



The Angels of God

"Those that stand by..."

Ron Cowie

The Angels of God

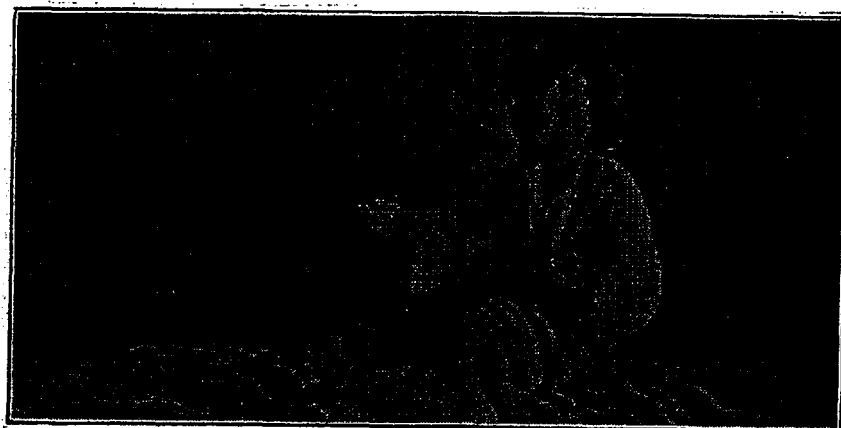
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"Those that stand by"

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Preface

The consideration of God's messengers is undertaken with a great sense of awe and respect. In attempting to portray the life and work of the angels one is very much aware that for all the many things that the scriptures reveal, there is also so much about angels that remains to be known.

The study of the angels is not limited to any part of the scriptures, but requires us to assemble the myriad of glimpses that we have of these glorious and interesting servants of the Deity. When we assemble the references to angels we find consistent methods of operation, and a wonderful example how immortalised creatures serve the Eternal Father. This picture is of vital importance to those who seek to be 'equal unto the angels'.

Through the angels we have an opportunity to comprehend heaven itself, and the glory of the immortal state. We can also be greatly helped by increasing our consciousness of these glorious and wise creatures that God has graciously given to minister to the heirs of salvation.

The words Hezekiah inspire us to remember their work with us:-

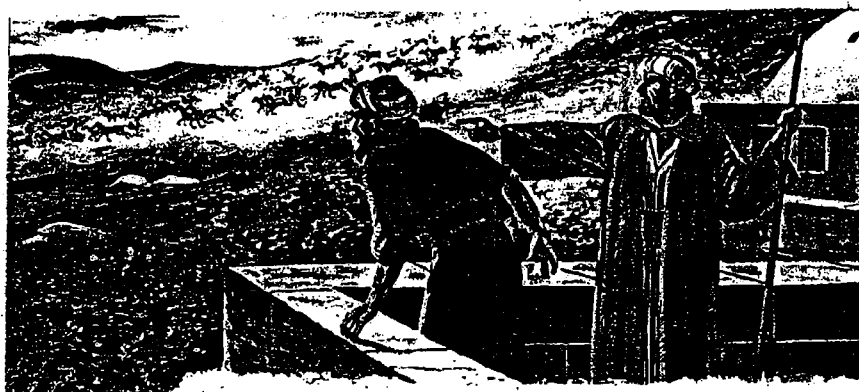
"Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, not for all the multitude that is with him; for there be more with us than with him."

2 Chron 32v7

If we are diligent to understand how God manifests himself in the angels then our eyes can be opened, like the young man who was with Elisha at Dothan:-

"And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more then they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man: and he saw and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."

2 Kings 6v16-17



1. Background

There are several very good reasons to study the Angels of God:

1. To understand their relationship to the Father
2. To strengthen our vision of what it is to partake of divine nature
3. To comprehend the joys set before us when we are made "equal unto the angels"
4. To fully appreciate the clear assurance in the Bible that angels encamp around the saints
5. To learn how angels can operate in our lives
6. To see angelic operations at work amongst the nations of the earth.
7. To be motivated by their joys, excitement and happiness that we might rejoice in hope of sharing eternity with them.

False Images

In approaching this subject we must divorce from our minds all the false images that have been propagated by false church doctrine and its inaccurate artworks.

Angels do not have wings, nor halo's, nor are they accurately depicted as fat babies, naked cherubs or as always having long golden hair. Let us banish all these images, particularly the very usual 'swan wings' that have become common in artworks of the Renaissance era where angelic mobility could only be portrayed by the addition of huge wings. They would be extremely uncomfortable, awkward and would never explain the swift movements of angels.

Likewise depictions of rebellious angels are equally offensive, because Jesus taught that The Father's "will is done in heaven".

The Reality of the Angels

On two very special occasions the angelic host was openly revealed to mortals. These occasions were to Jacob (*Gen 32v1*) where the heavenly army revealed its presence and to the shepherds of Bethlehem on the night that Jesus was born. There were many other occasions when individual angels or groups of angels were openly seen by man. Other mortals were given visions that portrayed the involvement of angels in the work of God.

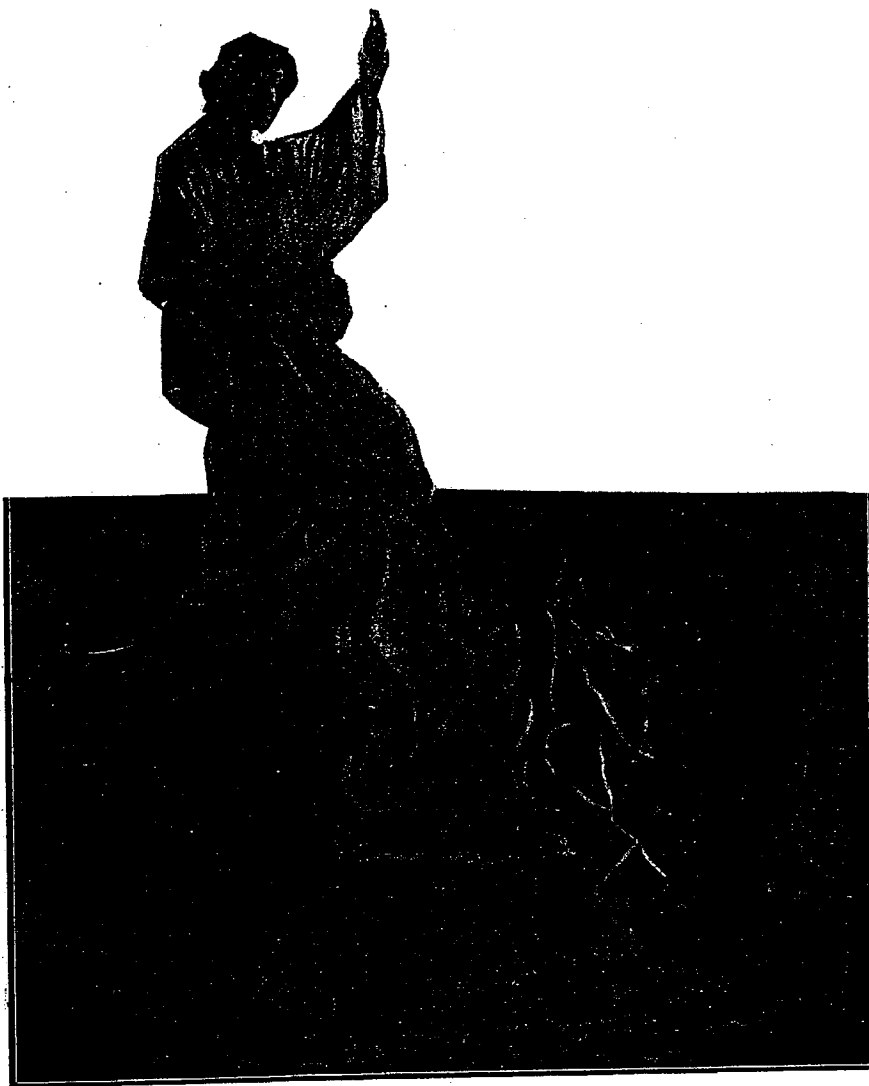
All of those instances are given that we might have faith that the angels are just as active today as they ever were, even though in our lives their hand is less visibly seen. This is an age where we are required to walk in faith, but the angels are still there and vitally involved and interested in us.

It is wise to remember that all the elements of life as we know it today are a passing illusion and the day will soon come when the only thing that will be of any consequence will be the reality of immortal nature and the Divine purpose. The angels are a vital part of that future.

Yahwehs Servants

The angels are ministering spirits, or servants.

One of the most vital principles that we all have to learn in the Truth is that the truly great are happy to humbly serve others. Jesus taught us that at the last supper, washing his disciples feet. Amongst the angels there is no envy, competition or pride and so they happily obey the Father, the Archangels and in the future the saints. (*1 Cor 6v3*)



2. The Divine Family

The Father's Purpose

To understand the angels we must start with their relationship to the Eternal Creator of all. Yahweh is the only uncreate, the only infinite immortal and all other creatures in heaven and earth derive their existence from Him. (*1 Tim 6v15-16*)

The grand purpose of God has always been to expand His own glory through beings who willingly become like Him. Bro Thomas gave a brilliant summary of this purpose in the following words:

“Men were not ushered into being for the purpose of being saved or lost. God-manifestation, not human salvation was the grand purpose of the Eternal Spirit. The salvation of a multitude is incidental to the manifestation, but it was not the end purpose. The Eternal Spirit intended to enthrone Himself on the earth and, in so doing to develop a divine family from among men, every one of whom shall be spirit because born of the Spirit; and that this family shall be large enough to fill the earth, when perfected, to the entire exclusion of flesh and blood.”

Herald of The Kingdom – April 1855
John Thomas

Bro Thomas correctly showed that the expansion of divine glory is the primary object of our existence, but that we can all obtain salvation and share in that amazing work. Human salvation is the way that God will graciously include a huge number of redeemed in His eternal existence.

The Father does not need either saints or angels to perform His will but has in His mercy, allowed His creatures to share His spirit existence and to be part of the great salvation, and His family.

The Family of God in Heaven and Earth

The apostle Paul makes it abundantly clear that God has a Family that currently exists both in Heaven and on earth.

“For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.”

Eph 3v14-15

The word in the Greek for ‘family’ is ‘patria’ which has the meaning of “those who claim descent from a common father”. So we see that God has both heavenly sons and earthly sons. The angels are immortal Sons of God and we mortals are Sons of God in status, and immortal sons in prospect. (*1 John 3v1-2*)

The Fathers plan is to unite the whole family together and to accomplish a vast expansion of His immortal servants.

“That is the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him”

Eph 1v10

The apostle in Hebrews 12v9 calls God ‘the Father of spirits’. He does this to emphasize that we, who naturally obey the fathers we have in this life, are actually the sons of a greater Father who is a father to angels as well.

The Numbers of Angels

The Lord Jesus spoke of having 12 legions of angels at his disposal (*Matt 26v53*) which is generally regarded as 72,000 in number. The apostle in *Heb 12v22* refers to an ‘innumerable company of angels’ and we are unable to be more precise than that. Vast companies appeared to Jacob, Elisha and the shepherds of Bethlehem. Another quantifying description is found in *Rev 5v11*:-

“And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.”

The Greek phrase for ‘ten thousand time ten thousand’ (which is 100 million – literally calculated) actually signifies ‘myriads of myriads’ and seems to be an idiomatic way to describe a vast, uncountable number.

While we cannot know how many angels exist, they are certainly a huge family of heavenly sons of the Deity.



The Angels are Spirit Creatures

The Angels are the Spirit of God embodied. Bro Thomas says:-

By these testimonies we are taught that the *Elohim* and the *Angels* are the same order of Divine Intelligences; and that they belong to, or are the property of Yahweh. Hence, they are styled "*His angels*," "*His Might Ones of Power*," "*His hosts*," and "*His Servants*" or ministers; "who do His pleasure." He is their Creator, and Lord or Imperial Chief; and they are nothing. I may be said of them, as Jesus said of himself, "Of myself I can do nothing." Energized and authorized, however, by Him, nothing is too great or difficult for them to do. The Supreme Power, or *Ail*, has His pleasures; and whatever He is pleased to do, He commands it execution, and they perform it by His Spirit, whose *material embodiments* they are. They are, therefore, "*Spirits*" – public official spirits, as Paul styles them; "*begotten of the Spirit*," and consequently *spirit*. They are therefore *Ail*, and of *Ail*, and He through them all.

Phanerosis pg 52

In Psalm 104 we read of the creature power of the Father as he moved powerfully to shape the Earth into a glorious paradise. One of the things that is said of God is that :... "He maketh His angels spirits, His ministers a flaming fire" (*Psalm 104v4*) This tells us that at some stage the Father made them immortalized, spirit creatures. There is an earthly body and there is a heavenly body (*1 Cor 15v49*) and we long for the day when we shall be raised to enjoy the glorious spirit filled bodies angels have.

Only God Himself has underived immortality, the angels have been allowed to share this, as we also hope to do.

However, the angels having been so glorified to the divine nature were now to be living embodiments of the power, will and character of the Father and to perform his wishes.

"Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. Bless ye the LORD, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure."

Psalm 103v20-01

In this way they become 'spirits' because their whole existence is bound up in joyfully doing the will of God in heaven and upon the earth. They are therefore the vehicles of God's spirit and used this mightily at Creation.

If then, the question be asked, by what power did they, the Elohim, create and make all mundane things? The answer is, by the spirit, self-named Yahweh or Yah, whose sons, messengers, and servants they are. Spirit radiant from the eternal center of light and power embodied itself in them; and from them as secondary focal organizations, radiated into the substance of the earth, and waters; by which radiation a collateral connection was established with 'the free spirit' directly emanating from the Focal Centre of the Universe, permeating and pervading all atoms. Holding such a relation to all things, and energized by such a power, they could move heaven, earth and sea, and elaborated the six days' work of power with all imaginable ease.

Phanerosis pg53

This we find that in the scriptures, "angels" and "spirit" are often used quite interchangeably, as the angels implement the will of the Father. See for example.

"In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit; therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them. Then he remembered the days of old, Moses, and his people, saying, Where is he that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of this flock? Where is he that put his holy Spirit within him?"

Isa 63v9-11

In the book of Acts the angels and the Spirit are quite interchangeable:

"And the angel of the Lord spake to Phillip..."

"And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Phillip..."

Acts 8v26-39

It is a useful exercise to realize that God's way of operation is to utilize His angelic spirits to do His will, and that many operations of "the spirit" were actually performed by their hands using the power of God.

3. Revealing God to Men

The angels rejoice to worship the Father in the holy sanctuary of heaven (*Psa 29v1-2 see margin*). Yet in this dispensation their primary work is to have the oversight of this creation for 6000 years and to represent the Father on earth.

Our Unique Doctrine of God-manifestation

Without doubt the unique doctrine or concept that sets the Truth apart from all other religions is a correct understating of how God has chosen to reveal Himself in angels, a Son and in the lives of ordinary men and women. (*John 1v18, 1 Peter 2v9-11*).

The principle of representation is easily illustrated from everyday life. If we call out the telephone company to fix our phone, the person who presents at our door is the human face of the telephone company. He will most likely introduce himself as 'Telstra; to fix the phone'. Rather than by his own name. He might be Bill Smith but to us he is the phone supplier, and the individuals identity is very secondary to the purpose of his visit. So it is with God's angels.

The angels cooperate together to bring to pass God's will – that is that many more sons might come to glory having been sealed with the Divine mind. (*Rev 7v2-4*). They interact between earth and heaven to reveal the invisible God to men when necessary.

The Father is so glorious that no mortal could look on Him and live:

“...Who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; a whom no man hath seen nor can see...”

1 Tim 6v15-16

So Jesus said... “No man hath seen God at any time...” (*John 1v18*). God himself is of purer eyes than to be associated with evil, so He sends out His angels to represent Him.

Bro Thomas explained this very succinctly:

“It is a well established principle of the Scripture that what the Eternal Father does by His agents, He is considered as doing Himself” (*Elpis Israel p183*)

Once we appreciate how God reveals himself in angels then it makes so much more sense of numerous Bible passages. Jacob would say 'I have seen God face to face' because he saw the angel who came from God. (*Hosea 12v4*). Look and how often it is said that God or Yahweh was on earth:

'Moses drew near...where God was'	<i>Exod 20v21</i>
'And Yahweh descended in a cloud and stood with him there...'	<i>Exod 34v5</i>
'And Yahweh came down...and stood'	<i>Num 12v5</i>
'Yahweh appeared to Abram...God went up'	<i>Gen 17v1,22</i>
'God called...out of the bush'	<i>Exod 3v4</i>
'And Yahweh spake unto Moses face to face...'	<i>Exod 33v11</i>
'And they saw the God of Israel...'	<i>Exod 24v10</i>
'Yahweh came and stood...'	<i>I Sam 3v10</i>
'Yahweh met him, and sought to kill him'	<i>Exod 4v24</i>
'And God came to Balaam'	<i>Num 22v9,20; 23v4,16</i>
'Behold, I will stand before thee on the rock'	<i>Exod 17v6</i>
'For Yahweh thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp...'	<i>Deut 23v14</i>

These few samples show that God was manifest in angels who do His will, speak His word and bring to pass His judgments.

Angels are Divine Messengers

The words used in the Bible for 'angels' are:

OLD TESTAMENT – Hebrew Words

'Malach'	a messenger – to send as a deputy
'Elohim'	mighty ones (<i>Psa 8v5, Heb 2v7</i>)
'Abbeer'	mighty or powerful ones (<i>Psa 78v25</i>)

NEW TESTAMENT – Greek Words

'Aggelos'	to carry tidings – translated messenger (angels) 181 times, messenger 7 times
'Isaggelos'	'angel-like' or equal to the angels (<i>Luke 20v36</i>)

We clearly see that from these meanings their role is to act and speak for God.

