***Angels, No. 2

Colossians 1:15-20

COL-120***

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Our subject is "Hymn in honor of Christ," segment number ten in Colossians 1:15-20.

The current popular interest in angels has not only reached the bookstores, but it has reached the entertainment television industry as well. In "The Conservative Chronicle" for April 9th, 1997, there is an article entitled "Prime Time Television Keeps Its Eye on the Sky" by Brent Boswell. I'd like to read a few paragraphs to you from that. In its March 29th issue, TV guide released a fascinating survey that finds, among other things, that more than two-thirds of Americans would like to see increased religious content on prime time television. At the same time, CBS, the network currently doing the best job by far serving spiritually minded viewers, is surging in the Nielsen ratings. Coincidence?

"If you think so, please explain this other coincidence. CBS's Comeback is powered by 'Touched by an Angel,' prime time's most faith-friendly program. On March 9th, 'Angel,' now in its third season, earned its highest rating ever, and was the top-rated drama of the week – not just on CBS, but in all of television. Surprisingly, two-thirds of respondents to the TV guide poll chose 'Angel' as the most spiritual show on the air. Moreover, half of those surveyed named Tess, the mentor angel, played by Della Reese, as not only the character they'd most like to discuss God with, but also the character they'd most like to have in their child's Sunday school class. Second in both categories was Monica, the younger angel, played by Roma Downey. But Jerry Seinfeld? Well, go figure.

“The manner in which CBS is treating religion today is truly revolutionary. Just five years ago it would've been a laughable proposition to imagine a prime time series with the main character, an angel sent by God no less, consistently issuing statements like: 'Faith is the evidence of what you can't see. With God's help, you can turn judgment into compassion, and hate into forgiveness.' Today, that line is typical on 'Angel.' So successful has the program become that, next to David Letterman, it may be CBS's most valuable asset. And yes, even more valuable than Bryant Gumbel ever will be."

This program, if you've seen it, does indeed show a great deal of respect for God; for His authority; for His Word; and, for the principle of doing what is right. This series, however, is not entirely biblically accurate about angels. There are no angel girls. That that phrase is repeatedly used. And the two main angels are ladies. But there are no angel girls. They're not quite right there. And there is no angel in charge of death, per se.

Della Reese, to her Christian credit, did refuse originally to play the role in "Touched by an Angel," because the original scripts were New Age-oriented to the spirit force that is characteristic of New Age theology. Therefore, she said, "I won't do that. But if you put it in the context of the Bible, and make it biblically oriented, then I'll do it. And they agreed, and completely rewrote the scripts, and wrote out the New Age - Star Wars type of force.

When I was a child, my parents practiced a custom at Christmas Eve dinner to honor the angels. This was done by placing an empty plate in the middle of the dinner table. And then a very large, very thin, crispy wafer was served to each one at the table. The name of this wafer was Oplaque. It comes from a Latin word ("oplabom"), which means "an offering." And that plate was there in the center of the table. This very thin wafer, probably six or seven inches across, was given to each one. Everyone would cover the wafer with honey, and then a portion of it would be broken off, and put in that plate in the center of the table for the angels.

I have no recollection of exactly the significance of this special pastry, or the meaning of the ceremony. It goes back really for many centuries. And it is still practiced in certain religious groups. It has a connection, to some degree, in the explanation with the manna that the Jews had in the wilderness. And it is the bread of angels, perhaps, in that respect. It is also a symbol of sharing, forgiveness, friendship, and a Christian spirit at the time of the celebration of the birth of Christ. But I don't really recollect exactly what the background was beyond that. I do remember, however, that the local church provided each family with a package of these special wafers for the Christmas Eve meal.

Now, angels, as you know, do not eat. They do not need to eat. And I do not recall that any ever stopped by the house later to pick up what we had put on the plate for them. I'm not quite sure what happened to that. I would not be surprised that I acted the role of the angels, and disposed of it myself, because it was a very tasty wafer, especially with a little honey on it.

I do observe, however, an interesting similarity of that practice to the oriental custom of bringing food to the altar when they worship their ancestors' spirits. And I suspect that what was a well-intentioned practice, probably it was another one of those angel-of-light deceptions of Satan at the time of the birth of Christ, to bring about what was actually an action of spirit recognition. These were not the good angels, but a custom of offerings which are never made in Scripture to angels, but offerings made to the demonic spirit world.

