

Angelic Deliverance

In Daniel chapter 12, we have a prophecy regarding a personage by the name of Michael:

“At that time shall **Michael stand up**, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people ... and at that time **thy people shall be delivered**, everyone that shall be found written in the book ...” (Dan. 12:1).

As we shall shortly consider, this would appear to be a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ, taking on a role like that of the angels of old, and delivering his people. But before we examine this aspect, we shall briefly review the work of the Angels and the deliverance effected through them.

2 Kings Chapter 19 expresses Hezekiah’s confidence in Yahweh in the face of the Assyrian invasion that had beset the land. In his prayer he asks:

“... now therefore O Yahweh our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art Yahweh God, even thou only” (2 Kings 19:19).

The answer came through the prophet Isaiah:

“... I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David’s sake. And it came to pass that night, **that the angel of Yahweh went out**, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.” (2 Kings 19:34-35).

We find therefore that the means by which Yahweh delivered his people from the power of sin, was through the work of an Angel appointed for the task. In some ways, the believers are in a similar position as Israel of old. We are at enmity with the world around us, and daily we face the power of sin active within our mortal frames. Each day is a warfare against the flesh – both within and without, and there is no discharge until the day of our death, or the appearance of our Master, whichever comes first. But like Israel, we are appointed with Angels to watch over us, even as it is written: “Are they not all ministering spirits, **sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation**”? (Heb. 1:14). We would do well therefore, to scrutinise the angelic activity in relation to Israel, that we might understand more about the ministers that attend to us in our own lives.

When we consult the Scriptures, we find that Angels had a role right from the very beginning of Israel’s history. Acts 7:53 describes how Israel “have received the law *by the disposition of angels*, and have not kept it”. And Exodus 23 recounts the promise of divine blessing and protection when Israel were to go forth to take possession of the land of promise:

“Behold, **I send an Angel before thee**, to keep thee in the way, and *to bring thee into the place* which I have prepared ... mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites: **and I will cut them off.**” (Exod. 23:20,23)

But even though Israel were promised possession of the Land, they had to go forth to war against the powers of sin themselves. They couldn’t simply sit at the border and expect the land to be turned over to their control: they had to fight and contend against their enemies. The Angel used the people’s own endeavours to bring about success. Hence in our New Testament reading for today, although the people were victorious in fighting for the land, it is described as God destroying the 7 nations (Acts 13:19). We must engage ourselves in the same warfare as Christ did, in order for him to lead us into victory. We must also therefore “endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (2 Tim.2:3), and be willing to suffer for his sake.

There is an aspect of the Angelic care that is sometimes overlooked. It is sometimes thought that because we have divine “ministers” to help us, that therefore we should experience no evil. A little reflection, however, reveals the short-sightedness of such a view. It is part of the Father’s purpose that we endure afflictions as part of His Chastisement upon His sons:

“for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are you illegitimate, and not sons” (Heb. 12:6-8).

Psalm 34 describes the Angels’ work of deliverance:

“the Angel of Yahweh encampeth round about them that fear him, *and delivereth them*” (Psa. 34:7)

Notice the point here: the Angel does not prevent difficulties from coming, but will deliver the faithful out of those afflictions when they come. As it is written: “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tried above that ye are able, but will with the trial also **make a way to escape**, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Cor. 10:13). Indeed, the same Psalm describes: “Many of the afflictions of the righteous: but Yahweh delivereth him out of them all” (Psa. 34:19).

The allusion in this Psalm appears to be from Jacob’s words concerning the Angelic hand in his own life:

“*The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads...*” (Gen. 48:16)

When we consider the life of Jacob, we see a man who endured many adverse circumstances in his life – in his case, there is no question as to whether evil times had come. But Jacob’s faith was not that he be spared affliction: rather it was that Yahweh’s Angel would deliver him out of it when it came.

Another case in point is the experiences of Daniel’s three friends in the Truth, and their refusal to bow the knee to the Babylonian Idols. They were thrown into a fire so hot that it devoured the mightiest men of Babylon, yet were protected from harm, so that even the smell of the fire did not linger in their clothes. So Nebuchadnezzar recognised the means of divine protection: “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, **who hath sent his angel** and delivered his servants that trusted in him...” (Dan. 3:28). Again, the fiery trial was to come – it was not averted – but in the midst of it all, the Angel delivered them out of all evil.

We read earlier that the angels are “ministering spirits” sent forth on the behalf of those who are “heirs of salvation” (Heb. 1:14). The application does not only refer to the disciples: The Master himself, as the heir with whom we obtain the inheritance, also needed, and experienced strength from Angels. Matthew chapter 4 describes his wilderness trials, ending: “then the *diabolos* leaveth him and, behold, **angels came and ministered unto him**” (Mat. 4:11). At the time of his wrestling against his mortal nature in Gethsemane: “there appeared **an Angel** unto him from heaven, **strengthening him**” (Lu. 22:42). And again, whilst being crucified he spoke of how he had 12 legions of Angels at his disposal. The Master therefore, was One who recognised the hand of the Angels in his life – and we, therefore, must seek to have that same vision. Jacob, Caleb, David, Elisha, Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego and others still, all trusted in angelic deliverance in times of difficulty and adversity.

