

STUDY FIFTEEN – ANGELS ON ASSIGNMENT I

“Are not the angels all ministering spirits (servants) sent out in the service [of God for the assistance] of those who are to inherit salvation?” (Hebrews 1:14)

INTRODUCTION

Angels were not only active in Old and New Testament times, but they are also active in our world today. They are sent to minister to those who are the heirs of salvation. Roland Buck comments:

“Angelic beings are continually ministering to people in many ways in these present days. Many seeming coincidences are really angels on the job. We haven’t fully realized God’s use of heavenly hosts to get His job done, because of our limited information concerning angels.”

All true Believers are the heirs of salvation and recipients of ministry by angels. This study focuses on their ministry to you. This summary is drawn from the Biblical record of the documented ministries of angels in the Old and New Testaments.

MINSTERING TO GOD’S PEOPLE

Angels minister to Believers by...

- ***Communicating messages from God.***

God communicates in many ways including through His Word; by speaking directly to man; through the still small voice in one’s spirit; through dreams and visions; and through the Holy Spirit. His greatest message, of course, was delivered through His Son, Jesus Christ. Angels are also a means of communication from God to man. They are the messengers of God. The important thing to remember is that it is the message, not the messenger that should be your focus.

“Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, “Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” This is desert.” (Acts 8:26)

- ***Providing prophetic revelation.***

Repeatedly in the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah, Revelation and elsewhere in Scripture, angels were sent by God to reveal His plans and purposes. Angels revealed the law to Moses; the births of Isaac, Samson, John the Baptist and Jesus; and provided many other revelations throughout Scripture.

“Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.” (Amos 3:7)

True spiritual revelation from an angel of God is always in harmony with the Word of God.

- ***Preparing Believers for ministry.***

Angels participated in the calling of Isaiah (Isaiah 6); Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1); Moses (Exodus 3); and Gideon (Judges 6) to ministry. These examples set the precedent that, at God’s direction, angels participate in the launching of ministries.

“For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, saying, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed, God has granted you all those who sail with you.’” (Acts 27:23-24)

- **Ministering during difficult times.**

It is reasonable to conclude that as the angels ministered to Jesus during His temptation (Matthew 4:11) and in Gethsemane, they will also minister to Believers in difficult times.

“And He was withdrawn from them about a stone’s throw, and He knelt down and prayed, saying, “Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not My will, but Yours, be done.” Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.” (Luke 22:41-44)

- **Providing strength, encouragement, and comfort.**

Angels strengthened Jesus after His temptation (Matthew 4:11. Luke 22:43). They encouraged the apostles to keep preaching after their release from prison (Acts 5;19-20). They told Paul to be of good cheer, that everyone on his ship would survive an impending shipwreck (Acts 27:23-25). Angels are dispatched to you from God with similar messages of encouragement and strength. In the “deserts” of your life, angels will join the Holy Spirit in ministering comfort to you.

- **Providing guidance.**

Angels gave instructions to Joseph to flee Egypt (Matthew 2:13-15). They guided Abraham’s servant to find a wife for Isaac (Genesis 24:7). They led Cornelius to send for Peter (Acts 10:1-8; 11:13-14). They told the women at the tomb what to do next (Acts 8:26). From these accounts and many others, it is apparent that angels provide guidance. Sometimes that “feeling” that you should or should not do something is the guidance of an angel. Do not be like Balaam who almost lost his life because he ignored the angel sent by God (Numbers 22).

- **Giving warnings.**

Angels warned of the destruction of Sodom (Genesis 19:1,12-13). They warned Joseph of Herod’s evil intentions towards the Christ child (Matthew 2:13). Sometimes that inner caution or feeling you experience is a warning from God delivered to you by an angel.

