

## **What does the Bible teach about: What Angels teach about Jesus**

*[New King James Version of the Scriptures used unless otherwise stated.]*

### **What angels teach us about Jesus**

Today I want to look at seven things angels teach us about Jesus and how they encourage us in our Christian worship and service.

#### **1. Angels teach us about the deity of Jesus**

The first thing angels teach us about Jesus is His deity. The writer of the Epistle of Hebrews outlines the deity of Christ in the opening chapter of his book.

"God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through 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 at the right hand of the Majesty on high" (verses 1-3).

He adds in verse 6 that when Jesus was born, God said, "Let all the angels of God worship Him." The chapter also explains the character and purpose of angels, "Who makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire" (v.7) and "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (v.14).

But then the deity of the Son of God is emphasised,

"But to the Son He says: 'Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Your kingdom'" (verse 8).

These scriptures show us how the angels continually witness the Son of God's deity in their worship and service. This ministry of angels is compelling and should stimulate our witness to the divinity of the Son of God and seek to faithfully serve Him. Paul expresses this in Galatians 2:20,

"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

Angels were created to worship and serve God. We do this because God has loved us.

#### **2. Angels teach us about the birth of Jesus**

Angels teach us about the birth of Jesus in several ways. First, Gabriel demonstrates the power of God when he promises the birth of John the Baptist. John the Baptist's parents, Zachariah and Elizabeth, were, naturally speaking, too old to have a child. But the promise Gabriel announced

was fulfilled. More remarkably, the same angel then announces that Mary, a virgin, would give birth to Jesus.

"Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favoured *one*, the Lord *is* with you; blessed *are* you among women!" (Luke 1:26-28).

Later an angel of the Lord appears in a dream to Joseph, encouraging him to marry Mary and be a faithful guardian of Christ.

"Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins. So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us"" (Matthew 1:20-23).

This revelation was a fulfilment of what God had promised to do 700 hundred years before,

"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and you shall call His name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14).

When Christ is born, it is the angels who announce His birth. First, God moved the Roman world to ensure His Son would be born at Bethlehem to fulfil His promise. The only people to witness that birth were Mary and Joseph. The Person who was the centre of heaven came into a world with no room for Him. But God then moves heaven, and angels appear in glory to announce the birth of Christ, not to royalty but to humble shepherds caring for their sheep.

"And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid" (Luke 2:9).

Directed by the angels, these shepherds went to see the child who would later be known as the "Good Shepherd" (John 10:11), the Great Shepherd (Hebrews 13:20) and the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:4). These ordinary men became the first witnesses to others that the Saviour had come.

When wise men appeared in Jerusalem to worship Jesus as the King of the Jews, Herod, and the whole city, was troubled. They did not receive with joy the news of the promised Christ. Instead, Herod asked the chief priests and scribes where Christ would be born. He then directed the wise men to Bethlehem, asking them to tell him where the child lived and falsely promising to come and worship Him. The wise men were led to the house where Jesus was and worshipped Him, presenting their famous gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. The Jewish shepherds witnessed to the Saviour's arrival into the world, the Gentile wise men worshipped the Son of God. Afterwards, the wise men were directed not to revisit Herod, returning home a different way. In response, Herod acts in the most brutal way murdering the infants of Bethlehem in an attempt to kill the Saviour. Once more, an angel of the Lord appears to Joseph in a dream to direct him to leave Bethlehem and escape to Egypt.

"Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His

mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him." When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son"" (Matthew 2:13-15).

After Herod's death, the angel of the Lord guides Joseph back to Israel, settling in Nazareth. The angels announced the birth of John the Baptist and Jesus' birth as the Saviour of the world. They then ensured the protection and care of the infant Jesus. The angels demonstrate the certainty of the promises of God. Neither the passage of time nor the hatred of men could endanger the fulfilment of God's ancient promises. The angels encourage us to believe God's promises and to act in simple faith and obedience to the word of God. We are not to cease in our confidence in the love of God, sharing, like the shepherds, the good news of Jesus Christ, and, like the wise men, worshipping the Saviour with lives characterised by obedience and sacrifice.

