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A Little Lower Than the Angels

1345-B
Series: Angels

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INTO HIS LIKENESS RADIO

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A Little Lower Than the Angels

Watch Him as He submits to the Father's will. See Him as He sits, seemingly alone in the wilderness, eating nothing, enduring the pangs of hunger, awaiting the attack of the evil one, whose only goal is to take advantage of His physical weakness and use it to destroy Him spiritually.

See Him as He heals a lame man beside a pool. Watch Him as He agonizes in that garden, weighing in His heart the most crucial issues ever to face God or man. And He was both God and man.

Observe those hours while His followers wandered in disillusionment, thinking that death's horrendous fangs had severed His once holy claims to eternal life. See the conclusion of it all when that huge stone was mysteriously rolled away and, with it, death itself.

As you view this motion picture of eternity, look carefully behind every scene. What do you see? You see the careful hand of a sovereign God weaving a pattern in which the visible threads are only laid in place to highlight the deeper colors, rich hues which, when seen in the Son-light, spray their beauty towards the heavens. Watch as the heavens open to display the portrait, for in every scene the eye beholds the image of angels, quietly hovering over the Son of God, responding to His every need, in awe over the restraint that keeps Him from calling on them when they perceive that danger warrants it.

They are invisible, silent sentinels, whose presence always draws attention to the Father's love, yet whose presence *never draws attention to itself*. And as this One who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, made Himself of no reputation, they saw in human form those very qualities they had been taught to exhibit in the spirit realm.

So we continue our journey into the recesses of Scripture to see just what angels do all day. Our tour has taken us to the edge of the sea of New Testament reality. We now enter into the life and times of Jesus and ask just what these winged wonders did all day while Jesus walked this earth. They didn't sit around in heaven watching

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on their big screen Sonys. God was in hand-to-hand combat with His enemy, and the stakes were for everything. From the beginning of Jesus' entrance into human history to His ascension back to the Father, the angelic host played a major role in virtually every incident. They did so, as you can imagine, quietly, without fanfare, and without drawing attention to their presence. But the New Testament bears witness over and over to the importance of their role in the Savior's life. That role will be the basis of this study.

I - JESUS AND THE ANGELS: THE RELATIONSHIP

The first and second chapters of Hebrews tell us a rich story of how God has designed the progression of history where angels are concerned. Here is what God said in that passage,

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

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.

For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?

And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.

But unto the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

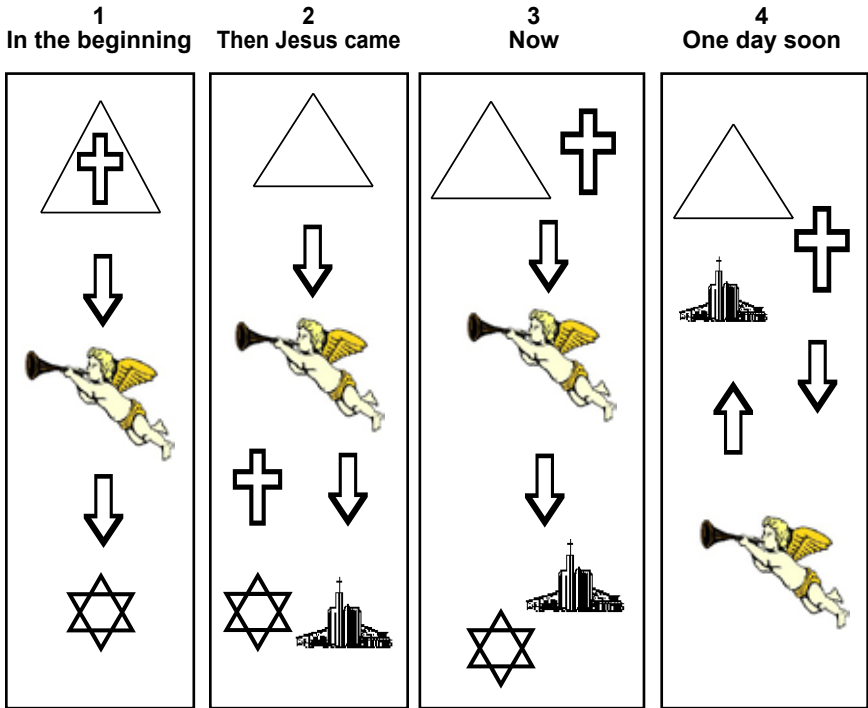
(Hebrews 1:1-8)

