

A Follow Up Bible Study

Building on the Messages of the Lessons from St. Michael and All Angels

Warm Up

When people refer to a friend who has helped them in when they were in great need or who is always there for them as *my angel*, ...

- What do they mean? What characteristic of real angels are they attributing to this friend?
- Consider and discuss: Is it wise for us to use *angel* in this sense? Do you think it diminishes the term angel, compromising a witness to the truth? Or is it just another use of the term *angel* or even one that gives witness to the ministry of God's angels?

1. Sermon for September 27, 2020

Text: **Genesis 28:10-17**

Theme: Wow! Look, the LORD God of angels. Totally Awesome!

Share your questions or comments regarding Sunday's sermon.

Share your questions or comments regarding Sunday's sermon **text**.

2. The sermon introduction made reference to this verse from Genesis 25 without quoting it.

²⁷ The boys grew up, and Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was content to stay at home among the tents. ²⁸ Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

Consider these characteristics as Rebecca and Jacob fear Esau's wrath. Also over Jacob's thoughts as he faced making this trip alone. How do you balance following the implications of texts like this without saying more than the Bible reveals?

3. While Jacob was fleeing Esau's plotting, his father instructed him to go to Laban to find a wife and not marry a Canaanite woman that he might meet along the way. What impact might this have had on Jacob's thinking and feeling? What else would you expect to be on Jacob's heart and mind?

A Follow Up Bible Study

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4. What do you think when you hear that Jacob used a stone as his pillow?
5. We are not told how many days Jacob traveled to get to Luz. It was about 70 miles from Beersheba. It's estimated that would be a 3 day journey. This was the time and place for Yahweh to give Jacob this experience. Note what kind of experience it was.

¹² He had a dream in which he saw a stairway set up on the earth with its top reaching to heaven. There were angels of God ascending and descending on it. ¹³ There at the top stood the LORD, who said, "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac.

The account is simple, yet impressive. List the significant features of this dream.

The sermon mentioned that Moses used the term *hinneh* 3 times in these verses. While commonly translated *Behold - Look*, that doesn't fully communicate the idea of *hinneh*. It focuses our attention on something unexpected or surprising. Does *Wow! Look!* Communicate that? Do you have any other suggestions?

Moses is clear where the focus is. It's something like this: *Wow! Look - a stairway... Wow! Look - angles of God... Wow! Look - Yahweh standing.* Moses notes 3 stunning wonders grabbing Jacob's focus. Note the progression.

What was Yahweh's visual message, even before he spoke?

6. Look at Isaac's blessing on Jacob as he sent him to find a wife in Paddan Aram and compare it with what Yahweh promises Jacob. Note the 4 parts of the Abramitic Covenant.

³ May God Almighty bless you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, so that you may become a community of peoples. ⁴ May he give you and your descendants along with you the blessing he gave to Abraham, so that you may inherit the land where you have been living as an alien, the land God gave to Abraham."

Genesis 29

"I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. The land on which you are lying, I give to you and to your descendants. ¹⁴ Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south. In you and in your seed all the families of the earth will be blessed. ¹⁵ Now, I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back again into this land. Indeed, I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised to you."

Genesis 29

A Follow Up Bible Study

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7. Look at Jacob's response. What impact did this dream have on his Jacob's heart, mind, spiritual state, and mindset? Compare his words with Yahweh's promises.

¹⁶ Jacob woke up from his sleep, and he said, "Certainly the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it." ¹⁷ He was afraid [he was filled with awe] and he said, "How awe-inspiring is this place! This is nothing other than the house of God, and this is the gate to heaven."

8. What did this lesson teach you about angels?

First Lesson: Daniel 10:10-14;12:1-3

9. What do we learn about angels from these words?

¹⁰ Then a hand touched me and pulled me up, trembling, to my hands and knees. ¹¹ He said to me, "Daniel, you are a highly valued man. Understand the words that I am speaking to you. Stand up where you are, because now I have been sent to you." When he spoke this word to me, I stood up, shaking.

¹² He said to me, "Do not be afraid, Daniel, because from the first day that you began to commit your heart to gaining understanding and to humbling yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come in response to your words.

10. As this angel speaks to Daniel, explaining his delay in coming to Daniel, he pulls back the veil, offering a glimpse of the work of God's angels, countering the influence of the evil angels. This is the first time the Archangel (chief officer) Michael is named in the Bible.

