

Ministering Spirits to the Heirs of Salvation

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

IN THIS SCRIPTURE, THE Apostle Paul addresses the fact that our loving Heavenly Father has powerful beings in the spiritual realm that are commissioned by him to carry out his plans and purposes, and assist his people who are being called for a special purpose during this present Gospel Age. Long ago Solomon said, “The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.” (Prov. 15:3) The Psalmist David pointed to the child of God, when he wrote, “Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way [perfect in the way, *Marginal Translation*], he shall serve me.”—Ps. 101:6

We are not given specific details in connection with the activities of these ministering spirits, or

how they go about carrying out the will of the Father. However, our Lord Jesus stressed the important and vital role that these angelic beings assume in the overall plans and purposes of God. He, therefore, warned, "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." (Matt. 18:10) The fact that these 'angels' are assigned to look after the Lord's 'little ones' during this time of their High Calling in Christ Jesus, suggests that they have immediate access to the glorious throne of the Heavenly Father and receive his ready and unre-served attention.

The Father's knowledge in connection with the earthly affairs and spiritual interests of his specially chosen people is learned by methods of which we have little understanding, except perhaps through these ministering spirits and the laws that govern and control our natural surroundings. The Heavenly Father has laws that govern his entire universe, and these angels have insight into his wonderful working power, and may use whatever means at hand for the spiritual benefit of the called ones.

THE CHIEF MESSENGER

Our Lord Jesus, who was the first begotten of all Creation, has always enjoyed a very prominent position with the Father, and during the time of his prehuman existence he was known as the Word [*Logos*, Greek] or special spokesman for God. (John 1:1-3) He willingly left his heavenly nature to become a perfect man, and to die for the sins of the

human family. By doing so, he provided the ransom sacrifice for them, and was later exalted to the right hand of the Father. He was given the Divine nature like his Father, received greatly increased power to carry out his will and purpose, and was placed in charge of the angelic creation.

The Apostle Paul spoke of this elevated state of glory when he wrote to the Hebrew brethren. He addressed the one who “Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.”—Heb. 1:2-4

THE CHARIOTS OF GOD

From the Psalmist David, we learn, “The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place.” (Ps. 68:17) David had just spoken of the events that had occurred at Sinai when he wrote, “The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God: even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel.”—vs. 8

When speaking before the Sanhedrin, Stephen spoke of the Jewish nation, saying, “Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.” (Acts 7:53) Paul explained, “The word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just

recompence of reward.” (Heb. 2:2) The apostle later provided further details of the angelic scene and the giving of the law at Sinai. “You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and to a blazing fire, and to darkness and gloom and whirlwind, and to the blast of a trumpet and the sound of words which sound was such that those who heard begged that no further word be spoken to them. For they could not bear the command, ‘If even a beast touches the mountain, it will be stoned.’ And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, ‘I am full of fear and trembling.’”—Heb. 12:18-21, *New American Standard Bible*

TWELVE LEGIONS OF ANGELS

When Jesus was about to be arrested at the conclusion of his earthly ministry, Peter drew his sword to prevent it from happening. However, our Lord took the opportunity to reveal the tremendous power of countless, and unseen, angelic beings that his Father had made available to him. If he needed their assistance, he could call upon them to do so at any time. “Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?” (Matt. 26:52-54) There were six thousand men in a legion, which represents the great number of angels that the Father could have sent for his protection, but Jesus knew that it was not the proper time, nor the Father’s will, to do so at that time.

To put this all in perspective, we read, “Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Ghost [Spirit]: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world [age].”—Matt. 28:18-20

Our Lord Jesus is now the head of all spiritual powers. Ministering spirits are on hand to prevent any mishap and to fight alongside the people of God who are being called during this age of consecration and sacrifice. During this time, their life of sacrifice has been made acceptable by the Father. (Rom. 12:1,2) When we go to the Father in prayer, we do so in the precious name of Jesus. He is our representative and Advocate in our relationship and dealings with the Father, and is our teacher in the school of Christ.

PROPHETIC VOICES

Those who are being called to a place in the body of Christ during this present Gospel Age have been put under the special guidance of our risen Lord Jesus and the ministering spirits who are subject to his control. Further, in his letter to the Hebrew brethren, Paul quoted from several Old Testament prophecies to address the point he was making. He asked them, “Unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? [Ps. 2:7] And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? [II Sam. 7:14] And again, when he bringeth

in the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. [Ps. 97:7] And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire [Ps. 104:4].” (Heb. 1:5,6) The apostle was showing through the words of prophets and others, that the Father would commit all power in heaven and earth to our risen Lord Jesus.

SAVED BY AN ANGEL

Before his name was changed to Abraham, we read concerning the Lord’s angel who appeared to him, “The LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.” (Gen. 12:7) In the previous verses of the account, we read, “Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”—vss. 1-3

Later, an angel instructed Abraham to slay his son Isaac. “The angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.” (Gen. 22:11,12) The angel gave God’s instructions to Abraham which had severely tested him.