It can be capsulized in these four illustrations:

In illustration #1, you see the Old Testament angelic pattern. Jesus and the Father reside in heaven. The angels are subject to them. Israel is the recipient of the angelic blessings. It shows us the angelic relationship to God and to God's children in Old Testament times. The angels were there to serve Him. To the Son, He said,

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“Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever.” To which of the angels did He ever say, “Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee”? The answer is, of course, He never did. They were created beings designed in eternity past to serve the Godhead. So the angels served Israel under the direction of the Godhead; and, on occasion, the precious Son identified Himself with the angels and went as the “Angel of the Lord” to apparently mentor and demonstrate to them the very mind of God.



In illustration #2, we see the servant heart of the blessed Savior demonstrated. We read about it in chapter 2.

Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing *that* is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.

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 should taste death for every man.

(Hebrews 2:8,9)

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He made Himself nothing; He became lower than the angels in order to bring salvation and grace to us. In illustration #3, we see Jesus back in the Father's presence as the High Priest who ever lives to make intercession for us. We read,

For verily he took not on *him the nature of angels*; but he took on *him* the seed of Abraham.

Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto *his* brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. (Hebrews 2:16,17)

Once again, the angels are in subjection to Him and, through His Spirit's direction, are meeting our needs. But during that time on earth, as illustrated in illustration #2, the angels continued their ministry on earth and demonstrated it most fully by how they ministered to the Angel of the Lord Himself, as He became not only a man, but a servant, for our sakes. The fourth illustration shows what one day will take place when, in fact, "we shall judge angels" (I Corinthians 6:3) (literally rule over angels).

So the progression is mirrored in Jesus who became lower than the angels to become a slave, now having returned as one who makes intercession for us. In like manner, we, who are now lower than the angels, will one day rule with Christ. Even the angels will be in subjection to us.

For now, however, let's follow these angels as they served our Lord during those precious 33 years as He wore the flesh we wear and bore victoriously the temptations that so plague us.

II - JESUS AND THE ANGELS: THE REASON

The question that is often asked in regard to Jesus' walk on earth is: "Why would God need angels?" He is, after all, omnipotent and omniscient. As Jesus walked this planet as a man, why did His Father still send angels to minister to Him and to help Him touch others? And even more puzzling, why did that angelic influence continue even after Jesus returned to the Father, and the Holy Spirit came to indwell believers? Why? Jesus was the Living Word. He never sinned. He never got "out of fellowship" with His Father; in fact, He never did anything that displeased His Father. So why couldn't Jesus just snap His fingers or say a word and have it done, without thousands of spirit beings floating around in the ozone, unnoticed, until they were needed? Why?

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Only when we get to heaven will we know for sure. One thing is certain, though, He was giving us a demonstration of why he created them in the first place, and He was giving us a warning that if Jesus needed them and used them in His ministry, we can be assured that they will be there for us, as well.

What did they do in the life of Jesus? They announced the Father's plans; they comforted God's people; they strengthened Him in His hour of testing; they healed at the Father's command. They communicated the plan of God, and especially the nature of God. In fact, watch for it, *every time angels appeared in Scripture, they revealed some aspect of the character of God.*

Did God need the angels? No. Does He need them today? No. Will He need them at the rapture of the church or during the great tribulation? No. But they will be there, and they will play an important role. God doesn't need anything, but His Name is Love. And everything He does, He does to make that love more understandable and available to us. The angels are ministers of that love. They, like the Holy Spirit, are invisible, but though they operate in the Spirit realm, *the works they do have physical consequences and occasionally involve physical appearances.* The Spirit, on the other hand, works in us to work through us to produce spiritual fruit. Without the Spirit's work, what the angels do will not change us or help us. But the Spirit uses them as ambassadors to run the errands that create the environment that allow Him best to work.