¹³ However, an officer of the kingdom of Persia was standing against me for twenty-one days. Yet Michael, one of the chief officers, came to help me, for I had been left there against the kings of Persia.

Comment on the angels explanation and its implications.

A Follow Up Bible Study

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11. What was this angel's mission?

¹⁴I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the latter days, because the vision concerns days still to come.

12. The Lesson then jumps to Daniel 12 to learn more about God's role for Michael and All Angels.

***12** Then at that time, Michael, the great prince who stands over your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress that has not happened from the first time that there was a nation until that time.*

At that time your people will be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book. ² Many who are sleeping in the dusty ground will awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame, to everlasting contempt. ³ Those who have insight will shine like the brightness of the sky, and those who bring many to righteousness will shine like the stars forever and ever.

Note the title given to Michael here. The angel is clear who “your (Daniel’s) people” are. Who are they? What time period is the angel referring to.

Some people say the Old Testament never speaks about life after death or the resurrection. This is simple, easy to remember, clear answer. Share your impression or reaction to this description of the eternal state of believers and unbelievers.

A Follow Up Bible Study

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Second Lesson: Revelation 12:7-12

13. Note the relationship between Michael and the angels. Compare that to his titles in Daniel.

Note who their enemies are and the enemies leader. John is clear.

⁷ There was also a war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought with the dragon. The dragon fought back along with his angels, ⁸ but he was not strong enough. There was no longer a place for them in heaven. ⁹ The great dragon was thrown down — the ancient serpent, the one called the Devil and Satan, the one who leads the whole inhabited earth astray — he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

The key question: When? Which war is this? It would be easy to think that since Satan and his angels are cast out of *heaven* this refers to God casting them out when they rebelled, sending them down to earth where Satan then tempted Adam and Eve. There are a number of reasons to indicate that doesn't match the text.

- The previous 3 visions reveal each of the visions cover the New Testament era, as does this vision. So this war is not the war of rebellions at the beginning of time.
- God was the one who cast the dragon and his angels out. This battles is angels vs. evil angels
- The term *heaven* is also used in the Bible to refer to the *spiritual realm - the air*. You may recall Paul calls Satan *the ruler of the kingdom of the air* (Eph. 2:2). Later in Eph. 6:12 Paul speaks about our battle against these demons in the *heavenly realms*.

John offers more insights. Note what wins the victory over Satan and the evil angels.

¹⁰ I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying:

*Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God
and the authority of his Christ,
because the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down,
the one who accuses them before our God day and night.*

¹¹ They conquered him

*because of the blood of the Lamb and
because of the word of their testimony.*

They did not love their lives in the face of death.

¹² For this reason, rejoice, you heavens and those who dwell in them.

Woe to the earth and the sea,

for the Devil has gone down to you.

He is full of rage, because he knows that his time is short.

This might be the same event Jesus refers to Luke **xxx**, the other Gospel for this festival.

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Gospel Lesson: Matthew 18:1-6,10

18 At that time the disciples approached Jesus and asked, “Who then is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”² Jesus called a little child, had him stand in the middle of them,³ and said, “Amen I tell you: Unless you are turned and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.⁴ Whoever humbles himself like this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.⁵ And whoever receives a little child like this one in my name receives me.

6 “But, if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a huge millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.

10 See to it that you do not look down on one of these little ones, because I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father who is in heaven.

14. This is the traditional Gospel for St. Michael and All Angels. It is clearly chosen because of v. 10. To find the comfort of v. 10, we need to understand the context.

Sin makes us think we are great if we.... (finish the sentence).

Children have plenty of sinful habits and attitudes. But what attribute of a child is Jesus' point of comparison, the virtue the believer will admire and pursue?

Discuss: Our cultures elevation of children, treating them like little adults, has undermined this point of comparison.

The opposite of humility is pride. It is argued that pride is at the heart of sin. Explain.

15. Jesus reveals where we find our value, without falling into the sin of pride. What is it?

Those who humbly delight in their servants role in God's kingdom will also delight in each and every other member of God's kingdom - even those who seem to have little to contribute, like a child. In other words, learn to see every human being as God sees them. Share his values.

16. Explain what Jesus is saying about the believing child's angel. Explain the facts and unpack both the law and gospel message in those words.