### **3. Angels teach us about the ministry of Jesus**

At the baptism of Jesus at the end of Matthew 3, the Spirit of God descended like a dove upon Jesus, and the voice of God the Father is heard from heaven,

"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (v.17).

This is a remarkable revelation of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. From this point, the public ministry of Jesus begins, and it starts with the Holy Spirit leading Jesus into the wilderness (Matthew 4:1). There He fasts forty days and nights before being confronted by Satan. This scene is in direct contrast to the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve had everything they needed in that garden but were spiritually defeated by Satan. Christ experiences all the weakness of hunger in a desolate place. And when Satan appears, he seems to have every advantage. But he is overcome by the Lord's simple reliance on the word of God. Afterwards, Satan is forced to depart, we read,

"Behold, angels came and ministered unto Him" (Matthew 4:11).

Angels had worshipped and served the Son of God in eternity. They must have wondered at the extraordinary display of love and grace seen in the Creator living in His creation. So they responded in the only way they knew by serving the One they were made to worship. Do we wonder at the majesty of the Saviour's humility through which His love, grace and truth were manifested? Does it compel us to seek to honour and serve Him? This is what angels teach us in the wilderness. It is an important lesson.

### **4. Angels teach us about the suffering love of Jesus**

Angels are present at the birth and infancy of Jesus. They are also present at the beginning of His ministry and towards the end of His life. Of course, they constantly observed His glorious life on earth and must have been engaged continuously in worship. And we have seen the events which record their ministry to the Lord of Glory. The last of these occasions before the Lord's death is in the garden of Gethsemane. As the Lord approached the Cross, we are given a poignant insight into His holy sufferings when He takes the disciples with Him to the garden of Gethsemane. He asked Peter, James and John to be close to Him whilst He prayed to His Father,

"Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane and said to the disciples, "Sit here while I go and pray over there." And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me." He went a little

farther and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will." (Matthew 26:36-39).

As Jesus approaches the Cross, He is found in the Garden of Gethsemane. Earlier, we saw the wilderness in contrast to the Garden of Eden. In the same way, the Garden of Gethsemane also stands in contrast to the Garden of Eden. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve fell prey to Satan disobeying God's will and fulfilling their own will. In the Garden of Gethsemane, the Lord Jesus prays, "not as I will, but as You will."

The Gospels paint a poignant picture of the Son of Man's agony as He contemplated the Cross. Jesus took Peter, James, and John with him in this hour of need. Peter had promised the Lord he would lay down his life for Him, but when Jesus returned to the disciples, He found them asleep. Jesus said to Peter,

"What! Could you not watch with Me one hour?" (Matthew 26:40).

At the beginning of Luke's Gospel, there was no one to herald the birth of Christ until the angels intervened. Then, at the close of the Lord's ministry, when He wanted the support and sympathy of His closest disciples, they fell asleep. It was not the first time this had happened. On the mount of transfiguration, the same three disciples fell asleep but happily woke up to see His glory and hear the Father's voice,

"This is my beloved Son. Hear Him!" (Luke 9:35).

But if Peter, James and John slept, angels did not. Luke tells us the Lord knelt down and prayed, saying,

"Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done" (Luke 22:42).

It was then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. Christ was confronted by the suffering ahead of Him in this holy scene. It was an angel who came to His side whilst his disciples slept. There is no doubt that when there is no response on earth to the Saviour, angels instinctively respond from heaven. In doing so, these mysterious, powerful angelic beings teach us what it is to be alert to the Lord's sacrifice and respond with thankful and worshipping hearts to the Saviour who loved us.

## **5. Angels teach us about the death of Jesus**

Angels do not teach us about the death of Christ by their presence but by their absence. In the Garden of Gethsemane, the angel encouraged the Lord Jesus in the loneliness of His agony by strengthening Him. Whilst earth was impervious to His grace, heavenly beings wondered at the depth of His redemptive love. Afterwards, the guards arrived to arrest Jesus. Peter tried to defend the Lord by attacking the high priest's servant and cutting off the man's ear. Jesus said,

"Do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? How then would the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?" (Matthew 26:53-54).

