

Awesome Angels

A Canadian acquaintance, Bruce Gordon, has recently written about his intrigue with angels. He said, "Revelation 5:11 tells me there are millions of angels which God created. Verse 11 speaks to over 100 million. We do live in a crowded cosmos. The universe is buzzing with divine life, and I need to be aware that God is there for me."

I agree with Bruce that we have no real comprehension of the awesomeness of angels, how much we are truly loved by God and what is continually happening all around us in the unseen spiritual world. As he said, "Angels may be unseen, but they are very real!"

Seen and Unseen Angels

Understanding the awesomeness of angels begins with knowing who they are and what they do. Scripture suggests angels are created, heavenly beings who are superior to humans in power and intelligence. However, they are not all-powerful, all-knowing, nor present in all places at all times, as is our Almighty God.

The word "angel" occurs over 250 times in the pages of Scripture. They are primarily worshippers of God, with a vast array of them remaining at God's side, praising the name of the Lord continually (Ps. 103:21, 148:1-2). These obedient servants are poised to accomplish His every command.

Angels are real and play a vital part in God's plans and purposes today (Acts 8:26, 10:3, 12:7, 27:23). They provide protection for God's people (Ex. 14:19-20, Dan. 3:28, Matt. 26:53) and meet a variety of human needs (Gen. 21:17-19, Mark 1:13). In addition, they may deliver God's people from danger (Acts 5:19, 12:6-11; Ps. 19:11-12). While they often operate in the invisible realm, when visible to human beings, angels often appear in human form (Gen. 18:2, Dan. 10:18, Zech. 2:1).

A few years ago, a friend and his family found themselves in the middle of a tornado. It destroyed their home and much of the town as he and his family huddled in a small central room until the storm passed. As they came out to observe the damage, almost everything was gone and the neighborhood flattened. Even the garage had been affected, and its large door mangled, with their only vehicle inside. As my friend observed the damage, all of a sudden a man was nearby and said he thought he could hold the door up enough for my friend to drive the car out. They proceeded to do this, and when my friend got out of his car, the man was nowhere to be found! My friend told me, "I really think we were helped by an angel!"

The New Testament writer to the scattered Hebrew believers asks, "Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to minister to those who will inherit salvation?" (Heb. 1:14)? Psalm 91:11-12 says of those who "abide under the shadow of the Almighty," angels are assigned to guard them. Billy Graham observed that these ministering spirits, or heavenly assistants, are plural in this text. He concluded that each believer may have at least two angels assigned to protect him, or guide him from unknown dangers in the unseen realm of the spirit. This is comforting to consider in these evil days of the end times!

Good Angels and Bad Angels

In this battle against evil, we must prepare to "stand against the schemes of the devil" (Eph. 6:11b). Whereas God has millions of good angels serving him at his command, some of His angels are "warring angels" who fought against the devil (also called the dragon and Satan in Rev. 12:7 and Lucifer in Isa. 14:12-14) and his fewer—but evil—fallen angels, who were cast out of heaven with him (Rev. 12:7, 9).

This warfare is between good angels and bad angels, and God's side will ultimately win! Until then, Paul offers insight into the ranks of the evil, angelic realm: "Our fight is not

against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, and against spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12).

Angels Will Assist Our Future Gathering to Christ

The Bible tells us angels will be involved in the future of all believers, whether they are dead or alive at Christ's Second Coming. Should death occur, our transition between this life and the next will not be a lonely, dreadful experience. Rather, angels will accompany us into everlasting joy, just as they carried Lazarus, the beggar, in Luke 16:19-31, to his resting place, as appointed for him by God.

All believers will find their final resting place in the presence of Jesus (John 14:1-3, 2 Cor. 5:1-8). However, if Christ's Second Coming occurs before our death, the angels—after the distress of the great tribulation—will gather us to Christ, as Matthew, Mark and Luke all tell us (Matt. 24:29-30, Mark 13:24-27, Luke 21:25-28).

Many believe the apostle John recorded this angelically announced harvesting of saints in Revelation 14:14-15, whereas Paul received these familiar insights by the Word of the Lord, "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we shall be forever with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:16-17).

Paul described these Second Coming events as happening suddenly and quickly, "in the twinkling of an eye" (see 1 Cor. 15:51-54). The last trumpet will sound, and the dead in Christ will be raised, while the living believers' earthly bodies are transformed into spiritual bodies, which are better suited for our eternal life with Christ. In 2 Corinthians, Paul called

these future bodies “an eternal building with God in the heavens, a house not made with hands” (2 Cor. 5:1b).

Angels are awesome! You might summarize the future, angelically-assisted Second Coming with these brief words: When He comes, the dead and living in Christ are gathered by angels, and together we go! {eoa}

Gary Curtis served in full-time ministry for 50 years, the last 27 years of which he was part of the pastoral staff of *The Church on The Way*, the Van Nuys’ California Foursquare church. Now retired, Gary continues to write a weekly blog at and frequent articles for digital and print platforms.

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