

Angels of God III Ranks of Angels

Michael Heiss—October 7, 2012

Good morning once again, everyone! We're ready for our third episode or section on angels. But just before we really get into that, I do want to comment on something Fred was bringing out over lunch yesterday about whether we're Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, *we all say* that we believe in the Bible, *we all say* our beliefs are based on the Bible, which to some extent is true, but it is always colored and filtered through *tradition*—whether it's Catholic tradition, Protestant tradition or Jewish tradition. I want to show you in one of the sections on angels where God had to specifically get the ball rolling to break one of those traditions.

Acts 10—I want to emphasize this. This is the story, the episode of where Cornelius had been praying to God, and God sends an angel to Cornelius to send for Peter. Why did God have to do it like this?

If you will recall, Israel of old was always going a whoring after other gods. Always living the way the nations round about them lived. God punished them again and again. Finally, under Ezra and Nehemiah they learned the lesson not to 'follow the way of the heathen.' But they followed it to such an extent that they cut off almost all communication with non-Jews—Gentiles. They took it to the point that they wouldn't associate with them, wouldn't speak with them unless they had to, certainly would not eat with them or bring them into their own homes. This condition, this mentality, went clear down to the time of Jesus and the apostles.

We're going to pick it up here in Acts 10:1: "Now *there* was in Caesarea a certain man named Cornelius, a centurion of a band that is called *the Italian band*, a devout man who also feared God with all his house, both in giving many alms to the people and *in* beseeching God continually *in prayer*. He clearly saw in a vision, about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming to him and saying to him, 'Cornelius.' But as he fixed his eyes on him, he became afraid *and* said, 'What is it, Lord?' And he said to him, 'Your prayers and your alms have gone up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and call for Simon who is surnamed Peter'" (vs 1-5).

It would never dawn on Cornelius to do this, because Cornelius knew that he was a Gentile, a Roman, and had no dealing with Jews until God sent His angel to say, 'Cornelius, you go send for Peter.' That was one-half of the lesson here. Then God is

not going to do this by an angel, but God—or Jesus Christ Himself—is going to have to deal with Peter, to prepare Peter to receive this Gentile. What do we have?

Verse 9: "And on the next day, about the sixth hour, as these were journeying and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray. And he became very hungry and desired to eat. But while they were preparing *the meal*, a trance fell upon him" (vs 9-10).

We're not going to read all the rest of it, but you know there was like a sheet that was dropped down three times filled with all kinds of animals—clean and unclean—and Jesus said, v 13: "... 'Arise, Peter, kill and eat.' But Peter said, 'In no way, Lord; for I have never eaten anything *that is* common or unclean'" (vs 13-14). That's true!

Finally, God tells Peter, v 15: "... 'What God has cleansed, you are not to call common.'" Then Cornelius' emissaries arrive at the gate. But God had to use an angel to 'break the ice' between Jew and Gentile. It's very, very interesting here how God did that.

Next, we're going to look at a Scripture that should give us a little bit of comfort at the end, when the mighty angels of God are coming to reap vengeance on those who persecute the Church. This is what Paul says to those Christians who are suffering persecution:

2-Thessalonians 1:5: "*Your faith and endurance are* "a visible testimony of the righteous judgment of God, so that you may be counted worthy of the Kingdom of God, for which you are suffering. Since *it is* righteous with God to recompense tribulation to those who are persecuting you; and to you... [Christians] ...who are persecuted, rest with us, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with His mighty angels, dealing out vengeance with flaming fire upon those who do not know God, and those who do not obey the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (vs 5-8).

Here will come Jesus Christ with His mighty angels and they will wreak havoc and vengeance upon the *beast power* and *all those who persecute the Church!* Let us be thankful for these angels.

Now we're going to look at some different angels—Michael, Gabriel, seraphim and cherubim. We'll get a good feel for it. As far as we know, today at this time—and for the last 2,000 years—

there has been only one being named an archangel. There might well have been another one, a long, long time ago, but if so, he blew it! He disavowed God and separated himself from God. Whatever he was, he was a cherub, an elected cherub that covered; a very powerful position, a glorious being. Today he's not called an archangel, only one is.

The Archangel MICHAEL

Jude 9: "But Michael the **archangel**, when he was personally taking issue with the devil, disputing about the body of Moses, did not presume to pronounce a reviling judgment against *him*, but said, 'The Lord Himself rebuke you!'"

We know of only one angel that is called an 'archangel' today. Does God have others that are archangels? Perhaps! Maybe! But if so, we're not told.

