

# Angels From Pentecost to the Last Days

## An Angel Frees Peter and John From Prison

"A short time after the descent of the Holy Spirit, and immediately after a season of fervent prayer, Peter and John, going up to the temple to worship, saw a distressed and poverty-stricken cripple. . . . The disciples regarded him with compassion. 'And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, 'Look on us.' 'Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.'"<sup>1</sup>

"As the Sadducees, who did not believe in a resurrection, heard the apostles declaring that Christ had risen from the dead, they were enraged, realizing that if the apostles were allowed to preach a risen Saviour, and to work miracles in His name, the doctrine that there would be no resurrection would be rejected by all, and the sect of the Sadducees would soon become extinct."<sup>2</sup>

"Some of the officials of the temple, and the captain of the temple, were Sadducees. The captain, with the help of a number of Sadducees, arrested the two apostles, and put them in prison, as it was too late for their cases to be examined that night."<sup>3</sup>

"Satan triumphed, and the evil angels exulted; but the angels of God were sent and opened the prison doors, and, contrary to the command of

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the high priest and elders, bade them go into the temple, and speak all the words of this life."<sup>4</sup>

"In the meantime the high priest and those with him had 'called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel.' The priests and rulers had decided to fix upon the disciples the charge of insurrection, to accuse them of murdering Ananias and Sapphira, and of conspiring to deprive the priests of their authority. . . .

"When they sent for the prisoners to be brought before them, great was their amazement at the word brought back that the prison doors were found to be securely bolted and the guard stationed before them, but that the prisoners were nowhere to be found. Soon the astonishing report came, 'Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people.' Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned. . . .

"As . . . [Peter and John] stood for the second time before the men who seemed bent on their destruction, no fear or hesitation could be discerned in their words or attitude. And when the high priest said, 'Did we not straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood upon us,' Peter answered, 'We ought to obey God rather than men.'"<sup>5</sup>

"Then were those murderers enraged. They wished to imbrue their hands in blood again by slaying the apostles. They were planning how to do this, when an angel from God was sent to Gamaliel to move upon his heart to counsel the chief priest and rulers. Said Gamaliel, 'Refrain from these men, and let them alone; for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to naught; but if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.'

"The evil angels were moving upon the priests and elders to put the apostles to death; but God sent His angel to prevent it, by raising up a voice in favor of the disciples in their own ranks."<sup>6</sup>

## Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch

"Heavenly angels watch those who are seeking for enlightenment. They co-operate with those who try to win souls to Christ. Angels minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation."<sup>7</sup> "[The] Ethiopian was a man of good standing and of wide influence. God saw that when converted he would give others the light he had received and would exert a strong influ-

ence in favor of the gospel. Angels of God were attending this seeker for light, and he was being drawn to the Saviour. By the ministration of the Holy Spirit the Lord brought him into touch with one who could lead him to the light."<sup>8</sup>

"When God pointed out to Philip his work, . . . he learned that every soul is precious in the sight of God, and that angels will bring to the appointed agencies light for those who are in need of it. The heavenly angels do not undertake the work of preaching the gospel. Through the ministration of angels God sends light to His people, and through His people this light is to be given to the world."<sup>9</sup>

### **Angels at the Stoning of Stephen and Saul of Tarsus's Subsequent Conversion**

"As . . . [Stephen was being stoned to death, he] looked up steadfastly into heaven, [and] a vision of God's glory was given him, and angels hovered around him. He cried out 'Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.'<sup>10</sup> "A young man, whose name was Saul" (Acts 7:58), witnessed this scene and soon after was converted.

