

Angels We Have Heard (and Seen)

Explaining the reality of angelic beings in everyday life



Angelic activity always increases at times of great spiritual breakthrough in the kingdom of God. Christmas was just such a moment in history. At the first advent of Christ, the earth exploded with angelic activity.

God sent angels to make announcements to all who took part in the birth of the Savior. Gabriel appeared to the priest Zacharias and told him: “Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John” (Luke 1:13). Soon after, Elizabeth was pregnant with the Messiah’s forerunner, John the Baptist.

Gabriel was also sent to Mary, Jesus’ mother, to herald her as the woman chosen by God to birth His Son. Joseph was reassured of Mary’s virginal purity by an angel who appeared to him in a dream. An angel directed the shepherds to Bethlehem so they could find the stable where Jesus was. The same angel along with countless others serenaded above the shepherds’ field.

Angelic activity increases when God releases the supernatural into the natural. And angelic ministry increases when our faith responds to the Word of God. Just as the first Christmas was a season of miracles, so it is now. You and I can learn to move on “miracle ground” where God’s angels operate.

On ‘Miracle Ground’

Because Jesus reigns as King, the kingdom of God *has come*. Therefore, we live today in a time of kingdom breakthrough.

These are the last days, and angelic activity is increasing, bringing with it miracles from God. The reason for this rise in supernatural operations is twofold.

First, as we move toward the end, human options begin to dwindle. Our ingenuity has created a world that is rushing toward ruin and chaos. As this time approaches, God releases more angelic intervention to miraculously protect His people and promote His kingdom.

Second, for the last century the church has been experiencing the renewal and restoration of the Pentecostal gifts. Beginning with the Azusa Street Revival in the early 1900s and continuing to this day, a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit has been sweeping across our world. Conversions to Christianity in developing countries are reaching record numbers. Even the Islamic world is being powerfully impacted by the supernatural. Angels are appearing there even where there is no missionary presence.

As charismatic ministry is increasingly embraced, old divisions are falling away, and kingdom unity is spreading worldwide. The last-days church must be kingdom-focused if we hope to see a release of the supernatural, which includes miraculous angelic assistance.

Kingdom Ministry

It is essential for us to know how to be in a prime position to receive and activate this supernatural (and often miraculous) influence of angels in our world. One of the main things we need to understand is how the kingdom of God works in relation to us and our earthly realm.

There are certain kingdom laws in the Word of God that angels abide by, and if we are to benefit from having angels as our allies, we too must abide by those laws. Here are a few points to help us understand God's kingdom and make this connection between His laws and our angelic allies.

1. The kingdom of God dwells within us. If Jesus is Lord in our lives, then His kingdom has come through us (Luke 17:21). Yet we will only have full access to it and its resources when we are born again by the Spirit of God (John 3:5). This access to kingdom resources requires a willingness to change (repent) and a submissive, broken spirit (Matt. 3:2; 6:33.) With the kingdom of God present all around us through angelic miracles, with old walls between churches being broken down, and with miraculous conversions occurring in the Islamic countries, it's clear that we are living in a time of kingdom breakthrough.

2. The kingdom of God is also yet to come. We do not yet see all the aspects and inner workings of God's kingdom (Heb. 2:8-9). Its "fullness" is still to come because we are still waiting for Jesus to return. Jesus also confirms this in John 18:36 by saying the kingdom of God is "not of this world."

3. The kingdom of God intensifies through the Holy Spirit. In the letters of the apostle Paul, he calls the baptism of the Holy Spirit a guarantee of the powers of the world to come in the here and now. Furthermore, the powers of the kingdom are released at our sealing and anointing (2 Cor. 1:21-22; Eph. 1:14). I'm convinced that many Christians are children of the kingdom but are not sons. All who are saved are children, yet the rights of sonship—which include angels, miracles, and signs and wonders—belong to those who have been baptized in the Holy Spirit.

4. The kingdom of God brings power and life into the world. Angels are a part of that realm we call the kingdom of heaven. When a church or a believer is willing to sell out to all God has, the angelic activity will increase exponentially. In a suffering, sad and dirty world we need this kingdom that is "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 14:17) to be activated. Let's look now at some of the ways angels impact our world with kingdom power.

Angels and Ministry

At Abba's House (Central Baptist Church) in Chattanooga, Tenn., where I have served for 30 years, we have moved from traditional ministry to charismatic. This transition began in 1989 and continues today. Since 1993, there have been angel sightings, angelic singing, orbs of light and bursts of fire in our church. All of these manifestations occurred after I was baptized in the Holy Spirit and as the church moved into the same spiritual realm. I believe that angelic ministry in today's church is similar to what we see in the New Testament church.

