

THE MINISTRY OF ANGELS



PART I

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STUDY MATERIAL

MCCLAIN MINISTRIES

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THE MINISTRY OF ANGELS



PART I



Never before in history has there been so much interest in supernatural phenomena. Many newspapers, magazines, radio and television programs carry issues dealing with the occult, astrology, spiritism, exorcism, UFO's and extrasensory perception.

Because of so much misinformation and blatant falsehood presented about those topics, Christians have tended to shy away from anything supernatural. In doing so, they have ignored a vital area that God wants us to know about--the ministry of angels.

There is a tremendous and exciting world of angelic existence, a world God has been pleased to reveal to us in the Bible, the only accurate sourcebook of information we have or need. In the Old Testament, for example, we find that angels are mentioned 108 times. Angels intervened in the lives of Abraham and Jacob as Genesis 18:19, 28, 32 indicates. In the books of the Bible accredited to Moses, the words angel or angels are mentioned a total of 32 times. Frequently the Psalms describe angels as protecting and delivering God's people from all kinds of danger, like in Psalms 34:7 and 91:11. Daniel gave us the names of two angels, Gabriel (Daniel 9:20-27) and Michael (Daniel 10:13).

The Old Testament alone would be sufficient enough to establish the existence of angels, but the New Testament continues to enlarge our knowledge of angelic beings. In fact, although the New Testament is shorter than the Old, angels are mentioned there even more often--a total of 165 times. The gospels are filled with references to them, and six times in the Book of Acts; angels ministered to the Lord's people. The Book of Revelation alone mentions angels 65 times.

Surely, all these references to the reality and the ministry of angels are convincing, but there is also the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was He, of course, who created angels in the beginning, so it comes as no surprise that He believed in and taught the existence of angels (Matthew 13:39-41).

Angels are real. We know that with absolute certainty from the Word of God. What are angels? Who are angels? Let's define them this way: Angels are created, spiritual beings. We know angels are created from reading Psalm 148:2, 5: "Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts...Let them praise the name of the Lord: for he commanded, and they were created." We know angels are spiritual beings because of passages like Hebrews 1:14: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

Another helpful definition of angels comes through the Greek and Hebrew words for them. Angel literally means, "messenger." Angels are the heavenly messengers of God, often delivering His messages to Christians all over the world.

Now that we have looked at the reality of angels and have defined their name, let me give you a general overview of angels by making a number of "*angels are*" statements.

Angels are immortal. Jesus said, "In heaven, people neither marry nor are given in marriage. Then He added, Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels." Luke 20:36

Angels are intelligent. In II Samuel 14:20 we read about being wise "according to the wisdom of an angel of God, to know all things that are in the earth."

Angels are innumerable. Hebrews 12:22 speaks of those who "are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels." The word innumerable means one thing: You cannot count them. The group is so vast that numbers cannot be assigned. The shepherds were treated to an incredible view of the angelic multitudes on the night our Savior was born. "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:13,14). How many angels came to take part in that world-changing announcement, we do not know? Perhaps the entire sky as far as the shepherds could see was filled with the heavenly messengers. What a sight!

Angels are strong. II Thessalonians 1:7 tells us of a coming day "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels. Consider also Psalm 103:20, which teaches that angels "excel in strength." Outside the Godhead, there is no order of creation any stronger. Angels are able to act effectively, with power, because they were given that power when they were created.

Angels are invisible. Although God has allow some of us to see them according to His Divine purpose. We see an example of how they do God's work even when invisible to us in Numbers 22:22-31.

Angels do not marry. We do not know why Jesus chose to tell us this, but in Matthew 22:30 He informs us that angels do not marry. We are not told anywhere in Scripture whether there are even female angels, and it would be pointless to speculate about the matter. What we do know, is that angels do not participate in the institution of marriage.

When we stop to consider how wonderful the angels are, we may feel that we ought to make a little statue and bow down to worship them. In a sense, that must have been the way the apostle John felt when he was given all the tremendous insights he recorded in the Book of Revelation. "And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. The saith he unto me, 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 (Revelation 22:8, 9)

So not only does the Bible say we must not worship angels, but it also says that angels do not want to be worshipped.