Those That Stand By

One of the most vital keys to understanding the work of the angels is their role of 'standing by'. In fact it is amazing how often we find the phrases 'stood by', 'stand by', 'standing by' and 'stood' used in connection with the heavenly messengers.

- Angels stood before God to await His decrees (*Luke 1v19*) (*1 Kings 22v19-21*)
- Angels 'stand by' the saints to deliver and guide them (*Exod 14v19, Deut 31v15, Gen 18v2, Dan 7v16, I Sam 3v10, Acts 27v23, Zech 3v5, Num 12v6*).

The Elohim

The angels are often called 'elohim' or 'mighty ones'. Paul confirms this by quoting *Psa 8v5* in *Heb 2v7* where the word 'elohim' is quoted as angels. These elohim are the beings who converse amongst themselves in *Genesis 1v26* ('let us make man...'). The churches implant the Trinity in these passages because they don't understand God-manifestation.

Comprehending the presence of the elohim at the Creation explains the grammatical dilemma in *Gen 1v1*. This verse has a singular verb ('He created') aligned with a plural noun (elohim), literally – 'In the beginning mighty ones, He created...'

"The Elohim gave the word, they brought the intent elements of the world into play, they gave direction and application to power, and the Spirit of the Everlasting Father accomplished all they were employed to effect. The Everlasting Father by the Elohim created the heavens and the earth. He said, "Let there be light;" He made the Expanse: He called it Heaven; He did it all through them; they executed what He empowered them to perform. This is the solution we offer of this grammatical enigma.

Bro John Thomas – Herald 1847

The Army of Heaven

As a group the elohim are called "Yahweh Tsvaoth (in the AV shown as, The LORD of hosts). They constitute God's host or the army of Heaven.

'And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?' (*Dan 4v35*)

'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.' (*Dan 4v17*)

This term 'Yahweh Sabaoth' first appears in *Joshua 5v14* when the mighty angel Michael appears to Joshua just prior to the conquest of Canaan. From then on it is frequently used in contexts where judgment is pending, or where God is determined to enforce His will. The title speaks to us of the unlimited power of God to perform his word through His angels.

The Origin of the Angels

It is recorded of the angels that they have 'experienced good and evil' (*Gen 3v22*). If God's method of probation before exaltation has been applied to them, then they have very likely been tried, tested and eventually glorified to eternal life (*Rom 2v7*).

"Sons of God is a title conferred upon certain descendants of Adam, which places them in the same class of intelligences as the Angels. These are also styled 'Sons of God' and "Stars of the Dawn', or 'Morning Stars' (*Job 38v7*). We do not mean to say that the Sons

of God, called in Scripture Angels, or messengers, and Gods, are now mortal and corruptible, and weak of mind and body as we are; they have passed through this state, and now occupy a state beyond it, in which they are incorruptible, immortal, glorious, powerful, wise, and of spirit-corporeality. In their former state they were Sons of God subject to evil as we; in their present, they are sons subject only to good."

Eureka, vol 1, p 29, Logos Ed.

Where or how they existed, how they were redeemed and were glorified we do not know, but if they did experience mortality then they must have been male and female prior to their glorification.



4. The Heavenly Society

The Father's will is done in heaven, and the angels rejoice to worship Him and to seek after His infinite wisdom. We get a glimpse of how heaven operates from *Psa 89v5-7*. For clarity we use Rotherham here:

5. So shall the heavens praise thy wondrousness O Yahweh, Yea, thy faithfulness in the convocation (Heb "Kedesh" – the Sanctuary) of holy ones.
6. For whom in the skies can one compare unto Yahweh? (Or) can one liken unto Yahweh, among the sons of the mighty?
7. A GOD inspiring awe in the circle (Heb – "Gathering in secret to share secrets *Ezek 13v6 mg*) of the holy ones exceedingly, And to be revered above all who are round about him.

This is most interesting. It tells us that the angels crowd around the throne of God to share His secrets and to deepen their comprehension of His wisdom. For His part, the Father shares His timetable and His plan with them and discusses with them the progress of the lives of the saints (*Matt 18v10*). Angels are vast in wisdom when compared to men (*II Sam 14v17/20*), however, angelic knowledge is far from complete when compared to God's.

- Only two of the greatest angels comprehend the time periods (*Dan 10v21*)
- No angel knows the day of Christ's return (*Mark 13v32*)
- Angels struggled to fully comprehend the detail of the salvation in Christ (*I Pet 1v11-12*)
- Gabriel was unsure how to move the king of Persia (*Dan 10v13*)

This gradual expansion of wisdom means that angels are assigned tasks, yet do not know exactly the method to accomplish it. They are not robots, but have to use their initiative, intelligence and spiritual insight to achieve the divine will. This use of initiative and their eventual success (God does not let them fail) brings enormous satisfaction, interest and excitement to the angels.

- Angels rejoice when a sinner repents (*Luke 15v10*) – because much effort has accomplished God's will. Sometimes the task must have been frustrating but when they succeed it is a cause of shared joy.
- Angels triumph when they achieve God's plan with the nations – see *Dan 11v1*, which is better rendered 'In the first year of Darius the Mede, I EVEN I, stood to confirm and strengthen him'. The Hebrew here is emphatic as the angel triumphs in this successful mission to bring Darius to power. There is a sense of achievement here.
- Angels are encouraged to use their initiative. An example of this is seen in *I Kings 20v20-22* where God offers to the angelic host the chance to suggest how Ahab will be caused to go up to die at Ramoth Gilead. God does not just issue an order to be obeyed, he invites suggestions, some of which are not accepted. When an angel (spirit) suggests the correct solution, he is rewarded with the task of implementation. By affecting the pagan omens that Ahab's prophets would use, he would cause them to advise Ahab to go to the battle. Ahab must be allowed free will, but the angel would still accomplish God's plan.

It is wonderful to see how that the Father can (by limiting angelic knowledge) constantly excite, interest and thrill his angelic servants. 'The deity delights in stimulating the intellect of His creatures'. (Phanerosis Page 39) and this aspect of angelic life is most instructive for the future joy of the saints. No doubt God will constantly delight, challenge and excite us as He unfolds His glorious plan with the earth, and as we see it come to fruition by our hands we will likewise have great joy and satisfaction to share with angels and saints alike.

Michael – Your Prince

The angels are the army of Heaven (*Dan 2v21, 4v17, 4v35*) and are the family of heaven also. All families and armies need strong leadership, order and clear lines of authority. God's army is no different. There are angels assigned to different roles, one as the Commander or Captain, others who stand in God's presence in positions of honor, angels given charge over cities, ecclesias and over nations. Some angels direct and dispatch other 'lesser' angels. One of the most interesting angels is Michael the Archangel.

The Yahweh Elohim

The Bible clearly shows that before Christ was born, one mighty angel had the primary role to represent God and to prefigure the Lord Jesus Christ. This angel is the 'Yahweh Angel' of the 'Yahweh Elohim'. This angel was the angel of God's name.

Look at how often that the Yahweh angel appears on earth to represent the God of heaven:

The appearance of Yahweh Elohim

"Yahweh Elohim caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam...and He took one of his ribs... (*Gen 2v21*)

"And they heard the voice of Yahweh Elohim walking in the garden...and they hid themselves from the presence of Yahweh Elohim" (*Gen 3v8*)

"...Yahweh appeared unto Abraham...(*Gen 17v1; 18v1*)

"And Behold Yahweh stood by him and said, I am Yahweh Elohim of Abraham...Behold I am with thee" (*Gen 28v13RV*)

"...Yahweh Elohim of the Hebrews hath met with us..." (*Exod 3v18; 4v5*)

"And Yahweh said...I will stand before thee there upon the rock" (*Exod 17v5-6*)

"And Yahweh spake unto Moses face to face as a man speaketh to his friend" (*Exod 33v11*)

Our pioneer brethren clearly distinguished this mightiest angel from the other Elohim.

The Yahweh Elohim in Elpis Israel.

"...It will be seen that the Everlasting God talks and acts by, or through, these Elohim, but chiefly through one of them, styled the LORD God.: (pg 183)

"The serpent...had seen the LORD God and His companion Elohim..." (pg80)

"He had heard the LORD Elohim, and the other Elohim conversing on their experience of good and evil..." (pg83)

"A declaration in the presence of the LORD Elohim..." (pg50)
 "The Arch-Elohim said...the Lord of the Elohim himself declares..." (pg186)
 "He willed; the Elohim executed by His Spirit." (pg 185)
 "...therefore said the Chief of the Elohim-Let us make man..." (pg 185)

The Yahweh angel was also seen on the earth on various special occasions.

"And the angel of Yahweh appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush" (*Exod 3v2*)
 "And Yahweh went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light" (*Exod 13v21*)
 "The glory of Yahweh...appeared in the cloud" (*Exod 16v10*)
 "Yahweh descended...in fire: and the smoke...and the whole mount quaked greatly." (*Exod 19v18*)
 "And the sight of the glory of Yahweh was like devouring fire" (*Exod 14v17*)
 "the angel of Yahweh ascended in the flame of the altar" (*Judges 13v20*)

Michael – the Yahweh Angel

Jude v9 tells us that the 'Yahweh Angel' is actually Michael the Archangel (chief angel).
Daniel 10v13 calls him 'one of the first princes'.

"MICHAEL ONE OF THE CHIEF PRINCES"

Now the Michael with whom the spirit co-operated on the side of the Kings of Persia against Babylon, must not be confounded with Michael, the Great Prince, who appears at the epoch of the resurrection (ch 12v1,2). The name *Mi-cha-el* signifies *who-like-to-Ail*, or the Eternal Power; and is applicable to any person, or community of persons, in whom Eternal Power is embodied, and manifested. It was therefore an appropriate appellation for the *sar-tzevah-yahweh*, PRINCE OF THE HOST OF YAHWEH, who appeared to Joshua by Jericho; and who had been appointed over Israel in the wilderness at the time the spirit said to Moses: "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for MY NAME IS IN HIM. But if thou shalt indeed obey *his* voice, and do all that *I* speak; then I shall be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary to thine adversaries. For mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee into the land, and cut off its inhabitants" (*Exod 23v20-23*; *Josh 5v14*). This Angel-Prince is styled Michael in Daniel, because the Name, or power, of the Eternal was in him. He was therefore as AIL, or as men say GOD to Israel. He was not the Only Potentate whom no man hath seen nor can see, but His representative, who was to be obeyed as if he were the Eternal himself, because "his voice" gave "utterance" to the commands of the Spirit.

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His name Michael means – ‘He who is like unto God’. His work is:

1. To speak for God - only the ‘Yahweh angels’ speaks in the first person- “I will do it...”
2. To command God’s angelic hosts (*Zech 1v11*)
3. To prefigure the Lord Jesus Christ (*Zech 1v8*)
4. To manage the Divine Calendar of events (*Dan 10v21*)
5. To encompass Israel (*Deut 32v10*)

Michael’s role is to administer the overall plan of God, and to send out other angels to perform it.

The Yahweh Angel with Israel

When Israel left Egypt, the Yahweh angel went with them on their journeys.

The angel that brought Israel out of Egypt

“And the angel of Yahweh appeared unto him...in a bush” (*Exod 3v2*)

“And Yahweh said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt...And I am come down to deliver them...” (*Exod 3v7-8*)

“And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel...” (in cloud and fire) (*Exod 14v19-20*)

“...Yahweh, He heard our voice, and sent an angel, and hath brought us forth out of Egypt...” (*Num 20v16*)

“In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them...” (*Isa 63v9*)

“This is he, that was in the ecclesia in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him...” (*Acts 7v38*)

Note how in *Exodus 3v2-4* – the same angel is called the angel, Elohim and Yahweh. God warned Israel that this name-bearing angel was a very holy angel, not to be taken lightly or provoked.

“Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared.

Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him.

But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and to all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries.

For mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and I will cut them off.”

Exodus 23v20-23

In this angel the power of God’s Holy Spirit was vested.

“...This was a Spirit – but not the Supreme Power, “whom no man hath seen at any time”; but an organized spirit-body, through whom the Supreme Power, by His Spirit, conversed with Moses; and with whom He was veiled. The words of the messenger were the Voice of the Spirit that came to Moses; so that when we read what was spoken, we do not read the words of the angel, but the declaration of the Spirit by whom he was *angelized*, or sent with a message.”

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The tragedy was that Israel failed to realize the enormous privilege that they had in this angel.

“In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them. “But they rebelled, and vexed (RV ‘grieved’) His Holy Spirit: therefore He was turned to be their enemy, and He fought against them.”

Isa 63v9-10

This angel of Yahweh had to later come and remonstrate with Israel in the land, because of their failure to drive out the Canaanites (Judges 2v1-5)

The Yahweh Angel Speaks for God

One of the unique features of the Yahweh angel is the fact that he alone speaks in the first person for God. Other angels quote God, but he says “I will do it...” without reference to God on most occasions.

Check out *Gen 18v9-10*, the two angels speak first – “they said...” but then “he said...I will...”. The Yahweh angel is clearly delineated as superior to the other two elohim present. He is clearly in charge and graciously waits to talk with Abraham. He also has the power to decide on a minimum number of righteous for Sodom to be spared, and to spare Zoar for Lot’s sake.

Look how Bro. Roberts described the scene:

“Here is a picture: Abraham, the father of the faithful, escorting three angels, one of whom pre-eminently bore THE NAME. There is a halt on the road, and this last communicates to Abraham the divine intentions with regard to Sodom, after which, the other two angels go forward to execute those intentions, leaving the NAME-BEARER with Abraham, standing before him, at a reverential distance. Abraham is concerned for the fate of Sodom, on account of his nephew, Lot, who had gone to sojourn there. Knowing Lot’s righteousness of character, he makes bold to think that surely he will not be included in a destruction intended only for the wicked. But he does not presume to make known his thoughts in a light or abrupt manner. He draws near and speaks, but he speaks with profound reverence. He breaks the subject, but it is in an indirect and apologetic manner: “Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city, wilt thou also destroy and spare not the place for the fifty righteous that are therein?” “If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.” This condescending answer was satisfactory so far

as it went; but it did not touch the subject of Araham's anxiety. He would like to ask again; but he is embarrassed at the idea of interrogating the Deity angelically manifest."

Visible Hand of God Page 70

A Dramatic Incident with the Yahweh Angel

After the incident of the golden calf in Exodus 32 there was a need for the great Yahweh angel to highlight the sinfulness of the people of Israel. Despite Moses' pleas the decree was that another angel would now be sent (32v34, 33v2). Mighty though any angel might be, it would not be the Yahweh angel in their midst any more.

"Unto a land flowing with milk and honey: for I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiffnecked people: lest I consume thee in the way"

Exod 33v3

This development greatly alarmed Moses, who reacted wonderfully. He took the 'tent of meeting' outside the camp (v7) to show that God was right in refusing to allow the holiest angel to be in their midst. It was to this tent that the Yahweh angel came and 'stood' that he might talk to Moses. Moses' perceptiveness was quickly rewarded and Moses and Yahweh (the angel) talked "face to face as a man speaks to a friend" (v11). This was a close relationship and a huge witness to the character of Moses (cp Acts 7v38).

Moses pleads for the greatest angel to remain with Israel, even though another lesser angel had the power to feed and protect Israel through the wilderness journey. There was a bond between Moses and the angel that needed preserving. Finally the angel agrees to stay with Moses (v14) and Moses is greatly relieved.

This incident clearly shows the superiority in power, rank and holiness of the Yahweh angel.

The Glory of the Yahweh Angel Revealed

In Exodus 33v18 Moses proceeds to request that he be allowed to see the glory of the Yahweh angel. The angel explains that no mortal could see his full glory and live (v29) so he places Moses in a cleft of the rock and passes by, covering Moses with his hand and only allowing Moses a glimpse of his departing form.

In Exodus 34v5 the Yahweh angel descended and stood with Moses, proclaiming the name of Yahweh and the divine characteristics. The angel, though magnificent in the physical Glory of God, was more intent to show Moses and all saints, the wonderful character of the Father.

The Captain of the Host

Just before the conquest of the land, Michael appeared again – this time to Joshua (*Josh 5v13-14*). Initially Joshua, who saw the angel dressed as a warrior with a sword drawn mistook him for an enemy. The angel describes himself as the ‘Captain (or “Prince”) of the host of Yahweh’. This is the first use of the divine title Yahweh Sabaoth.

Michael Foreshadowed Christ

When Jesus ascended to heaven he sat down at God’s right hand, “...angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.” (*1 Pet 3v22*).

Until that time Michael was the supreme commander of the heavenly host, a position he held for 4000 years. Besides representing the Eternal Father on earth, Michael had the privilege of foreshadowing Christ. Examples are:-

- *Exodus 17v6* - ‘I will stand on the rock...’ (cp *1 Cor 10v4*)
- *Deut 33v8* - “...with the man, thy holy one” (Dr Thomas translation)
- *Zech 1v8* – the commander on the red horse who dispatches other angels to and fro

When Christ returns he will come in power – “with the voice of the archangel” (*1 Thess 4v16*) with all his mighty angels in attendance (*II Thess 1v7*). He will be the new commander of Yahweh Sabaoth (*Isa 55v4*) which will now also include the glorified saints.