Messiah cried out to Yahweh in his distress: and that prayer was answered by the provision of an Angel. Hebrews chapter 4 describes how:

“in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplication with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared” (Heb. 5:7)

Notice the expression here: “ ... to save him *from* death...” The Greek is more specific: “ ... to save him *out of* death ...”. The difference is this: if he was saved from death, he would not have died, he was saved from it. But the truth of the matter is that he did die – but he was raised up out of that death by the hand of the Father. As we showed earlier: Angelic ministration does not mean evil will not come, but will rather mean that we will be delivered from our trials – and the example of Christ himself is a case in point.

MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

Although there are an innumerable company of Angels, we are only told the names of three: Michael being one of them. He is referred to in the Epistle of Jude:

“Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee” (Jude 9).

The plain allusion here, is to Zechariah 3:

“and he shewed me Joshua the High Priest standing before the angel of Yahweh, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And Yahweh said unto Satan, Yahweh rebuke thee, O Satan; even Yahweh that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? (Zech. 3:1-2).

Although it falls outside the scope of our current considerations to expound these words, we find that the Satan, or Adversary answers to the Samaritan opposers to the Temple being built, who sought to hinder that work. And the “body of Moses” would appear to be the body of believers who were baptised into Moses (1 Cor. 10:2), concerning whom the satan was in opposition. But the point we wish to make from this, is to notice that the Angel here bears the name of Yahweh. It is said that “Yahweh said unto Satan ...”, yet Jude informs us that it was actually Michael the Archangel who uttered these words. Hence, Michael is the name-bearing Angel, and we suggest that he is the same Angel described in Exodus 23 (above) where he spoke in the name:

“ ... ***my name is in him.*** But if thou shalt indeed obey ***his*** voice, and do all that ***I speak;*** then I will be an enemy to thine enemies ... for mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in to the Amorites etc: and I will cut them off” (Ex. 23:23).

Notice that again, it is the Angel’s “voice”, but it is Yahweh speaking. And this angel is again referred to in Isaiah 63 as “the angel of his presence” (Isa. 63:9) - a specific Divine Messenger sent for a particular purpose. It is assumed that all the angels bear the name of Yahweh, but there is no Bible verse that states this.

This foreshadows the work of the Lord Jesus Christ: “Believest thou now that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you ***I speak not of myself:*** but ***the Father that dwelleth in me,*** he doeth the works” (Jno. 14:10).

And just as the Angel went before the people to bring them in to their inheritance, Jesus declared: “... I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself ...” (Jno. 14:3)

There is another reference to Michael in Daniel chapter 10, in the words of a different Angel:

“ ... the prince of the kingdom of Persia withheld me one and twenty days: but lo, ***Michael,*** ***one of the chief princes,*** came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia” (Dan. 10:13).

Again, it is beyond the scope of our present considerations to expound what is described here: suffice it to say that it illustrates the providential Hand of God in action, with the Angels assisting each other to accomplish the Divine Will. But the point here, is that this Michael is “one of the chief princes” – which implies that there other chief princes in the heavenly realm also. There is therefore a hierarchy amongst the Angels of God, some being more “chief” than others.

But Michael is but a *type* of the Lord Jesus Christ. The name itself means “Who is like El”, with “El” being a Title of God. This matches the person of Christ, who is “the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person” (Heb. 1:3) – and the citation here, is by way of illustrating how that Jesus is higher than the Angels: “again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him” (Heb. 1:6).

This brings us to Daniel chapter 12. There we read:

“And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time, thy people shall be delivered, everyone that shall be found written in the book.” (Dan. 12:1).

Notice, that the “Michael” described here, is not “one of the chief princes”, but rather he is higher than that: “the great prince” – which can only be the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the prince of peace, who shall stand up for the deliverance of his people, in a way not dissimilar to the angels of old. When he stands up, there will be a general resurrection:

“And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever” (Dan. 12:2-3).

This can only take place when Messiah comes again, “who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom” (2 Tim. 4:1). Indeed, the very name Daniel means “El is Judge”!

We began by showing how the angels minister to the saints, particularly emphasising the way in which they deliver from evil. But it is written that “unto the Angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak” (Heb. 2:5). The earth will rather be given to Messiah and his glorified brethren. Christ and his saints will cause God’s Will to be performed as in the heavens above. As the Lord taught his disciples to pray: “... thy kingdom come. **Thy will be done on earth**, as it is in heaven” (Mat. 6:10). Obedience to the Will of Yahweh will be the ultimate objective in His coming Kingdom.

To conclude therefore: we have seen tremendous things from the Holy Writ, which have a very direct application to our lives. The Angel is there, and will deliver us out of all evil, according to the mercy and wisdom of our Eternal Father. Trusting in the Angelic Host, we declare war against the flesh, both within and without, and can be confident of the victory. The Lord Jesus Christ himself needed Angelic deliverance, and we, as his brethren, have a like need. In the future, Christ’s brethren will themselves have an angelic role, becoming part of Yahweh’s continually expanding glory. This is a position which we need to prepare for - and the only preparation is to search the Scriptures daily, and act upon the precepts revealed therein. This we do, both to see whether these things are so, and also to strengthen our vision of the coming kingdom, and our place within it.

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