However, as we know, the Bible is not silent on the truth about angels. So, no superstitious inventions, such as giving an offering or food to the angels is necessary.

**Messengers**

We have learned two basic things in the doctrine of angels. First of all, the Greek and Hebrew word for "angels" in the Bible basically means "a messenger" – one who is sent. This refers to a class of non-corporeal rational beings which created by Jesus Christ. They don't have physical bodies. They have spiritual bodies. While angels are not human beings, the word "angel" is sometimes applied to human beings in the sense of being messengers from God, such as in the seven letters to the churches in the book of the Revelation.

**The First Created Beings**

Secondly, we learned that angels were all created by Jesus Christ at the same time in multiplied millions as the very first work of creation. Before anything else was done, the first thing He did was created the millions of multiplied millions of angels. Angels do not marry, so they don't reproduce. There are no baby angels. Angels cannot die, so their numbers never decrease. Angels, however, are not sexless. They are always males in keeping with the exercise of spiritual authority, which God has given them. Females do not exercise spiritual authority in the work of God.

**Created as Sinless Beings**

So, continuing from there with our study of the doctrine of angels, the next point is that all the angels were created as sinless means, but Satan was able to draw, we think, about a third of them, into a rebellion against God's authority, when he wanted to replace God as the ruler of the universe. In Genesis 1:31, we read: "And God saw all that He had made (at the end of the week of creation), and behold, it was very good. That gives us a very definite statement that originally the angels were all in sync with God. There were no evil angels.

**Demonic Angels**

Now, Greek philosophy that demons have two categories: good demons; and, bad demons. But the Word of God says "No." All angels originally were compatible with the righteousness of God. What happened was that they decided to team up with Satan. The basic revelation about that to us is in Ezekiel 28. There is an extended description here in the context. And while it refers here to the king of Tyre, the real king behind every nation is Satan. And here, this king is described in terms which could not apply to a human being. That is because one of the things that it says about the king of Tyre is that he was in Eden. That was not true of the actual king of Tyre. It was true of Satan, because Satan, when he was the archangel was in the inner circle of the protection of the holiness of God. He was right there in the inner circle of the honor guard.

So, we're going to skip all the description concerning him, and the fact that he was a very beautiful person. He was the wisest of all the angels that God made. He was full of wisdom, it says, and he was perfect in beauty. And when he was made, he was sinless. I want you just to notice verses 14-15: "You were the anointed cherub." The cherubim class of angels are the highest class. They are the honor guard, protecting the holiness, standing around the throne of God in heaven: "You were the anointed chair who covers. And I placed you there, and you were on the holy mountain of God." This is a poetic description for being in the kingdom of God in heaven: "And you walked in the midst of the stones of fire." These are reflecting a poetic description of the fiery glory of the presence of God. And Satan walked in the very glory of God, in His very presence, with no problem. The same fire that would burn someone that was sinful had no effect upon him: "You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, until unrighteousness was found in you." And it goes on and tells more of what he did.

Verse 17 says, "Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty. You corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor." Now, this is what Satan, as a powerful angel does to this day. He is always trying to cause Christians to become proud of the things they shouldn't be proud of. And he is trying to cause Christians to get followed up in their thinking. And that is very easily done. Human viewpoint surrounds us. It eats us up. Only the Word of God can stabilize us in whatever relationship you have in life, whether it's in marriage; the rearing of your children; your business; or, whatever. Without the wisdom of God, you will have the wisdom of Satan. And at the heart of it was pride. He became so proud of himself. And there isn't anybody here tonight who doesn't have some area where you think you can take great personal pride. And when you do that, that means you're focusing on yourself, and not having your eyes on the Lord. Once Satan took his eyes off the Lord, and once Satan took his eyes off of asking the Lord for the directions, and to act as an obedient servant, he put his eyes on himself. So, the result was that he was cast to the ground, as it says: "He was put out of heaven itself."

We also have what is probably an illusion to this in Isaiah 14:12-14: "How have you fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn? You have been cut down to the earth – you who have weakened the nations. But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven. I will raise my throne above the stars of God (the angels), and I will sit on amount of the assembly in the recesses of the north (in a north where the throne of God apparently is, in that direction), and he will sit on the mount of the assembly, that he will be superior to all the assembled believers. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will make myself like the Most High.'" And there was the sin of Satan.