III- JESUS AND THE ANGELS: THE REALITY

Let us then put on our first century sandals and walk the dusty roads of Israel with the Son of God. Let us invade His world for a few minutes and watch as the Father prepared for and provided for the Lamb of God. You will find, Beloved, that those provisions and preparations invariably included (you guessed it) myriads of angels. Let's proceed.

First of all, the angels were God's first century internet providers. They took the message of the Father and sent it by personal e-mail directly to the ones whose lives would be affected by the news. It all began with an elderly couple named Elizabeth and Zacharias. It begins in Luke, chapter one.

And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

And when Zacharias saw *him* , he was troubled, and fear fell

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upon him.

But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.

And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.

And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.

(Luke 1:11-14,18,19)

The next appearance set the stage. It is found in Luke 1:26,

And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, *thou that art* highly favored, the Lord *is* with thee: blessed *art* thou among women.

And when she saw *him* , she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God.

And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

(Luke 1:26-31)

Meanwhile, the angel appears to Joseph,

Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man* , and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.

But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

(Matthew 1:19-21)

It was the angelic host who appeared to Joseph and sent him to Egypt,

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And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee 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 into Egypt:

And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son. (Matthew 2:13-15)

And when it was time to leave Egypt?

But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,

Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life.

And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. (Matthew 2:19-21)

The announcements and the movements of the baby Jesus and His parents came at the hands of an angel. Was this Gabriel? We don't know. We do know that it was through God's angelic telegraph service that the messages came. They are, remember, messengers; and they saw that Mary and Joseph knew where to go and when.

Now, let's look to the first major event in the life of the Savior. Jesus was in the wilderness being tempted of the devil. Three times the enemy hurled his fiery darts at the King of kings. Three times, the Master answered, "It is written." The battle was raging. The enemy spent every ounce of ammunition he possessed. The last temptation ended like this,

Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him (Matthew 4:8-11)

What did the angels do that the Holy Spirit could not do? They

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ministered to him physically. They may have brought food and water. They may have had the first “Meals-on-Wheels” franchise. We don’t know. Maybe they wiped His fevered, weary brow and carried Him on the first Eastern Airline flight to Jerusalem. That we don’t know, either. They weren’t there the whole time. It says, *they came* and *they ministered*. They met His needs. The Spirit met His spiritual needs. The angels met His physical needs, but not until the battle was over, and the enemy had departed.

So often we want the angels to come ahead of time, to soften the blows of the evil one’s weaponry. That’s not the plan. We are to stand in Christ and put on the whole armor of God. When the enemy flees in defeat, the angels come. And, oh, how they minister to us. We usually don’t know they’ve come. That’s good. But our God does not leave us in the wilderness alone. When the battle’s over, the angels come. They really do.

We find the angelic host again in John, chapter 5,

After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep *market* a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.

In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.
(John 5:1-4)

God was giving a preview of His healing hand, using angels as His messengers. This pool, surrounded by porches, was the gathering place for really sick people. This was the waiting room for Jehovah General Hospital. You may think you have to wait a long time to see your doctor. These poor people would just lie there, month after month, waiting for the Great Physician to send His angelic water workers to trouble the waters. Seldom they came. Maybe only once a year. But when they did, the first person who was able to make it into the pool was miraculously healed. They weren’t all healed, mind you. But the first one always was. On this occasion, something different happened.

And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.

When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a

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long time *in that case* , he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?

The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.

Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.

And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.

