

23. God's invisible warriors

March 17, 2013

Ladies and gentlemen, if I say that we Christians are living in a very increasingly hostile and demonic world, would you agree? Additionally, if I say that the majority of born-again Christians are not prepared for their spiritual warfare properly, would you agree? I believe that your answer would be "Yes" on both questions.

The reasons for ill-preparation of the vast majority of Christians for the spiritual warfare are:

1) They do not know the Word of God as they should.

Knowing God's Word is not for pastors or Bible teachers only. It is a MUST for every follower of Jesus Christ.

2) They do not think about the spiritual realm even though they interact with it day in and day out.

It is because their thinking is only limited to the physical realm. They think that the spiritual world is surreal, while the physical world is the only real thing. WRONG!

3) They are influenced by liberal media, especially Hollywood.

Instead of receiving the truth from the Word of God, many Christians allow themselves to be persuaded by the stories of Hollywood movies that are practically demonic, spiritually ignorant, and anti-God.

Today we are starting a topical series "the Whole Armor of God" within the expository study of the Book of Ephesians. As you know, I rarely do topical studies, but I believe that the Word of God is leading us to have in-depth studies on this subject. It will take many weeks to finish this study.

During our study, we are going to find out who divine angels – God's invisible warriors are; who our enemy is and how they work against us; what spiritual warfare is; what each armor means to us and how we are going to apply it in our lives. I am very excited about this study. I've been waiting for this for many years.

Ancient Chinese general and tactician Sun Tzu wrote in his profound book "The Art of War":

So it is said that if you know your enemies and know yourself, you can win a hundred battles without a single loss.

If you only know yourself, but not your opponent, you may win or may lose.

If you know neither yourself nor your enemy, you will always endanger yourself.

This morning we are going to learn about the angels, God's invisible warriors.

A. THE TRUTH AND MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT ANGELS

There are many misconceptions about angels. Thanks to the wild imaginations by artists and Hollywood. Here are a few:

- They are fat little naked babies with tiny wings and harps, floating on clouds.

Often they look as if they are bored out of their minds.

- They are long flowing robed females flying across the sky on long, feathery wings.
- Good dead people become angels and come back to help their families or helpless people on earth.

None of these are true.

You may remember a couple of old TV series – “Highway to Heaven,” and “Touched by an angel”. There were so many discrepancies between what they showed and the truth from the Bible that it was not even funny. Even the latest portrayal of the Bible on History channel is the same way. I had to stop watching it. Hollywood just has immense problems in interpreting the Bible as is.

According to the Bible, angels are tremendously powerful spirit beings, created by God for a definite function. They not only operate in the world-at-large, doing the works of God, but they also have a very specific series of duties in the lives of followers of Jesus Christ. Billy Graham calls them “God’s Secret Agents”.

B. NEVER TO WORSHIP ANGELS

In the Bible, we are never taught to seek out or worship angels. Nor should we ever pray to them or try to make contact with them. Instead, we should pray to God and reserve our worship for Him and Him alone.

Revelation 19:10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, “See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

To put it simply, angels are sent to earth to do God’s work. They are doing it discreetly and quietly, not seeking to draw attention to themselves. God wants us to give honor and glory to Him, not to angelic beings.

C. THEY ARE INVISIBLE MOST OF THE TIME

Angels are invisible, and they remain that way most of the time except on the very special occasions when God sends them on special missions, clothes them with a human form or simply in their splendor:

- Two undercover angels were with Lot before they destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.
- An angel appeared to Daniel while he was fasting and praying
- Angel Gabriel showed himself to Zechariah, Mary, Joseph, and a group of lowly shepherds in the fields outside of Bethlehem.
- An angel appeared to Peter in a Jerusalem jail.

D. ANGEL’S DUTIES

I am sure that these God’s angels have many duties they do for the glory of the Lord. If I may, I’d like to list four of them:

1) Angels protect born-again believers

Psalm 34:7 The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, And delivers them.

