**The Error of Angelic Worship, number 31 (Colossians 2:18-19)**

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We have seen the false teachers who invaded Colossi were telling people they must practice the Old Testament way of life of Judaism under the Mosaic Law. This was a thing which was active while the apostles were still alive. In fact, the first church council that we have recorded in Acts 15 which took place, was over this very question to settle the issue. Once the Gentiles with the incident at Joppa came into the Church, it was very clear now that for the first 7 years following the day of Pentecost, there were only Jews. Now with the full gamut and the outreach of Christianity was shown to be totally different. It was not Jewish, it was not Gentile, it was the body of Christ.

This morning, we continue our study in Colossians, The Error of Angelic Worship - Number 31, Colossians 2:18-19.

**Introduction - The Nature of the False Teaching at Colossi**

As you have been made aware, the false teachers in Colossi were teaching religious ideas that would actually undermine a Christian's very special position in the Church Age: what Paul in Colossians calls "their prize," the prize of being able to live a godly life (not because we are more devoted and because we are more zealous than the Old Testament Saints, but because there's a power besides human effort to do that). That was not true in the Old Testament. The Holy Spirit is a power system given only to Christians to live out the life of Christ in the spiritual believer, to produce divine good works which God will honor with rewards in heaven. This is a prize which would never be lost.

And this is a prize which Satan has always wanted to undermine. So, early on, he brought in these false teachers, these teachers who are actually teaching things that are going to undermine this spiritual power system. One of these false teachings was to seek satisfaction in a false attitude of humility, in approaching God, taking the attitude that we are too corrupt, too sinful, for God to want anything to do with us. This false humility was, in fact, an expression of their pride in the Old Sin Nature, because while they claim to be too lowly to ever be able to approach the Holy God directly, they were really very proud of what they thought they had discovered as a special way to do that, which the apostles themselves did not know about.

Well, the approach to God is made very clear in Hebrews 4:14-16(NAS77), where the writer says, "Since then we have a great high priest [the Lord Jesus Christ] who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the son of God, let us hold fast our confession. [15] "For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses [He was human as we are human, just minus the Sin Nature], but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin [without a sin nature]. [16] "Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need." This is what God has said is the way the system works. We have a high priest in heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ. He has made the provision, covered our sin, giving us the path into heaven as a gift. Therefore, He knows our difficulties. He knows the distresses that we have to deal with in life because He too was human. What can we do with that? Yes, there is a big separation. Does that mean we cannot approach God? It does not mean that! That is the false idea that is being conveyed here. What the Book of Hebrews says, is that we are to draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, God's throne of grace. And that means we receive the mercy that we need to help in times of need.

So, these false teachers, claiming to be too humble to approach God, came up with a practice that they had is the way to get there. This was a practice that centered on the observance of externals of religion, rituals, rather than the reality of a heart of love, adoration and submission to God. The worship that they promoted centered on the practices of the external forms of religion, rather than on a personal godly lifestyle under the grace of God through Jesus Christ. So, this was an Old Testament false humility about approaching God and has resulted in worshiping angels. They said, 'the angels are the way to get to God, the angels are between us and a holy God, they're the mediators.' So, they practice a ritual of worship, very much like what the occult people do today. They stand in the middle of a Pentagon. They burn certain incense, they go through certain chants. They go through external religions in order to make contact with the spiritual world. All of this is based on human viewpoint emotionalism.

What the Bible does make clear is that there's only one mediator between God and man, and He is there. That's the Lord Jesus Christ. He alone, therefore, is to be worshiped. 1 Timothy 2:5-6, Paul says, "For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, [6] "who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony borne at the proper time." Only Christ is the access to God, not ritual, not ceremonialism, not a church.

It wasn't but a few hundred years after Christianity began, the Roman Catholic Church began to come into existence. And at the heart of the system was 'the church is the channel into heaven.' John 4:24, "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship [Him] in spirit and in truth." You do not worship God through externals of ritual.

**Summary of the Doctrine of Angels**

**Summary of Points Thus Far**

Angels are indeed a special category of created rational beings. These angels surround the throne of God. They surround Him with adoration and praise, and they act as His messengers in the worship of Christ. Hebrews 1:6 points this out to us. Hebrews 1:6 says, "And when He again brings the first-born into the world [Christ], He says, 'AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM.'" That's not what the false teachers in Colossi were saying. They were saying 'Worship the angels.' But the Word of God says, 'No!'