The New Testament is filled with angelic activity that touches the church's ministry on the earth. For example, when the church brings those who are lost to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ "there is joy in the presence of the angels" (Luke 15:10); angels exhibit a strong curiosity about believers' spiritual lives (1 Pet. 1:12); and when the church gathers for worship, angels gather with us (Heb. 12:22).

In his book *Truth About Angels*, Terry Law of World Compassion ministry illustrates how angels are moved by our worship. He quotes the account of Sharon Abrams, who told of seeing two angels during a church service. The angels hovered over the congregation with their arms outstretched and appeared to be about 7 feet to 8 feet tall.

Abrams wrote: "Their faces were broad with high cheekbones and beautiful smiles. They looked like men except they did not have beards. There was an innocence to their faces, and the joy of their expressions was wonderful. They did not wear shoes, but wore long white gowns with gold braid.

"I knew they were in the service because of our praise and worship ... because Jesus was being lifted up and adored. I sensed there were many more beings present ... but I was only able to see those two."

Law also wrote of Marilyn Cappel of Louisville Covenant Church in Kentucky, who reported seeing two angels standing on her church's front platform during several different services. She described them as "a little over 6 feet tall and dressed in white. They do not speak but raise their wings when songs are sung of direct praise to the Father. ...

"I have seen them off and on over a period of months and have prayed often to understand their purpose and mission at our church. One morning one of them walked over behind the pastor and spread his wings as our pastor was making declarative statements about God to us. The angels appear to be waiting for us to do something and always watch intently."

Perhaps it's because moments like these would be so remarkable in the everyday of a believer that the Bible cautions us about our relationship with angels. Scripture warns us not to make them objects of our worship (Col. 2:18).

Angels and Leadership

In addition to their role as ministering spirits in the church, angels accompany and protect those who serve in the fivefold ministry. Let's look carefully at Hebrews 13:2, an often-quoted but misunderstood verse about angels. It reads: "Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels."

When this passage is read in context, it can be seen that it concerns church authority and order. If we continue to verse 7, we see we are called to "remember those who rule over [us], who have spoken the Word of God" to us. Note the full mandate in verse 17: "Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls. ... Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you."

The point is quite clear: Angels accompany those who lead, speak the Word of God, teach faith and are watchful of our spiritual well-being; and these angels release profit or

prosperity. When a believer refuses to submit to apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers who are submitted to the Word and the Spirit of God, the angels that accompany them are insulted and will not release blessing to the believer. Those who mock and make fun of men and women of God are blocking the ministry of angels.

An interesting example of God's care for His chosen leaders, demonstrated through the intervention of angels, can be seen in the life of John G. Paton, a pioneer missionary in the New Hebrides Islands in the mid-19th century. He tells a thrilling story of angelic protection.

Hostile tribesmen surrounded Paton's missions headquarters one night, intent on burning out and killing Paton and his wife. The couple prayed all during the terror-filled night that God would deliver them. When daylight came they were amazed to see that the attackers were gone. The Patons didn't know why the men left, but they thanked God for delivering them.

A year later the chief of the tribe accepted Christ. Paton was curious to know what happened on that dangerous night and asked the chief what kept him and his men from burning the house and killing the couple.

The chief was surprised by the question and replied, "Who were all those men you had with you there?"

"There were no men there—just my wife and me," the missionary answered.

The chief said they had seen hundreds of men on guard, circling the mission—big men in shining garments with swords drawn. The tribesmen were afraid to attack. Only then did Paton know God had sent angels to protect the couple. The chief agreed there was no other explanation.

As this story makes clear, when we welcome the ministries of godly men and women, we also entertain the angels assigned to

them. Their accompanying angels battle the powers of the enemy in the local community and release God's miracles. Only as we receive those whom God sets over us can we have the full ministry of the angelic hosts at their disposal.

Angels and Awakenings

Likewise, the hosts of heaven can move on behalf of our nations only if we respect the spiritual leaders God sends us. When this happens, angels will come with fire to cleanse and rekindle our spiritual lives, which will result in supernatural power and resources being released. Angels are "flames of fire," according to Heb. 1:7, and Pentecostal fire includes angelic fire released to do its powerful work in the earth. (Even biblical tongues are called "tongues of angels," as we see in 1 Cor. 13:1.)

As faith increases and the church operates in kingdom power, our angelic allies will help us take dominion in our communities and nations. Let us activate our angels by making the kingdom of God our priority. God will order the angels into our dimension as we move in the power of the Holy Spirit.

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