The Angels’ Subjection to Christ

There is absolutely no doubt that the angels, including Michael the prince of the host, would have so looked forward to the day of Christ’s arrival in heaven. No angel had ever sat down in God’s presence (*Luke 1v19, Heb 1v13*) but Christ has obtained that position by virtue of his divine begetting (*Heb 1v4-5*) and his complete obedience to the Father’s will.

Christ, as a true son now commands the heavenly host (*1 Pet 3v22*) and will come again with all his angels escorting him.

“For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.”

Matt 16v27

Michael will work under Christ’s direction, very likely still with Israel and among the nations, until the saints assume their roles as king-priests (*Heb 2v5*).

Michael – The Great Prince

The Lord Jesus Christ has become the new commander (*Isa 55v4*), and rightly owns the title of 'the Great Prince' of *Dan 12v1*. The name Michael is actually a title fitly worn first by the Yahweh angel, and even more so by the glorified Lord Jesus Christ. ('He who is like unto God'.) The angel Michael is never called 'The "great" prince', but only "one of the chief princes" or "your prince".

The Lord Jesus Christ is Often Called a 'Prince'...

1. "Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host..." (*Dan 8v11*)
2. "...he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes..." (*Dan 8v25*)
3. "...unto the Messiah the Prince..." (*Dan 9v25*)
4. "...and the people of the prince..." (*Dan 9v26*)
5. "And at that time shall Michael ('Who is like unto God') stand up, the great prince..." (*Dan 12v1*)
6. "It is for the prince; the prince, he shall sit in it to eat bread before Yahweh." (*Ezek 44v3*)
7. "...my servant David (the beloved) a prince among them." (*Ezek 34v24*)

Jesus Christ is also the 'Great One' of the Bible

- "He shall be great" (*Luke 1v32*)
"Jerusalem...the city of the great King" (*Matt 5v35*)
"Greater love hath no man" (*John 15v13*)
"...a great high priest...Jesus the Son of God" (*Heb 4v14*)
"Great is the Holy One in the midst of thee" (*Isa 12v6*)
"...he shall send them a saviour and a great one" (*Isa 19v20*)
"Therefore I will divide him a portion with the Great" (*Isa 53v12*)
"...that great shepherd..." (*Heb 13v20*)
"And from Jesus Christ...the prince of the kings of the earth." (*Rev 1v5*)
"...a leader and commander to the people" (*Isa 55v4*)

SO we conclude that Michael 'the Great Prince' of *Dan 12v1*, is the Lord Jesus Christ coming with the 'voice of the archangel' and the trump of God to raise the dead and to rescue Israel at the time of the end.

MICHAEL THE GREAT PRINCE

The angel Michael, then, contemporary with Moses, Joshua and Daniel, was only provisional viceregent of Israel till the Son of Man should attain to authority and power.

But this Michael was not a son of man. He did not belong to the race of Adam, to which the dominion of the earth was originally and for ever given (*Gen 1v26*). His viceregency therefore, could only be provisional. He had dominion over Israel as their prince until another personage should appear to assume the reins of government, who should be both Son of Man, Son of Abraham, and Son of David, to whom dominion over Israel and all other nations inhabiting the earth to its utmost bounds, has been decreed (*Psa 2v6-9, 8v6*). Thus, as Jesus taught, "the Father hath committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father, who hath given him authority to execute judgment, *because he is a Son of Man*" (*John 5v22-27*).

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So then we look for the day when 'Yahweh' goes forth to fight against the nations (*Zech 14v3*). This 'Yahweh' will be the new leader of God's host.

An Exhortation from Michael the Archangel

Both Jude and Peter warned against the inroads of error and pernicious teachers that would eventually corrupt the purity of the first century ecclesias (*Jude v5, II Pet 2v1-3*).

In *II Pet 2v9-11* and *Jude v8-10* both writers give advice on the early detection of the selfish spirit that can lead to the sowing of error. Most errorists are ambitious people seeking a following (*Acts 20v29-30*) and their first tactic is usually to subtly undermine the ecclesial teachers and brethren with the responsibility to guide the flock. Malicious tongues ruin reputations and undermine the confidence of the simple, towards brethren who have labored in the word and doctrine.

So one of the early warning signs is a willingness to spread evil gossip, to destroy reputations and to despise any suggestion of cooperation or submission.

"But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities"

II Pet 2v10

By contrast the greatest angel (Michael *Jude v9*), when he appeared in the vision of *Zech 3v1-3* was a model of constrained, careful speech as he defended the fledgling revival of Israel (the body of Moses) from the Samaritans (the diabolos).

"Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee."

Jude v9-10

Jude says he 'durst not' bring a railing accusation against the evil Samaritans. Weymouth has he refused to "use abusive terms".

The lesson for us is dramatic and obvious. The Yahweh angel in *Zechariah 3* was :-

- completely in the right
- able to see the evil motives of the Samaritans
- able to command incredible power
- was able to command all the angelic host

Yet, for all his greatness, in matters of judgment he refused to get personal, to impute motives or to use any indiscreet language. He merely deferred the matter to the Father's justice and timing, appealing to God on the basis of his promises about Israel and Zion (*Zech 3v1-3*).

If archangels, so great in power and might, are so reluctant to judge and to use harsh words – how much more careful should frail mortals of mixed motives be careful to avoid sinning with their lips. Let us not grieve God or his angels by unkind words.

"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.
And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.
Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:
And be ye kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you"

Eph 4v29-32

5. Gabriel the Communicator

The only other angel named besides Michael named is Gabriel. His name (or perhaps title) is Gabriel – meaning ‘the mighty God’ or “mighty warrior”.

Gabriel appears to have two special roles.

1. To communicate God’s word to men (*Dan 8v16*)
2. To bring God’s Son into the world (*Luke 1v19-26*)

To achieve these great works he appears to share the full knowledge of the divine calendar with Michael (*Dan 10v21*) and the two of them cooperate wonderfully (*Dan 10v13*) to ensure that God’s plan is accurately fulfilled.

Michael is obviously of higher rank, as he commands and dispatches Gabriel (*Dan 8v16, 10v11, Zech 2v3-4*) but also he comes to relieve Gabriel at a most difficult moment, so that Gabriel can communicate to Daniel.

“But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.
Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days.”

Dan 10v13-14

Through the record of scripture we find that one particular angel is used by God to explain events. We know that this is Gabriel, on many occasions.

“Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision.” (*Dan 8v16*)

“I am come to show thee...” (*Dan 9v21-23*)

“Unto thee am I now sent” (*Dan 10v11*)

“Now am I come to make thee understand” (*Dan 10v14*)

“The angel that talked with me...” (*Zech 1v9, 13v14*)

“I am Gabriel...sent to speak unto thee” (*Luke 1v19*)

“For behold I bring you good tidings...” (*Luke 2v9-10*)

There are other occasions where the angels communicate, and these are also strong indications that Gabriel was the individual who came to reveal the Divine will.

THE ANGEL THAT TALKED WITH ME

"For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, Saying, Fear not, Paul..." (*Acts 27v23-24*)

"There came one of the seven angels...and talked with me" (*Rev 21v9*)

"And he that talked with me" (*Rev 21v15*)

"I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things" (*Rev 22v8*)

"I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify to you these things in the Ecclesias" (*Rev 22v16*)

The strong connection of Gabriel to Christ, and his inclination to communicate perhaps makes him the angel of the Apocalypse, known as 'mine angel' or 'His angel' (see *Rev 1v1, 22v16*).

The Palmoni

In the vision of the little horn of the goat in Daniel 8 the wars between Greece and Persia were outlined, leading finally to the arrival of Rome in the East. The vision that Daniel saw is recorded from *v1-14* and includes an angelic conversation in *v13-14*. The angel who has the oversight of the movements of Persia and Greece is clearly Gabriel (see *10v20-11v2*). So then in the vision Daniel sees a mighty angel talking about the events that have been portrayed in the ram goat and little horn (*v13*). Another saint (holy one, or angel) asks the 'certain saint which spake' about the length of the time that Jerusalem will be trodden underfoot. This is typical of angelic interest in matters divine, and the greater angels delight to impart their knowledge to those of God's family who are interested to know. In fact the answer is given to Daniel (*v14*) because he shared the angel's intense desire to understand (*10v12*), and was involved in the vision.

The Hebrew for 'certain saint' is actually 'Palmoni' and the margin of the AV in *Dan 8v13* evidences the confusion of the translators. Palmoni is a title ascribed to the angel Gabriel as he appears in this vision, in control of the nations and their appointed timetable (see *11v6,13,14,24,27,29,35*).

The word 'pele' means 'wonderful' and is a title used of the angel that appeared to Samson's parents (*Judges 18v13* - "my name is Wonderful"). 'Mene' is a Hebrew word meaning 'to number' (see *Dan 5v26*). So the name or title 'Palmoni' indicates a "Wonderful Numberer", which Gabriel clearly was. Daniel's enormous difficulty in comprehending the vastness of the times, but also their precise fulfillment leaves him astounded at the incredible knowledge of times that Michael and Gabriel shared (see *Dan 8v26-27, 12v8* cp to *Rev 22v8-9*).

So we conclude that 'Palmoni' was in fact Gabriel, and when the vision closed, he came to Daniel to further elucidate on the detail of the time periods (*Dan 8v16-20*).

Gabriel and the Lord Jesus Christ

The angel Gabriel was particularly involved with the preparation, prophecies and events that would see Christ come into the world.

Gabriel with Christ

70 week prophecy (*Dan 9v23-26*)

Visit to Zacharias (*Luke 1v19*)

Visit to Mary (*Luke 1v26*)

Visit to Mary (*Luke 1v26*)

Visit to Joseph (*Matt 1v20, 2v13,19*)

Visit to Shepherds (*Luke 2v8-9*)

Having superintended the fulfillment of the 70 week prophecy we can reasonably speculate that the angel Gabriel was also the angel that:-

- warned the wise men (*Matt 2v12*)
- sent Joseph to Egypt (*Matt 2v13*)
- sent Joseph out of Egypt (*Matt 2v19-20*)
- directed Joseph to Nazareth (*Matt 2v22*)
- led Jesus into the wilderness (*Matt 4v1*)
- came to Jesus in Gethsemane (*Luke 22v43*)
- opened the tomb of Jesus (*Matt 28v2-5*)
- spoke to the women (*John 20v12, Mark 16v5*)

Cooperation with Michael

The two princes that shared the Divine calendar worked closely together to bring Jesus into the world 'at the fullness of time'. Nations, stars and an amazing array of people had to be providentially organized to achieve the birth of Christ in the way intended.

It is no surprise that we find that at the resurrection Mary Magdalene looks into the tomb and 'sees two angels...sitting' at each end of the place where the body of Jesus had lain (*John 20v12*). The fact that they 'sat' indicated that having raised, clothed and glorified Jesus that their many years of tediously planned work was finished.

Later two angels appeared on the Mount of Olives (*Acts 1v9-11*) to communicate to the disciples about the return of Christ. Very likely this was also Gabriel and Michael. Their roles, Michael – the angel of Israel and the Kingdom, and Gabriel – the angel of Jesus Christ, parallel the two elements of the Gospel of Salvation (*Acts 8v12*).

The Certain Man

"Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man (mg. 'one man') clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz:"

Dan 10v5

In *Dan 10v1-6* Daniel witnesses a glorious vision of the 'Man of One' which portrays the Kingdom of God and the glorified ecclesia. This 'man' is a contrast to the image of *Daniel 2* which portrays the powers of the flesh in the Kingdom of Men.

The vision is a typical representation, not a literal description in the same way that the cherubim, seraphim or multitudinous Son of Man portray elements of the glorified ecclesia of Christ. The 'Man of One' is the motivational force of all of God's works amongst the nations. The river of human history is superintended by the 'Man of One' and is guided by the two great angels that direct it's course (*Dan 12v5-8*).

However the name 'certain man' occurs elsewhere in relation to particular angels, and in particular with Joseph, the greatest type of Jesus Christ.

"He cried also in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near...And behold, six men came...and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side..." (*Ezek 9v1-2*)

"And a certain man found him, and, behold, he was wandering in the field: and the man asked him, saying, What seekest thou?" (*Gen 37v15*)

The Archangels and Christ

The following is a list of the names and titles given to angels.

Prince of Yahweh's Host – *Josh 5v14, Dan 10v13,21*

Gabriel – "Gibbor-El" – "the mighty warrior"

Michael – He "who is like unto God"

Palmoni – "the wonderful numberer"; "the numberer of secrets" (*Dan 8v13 mg.*)

Pele – "the wonderful" (*Jud 13v18*)

When Jesus was glorified he said "...all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (*Matt 28v18, cp 1Pet 3v22*). All the titles of angels will in the future be ascribed to Christ Jesus, our King.

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (*Isa 9v6*)

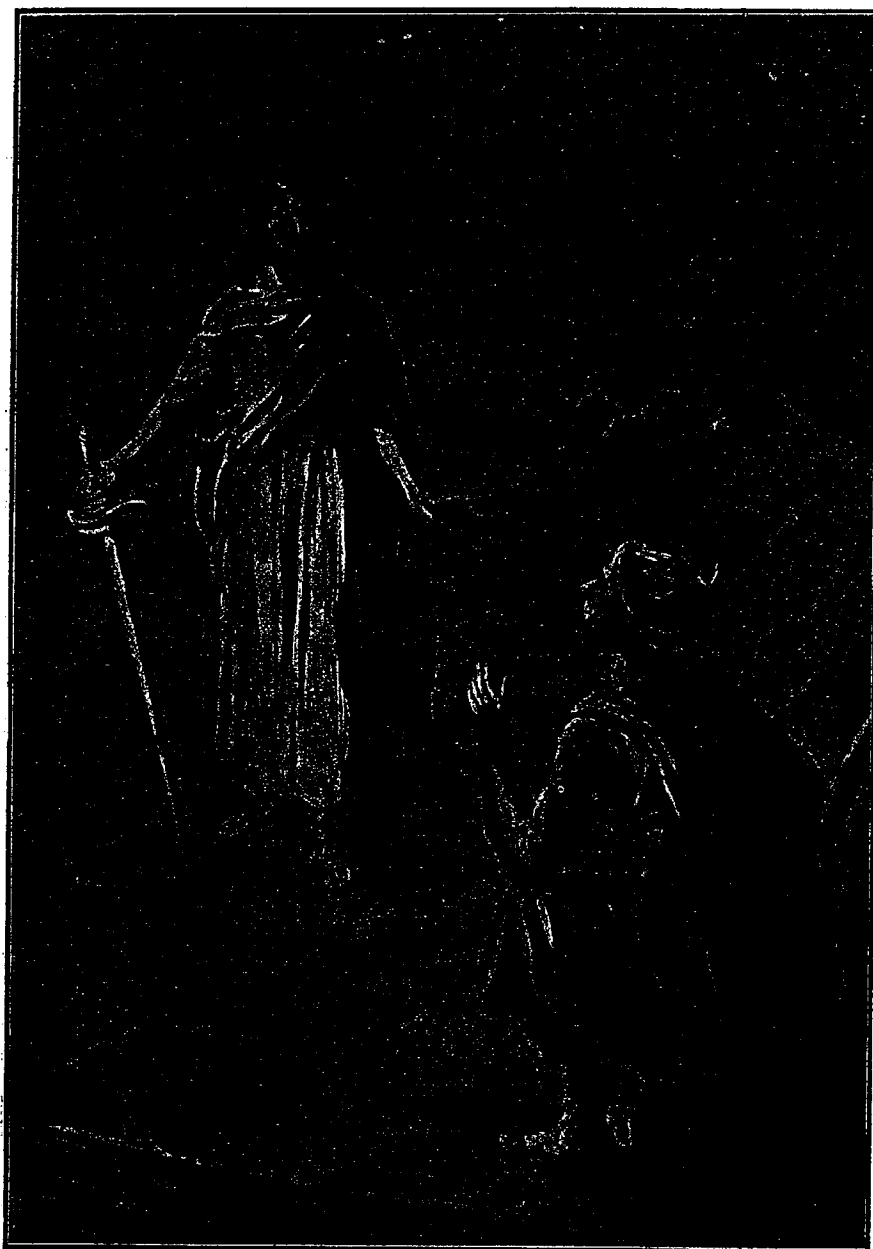
Wonderful – Heb "Pele"

The Mighty God – Heb "Gibbor-El"

The Father Of the Age – “God with us”; “like unto God”
The Prince Of Peace – “the zeal of Yahweh of armies will perform this”
Counsellor – the “giver of advice” – “the communicator”

In fact God has given Jesus a name above every name, in heaven and on earth, (*Phil 2v9-10*) and has commanded that “all the angels of God worship him”.

Archangels will so gladly honor God’s only begotten Son as their lord and king.



JOSH'U-A MEETS THE CAPTAIN OF THE LORD'S HOST ON THE PLAIN OF JER'I-CHO

6. Equal unto the Angels

Vision is Vital

Vision is essential to our spiritual survival.

“Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.”
Prov 29v18

The word for vision has the idea of ‘mental insight’. We have to be able to visualize the Kingdom and to mentally see ourselves there if we are to resist the temptations around us.

God has given to us the motive power of the hope of living eternally.

“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”

II Peter 1v4

We have to earnestly seek glory and honor, and be ambitious to glorify God in immortal nature.

“To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life...”

Rom 2v7

Yahweh has determined to glorify and immortalize many immortal beings, and to bring together His family in heaven and earth.

The Risen Christ

The scripture tells us that we should hope to be made like unto the risen Lord Jesus Christ.