The day came when, in his mind, he said, "I can be just like God." And the reason he did that probably was because he believed that this was an evolutionary process, and he believed that God had evolved to a greater height than he had, but that he saw himself now having the beauty and such great wisdom that he could almost think God's thoughts after God Himself. So, he decided that he could replace God.

In Revelation 12:3-4, we read, "And another sign appeared in heaven, and behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems. And his tails swept away a third of the stars of heaven." There is where we base the concept that Satan took one-third of the multiplied millions and millions of angels down with him: "And he threw them to the earth, and the dragon stood before the woman, who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child." This, of course, is a reference to Jesus Christ. As you know, from the very first, the birth of Jesus Christ, Satan has done everything he could to kill the baby, and then later, to kill the man. It was his purpose not to let Jesus Christ ever fulfill His mission. And he did that by bringing down with him one-third of the angelic host to act as the demonic reinforcement for his actions.

In verse 7, we read: "And there was war in heaven." Chronologically, this is at the midpoint of the tribulation: "Michael (the current archangel who replaced Satan) and his angels waging war with the dragon. And the dragon and his angels waged war. And they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven." It is at this point that Satan will no longer be able to go into heaven to be able to accuse the believers when they sin. Now he has access, as we see in the book of Job, where he could report in, and he could ask to be able to attack the godly man job. But when this happens, at the middle of the tribulation, that closes the door of heaven forever. He can no longer again stand before God.

The result is verse 9: "The great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old, who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world, and he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. Everybody is out of heaven who is now an evil personality. And the result was, as the context later describes to us, verse 12: "For this reason, rejoice, O heaven, and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time."

If there is one thing you can say about Satan, he's not ignorant of doctrine, nor is he ignorant of the prophetic plan of God. And he knows that when this Scripture is fulfilled, and when he loses this war with Michael and the angels of God, he has three-and-a-half years before they pull him in, and put him into the pit of the abyss for 1,000 years of the millennium. So, he understands that he must do everything he can to try to avoid this coming about.

The point is that he was once a perfect angel, and he has totally corrupted himself by his own personal choice.

So, there are angels who remain loyal to God. They are the holy angels. We have them referred to, for example, in Mark 8:38: "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My Words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when he comes in glory of his Father with the holy angels." The holy angels are the angels loyal to God. What Jesus is saying is that anybody (any believer) who is ashamed of Him, and who is ashamed of being a Christian, and who is ashamed of living by the Words of God in a very sinful society, and who, in fact, wants to imitate that sinful society, the Son of Man, Jesus, when He returns, at the Second Coming, in His glory, will be ashamed of them. And the consequence of them will be great personal loss, even though they will retain their salvation.

So, there are holy angels, and you notice that they're associated with Christ when He returns. The angels who rebelled against God are now in the category of the demon angels. Look, for example, in Luke 4:4-33-36: "And there was a man in the synagogue possessed by the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice." In the Scriptures, it is interesting to observe that demon angels are loudmouths – consistently and repeatedly. When speech is referred to by the demon angels, they're loudmouths, because they are raucous; they are undisciplined; and, they are unrestrained: "There was a man in the synagogue possessed by the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, 'Ha, what do we have to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are – the holy one of God. Now this demon angel knew who Jesus was. There's no question about it. It is very clear that he was dealing with the Holy One of God. And he was in panic. He was afraid of what Christ was going to do to him.

When we had the demons that broke the vows of staying in their own kind, that we looked at this morning, in Genesis 6, those demons are incarcerated in Tartarus, which is a compartment of Hades – totally dark, and waiting their judgment day. These demons know that that's what's ultimately is destined for them – and in the long-range, the lake of fire. And that's what is behind this panic: "Who are you? I know who you are. Why are you here?"

Verse 35: "And Jesus rebuked him saying, 'Be quiet, loudmouth, and come out of him.' And when the demon had thrown him down in their midst, he came out of them without doing him any harm." What did the demon do? This man possessed by the demon was slain in the spirit, and he was thrown down – just thrown down backwards: not kneeling in obeisance and recognition of Christ.

You can go down here to the big temple on the highway. I think it's Friday night. And you can see all the action of the demonic world. Get your stomach set. Take something to settle your stomach because, all over the place, you'll see them – people being slain in the spirit. And they don't fall down in worship. They fall backwards. That's always the way when a demonic spirit hits somebody.