"In the record of the conversion of Saul [of Tarsus] important principles are given us, which we should ever bear in mind. Saul was brought directly into the presence of Christ. . . . He arrested him in his course and convicted him of sin."<sup>11</sup> "As Saul journeyed to Damascus, with letters authorizing him to take men or women who were preaching Jesus, and bring them bound to Jerusalem, evil angels exulted around him. But suddenly a light from heaven shone round about him, which made the evil angels flee."<sup>a 12</sup>

"When Saul asked, 'What wilt Thou have me to do?' the Saviour placed the inquiring Jew in connection with His church, there to obtain a knowledge of God's will concerning him."<sup>13</sup>

### **Paul Is Healed and Baptized**

"The Lord then sent His angel to one of the very men whom Saul had hoped to take captive."<sup>14</sup> "Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight,' the heavenly messenger said, 'and inquire in the house of Judas for one called

a. As at Christ's resurrection, the "light from heaven [that] shone round about . . . [Saul] made the evil angels flee." See footnote r on p. 195.

Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth.' . . . Ananias could scarcely credit the words of the angel; for the reports of Saul's bitter persecution of the saints at Jerusalem had spread far and wide. . . . [Nevertheless,] obedient to the direction of the angel, Ananias sought out the man who had but recently breathed out threatenings against all who believed on the name of Jesus; and putting his hands on the head of the penitent sufferer, he said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.'<sup>15</sup>

"As Paul preached Christ in Damascus, all who heard him were amazed. . . . The opposition [toward him] grew so fierce that Paul was not allowed to continue his labors. . . . A messenger from heaven bade him leave for a time, and he 'went into Arabia,' [Gal. 1:17] where he found a safe retreat. Here, in the solitude of the desert, Paul had ample opportunity for quiet study and meditation. . . . Jesus communed with him,<sup>b</sup> and established him in the faith, bestowing upon him a rich measure of wisdom and grace."<sup>16</sup>

"At the time of Paul's conversion, the Lord had declared that he was to be made a minister to the Gentiles, 'to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me.' Acts 26:18.

"The angel that appeared to Ananias had said of Paul, 'He is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.' Acts 9:15. And Paul himself, later in his Christian experience, while praying in the temple at Jerusalem, had been visited by an angel from heaven, who bade him, 'Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.' Acts 22:21."<sup>17</sup>

### **Cornelius and Peter**

"The same Holy Watcher<sup>c</sup> who said of Abraham, 'I know him,' knew

b. At his conversion on the road to Damascus, Paul was "brought directly into the presence of Christ" (AA 120).

c. In some instances the "Holy Watcher" is the third Person of the Godhead. In other instances it is the Holy Spirit working through an angel. For an explanation, see footnote b on p. 136.

Cornelius also, and sent a message direct from heaven to him.”<sup>18</sup> “The One who knew where Cornelius lived, and who appeared to him as an angel, . . . declared to him, ‘Your prayers and your alms have come up as a memorial before God.’ ”<sup>19</sup>

“The angel appeared to Cornelius while he was at prayer. As the centurion heard himself addressed by name, he was afraid, yet he knew that the messenger had come from God, and he said, ‘What is it, Lord?’ ”<sup>20</sup>

“[In response to Cornelius’s question, the angel said,] ‘Send men for one Simon, whose surname is Peter, who lives with one Simon a tanner.’ And he told him the very place where Simon the tanner lived. Then the angel of the Lord went to Peter, and prepared his mind for the reception of the men.”<sup>21</sup>

“Cornelius was gladly obedient to the vision. When the angel had gone, he called ‘two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually; and when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.’ . . .

“The angel was not commissioned to tell Cornelius the story of the cross. [Peter,] a man subject even as the centurion himself to human frailties and temptations was to tell him of the crucified and risen Saviour. In His wisdom the Lord brings those who are seeking for truth into touch with fellow beings who know the truth.”<sup>22</sup>

“Immediately after the interview with Cornelius,”<sup>23</sup> “the same angel went to Peter,”<sup>24</sup> “who, at the time, was praying upon the house-top of his lodging in Joppa.”<sup>25</sup> “In . . . vision, Peter ‘saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, . . . wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts . . . and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.’ . . . This vision conveyed to Peter both reproof and instruction. It revealed to him the purpose of God—that by the death of Christ the Gentiles should be made fellow heirs with the Jews to the blessings of salvation.”<sup>26</sup>