“For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

Who shall change our vile body, that it may be like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”

Phil 3v20-21

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

1 John 3v2

However we really have little detail on the 'glorious body' of Jesus Christ. We know he ate, that he still had scars in his hands and side and was recognized by his friends. In the transfiguration he appeared in shining garments and great glory, but again the description is minimal.

To gain a deeper appreciation of immortal life, the best way is to examine the nature and experience of the angels. The Lord Jesus Christ encouraged us to do this:-

"But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God being the children of the resurrection"

Luke 20v35-36

There was an equivalent promise to the faithful found in the following passage:-

"Thus saith the LORD of hosts; if thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by." (*Zech 3v7*)

The angels are those 'standing by' – as depicted in *Zech 1v8, 10, 11* and *3v5*. This is the Old Testament promise of equality with the angels. Places (Heb – 'right of access') to mingle with the angels awaits those who walk in God's ways.

So let us look at what we know about the angels and their existence.

Bodily Shape

Man was made in the image of the *elohim*, which means they share the same bodily shape (*Gen 1v26*). We do note that both male and female were made in the image of *elohim* (*v27*). Angels have often been mistaken for ordinary men on the occasions where they chose not to reveal their full glory.

Immortalized Bodies

The promise is that God will "beautify the meek with salvation" (*Psa 149v4*). God will be able to perfect, heal and restore our mortal frames so that all afflictions, blemishes and the ravages of time are removed, yet our individuality will be maintained.

The angels were not seen as a group of clones or robots but each was an individual. The aging process will not be evident in the immortal state rather the saints will be restored to eternal youthfulness, or the prime of life.

“Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom. His flesh shall be fresher than a child’s: he shall return to the days of his youth.” (*Job 33v24-25*)

“Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s” (*Psa 103v5*)

“And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted.” (*Mark 16v5*)

This is interesting as this angel in the tomb was most likely a very senior angel in rank.

No more the frailties, fear of disease, the diets, medications, the cruel aging process, wrinkles or any of the inconvenient process of mortality (*Psa 103v3*). No longer dependent on food, oxygen or blood the saints will be ‘spirit’ bodies, that is bodies totally motivated and sustained by the power of God.

“It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.”

I Cor 15v44

“And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.”

I Cor 15v49

How we long for the day when we shall be changed, and this mortal puts on immortality.

Are There Female Angels?

If the angels were redeemed from mortality, then many of them were once female. However in the immortal state gender is irrelevant.

“But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage:”

Luke 20v35

Our immortal bodies will not need any of the reproductive and digestive organs, and none of the blood and hormonal influences will exist.

The saints will not continue having the current male or female susceptibilities or instincts, but will be perfect imitations of the complete and totally balanced character of the Father of All (*Exod 34v5-7*).

The angels are always referred to as 'he' or 'him' because their primary relation to men is to represent 'the Father' who reveals Himself that way. They come as deliverers of Holy Spirit power and this power is also personified as a 'he' (*John 14v17*).

While perfected immortals will be neither male nor female, their personal identity will remain and their unique experiences from mortality will be preserved. This will be of great value in dealings with the mortal population, who will still be marrying and bearing children throughout the millennial period, and will be guided and led by the saints in Godly living.

Divine Wisdom

The angels are used of similes of great wisdom and understanding.

"Then thine handmaid said, the word of my lord the king shall now be comfortable: for as an angel of God, so is my lord the king to discern good and bad: therefore the Lord thy God will be with thee." (*II Sam 14v17*)

"To fetch about this form of speech hath they servant Joab done this thing: and my lord is wise, according to the wisdom of an angel of God, to know all things that are in the earth." (*II Sam 14v20*)

"And ye shall be as the Elohim, knowing good and evil...and when the woman saw that the tree was...a tree to be desired to make one wise..." (*Gen 3v5-6*)

We are told that humans really only use about one tenth of their brain capacity – and when God invests us with the spirit and expands our spiritual wisdom we shall have that glorious combination of angelic wisdom and mature spirituality contained in glorified youthful bodies. No more proneness to sin, fighting with our lusts but delighting to do God's will at all times.

Glorious Bodies

The angelic experience gives us an insight into the glory of the spirit-filled body. In their normal appearance they radiate the light of heaven. Coming as they do from the unapproachable light of the Father they bring reflected glory (as Moses did) and also their own personal majesty.

Consider the frightening aspect of the mighty angel who opened the tomb of Christ:-

"And behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. 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.”

Matthew 28v2-4

Also see the description of Gabriel who appeared to the shepherds of Bethlehem:-

“And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.”

Luke 2v9

Their bodies radiate the glory of God, in a similar way that the transfigured Jesus “shone as lightning”. Cornelius saw a man in ‘bright clothing’ (*Acts 10v30*) and the prison that Peter was rescued from was ‘filled with light’ (*Acts 12v7*). The Yahweh angel in the wilderness with Israel glowed in the cloud, giving light to the camp of Israel. Moses’ face shone for some time after seeing the glorious Yahweh angel on the mount (*Exod 34v30*)

All these instances evidence an amazingly glorious bodily existence.

The Glory of the Elohim

In *Exodus 24v9-11* we have one of the most dramatic revelations of an angelic host in the Bible. Moses, Aaron and his sons and the 70 elders were called up the mountain to a fellowship meal with the angels. The angelic host moved as one spirit and wherever they walked the harsh rock of Sinai leveled under their feet (‘the glory of Yahweh making rough places plain’) and became as level as paving stone. Not only level, but translucent and blue as sapphire wherever they moved. The Divine light radiating from the angels made the rough mountain as a deep blue gemstone.

No wonder in *Num 15v38-39* God commanded Israel to put a ribband of blue on their garments. They would be testifying that they desired to walk in heavenly light as the angels did.

Later, Moses went up alone to see the glory of the Yahweh angel (*Exod 24v15-17*). The glory was so magnificent that it shone as fire, even through the clouds over the mountain.

Concealing Their Glory Before Moses

However, angels do not always appear in stunning glory and on occasions were seen by men and were not recognized as angels. Moses spoke to the Yahweh angel face to face (*Exod 33v11*) yet later was told he could not see his face and live. The angels at Christ’s tomb later conversed with the women without engendering the terror the soldiers felt.

How is this difference explained? Well let’s first be absolutely clear that angels do not have dimmer switches, nor do they literally change form. Their sudden appearances of disappearances are not because they vaporise or dissolve physically.

The simple answer is that angels can affect the eyes of the beholders so that they appear as they wish to be seen.

Some appear associated with fire:

- Samson's parents *Judges 13v20*
- In the bush to Moses *Exod 3v1-6*
- As chariots of fire round Elisha *II Kings 6v16-17*
- The 'faces' and 'flaming' sword in Eden *Gen 3v24*

Sometimes only the angelic hand is seen:

"And Yahweh put forth his hand, and touched my mouth." *Jer 1v9*

"I looked, behold an hand was sent unto me..." *Ezek 2v9-10*

"And he put forth the form of an hand..." *Ezek 8v3*

"...the king saw the part of the hand that wrote." *Dan 5v5*

"one...touched me..." *Dan 10v16,18*

Some appeared with swords drawn to indicate that God's judgements were about to fall:

- The angel who resisted Balaam *Num 22v22*
- The angel against David *I Chron 21v16*
- The angel to Joshua *Josh 5v13-14*

Angels do not need or own swords, but in these cases the picture was an important way to convey their intentions.

Affecting the Eyes of Beholders

The scriptures show how angels (or risen Christ) acted on the eyes of men as they needed to:

1. *Luke 24v16,31* – See AV margin – Jesus 'ceased to be seen of them'
2. *Num 22v22,31* – The ass saw the angel, but Balaam didn't until his eyes were opened – however the angel was definitely there.
3. *II Kings 6v16-17* – The young man's eyes had to be opened to see what Elisha already saw

The angels affect the senses of mortals as they wish, so that we see only what they wish us to see. Their glory which would destroy us if fully seen is concealed from our mortal eyes.

It seems that even the mortal Jesus, by virtue of the power of the Holy Spirit could hold the eyes of those who sought to kill him prematurely.

Entertaining Angels Unawares

A very interesting comment is made in *Heb 13v2*:

“Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.”

While the primary intent of the exhortation is hospitality, we must always remember that angels have appeared unrecognized in the past. This epistle was written at a time when open vision and angelic appearance had almost ended, and so it is quite possible that angels could appear to us today, although unrecognized by us. We will never know for sure this side of the Kingdom but there is no reason why the angels might influence our lives as casual acquaintances, as happened to Joseph *Gen 37v15*.

Angelic Inexhaustibility

Sharing the nature of God who ‘slumbers not nor sleeps’ (*Psa 121v4*) they do not need sleep or refreshment as we do in our mortal frames. Our hope is to share their powerful bodies.

THE IMMORTAL EXPERIENCE – Partakers of Divine Nature

“Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the God of age-past time, Yahweh, the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither groweth weary; there is no searching of His understanding: Giving to him that fainteth, strength and to him that hath no vigour He causeth power to abound. Youths both faint and grow weary, and young warrior, they fall they fall; but they who wait for Yahweh shall renew their strength; they shall mount up on strong pinion, like eagles, they shall run and not grow weary, they shall walk and not faint.”

Isa 40v28-31 (Rotherhams Translation)

How we long to be free of fatigue and weariness.

We note from *Gen 19v1-3* that the angels were quite at home in the street all night, but condescended to go to Lot’s house. They did not need to lie down but were at home in the open air.

Angelic Mobility

Angels move very swiftly at times:

“And he left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham” *Gen 17v22*

“And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven...” *Luke 2v15*

“the Spirit of the Lord (the angel v26) caught away Philip...” *Acts 8:39*

“...that the angel of Yahweh ascended in the flame of the altar...” *Jud 13v20*

“...then the angel of Yahweh departed out of his sight.” *Jud 6:21*

On other occasions they appear suspended in mid air.

"And David...saw the angel of Yahweh stand between the earth and heaven..."

I Chron 21:16

They have spirit powered mobility, soaring effortlessly (as do the eagles) but without the need for the rapid wing beats. They can move freely about the universe and can be very quickly found far away (cp *Dan 10v13, Acts 8v39-40*).

The saints are portrayed as going ahead of the mortal pilgrims to Zion like doves (white and pure and with a homing instinct for the courts of God).

"Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as doves to their windows?" *Isa 60v8*.

By the grace of God we will share the mobility of the angels to move freely about the universe.

Eating

Israel's manna in the wilderness was described as 'the bread of the mighty' or 'angels food' (*Psa 78v25*).

Angels do not need to eat, but can do so entirely for enjoyment and fellowship, as the risen Christ did with his disciples. Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God, when we partake of the celebrations around the supper of the Lamb and his bride.

To be able to eat without any of the consequences we experience today or any digestive process will be one of the joys of the kingdom.

Bro Roberts comments as follows:

'Lot made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and *they did eat*.' Angels eating, will only be a difficult idea with those whose notions on the subject are drawn from religious novels and art illustrations. The Scriptural exhibition of the subject is free from difficulty. Angels can eat, though independent of eating for life; and when they eat, their food is assimilated to their spirit-nature, just as food eaten by man is assimilated to man-nature; by animals to animal-nature. There is this difference, that angel-nature is spiritual and incorruptible. There is none of the offensiveness more or less incident to the processes of all animal organizations. Cleanness, holiness, incorruptibility, and strength, are characteristics of the spirit-nature, involving completeness of absorption of all substances partaken of.

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Angelic Clothing

Other than the times that the angels chose to be seen dressed as ordinary folk of the era, they appeared in 'white robes' or 'shining garments' (cp *Mark 16v5*). The saints will likewise 'walk in white' as a mark of the righteousness of saints (*Rev 7v13-14*).

Angelic Speech

The angels as controllers of the power of the spirit are able to converse in any tongue, and were responsible for the confusion of tongues in the earth in *Gen 11v7*.

Paul alludes to a 'tongue of angels' in a hyperbole (an extremism) in *I Cor 13v1*. Perhaps there is a unique language of heaven to which the earth will one day return for united praise and worship.

'Then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call on the name of the LORD, to serve Him with one consent' *Zeph 3v9*

Angelic Capabilities

The angels have been involved behind the scenes to accomplish God's will, using the forces of nature. Here are a few examples:

- The Flood
- Sodom and Gomorrah
- Famine in Egypt
- Opening the Red Sea
- Defeat of Sisera
- The battle of Salamis
- Defeat of Juleiman... AD 718
- The fall of Constantinople... AD 1453
- Destruction of Spanish Armada
- Napoleon's retreat from Russia
- Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo
- The poor weather leading up to French Revolution
- The Black Death
- The Battle of Mons
- Dunkirk
- Hitler's invasion of Russia
- D-Day (1944)
- Jerusalem (1948)

The Bible describes this use of nature as "stormy winds fulfilling His word".

On other occasions their work was less obvious but was still vitally important.

- Taking a rib from Adam – making a woman
- Removing the wheels from Pharaoh's chariots
- Creating the noise of many horses
- Guiding the arrow that struck Ahab
- Providing a ram caught in a thicket
- Knocking down the altar of Dagon
- Putting a coin in the mouth of a fish
- Provoking two she bears to anger
- Making sure Paul didn't drown (4 times)

- Filling the Inn at Bethlehem
- Providing a great fish to swallow Jonah and vomit him on land
- Stirring up the Spirit of Kings and Prophets
- Bringing plagues on Egypt

Make a list of unusual events that required the angelic hand.

Angelic Perception

The angels have a remarkable gift to read the minds of mortals under their care.

Zacharias

"And thou shalt be dumb...because thou believest not my words..." *Luke 1v20*

Abimelech

"And Elohim said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart..." *Gen 20v6*

Sarah

"Wherefore didst Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old?" *Gen 18v13*

David

"This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." *Psa 34v6-7*

This explains why on so many occasions the angels perceived the inward apprehension of mortals and immediately reassured people with the words... "fear not".

The saints will have a similar power to read the hearts of mortals in the kingdom.

"And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers: And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left."

Isa 30v20-21

Family Life

Marriage is not needed in the immortal state (*Luke 20v35-36*) as there is no need to further produce a godly seed or to maintain homes for the mortal needs we have now. Gender is of no relevance in the immortal state and all will share the work of the Kingdom equally.

It does seem likely that spiritual bonds developed by the close association of marriage will be preserved. One of the great joys of the kingdom will be for immortal parents to teach their mortal children, and grandchildren. See *Psa 128v6*.

Angelic Power

The angels used the power of God at creation, to bring the Flood, to destroy Sodom, to plague Egypt, to destroy 185,000 Assyrians and to work mightily so often. Likewise the saints will 'smite the nations' and be able to work miracles, including healings and regenerating the earth.

The first century spirit gifts were but a deposit or foretaste of on the outpouring of gifts which is yet to come.

"...Ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit" *Rom 8v23*

"Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." *II Cor 1v22*

"...After ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest (a down payment or deposit) of our inheritance..." *Eph 1v13-14*

"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come..." *Heb 6v4-5*

The glorified saints will have all the gifts – as well as spirit filled minds.

In the Kingdom the saints will control the amazing power now in the hands of the angels.

Angelic Character

To have such power in mortal hands is a frightening prospect, but God only invests His power in those who are fit to exercise it. Everything we see about the angels evidences character.

"Though power greater than dynamite lies latent in the graceful and brilliant form of an angel, it is under the control of perfect and beneficent intelligence"

Nazareth Revisited Page 27

"The angels are not indifferent to the wishes and comforts of others. They are the true gentlemen of the universe. They reflect the character of the Eternal Father of all, who is gracious, compassionate and good..."

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In fact everything we can glean about the angels evidences a wonderfully cooperative and humble spirit. When John was tempted to fall down at the feet of the angel of the Apocalypse and worship him, the angel said to John:

"...See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God."

Rev 22v9

This shows both the humility of the angel in deferring to God, and the tremendous sense of companionship that angels feel toward the faithful servants of the Deity like John and

Daniel (cp *Dan 10v11-12*). They regard us as 'fellow-servants' and 'brethren' and delight to see our burning interest in things divine. In many epochs of history there were very few that the angels could look to for the preservation of God's Truth, and so their feelings for the diligent servants of God were very strong.

Angelic Ministration

The great lesson of the truth is that the truly great are not too proud to serve others. Jesus so clearly taught us this at the last supper, washing even the heel of Judas that was lifted up against him (*John 13v3,14-15*).

Angels are seen on many occasions caring for mortals. An angel found Hagar in the wilderness (*Gen 21v17*). Elijah was fed by an angel who had prepared meals for him and was conscious of his physical needs in a time of great depression (*I Kings 19v5-8*).

Angels ministered to the emaciated and drained Son of God after his victory over temptation (*Matt 4v11*).

They nursed him back from the point of physical collapse so that he came in the power of the Spirit into Galilee to begin his ministry. We can only imagine the tender care they would have given to the Beloved Son of God, their future king and lord. Their charge of *Psa 91v10-11*, which had been part of the temptation now was fulfilled by their gentle care of Jesus.

Angelic Patience

The 'Yahweh' angel that visited Abraham and Sarah is seen exercising tremendous patience and condescension to Abraham in regard to the impending destruction of Sodom (*Gen 18v22-33*).

Having decided to reveal the fate of Sodom to Abraham because the knowledge would be profitably used by Abraham (*v17-19*), the angel then patiently waits for Abraham's response (*v22*). Sending the other two Elohim ahead the 'Yahweh' angel halts on the road, perceiving Abraham's distress and concern. His patient concession to Abraham's feelings not only reduced the number from 50 to 10 for Sodom to be spared, but shows us this angel had the prerogative to so decide on behalf of the Father. Abraham was greatly afraid to push the matter in the presence of so mighty an angel and was rewarded by patient consideration, even though the angel probably knew that even the 'ten' would not be found. The angel did not crush Abraham's concerns, showing us the graciousness we will need in dealing with the mortals of the future age.