The apostle Paul also spoke to the matter of angel worship: "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen" (Colossians 2:18). So if someone says to you, in effect. "We ought to worship angels," don't listen to him. He's wrong. His teaching is contrary to God's Word.

This has been a brief introduction to the wonderful subject of angels. We've looked at just a few of the characteristics of angels. Is the ministry of angels an important message? It is, indeed, particularly in the times in which we live. It is my earnest belief that in these last days we are going to see more angels, see more of their work and power, than any other time in history. There are going to be tremendous things happening in the very near future, and we don't want through unbelief or unconcern be blinded or miss what God is doing in our time.

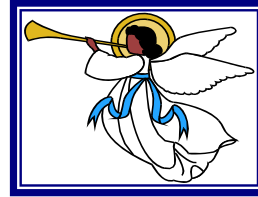
Part II of our three part series on angels will center around, "What do angels actually do." Let me give you a glimpse of our next message regarding the activities of angels. Angels worship God. They direct man. They protect believers. Angels give information. God has even used angels to provide for the physical needs of His people. Angels do battle on behalf of God and His children. They also strengthen and encourage His own. How effectively are you utilizing your angel? What are the classifications or ranks of angels? Do they all look the same? How would you identify an angel if you were to see one? Don't miss Part II of this message about these magnificent supernatural beings.

Melva McClain 📖

THE MINISTRY OF ANGELS



PART II



As promised, Part II of the series on angels will center on, what are the classifications or ranks of angels? As well as, how you would identify an angel if you were to see one?"

WHAT ARE THE CLASSIFICATIONS & RANKS OF ANGELS?

God ranks angels. Our Lord even used a military term once in connection with angels. When Jesus was about to be arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, Peter took out a sword and tried to protect Him. Jesus said, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matthew 26:53). The word legion was a Roman military term referring to about six thousand soldiers.

The Heavenly Host

Probably the largest group of angels is what we might call the "ordinary" angels. Most of the time when angels are mentioned in the Bible, it is referring to these otherwise unidentified angels. To speak of ordinary angels seems a contradiction in terms. How could these extraordinary, created beings be considered just something routine or ordinary? Yet in one sense, this designation is appropriate when we contrast them with the several special classes, or orders, of angels that the Bible mentions.

Cherubim

Based on various scriptural references, the cherubim ranks extremely high among God's heavenly creations, both in power and beauty. They are the first of the angelic order to appear in the Bible, after Adam and Eve's fall from grace. Genesis 3 records the events in the Garden of Eden. When Adam and Eve were banished, God sent a contingent of glorious and trusted cherubim to guard the entrance of the Garden.

The next appearance of the cherubim in the Bible concerns regaining what was lost. In Exodus 25, Moses was given explicit and detailed instruction on how to make various articles of furniture that would be used in the tabernacle. The first described was the ark of the covenant and the mercy seat, where God promised to meet and commune with Moses. What did God place on top of the mercy seat? He chose representations of the cherubim, in gold. "And thou shalt make two cherubim of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make, them, in the two ends of the mercy seat. And make one cherub on the one

end, and the other cherub on the other end; even on the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubim on the two ends thereof. And the cherubim shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be.
(Exodus 25:18-20)

What a great sight that must have been--the cherubim associated with the very presence of God. These two Scripture references, appears as though the cherubim's major responsibility may be to, declare the sinfulness of man and protect the presence of God from sinful men. No doubt Adam never forgot the sight of the cherubim as he longed to return to the Garden of Eden. They reminded him that he had transgressed the commandment of God. Once a year, the high priest of Israel would be permitted in the Holy of Holies; there he could look upon the mercy seat. I'm sure he must have felt on this occasion, "I don't belong here in the holy presence of God."