There has been a very famous program based on angels on TV for several years, something like 10 years I think. It's coming to an end now. It dignified the reality of the spirit world, the love of God and the angelic world, but it was not very biblical. Human beings are not angels. Angels are a separate group of creatures. And they are by the very fact of their magnificence. As we shall see, going bit by bit through Scripture, it is very easy to look upon an angel and be inclined to think that this is somehow a deity, someone to worship. As you know, that happened a couple of times in the Book of the Revelation with John. An angel had to say, 'John get up! Don't do that! You don't bow to me. I'm a creature made by God, same as you.'

Well, we begin our summary of the doctrine of Angels. This is enormously extensive, something like 300 times the Bible refers to angels, constantly revealing critical things about them.

1. Last week we looked at the fact, first of all, that both the Greek and Hebrew word for 'angel' means 'messenger.' That's the fundamental thing, an angel, a spirit being, who's a messenger of God. But messenger is a quality there, because in the book of the Revelation you remember that the letters to the seven churches are addressed to the pastor-teacher who is called the angel of that church. What that means is that he is the messenger of that congregation. It doesn't mean that he's not a human being.

2. Angels were all created by God at the same time, and they are innumerable.

And by the way, this is going to be quite extensive and we will get this printed up for you so this whole doctrine will be put together. Because you're going to have a bit of a problem as we go through this, trying to keep track of this. But this is an important area to understand because angels are coming into prominence more and more and they're going to have a magnificent role and we will be related to them and we are related to them now. So, we need to know about this.

3. Angels were created as innocent of sin, but the archangel, the chief angel, Satan, sinned in heaven. He convinced one third of the angels to join him in his rebellion against God. Those one third angels are now the demons.

4. The loyal holy angels will spend eternity in heaven, but the rebellious demon angels will be in the Lake of Fire.

5. Satan, as leader of the demon angels, has his headquarters in outer space. In Ephesians 2:2 this is referred to when Paul says about Satan, "in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience." Satan's headquarters is in outer space.

6. At the beginning of the Great Tribulation, the final 3 and half years, Satan will be permanently denied access to heaven, where he now can enter to accuse sinning Christians.

**Continuing With Summary of Doctrine of Angels**

**Demons Are Unclean**

1. Continuing this morning with a summary, point No. 1., demons are unclean. They are sullen, they are violent, and they are malicious characters. They are filthy creatures. Matthew 8:28, this is the man out of whom Jesus was going to cast out demons. "And when He had come [Jesus had come] to the other side into the country of Gadarenes, two men who were demon-possessed met Him as they were coming out of the tombs; they were so exceedingly violent that no one could pass by that road." These demon angels still have the great power that angelic beings have by nature, and they are a violent group of beings because they're filled with hatred toward God.

Matthew 10:1, Jesus said, "And having summoned His twelve disciples, He gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness." Please notice, this is given to the apostles. They could cast out demons. The TV evangelist pretends he can, but he cannot. In fact, he might get into trouble because the demon might turn on him and has.

In Mark 5:3-5, "And he had his dwelling..." Here's a man again that came up and talked to Jesus at the Gadarenes. [Mark 5:3-5] "and he had his dwelling among the tombs. And no one was able to bind him anymore, even with a chain; [4] "because he had often been bound with shackles and chains, and the chains had been torn apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces, and no one was strong enough to subdue him. [5] "And constantly night and day, among the tombs and in the mountains, he was crying out and gnashing himself with stones." It is characteristic of people who are indwelt by demons to harm themselves, to draw blood. What did Jesus say about Satan? "The chief angel, he is a murderer from the beginning." So it is not uncommon for people who are demon possessed to do themselves great physical harm.

And in Mark 9:17-18, "And one of the crowd answered him, 'Teacher, I brought You my son, possessed with a spirit which makes him mute [a demon]; [18] "'and whenever it seizes him [This boy would have seizures], it dashes him to the ground and he foams at the mouth, and grinds his teeth, and stiffens out. And I told your disciples to cast it out, and they could not do it.'" Mark 9:20-22, "And they brought the boy to Him [Jesus]. And when he saw Him, immediately, the spirit threw him into a convulsion, and falling to the ground, he began rolling about and foaming at the mouth. [21] "And He asked his father, 'How long has this been happening to him?' And he said, 'From childhood. [22] "'And it has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, take pity on him and help us!'"

Demons will drive you crazy. Some of the horrendous things we hear about on television, crimes that people commit, you can just be sure that behind them is a demonic force. It is so heartless. It's so unbelievable. It is so brutal. It is so inhuman. This is how it happens. Demons are not creatures of love.