(John 5:5-9)

Oh, the mercy of God. Here was a man who had been sick for 38 years, but he had never given up hope. What faith. Jesus saw in him, not only a need for his body to be made whole, He saw a man of faith. Here was a man who believed that anything was possible with God. So Jesus, having heard the man's story, solved the man's problem. The Angel of the Lord went beyond what the angels were allowed to do, and healed, not the first one in, but the one with the greatest faith.

We see the angels and Jesus together again in the garden of Gethsemane. Look at Luke 22.

And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation.

And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed,

Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.

And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

(Luke 22:40-44)

Once again, Jesus was engaged in a great spiritual struggle. He was physically, emotionally and spiritually drained. The Father knew that. He knew that Satan wanted nothing better than to take advantage of the weakened state He was in. So He sent an angel to *strengthen* Him. There's that word again. Now what does that mean? It means literally, *to invigorate*. What did the angel do? Gatorade wasn't invented then, so far as we know. What we do know is that Jesus, in His weakened condition, was *strengthened*. If we needed to know more than that, God would have told us. The angels came. That we know. And once again, they strengthened Him.

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We hear about the angels again in Matthew, chapter 26, this time in a restrained sense. This is an important passage.

And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out *his* hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear.

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?
(Matthew 26:51-54)

We now begin to see *the restraining work of Jesus* where the angels are concerned, and there is an incredible message to us hidden in the text. Jesus had at His disposal all of the hosts of heaven. At any time (and this passage bears that out) that He so chose, all He had to do was speak a word to His Father, and the entire seventh wing of God's Air Force would swoop down and do whatever was needed to put the enemy away. Jesus didn't need Simon Peter or anyone else to do a hatchet job on someone's ear. The passage indicates that Judas had arrived with what appeared to be a small army, sent from the Chief Priest and the elders. They were heavily armed, even though they had come to arrest the Prince of Peace. Had Jesus chosen to do so, with a word, not only would these intruders be struck blind or even dead, the entire hierarchy that sent them would have been turned to dust. Had Jesus spoken the word, the whole Satanic kingdom would have fallen to earth, dead, and He could have set up the Kingdom of His Father on earth with absolutely no opposition.

If we had been God, we probably would have opted for that course of action. We know that, because we know how we operate. When the heat is on, we call on God to turn down the heat. When the pressure gets too great, we pray and ask God to turn the valve down, (or off if possible). When the persecution gets heavy, we plead with God to do unto our enemies as we would like to if we could. Oh, we do it with a spiritual tone in our voices, but what we want is out of the furnace. Furnaces are for the likes of Satan, we surmise. We deserve better.

But furnaces are also for purification. Unless the heat gets to the right temperature the dross remains and we have metal that is weakened because it is not pure. If we could only learn, like Jesus,

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to respond to the fire *with God's kind of restraint*, we would not only reap the benefits of the fire, but the benefits of God's character, as well. He could have summoned the angelic host, and it would have all been over. Boy, would it all have been over. You and I would still be lost in our sins.

The song goes,

*He could have called ten thousand angels,
To destroy the world and set Him free.
He could have called ten thousand angels,
But He died alone, for you and me.*

And indeed, He did. He, who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, had made Himself a little lower than the angels; and, faced with a choice to call upon those angels to deliver Him, or to stand before the enemy in His Father's strength and deliver us, He chose the latter. He died. We live. He gave Himself a ransom for many, that we might be called the Sons of God.

That, Beloved, is *restraint*. That is like being faced with all the armies of the known world, and having a panic button to punch. At one press of a button, the earth beneath them would sink and they would all perish; or you could refuse to push the button, and ask God to do whatever would most glorify His name.

That is why it is so important that we really learn to pray. Most of us think that prayer is calling out to God with a laundry list of things that are broken that need to be fixed. We treat prayer like a trip to the repair shop. Lord, Aunt Susie is sick. Fix her. Lord, my child is in rebellion, fix him. Lord, my car is missing, fix it. Lord, my wife is angry, fix it. Lord, my job is in trouble, fix it. Amen.