1-Thessalonians 4 describes the coming of Jesus Christ, the resurrection, but also has a very interesting remark about the 'voice of an archangel. 1-Thessalonians 4:16: "Because the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with *a* shout of command, with *the* voice of an archangel and with *the* trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first." Whose voice is this?

Do you remember old movies of the calvary riding to the rescue? There was the captain or the colonel in charge. When they were going to charge, what did the colonel say? *Bugler, sound the charge!* The colonel didn't sound the charge. The captain, the major, the general didn't. *The bugler did!*

So, here comes Jesus Christ at the head of the troops. Is He going to say in a way, 'Michael, sound the charge!?' *I think so!* I can't prove that, but why say 'with a voice of an archangel'? There's only one archangel, and I suspect he's a warring angel. We'll see what his name really means. He's the one who is going to be right there, and I'm sure that he'll be at the right side or slightly behind—whatever it is—but I personally believe that he's going to sound that charge. Of course, at the command of God; he's not going to do it on his own.

Michael means *one; one who is like unto God; one who is like God*. That is a power name, a very powerful name for a powerful archangel. Let's see Michael in a sense leading the charge. We will see Michael in action.

Revelation 12:7: "And there was war in heaven; Michael and his angels warred against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels warred. But they did not prevail, neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, the ancient serpent who is called the Devil and

Satan, who is deceiving the whole world; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him" (vs 7-9). This doesn't say who cast him down. Jesus made an interesting comment, similar to this, in Luke 10. This episode in Rev. 12 occurs later; it hasn't happened, yet.

But Jesus says in Luke 10—the first several verses refer to the Lord sending out 70, two by two, to preach the Gospel. When you go into a house do this, don't do that. They came back and they rejoiced.

Luke 10:17: "Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, 'Lord, even the demons are subject to us through Your name.' And He said to them, '**I beheld Satan fall as lightning from heaven.**'" (vs 17-18).

Who threw Satan down the first time? *Again, this language does not give the impression that Jesus did it!* Or the One Who was the God of the Old Testament—Jehovah. He could have. He certainly had the power to do it; no argument there. But the language seems to say 'I watched while Satan went down.' I suppose it could say, 'I threw him down and then I watched as he went all the way down.' I suppose you could say that. I don't think so! I think He said, 'I watched while he was thrown down.

Who's left to have done it? *The One Who became the Father certainly had the power to do it! Oh, did He ever have the power to do it!* But we're not told that He did. In fact, He's in the background most of the time. He's not the executive branch, that was turned over to the second member of the Godhead, the One Who became Jesus Christ.

- Who is left after that?
- *The only one I can think of is Michael!*
- Would Michael have the power and the might to take hold of the adversary?
- Could he have done that?
- Could any angel do that?
- *Yes, an angel could do it!*

In fact, we know of an angel who is going to do it!

Revelation 19:20 "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet who worked miracles in his presence, by which he had deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. Those two were cast alive into the Lake of Fire, which burns with brimstone; and the rest were killed by the sword of Him Who sits on the horse... [the returning Jesus Christ] *...even the sword that goes out of His mouth; and all the birds were filled with their flesh*" (vs 20-21).

Revelation 20:1: "Then I saw an angel descending from heaven, having the key of the

abyss, and a great chain in his hand. And he took hold of the dragon, the ancient serpent who is *the* Devil and Satan and bound him *for* a thousand years. Then he cast him into the abyss, and locked him *up*, and sealed *the abyss* over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer until the thousand years were fulfilled; and after that it is ordained that he be loosed *for* a short time” (vs 1-3).

Jesus Christ didn't do this. It was done under His command that's for sure, but there was an angel who did this. I don't know how angels do this, but I know that in the flesh—humanly speaking—haven't you ever said, or haven't you ever heard someone say, 'If I could just get my hands on you...?'

Well, somehow this angel got his hands on the serpent. I don't know how one spirit picks up another spirit—I don't quite know how that works—but in some way this angel grabs hold of him, picks him up, throws him down and locks him in.

If this angel could do that, do we doubt that Michael could have done it at the command of God? *Oh, I think so!* Personally, I'm of the opinion that it was Michael. Am I dead sure? *NO!* Nevertheless, that's what Michael is for; he is the *fighting angel*, one who is like unto God.

Just put it in the back of your mind and if we find out that, no, that Jesus Christ did it, that's okay with me, too; it doesn't matter. But the language doesn't indicate that God did it. The language indicates that Michael did it. We'll find out, and, in fact, maybe that's one of the questions we'll get to ask Michael.