Drop down to Mark 9:25, "And when Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying, 'You deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and do not enter him again.' [26] "And after crying out and throwing him into terrible convulsions, it came out; and the boy became so much like a corpse that most of them said, 'He is dead.' [27] "But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him; and he got up." When Jesus told this demon to leave this boy, the demon made one final violent act of assault on the child so that the child fell to the ground finally exhausted. And people thought he was dead, but when he got up, [he was] completely healed.

The world about us is filled with these demon creatures. Would you like to be indwelt by a demon? [Kiddingly] If you give large sums of money beyond a certain point at the offering box, we can ensure that won't happen to you. Anybody interested? No, no bunco, no special masses. I'm happy to tell you that you are already indwelt by a spirit who will not allow anybody else to enter your body. That is God the Holy Spirit. God the Holy Spirit will not allow a demon spirit into a believer, no matter how terrible that believer may become. But if you are an unbeliever, you are open territory.

Please remember, it's one thing in the depths of the jungles of Africa on how these demons will act. It's another thing how they'll act in a sophisticated society like the United States and that'll fool you. You look at some of these people on television, the entertainers, the people of the world, people who are the opinion makers, the people who are looked at with esteem. All of a sudden you listen to them and say, that's a very ungodly thing that person is saying. That is not God's way, there's something wrong here. What's wrong is that behind the motivation of these people is a demon spirit. But it is not in these gross ways that would turn people off because they're people of financial means, fame, fortune, talent, and therefore Satan uses them in a cultured, sophisticated way. It doesn't matter whether the demon is cultured or uncouth; when he enters a person, the violence and the tragedy is enormous. So, demons are unclean, sullen, violent, malicious spirits.

**Holy Angels are Messengers of God**

2. The holy angels of God are the agents of divine revelation from God to man. This is part of what the word angel means, namely "messenger." These angels of God are messengers of God. In Daniel 8:16, Daniel says, "And I heard the voice of a man between the banks of Ulai, and he called out and said, 'Gabriel, give this man an understanding of the vision.'" This is one of the few angels that we have a name for in the Bible. Gabriel is one of them. The Catholics out of their apocryphal books come up with a one or two more, Rafael and a couple of the others, they are not authentic names. But here's one of the primary communicators of God, the angel Gabriel. The voice says, 'Gabriel, give this man, Daniel, an understanding about the things that he's been seeing about what is coming, particularly the rise of the little horn, which in this case is Antiochus Epiphanies, rising out of one of the four parts of Alexander the Great's Empire that it was divided into.

Antiochus Epiphanies was an avid hater of the Jews, and he was the one who went into the Temple and offered a pig on the altar of sacrifice in order to show his contempt for God. This creature is in this vision, seen as a little horn. This is not the little horn that comes at the end that's going to be the antichrist that rises up and knocks out three nations and becomes a world ruler. That's another thing.

So, here it is in Daniel 8:19, "And he said, 'Behold, [this is Gabriel saying to Daniel,] I am 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 he goes on and describes what historically was fulfilled exactly in Antiochus Epiphanies of that sector of Alexander the Great's Empire. In Daniel, 9:21 & 22, "while I was still speaking in prayer," Daniel says. And this prayer was Daniel realizing that the prophet in the Old Testament had said that they would go into captivity for 70 years. Daniel gets out his calculator and starts counting at adding up the years. He says, 'We've been there 70 years, it is time for God to make the move because God has told us that there would be 490 years left of Israel's history from the time of the rebuilding of Jerusalem, the order to go do it. Sure enough, just like clockwork, 483 years pass by. We got to Palm Sunday, the final official rejection of Jesus Christ as the Messiah Savior, and the prophetic clock stopped ticking, to the very day, 483 years to the very day. And Daniel knows those 7 years remain so that all of God's covenant promises to Israel will be finished, brought to fruition.

And so, Daniel goes to prayer. He says, 'God, what about this? This is the time schedule. By my calculations, we've been here in this exile in Babylon for 70 years.' Daniel 9:21-22, "while I was still speaking in prayer, then the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me in my extreme weariness about the time of the evening offering. [22] "And he gave me instruction and talked with me, and said, 'O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you insight with understanding.'" Then the angel goes on and says, 'There's coming a period when there will be seven years of great tribulation upon the earth. That will complete the 490 years. During that time, the Messiah will come, He will be rejected, He'll be set aside. Finally, the world will come to a catastrophic end at the final campaign of a series of battles called Armageddon. Then Christ will return to fulfill all the promises, the covenants of God to Israel.

