

Angels

Part 2

Introduction

In the first half of this study, we learned that angels are ministering servants to God's people. We saw them protecting and frequently carrying good news to many Old Testament leaders. Now we shall see how they ministered to Jesus and those associated with Him and to the Early Church. Their intervention possibly changed the whole history of Christianity.

Our Study

Angels Ministered to Jesus

The Bible records three instances before the birth of Jesus when angels played a role in the life of the principle characters.

Zechariah, a priest married to Elizabeth, the Virgin Mary's cousin, was barren. Elizabeth was barren, and sadly the couple reached old age still childless. One day while Zechariah was on duty in the temple, an angel appeared before him.

The Scripture: Luke 1:13-16

"The angel said to him, 'Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth. Many of the people of Israel will he bring back to the Lord their God. And he will go on before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous--to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.'"

1. What did the angel tell Zechariah? _____

2. What would be special about this child? _____

3. What would John do? _____

The Scripture: Luke 1:19

"I am Gabriel. I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news."

4. Who did the angel say he was? _____

Sometime after this, this same angel, Gabriel, appeared to Mary.

The Scripture: Luke 1:31

"You have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the son of the Most High...His kingdom will never end."

5. What did Gabriel tell Mary? _____

The Scripture: Luke 1:34-35

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you...For nothing is impossible with God."

6. What was Mary's question? _____

7. What was Gabriel's explanation? _____

8. What were Gabriel's words of encouragement? _____

Indeed, nothing is impossible with God. A short while later, Mary found herself pregnant. However, before her fiancé, Joseph, could break the engagement, an angel appeared to him in a dream.

The Scripture: Matthew 1:19-21

"[Joseph] was a righteous man and did not want to expose [Mary] to public disgrace...An angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.'"

9. What did the angel say to Joseph? _____

10. What was the child to be called? _____

11. Why? _____

On the night Jesus was born, angels also appeared to the shepherds in the nearby fields.

After the birth of Jesus, the reigning king, Herod, tried to find the baby so he could have him put to death. But again God intervened through angels.

The Scripture: Matthew 2:13-14

"An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. 'Get up,' he said, 'take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.' So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod."

12. What did the angel tell Joseph to do? _____

Although it is entirely possible that Jesus had other encounters with angels during His life on earth, the Bible records only two instances. The first was after Satan had tempted Him for forty days.

"Then the devil left him and angels came and attended him."

13. What happened after Jesus was tempted by Satan? _____

The second angelic visitation was in the Garden of Gethsemane, shortly before Jesus was arrested.

The Scripture: Luke 41:13

"He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them. He knelt down and prayed, 'Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.' An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him."

14. What was Jesus' prayer? _____

15. What happened next? _____

Jesus also made reference to angels as His companions tried to rescue Him from the soldiers who came to arrest Him in the Garden.

The Scripture: Matthew 26:52, 53

"Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him... 'Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?'"

16. What did Jesus say His Father would do? _____

One of the most beautiful occurrences happened after angels met with the women followers who went to Jesus' tomb the morning after his death. They found the tomb empty.

The Scripture: Luke 24:4-8

"Suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them... The men said to them, 'Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told

you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'"

17. What was the angel's question to the women? _____

18. What was their proclamation? _____

One more appearance of angels relating to Jesus' resurrection is reported in Acts.

The Scripture: Acts 1:10-11

"They (the disciples) were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 'Men of Galilee,' they said, 'why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.'"

19. What information did the angels give? _____

Angels Ministered To The New Church

The Scripture: Acts 10:1, 3-6

"At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion. One day he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, 'Cornelius!' The angel answered, 'Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter... Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier....He told him everything that had happened and sent them to Joppa.'"

20. Who was Cornelius? _____

21. What did the angel tell him to do? _____

In the meantime Peter had a vision from the Lord. In his vision the Spirit told him that three heathen men were looking for him and he was to go with them.

Peter returned with the men to Cornelius' home where Cornelius had called together his relatives and close friends. There, he explained to them about Jesus. While he was still speaking the Spirit came on all those who heard the message and they began to speak in tongues and praise God. They were all baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

A second episode concerns the Apostle Paul. After traveling throughout Asia, Paul was eventually taken prisoner and sent to Rome. On their way there, a terrible storm broke out. The soldiers planned to throw Paul overboard, but he stopped them by telling them of a dream.

The Scripture: Acts 27: 23-25

"Last night an angel of the God whose I am and whom I serve stood beside me and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you. So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me."

22. What was Paul's vision? _____

The men believed Paul and spared his life. Had it not been for this angelic intervention, Paul would have been killed and we probably would never have been blessed with many of his writings as well. The whole history of the Early Church might have been very different.

Do angels still visit God's people today? Thousands of people bear witness to the fact that they do, and hundreds of magazine articles and books have been written and testify to their appearance.

We also have this reminder from the book of Hebrews:

The Scripture: Hebrews 13:2

"Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it."

23. What are we urged to do? _____

24. Why? _____

The Answers

1. His wife Elizabeth would bear a son.
2. He would be filled with the Holy Spirit from birth.
3. He would prepare a people for the Lord.
4. Gabriel.
5. She would give birth to a son who would be called the son of the Most High. His kingdom would never end.
6. "How will this be since I am a virgin?"
7. "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you."
8. "Nothing is impossible with God."
9. That he could take Mary home as his wife because what she had conceived was from the Holy Spirit.
10. Jesus.
11. Because He would save His people from their sins.
12. To take Mary and Jesus out of Egypt and to stay there until the Lord further instructed him.
13. Angels came and attended him.
14. "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me, yet not my will, but yours be done."
15. Angels appeared and strengthened him.
16. Put more than twelve legions of angels at Jesus' disposal.
17. "Why do you look for the living among the dead?"
18. "He has risen!"
19. That Jesus will come back in the same way they saw Him go into heaven.
20. A centurion.
21. He sent his servant to get Peter.
22. An angel told Paul he would stand trial before Caesar and that all the men on the ship with him would be saved.
23. Entertain strangers.
24. Some of them may be angels.

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