord spoke to Philip, saying, 'Arise and go toward *the* south, on the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza, which is *in the* desert.' And he arose *and* went...." (vs 26-27). What did Philip think he was going to find? or see? *We have no idea, an angel didn't tell him!* If the angels did tell him, it's not recorded. But Philip being a good obedient disciple of Jesus, he went:

"...And behold, an Ethiopian man, a eunuch, one in power under Candace, the queen of *the* Ethiopians, who was over all her treasure, had come to worship in Jerusalem" (v 27).

Remember, we talked about agency, v 29: Then the Spirit said to Philip... [This is God communicating with Philip, not just a separate entity called the Spirit]: ... 'Go near and join yourself to this chariot.' And when Philip ran up, he heard him reading the words of the prophet Isaiah and said, 'Do you understand what you are now reading?'" (vs 29-30). The eunuch invites him into the chariot to explain it to him.

They saw water, v 36: "And as they were going down the road, they came upon a certain *pool* of water; and the eunuch said, 'Look, there is water! What is preventing me from being baptized?'.... [the

eunuch asks] ...And Philip said, 'If you believe with all your heart, it is permitted.'..." (vs 36-37). They went down and they were baptized (v 38).

Verse 39: "But when they came up out of the water, *the* Spirit of *the* Lord caught Philip away; and the eunuch saw him no longer..." So, all of a sudden Philip was no longer there, he was in another town! Just like that! and he was preaching the Gospel.

Here's an example of an angel who was talking to Philip. You notice that angels don't preach the Gospel, but the leave the service of Jesus Christ to preach the Gospel. Angels are not really going to preach the Gospel until the end of time when finally there really is no more active church and they're all persecuted or killed, except for a few that are in a *place of safety*. Then we're going to have angels flying forth sounding God's message. But until that time they really don't preach the Gospel, but they lead God's servants to preach that Gospel.

> Angels save apostles

We're familiar with this story, but it's always inspiring to read, Acts 12:1: "Now about that time, Herod the king stretched forth *his* hands to persecute some of those of the Church; and he killed James, the brother of John, with the sword" (vs 1-2).

Remember in part one we were saying that God allows some to die and others not. 'My ways are higher than your ways; My thoughts greater than yours.' God has His reasons why He allowed James to be killed. James was a mighty apostle, and according to the stories that I read about him, he was very powerful; perhaps a little too powerful for Herod.

Verse 3: "And when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to take Peter also. (Now those were *the* days of Unleavened Bread). And after arresting him, he put *him* in prison, delivering *him* to four sets of four soldiers to guard him with the intent of bringing him out to the people after the Passover *season*" (vs 3-4). Peter was in a very secure setting. He's not going to get out, 'We're not going to let this guy out.'

Verse 5: "As a result, Peter was securely held in the prison, but fervent prayer was made to God by the Church for him. Now when Herod was about to bring him out, during that night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains; and guards *standing* before the door were keeping the prison. But suddenly an angel of *the* Lord stood by *him*, and a light shined in the building. And after striking Peter on the side, he roused him, saying, 'Get up! Hurry!' And the chains fell off *his* hands" (vs 5-7). Colloquially speaking, 'Pete, get up! Come on, Pete, wake up! We got to

go!'

Verse 8: "And the angel said to him, 'Put on your clothes and fasten your sandals.' And he did so. And he said to him, 'Wrap your cloak around you and follow me." Doesn't matter how secure a setting the king may have, when God sends an angel to get Peter out, he's going to get Peter out, rest assured!

Verse 9: "And he followed him, going forth, but did not realize that this was really happening by *the* hand of the angel; rather, he thought he was seeing a vision."

Just think about this! If you're sound asleep and all of a sudden somebody touches you, nudges you, 'Peter, come on, get up, we're going.' He didn't know whether it was a vision; he didn't know whether this was real; he didn't know what was going on, except, yeah, follow the angel.' So, Peter followed the angel.

Verse 10: "Now, after going past a first guard and a second, they came to the iron gate that leads into the city, which opened to them by itself... [to the visible eye it looked like it opened by itself] ...and after going out, they went on through one street, and *then* the angel suddenly departed from him." In other words, the angel said, 'All right, Peter, I'm out of here, you know what to do now, I'm going'—and he went.

Apostles imprisoned

God's angels saved Peter, but not just Peter. The high priests and the Sadducees didn't like the apostles preaching in the name of Jesus—not at all!