So, the holy angels are agents of divine revelation from God to man. What's the devil going to do with this? If you are in charismatic circles, I can tell you, sooner or later you have heard somebody get up and say, 'An angel came to me and said, "I woke up in the middle of the night and I open my eyes and there at the foot of my bed was this glow. And there was this man standing in it and he spoke to me."' It is not uncommon among them. What they're doing is, Satan is saying, 'Yes, I'll give you such a special revelation from God because angels do carry information from God.' And if you do not understand that there was a time when that was done, but all this is now recorded in Scripture so that we have an objective frame of reference, you might be foolish enough to think that that person is of God, when in fact that's a demonic spirit.

**Normally Invisible, Angels Can Make Themselves Seen**

3. Angels are normally invisible to man, but they can make themselves seen. We could get quite a crowd out in any particular service, if I could announce at a certain point of the service, the gym, which is now filled with the holy angels of God (probably sitting in these seats and standing around the wall, because they are always interested in what we're going to say about Christ the Savior, their Lord.), it would be quite a service if we could announce 'at a certain point in the service, we will make all the angels visible.' That would give us enough money for two parking lots. They'd come out for that. But it's just as real! Angels are normally invisible, but they can make themselves be seen.

Genesis 19:1, "Now the two angels came to Sodom." Sodom was a hotbed along with Gomorra of homosexuality. And God said, 'the time has come and I'm going to bring judgment upon this, upon this nation, upon these people. I'm going to make Sodom and Gomorrah an ash heap so nobody will know where it is.' Indeed, today, they can't be sure where Sodom and Gomorrah is, someplace down at the end of the Dead Sea, but it's all gone and it's very important to know when God says 'I'm going to totally destroy it, obliterate it,' that this is what God has said about Babylon. I'm going to obliterate the city of Babylon, the mother of false religions, the mother of the harlotry of false religion, and I'm going to destroy Babylon like Sodom and Gomorrah. You won't even see the ash heap.' Has that ever been done? No, that's why we have good reason to conclude that indeed, where the world is moving, the world's commercial center will switch to Babylon.

Isn't it interesting that the Gulf War has made that possible now? The tyrant is out, the nation is open; you should be feeling goosebumps all over yourself right at this point. God's program is coming together and Babylon is going to become the World Commercial Center. Then, as we saw later in the Book of the Revelation, the merchants of the world cry and bemoan and they regret as they stand afar and they watch Babylon go up in smoke and reduced to ashes. They bemoan 'this wonderful city where we made so much money, we had so much commerce. It has so much culture. It has so much refinement. Oh, what has happened? How could this come about?' Well, the United States has now had a major part in beginning to bring conditions together for this to happen.

So, in Genesis 19:1, God has a problem which he must resolve. Within Babylon [Sodom] lives a godly but carnal man, the nephew of Abraham, Lot. So, [Genesis 19:1] "the two angels came to Sodom in the evening as Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose up to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground." You see, these were invisible spirit beings who now made themselves visible. Angels can do that. When Lot saw them coming, he thought they were a couple of strangers. So they came to Lot's house, Lot rose up and offered them hospitality and prepared the meal for them. Genesis 19:4 "Before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, surrounded the house, both young and old, all the people from every quarter." They found, 'hey, did you see those two good looking guys that went over there and they're at Lot's house? They have just come in.' So, these people started streaming toward Lot's house. Lot was not only a rich man, he was also a man of prominence in this society. Sitting at the gate is what officials do. So, Lot was no run of the mill character. He was well known to these people.

Genesis 19:5, these people, (yes, homosexuals,) come; "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.'" Can you figure out what they meant? These angels of God appeared as human beings and the homosexual overwhelming community of Sodom comes up and says to Lot, 'let us have these men. We want to play games with them.' As you know, the story goes, Lot said, 'No, let's be very clear on that. That would not be very hospitable to me to do.' He carried on. So Lot did a terrible thing. 'You take my two daughters and play with them.' This man had money. He had prominence in the city, was on the city council, but he had lost it. He was Abraham's nephew. He knew what godliness was and he lost his way completely.

So, one of the angels reached out the door, jerked Lot into the house, and slammed the door. Then the angels demonstrated one of their great powers. They made everybody outside go blind. So, they're fooling around, feeling around, trying to find their way out, where to go.

