

### Angels are Watching You!

Readers Digest once told about a doctor in Philadelphia. Late one night there was a knock on his door. A little girl was there saying that her mommy was sick and needed a doctor. The good doctor put on his coat and followed the girl through a rainstorm to her home. There he found the mother critically ill with pneumonia. After helping the lady he complimented her on her daughter's clear thinking and persistence. The woman looked at him with a puzzled look and explained that her daughter died just over a month ago. "Her coat is still in the hallway closet," she added. The doctor looked and there was the very coat worn by the little girl who knocked at his door. But the coat was dry and could not possibly have been worn in the storm. Nor could the girl be found. Was it an angel?

#### Angels are real

Many people reject the idea of angels because they can't see them or study them in a laboratory. Yet, the Bible has almost 300 references to angels in the Bible. Angels are personal, spiritual beings, that is, they do not have a body, but they are individuals, created sometime during the week of creation. As spirits without bodies there are not male and female angels who get married and have baby angels. I also need to make sure I mention that when you die, you do NOT turn into an angel. The number of angels has remained the same since God created them. The book of Revelation (5:11) tells us that there are "**thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand.**" of angels – too many to count. Angels are very powerful, much more powerful than any human, but not near as powerful as God who is all-powerful. They can move very quickly from one spot to another, but can not be in more than one place at the same time.

#### Angels are often misunderstood

Movie or TV shows usually depict angels as sweet young men or maidens wearing flowing white robes with a halo over their head. That's not what the Bible describes. Even though angels do not have bodies, there are a few occasions in the Bible when the angels took on a visible form to let people know they were there and to share a message. But those are unusual circumstances which did not last long. We guess that angels could make similar appearances today. Hebrews 13 tells us that some

people have interacted with angels without even knowing it. Even though angels are spirits, the Bible sometimes describes them as having wings to illustrate their mobility and ease of movement; and other times with wheels to illustrate their power and motion. We know there are ranks of angels, such as cherubim, seraphim, and archangels, just like there are majors, colonels, and generals in our military, but we do not know the specifics.

#### Angels were seen by Elisha's servant

We have proof of angels in our Old Testament reading. The king of Aram kept trying to attack Israel, but the Lord let the prophet Elisha know where the Arameans were going to attack. Elisha would then tell Joram, the king of Israel, where the attack was coming and Joram avoided those places. This happened time and time again. They would be ready to attack the Israelite army and the next morning they were gone. The king of Aram was furious. He thought that he had a traitor on his staff who was telling the Israelites about their plans.

His advisors, who must have had some sort of spies giving them information, explained that the prophet Elisha was able to predict where each attack would be, so the king decided to capture Elisha. They found out that Elisha was in the city of Dothan. The king sent an army with chariots (the armored tanks of the day) to surround Dothan during the night. The next morning, Elisha's servant went outside and saw that they were surrounded by a huge army. There's no way they could defend themselves. They were doomed. The servant panicked and screamed to Elisha (:15), "**Oh no, my lord! What shall we do?**"

Notice how the servant asked, "What shall WE do?" He only thought of what they could do. He completely forgot about the Lord's help, let alone the angels. How many times do we do the same thing? We get a bad report from the doctor, or we end up with more bills than we have money for, or a loved one is in trouble, or we face some other crises, and we panic. Since we are not able to solve our problem, we despair, worry, stress. We forget that our loving Lord is watching over us as well as the powerful angels.

Instead of panicking, Elisha calmed his servant down (:16), "**Don't be afraid. Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.**" There was no need to panic. The powerful angel forces outnumbered Aram's army. Elisha prayed (:17), "**Open his eyes, LORD, so that he may see.**" In answer to Elisha's prayer, the LORD gave the

servant spiritual eyesight. He saw that the hills around Dothan were full of horses and chariots of fire, controlled by angels. Imagine the kind of damage that fiery horses and chariots could do to the Aramean army. Elisha and his servant had no reason to worry.