If the Lord opens our spiritual eyes right now, we might be able to see a horde of angels in this sanctuary. They came with you and they will leave with you as you go about your business. They were assigned to you to protect you from harms and evil ones when you received Jesus into your heart as the Savior and Lord.

2 Kings 6:17 And Elisha prayed, and said, “Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.” Then the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

I think that I wear out my guardian angels every two years because of the way I drive. My wife Karen tells me that I am a horrible driver with a lead foot. I think that other people drive too slow. I don’t drive fast, I just fly very low. As I pull into my driveway, I can imagine my guardian angel whizzing from protecting me all the way home.

Revelation 12:3-4a And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. 4 His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth.

If my math is correct, when satan revolted against the Lord, he led one-third of the angels. That still leaves two-thirds on our side. We don't know how many angels were in heaven to begin with. But I know many more angels on the side of believers than satan. Besides, we are on Lord's side and He doesn't need angels to fight against satan. If the Lord just says the word, the devil is history.

So, how powerful are angels? We have in 2 Kings 19, the record of one particular angel who killed 185,000 of Syrian soldiers overnight. Move over Rambo. You don't want to make this angel mad at you.

2) Angels deliver God's judgment

In the Book of Revelation 8 and 9, you see seven angels blow their trumpets. Each time the angel blows his trumpet, serious, serious disasters happen on earth. In the same Book chapter 16, seven angels dump bowls from heaven to earth. More devastating outcomes happen all over the earth.

In the past, two angels called down God's judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah with brimstone and fire as soon as Lot's family escaped.

3) Angels minister to born-again believers

Not only angels around us protect us, but they also minister to us through the promises and power of the Holy Spirit.

Psalm 91:1-2 He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. 2 I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust."

Did you get that? Our Lord is our secret Hiding Place, our Refuge, and our Fortress. In Him we can trust, find rest. Like your children run to you for your protection, when we go to the Lord, He often would protect us and minister to us through His angels.

When Daniel was fasting and praying to the Lord in Daniel chapter 10, an angel was delayed 21 days because of the demonic forces until Michael the archangels came to reinforce him. Then the angel was able to minister to Daniel and explained the vision he received from the Lord.

4) Angels escort the spirits of dead born-again believers to the Lord in heaven

In Acts chapter 12, an angel rescued Peter who was locked in a slammer behind two locked gates and was guarded by 16 of Herod's soldiers. The angel didn't have a problem. The guards were clueless and the locked gates were opened by themselves. Peter was sprung to the street.

But what about James, another apostle? He was slain while Peter was spared. Why? Why do angels protect some and allow others to die? We don't understand the infinite wisdom of our God and His angels are doing exactly what the Lord wants them to do.

Here is another role of angels for us. They are responsible to accompany us to heaven some day. For every believer there comes the moment when our number is up. Life is over. You finally kick the bucket. Then, from the moment you draw the

last breath, you will get an airlift by an angel all the way to heaven where your Master Lord Jesus waits for you.

Luke 16:22 So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried.

2 Corinthians 5:8 We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

Through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we, too, have the resurrection power that comes from the Lord. When our spirits leave our earthly bodies behind, the Lord provides angelic protection all the way to heaven.

Some of you might respond, "Come on, Give me a break. Do you actually believe all this nonsense about a supernatural world?" You betcha. I believe it more than my breath right now. The spiritual world is very real.

The very fact that you cannot believe the Lord Jesus' salvation for you is the evidence of the demonic presence in your life and your willful ignorance for the truth. The demons don't want you to believe the truth of God and you are agreeing with them. If you keep on listening to them, you will end up in hell with them by your own choice. Additionally, the Bible promises you that you are not going to have parties in hell. There will be nothing but eternal damnation and punishment.

But if you are a believer of Jesus Christ, you are in good hands with Him. For a believer, "To live is Christ and to die is gain." To believers, death is graduation and a coronation. It is a reward by which we pass from this decaying body into the eternal body that God has prepared for us. That's hope for every Christian.

I can hardly wait, can you?

E. APPLICATION

Angels should not be worshiped or prayed to, because they are fellow servants in Christ.