The angels accepted Lot's pleas to take shelter and food in his house. Though not needing either food or sleep they both ate and prepared to 'lie down' *Gen 19v3-4*.

Bro Roberts remarks:

'The angels are not indifferent to the wishes and comforts of others. They are the true gentlemen of the universe. They reflect the character of the Eternal Father of all, who is gracious, compassionate, and good. They would have preferred God's open air, but in view of Lot's strong desire, "they turned in unto him, and entered into his house," and not only so, but they condescended to partake of what he provided for them.'

The Visible Hand of God Page 70

The angels are not rude nor impatient, even though Lot took some time to grasp the enormity of the situation. Having smitten the men of the city with blindness (19v11) they gave Lot a chance to save his married children, even though they knew it would be futile. They were conscious of Lot's feelings and knew he had to see the fulfilling of it for himself before he went.

Eventually, they had to press Lot to go (v15) seeing that he was wavering in the hope that more of his family might respond. Finally in an act of great mercy and tenderness each angel took one of the family with each hand and led them out of Sodom (19v16), sending him to the mountain.

Even then Lot's courage failed, and he begged for Zoar as a refuge. The Yahweh angel kindly spared Zoar for Lot's sake, even though it would be surrounded by devastation and horror. Later Lot couldn't get up the mountain fast enough (v30).

This incident is very instructive to us who will one day be visited by angels, and when 'the days of Lot' will be repeated. Let us ensure that we think about it ahead of the event, and so be prepared to go without prevarication or turning back (*Luke 17v28-33*). The other great lesson is to see the incredible sensitivity and patience of the angels with Lot and his family. Lot was in a state of shock and grief for his family, and so the angels treated him very gently, despite the poor decisions he made. Their firm but gentle removing of Lot was an expression of the 'mercy of Yahweh' for Abraham's sake (v29).

The Yahweh angel appears to have met Lot and the two Elohim outside of Sodom – see v17 – 'he said' and v21 'I will'. The 'Yahweh' angel then rains down fire and brimstone '...from Yahweh in heaven' (v24). The angels did the destroying (*Gen 19v29* cp *Amos 4v11*) through their manipulation of divine power, yet mixed with such great power was a gentleness in dealing with the righteous.

Equal Unto the Angels

So we see that our hope is to be equal in nature and character to the angels that stand by us today. We must have a driving vision of future glory because our God has promised to give us 'the desires of our heart' (*Psa 37v4*).

THE VISION OF EQUALITY WITH THE ANGELS – Our Place Amongst Those That Stand By

- Gloriously perfected bodies – eternal youthfulness
- Radiant brilliance, celestial bodies, like unto His glorious body
- Unable to die, feel pain, or know decay
- Complete removal of the proneness to sin – perfected characters
- Amazing powers of intellect and vast wisdom – of quick understanding in ways of God
- All the powers of the Spirit of God
 - able to read minds of mortals
 - a degree of foreknowledge
 - power to heal and perform miracles
 - control of forces of nature
 - ability to affect the eyes of beholders
- Glorious, untrained ability to render praise in perfect tone and unison
- Participating joyfully in amazing episodes of worship and praise
- Ability to travel through space swiftly
- Inexhaustible and unlimited bodies, no need of sleep
- Able to eat for fellowship and enjoyment
- Sweet fellowship with our fellow heirs, the angels and generations of mortals
- Revered and respected by all the mortals
- Knowing the Lord Jesus Christ personally – seeing his glory
- To see the glorious culmination of the 7000 year plan
- To behold the face of the Father

The very last writing of our beloved Brother John Thomas evidences this vision of equality with the angels.

Let us share these sentiments.

“Dr Thomas’ last utterance was just such a case. He was writing to a brother on the subject, “What is flesh?” After a few beautiful and lucid paragraphs, in which he insisted that difference of organization under the will of the Eternal was the true basis of distinction between man and the inferior creation, he came to speak of the change of nature to which the friends of God will be at length subjected by Christ:-
“The transforming energy of divine power will convert spirit that passeth away into spirit that passeth not away. They who may be the subjects of this operation will be exalted to equality with the angels, whose substance doth not waste nor pass away...”

7. Those that Stand By

The Angels and God's Family

The work of the angels with the elect of God has always been a major part of their work. Consider their mission in these words.

"Behold I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared." (Exod 23v20)

"And behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land, for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." (Gen 28v15)

The angels 'stand by' God to await His pleasure (Luke 1v19) and 'stand by' the saints to perform His will with His children. This is the significance of the staircase that Jacob saw, which showed him that the angels of heaven are also intimately involved with Abraham's seed in their earthly pilgrimage.

Their work is to keep us in the way, and to bring us in to inherit the place God has prepared for us.

The angels guided Israel from Egypt to the Land of Promise (Isa 63v9; Acts 7v38), providing protection, food, warmth, light and frustrating their enemies, such as Balaam and Balak. The Yahweh angel felt with Israel all the afflictions "in all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them".

The Angels and God's saints

There are few clearer teachings in the Bible than that God has graciously assigned each of His saints the individual attention of angels to assist them to obtain salvation.

Both Old and New Testaments clearly indicate the presence of angels to guide and protect God's children.

"The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them" Psa 34v7

"Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." Matt 18v10

Both these verses teach individual angels work with us for our good. Let us never imagine we are so unimportant that a mighty angel could be given charge over us. In very few generations since Christ have there been more than 50,000 of the saints alive at the same time. If there are a million angels (and there may be many millions) then even

in the times when there was 50,000 saints, only one in 20 angels would have a saint to care for. In many other epochs when the 'remnant of the womans seed' were few, the privilege of working personally with a saint would be highly prized among the angelic host. No wonder Gabriel said to Daniel "O man greatly beloved unto thee am I now sent."

Matthew 18v10 provides a very great exhortation about how the angels work with the 'little ones' that believe in Christ. 'Their angels', said Jesus "do always behold the face of the Father", and woe betide those who offend the little ones, or cause them to stumble. (*Romans 14v15,21*) The scene that Jesus portrays is of an angel reporting to God on the progress of their assigned saint, and having to mention the names of others who are hindering their task. It were better, said Jesus to be drowned like a vicious dog, than to be so mentioned in a negative light in God's presence.

God's eyes in the earth

One of the first things we teach our little children is that God sees all. How sad that as we grow older we act in ways that evidence that we don't always believe it ourselves. The angels are sent out to represent God and to see the things done in the earth.

"And Yahweh came down to see ..." *Gen 11v5*
"I will go down now, and see" *Gen 18v21*

King Asa was rebuked by Hanani the prophet for making a political alliance with Syria, instead of putting his trust in the God of Heaven.

"And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said unto him, because thou hast relied on the king of Syria and not relied on the LORD thy God, therefore is the host of the king escaped out of thine hand" "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly; therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars. *11 Chronicles 16v7,9*

Solomon also recognized the eyes of God were in every place, beholding the evil and the good (*Prov 15v3*). It is vain to think that we can hide anything from God or his messengers. (*Isa 29v15*)

Thus the angels are called 'watchers even holy ones' in Daniel 4v13 and 'they walk to and fro in the earth' to perform the divine will. (*Zech 1v10*)

Supporters not Policemen

Often our first emotion when we grasp the nearness of angels to our lives is one of fear and shame. We must graduate to see that angels are not sent as spies, judges or policemen. Their sole mission is to assist, protect, guide, develop and ultimately save us

for the eternal life God promises. They are utterly dedicated to our eternal welfare and feel nothing but goodwill toward us. Paul comments:- "Are they not all ministering (Litourgikos - public service: esp in the Temple) spirits, sent (Apostello - to send forth, equip and dispatch on a mission) forth to minister (Eis dia-lit "with a view to service") for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" *Heb 1v14*.

These words show that the service they render is something they greatly rejoice to undertake. They are "sent forth" (continuous sense in Greek) constantly to work with us. Today they ascend and descend on the medium of the Son of Man. The only limitation to their work is that they cannot take away our freewill. They can providentially give us opportunities and attempt to change us, but in the end we have to choose life or reject it.

Their work with the saints is described as 'sealing the servants of God' (*Rev 7v3*). This indicates that impressing the minds of saints with the divine character is their chief work, and that history has been arranged around the time needed to perfect the children of God.

So there is no question that angels are assigned to individual saints, and cooperate as family angels (2 came to Lot) and ecclesial angels. In fact the 'elect angels' of *1 Tim 5v21* are likely the angels assigned to coordinate ecclesial affairs and to ensure that the sealing work in each ecclesia is effectively coordinated.

The great power in our lives comes when we learn to work with the angel God has given us, and to not frustrate them in their task. How much better to look forward to the day that we shall meet our angel and to meet those who know us better than we know ourselves. Note what Zerubbabel was told about his personal angel.

"The hands of Zerubbabel have founded this house and his hands shall finish it, so shalt thou know that Yahweh of hosts hath sent me unto you. For who hath despised the day of small things? Yet shall they rejoice when they see the plummet stone in the hand of Zerubbabel - these seven! The eyes of Yahweh they are running to and fro throughout the earth." *Zech 4v9-10* (Roth).

May we see even in this age, that Yahweh of Hosts has also sent an angel to us.

Jacob and the Angels

One of the early 'heirs of salvation' was Jacob. His life is a very useful way to look at providence because his life was a mixture of life's blessings and the evils that beset all men. Jacob was full of natural guile and human fear and his life was punctuated by an incredible list of tragedies.

Jacob's life of Tragedy

"Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been"

- Exiled from his family

- Never saw his mother again
- Lived 40 years in morbid fear of Esau's hatred
- Forty years of hard labour in Laban's house
- Deceived in matter of wives
- Wages changed ten times by Laban
- Bitter conflict between wives & handmaids
- Incest committed by Reuben & Bilhah
- Early death of Rachel, left with two boys under six
- Dinah defiled by the Prince of Shechem
- Cruel slaughter of Shechem by Simeon & Levi
- Living in fear of Canaanites
- Judah marries a Canaanite
- Two grandson's slain by God
- Unruly behaviour of sons of handmaids
- Judah's adultery a shame to whole family
- Bitter hatred amongst sons towards Joseph
- Supposed death of Joseph
- Several times of severe famine
- Simeon kept in prison in Egypt
- Benjamin sent to Egypt

"All these things are against me." Gen 42v36

For most of his life he found it very hard to see the work of the angels. Few men have suffered as much as Jacob and so his struggle to keep on believing is helpful to us as we grapple with life and its troubles. Yet in all his troubles the angels were in control.

'The very best experience at present is only a state of divinely regulated evil. The divine regulation of this may and does permit the experience of evil in severe forms by His people. Some of Jacob's experiences, however, show that the cruelest and apparently most aimless wrench of affliction may be but the preparation for the highest blessedness even now.' *Ways of Providence* p234

Jacobs Life Story

Genesis 28v12-15: As Jacob began his 40 year exile, he saw in a dream the 'staircase' connecting heaven and earth, with angels 'ascending & descending' on it. The message was that God's angels constantly guarded him and their base was on earth, but that they also reported to God.

What is vital is v13. The RV margin has correctly ...*"Yahweh stood beside him ..."*. The Yahweh angel stood with Jacob and promised never to leave him until Jacob

returned to the land again. This was fulfilled in *Gen 35v13* where "...elohim went up from him..."

It was 40 long years from Bethel before the angel came again in a dream to Jacob. No doubt he began to doubt the dream or its intention. The second dream is recorded in *Gen 31v5-7* where the angel informs Jacob to return to the land, and shows him that the acquisition of Laban's flocks was the work of God, not Jacob's guile.

The angel warns Laban not to harm Jacob (*Gen 31v24*) and protects him from Laban's wrath. Jacob arrives on the border of the land still greatly fearful of Esau.

Genesis 32v1-2 is a dramatic moment when God briefly draws back the curtain of the unseen and reveals to Jacob the ever present angelic army.

Jacob's response to seeing the armies of heaven surrounding him and his host was to name the place "Mahanaim" meaning 'two hosts' or 'two camps'. Actually it was only one camp. The angels were part of his camp and were standing by to support him.

As the meeting with Esau approached, Jacob became greatly distressed and torn by fear (*v11*). He devised strategies to appease Esau, sending off droves of presents. He prayed with great intensity (*v9-12*) and finally he was left alone (*v23*).

His obsession with Esau comes out in the literal rendition of *Gen 32v20* - "For he said, I will cover his face the present that goes before my face, and afterward I will see his face, peradventure he will accept my face..."

Jacob's obsession with Esau was unhealthy and so his angel wrestled with him. This wrestling was to test Jacob's resolve to trust or to go after his family and contrive to outwit Esau. It was a spiritual crisis for Jacob and he clung tenaciously to the angel, who exerted sufficient pressure to test Jacob's determination. The angels likewise bring sufficient pressure on us to test our resolve, and may even cripple the power of the flesh, but they don't destroy us.

The angel gave Jacob every chance to go (*v26*) and to resort to native guile, but Jacob clung on (*Hos 12v4*) seeking for assurance from the angel. Jacob's choice to depend on the angel was rewarded. He learnt to look into the face of the angel and not Esau. You can't get much closer to a face than in a wrestling situation.

Jacob names the place "Peniel" - 'the faces of elohim' to memorialize his encounter with God's angel (*v30*).

The angels working behind the scenes made Esau to be his friend (*Prov 16v17*) and he now viewed Esau as a challenge from God (*33v10*) rather than an enemy.

The angels protected Jacob from the avenging Canaanites (*35v5*) and finally he completed his journey at Bethel.

It was to be 33 years more before Jacob was to see God's hand openly revealed in the reunion with his beloved Joseph.

Jacob's Faith In His Angel

Jacob's final dramatic act of faith which makes Hebrews 11 is the blessing of the sons of Joseph. His final confession of faith shows that despite a terribly tragic life that God gave him power to last till the end, and that the angel had "shepherded" him through his life of suffering afflictions.

"And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."

Gen 48v15-16

Jacob's summary of his life was 'few and evil have been the days of the years of my life'. *Gen 47v9*. Few of us have suffered as many hardships as he did, which proves that as part of their 'charge' the angels allow evil to come upon us for our good. (*Rom 8v28*)

Jacob's life is an especial illustration of one fact most important to be recognized, that the life of those who God regards is not necessarily a life of unmixed prosperity. God is with them and God guides them but because of the imperfect nature of the present state, "chastening" is a necessity which takes the form of evil permitted for correction. Jacob's case further shows us that God does not propose the bestowment of perfect good in the present state. The present life in its best state is a state of exile from Eden. Reconciliation and return are in process of accomplishment, but we shall make a mistake if we look for unmixed good till the proclamation is made; "There shall be no more curse."

Ways of Providence pg 234-235

So we can learn much from Jacob's life, his struggle to prevail with God, and his trust in the angel who never left him.

In all thy ways acknowledge him

Jacob illustrates plainly the angelic nature of what we call providence, giving affairs an intelligent bent this way and that, as occasion requires, without showing His hand. Where the angels do not operate, providence is not at work, but affairs are left to work themselves out on natural principles. Yet angelic operations in ordinary life are not distinguishable from the effect of nature, the results induced appearing natural. We cannot discover their hand and need not make the attempt. Our part is to fear God, keep the commandments, and go forth with courage and trust, believing the assurance that all things work together for good for those who love God"

Ways of Providence.

Are You A Jacob?

There are many Jacobs in the service of God today - men who have received clear, gracious, diving assurances of the forgiveness of sins, of unfailing heavenly care and guidance, and of ceaseless angelic concern for all their affairs, and who yet live as though convinced that their own wit and wisdom and scheming and contriving are worth more than anything that the heavenly minister can achieve. It is enough to make angels weep with disappointment. Yet, happily with some the day of realization comes as it did for Jacob, early enough to transform a life of assertive self dependence into a pilgrimage of faith." (From "Wrestling Jacob")



8. How Angelic Providence Operates in our Lives

Providence is a subject that can be taken to an extreme in both directions. It is possible to leave God and the angels right out of the picture, and it is also possible to read providence into every incident of life. Let us heed the words of Bro Robert Roberts in 'The Ways of Providence'

"Much that is talked of in a common way as providence is no providence. Providence consists of the divine regulation of natural circumstances; and the principles upon which this regulation takes place, can only be learnt from the scriptures of truth. These principles we have endeavored to exhibit, with the result of enabling us to realize that all who commit their ways to God in a scriptural manner, are included in the operations of the only providence that exists in the universe - that is the control of natural circumstances by angelic agency; in an unseen manner, however, and without any apparent interference with natural ways. Outside of this control, all is chance; for there is such a thing as chance, but chance is controlled when the purpose of God requires it. This control is exercised in accordance with the 'charge' which the angels receive from the Creator. Where no such charge exists, things happen naturally, or according to the mechanical relations of things in nature"

(page 232-233)

"But one may say, How do I know that God is with me? Such may find their answer in these words: The Lord is with you while ye be with him. If ye seek Him, He will be found of you; but if ye forsake Him, he will forsake you" 2 Chron 15v2 The scriptures abound with similar declarations. They make the course of every earnest man clear. Seek the Lord in the reading of His word, in prayer to Him, and in the doing of those things He has commanded; and He will guide your way in the darkness without any apparent interference, and cause all things (yea, even evil circumstances) to work together for your good, namely, your preparedness for an entrance into His glorious Kingdom. But if ye decline from His ways and seek your own pleasure, He will leave you to your own - perhaps successful - devices which will at last work out your own destruction"

(pg 31)

We are assured that God will direct our paths on two very clear grounds.