“It was with reluctance at every step that Peter undertook the duty laid upon him by divine command. [Later] when relating his experience [to his fellow apostles], he . . . [did] not defend his action on general principles [that the gentiles were in need of salvation as much as the Jews], but as an exception, done because of divine revelation. And the result was a surprise to him. When Cornelius had related to him his experience, and the words

of the angel who had appeared to him in vision, Peter declared, ‘Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; for in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him.’ ”<sup>27</sup>

### **Peter Delivered From Prison**

Not long after Herod put Peter in prison to appease his Jewish subjects, “the day of Peter’s execution was at last appointed; but still the prayers of the believers ascended to Heaven. And while all their energies and sympathies were called out in fervent appeals, angels of God were guarding the imprisoned apostle. . . .

“Peter was placed between two soldiers, and was bound by two chains, each chain being fastened to the wrist of one of his guard. He was therefore unable to move without their knowledge. The prison doors were securely fastened, and a strong guard was placed before them. All chance of rescue or escape, by human means, was thus cut off.”<sup>28</sup>

“‘And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.’ Peter, suddenly awaking, was amazed at the brightness that flooded his dungeon, and the celestial beauty of the heavenly messenger. He understood not the scene, but he knew that he was free, and in his bewilderment and joy he would have gone forth from the prison unprotected from the cold night air. The angel of God, noting all the circumstances, said, with tender care for the apostle’s need: ‘Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals.’

“Peter mechanically obeyed; but so entranced was he with the revelation of the glory of heaven that he did not think to take his cloak. Then the angel bade him: ‘Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision. When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord.’ ”<sup>d 29</sup>

“No word is spoken; there is no sound of footsteps. The angel glides on in front, encircled by a light of dazzling brightness, and Peter, bewildered, and still believing himself to be in a dream, followed his deliverer.

d. This is a biblical example of telekinesis—action at a distance. There is no evidence that the angel moved the gate or removed Peter’s shackles by physical means.

Thus they passed on through one street, and then, the mission of the angel being accomplished, he suddenly disappeared.

"The heavenly light faded away, and Peter felt himself to be in profound darkness; but as his eyes became accustomed to the darkness, it gradually seemed to lessen, and he found himself alone in the silent street, with the cool night air blowing upon his brow. He now realized that he was free, in a familiar part of the city; he recognized the place as one that he had often frequented and had expected to pass on the morrow for the last time [on his way to be executed]. . . .

"The apostle made his way at once to the house where his brethren were assembled and where they were at that moment engaged in earnest prayer for him. 'As Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda. And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate. And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel.'"<sup>e 30</sup>

"The same angel<sup>f</sup> who had left the royal courts of heaven to rescue Peter from the power of his persecutor, had been the messenger of wrath and judgment to Herod [Agrippa I]. The angel smote Peter to arouse him from slumber; but it was with a different stroke that he smote the wicked king, bringing mortal disease upon him."<sup>31</sup>

### **Angels Guard Paul on His Journeys**

"A report of . . . [the speech by Demetrius against Paul to the Ephesian silversmiths] was rapidly circulated. 'The whole city was filled with confusion.' Search was made for Paul, but the apostle was not to be found. His brethren, receiving an intimation of the danger, had hurried him from the place. Angels of God had been sent to guard the apostle; his time to die a martyr's death had not yet come."<sup>32</sup>

"[While] at Troas, on the borders of the Mediterranean Sea, 'a vision appeared to Paul in the night: There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.' The call was imperative [and Paul and Silas immediately sailed for Macedonia and began

e. "The Jews believed that a guardian angel was assigned to each man, and that when the angel appeared in human form he assumed the man's likeness" (6BC 272).

f. An angel can be an emissary of benevolence as well as a messenger of wrath.

preaching the gospel in the chief city of Macedonia, Philippi].