Then, we sit around and watch the circumstances of life to determine whether or not God was able to fix it. If not, we sort of push it under the rug as though we never prayed it, lest we give God a bad reputation or have to admit we don't know how effective prayer is supposed to be.

The purpose of prayer is to bring our hearts into line with the heart of God; and the heart of God is singular. He wants men and women to be born again into the family of God and grow into His likeness. Every decision He makes comes through that grid.

Now picture Jesus in Gethsemane. He could have called on legions of angels to wipe out the soldiers who stood before Him, and, Beloved, they would have made mincemeat of the whole throng.

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But He didn't come to make mincemeat; He came to build a church against which the gates of hell would not prevail.

His choice was *power or restraint*. A display of power would have temporarily solved the physical problem He faced and awed a few people who were looking for miracles as a sign that God is. But that would have been a physical solution to a spiritual problem, a short-term Band-Aid on a long-term cancer. So Jesus chose the better part. He exercised *the restraint of godliness*. He chose not to allow that eager angelic host, perched on the canopy of heaven just waiting to swoop down and rescue their loving God, to move into their battle positions. He chose, instead, to quietly submit to the Father's plan.

He knew that plan meant a Cross. It meant death. But through His death, millions would find life. Through His suffering, others would come to be spiritually healed. And so He could have called 10,000 angels (literally, 72,000). But He didn't. And aren't you glad?

What about you? How do you pray when the fire in your life is heated to what seems to be 300 degrees and you sense that there is a battalion of angels swooping overhead just waiting to descend and rescue you from all your troubles? Do you cry out for the angels or for God's will? Do you pray for deliverance or for God's will?

What is deliverance anyway? We think we have been delivered when we are removed from the battlefield and taken safely back to the barracks for a little "R&R". No, Beloved. We have been delivered when we are safely in the very center of the will of God, and the will of God is sometimes a cross. It was for Jesus. If we are to be transformed into His image, we must enter into the fellowship of His sufferings that we might become conformed to His death.

That means deliverance into the heart of the battle, so the Commander-in-Chief can use the battle to change lives, ours or someone else's. The angels are there, waiting to deliver you. But the greatest joy in your life may well be your ability, by grace, not to pray them into action. Your greatest joy may come from the "Thy will be done" that springs forth from your lips at the hand of the Holy Spirit. The cross that looms on the horizon of your life may be the greatest blessing ever to touch your life; and more than that, it may well be an opportunity for God to bring others into the Kingdom or into an understanding of the Kingdom they never would have otherwise had.

Jesus was not concerned about His own life. He came to earth to lose it. He was concerned, rather, with what would most glorify the

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Father. In His humanity, He prayed that *if it were possible to have the Father's will be done without that Cross, so be it, nevertheless...*, and that may well be the most important word Jesus ever spoke. *Nevertheless, thy will be done.* Oh, the restraining power of Jesus. He could have called the angelic host into the fray, and the war would have been over, but the war would have been lost. They would have won the battle, but Jesus, by calling on them, would have lost His chance to die so we could live.

And sometimes the very things we pray that God will take away are God's projectors, beaming onto the screen of life for our families, our disciples, our neighbors, our friends, a picture of how Jesus looks when He inhabits a man or a woman who is heading for what appears to be their cross. They cannot understand how you could have such peace, such joy, such confidence in your God. At that moment, Satan will tempt you to call out for deliverance; not for God's will, but for God's deliverance. God can do that. He can send 10,000 angels, if need be, and rescue you. But be careful. What if those angels, as they rescue you, come one day too soon...just because you begged God to do so?

Will not your angelic rescuers, though obeying God in answer to your prayers, not cause you to miss the greatest blessing of all? It is the *grace of restraint* that will give you the victory. "Yes, Lord, I know you have legions of angels waiting to deliver me. Send them, Lord... but *only if it is the very best thing you can do for the Kingdom's sake and for Your glory, and only then. Nevertheless, thy will be done.*"

You want to be healed. You want that relationship. You want that job. You want that ministry. You want that thing you have been praying for. You want out of that desperate financial pressure. You want. But what does God want? It isn't always a matter, Beloved, of what God can do...but rather, of what God can do if you exercise *the grace of restraint*.