Seraphim

Another groups of angels specifically identified are the seraphims. In the Hebrew language, seraphim means, "burning one." Isaiah 6 tells us of the seraphim. "I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim: each one had six wings, with twain he covered his face, and with twain be covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. (Isaiah 6:1, 2)

What are the seraphim doing? "And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory" (v.3). Wow! Can you imagine witnessing such a site?

The prophet recognized at once that he had no right to be in the holy presence of God, and said so. So one of the seraphim took a burning coal from the altar and touched Isaiah's lips to cleanse his iniquity and purge his sin. (vs.5-7)

So, seraphim have wings. They proclaim the holiness of God. They indicate to men their need to be cleansed from sin.

Living Creatures

We have a third group of special angels. In the King James version they are called, "the four beast." But a better translation would be "the four living creatures." These angels, like the seraphim, have six wings. Revelation 4:8 describes them as, "And the four beasts (living creatures) had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying: Holy, holy, holy, God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."

Their special ministry, then, is to worship God and give Him glory throughout all time and eternity. We read of them again in Revelation 5, 7 and 19. In each instance they are depicted in an attitude of worship and praise. In Revelation 15, however, they participate in the pouring out of the wrath of God on unrepentant men.

Michael

Archangel's are another angelic rank. The word arch means "chief," so this angel is the most prominent of all the holy angels. The archangel's name is Michael. The name asks a question: "Who is like God?"

The prophet Daniel introduces us to Michael. It seems that he had been praying, and God had dispatched an answer by the hand of a messenger who was hindered on his journey until, he testified, "Michael, one the chief princes, came to help me". (Daniel 10:13). So Michael had to fight for the free passage of God's Word.

It might be appropriate to give Michael the title of general, for each time we see him; it is in connection with some type of spiritual struggle. In his role as a fighter, Michael has particular responsibility to Israel. In Daniel 10:21 and 12:1, he is said to be the prince of that nation. As we read ancient and modern history, I believe we see the hand of Michael defending Israel. As you know, that little nation has fought four wars with its Arab neighbors since gaining statehood in 1948. The Arabs have often expressed their determination to drive Israel into the sea, but they have never been able to accomplish that feat. Could it be because Michael is on the side of Israel, influencing a strategy and insuring victory? I think that may well be the case.

In the New Testament, John tells us in Revelation about a conflict with Michael and Lucifer. "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon: and the dragon fought and his angels. And prevailed not: neither was their place found any more in heaven. And that dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him (Revelation 12:7-9). Here we see Michael serving as commanding officer of a large group of angels. Evidently, Michael is a chief warrior of God.

Gabriel

The only other angel whose name is given in Scripture (besides Lucifer) is Gabriel. The meaning of Gabriel is "mighty one of God." He lives up to his name, for he does, indeed, do mighty things. Rather than being a fighter like Michael, Gabriel serves God more as a messenger. He appears several times in the Book of Daniel to give important revelations concerning future events, especially related to God's kingdom. After one of Daniel's visions, for example, the prophet wondered about its meaning. Then suddenly, "There stood before me as the appearance of a man. And I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision," Gabriel did. We have something similar in Daniel 9, where, following Daniel's prayer of confession sin on behalf of his people, Gabriel again came to him, "being caused to fly swiftly." (Daniel 8:15, 16, 21).

In the New Testament, he is concerned with kings. In the first instance, Zacharias was waiting before the Lord in the Temple. Suddenly, "there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense." Gabriel identified himself to Zacharias: "I am Gabriel that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and show thee glad tidings. That good news concerned the coming birth of John

the Baptist, who would be the forerunner of the Lord Jesus, ruler of Israel and the world.

It was this same Gabriel whom God sent one day to the city of Nazareth "to a virgin expoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary." What a great announcement Gabriel had to give to that young lady. "Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall give unto him the throne of his father David." (Luke 1:27, 31, 32)

Gabriel, then, is the one who bore the message of God concerning the coming kingdom and the King. God gave this specific angel that tremendous privilege and responsibility.

