

The Importance of Angels

In these troubling times we need a reminder that angels walk among us.

Jesus warned that in the last days there would be “wars and rumors of wars” (Matt. 24:6, NKJV). He further explained, “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom” (v. 7). Among the nations and kingdoms of the earth there will always be conflict.

Hidden in the words of Jesus is a reference to the war between the dark forces of Satan and the angelic armies of Jesus. As we move toward the end of the age, the sounds of war are being heard across our planet. Dark forces are drawing strength from false religions and are following demonic leadership toward the final conflagration on Earth. All roads lead toward the valley below the mountain of Megiddo, the place called Armageddon.

Islamic militants are receiving visits from the dark side instructing them in acts of terror, preparing for an all-out assault on the Jews and the nation of Israel. America and its allies are at war in the Middle East now and are searching for strategies to obstruct the purposes of darkness. As chaotic as the conflicts are on Earth, above the atmosphere of our planet, larger wars are raging. Here, our authentic allies, the angels, can and must be trusted.

The book of Daniel reveals the pattern of angelic operation among the nations. Above every nation, Satan has assigned a principality, and under that demon, “hosts of wickedness” (Eph. 6:12). In the word of the Lord recorded in Daniel 10, the prophet discloses the truth that there are evil, demonic spirits over territories, and Paul affirms it in his letter to the Ephesians.

Daniel had been fasting and mourning over captive Israel for

three weeks. During that time of intense spiritual focus and physical deprivation, Daniel received an angelic visit. His vision gives us some idea about what angels look like.

“Now on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, that is, the Tigris, I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz! His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude” (Dan. 10:4-6).

This strong angel was brighter than lightning, glistening as fine jewels, and glowing as polished bronze. His words were as majestic as a waterfall.

Daniel was the only one who saw the vision. However, as the magnificent scene unfolded, the men who were with him ran and hid in terror. They could sense the supernatural presence.

Daniel was himself slain in the Spirit with his face to the ground as the angel spoke. The power of this supernatural encounter left him with no power in his flesh. He tells us that “suddenly, a hand touched me, which made me tremble on my knees and on the palms of my hands” (v. 10).

When the angel touched Daniel, he gained strength enough to get on all fours, in a reverential position, bowing down. His whole body trembled at the experience.

“And he said to me, ‘O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you.’ While he was speaking this word to me, I stood trembling. Then he said to me, ‘Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words.’”

“‘But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia. Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come’ ” (vv. 11-14).

Daniel stood trembling to receive the prophetic word from the angel. In the middle of this prophecy about “the latter days,” the angel spoke of warring with a territorial spirit called “the prince of the kingdom of Persia.” This demon was so strong that the archangel Michael was summoned by God to rescue the other angel so he could release the message.

Here we get a glimpse of the invisible war in the heavenly dimension. Intense warfare erupted in the heavenlies because one man with a prophetic calling—Daniel—prayed and fasted. The demonic opposition resulted in a three-week delay in the manifestation of the answer to Daniel’s prayer.

Note also that the struggle in this prophecy was about Israel in the latter days. The angel told Daniel, “‘Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come’ ” (v. 14).

We are living witnesses to the last-days’ struggle the angel referred to. The same demon of Persia is threatening Israel today. This is the force behind Islam, and it is a visible enemy that we battle alongside our angelic allies. Behind every earthly conflict is demonic influence.

“The prince of Greece” is also mentioned in Daniel 10: “Then he [the angel] said, ‘Do you know why I have come to you? And now I must return to fight with the prince of Persia; and when I have gone forth, indeed the prince of Greece will come’ ” (v. 20).

This is not simply a reference to the land of Greece. The

prince of Greece represents Greek philosophy that has captured and now governs Western thought. Rationalism that denies the supernatural has taken over our educational system. Churches that deny the Holy Spirit's power have bowed to this "prince of Greece."

This two-pronged enemy is arrayed against the Spirit-filled church today. The prince of Greece bows to the mind of man while the prince of Persia bows to a demon god.