1. our ultimate spiritual welfare and salvation (*Heb 1v14; Rom 8v28; 2 Cor 4v7-8, 17-18*)
2. undertaking to do God's declared purpose - e.g.
 - promoting unity (*Eph 4v1-2*)
 - preaching the Truth (*Rev 19v10*)
 - feeding the flock of God (*1 Pet 5v1-2*)
 - raising a godly seed (*Gen 18v17-19*)
 - seeking divine wisdom (*Dan 10v12; 9v23*)

Our Contribution

What we have to do is play our part, trusting in the good hand of God upon us.

Labourers together with God

"Though God is with His children, He looks to them to arrange their affairs with discretion, as testified in all the proverbs of Solomon. Human action is the basis for divine supervision. In its absence, there is nothing for the angels to work on". Ways of Providence

Angels cannot override our freewill to choose life or death, good or evil. David in *Psalms 34v7* firmly believed the angels 'encamped' around him even in a time of great weakness and failure. As a result he exhorts us to:

- taste and see that Yahweh is good
- fear Yahweh and to trust in him
- to depart from evil and do good

Read the rest of the psalm and see how much the angels need our cooperation and willing commitment.

Daniel's friends had the correct attitude - trusting God, yet never presuming that their mortal lives were guaranteed.

Daniel's friends - the correct attitude to God's Providence

"Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

Dan 3v16-18

Yet in this case God did send his angel ('a son of the gods' *Dan 3v25-28*) and rescued them from the furnace of Nebuchadnezzar (*Heb 11v34*).

Struggling With Life's Reversals

Not all of God's children are rescued. *Heb 11v36* goes on to say that "...and others suffered...". Even great men of faith like Jeremiah and the prophets suffered immensely and many thousands of Christ's brethren have died for their faith. It is not always easy to comprehend why we are not always delivered from evil.

We need to appreciate that if life dealt us unmixed good we would learn little and not find it easy to long for the future. Life is a mixture of good and evil. Look at Job's experience. We have seen the gracious '...end of the Lord...' (*James 5v11*) but in the middle of huge grief and bewilderment even Job struggled to find God in the tragedy he felt.

His words express the feeling of all God's children in times of great trial.

"Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him; On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him: But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."

Job 23v8-10

The Apostle Paul

Paul was a classic case of a man grappling to understand providence in his life. At times God sent angels to direct and reassure him (*Acts 27v23*). His life had been foreseen and controlled by God that he might be the great living example of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles. His desire was to travel, to preach in regions beyond and to confirm the new ecclesias, but he always encountered great frustration in his work. Paul suffered:-

- 4 shipwrecks
- 8 beatings
- a stoning
- 5 years imprisonment
- perils of many kinds
- hunger, cold & nakedness
- an embarrassing illness
- loss of support and betrayal

Paul always had a great sense of the angelic presence watching over his work

Paul's awareness of angels.

"We are made a spectacle (Gk 'theatre') unto the world, and to angels, and to men" *1 Cor 4v9*

"Ye are come (by faith) To an innumerable company of angels." *Heb 12v22*

"For this cause ought the woman to have power (a token of submission) on her head because of the angels" *1 Cor 11v10*

"I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels" *1 Tim 5v21*

Yet he must have pondered often about the strange course his life took which so frustrated his desires to complete his great commission. Why was he locked up for 5 years at a critical time of ecclesial strife? Why was he left to cope with his debilitating illness which so hampered his effectiveness?

We know why Paul was locked up - it forced him to write glorious expositions that have profited so many generations of saints. Passionate logical epistles flowed from Paul, expressing the mind of the spirit for our sakes. However, Paul would have surely wondered why it was so at the time.

The Early Ecclesia

Another great lesson in the ways of providence and the work of angels is found in *Acts 12v2*. The angels who had previously rescued the apostles from prison (*Acts 5v19*) seem suddenly absent as James the brother of John is taken and executed by Herod. One of the 3 apostles in whom so much had been invested by Jesus is taken and not spared. Then Peter is captured as well. The ecclesia was still praying hard for Peter's safety, but the loss of James had so dented their faith that when Peter came to the door, they did not believe that their prayers were answered (*Acts 12v15*)

Not only did the angel rescue Peter (v7) but later the pompous Herod was to be inflicted a gruesome death at the hand of the angel (v23). Their prayers were answered but not before their faith had been tested and refined.

So we see that while the angels are fully in control, that reversals and tragedies are part of the tapestries of life that God allows.

Joseph The Great Example For Us

The great benefit of his life for us is that Joseph never experienced a miracle, never had a vision or knew that he had met an angel. All he had was a life marked out by dreams. His life however, was perhaps the most providential life ever recorded, except that of the Lord Jesus whom he foreshadowed.

Joseph had a great consciousness of God, and always believed that God was in control of his life (*Gen 39v9; 40v8; 41v32; 45v5,7; 50v20*). However there was no open revelation of why he had to go through so much suffering.

Joseph's tears

"In the first moments of his incarceration, Joseph must have been in a dreadful state of mind. We know what came after, which makes it difficult for us to realize the darkness of his situation. Joseph did not know what was coming after.

Joseph, doubtless, bemoaned his position with many tears. The 'stoical grin' with which educated Britons are taught to meet misfortunes is a part of the polished Paganism of the times.

It belongs not to the school of which Job, David, Jeremiah, and the Lord Jesus are prominent examples. These recognize that 'there is a time to weep' as well as a time to laugh, and they do not require to invent the weeping time."

Ways of Providence pg 66-67

Why Joseph had to suffer

"Joseph was innocent and excellent, but Joseph was young and untried, and God had a great purpose for him that required that he should be matured and perfected in character as men only can be perfected - in the school of adversity. Joseph had to be fitted for exaltation and the exercise of power, and therefore Joseph had to suffer for Joseph's own good and for the bringing about of a great result to the whole house of Israel."

Ways of Providence pg 62

Is God with us?

"Trouble is often a preparation for good even now. How completely this lesson is illustrated in the case of Joseph, which yields this additional feature, that God may be at work in our affairs not only when there is no trace of His hand but when it seems impossible that He can be at work. It may often seem not only that God is not working with us but that He is working against us. Joseph's case may teach us patience on this point."

Ways of Providence pg 235

The mission of Joseph to 'seek his brethren' took far longer than Joseph could imagine. He was guided in this by a 'certain man' (*cp Dan 10v5, 'Man of One'*) who 'found him' wandering in the field. This man was no doubt an angel appearing 'unawares' and who had listened to the plans of Joseph's brethren (*Gen 37v15-17*).

Despite horrible experiences - the pit, being sold twice, falsely accused and cast into prison, Joseph kept up his faith in God and never lost his way. We read that even in the lowest dungeon that 'Yahweh was with Joseph' to care for him.

Joseph's life teaches us that God can be fully at work in the darkest circumstances, and also in the mundane & smallest events of life.

"Meanwhile, the lesson of Joseph's life is unmistakable. It is what we have already seen illustrated, that God works when His hand is not apparent, and often when it would seem as if He must be taking no notice, and by means that seem to exclude the possibility of His being at work. The conclusion is comforting to those who commit their way to God. It may seem to them that God is not only working with them, but actually working against them. Let them remember the agony of Joseph in the pit; in slavery, in false imprisonment, and learn that the darkest paths of their life may be the ways appointed for them to reach liberty and life, wealth and honor - yea, a throne in the kingdom of the antitypical Joseph, who himself had to tread the dark and tearful valley of humiliation, and who, in the day of his glory will introduce all his brethren, amongst many bright stars, to the most interesting of Jacob's sons"

Ways of Providence pg 70

May the lessons of Joseph inspire us to continue, whatever comes our way.

Providence At Work For Saints

Bro Islip Collyer makes an interesting observation about the way Bro Roberts was directed by circumstances to come to Birmingham, and how his life unfolded.

The Ways of Providence

"Repeatedly we are told that God acted in the affairs of men, but often we are shown that the required situation was brought about by a chain of circumstances which seemed to be completely mundane. One of the best illustrations of this is in the words to Samuel. "Tomorrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin." Then we are shown the apparently trifling chances which brought the man before Samuel at the time appointed. We cannot be sure that any particular circumstance of modern times has been in similar manner controlled, but often in retrospective review we see things which look so much like the scriptural pattern that although we may not venture to affirm that the hand of God was in them, we would not dare to deny. To the present writer much of the experience of Robert Roberts is suggestive of such a thought"

Bro Islip Collyer 'Robert Roberts'

What we need to do is develop the spirit of Noah and Enoch - who 'walked with elohim', and the faith of Abraham who believes that the angel would go before Eliezer (*Gen 24v7*). If we desire to teach our children and to keep them in the faith, God's angels can work with us.

Daniel – A Man Greatly Beloved

Daniel was delivered from the mouth of lions by God's angel (*Dan 6v22*) because he believed in his God. Faith and courage combined with a great zeal to know the deeper things of God made Daniel 'greatly beloved' of God's angels (*Dan 10v11*)

"Could we but penetrate the invisible with our faithful scrutiny, we should see the angels of God at work just as much now as in the days of Daniel and the Persian Kings. There is progress though there is silence."

Ministry of the Prophets pg 721

The principle of providence is simply expressed in the words of Solomon.

"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." *Prov 3v5-6*

God has promised that He will never leave nor forsake us (*Heb13v5*). We just have to believe that in all our troubles God is there and His angels will carry us through.

We Will Finally Comprehend

Zerubbabel and Joshua (the high priest) felt alone and under pressure in their great work of rebuilding God's house. But they were not alone. The angel assured them that in the end they would overcome all opposition and apathy, and that they would one day realize the angelic hand in their victory.

"Moreover the word of Yahweh came unto me, saying; the hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that Yahweh of Armies hath sent ME unto you."

Zech 4v8-9, 6v15

Perhaps it will only be from the sanctuary of the Kingdom that we will fully appreciate the remarkable hand of providence that worked in our apparently unremarkable lives. When we realize how often we were spared, how often we were led away from temptation and how much the angel accomplished despite us, there will be a tremendous sense of gratitude to the "Father of spirits". Let us not despise the day of small things - confident that all things work together for our good.

9. The Angels and the Return of Christ

We are not yet able to recognize the angels assigned to our welfare, even though we may have met them unawares. The day will soon come when we shall know as we are known.

The Need to Think Ahead

The day we are called to judgement will be a day that brings finality of opportunity. When the angels come for us we may well be in a state of shock and terror if we have not thought carefully about the awesome prospect of meeting our Lord. Lot and his wife were totally unprepared and suffered accordingly. It will be fearful enough for us to be confronted by immortal angels, but it need not be confusing or terrifying if we know what lies ahead of us.

For us who know the Truth, the prospect of judgement is more certain than death, and there are no second chances. It will be either '...Come ye blessed of my Father...' or 'depart from me' when we appear before the Son of Man.

The Angels are Part of the Process

The Lord Jesus clearly outlined the role of the angels at his second coming:-

"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works."

Matt 16v27

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory..."

Matt 35v31

"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels..."

II Thess 1:7

The work of the angels at the time of the resurrection is immense. To raise and recreate millions of dead saints (and others), to provide them with physical needs, to comfort and reassure them and then to gather the living from all parts of the world is a huge operation and the angels are a vital part of it.

The angels are there because they have worked in the lives of the saints and they have a very personal interest in those saints.

The Resurrection Process

- Jesus 'stands up' from sitting at his Father's right hand (*Dan 12v1-3, Acts 7v56*) and assembles his angelic host.
- Jesus leads the angels as 'Michael – the Great Prince' – the new leader and commander (*Isa 55v4*) and comes with the 'voice of the archangel' (*I Thess 4v16*).
- The angels are commanded by Jesus to 'gather my saints together unto me' (*Matt 24v31, Psa 50v5*).
- The dead will be raised first (*Thess 4v16*), clothed and comforted by the angels (*Psa 71v20-21*).
- The living will be visited by the angels, and very likely also a risen saint (*I Thess 4v17*).
- Once the dead and living have been assembled together they will be transported to the Sinai region (*Isa 26v20-21, Deut 33v2, Hab 3v3*).
- The angels will settle the assembled company, providing food and shelter for their mortal needs.

The Judgement Process

Jesus Christ is the only judge, because he was first the Son of Man (*John 5v26-27*). Angels are not judges of the saints, but have a valuable role to play in preparing the saints. Who better than the personal angel to review each life and to ensure the lessons have been learnt, to expose hidden motives and to resolve all the unresolved issues of life.

The purpose of the judgement seat must be understood, or else it will be viewed with fear and apprehension. It is not about working out who will be saved, but to ensure that the righteous are fully prepared for eternal life.

Bro Roberts comments as follows:-

"Jesus watches and discerns the developments of probation. He requires not be bring men to the judgement seat to know, though he will bring them there to reveal them."

Thirteen Lectures Page 20

We will need revealing to ourselves, and perhaps to be exposed to others if we have been hypocrites (*Luke 12v3-4*). Very few will be mentally ready for the bestowal of immortality. Some will be young and immature in their faith, others will have blind spots and hidden faults (*Psa 19v12*). All will need completing, shaping and finishing to be ready for the Lord to bestow life. There will be an enormous number of lives to be reviewed, issues resolved and lessons to be learnt. This is why Jesus comes with all his holy angels.

The Purpose of the Judgement

The reason for the judgement is to reveal the thoughts and motivations of our hearts.

“Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.”

I Cor 4v5

The Weymouth Translation has for “manifest the counsels” - “...will openly disclose the motives”. The patient but specific questioning of the angels will expose our motives and what has caused us to do the things that we have done. The record of our lives in God’s book (*Psa 56v8*) will be reviewed and revisited, but forgiven sins will not be held against us.

The divine method of revealing motives is to ask penetrating questions (*Gen 3v9, 3v11, 3v13, 4v6* etc) and it is usually the angels who effectively utilise this on mortals (*I Kings 19v9,13, Jud2v2*). The answers we will give will not be allowed to avoid responsibility.

“So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”

Rom 14v12

“A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.”

Matt 12v35-36

There will be a need for reconciliations between brethren resolving of many divisive and painful issues (David and Uriah, Paul and Stephen) and the angels will be instrumental in bringing people together. There is also a need to reinforce the good and positive attributes we have developed and to remember the good done (*Heb 6v10*).

By the end of the process, every one will be totally humbled, and ready to appear before Christ for the final verdict.

Confessed Before the Angels

Christ Jesus alone is our judge. Only he can fully weigh up our capacity, opportunity and to know how far the mercy and grace of God can be extended. As the ‘Son of Man’ he has been tempted in all points as we have, and he understands the struggle against sin (*Heb 5v5-8*) – He will give weight to acts of love (*Matt 25v35-40*) acts of kindness and to the instinctive motivations of his brethren toward each other.

He will pronounce his verdict upon the saints, either granting life or condemning them to shame and death. The angels may have formed opinions about the likely outcome of a

saint's life but even they will get some very pleasant surprises as "mercy rejoices against judgement".

Jesus says that if we confess him before men, then he will confess us before the angels:-

"Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God."

Luke 12v8-9

"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."

Rev 3v5

The Lord's judgement having been given, the angels will have the sad task of forcibly removing the unjust to their fate.

"So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just..."

Matt 13v49

"And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds."

Luke 19v24

Once the unjust have witnessed the joy of the accepted they will be 'cast into outer darkness' and will be sent back into the wars of Armageddon.

The Joy of the Angels and the Saints

As sad as will be the rejection of the unjust, the justice of their sentence will be seen by all, including the angels. There will be far more joy and wonder at the gracious hand of God in bringing so many sons to glory.

The angels will be there when the saints are immortalised (*Zech 3v5*) and may even impart the immortal nature to the saints that they were particularly involved with (cp *Dan 10v18-19*).

The joy that both angels and saints will share when the family of God in heaven and earth as finally one (*Eph 1v10*) will be incredible, exceeding all our past experiences.

Paul describes this moment in *Heb 12v22* (Rotherhams)

“But ye have approached-

Unto Zion’s mountain,

And unto the city of a Living God a heavenly Jerusalem,-

And unto myriads of messengers in high festival,-

And unto an assembly of firstborn ones enrolled in the heavens,-

And unto God judge of all,-

And unto the spirits of righteous ones made perfect...”

The saints will become the ‘elohim’ of the age to come (*Isa 60v19*) and will ‘go forth from standing by’ Christ, the light of the age to come (*Zech 4v14, 6v5*).

The Future of the Angels

The Millennium will be the responsibility of the saints, and the angels will joyfully assist the saints to complete the purpose of the Father with this earth.

‘For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world (age) to come, whereof we speak.” *Heb 2v5*

The angels will:-

- Join with the saints to exalt Christ
- Rejoice with saints – their fellow servants
- Continue God’s work into eternity

The angels may in fact be happy to assist the saints and work under their direction. Paul alludes to this in one of his hyperboles in *1 Cor 6v3*. This service will be no problem to creatures that do not have to contend with pride, and who are living examples of the divine principle that the truly great are happy to serve others. Bro Thomas comments:-

“Jesus and the saints, equal in physical constitution to the Elohim, and superior to them in the Kingdom of God, will judge, rule or direct the movements of the Elohim in governing the nations committed to their charge. Hence, ‘Know you not that we (*the saints*) shall judge Angels?’ They will cooperate with the Saints as their subordinates, having ceded to them their present direction of the affairs of the nations.”