Michael is more than that. He seems to be the angel administrator for God. He defends and protects Israel.

Daniel 10:10—Daniel speaking: “And behold, a hand touched me, which set me trembling upon my knees and the palms of my hands. And he said to me, ‘O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, give heed to the words that I speak to you and stand upright, for to you I am now sent.’ And when he had spoken these words to me, I stood up trembling. Then he said to me, ‘Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard. And I have come because of your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days. Then lo, **Michael, one of the chief princes**, came to help me; for I had been there alone with the kings of Persia” (vs 10-13). Here's an angel who had trouble getting through.

We don't realize how full of the universe these angels and demons are. Think of WWII

between the Germans and the Russians, there were power beings at work urging both sides on. Here was Greece and Persia, and there were mighty angels involved here; almost fighting in heaven at the same time. He said, “...the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days...” *I could not get through until Michael came!* It took Michael, the mighty warring angel of God.

Verse 20: “Then he... [this same man] ...said, ‘Do you know why I come to you? And now I must return to fight with the **prince of Persia**.... [a mighty demon] ...And when I go forth, lo, the **prince of Greece** shall come.... [another mighty demon] ...But I will show you that which is written in the Scripture of Truth. (And there is none who holds strongly with me against them, except Michael your prince” (vs 20-21).

So, Michael is the prince of Daniel, the prince of Israel. In fact, we find that specifically stated in Daniel 12:1: “‘And at that time Michael shall stand up, **the great prince** who stands for the children of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even until that time....”

Michael is shown here as “...the great prince...” of physical Israel. But I think Michael is also *the great prince* of the *spiritual children of Israel*. As Michael is the prince of the physical people of Israel, I think we're going to find may well be the prince of all of us, too.

Revelation 2:1: “To the angel of the Ephesian church, write...” Here was an angel in charge of Ephesus.

- v 8: “And to the angel of the church of *the* Smyrneans write...”
- v 12: “And to the angel of the church in Pergamos, write...”
- v 18: “And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write...”

It seems that each of these churches and congregations have an angel assigned to them, to be over them.

Revelation 3:1: “And to the angel of the church in Sardis, write...”

- v 7: “And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia, write...”
- v 14: “And to the angel of the church of *the* Laodiceans, write...”

Did these angels have another angel over all angels in charge of them? To supervise? *I suspect!*

Paul made a very interesting statement, and

we're all familiar with it. I haven't connected it until now with the possibility of Michael.

Galatians 3—here the Apostle Paul is almost pulling his hair out: 'Oh, Galatians, who has bewitched you? What has happened to you? You've turned away from the simplicity of Christ. You don't need all this mish-mash and all these other things. But finally:

Galatians 3:29: "And if you *are* Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to *the* promise." We know that Michael is the *prince of the physical seed of Abraham* through *Isaac and Jacob*. Jesus and Paul was saying that if you belong to Christ—whether you be Jew, Gentile, black, white, Chinese—it doesn't matter. ***If you be Christ's then you are Abraham's seed!***

I think being considered Abraham's seed puts us under Michael's jurisdiction. Again, speculation, but I think so. I think we're going to find that in terms of an angel protecting the people of God, the people of Israel, that Michael is there doing it. That is basically in Scripture all of what we find of Michael. There are some other hints perhaps, but they're just big hints.

GABRIEL the Messenger

Gabriel is never called an archangel. Could he be one? *Maybe!* But he's not called one. Gabriel is the 'messenger of God.' Let's go back to Daniel to be absolutely certain, to show very, very clearly that Gabriel is indeed *the messenger*.

Daniel 8:15: "And it came to pass when I, even I, Daniel, had seen the vision and sought to understand it, then, behold, there stood before me one having the appearance of a man. And I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai, which called and said, 'Gabriel, make this one understand the vision.' So, he came near where I stood. And when he came, I was terrified and fell upon my face. But he said to me, 'Understand, O son of man, for the vision *is* for the time of the end.'" (vs 17-18). This was Gabriel speaking, without a doubt. Not only that, it was Gabriel who announced the 70 weeks prophecy.

Daniel 9: 1: "In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans. In the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood by books the number of the years..." (vs 1-2). This is the beginning of the 70-weeks prophecy.