Jesus did, as He approached that Cross. And because He did, the angels folded their wings in adoration and awe and did not move a muscle towards the Savior. What must they have thought? When we get to heaven, we'll ask them. They can speak, you know. Until then, we can only imagine. The troops must have been on "red alert". They could see the Living Son of God being beaten, badgered, spit upon, laughed at, scorned, and belittled.

They could see Him carrying that Cross up that awful hill. They could see Him falter beneath the load. "Now, Father?" they must have

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cried, “Now?” “No, not now,” God must have whispered, as Michael, pacing the heavens, surrounded by anxious winged warriors, waited for the word from his Commander to swoop down and crush the enemy, retrieving the Master just before they...oh, no, they’re doing it. They are driving nails into His hands and His feet. Those precious hands that fed the poor, healed the sick, touched blind eyes and made them see; those hands will never be the same again.

See the blood as it pours from His hands and His side. Jesus is dying. His Father is silent. The heavens are silent. The angels are still. He could have called 10,000 angels, Beloved. But He died alone for you and me.

The angels must have turned up their cellular phones to see if they had missed God’s call to action. Nothing. They watched in agony as God died. “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?” He cried. And the angels could not move an inch.

“Father into thy hands I commit My Spirit”. They heard that, too. But they could not so much as drift in their heavenly formation towards that cruel Cross. The Father had not spoken, for the Son had not insisted.

Surely, by now they folded their wings in grief and despair. The Angel of the Lord was dead. The sky overhead turned ominous. The sun disappeared from the heavens. The veil of the temple was rent in two from top to bottom. This was no ordinary death. This was the death of death. Now, any man or woman, boy or girl, who by simple faith accepted what just had happened as the atonement for their sins, could become born again into the family of God and never die.

The angels’ obedient inaction freed God to deal Satan the final blow. God had died so we could live, and it all happened because *He made Himself a little lower than the angels*. And when given a chance to call those angels into action, *He exercised the grace of restraint, instead*. “Thy will be done,” He prayed. The angels folded their wings; the Son became a Savior; and *it was finished, indeed*.

For Focus and Application

1- Read Hebrews, chapters one and two again. Take the chart on page 4 of your notes and redraw it in a way that will better help you to both understand it and explain it. What was the most significant thing that ever happened regarding Jesus and the angels? What made it so significant? Why do you think God sent Jesus as an angel so many times? What do you think the other angels learned from that?

2- Why do you think God used angels to announce the coming of Jesus? What key phrase is found in every encounter? Why do you think God used angels to minister to Jesus? To strengthen Him? How does that affect us today?

3- Read Luke 1:11-19, Luke 1:26-31, and Matthew 1:19-21. What similarities occur in these three appearances? What differences?

4- How do you think the angels ministered to Jesus in Matthew 4:11? Have they ever ministered to you? How did it happen? Why do you think they waited until the devil departed?

5- The angel in John, chapter 5 had a regular job to do. What was it? What was the problem? Can you identify with these people? How long had the one man been sick? How did Jesus solve the problem? What do you think there was about this man that made Jesus single him out?

6- An angel “strengthened” Jesus in Luke 22:40-43. Why? How could an angel help at a time like this? What do you think he did to “strengthen” Jesus?

7- In Matthew 26:51-54, Jesus was faced with the greatest single decision of His life. What was it? What were His options? How did the angels fit in? What do you think you would have done?

8- Why is understanding *the restraining grace of Jesus* so crucial to us? How ought it to affect the way we pray? The way we think? How would you describe the purpose of prayer? Is that definition borne out in how you pray? What do you think made Jesus refuse to call those angels and go to that Cross? Bow before Him again and thank Him from the bottom of your heart that He *could* have called 10,000 angels but, because of you and me, He *didn't*.

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