Herald 1847

Equal Unto the Angels

BEHOLD THEN THE CONSUMMATION! Mortal and corruptible beings like ourselves become Elohim, mighty in strength, and framers of new worlds, of which the planet we inhabit, even in its present state, is a grand and glorious specimen. “Behold”, says Jesus, once an infant at the breast, powerless in death, but now endued with all power, “*I make all things new*”. He will educe from the things which exist, a new and magnificent world, as a fit and appropriate habitation for his companions, redeemed by his blood from the sons of

men. This is the destiny set before those who shall become "equal to the angels" by a resurrection to eternal life.

Elpis Israel Page 187

The future is glorious, but we have to focus also on the need to be prepared for the coming of Christ.

Bro Roberts commented on the need to really believe in our prayer for the coming of Christ:

The saints of the 19th Century may hope to have their own joyful experience of this shortly, when after praying for a lifetime for the Lord's coming, amid increasing human frailty, and, it may be, faltering expectation, the angel of his presence will announce that the prayer is answered to the joy of thousands, who will only find suitable vent to their feelings in tears.

Nazareth Revisited, Page 28
Robert Roberts

Bro Roberts expected to find relief from the problems of life in tears. What sort of tears will we shed?



10. The Joy and Emotions of the Angels

The Angels Rejoice

The verse most quoted at Christadelphian baptisms is very likely *Luke 15v10*.

“Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.”

Luke 15v10

This verse tells us a number of fascinating things about the angels. Angels are intensely involved with our lives and the way that mortals respond to their efforts and to their providential care. They are assigned the task of saving mortals for the Kingdom (*Heb 1v14*) and when their work succeeds they express their joy by assembling their fellow angels and rejoicing together.

That angels should rejoice over something that must have occurred so frequently assures us that in the immortal state joy never becomes stale or mundane. Nothing gives them greater delight than to accomplish the Father’s will, and to glorify him. They also love to share happiness with their fellow angels which gives us a glorious picture of sharing eternal joys together and with the angels.

In the angels we have our best insight to the future God has in store – not robotic or unemotional, but an existence full of real happiness and satisfaction, mingled with times of great excitement and overflowing joy.

Why Angels Rejoice

One of the reasons that angels rejoice is that God gradually unfolds things to them, and as they comprehend the manifold wisdom of God they spontaneously burst into songs of joy and praise to Him.

The angels sang at creation (*Job 38v7*). Being assigned one of the millions of tasks needed to reshape and create the earth and its creatures must have been a wonderful experience. Each angel could have been given specific creatures or plants to fashion and place and it was only when all was completed that they saw how all elements were complementary. Perhaps they were allowed some creativity themselves, but always the manifold wisdom of God was in control, producing a totally harmonized result.

Their spiritual bodies could see the intricate beauties that we have discovered by microscopes. They ‘saw everything was good’ and praised the Father in songs of joy and happiness. The ‘morning stars’ sang for joy, and in *Rev 2v28* the saints who overcome are promised to receive the ‘morning star’. They will likewise rejoice over a new creation on the earth, restoring the earth and converting the mortal population.

Angelic Singing and Our Future

The angels love to sing (*Psa 148v1-2*) and they are in constant awe of the Father (*Psa 29v1 mg, Psa 103v21*). Their joyful singing is a great inspiration and hope for us who hope to share their nature and work.

Singing is a very vital part of the vision we can have.

“For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation. Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds.”

Psa 149v4-5

The glorified saints will sing their unique new song (*Rev 5v9*) and praise God for their deliverance in the Song of Moses (*Rev 15v3*). In fact in describing the temple revealed to Ezekiel, the circular inner sanctuary is designated ‘the chamber of the singers’ (*Ezek 40v44*). This indicates that the mortals who walk round about Zion will be amazed by the singing of the saints.

The Angels With Christ

The joy of the angels came to a climax with the great work of the birth and life of the Son of God. We do not know by what sacrifice or redemptive plan the angels were redeemed but it does seem that this creation is the only one to have been saved by the death of the Son of God. Not surprisingly interest in the saviour of the world they had created was intense among the angels. Their whole life is bound up in the glorification of the Father and He was now to have his own son. For them this was a wondrous new thing, an actual Son of God yet one born into the fallen race of Adam.

Their intense interest is spoken of in *1 Pet 1v10-12* where the apostle comments on the spirit of Christ that was built into the prophet’s writings:- how that the Messiah would suffer before coming to glory. This unique plan of atonement permeated Messianic Psalms (22, 69 etc) and the Servant Prophecies as well as many other writings. Gabriel had been instrumental in the giving of the 70 weeks prophecy in *Daniel 9*, which spoke of the ‘cutting off’ of Messiah the Prince. The angels had seen this glorious plan of salvation developing from the Garden of Eden and had been involved in setting in place so many evens that would prove later to be types and shadows of the work of God’s Son.

Peter says that both prophets and angels wondered at the things written concerning the Messiah “...which things angels desire to look into...” (Gk ‘to stare enquiringly’). Imagine the discussions and anticipation as Gabriel and Michael sent them on mysterious errands to ensure all was in place for the birth of Jesus. After the long silence since the days of Ezra (250 years) we suddenly find angels active everywhere.

God had said that He would give His angels a special 'charge concerning' Jesus (*Psa 91v10-11*) and so it was no surprise to find the angels so involved in his life. Besides the tasks of arranging the need for a census at a precise moment, filling the inn at Bethlehem and arranging the movements of stars to guide the wise men from the east there must have been so many preparatory tasks.

In fact the known appearances of angels are as follows:-

- Seventy weeks prophecy *Dan 9*
- Visit to Zacharias *Luke 2v11*
- Gabriel to Mary *Luke 1v26-38*
- Angel appears to reassure Joseph *Matt 1v20-24*
- Appearance of host to shepherds *Luke 2v9-15*
- Wise men are warned *Matt 2v12*
- Joseph sent by angel into Egypt *Matt 2v13*
- Joseph told to leave Egypt *Matt 2v19-20*
- Joseph directed to Nazareth *Matt 2v22*
- Led of spirit...into wilderness *Matt 4v1*
- Angels minister to Christ after the temptation *Matt 4v11*
- The angel 'from heaven' comes to Jesus in Gethsemane *Luke 22v43*
- Angels at the resurrection
 - opened the tomb *Matt 28v2-5*
 - raised Jesus *Matt 28v6*
 - met women and disciples *John 20v12, Mark 16v5*

When Jesus was born in the humble stable, heaven was alive with excitement.

The Angels and the Shepherds of Bethlehem

It seems most likely that the angel who appeared to the shepherds was also Gabriel. The 70 week prophecy had been given by him 460 years before and now Gabriel communicates again to the Shepherds.

The Jewish Mishnah tells us that the Tower of Edar (or 'Tower of the Flock' – *Micah 4v8*) was here near Bethlehem, and that these Shepherds were charged with the care of the flock of sacrificial animals that were to be offered in the Temple, some 5 miles away. So vital was the care of this flock of 'lambs without spot or blemish' that these shepherds were exempted from the requirements of the Sabbath. Perhaps above all others in Israel they had pondered the significance of the Lamb of God, and the angels had noted their conversations.

When Gabriel outlined the work of Christ (and we probably only have a summary of his words) the great plan of the Father became clear to the angelic host with Gabriel. Their total joy could not be restrained any longer and they gave vent in the most glorious chorus ever heard by mortals.

In one of those few glimpses into angelic reality, the curtain of invisibility was removed and the shepherds saw the marvellous light that came from a great host of angels, and heard the impeccable tone and expression of immortal voices (*Luke 2v9-14*).

Spirit filled creatures need no practice, but find immediate and perfect unison, perfect tone and complete harmony. No mortal choir can possibly match what the shepherds were to hear. What is noticeable is the apparent spontaneity of their songs.

Bro Roberts makes these observations:-

"The birth of Mary's child...was not an insignificant occurrence to the angels. If their spiritual interest and susceptibility are so keen as to be made glad by the reformation of one sinner, we may understand the interest they would take in the birth of one who came into the world to save a multitude of sinners..."

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"How much in harmony with human ways it was for the angels to communicate thus with the shepherds. How natural it is to communicate good news when you have it. The angels were full of interest...There is no evidence that they were commanded to tell the shepherds of the fact. They appeared to have volunteered the information in the fullness of their own joy."

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The Angels and Christ

After the angels left the shepherds (*Luke 2v15*) to continue rejoicing in heaven, they would now watch Jesus grow in wisdom and favour with God and men.

We can but imagine their anxiety as Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, and *Psa 91* was used to test him. but the promise did not fail and they took the emaciated, drained Son of God and ministered unto him (*Matt 4v11*), nursing him back to health again.

For the next 3½ years there could be no open angelic involvement, as Jesus had to be tempted in all points as we are. Only when the victory over self was won in blood and sweat did the angel come (*Luke 22v43*). Note, this angel is said 'to come from heaven, showing it was a direct message for Jesus from His Father. The record here parallels Gabriel's visit to Daniel in *Dan 10v10-19*.

The angel reassured Jesus that the Father awaited him, and that he would find 'fulness of joy' at the Father's right hand (*Psa 16v10*). It was this vision of 'the joy set before him' that strengthened Jesus to endure the cross, and obtain the throne (*Heb 12v1-2*).

Jesus knew that he could have 72,000 angels to rescue him, but he gave himself to his captors and to death. We can imagine the feelings of the angels who watched the unjust trial, the cruel mockings and gruesome crucifixion scene. They were only allowed to express heaven's displeasure in earthquake and darkness. No doubt they watched the tomb, and in fact one of the archangels may even have been in the tomb for the 3 days and nights (*Psa 16v8-10, 109v31 cp Mark 16v5*).

As soon as the time for the resurrection came the angel descended again 'from heaven' to roll back the stone (*Matt 28v1-2*) very likely with the 12 legions in escort. We find angels everywhere. What a privilege for the two greatest angels to resurrect the Son of God, to clothe him and to immortalise him. Perhaps Jesus awoke to the very familiar face of the angel he had met in Gethsemane.

Later two angels sat in the tomb, their work to this stage accomplished and between them the graveclothes of Christ (cp *Zech 3v5-7*). They spoke to the women and later two appeared on the Mt of Olives, very likely these two were Gabriel and Michael.

Later again Jesus was 'carried up' (*Luke 25v51* – Roth 'borne upwards') and a cloud received him out of their sight. The cloud no doubt concealed a great heavenly host who would carry him to present him to the Father.

“...the resurrection of Jesus Christ who gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.”

I Pet 3v22

The Rejoicing in Heaven

We can but try to imagine the emotions of the angels as the Father and Son now met physically for the first time. Perhaps our weak feelings just could not grasp the depth of love and perfect happiness of the moment. How the angels must have sung as Jesus sat down in the place of honor! How willingly they would have bowed to him.

Psalms 16v10 had said “...in thy presence is fullness of joy, at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.”

So now the fullness of joy had come for Jesus and the angels would have delighted to share it.

Jesus was to say:-

“All power is given unto me in heaven and earth.” *Matt 28v18*

Every title and name of angels was now subject to him (*Phil 2v9-10*) and the angels now are dispatched at his command (*Rev 22v16*).

Angels Rejoicing in the Future

When the kingdom is set up the work the angels commenced 6000 years before will be complete and they will rejoice at the culmination. The angels will rejoice to see Jesus installed as king:-

“And when he again bringeth in the firstborn into the world he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.” *Heb 1v6 RV*

They will acclaim his worthiness (*Rev 5v11*) and will sing with the saints of his great work. Again the morning stars will sing and rejoice.

"But ye have approached unto Zion's mountain and unto the city of a Living God, a heavenly Jerusalem, and unto myriads of messengers in high festival and unto an assembly of firstborn ones, enrolled in the heavens, and unto God the judge of all, and unto the spirits of righteous ones made perfect."

Heb 12v22 (Roth)

It is important to note that the angels do not sing *Rev 5v9-10*. Let us look forward to singing the song of the redeemed, and hearing the angels singing the chorus with us.

"The Four Living Ones, and 24 stephaned Elders, are all harpers who harp with their harps...The Angels within the Circle of the Throne...listen with ravished ears to the Divine melody of the new oratorio...How gratified they will be in beholding the Royal Child, whose birth they celebrated over eighteen centuries before, enthroned by the Eternal Power, in his father David's seat; and songs of thanksgiving and praise; ascending in immortal strains to the Deity, from the innumerable multitude of the redeemed."

Eureka, Vol. 5, Page 24, Logos Ed



11. Other References to the Angels

Angelic Hyperboles

Paul often uses the angels in his hyperboles. These are ultimate statements designed to emphasize a point, and do not necessarily mean that angels would try to teach error or separate us from God.

I Corinthians 13v1

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels..."

Galations 1v6-8

"But though we; or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel..."

I Corinthians 6v3

"Know ye not that we shall judge angels"

Romans 8v38-39

"Neither death, nor life, nor angels...shall be able to separate us from the love of God"

The Angel Before Them

A fascinating reference to the 'Yahweh Angel' of *Zechariah 1v8-12* occurs in *Zech 12v8*. The angel 'before them' is Michael and the allusion is the Divine Order then and in the future when Jesus Christ is the leader of saints and angels. All the participants will be elevated to higher stations.

The Angels and the Comforter

The angels 'stood by' the apostles in their battle to preach the risen Jesus Christ against a hostile world. The angels were openly seen at this difficult time. This was a form of the 'Holy Spirit' that would be their guide in these formative years.

THE ANGELIC 'PARAKLETOS' IN ACTS

- "behold, two men stood by them in white apparel:" *Acts 1v10*
- "But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors..." *Acts 5v19*
- "And, behold, The angel of the Lord came upon him..." (Peter in prison) *Acts 12v7*
- "Cornelius...was warned from God by an holy angel which stood..." *Acts 10v3, 22, 30*
- "And the angel of the Lord spoke unto Philip..."
- "Then the spirit said unto Philip..."
- "...the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip..." *Acts 8v26, 29, 39*
- For there stood by me this night the angel of God..." *Acts 27v23*

It is interesting to note that the words 'angel' and spirit are used interchangeably in Acts. Perhaps this is how 'the Spirit' operated in *Acts 13v2* and *16v6*.

Upon Eagles Wings

The mobility of angels and their perception is sometimes compared to the eagles. No wonder the future powerful bodies of saints are also spoken of in these terms.

BORNE UPON EAGLE'S WINGS – The Angels' Work Now

- "I saw an angel (RSV 'eagle') flying in the midst of heaven..." *Rev 8v13*
- "As birds flying, so will the LORD of hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also he will deliver it; and passing over he will preserve it." *Isa 31v5*

THE SAINTS' FUTURE

- "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction...so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." *Psa 103v3-5*
- "But they that wait upon Yahweh shall renew (mg change) their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint." *Isa 40v31*



12. Selected Quotations

Well may the apostle exhort believers to "walk worthy of God, who has called them to His kingdom and glory." It is indeed "a high calling," and a great manifestation of divine love, bestowed upon men by the Father, that He should invite them to become His sons, and when manifested in the divine nature, be in them "all things for all." When we contemplate such a destiny, that we are to be elements of the Spirit-glory, the Cherubic manifestation of the Eternal Spirit, which is to fill the earth as waters cover the sea, we ought, indeed, to "purify ourselves, even as He is pure," and to live superior to the mean and petty considerations of time and sense. "Walk worthy of God"—worthy of a position in which we shall be *isangeloi*, equal to the angels, "the sons of God being the children of the resurrection." (Phanerosis p 87)

Our angels, or Elohim, those I mean of the heavenly hosts, to whose superintendence terrestrial affairs are consigned, until the Lord Jesus shall assume the reins of government; not all the Elohim, but those of them related to us "always behold the face of God", and minister His will towards the sons of men. This is their glory—a part of their reward. He sent them to form and fill the earth with living souls. They executed their commission according to His purpose.

BEHOLD THEN THE CONSUMMATION! Mortal and corruptible beings like ourselves become Elohim, mighty in strength, and framers of new worlds, of which the planet we inhabit, even in its present state, is a grand and glorious specimen. "Behold", says Jesus, once an infant at the breast, powerless in death, but now endued with all power, "*I make all things new.*" He will educe from the things which exist, a new and magnificent world, as a fit and appropriate habitation for his companions, redeemed by his blood from the sons of men. This is the destiny set before those who shall become "equal to the angels" by a resurrection to eternal life. (Elpis Israel p 187)

Furthermore, it is a well established principle of the sacred writings, that *what the Everlasting Father* does by His agents, He is considered as doing Himself. There is a maxim in law similar to this, which runs somehow thus, *qui facit per alios, facit per se*, what one doth by, or through, others, he does of himself. If this be borne in mind, many seeming incongruities will be harmonized. Thus, *the Lord* is said to have appeared to Abraham, as he sat in his tent-door; but when he first caught sight of the visitant, he did not see the Lord but "three men", or Elohim, of whom one was the chief. Read the whole chapter and to verse twenty-nine of the next, and it will be seen that the Everlasting God talks and acts by, or through, these Elohim, but chiefly through one of them, styled the Lord God. (Elpis Israel p 183)

The similarity of these angelic actions to those of "the Cherubim" in Eden strongly suggests the identity of "Cherubim" with "elohim" or angels. And this is in harmony with the promise of the Lord Jesus concerning "the children of the resurrection" (Luke 20v36). "They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that age, and the resurrection from the dead ... shall be equal unto the angels, and the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." That is equivalent to saying they shall be "the cherubim" of that age and order.