Verse 20: "And while I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin, and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the Holy mountain of my

God; Yea, while I was speaking in prayer, **even the man Gabriel**, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, came to me, about the time of the evening sacrifice. And he *made* me to understand, and talked with me, and said, 'O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you insight and understanding....'" (vs 20-23). Then the 70-weeks prophecy.

Gabriel is the messenger of God! He introduces visions; he introduces prophecy. This is Gabriel's position.

Notice something interesting in Luke 1 where Gabriel was sent to announce the birth of John the Baptist. I want to emphasize something here. Not much is given to us about Michael and Gabriel, but enough for us to get a picture. You will notice where Gabriel had been talking to Zacharias, but he doubted. There was something about Zacharias' doubt that was real deep questioning. Notice what Zacharias questioned:

Luke 1:18: "Then Zacharias said to the angel, 'By what *means* shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife *is* advanced in years.'"

We'll find out that Mary kind of really didn't doubt, but she says, 'I don't understand, I've never *known* a man. How can this be?' It seemed to just sort of a question, How are you going to do this? How is this going to come?

Zacharias said (really questioning), 'By what means shall I know this?' Sort of a real doubting, almost a challenge to Gabriel. Notice what Gabriel says, v 19: "And the angel answered *and* said to him, '**I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God...**'" His position is in the presence of God; He's not like Michael, going out and fighting. He's at the throne room. Whenever God wants a message delivered, give the message to Gabriel, he will get the message through. That's his function.

He says, "...I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, 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'" (vs 19-20).

It's interesting, "...you did not believe my words..." He didn't say *God's words*. In essence they were God's words, of course, because he was commissioned to tell Zacharias this. But here was Gabriel acting almost as an independent agent, 'because you doubted my words, you will not be able to speak until the time is fulfilled.' Once again, these angels have broad powers in carrying out God's commission.

- they're not going against God
- they're not going to supercede their power
- they're not going to make any great pronouncements that they're not authorized to

So, you know Gabriel was authorized to take action like this.

Seraphim

Now let's look at some interesting creatures called seraphim. There's only one place in the Bible we find them so designated: the book of Isaiah, the prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah 6:1: "In the year that King Uzziah died, I then saw the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim; each one had six wings; with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew" (vs 1-2). So, there are six wings. The wings don't seem to have to work in tandem. Each pair does, but it seems that each set of wings can work independently.

- one set of wings you can cover the face
- one set of wings you can cover the feet
- one set of wings you can fly

Maybe the seraphim can fly with all six wings, probably so, but notice what they say, v 3: "And one cried to another, and said, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory.'" They're near God, they're crying out *Holy* all the day.

Verse 5: "Then I [Daniel] said, 'Woe is me! For I am undone; for I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.' Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having a live coal in his hand, *which* he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he laid *it* upon my mouth and said, 'Lo, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away, and your sin atoned for'" (vs 5-7).

Apparently the seraphim are capable of extending God's grace and God's mercy—atoning. The angels can't affect the atoning, of course not; no seraphim can do that, but they act as God's agents in doing that. This is the only place where seraphim are mentioned.

I don't know if these other creatures are seraphim. I tend to doubt it, but there's some similarities, Revelation 4. There's so much in the book of Revelation on angels and the 24 elders and the living creatures.

Revelation 4:2: "And immediately I was in *the* Spirit; and behold, a throne was set in heaven,

and *One* was sitting on the throne. And He Who *was* sitting was in appearance like a jasper stone and a sardius stone; and a rainbow *was* around the throne, like an emerald in its appearance. And around the throne *were* twenty-four thrones; and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments; and they had on their heads golden crowns. And proceeding from the throne *were* lightnings and thunders and voices; and seven lamps of fire, which are the seven Spirits of God, *were* burning before the throne. And before the throne *was* a sea of glass, like crystal. And around the throne and over the throne *were* four living creatures, full of eyes before and behind; and the first living creature *was* like a lion, and the second living creature *was* like a bull, and the third living creature had the face of a man, and the fourth living creature *was* like a flying eagle. And each of *the* four living creatures had six wings respectively; *and* around and within *they were* full of eyes; and day and night they cease not saying, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was, and Who is, and Who *is* to come.'" (vs 1-6).

So, these angels sing *Holy, Holy, Holy*, and the seraphim say *Holy, Holy, Holy*. I'm not sure they're one in the same, because if you look at the description it seems to be a little different. But these are the only angels or angelic host that I know of that have six wings.

Cherubim

Ezekiel 10 is a good description of the cherubim. In fact, you can read the entire tenth chapter talking about cherubim. Ezekiel 10:5: "And the sound of the wings *of the* cherubim was heard over the outer court, as the voice of the Almighty God when He speaks."