“For He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways. In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone”. (Psalms 91:11-12)

- **Executing judgment.**

It is evident throughout Scripture that angels execute judgment on the enemies of Believers. An angel brought judgment in Egypt because of Pharaoh’s refusing to set God’s people free (Exodus 11). An angel brought judgment on evil King Herod who had persecuted Believers (Acts 12:21-23). In the Revelation, angels are depicted as busily fulfilling God’s commands of judgment on the wicked people on earth. Eventually, angels will execute God’s judgment on Satan, the enemy of all true Believers:

“Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, “Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God, day and night, has been cast down.” (Revelation 12:10)

- **Accelerating answers to prayer.**

Daniel’s prayer to God for revelation was answered by an angel from God who interpreted the prophetic visions he was receiving (Daniel 9:20-27; 10:10-14). Prayer for Peter when he was incarcerated resulted in an angel being dispatched to deliver him from prison (Acts 12:1-17). In the book of Revelation, we see angels offering up the prayers of the saints to God:

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“Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.” (Revelation 5:8)

“Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel’s hand. Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth. And there were noises, thundering’s, lightnings, and an earthquake.” (Revelation 8:3-5)

- **Interceding for God’s people.**

An example is when the angel interceded for Jerusalem:

“Then the Angel of the LORD answered and said, “O LORD of hosts, how long will You not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which You were angry these seventy years?” And the LORD answered the angel who talked to me, with good and comforting words.” (Zechariah 1:12-13)

- **Assisting in evangelism.**

One of the first cross-cultural ministries of Jews to Gentiles was orchestrated when an angel appeared to Cornelius and told him to send for Peter to come and minister to him and his family (Acts 10:1-6). An angel directed Philip to go into the desert where he met an Ethiopian man who he led to the Lord (Acts 8:26-39). In the end-times, an angel will actually preach the Gospel to the world (Revelation 14:6). The Trinity of God and the angels are all active in your evangelism efforts. You do not minister alone.

“Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people— saying with a loud voice, “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.”” (Revelation 14:6-7)

- **Providing physical needs.**

Angels provided food and water for Hagar (Genesis 21:17-20). Angels brought manna to the Israelites in the wilderness (Psalm 78:23-25). An angel prepared food for the tired and distraught Prophet Elijah (1 Kings 19:5-8). Angels can be used by God to provide your needs supernaturally, through others, or through strangers who may be angels unaware (Hebrews 13:2).

- **Guarding, protecting, preserving, and delivering God’s people.**

Angels first protected sinful man from a righteous God by blocking the way back to Eden lest mankind partake of the tree of life and live forever in their sinful state. Angels protected Israel as they fled from Egypt and traveled with them during their wilderness trek. The testimony of the aged Jacob was that an angel had protected him throughout all his life. Angels protected Daniel in the lions’ den, the Hebrew men in the fiery furnace, and Elisha from an enemy army. Angels delivered the disciples from prison (Acts 5:14-25, 12:1-17).

The angels minister to guard, protect, preserve, and deliver God’s people. There have been many modern documented cases of angels appearing and causing a threatening enemy to withdraw. The Scriptures declare:

“The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him and delivers them.” (Psalms 34:7)

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- ***Assist in spiritual warfare.***

God's warring angels are innumerable. They protect His people from the pursuing enemy; drive out the enemy; fight for them and reveal spiritual warfare strategies to them. God's warring angels will overcome all evil enemies in the end-times. We will learn more about this in further study.

- ***Attending Believers at the time of death.***

As we learned previously through the story of Lazarus and the rich man, Jesus taught that angels attend Believers at the time of death (Luke 16). A Believer never dies alone, even though he might be separated from family and friends.

- ***Gathering Believers as part of the elect of God.***

Jesus said that in the end-times, angels would gather the elect of God from the earth (Matthew 24:31). The elect of God does not mean that He chooses some people to go to hell and others to heaven. It means that God foreknew those who would love and serve Him. They are His elect.

- ***Presenting Believers as the Bride of Christ.***

When Believers are gathered together to their eternal home, angels will present them as the Bride of Christ. John witnessed this prophetically:

“Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.” And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, “Write: Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!” And he said to me, “These are the true sayings of God.”” (Revelation 19:7-9)