

WELCOMING THE KING! THE ANGELIC WITNESS

Text: Luke 2:8-20

Make no mistake about it. Angels visit earth. Jacob was an early witness of this truth. *"And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it"* (Genesis 28:12). Jesus made reference to this in John 1:51, *"And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."* Hebrews 13:2 tells us, *"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."*

Although we do not have a record of exactly how many angels there are, we can at least say there are many, for the Bible says, *"But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels"* (Hebrews 12:22).

1. Angels are powerful.

Psalm 103:20: *"Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word."*

2 Kings 19:35: *"And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses."*

Matthew 26:53: *"Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?"*

2. Angels are in total commitment to the Lord.

1 Corinthians 7:32,33: *"But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the*

Lord: But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife."

Matthew 22:30: "For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven."

3. Angels are special agents for God's children.

Luke 15:10: "Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

I Peter 1:12: "Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into."

Hebrews 1:14: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

Mark 13:27: "And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven."

Matthew 18:10: "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."

Luke 4:10,11: "For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee: And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." (This is a direct quote from Psalm 91:11,12).

Psalm 34:7: "The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."

Exodus 23:20: "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared."

Luke 16:22a, "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom...."

4. Angels are often distributors of God's messages.

Acts 7:53a, "Who have received the law by the disposition of angels...."

Galatians 3:19: *"Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator."*

Luke 1:19: *"And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings."*

5. Angels are full of praise to God.

Psalms 148:2: *"Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts."*

Job 38:4,7: *"Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding...When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"*

Hebrews 1:6: *"And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him."*

Let's look at the text before us:

A. Certain Shepherds

Luke 2:8. God knows with whom He may trust His message. From *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* by Alfred Edersheim published in 1883, we read, "That the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem was a settled conviction. Equally so was the belief that He was to be revealed from Migdal Eder, "the tower of the flock." (Micah 4:8). This Migdal Eder was not the watchtower for the ordinary flocks which pastured on the barren sheep ground beyond Bethlehem, but lay close to the town, on the road to Jerusalem. A passage in the Mishnah leads to the conclusion that the flocks, which pastured there, were destined for Temple-sacrifices, and, accordingly, that the shepherds, who watched over them, were not ordinary shepherds." See Micah 5:2; 4:8; Genesis 35:19; 48:7; 35:21.

B. Certain Message

Luke 2:9-11. The shepherds were, first of all, gripped by fear. Then they were told not to be afraid. The definition of the Gospel is given in the phrase,

“good tidings of great joy.” A three-fold witness is given in the naming of our Lord: “Savior, Christ, the Lord.”

C. Certain Place

Luke 2:12, 15-16. All the information needed to get these special shepherds to the place where Christ was born was given on that night the angels announced that Messiah had come. When God wants someone in a designated place; He does not leave them in a state of confusion. He guided these shepherds just like He guided the wise men.

D. Certain Celebration

Luke 2:13-14; 17-20. We see in this part of our passage that the angels did exactly what angels are designed to do, which is to praise the Lord. In Luke 2:10b, the angel tells the shepherds, “...I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.” We, of all people should be rejoicing because it is disclosed soon after Christ is born that He is coming to all people! Rom. 1:16 says, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.” This great salvation is proffered to everyone, not just some select group or nationality. In Revelation 14:6 we read, “And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.” What an offer! What a Savior! What a salvation! Hebrews 2:3b asks, “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation...?”

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Johnny Pope". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.