Verse 1: "And I looked, and behold! In the expanse over the head of the cherubim appeared the form of a throne, like a sapphire stone, above them." Apparently, up in heaven, and you'll also find in the Ark of the Covenant cherubim above the throne, above the Ark, extended above it, and they had their wings covering it. We have the wheels here and these are cherubs.

Verse 21: "Four, *even* four faces belonged to each one; and four wings to each one. And the form of a man's hands *was* under their wings. And the form of their faces was the same as the faces that I saw by the river Chebar, even their appearance. They each went straight forward" (vs 21-22). Here are cherubim:

- They're above the throne
- God appears in the midst and above

Let's look at a couple of examples:

Psalm 80:1: “Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel; You Who lead Joseph like a flock; You Who dwell **between the cherubim**, shine forth.” So, in the Tent of Meeting we’ll find that God met Moses between the cherubim on the mercy seat.

Psalm 99:1: “The LORD reigns; let the people tremble. He sits **between the cherubim**; let the earth quake.” That is a clear example of where God dwells.

Numbers 7—we’ll see something very similar, only this refers more to the Ark. Remember, God gave the dimensions of the Ark and all the figures in it as a replica of what is in heaven. There’s nothing in the Ark that did not represent something, or wasn’t a miniature of that God has His throne.

Numbers 7:89: “And when Moses had gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with Him, then he heard the voice of One speaking to him from the mercy-seat on the Ark of Testimony from **between the two cherubim**. And He spoke to him.”

So, you have cherubim on one end of the Ark, cherubim on the other end of the Ark, their wings covered it and God spoke between them. Apparently that’s what it’s like in heaven.

One of the functions of cherubim is to guard the Garden to make sure that Adam and Eve didn’t get back in (Gen. 2:23-24). I do not know really what other function cherubim have, but I do know that they can be means of transportation.

Jesus Christ is normally seen as riding on a horse, a white charger. Apparently, if I’m reading this correctly, we are going to be given horses—who knows maybe angels will have to give us lessons on how to use the horse. Let’s look at two Scriptures that are almost identical.

2-Samuel 22:10: “He bowed the heavens also, and came down. And darkness *was* under His feet. And He **rode upon a cherub and did fly**. And *He* was seen upon the wings of the wind” (vs 10-11). Remember what we sing: *And on a cherub swiftly rode!* This is where it comes from.

Apparently, cherubs are means of transportation. I don’t know when God rides on a cherub or when He’ll ride on a horse, but clearly, He rides on a cherub.

Psalm 18:9: “And He bowed the heavens and came down, and thick darkness was under His feet. And He rode upon a cherub, and flew; yea, He soared upon the wings of the wind” (vs 9-10). What a description, to soar “...on the wings of the wind.” That’s magnificent poetry!

Cherubs are by the throne of God. I don’t know how far out they venture, but God sent them down to earth to guard the way of Garden of Eden, so they can venture a far piece when God sends them. But they’re also a means of transportation.

This is just an insight into seraphim and cherubim; something of Gabriel and something of Michael. In part four we’re going to wrap this up with Lucifer himself, the adversary, the devil.

- When was he?
- How did he turn?
- How does such a glorious being have this influence on the earth with leaders, dynamic leaders of empires, and they had the same characteristics that Lucifer did?

Of course, he’s inspiring them with *his spirit* the same way.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Acts 10:1-5, 9-10, 13-15
- 2) 2 Thessalonians 1:5-8
- 3) Jude 9
- 4) 1 Thessalonians 4:16
- 5) Revelation 12:7-9
- 6) Luke 10:17-18
- 7) Revelation 19:20-21
- 8) Revelation 20:1-3
- 9) Daniel 10:10-13, 20-21
- 10) Daniel 12:1
- 11) Revelation 2:1, 8, 12, 18
- 12) Revelation 3:1, 7, 14
- 13) Galatians 3:29
- 14) Daniel 8:15-17
- 15) Daniel 9:1-2, 20-23
- 16) Luke 1:18-20
- 17) Isaiah 6:1-3, 5-7
- 18) Revelation 4:1-6
- 19) Ezekiel 10:5, 1, 21-22
- 20) Psalm 80:1
- 21) Psalm 99:1
- 22) Numbers 7:89
- 23) 2 Samuel 22:10-11
- 24) Psalm 18:9-10

Scriptures referenced, not quoted: Genesis 2:23-24

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