

WHAT DO ANGELS DO?

- 1) **THEY PRAISE AND WORSHIP GOD** - Many passages make this clear. See **Revelation 5:11-12** - "Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, [12] saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!" See also **Psalm 103:20, 148:1-2**. This may be described as the *full-time occupation of angels*. The encouraging truth of this is that *we never worship alone*. Our weak efforts always join in with their ongoing chorus of praise. **How important worship must be that it fills the minds and hearts of the angelic throngs unceasingly!**
- 2) **THEY COMMUNICATE GOD'S TRUTH** - As we said last week, they are surely not *originators* of revelation. Rather, they are *messengers* of God's revelation. That is, they pass on what they have been given (we will return to this truth at the close of this lesson).

They communicate truth in at least **three ways**:

- a) **Interpretation** - Perhaps *Daniel* is the clearest example. See **Daniel 8:19 and 9:23** - "He said, "Behold, I will make known to you what shall be at the latter end of the indignation, for it refers to the appointed time of the end....9:23.... At the beginning of your pleas for mercy a word went out, and I have come to tell it to you, for you are greatly loved. Therefore consider the word and understand the vision." The *bare revelation* of the dreams was not understandable by Daniel alone. Here the message was explained and made clear by angelic visitation. See also **Revelation 1:1**.
- b) **Announcement** - **Luke 1:28** - "And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" This begins the announcement to Mary of the birth of Jesus. Then the *meaning* of what was happening to Mary was explained by an angel to Joseph as well - **Matthew 1:19-20** - "And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. [20] But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit."

Angels are also involved in announcement and explanation at Christ's Resurrection (**Matthew 28: 5-6**) and also at His Ascension (**Acts 1:11**).

- c) **Direction** - There are many cases where God used angelic messengers to specifically guide His servants. See **Judges 13:3**, and especially **Acts 8:26, 10:3-6** - "Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is a desert place....10:3-6...."About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God come in and say to him, "Cornelius." [4] And he stared at him in terror and said, "What is it, Lord?" And he said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God. [5] And now send men to Joppa and bring one Simon who is called Peter. [6] He is lodging with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the seaside."
- 3) **THEY MINISTER TO GOD'S PEOPLE** - This fits in completely with our definition of angels in last week's lesson from **Hebrews 1:14** - "Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?" Notice, they are called "*ministering spirits*." Notice from this verse that angels *do not minister salvation*, but rather, minister to those who have *received* salvation through Christ.

Two specific areas of ministry:

- a) **Consoling and strengthening** - For **Hagar** in Genesis 21:17, for **Elijah** in 1 Kings 19:5, and even for **Jesus Himself** in **Matthew 4:8-11** - "Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. [9] And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." [10] Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'" [11] Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him."
- b) **Protection and Deliverance** - See Exodus 23:20, Daniel 6:22, and **Acts 5:17-20** - "But the high priest rose up, and all who were with him (that is, the party of the Sadducees), and filled with jealousy [18] they arrested the apostles and put them in the public prison. [19] But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, [20] "Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life." All of these events fit in with the Psalmists praise in **Psalm 34:7** - "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles. [7] The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them."
- 4) **THEY ARE INVOLVED AT TIMES IN THE EXECUTION OF DIVINE JUDGEMENT** - God may judge *directly* or through the *means of angels*. Actually, the Bible says more than some think about the *judgmental role of angels*. See **1 Chronicles 21:15, 2 Kings 9:35**, and a particularly fascinating case in **Acts 12:21-23** - "On an appointed day Herod put on his royal robes, took his seat upon the throne, and delivered an oration to them. [22] And the people were shouting, "The voice of a god, and not of a man!" [23] Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him down, because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and breathed his last."

Note especially *the future role of angels in judging the world at Christ's Second Coming* as Jesus explains His parable about the end of the age - **Matthew 13:41** - "The harvest is the close of the age, and the reapers are angels. [40] Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the close of the age. [41] The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, [42] and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. [43] Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear."

5) **THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE OF ANGELIC BEINGS** - Several basic things need to be said:

- a) **The Scriptures clearly point to the presence and role of angels in the world today.** Both the Old Testament (**Psalm 34:7**) and the New (**Hebrews 12:22**) speak in terms of the *ongoing presence and role of angelic beings*. Notice from the reference in Hebrews that the Christian, upon salvation, comes not only to the spiritual Mount Zion, but into the presence of "**thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly**". There are not just one or two angels. They are *numerous*, and appear to be almost *unavoidable*, though *invisible*.
- b) **We do not always recognize the presence of angels as such** - See **Hebrews 13:1-2** - "Let brotherly love continue. [2] Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." Angels, while spiritual beings, can, it seems, take on other forms. It's important to note in this case that the emphasis is not on *entertaining friends* but rather *strangers*. This, it seems, is where the masked encounter with angels is most probable.
- c) **Angelic visitations can readily be counterfeited** - See **2 Corinthians 11:13-14** - "For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. [14] And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light." and also **Galatians 1:8-9** - "But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. [9] As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed."

The key truth stressed here is to **not bank on angels as bearers of new or extra-Biblical revelation** (remember the book, "Angels on Assignment?"). This is a sure sign of deception. *Where* the revelation comes from is never as important as *what* the revelation contains. The entire foundation of *Mormonism* (and indeed, almost *all* false religions share this trait) rests on the angelic revelations of the angel *Moroni* to Joseph Smith.

- d) **When considering angels, it is better to speak of their presence than their visitations.** Indeed, there were visitations in Scriptural cases, and they certainly *can* occur again. ***But the main emphasis in the Word for the believer is the abiding presence of angels performing God's will for the believer.*** Their presence does not have to be **seen** to be **actual**.