Angels could play no part in the work of redemption. They, like everyone else, could only look on as the Good Shepherd laid down His life for the sheep. We have already read Hebrews 1:1-3,

"God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His

Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through 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 at the right hand of the Majesty on high" (verses 1-3).

The expression "when He had by Himself purged our sins" is very important, and later, we read in chapter 10 of the same book,

"But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God" (v.12).

These verses confirm the work of redemption was entirely Christ's. This is further supported by the Lord's own words in John 10,

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep" (v.11).

"As the Father knows Me, even so, I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd" (vv.15-16).

"Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father" (vv.17-18).

To do this work, Hebrews also tells us Jesus was made a little lower than the angels,

"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone" (Hebrews 2:9).

The absence of angels bears testimony to the one eternal, perfect sacrifice of the Son of God.

## **6. Angels teach us about the resurrection of Jesus**

But if angels were not present at the death of Christ, they announced His resurrection. Just as they heralded the birth of Christ, they celebrated His resurrection. I want to refer to two passages concerning angels and the resurrection of Jesus. The first is Matthew 28:2-6,

"And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men. But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said, come, see the place where the Lord lay.""

It is essential to understand that the angel did not open the tomb to allow Jesus to emerge. Instead, the angel opened the tomb to show that Jesus was not there. Later in John 20:11-13, we read,

"But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. Then they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?""

We see angels doing something they were not created to do in these two passages. They sat down. Angels are the ministers of God and constantly fulfil holy activities. So to see them sitting down is very interesting. The first angel showed his angelic power by removing the stone from the entrance to the tomb and sitting down on it.

In the second passage, two angels were sitting quietly at the head and the feet, of where the body of Jesus had lain. The angels were calm and peaceful. They seem to me to powerfully reflect the wonder of the finished work of Christ and the glory of His resurrection. In the tabernacle in the Old Testament was the mercy seat. It was made of pure gold. At each end of it was a cherub. The wings of these two cherubim covered the mercy seat and their faces looked down. These cherubim had stood motionless in this position for hundreds of years, looking down on the blood that was sprinkled on the mercy seat, blood that could never take away sins (Hebrews 10:11). But after Christ had offered one sacrifice for sins forever (Hebrews 10:12) and rose triumphantly from the dead, the angels sat down.

This reminds us that the finished work of Christ is the basis of our peace with God. The angels encourage us to pause and reflect on the majesty of the Person and the work of Jesus. By doing so, we can live in the present reality and power of all that Christ has accomplished.

## **7. Angels teach us about the ascension and return of Jesus**

In Mark, we are told that after His resurrection Jesus was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God (Mark 16:19). In Luke 24:51, we are told Jesus was carried up into heaven. Matthew and John do not refer to Christ's ascension. But at the beginning of the Book of Acts, Luke goes into greater detail, not confining his comments to Christ's return to heaven. He also describes angels foretelling the future return of Christ to earth.

In Acts chapter 1:4-8, Jesus instructs his disciples to wait for the Promise of the Father, which was the coming of the Holy Spirit. But the disciples were more interested in the kingdom of Israel. But Jesus made it very clear that this was not their concern but God's. Their sole responsibility was to be witnesses to Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit, who would indwell them. And as they watched Jesus being taken up into heaven two angels spoke to them,

"Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven" (v.11).

These two angels heralded the return of Jesus Christ. He would not return as the lowly Nazarene to be rejected and crucified. He would come as the Kings of kings and Lord of lords. Paul's writes of this in his letter to the Philippians chapter 2,

"Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (vv.9-11).

Angels were present at the birth of Jesus. They ministered to Him after He was confronted by Satan in the wilderness and in the Garden of Gethsemane. Before going to the Cross, Christ said

He could call on more than twelve legions of angels. They were not present at Calvary as the Lord of life sacrificed His life for our redemption. But they announced His resurrection and were present at His ascension and foretold His return. In Acts 1, they teach us to expect the return of Christ and to live in the light of it whilst devoting ourselves to his service in witness and worship.

Thank you for listening to the Truth for Today talk "What angels teach us about Jesus." Talk number T1245.

---

**Please Note:**

We encourage you to use this transcript for your personal or group Bible studies. This material should not, however, be used in any publications without the express permission from Truth for Today, whose contact details can be found on page 1.