But the angel conveying the message was very clear. Genesis 9:14, "And Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, [after the Angels told him what they were there for, Lot speaks to his sons-in-law,] who were to marry his daughters, and said, 'Up, get out of this place, for the LORD will destroy this city.' But he appeared to his sons-in-law to be jesting." So, Lot was warned 'get out of the city. God is going to bring judgment upon it.' These angels were normally not visible, were visible to these people. Though they may be visible, very clearly as they were here, as human beings.

The holy angels never appear in animal form or an object. Holy angels do not. Demon angels do appear in animal form, but not the holy angels. The holy angels may cause animals to speak. For example, Numbers 22. (You see, as we go along, the more and more you have great respect and awe of these marvelous creatures that God has made. By the way, their main job now is to be your servant day-by-day. They are, Hebrews says, our ministering spirits; and probably one of them is assigned as your guardian spirit who do things that you could never even think they're doing.) In Numbers 22, Balaam is being invited to speak against the people of Israel and to be given a great reward for it. In Numbers 21, Balaam decides, 'OK, you pay me so much and I'll go and I'll pronounce a curse on Israel.'

Balaam is a representative of God. He is in the priestly corps. Here he's making a deal to curse the people of Israel. So Numbers 22:21 says, "So Balaam arose in the morning, and saddled his donkey, and went with the leaders of Moab." God was very angry at this. And as he's going down the path, Numbers 22:23 tells us that the donkey suddenly sees the angel of the LORD standing in the roadway, standing with a sword in his hand. In the Old Testament, the term "the angel of the LORD" is a technical term for the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ. So, here's this man riding his donkey, Balaam, a representative of God, going to pronounce a curse upon the people of Israel. God does not take this very fondly. So, suddenly this poor donkey sees the pre-incarnate Christ standing there with a sword in his hand. Numbers 22:23, "When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way with his drawn sword in his hand, the donkey turned off from the way and went into the field; but Balaam struck the donkey to turn her back into the way." The donkey said, 'I'm getting off this path. I don't want to face the Deity Itself.'

So, Balaam beats the donkey to get him back into the road and the donkey brushes up against the side of the wall. So, he brushes against Balaam and because he's trying to avoid facing Christ there on the trail. Then Balaam hits the donkey again. [Numbers 22:26] "And the angel of the LORD went further, and stood in a narrow place where there was no way to turn to the right hand or the left." The donkey couldn't get around him. So, finally, Numbers 22:27, "When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she lay down under Balaam; [She sat down on the road, said, 'that's it.'] so Balaam was angry and struck the donkey with his stick. [28] "And the LORD opened the mouth of the donkey and she said to Balaam, 'What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?'" So, the donkey speaks and rebuked Balaam for what he has been doing and mistreating.

And in Numbers 22:30, "And the donkey said to Balaam, 'Am I not your donkey on which you have ridden all your life to this day? Have I ever been accustomed to do so to you?' And he said, 'No.' So, the donkey is speaking but it's not from internal. Now, a demon would enter the donkey, but an angel of God, Christ as a messenger, God would not do that.

Then Numbers 22:31 says, "Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD [the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ] standing in the way with his drawn sword in his hand; and he bowed [down] all the way to the ground." So, the question in this incident is, for the first time in history that a donkey was riding a donkey and the foolishness was on top, not underneath. It was God who was making this creature speak. But the angels are normally invisible. They can make themselves be seen.

**Angels Always Appear as Adult Males**

4. Another thing is, they always appear as adult males. I don't want to mess up your Christmas cards. They are never little cherubs. They never appear as children. They're always adult men, like the two men that came to see Abraham to tell them what he was going to do in Sodom and Gomorrah. And in Hebrews 13:2, "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it." It's interesting, isn't it, ... hospitality to strangers, and that stranger is an angel who has made himself visible. But if he does, he will be visible as an adult. You will not have a little cherub knocking on your door and there'll be no little cherubs floating around at Christmas time. Angels are always adults and they're always males and they're not females. Therefore, they do not have long hair.

Angels also always appear clothed and they appear clothed in the garb of the era. They wear whatever is the custom of the times. In Acts 1:10, for example, "And as they were gazing [Jesus just ascended into heaven as disciples were gazing] intently into the sky while He was departing, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them." Well, that's what everybody else was wearing. That's the kind of clothing they wore. You can also add Mark 16:5 to that. They appear in the garb of the era.