Can you see that the world conflict has clandestine operations going on in the spiritual realm? The prince, or spirit, of Greece (which is represented in the architecture of our government buildings in Washington, D.C.) cannot defeat the Persian spirit. The church must rise to take down these spirits.

Angelic Influence in Government

There is a remarkable story in the book of Judges about an angel coming to a man named Manoah during a season of distress for the nation of Israel. God had allowed the Philistines to enslave the nation because the Israelites had done wrong.

The angel, who revealed that his name was "Wonderful," came to prophesy the birth of Samson (see Judg. 13:18). "Wonderful" comes from the Hebrew word *pala*, which means "wonder worker" or "miracle worker." This angel called "Wonderful" announced to Manoah and his barren wife that they would have a son named Samson who would deliver his nation from 40 years of bondage.

On a later occasion angels prophesied the death of Ahaziah through Elijah. In this compelling story angels killed two captains of 50 with all their soldiers. The third captain begged for mercy, and a fearless Elijah issued the verdict of death to the wicked king (see 2 Kin. 1:1-17).

An account in the New Testament records that an angel struck and killed King Herod Agrippa when he tried to take God's

glory for himself (see Acts 12:20-23). Here again a national leader fell at the hand of an angel.

In a later chapter, the increase of angelic operations among the nations at the end of the age is documented. Angelic agents operate clandestinely among the nations of the earth. In a constant war against their demonic counterparts, angels affect the destiny of national and international governments.

Chuck Ripka, international banker, entrepreneur, marketplace minister and author of *God Out of the Box*, shares a story about how he and the ministers of Elk River, Minnesota, were assisted by angels when the destiny of their state needed to be changed.

As an ambassador of the kingdom, Ripka had received a specific word from God about the plans He had for bringing a revival to Minnesota.

However, there were spiritual bondages that needed to be broken within the state legislature, so God sent them right to the source—the state capitol building—to begin the work through prayer.

Says Ripka: “When we were ready to step into the capitol, I sensed a strong demonic presence. I prayed, ‘Lord, would you please send warring angels to go into the capitol before us?’ Incredibly, I immediately saw two angels before me, each 20 feet tall. One had a sword, and the other had a huge hammer or mallet.

“They walked inside and caught a demon that looked like a Pan god from Greek mythology. It was half man and half animal. The angels bound the demon’s hands, laid it on a block of granite, and then crushed its skull with the hammer.

“As its head was being crushed, the hand of the demon opened up. A gold key fell to the ground. The Lord said to me, ‘Now, with this key, no door will be locked to you.’

“We stepped inside ... [and] the Lord began revealing to me what He wanted done that evening. ‘My heart grieves because there has been a separation between church and state,’ He said. ‘But My heart grieves even more because there has been a separation between church and church.’”

Ripka and his group of ministers prayed and repented for the sins the state and its constituents had committed against racial groups, different age groups and so on. There was a spirit of love and repentance in the meeting because Ripka activated his authority and called on the angels of God to fight back the enemy and his attempts to cancel the movement of God in their state.

Ripka reports that their “prayers and confessions had made a difference. ... The atmosphere had changed. There was a new spirit of cooperation within the walls of the capitol. By following God’s leading, we were able to help reconcile church and state and church and church.”

Understanding how angels interact with governments in the spiritual realm helps believers see the significance of our alliance with the angels. As Ripka’s story demonstrates, our worship, prayer and witness can turn the tide in national and international struggles.

Had it not been for the release of those warrior angels, he and his ministry team would have been up against enormous opposition to carry out God’s plan for revival in Minnesota.

In many respects, the church is viewed as a colony of the kingdom of heaven. Our role is to be ambassadors of the kingdom here on earth. While loyal to our earthly nation and heritage, we must confess that we have a citizenship elsewhere (see Phil. 3:20).

This concept elevates the gatherings of the people of God to cosmic and eternal importance. Jesus taught us to pray, “‘Your kingdom come ... on earth’” (Matt. 6:10). In alliance with the

triune God, His decrees and the holy angels, we are a part of a destiny-changing enterprise.

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