Well, here, this demon, in one last expression of rebellion, slaps it to this man, and slays him in his spirit, so that he is out of control and unconscious: "And amazement came upon them all, and they began discussing with one another: 'What is this message? For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out. Yes, there were spirits who rebelled against God, but they're all under the control and the authority of Jesus.

So, the response of positive or negative volition toward God during what was probably a probationary period for the angels has forever determined the status of the angels as either holy or demon. So, originally they were all created perfect and holy. One third of them chose to go with Satan, and they lost their holy status, and therefore, they are destined to spend eternity with their leader, Satan, in the lake of fire.

**Holy Angels in Heaven; Demon Angels in Hell**

That brings us to the next point. The holy angels will spend eternity in heaven while the demon angels will enter the lake of fire forever. Hebrews 12:22: "But you have come to Mount Zion to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriad of angels." Angels will be everywhere in the new Jerusalem, which is another expression for heaven.

**The Lake of Fire**

In Matthew 25:41, you have the opposite side of the coin as to where the demon angels will be going. This is written to these, at the beginning of the Millennium, when the Jews and Gentiles are judged as to whether they're qualified to go into the Millennium as saved people or if they're unsaved. Those who are the goats are on His left: "Then He will say to those on his left: 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.'" That's where we get the expression, "the lake of fire." It has been prepared for the devil and his angels.

So, there you have the two sides very clear. The holy angels spend eternity in the new Jerusalem with God. The demon angels spend eternity with Satan in the suffering of the lake of fire.

**Torment Forever and Ever**

Revelation 20:10: "And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever." This is following the period when Satan is loosed after the 1,000-year Millennial Kingdom so that he can raise one more rebellion, gathering together the people who have been born during the millennium, and who have rejected Christ, Who is ruling from Jerusalem. They have not accepted Him. So, they rise up and they follow Satan to their total destruction, and they all end up together in the lake of fire. And you will notice that it will be torment day and night forever and ever.

Now other places in Scripture tell us that the place is going to be dark. So, it's going to be a fire that is felt, perhaps of an electronic kind, so that it'll be total darkness. That's oppressive in itself – that you spent eternity in total darkness, and yet you are in the intensity of the heat and the agony of what you're experiencing.

I was very surprised reading a book recently. It's an excellent book written by a man who obviously knows the Word of God, and has brought marvelous things together about the moving of the spirit world upon Christians today. And in it, he came to the conclusion, by a series of verses, that he believed that the people who were going to be sent into the lake of fire would have a period of suffering, and then they would be rubbed out of existence. I was appalled to read that. That's what the Jehovah's Witnesses teach. You can't really lose. You can live like the devil all your life. They'll have a little suffering, but eventually you're going to be wiped out. And here the Scriptures make it very clear that they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. Now, if forever doesn't mean forever, how long is your salvation – the eternal life that supposedly you have?

I'm always amazed how careful you have to be when you're going to be a Bible teacher, which is why Peter says, "The worst thing in the world to happen to any human being is to be called upon God to be a pastor-teacher-elder. It's the worst thing in the world, because if you don't do the job right, people will be shortchanged, and they will suffer for all eternity. And the consequences will be upon your shoulders as well. They may not listen. They may not want to follow the implications of your wisdom, of what a doctrine teaches in some aspect of life, but you must make it clear to them that this is the way it should be. And then they can walk out, and they do their own thing. But the burden is there, such that they must be told.

These demon angels are doing everything that they possibly can to keep people in the dark as to what are the consequences of not knowing the Word of God and being obedient to it. Matthew 8:29: "And behold, they cried out saying, 'What do we have to do with you, Son of God? Have you come to torment us before the time?'" Here is the demoniac at Gadara. And here again, the demon angels were afraid that they were going to be sent before their time into the lake of fire.

**Agents of Divine Revelation**

The next point is that the holy angels are the agents of divine revelation from God to man. Now, I want to tell you right up front that this is the way it used to be. This is not the way it is now. If some evening, you look at the foot of your bed, like any high-class charismatic sooner or later does – in fact, you can hardly be a respectable charismatic preacher if you have not had an angel appear at the foot of your bed one night, in a glowing light, so that you have had a real contact with God.