"As the messengers of the cross went about their work of teaching, a woman possessed of a spirit of divination, followed them, crying, 'These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation.'"<sup>33</sup> "Day after day, as . . . [Paul and Silas] went to their devotions, . . . [this] woman . . . followed them, crying, 'These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation.' This woman was a special agent of Satan; and, as the devils were troubled by the presence of Christ, so the evil spirit which possessed her was ill at ease in the presence of the apostles. Satan knew that his kingdom was invaded, and took this way of opposing the work of the ministers of God. The words of recommendation uttered by this woman were an injury to the cause, distracting the minds of the people from the truths presented to them, and throwing disrepute upon the work by causing people to believe that the men who spoke with the Spirit and power of God were actuated by the same spirit as this emissary of Satan."<sup>g</sup>

"The apostles endured this opposition for several days; then Paul, under inspiration of the Spirit of God, commanded the evil spirit to leave the woman. Satan was thus met and rebuked. The immediate and continued silence of the woman testified that the apostles were the servants of God, and that the demon had acknowledged them to be such, and had obeyed their command. When the woman was dispossessed of the spirit of the devil, and restored to herself, her masters were alarmed for their craft."<sup>34</sup>

"After the woman had been freed from the evil spirit, she became a follower of Christ. Her masters saw that their hope of gain was gone, and taking Paul and Silas, they brought them before the rulers, charging them with troubling the city. This caused an uproar. The multitude rose against the disciples, and the magistrates commanded that the prisoners should be beaten."<sup>35</sup>

"When . . . [the civil authorities] had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely, who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison and

g. This episode of demon possession is a case study in how Satan sometimes operates behind the scenes to cause confusion. In this instance the demon's purpose was to lead the Philippians to think that the evil spirit that controlled this woman was the same as the Holy Spirit whom Paul served. Satan frequently uses this tactic today, and it behooves us to understand his modus operandi.

made their feet fast in the stocks. But the angels of God accompanied them within the prison walls.”<sup>36</sup>

“The apostles suffered extreme torture because of the painful position in which they were left, but they did not murmur. Instead, in the utter darkness and desolation of the dungeon, they encouraged each other by words of prayer and sang praises to God because they were found worthy to suffer shame for His sake. . . . With astonishment the other prisoners heard the sound of prayer and singing issuing from the inner prison.”<sup>37</sup> Through their witness, the prison inmates, and the jailer and his family learned something of the way of salvation.

“While . . . [the city fathers] were cruel and vindictive, or criminally negligent of the solemn responsibilities devolving upon them, God had not forgotten to be gracious to His suffering servants. An angel<sup>h</sup> was sent from Heaven to release the apostles. As he neared the Roman prison, the earth trembled beneath his feet, the whole city was shaken by the earthquake, and the prison walls reeled like a reed in the wind. The heavily bolted doors flew open; the chains and fetters fell from the hands and feet of every prisoner,”<sup>38</sup> and, as a result of their witnessing and further instruction, the jailer and his family, and possibly some of the prisoners, became Christians.

### **Paul’s Ministry at Ephesus**

“The apostle Paul, in his labors at Ephesus, was given special tokens of divine favor. The power of God accompanied his efforts, and many were healed of physical maladies. ‘God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: so that from his body were brought unto the sick[,] handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.’

“These manifestations of supernatural power were far more potent than had ever before been witnessed in Ephesus, and were of such a character

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h. AA 215 says that “angels [plural] were sent to visit the prison. At their tread the earth trembled. The heavily bolted prison doors were thrown open; the chains and fetters fell from the hands and feet of the prisoners; and a bright light flooded the prison.” This is not inconsistent with 1SG 96, which says: “Angels of God accompanied . . . [the apostles] within the prison walls.” These angels were present when the angel from heaven descended to liberate the apostles, and simply joined the angel from heaven in causing the earthquake. Something similar happened at Christ’s resurrection. See footnotes k and l on p. 193.

that they could not be imitated by the skill of the juggler or the enchantments of the sorcerer. As these miracles were wrought in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, the people had opportunity to see that the God of heaven was more powerful than the magicians who were worshipers of the goddess Diana. Thus the Lord exalted His servant, even before the idolaters themselves, immeasurably above the most powerful and favored of the magicians.

