

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Angels: God's Enforcers

(Jerry Fite)

A real space accommodating the travel of God's messengers exists beyond our eye sight. We are familiar with spirit beings such as Gabriel who announced the coming of important kingdoms and kings and the birth of John and Jesus (*Daniel 8:16-26, Luke 1:19, 2:26-31*). Angels are not only God's messengers, they are also the enforcers of God's will.

When Adam and Eve sinned in partaking of the forbidden tree, God ruled man was to work the cursed ground until he returned to dust in death. So, God drove out the first man and woman from the garden and “*placed at the east of the garden of Eden the Cherubim, and the flame of a sword turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life*” (*Genesis 3:24*). God's ruling was set forth and those chosen by God to enforce His will were the angelic Cherubim.

When the wickedness of Sodom became so great, God sent angels to destroy the cities of the plain. Their mission was twofold: destroy the city of Sodom, and save Lot. The angels came in human form and told Lot, “*for we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxed great be-*

fore Jehovah; and Jehovah hath sent us to destroy it” (*Genesis 18:1, 19:13*). When Lot went outside his door to protect his angelic guests from the perverted mindset of the men of Sodom, He learned very quickly that his guests did not need his help, for “*the men put forth their hand, and brought Lot into the house to them and shut the door. And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they wearied themselves to find the door*” (*Genesis 19:10-11*).

When the hearing of the total number of fighting men was more important to David than relying upon God to defeat his enemies, regardless of number, David commanded the number to be set forth. The punishment for his sin was three days of pestilence upon his people. God sent his angel to enforce the punishment. Seventy thousand men from Dan to Beer-sheba died. “*And when the angel stretched out his hand toward Jerusalem to destroy it, Jehovah repented Him of the evil and said to the angel that destroyed the people, 'It is enough; now stay thy hand'*” (*2 Samuel 24:16*). Here, God's angel is an enforcer of punishment, but only to the extinct of God's authoritative will. Like

the archangel Michael, the angel respects God's authority and acts accordingly (*cf. Jude 9*).

Angels direct the traffic of souls to their destinations. When the beggar died, his soul was “*carried away by angels*” to the comforting presence of Abraham's bosom in the place of departed spirits called Hades (*Luke 16:22*). It is comforting to know that even if we die alone, we have a procession of angels ready to lift us upward, guiding our way to a place of comfort. However, at the end of time, “*the Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth*” (*Matthew 13:41-42*). God's angels lift the righteous to comfort in time, and will gather up and cast the unrighteous into Hell at the end of time.

The first record of angels working in the Bible shows them enforcing God's will. We might think of them as “*God's policemen,*” enforcing His laws, and directing souls to their eternal destination. May we so live that our experience with God's angelic policemen will be a pleasant one.