I listened to a man one time being interviewed on radio by one of the charismatic stations. He was sitting in his study at church when an angel appeared to him and identified himself as an angel. Did he really see something? Was there somebody really there? There could have been, but it wasn't an angel of God if it was. It was a demon angel of Satan. And this interviewer – a lot of you would know his name if I told you. He's very prominent on radio here. He said, "That is wonderful, wonderful. What did he look like?" He said, "Well, he looked very manly." And the man asked, "And how was he dressed?" And he said, "Well, he wore a turtleneck shirt (sweater), and he had deck shoes," and he went on with this crazy description of how this angel was dressed. And this interviewer was getting all sweaty under the armpits, you could tell, with this excitement over this kind of stupid nonsense.

So, angels carried messages from God, but not today. We have had the revelation of Scripture completed, and the message comes through Scripture. So, don't let anybody con you into telling you that they've had a divine visitation, and therefore, they have a direct Word from God. Daniel 8:15 says this, when angels were delivering messages from God: "And it came about when I, Daniel, had seen the vision, that I sought to understand it. And behold, standing before me was one who looked like a man. And I heard the voice of a man between the banks of the Ulai, and he called out and said, 'Gabriel, give this man an understanding of the vision.'" Daniel has just had a tremendous vision from God about the coming antichrist. He said, "I don't understand this." So, here's a voice that says "Gabriel." Now, Gabriel is one of the few angels that we know with a name. And Gabriel is one of the primary messengers of God. And he is told to give Daniel an explanation. Now, this is all really happening. Daniel is really hearing this. This is coming directly from God.

Verse 17: "So he came near to where I was standing, and when he came, I was frightened, and fell on my face." This angel did not slay him in the spirit so that he flew over backwards. That's what the demon angels do. When you come into the presence of a holy angel, you are in the presence of someone who respects and honors God, and you bow down in worship, under full control: "But he said to me, 'Son of man, understand that the vision pertains to the time of the end (the tribulation era).' Now while he was talking with me, I sank into a deep sleep with my face to the ground. But he touched me, and made me stand upright, and he said, 'Behold, I'm going to let you know what will occur at the final period of the indignation, for it pertains to the appointed time of the end.'"

Then Daniel, now fully composed and under control, sits and listens to the most marvelous explanation of where history is moving, and what is going to happen at the end of the tribulation era, and during that terrible period. Daniel 9:21-22: "While I was still speaking in prayer, then the man, Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision previously." To him, when he saw Gabriel, knowing that he was a messenger of God, yet he looked like a person. It wasn't a poltergeist that came floating into his presence. It really was an angelic being: "He came to see me in my extreme weariness about the time of the evening offering. And he gave me instruction, and talked with me, and said, 'O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you insight with understanding.'" And then again, this angel proceeded to give Daniel the most critical time schedule that we have in the Bible: the 70 weeks prediction of God's dealing with the Jewish people.

What it amounted to was that God said: from the rebuilding of the wall in Jerusalem, when the king gives the authority to do that, the time will start counting, and there will be 490 years of Jewish history left. And then everything promised to Abraham and through the Davidic Covenant will be fulfilled. The Jews will run the world. They will be the chief nation. Christ, the Messiah, will be ruling from Jerusalem.

Well, it came down to 483 years, and the clock stopped ticking because the Jews crucified their Messiah. And then something that God never revealed came into play – drawing together a special group of people called Christians, the body of Christ, the church. And that dispensation is now what is in force, but the seven years haven't been forgotten. That's where the reformers made a big mistake. They said that God has blown off the seven years, and the church has now replacing everything of the promises to Israel. That is not true. Israel is still in the plan of God.

Now in 1948, I think it was May 17th, when Israel became a nation officially, the amillennialist were simply blown out of the water, because at the heart of no millennium (only a heavenly millennium) was a fundamental principle: you cannot have a Jewish nation. And when the Jews were restored as a nation, everything they were teaching collapsed. Did they change your opinion? No. If you want to be ignorant, you may continue to be ignorant still. But the purpose of God was explained here to Daniel in this Scripture (in this particular passage which became part of Scripture), and it is revelation through angels directly from God. We don't have that anymore because the revelation that God wants us to have is here in the recorded in the Bible.