Lucifer

We learn the original name of the angel Satan in Isaiah 14:12. That verse not only names him but also tells us something vital about him. "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning; how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!" Once, Lucifer was up there with God. But not any longer. Why? He was cast down because of his pride and ambition:

"For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High." (Isaiah 14:14, 15)

Because of his own ego, and because of his promotion of himself, Lucifer lost his lofty position in heaven. He fell from the Father's Divine Grace.

Holy Ones & Watchers

There are various minor categories of angels mentioned in the Bible, such as holy ones and watchers. Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar reported, "I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and behold, a watcher and a holy one came down from heaven." (Daniel 4:13, 17, 23).

Could these watchers and holy ones still be at work today? It's an interesting thought.

Thrones, Dominions, Principalities & Powers

There are two passages from the writings of the apostle Paul that seem very similar at first glance. Let me show you the difference. In Colossians 1:15,16, we read these words: "(Jesus) is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or powers; all things were created by him and for him." Those classifications seem to refer to godly powers or angelic orders. We have very little information about them other than their names.

In the Book of Ephesians, Paul used similar words, but this time with a different reference. We are told to, "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles on the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against

principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:11, 12). These are obviously evil angelic hosts.

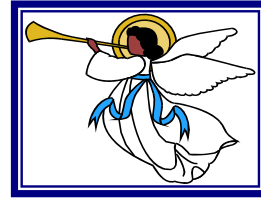
I have given you some of the angelic ranks in this message. God in His wisdom has not given us as much information about the names of angelic orders as we would like. He has simply lifted the curtain of heaven a bit so that we might catch a glimpse of these spiritual beings in their activity on behalf of God and man. More to come about angels in Part III of our series.

Melva McClain 📖

THE MINISTRY OF ANGELS



PART III



In Part III of our series on angels we will discuss, "What angels actually do." Also discussed in this message; "How effectively are you utilizing your angel?"

WHAT ANGELS DO!

The Bible gives us job descriptions for angels. Yes, God joyously shows us by His teaching and by example some of what His marvelous angelic creations do. Not all angels do the same things, of course, for the Lord has given them various assignments. God's angels are active. In this message, I'd like to show you some of the important things angels do. Let's use a general reference scripture. "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." (Psalm 91:11) This confirms that it is God who gives angels their responsibilities and that many of their activities are on our behalf.

Worship

The Word gives several pictures of angel's worshipping God. We have already seen the seraphim proclaiming God to be "holy, holy, holy" in Isaiah 6:3. And in Revelation 5:11, 12 we read: "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders...saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor and glory, and blessing."

The angels provide a good pattern for us to follow. How often do we rush off to serve others, and neglect to first worship God? Of course we should give others our best effort in service. But before that, we need to spend time in His presence, getting our hearts tuned up.

Direction

The need for clear direction in spiritual matters is very important. One great thing angels do is to direct believers. Abraham's son Isaac was a bachelor, and Abraham wanted to find him a wife. So he sent his eldest servant on this extremely important mission of finding a wife for Isaac among relatives in the land. Perhaps the servant was fearful that he might make the wrong choice, so Abraham said something to him that was reassuring: "He (God) shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence." (Genesis 24:7). That's exactly what took place. An angel led the

servant directly to Rekekah, and she readily agreed to leave her home and people to become Isaac's bride.

Let's jump ahead several hundred years in the history of God's people to the time of the judges. Under great oppression, the Israelites cried out to the Lord, and He sent them deliverance through the man Gideon. "And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him, and said unto him, the Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor" (Judges 6:12). Then this angel went on to tell Gideon just how he was to go about the job of freeing God's people from their enemies. Gideon didn't have to guess what he was to do or how he was to do it. The Lord gave specific direction through His angel.

The New Testament gives us other fine examples of angelic leadership. It happened to Philip, one of the original seven deacons. The Lord wanted to direct him to a special evangelistic task. But how would that direction be given? "And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert." (Acts 8:26). Philip obeyed at once, and from that point on, the Holy Spirit guided him.