Acts 5:17: "Then the high priest rose up, and all those with him, being of *the* sect of the Sadducees; *and* they were filled with anger. And they laid their hands on the apostles and put them in *the* public hold" (vs 17-18). I don't know if this included all of the apostles, but certainly a very large number of them.

What happens, v 19: "But during the night an angel of *the* Lord *came and* opened the doors of the prison; and after bringing them out, he said, 'Go and stand in the temple, *and* speak to the people all the words of this life." (vs 19-20).

'All right, guys, get back out there and do your job.' Amazing! God's using angels to do this! Angels are very prominent in the Bible; they are His messengers. They carry out His mission. We should be thankful for those angels, really, I think, more than we are, with more gratitude than we show!

> Angels carry out God's judgment

This is Agrippa, Acts 12:18—right after the

angel took Peter out of the prison: "And when daylight came, there was no small disturbance among the soldiers *over* what had become *of* Peter. Now when Herod sent for him and *he* was not found, he questioned the guards *and* commanded *that they* be led away *to death....*" (vs 18-19). A really nice generous ruler, full of compassion, this Herod Agrippa.

Verse 20: "Now *there* was bitter hostility between Herod and the people of Tyre and Sidon; but with one accord they came to him and, having gained Blastus... [an influential individual] ...who was over the king's bedchamber, as a friend, they sought peace because their country was nourished by the king's." So, they kind of bit their lip, bit their tongue and went to hear Herod.

Verse 21: "And on a set day, Herod, who had put on royal apparel, sat down on the tribunal and made an oration to them. And the people cried out, 'It is the voice of a god, and not of a man!" (vs 21-22). Ut-oh! That's a No, No! I remember reading vaguely about some man who was supposed to enter a temple and sit down there as though he is God, calling himself God. We can read what his fate is going to be. Well, Herod's fate wasn't much better.

Verse 23: "And immediately an angel of *the* Lord smote him because he did not give the glory to God; and he was eaten of worms, *and* died." My best guess, medically speaking, God allowed a bacterial infection to just take over and destroy his insides. That's just a guess on my part, but probably if you had a doctor there, that's probably what the doctor would have said.

Notice that an angel of the Lord smote him. He was beneath God's dignity. God says, 'I'm not going to do it. Angel, you go do it.' And the angel did!

> Paul

Even the Apostle Paul could use the help of angels and encouragement. After the trial of Paul in Judea, and he was before Festus and Agrippa, and he appeals to Rome:

Acts 26:32: "Then Agrippa said to Festus, 'This man might have been released if he had not appealed to Caesar.'

Acts 27:4: Now, after setting sail from there, we sailed below Cyprus because the winds were contrary.

Verse 7: "And after many days of slow sailing, and having great difficulty passing by Cnidus, *for* the wind hindered us, we sailed below Crete near to Salmone."

We read about the storm and they're about

to be shipwrecked and everybody was scared not knowing what to do.

Verse 21: "Then, after a long period of silence, Paul stood up in their midst *and* said, 'O men, you should have listened to me and not have set sail from Crete, and you would have been spared this disaster and loss; but I exhort you now to be of good cheer, because there shall not be any loss of life among you, only of the ship. For *there* stood by me this night an angel of God, Whose I am and Whom I serve, saying, "Have no fear, Paul. You must stand before Caesar; and behold, God has given to you all those sailing with you." So then, be of good cheer, men; for I believe God, that it will be exactly as it was told to me" (vs 21-25).

So, the angel is saying, 'Paul, you have work to do and God will spare you, and because of you, God will spare all the men with you. God sent His angel to reassure Paul. Throughout this Bible, we see over and over again God sending His angels.

> Christ's ascension

This is not, perhaps, a dramatic episode, but it is Jesus' final ascension to heaven from this earth. We know that He was crucified and resurrected.

Acts 1:3—Luke is writing: "To whom also, by many infallible proofs, He presented Himself alive after He had suffered, being seen by them for forty days, and speaking the things concerning the Kingdom of God. And while they were assembled with Him, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem but to 'await the promise of the Father, which,' He said, 'you have heard of Me. For John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit after not many days.' So then, when they were assembled together, they asked Him, saying, 'Lord, will You restore the kingdom to Israel at this time?' And He said to them, 'It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father has placed in His own authority..." (vs 3-7). And He tells them to preach the Gospel.

Verse 9: "And after saying these things, as they were looking at *Him*, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.' Now while they were gazing intently up into heaven as He was going up..." (vs 9-10). Just picture this, here are the disciples, Jesus is talking to them and He's teaching them. They're looking at Him intently, and all of a sudden up He goes and they're just staring in a daze almost.