**Angels are Normally Invisible**

The next point is that angels are normally invisible to man, but they can make themselves seen. Genesis 19:1 illustrates that, "Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening as Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lott saw them, he rose to meet them, and bowed down with his face to the ground." Verse 5: "And they called to Lot and said to him, 'Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may have relations with them.'" The two angels have gone to Sodom and Gomorrah. They have entered the city of Sodom. They're sent there as God's agents, and they have made themselves visible. They look like two ordinary men. They have come, because of the mercy of God to Lot, who foolishly decided that he wanted to go along with the world, like some of you kids might do, or like some of you older folks might do, who love to live in the world, and who loved the world system. Lot loved it. He was so accepted that he was a judge among them. They wanted a nice righteous guy. This was a horribly evil city. And the judgment of God was because it was a city of homosexuality. This is the same thing as the angels we talked about before, who left their own natural kind. So, for men to leave their natural kind, which is women, and women to leave their natural kind, which is men, in terms of sexual relationships, the whole city was corrupt. But God said, "For Abraham's sake, I'm going to see if I can pull a lot out."

Well, Lot's wife didn't like this at all. She loved the city. She believed in God, but she loved the good times city, and all the good things it had. She realized that if her husband, Lot, who was a herdsman, took his herds and left and went out into the fields away from Sodom and away from Gomorrah, that they would have a life, but it wouldn't be the glamorous life that they have in the city of Sodom.

Obviously, this man also corrupted his own children. He did not steel them to have a resistance to the world. He did not train them such that whatever their peers do in the world has to be matched up against the Bible, and that most of the time, what their peers do, who do not know Christ, is going to be wrong. Therefore, these two girls didn't mind having sexual relations with their father after they got him drunk, out of which came two of the groups in the Arab world who are causing Israel great grief to this very day.

So, the angels here came, and they were seen by Lot as a man. Then, when the homosexuals of the city had seen them, they came to Lot's house and said, "Where are the men?" They didn't realize these were angels. They looked like men because that's the appearance that they had. Angels are normally invisible, as they are in this auditorium right now, but they can make themselves seen, and they may appear in a form, but only as males. They never appear in the form of females.

Please notice Genesis 18:2: "And when he lifted up his eyes (this is Abraham), he looked, and behold, three men were standing opposite him. And when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself down to the earth." Now compare that with Genesis 18:13: "And the LORD (notice the capital letters – 'YHWH' (yeh-ho-vaw') Jehovah) said to Abraham, 'Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Shall I indeed bear child when I am old?'" So, one of these men was actually the Angel of the Lord, the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ. And that's why He is called here the "LORD," because Christ also bears the title of 'YHWH.' He is supreme God. And the other two were regular angels of a certain category and a certain rank, who were dispatched with the pre-incarnate Christ to tell Abraham, because he was a friend of God, what He was going to do to Sodom and Gomorrah. The Lord said, "I don't want to do this without telling Abraham what's coming up."

In verse 33, Abraham pleads to try to stop this in various ways: "And as soon as He had finished speaking (to Abraham) . . . , the LORD (the pre-incarnate Christ) departed, and Abraham returned to his place. Then in the next chapter, in Genesis 19:1, you have now the two angels. The other two remain. The Lord Jesus Christ left. His mission was finished, and they carried on.

Holy angels never appear in animal form or as material objects. They may cause animals to speak on occasion, and they do that. But they never enter animals. The demons will enter animals, as in the man at Gadara – the lunatic there who is filled with demons. When the demons were brought out of him, and when he was asked about that, they said, "How many are there?" And he said, "We are legion" – many. And that's why they asked to be put into the pigs, because demon angels do not like to be without a body of some kind. So, they will enter animals.

The angels of God always, as we said, appear as adult males. They never appear as females or as children. As we've seen here in Genesis 19:1-2, Daniel 10:18, and Hebrews 13:2. Angels always appear clothed. What do they wear? They wear the garb of the era. If angels were still appearing to people today, they would appear just like any of us, wearing the kind of clothing that we wear. That's why, whenever they were seen, they just seemed to be human beings. In Acts 1:10, Jesus is about to ascend to heaven: "And as they (the disciples) were gazing intently into the sky (as Christ was rising up through the clouds, while He was departing) behold two men in white clothing stood beside them." The kind of clothing they wore was the same kind of clothing that everybody else was wearing there, except that it was white.

Mark 16:5 also indicates that the angels of God are clothed in the style of the day: "And the women entering the tomb saw a young man sitting at the right, wearing a white robe, and they were amazed." What was he wearing? He was wearing a robe, like everybody else, except this one was white.