Cornelius needed to know about the salvation that could be found only in Jesus Christ. So he was directed by an angel to send for Peter. (Acts 10:3-5).

Do angels perform this same service today? Do they have the same ministry of providing direction for God's people? I'm confident they do! I have often felt when I have started to do something or to reach somebody that God's angel had gone on before me and directed me. Isn't that beautiful?

Protection

Angels also protect believers. We have many instances of such protection recorded in the Bible. Remember the time when the apostle Paul's ship was caught in a terrible storm as he went to Rome? It seemed certain that the vessel would be lost and all hands on board would drown. The sailors did everything they possibly could, but they recognized they were facing death. Then Paul went to tell them to be of good cheer. How could he say that? How did he know? What inside information did he have? This is exactly what he said:

"There shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee." (Acts 27:22-24). With that angelic assurance of protection, no wonder Paul could encourage them.

God's Word gives us other examples of how angels protect His people. An angel shut the mouths of lions as Daniel spent the night in their den. (Daniel 6:16-23).

Think back on your life. Perhaps you were spared some horrible accident that could have seriously injured or even killed you. You came through without a scratch. Could an angel have been on duty to save you in your moment of peril? Don't be surprised to

learn some day that is exactly what took place.

Information

One of the main ministries of angels to human beings is to, convey information from God to us. We have already looked at a few cases in which angels served as God's messengers: when angels spoke to King Nebuchadnezzar in a dream, and when Gabriel prophesied the births of John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus Christ.

There have been many times when men have needed messages from God and angels have delivered them. Consider, for example, the enormous burden that rested on the shoulders of Moses as he undertook the leadership of God's people. They needed commandments, for one thing, so that they would know how to live lives pleasing to God. Angels had some part in that: "received the law by the disposition of angels." (Acts 7:53).

As God has relayed information through angels in these and many other cases in the past, He also could provide information to you at a time of special need in your future. We don't know, of course, when God will choose to use this extraordinary means of communication, just be aware of the fact that God still can and will supply information through angels.

Provisions

We see a number of instances in which God used angels to provide the physical necessities of food and drink when they were not normally available. The first of those is found in Genesis 21, which records the conclusion of the story of Hagar. Abraham had to send her and her son away, yet he loved her and his son Ishmael. So he gave them bread and a bottle of water before they left to go out into the desert.

Soon, however, those provisions were depleted. Hagar was sure they were going to die. She and Ishmael cried out to God and wept. "And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? Fear not: for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is...And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water: and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink. (Genesis 21:17, 19) What a touching story! What a gracious God!

There is a similar story in the life of Elijah immediately after his well-known confrontation with and victory over the prophets of Baal. Jezebel threatened his life. Elijah lost all his courage and took off like a scared rabbit, running for miles. Finally he sat down under a tree and gave up. "O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers." (I Kings 19:4).

God's ministry for Elijah, however, was not over. How would He intervene in this situation? The following verses tell us: "An angel touched him, and said unto him. Arise and eat. And he looked, and behold, there was a cake baked on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink." (I Kings 19:5, 6)

Do angels minister to God's people in this manner in modern times? George Muller thought so. This great Englishman of the 19th century provided care for scores of orphans. Sometimes, he had nothing to place on the table before them, but somehow, unexpectedly and mysteriously food would be provided for the children.

So what do angels do? Let's refer back to our foundation scripture. "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." (Psalms 91:11). Glory!

There are so many facts about angels that we still don't know. I believe through meditation we can get our questions answered, and I think we will be simply amazed at all we learn about these fantastic beings God created.

How effectively are you utilizing your Angel? What of the here and now? Is your angel sitting idol, waiting for you to speak the Word, waiting for you to call things that be not as though they were? Speak the Word boldly and start your angel moving on your behalf today!

I hope I have been able to demonstrate in some measure the ministry of angel's to you. As we journey through life, let them reach out and touch you at your point of greatest need. I certainly have and that's why I'm able to share this message with you today.

Melva McClain 