#### Angels are servants of God to serve us

When we face situations that seem overwhelming, it is a natural reaction to panic like Elisha's servant did. Hebrews 1:14 tells us that God sends his angels to serve us. Isn't that amazing? These great, powerful and sinless creatures are sent to do the dirty work of watching over us stumbling, bumbling sinners. Certainly, we would like to see a powerful angel flying in front of our car to keep us safe like Elisha's servant saw the angels, but God does not need to show us the angels around us. He gave us this story of Elisha and his servant as proof that angels exist and are watching over us. I have heard all sorts of stories of people who were in a car accident and the police were amazed that anyone survived. It was likely an angel that the Lord sent. Even though we do not see them, our lives would be a lot worse off if it wasn't for the angels. Maybe you remember that children's song, "All night, all day, angels watching over me, my Lord." That's a good thing to remember. Maybe sing that song during the day or when you put your head on your pillow. What a comfort to know that angels are watching over us.

#### Angels announced salvation

The Lord delivered Elisha and his servant from the king of Aram. That physical deliverance is a sign of God's ultimate deliverance – salvation from sin and death. The angels have been watching humans from the beginning of time. They see and hear us when we sin, when our words and actions are far less than perfect. The angels know that we are not worthy to be with God in heaven and, left to ourselves, would spend eternity suffering in hell. The angels are on the same wavelength as the Lord. They are sad that we sinners hurt ourselves and others. They are sad that we are doomed to destruction. That's the only reason I can figure out as to why they rejoiced when Jesus was born. They were eager for us to be saved.

Don't you think that the angels would have cried when Jesus was born. As true God, Jesus was enjoying the grandeur and glory of heaven. The angels were happy to constantly praise him. Then Jesus called a time-out as he set aside the full use of his power and glory to be born in a barn and live in this sin-infected world. Angels don't know the future so they did not know all the details, but they knew the prophecies that the promised

Messiah was going to suffer and die. You would guess that the angels would have cried that Jesus came into this world. "No! This should not happen to you. This is not what you deserve." Instead, they sang to the shepherds, "**Glory to God in the highest and peace to his people on earth.**" They announced salvation.

The angels praised God for his amazing love that led him to give up so much in order to save us. What an incredible Savior we have! Not only was he born and raised in the most humble circumstances, but he let himself be arrested, abused, falsely accused, condemned and crucified. I like to imagine that when that was happening, the angels had to hold themselves back from rushing in to rescue Jesus. The Lord, however, would not let them. The angels even served us then by letting it all happen. If they had physical eyes, I'm sure they would have cried, "No! Not him. How dare you treat the Lord of glory that way?" They stood still as Jesus accepted the blame for each and every sin and he let the soldiers pin him to a cross and lift him up for all the world to see. Through his sacrifice your sins are forgiven. You are saved. And when Jesus rose again on Easter morning to guarantee you physical life after death, angels got to preach the first Easter sermon by announcing, "**He is not here. He is risen just as he said.**" Salvation was complete.

#### Angels will rejoice with us in heaven

A pastor friend of mine was once sitting at the death bed of a member. She said to him, "I see two angels standing at the foot of my bed." The pastor did not know how to respond. Was she hallucinating? He asked her why she thought they were there. She calmly replied, "They are waiting to take me to heaven." "Are you scared?" he asked. "No. There's nothing to be scared of. I'm going home to Jesus." And then, a few minutes later, the angels did, in fact, carry her to heaven.

One day, just like that lady, the angels will guide your soul to heaven where you will see Jesus face to face. Until that time when you enter heaven, rejoice and praise God that angels are watching you. When you face struggles, instead of worrying, thank the Lord that he has ordered such magnificent beings to serve you. And, if you ever get that feeling that someone is looking over your shoulder or staring at you, don't be surprised. It might be an angel watching you. Amen.