Sometimes, the visual appearance of angels is very, very dramatic, and very frightening. For example, Matthew 28:2-4: "And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it." Now the Roman soldiers on guard are watching this. That is a very dramatic entrance: "And his appearance was like lightning, and his garment as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men." It just knocked them out into unconsciousness when they saw the angel of God with all the glory of God reflected by him.

Matthew 24:4, "And it happened that while they were perplexed about this, behold, two men suddenly stood near them in dazzling apparel. This was another of the resurrection events.

Then we have one in Revelation 10:1, "And I saw another strong angel coming down out of heaven clothed with a cloud, and the rainbow was upon his head, and his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire." Here is something that, at some point in time, an angel from God is going to descend in the end time, looking just like this. So, sometimes the appearance of angels is very impressive.

Angels on occasion do appear simply as themselves, and they are recognized as such – that they are indeed angels. You have this, for example, in the Old Testament in 2 Samuel 24:17: "Then David spoke to the Lord, when he saw the angel who was striking down the people, and said, 'Behold, it is I who have sinned, and it is I who have done wrong, but these sheep: what have they done? Please let Your hand be against me, and against my father's house.'" David was told by God not to number his military forces, but David disobeyed, and he had the troops numbered, because he wanted to know how strong he was. But he was acting on that rather than trusting in the Lord.

So, the Lord gave him three choices. He said, "Here's what you can do. I'll let you pick your punishment for doing this." In verse 13, He says, "You can have seven years of famine, or you can flee for three months with your enemy chasing you constantly, or there shall be three days of pestilence in your land. Which do you want?" And David says, "O, just hit me. Why would you hit all the people? And I don't want these other things. I don't want to be pursued. I don't want to have the famine for the people." So, he just, in effect, wouldn't choose. So, God chose for him, and He sent the pestilence. And David, in all of this, knew very clearly that this was an angel being. There was no doubt in his mind.

Of course, we have Luke 1:11-12: "And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense." This is Zacharias. And Zacharias was troubled when he saw him, and fear gripped him. Zacharias, when he was told about the birth of his son, John, was very frightened when he saw this angel, because he knew who it was that he was dealing with.

Also, Luke 1:28-29: "And coming in, he said to her, 'Hailed favored one, the Lord is with you.' But she was greatly troubled at this greeting, and kept pondering it in her heart. The one who came to her was an angel, and she knew it.

**Names of Certain Angels**

There are certain number of names of the angelic host. And I will briefly run through those. We won't look up the Scriptures. There is Lucifer. He was a former archangel. Lucifer means "the light of the morning – the son of light." Lucifer, a former archangel is also called the devil; Satan; and, Beelzebub (Isaiah 14:12, Matthew 4:1, Matthew 4:10, Mark 3:22). There is the angel Michael. He is the current archangel, and he is the commander of God's army of angels (1 Thessalonians 4:16, Revelation 12:7). Then there is Gabriel, a very special messenger of God (Luke 1:19). Then there is an angel who is named "Abaddon" and "Apollyon. He is a demon who is in authority over the pit of the abyss where Satan will be incarcerated (Revelation 9:11). And there the name "Belial" for Satan (2 Corinthians 6:15); and, also "the great dragon" in Revelation 12:9.

So angels are very real. They are special agents of God for communication. They were all created holy. Some rebelled against Him. Those who are now holy became the agents of revelation, which has now been recorded. Angels are normally invisible, but they can make themselves seen, but they don't do that today. When they were seen, they appeared clothed as men. And when they were not clothed to look like people, they had a very dramatic appearance to them. And angels appearing as themselves were a very forceful testimony from God. And a few angels we have names of – both those who are the angels of God, and those who are the angels of Satan.

Now, the next thing that is important is where we came to in Colossians 1:16, and that is angels having military ranks of power, and we shall look at that next time.

God, our Father, we thank You for the power of the spirit world (the angelic world), and we thank You that it is there in a variety of ways in our behalf. We thank You that, as we study further in this summary, we're going to find how the angels have, in times past, been used in a very forceful way in the lives of believers. And we are delighted to realize that they still operate in that way in the lives of believers today. We thank You for this day, and we pray that we'll have a new respect for these powerful agents of God. And we thank You that, wonder of wonders, we will someday be higher in authority than they are, because we are related to Your son Jesus Christ. We pray for Your blessing and Your gracious provision for Your people.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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