BESIEGED BY ENEMIES

A powerful and unseen hand was manifest when the nation of Israel was besieged by their enemies the Midianites. They had no way to defend themselves against their foe, and the situation appeared to them as being hopeless. Then one of God's angels spoke to Gideon, one of Israel's most outstanding judges. He lived during a very turbulent period in his nation's history. For a number of years, neighboring pagan nations, especially the Midianites, had invaded them at harvest time. The angel explained to him that God was going to use him to deliver his people.

The scriptural account reads, "The angel of the LORD appeared unto him [Gideon], and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour." (Judg. 6:12) In reply, Gideon said to the angel that it would take a miracle from God to deliver them from their great enemy. "Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites." (vs. 13) The outlook was desperate. "The LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?"—vs. 14

He then asked for a sign that he might know that the messenger was really an angel of the Lord. "When Gideon perceived that he was an angel of the LORD, Gideon said, Alas, O Lord GOD! for because I have seen an angel of the LORD face to face.

And the LORD said unto him, Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die. Then Gideon built an altar there unto the LORD, and called it Jehovah-shalom: unto this day it is yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.”—vss. 22-24

POWERFUL EVIDENCE

Gideon sought further evidence that God was truly with him, and requested that a fleece which he would place on the threshing floor be wet with dew the next morning while the floor around it remained dry. When his request was granted, he asked again that the circumstances be reversed, which they were. (Judg. 6:33-40) This marvelous demonstration of power convinced him that God was truly with him.

Thirty-two thousand men rallied to the call to fight the Midianites, who had a force of 135,000, and who outnumbered them by four to one. However, God indicated that there were still too many fighting men with Gideon. “The LORD said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me. Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand.”—chap.7:2,3

TESTING REQUIRED

God then instructed Gideon to lead the remaining 10,000 men down to a watering place where they would be further tested. A mere 300 of them

scooped the water to their mouths by hand, which showed their alertness to danger, while the remaining dropped to their knees while drinking. These 300 fighting men were selected along with Gideon to fight their enemies. “He divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put a trumpet in every man’s hand, with empty pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers.” (vs. 16) The men were instructed to break their pitchers which allowed their lights to shine, and then blow their trumpets. When they did this every man’s sword was against his fellow in the enemy camp thus giving Gideon the victory. This is an astounding example with many significant lessons for the Lord’s people who are striving to let their light shine, and proclaim Christ’s future kingdom that will deliver the world from sin and death.

THE FATHER’S WILL

As a group of the Lord’s people now living during the closing years of this present Gospel Age, we must learn to recognize and accept the Father’s will for us whatever that may be. We cannot expect to be delivered from evil in every case because we have given our lives unreservedly to him. These are the terms of our consecration vows to him. “When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.”—Eccles. 5:4,5

We need the Heavenly Father’s spiritual guidance and the provisions of his grace on our behalf in all of our earthly and spiritual affairs. We are

not qualified to guide ourselves in the narrow way, but are reminded of Paul's admonition, "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."—Phil. 2:12

The Father's will may be manifest in different ways, as shown when the Apostle Peter's life was spared while James' life was not. We read in the scriptural record, "Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.) And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter [Passover] to bring him forth to the people."—Acts 12:1-4

REMARKABLE POWERS

While the Apostle Peter was in prison, we further read, "The angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision." (vss. 7-9) Peter's chains had fallen off his hands, and the prison's iron gate opened of its own accord before the angel departed. "When

Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.”—vs. 11

This remarkable incident in the lives of both James and Peter serves to illustrate the mighty power of the Father, who has commissioned his ministering spirits to care for his special people. In each case the Father’s will was manifest, although in different ways.

This serves as an important lesson to those who have committed their lives to God, “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”—Rom. 8:28

WRESTLING WITH SPIRITS

Throughout this Gospel Age, the followers of Jesus have encountered formidable enemies that have confronted their spiritual life and growth as New Creatures in Christ Jesus. Our fight is one of faith as we must struggle against these powerful unseen foes. Paul encourages all to “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness [*wicked spirits, Marginal Translation*] in high places.”—Eph. 6:11,12

Satan and the wicked spirits who carry out his will are always seeking ways to weaken the defenses of the Lord’s people, but the apostle has outlined

the necessary armour that will help strengthen us as we continue to walk the narrow way. He says, "Take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."—vss. 13-17

Although we readily obey these instructions as given here by the Apostle Paul, we must keep in mind the loving providence of our Father to provide the ministering angels of righteousness on our behalf of which he spoke in our featured text.—Heb. 1:14

IN TIME OF NEED

There are numerous illustrations in the Word of God wherein angelic beings were used by the Father to carry out his will and purpose. During earlier times, some of these angels materialized in human form to deliver their messages. The present Gospel Age is the age of faith, and throughout this long period of time, ministering spirits have been made available for those who are presently being called as members of the bride of Christ. These angels fight alongside the Lord's people to assist them in their Christian warfare. These are comforting thoughts to those members of the body of Christ who are now living during the closing years of this Gospel Age.

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” (Heb. 4:16) “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.”—Eph. 6:10 ■