I was listening to a charismatic station. One man was being interviewed who had seen angels and this guy was carrying on. 'You did. That's really wonderful! You really did!' 'Yes.' 'Well, tell me, what did he look like?' 'Well, he was wearing a turtleneck sweater, turtleneck shirt, and he's wearing deck shoes.' He proceeded to describe this angel. Well, he was at least right that if the angel were there, he's going to look just like some of you look. Well, maybe not quite, but mostly in the style that people wear, whatever the era of the time, that's what angels will look like.

**Visual Appearance is Sometimes Dramatic**

5. And also, sometimes the visual appearance of angels is dramatic. They are kind creatures, the holy angels. They are merciful persons, but they are magnificent and they are quite awesome. Notice in Matthew 28:2-4, "And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, [This was at the tomb of Christ.] for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. [3] "And his appearance was like lightening, and his garment as white as snow; [4] "and the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men." They were awed by the sight of these angels.

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 were like pillars of fire." The appearance of angels can be very dramatic and you know they are special beings of God.

**Angels Sometimes Speak as Themselves**

6. Angels on occasion will actually appear as themselves and they just speak. They don't do that now. But in past times before Scripture was completed and God was carrying on this direct communication, there were times when angels would be sent and a person would know, 'I'm speaking to an angel.' 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 Thy hand be against me and against my father's house.'" David had sinned against God and there came down this judgment upon him, but it was also hitting the people. That was an angel. David knew he was speaking to an angel when this was brought to him and he was communicating to God through this angel.

Mary knew that she was dealing with an angel. Luke 1:11-12, "And an angel of the Lord [This is of Zacharias. An Angel of the Lord] appeared to him [to Zacharias as he's ministering at the altar of incense], standing to the right of the altar of incense. [12] "And Zacharias was troubled when he saw him and fear gripped him." He knew this was an angel and it scared him.

Notice Luke 1:26-29. "Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee, called Nazareth, [27] "to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. [28] "And coming in, he said to her, 'Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you.' [29] "But she was greatly troubled at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this might be."

So, angels are normally invisible, but on occasion they can make themselves visible in a dramatic way. They always look like males, they're always adults, and they are sometimes clearly recognized as angelic beings.

We have some names revealed of angels in Scripture. There is of course in Isaiah 14:12, the name Lucifer means star of the morning. Lucifer was the original archangel of God. Lucifer has several other names. He's also called Satan, which means adversary in Matthew 4:10. He is called the Devil, which means slanderer in Matthew 4:1. He is called Beelzebub, lord of the flies, in Matthew 10:25 or sometimes Beelzebul, another spelling. He is called the Great Dragon, which means Monster in Revelation 22. He is called the Serpent connoting treachery in Revelation 22.

We also have an angel named Michael. He is the current archangel who has replaced Satan in that position. It is Michael who's the commander of God's holy angels, that army of the angels of God. In Revelation 12:7, this is the middle of the Tribulation, three-and-a-half years go by. Satan has been having access to heaven during the first three-and-a-half years of the Tribulation, as he always has and as we've seen in the Book of Job. Now in Revelation 12:7, "And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. And the dragon and his angels waged war." Here's the great angelic conflict, which is what rages every day, coming now to a great climax. Here you have Michael as the commander of God's army. He's the commander leading the angelic hosts against the forces of Satan.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:16, "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first." When the rapture takes place, you will hear, either alive on earth or being brought to life from the grave, you will hear the voice of Michael announcing the arrival of Christ.

Then there is another angel whose name we know, and that is Gabriel. He is a messenger of God, as we have seen in Luke 1:19.

And there's one more angel whose name has been given to us. His name is Abaddon in Hebrew, Apollyon in Greek. This angel is in charge of what the Bible called the pit of the abyss, that is Sheol. It is the place in the New Testament, this is Hades. Sheol is the Hebrew word for that holding pen. Revelation 9:11, "They [these people in Sheol and these demon creatures who are there] have a king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek he has the name Apollyon."

That's just the beginning of some tremendous realities concerning angelic beings. They are for real. They are on the job. They're all about us. One of the wonderful things is, as we shall learn, in the order of creation, they're above us. And for a while, the Lord Jesus Christ, because He was human, was beneath the angels in the order of creation, the table of organization. But once Christ had defeated Satan, He rose above the angelic order and because we are in Him, we too are above the angels. And what is above the angels? God Himself. So, we are in the status of the category of the Lord Jesus Christ and we are part of Him. In the meantime, those angels, and we'll go more into this, are every day trying to find how they can help you. They are your ministering spirits. Fred Childress

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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