There is a doctrinal harmony here between this promise of Jesus and the saying of the LORD God: "Behold the man is become as one of us." Man was created "in the image of Elohim". "And Elohim said, Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness" (Gen 1v26). That is as regards form and mental and moral capacity. But when man sinned, and was "made wise" in a sorrowful manner little anticipated, "likeness" extended to mental and moral *experience*. Elohim had "*known evil*", and had attained to the divine nature by redemption from the evil. This consideration lends emphasis to the angelic refusal of "worship" on the part of the apostle John (Rev 19v10; 22v8). "I fell at his feet to worship him", said John, "But he said unto me, See thou do it not; I am *thy fellowservant*, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God." Immortal "fellowservants" redeemed perhaps from some other world and race, such is the idea that presents itself.

The Visible Hand Of God

God can speak through the angels. This is not so direct as when He himself speaks; but it is more direct than when He speaks by the prophets. It is so much more direct that while in the case of the prophets, their messages are always prefaced by the intimation that "thus saith the Lord", in the case of the angels such a form rarely occurs; the message is almost always given without preface and in the first person as when the Almighty speaks directly. There are many illustrations of this. Let one or two suffice. When Israel, after their national settlement in the land of promise under Joshua, began at the first (after Joshua's death) to go astray, "*an angel of the Lord* came up from Gilgal to Bochim and said, *I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you into the land of which I swore unto your fathers, etc.*" (Jud 2v1). Again, "*The angel of the Lord* appeared unto him (Moses) in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush, and ... He said, *I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*" (Ex 3v1-6). Again the angel which spake to Moses in Sinai (Acts 7v38; Heb 2v2) always speaks in the first person without preface, eg, "*I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt*" (Ex 20v2).

In these cases, the angels speak as if they were God himself. What is the explanation of this? It is doubtless to be found here, that when the Spirit speaks by an angel, it speaks by an organism that is part of itself, so to speak. Man is of the earth, earthy; he is an animal organism, which, though subsisting in the Spirit, as all creation does, is not organically in unity and sympathy with it. He is, therefore, separate from the Spirit in all that constitutes his characteristics and sympathies as a living being. But angels are spirits (Heb 1v7); that is, they are spiritual natures, spiritual bodies, organisations affinitised to all, that characterises the Spirit in its eternal subsistence of wisdom, goodness, and power. When, therefore, God, the Eternal sole universe-filling Spirit, speaks by them, He speaks by a vital apparatus that is, so to speak, part of himself. Considered in relation to the ineffable Father himself, they are separate from Him and ministrant to Him; but considered in relation to man to whom they are His representatives, they are One with Him, and therefore speak in His name, when He wills. (p 24-25)

But angels are part of the Bible, part of Jewish history - part of a great work which beginning in Judea in the first century, has already revolutionised the world. They cannot be put aside. A man may exclude them from his individual recognition by isolating himself from the facts that establish their existence; but the facts - great and serious and

noble - remain to be seen by every earnest mind in diligent quest for truth irrespective of the form it may take. There is nothing in the idea of angels in the abstract calculated to excite incredulity or aversion. On the contrary, it is in harmony with reasonable presumption, suggested by the contemplation of the universe. It is reasonable to assume as a matter of scientific induction that there are higher forms of life than we now see upon the earth. The universe is too vast and grand to allow of the supposition that it exists only for such a poor abortive creature as dying man. (p 29)

The appearance and speech of angelic visitors can only be called miraculous by those who have not been privileged to experience the fact - a description as yet applicable to the whole of the present generation. In its own sphere, it is as much a natural occurrence as anything else. The angels live as much as we do, and more; for we are only half-alive and rapidly tending to dissolution. They live a higher life than we do; for it is written, "Thou hast made man a little lower than the angels" (Heb 2v6-7). They are already incorruptible, immortal, powerful, and glorious, which we only hope to become on attaining equality with them. (p 27)

Perceiving they were strangers, and doubtless by their carriage, distinguished strangers, he rose and advanced towards them, and making profound obeisance offered them an importunate and cordial hospitality for the night. The angels declined, remarking they would "abide in the street all night". Abide in the street all night! Curious visitors these, who could dispense with roof and bed while darkness brooded on earth - and make themselves at home "in the street"! There is here a peep into the modes of angel life. Habits are according to nature and need. The fish in the water, the birds in the trees, beasts in the open field - are at home where man would perish. The comforts of a human home would be death to these. Angels are higher than man: they cannot die anywhere: they can adapt themselves to any condition. At the same time, possessing the highest and most appreciative order of intelligent faculty, they have their preferences. A human habitation may be to them what a "lodging house" would be to the lord of a palace. Sleep they apparently do not require. Sharing the nature of Him who "slumbers not nor sleeps" (Ps 121v4), "who fainteth not neither is weary" (Isa 40v28), they can "abide in the street all night" without inconvenience. The fact is interesting to us because of the hope the gospel gives us of becoming like to them (Luke 20v36).

However, Lot "pressed upon them greatly. His importunities were not unavailing. The angels are not indifferent to the wishes and comforts of others. They are the true gentlemen of the universe. They reflect the character of the Eternal Father of all, who is gracious, compassionate, and good. They would have preferred God's open air, but in view of Lot's strong desire, "they turned in unto him, and entered into his house", and not only so, but they condescended to partake of what he provided for them. "He made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and *they did eat*." Angels eating, will only be a difficult idea with those whose notions on the subject are drawn from religious novels and art illustrations. The Scriptural exhibition of the subject is free from difficulty. Angels can eat, though independent of eating for life; and when they eat, their food is assimilated to their spirit-nature, just as food eaten by man is assimilated to man-nature; by animals to animal-nature. There is this difference, that angel-nature is spiritual and incorruptible. There is none of the offensiveness more or less incident to the process of all animal organisations. Cleanness, holiness, incorruptibility, and strength, are characteristics of the spirit-nature, involving completeness of absorption of all substances partaken of.

"Before they lay down" - then they did lie down? Yes, they can accommodate themselves to circumstances. They were under Lot's roof: they had the hours of darkness to spend: they had accepted his hospitality; and they conformed to his wishes and expectations in the matter of "lying down"; they could make themselves as comfortable by lying down as sitting up, and lying down would be more to the comfort of the family than if they had sat up. (p 70-71)

The publication of this decree did not deter Daniel from his daily duty; and being caught in the act of prayer, he was thrown to the lions. The whole world has heard of this, and of the result; that God stopped the mouths of the lions, and preserved him from their claws till the morning, when he was liberated safe and sound. It was a miracle, that is, a divine act, but not an inexplicable or unreasonable one. The angel commissioned in the case (Dan 6v22) acted on the nervous systems of the brutes, with the restraining power which even a high human magnetism possesses in a small degree, but which in the hand of an angel, who is spirit-substance itself, is irresistible wheresoever brought to bear. Under its influence the lions felt no more inclination to eat Daniel than to eat stones. (p 296)

The Ways Of Providence

It is further illustrated in the angel's words to Daniel: "The prince of the kingdom of Persia *withstood me one and twenty days*: but lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to *help me*; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. Now I am come to make thee understand, ... and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia; and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come" (Dan 10v13, 20). The explanation of this, at first sight, extraordinary fact - that man can antagonise the divine purpose in the hands of the angels, "who execute his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word" - is probably to be found in the nature of the process by which that work has to be carried out. Human rulers to whom the angels are unknown and invisible, have to be led by them into certain courses of action, without any interference with that law of intelligent volition which distinguishes intelligence from merely physical life. Men whose actions the angels have to guide, are allowed the unfettered exercise of their wills, and the angels have to influence them to exercise those wills in a given direction, by regulating the circumstances around them. If you set fire to a house, you cause all its inmates to leave, without interfering with their free will. It is the exercise of their freewill that leads them to endeavour to escape the fire. So the angels, by disposing circumstances, can influence men to act in a certain way without interfering with their volitions. Such a mode of carrying out the work entrusted to them makes their work a delicate and interesting one, and provides scope for the possibility of that kind of human antagonism which requires careful and persistent arrangement to overcome, as in the case of the Persian emperor, who unwittingly was fighting against an angel in the particular policy he pursued. (p 167)

What more forcible illustration was it possible for God to have given to all succeeding generations of his children that trouble (so far from being evidence of desertion) is a means employed in His hands to lay the foundation of future joy and blessedness. Let His children then be comforted and strengthened to endure even the deepest and most inexplicable affliction. Let them learn to see God in the darkness and to feel His hand in the tempest. Let them beware of the folly of Job's 3 friends rebuked of God. Let them know that this time of our pilgrimage is the night and that though weeping may endure for a night, joy cometh in the morning; and that joy a joy prepared by the weeping. Let

them apply the consolation Christ has given them: "Blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall be comforted." (p 90)

The application of all these cases to our own times will be obvious. God has not changed. He has not abandoned the earth. By the hand of the Lord Jesus and the angels, He is working out a work in it, both as regards nations and individuals, Jews and Gentiles. It matters not that we cannot see the divine hand in visible operation. The fact is attested in too many ways to admit of doubt. The fact is consoling in private life, to such as fear God and commit their way to Him; common occurrences may be the Lord's hand leading and guiding to an appointed end, for blessing or punishment as His unerring wisdom sees fit; while as regards political occurrences, we are enabled to feel that they are no empty words that are written in Dan 4v17: "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." (p 155)

Meanwhile, the lesson of Joseph's life is unmistakable. It is what we have already seen illustrated, that God works when His hand is not apparent, and often when it would seem as if He must be taking no notice, and by means that seem to exclude the possibility of His being at work. The conclusion is comforting to those who commit their way to God. It may seem to them that God is not only working with them, but actually working against them. Let them remember the agony of Joseph in the pit; in slavery, in false imprisonment, and learn that the darkest paths of their life may be the ways appointed for them to reach liberty and life, wealth and honour - yea, a throne in the kingdom of the anti-typical Joseph, who himself had to tread the dark and tearful valley of humiliation, and who, in the day of his glory, will introduce all his brethren, amongst many bright stars, to the most interesting of Jacob's sons. (p 70)

As regards all who truly trust and obey the God of Israel; David's words will remain true to the last: "I have been young and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." They may be taken through seas of affliction, like Job, and may sometimes know hunger and want, like Paul; but it will only be for their good - not for their destruction. God will not forsake them; and "if God be for us, who can be against us?"

But we must do our part, otherwise God will not be for us, for so is His will that we do what He has appointed. "Isaac sowed in that land" (Gen 26v12). If he had not, the hundredfold increase, which God bestowed on his labour, would not have come. There is a difference between faith and presumption. Faith is obedient and modest; but there is an article called faith in our day which is the reverse. With much "piety" of talk, it is, in its spiritual essence, dictatorial to God, insubmissive to His arrangements, presumptuous in its expectations. It expects God to give a crop at their call, without that sowing of the land which is the way He has appointed for the crop to come. Let us do our part in all humility and God will do His. He can spoil or prosper our work, but our work is the basis of His action toward us. "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you." A presumptuous attitude will be our destruction.

There is a sense which everyone will readily recognise in which the work of God is independent of all human action: but when God works with and by means of man, human agency is far from superfluous. Israel were made to realise that while they could do nothing if God were not with them, He could not in a sense do His part unless they did theirs. God requires men humbly and faithfully and diligently to do their part as the condition and means of enabling Him to work out His purpose with and concerning them. In this beautiful combination we have to "work out our own salvation with fear and

trembling, while it is God who works in us to will and to do His good pleasure". It is a noble and beneficent principle tending to keep back man from presumption, preserving a place for faith and wholesome activity while giving us the comfort of divine co-operation in all that we do according to His will. While the performance of our part is necessary, the accomplishment of final results is all of God, who can prosper or frustrate the devices of men or leave them altogether to their own ineffectual ways. Nevertheless, the experience of both Moses and Joshua shows that if God gives men opportunities, He expects them to discern and enterprisingly use them. There is a time to stand still and see the salvation of God, but it is not when He proposes to work by us. All the promises of God presuppose active, diligent, courageous, and caretaking co-operation on the part of those to whom they are made. When we are in circumstances which make this exercise on our part impossible - as when Jeremiah was in the pit in the court of the prison, sunk to the armpits in mire - prayer and waiting is the not unavailing alternative. (p 237)

Much that is talked of in a common way as providence is no providence. Providence consists of the divine regulation of natural circumstances; and the principles upon which this regulation takes place, can only be learnt from the scriptures of truth. These principles we have endeavoured to exhibit, with the result of enabling us to realise that all who commit their way to God in a scriptural manner, are included in the operations of the only providence that exists in the universe - that is, the control of natural circumstances by angelic agency; in an unseen manner, however, and without any apparent interference with natural ways. Outside of this control, all is chance; for there is such a thing as chance, but chance is controlled when the purpose of God requires it. This control is exercised in accordance with the "charge" which the angels receive from the Creator. Where no such charge exists, things happen naturally, or according to the mechanical relations of things in nature. (p 232-233)

Jacob's case further shows us that God does not propose the bestowment of perfect good in the present state. The present life in its best state is a state of exile from Eden. Reconciliation and return are in process of accomplishment, but we shall make a mistake if we look for unmixed good till the proclamation is made: "There shall be no more curse." The very best experience at present is only a state of divinely regulated evil. The divine regulation of this may and does permit the experience of evil in severe forms by His people. Some of Jacob's experiences, however, show that the cruellest and apparently most aimless wrench of affliction may be but the preparation for the highest blessedness even now. Trouble is often a preparation for good even now. How completely is this lesson illustrated in the case of Joseph, which yields this additional feature, that God may be at work in our affairs not only when there is no trace of His hand but when it seems impossible He can be at work. It may often seem not only that God is not working with us but that He is working against us. Joseph's case may teach us patience on this point. The very injustices and barbarities of men may be the Lord's hand to put us to the proof and to twist our affairs into a form for future blessedness. (p234-235)

Further Reading On The Angels

Phanerosis pg 87 - "Well may the apostle ... children of the resurrection."
Nazareth Revisited pg 28 - "The saints of the 19th ... their feelings in tears."
Elpis Israel pg 187 - "Our angels, or Elohim ... by a resurrection to eternal life."
The Visible Hand of God pg 24-25 - "God can speak ... when He wills."
The Visible Hand of God pg 27 - "The appearance and speech ... equality with them."
The Visible Hand of God pg 29 - "But angels are part ... as dying man."
The Visible Hand of God pg 70-71 - "Perceiving they were ... than if they had sat up."
The Visible Hand of God pg 296 - "The publication of this ... than to eat stones."
The Ways of Providence pg 27 - "As regards all ... will be our destruction."
The Ways of Providence pg 31 - "But one may say ... work out your own self-destruction."
The Ways of Providence pg 70 - "Meanwhile, the lesson ... of Jacob's sons."
The Ways of Providence pg 90 - "What more forcible ... ye shall be comforted."
The Ways of Providence pg 155 - "The application of all ... basest of men."
The Ways of Providence pg 167 - "It is further illustrated ... policy he pursued."
The Ways of Providence pg 232-233 - "Much that is talked of ... things in nature."
The Ways of Providence pg 234-235 - "Jacob illustrates plainly ... future blessedness."
The Ways of Providence pg 237 - "There is a sense ... is the not unavailing alternative."



13. Zechariah's Night Visions - Colouring Project

(Zech 1v7 - 6v15)

Michael - the Archangel (Yahweh Angel)

1v8 a man, he, him
 1v10 the man, the LORD,
 1v11,12 the angel of the LORD
 1v13,20 the LORD
 1v21 he
 2v3 another angel
 2v5 I, the LORD
 3v1 the angel of the LORD
 3v2 the LORD (1st)
 3v3 the angel
 3v4 he (2x), him (1st), I (2x)
 3v5,6 the angel of the LORD
 4v6,8 the LORD
 4v9 me
 4v10; 6v9 the LORD
 6v15 me

Gabriel - the Communicating Angel

1v9 the angel that talked with me, I
 1v13,14,19 the angel that talked with me
 1v19 he
 2v3 the angel that talked with me
 2v3,4 him
 3v1 he (1st)
 4v1,4,5 the angel that talked with me
 4v6 he
 4v11,12 him
 4v13,14 he
 5v2,3 he
 5v5 the angel that talked with me
 5v6 he (2x)
 5v8 he (3x)
 5v10 the angel that talked with me
 5v11 he
 6v4 the angel that talked with me
 6v5 the angel

Yahweh Himself- God in Heaven (LORD of Hosts)

1v7 the LORD
 1v12 LORD of Hosts, thou (2x)
 1v14 I, LORD of Hosts
 1v15 I (2x)
 1v16 The LORD
 1v16 I, my, LORD of Hosts
 1v17 LORD of Hosts, my, The LORD
 2v8 LORD of Hosts, he, his (first occ)
 2v9 LORD of Hosts
 2v11 The LORD, LORD of Hosts
 2v12 The LORD
 2v13 The LORD, he, his
 3v2 The LORD (2x)
 3v7 LORD of Hosts, my (4x), I
 3v8 I, my
 3v9 I (3x), LORD of Hosts
 3v10 LORD of Hosts
 4v6 my, LORD of Hosts
 4v9 LORD of Hosts
 4v10 the LORD
 5v4 I, LORD of Hosts, my

6v12 LORD of Hosts, the LORD
 6v13,14 The LORD
 6v15 LORD of Hosts, the LORD (2x)

Christ Jesus

2v6 The LORD, I, the LORD
 2v8 me
 2v9 I, me, mine
 2v10 I (2x), The LORD
 2v11 my, I, me
 4v14 The Lord of the whole earth
 6v5 The Lord of all the earth
 6v7,8 he
 6v12 he, his, he, The BRANCH
 6v13 he (3x), his (2x)