As they were staring, the angels come, "...two men in white apparel suddenly stood by them, who also said, 'You men of Galilee, why do you stand *here* looking up into heaven? This *same*

Jesus, Who was taken up from you into heaven, shall come in exactly the same manner as you have seen Him go into heaven'" (vs 10-11).

Of course, the angel didn't tell them that it might be some 2,000 years from hence that you'll see Him again. But that didn't matter, He was going to come as He left—and, indeed, He will!

> Chosen angels

Now let's see what Paul says about 'chosen angels.' This is just a statement, almost in passing, but it's interesting how many statements like this we find. Here's Paul talking to Timothy:

1-Timothy 5:21: "I charge you before God and *the* Lord Jesus Christ and <u>the elect angels</u>, that you observe these things without prejudice, *and let* nothing be done by partiality." Here's Paul saying, 'The Father is present, the Son is present, and even the angels are present.' So conscience was Paul of the angels of God.

> The future

This is a going to be a glorious event and a most gratifying event to think what Jesus is going to do for us before the angels. If you think about this long enough and hard enough, you'll be so thankful and so grateful; I know I am every time I read this:

Luke 12:8—Jesus is saying: "And I tell you, everyone who shall confess Me before men shall the Son of man also confess **before the angels of God**; but the one who has denied Me before men shall be **denied before the angels of God**" (vs 8-9).

If you can picture this at the resurrection, whether it's on the Sea of Glass, wherever it is, there's going to come a time when we're all going to be assembled and our elder Brother, Jesus Christ High Priest of Nazareth, is going to be looking at us, turning looking to the Father and say, 'Father, behold My brothers, Your children.' What an emotional time that is going to be! And He'll do it in the presence of angels!

Angels reveal the book of Revelation

We have the book of Revelation, and what I read is that God used an angel to reveal it. I know about the book of Revelation, I've read it a number of times, but I read right over this:

Revelation 1:1—where God is wrapping everything up: "*The* revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to Him, to show to His servants the things that *are* ordained to come to pass shortly; and He made *it* known, **having sent** *it* **by His angel** to His servant John."

So, even though John saw things in vision with Jesus Christ talking to Him, God is telling us that this book of Revelation, in essence, was revealed through an angel. How does God work through His angels? Over and over again!

Separating the righteous from the wicked

This is the parable of the tares, Matthew 13:40: "Therefore, as the tares are gathered and consumed in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this age. The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all the offenders and those who are practicing lawlessness; and they shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father..." (vs 40-43).

The angels are going to come and they're going to separate—down through the ages, even in the Great White Throne Judgment—the righteous from the wicked. God's going to do it *through His angels!*

Glory of angels

Revelation 10:1 "Then I saw <u>another strong</u> <u>angel</u> coming down out of heaven, clothed with a cloud, and *with* a rainbow on his head; and his face *was* like the sun, and his feet *were* like pillars of fire." Maybe not as strong as the risen Christ, God in all His glory I grant you, but WOW! is this a magnificent description of a magnificent being.

Daniel 10:5—Daniel speaking: "Then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man was clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz. His body also was like beryl, and his face looked like lightning. And his eyes were like lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet in color were like polished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude" (vs 5-6). These are powerful, glorified angels who serve God, helping people in the Old Testament times, helping in New Testament times, and helping us!

Tomorrow we're going to look at *ranks of angels*. We're going to see Michael in contrast to Gabriel, what their functions are. Michael is a powerful angel. We will look at seraphim, cherubim and how they function, what they look like. In part four we'll reserve for the adversary himself, the hateful Satan the devil and how he turned and what his problem was. If you want, think of the five *I's!* (Isa. 14) of Lucifer.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Genesis 19:13, 24
- 2) Luke 15:4, 7-8, 10

- 3) Luke 1:11-13, 18-20, 26-28
- 4) Matthew 4:10-11
- 5) Luke 22:39-43
- 6) Matthew 1:18-21, 24
- 7) Matthew 28:1-5
- 8) Acts 8:26-30, 36-37, 39
- 9) Acts 12:1-10
- 10) Acts 5:17-20
- 11) Acts 12:18-23
- 12) Acts 26:32
- 13) Acts 27:4, 7, 21-25
- 14) Acts 1:3-7, 9-11
- 15) 1 Timothy 5:21
- 16) Luke 12:8-9
- 17) Revelation 1:1
- 18) Matthew 13:40-43
- 19) Revelation 10:1
- 20) Daniel 10:5-6

Scriptures referenced, not quoted: Acts 8:38

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