“But the One to whom all the spirits of evil are subject and who had given His servants authority over them, was about to bring still greater shame and defeat upon those who despised and profaned His holy name. Sorcery had been prohibited by the Mosaic law, on pain of death, yet from time to time it had been secretly practiced by apostate Jews. At the time of Paul’s visit to Ephesus there were in the city ‘certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists,’ who, seeing the wonders wrought by . . . [Paul], ‘took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus.’ An attempt was made by ‘seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests.’ Finding a man possessed with a demon, they addressed him, ‘We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.’ But ‘the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.’<sup>i</sup> . . .

“Facts which had previously been concealed were now brought to light. In accepting Christianity, some of the believers had not fully renounced their superstitions. To some extent they still continued the practice of magic. Now, convinced of their error, ‘many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds.’ Even to some of the sorcerers themselves the good work extended; and ‘many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men.’ . . . These treatises on divination contained rules and forms of communication with evil spirits. They were the regulations of the worship of Satan—directions

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i. This episode should be a warning to those who engage in sessions of exorcism. Casting out evil spirits is a serious matter and should not be entered into lightly. If we are *confronted* with a situation that demands action, we must ever bear in mind that God does the casting out, not we, and that some, perhaps all, cases of demon possession require “fasting” as well as “prayer” (Matt. 17:21). We are warned that “we are none of us to *seek* to cast out devils, lest we ourselves be cast out” (Lt 96, 1900, quoted in 13MR 324, emphasis supplied). See footnote dd on p. 201.

for soliciting his help and obtaining information from him.”<sup>39</sup>

“This portion of [Christian] history has been written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. The Ephesians claimed to have intercourse with invisible beings, from whom they derived their knowledge of that which was to come to pass. In our day this communion with spirits is called Spiritualism, and the arts practiced by mediums are not all slight of hand, cunning, and pretense. The visible and invisible worlds are in close connection. Satan is the master deceiver, and his confederates in evil are in training under him to work in the same line in which he works. The apostle [Paul, writing to the Ephesians] says, ‘We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day.’”<sup>40</sup>

#### **Paul the Prisoner Attended by Angels**

“[Paul, the] aged prisoner, standing chained to his soldier guard, presented nothing imposing or attractive in his dress or appearance, that the world should pay him homage. Yet this man, apparently without friends or wealth or position, had an escort that worldlings could not see. Angels of heaven were his attendants. Had the glory of one of those shining messengers flashed forth, the pomp and pride of royalty would have paled before it; king and courtiers would have been stricken to the earth. . . . All heaven was interested in this one man, now held a prisoner for his faith in the Son of God.”<sup>41</sup>

#### **An Angel Assures Paul in His Voyage to Rome**

“[Paul’s] voyage [to Rome with his fellow-prisoners] began prosperously, and the day after they started, they cast anchor in the harbor of Sidon. Here Julius, the centurion who had listened to the apostle’s address before Agrippa, and had thus been favorably disposed toward him, . . . ‘gave him liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself.’ . . .

“Upon leaving Sidon, the ship encountered contrary winds, and . . . its progress was very slow. At Myra, . . . the centurion found a large Alexandrian ship, bound for . . . Italy, and to this he immediately transferred his prisoners. . . . At Fair Havens they were compelled to remain for some time. . . . The . . . question now to be decided was, whether to stay where they were or attempt to reach a more favorable place to spend the winter.

“The matter was earnestly discussed. . . . The apostle . . . advised . . . they remain where they were. . . . But the owner of the ship . . . and the majority of passengers and crew, were unwilling to accept this counsel. . . . The centurion decided to follow the judgment of the majority. Accordingly, . . . they set sail from Fair Havens. . . . All were now rejoicing that they had not followed the advice of Paul: but their hopes were destined to be speedily disappointed.

“They had not proceeded far, when a tempestuous wind . . . burst upon them with merciless fury. From the first moment that the wind struck the vessel, its condition was hopeless. . . . A gloomy apathy settled upon those three hundred souls, as for fourteen days they drifted, helpless and hopeless, under a sunless and starless heaven. . . . In the midst of that terrible scene, the apostle retained his calmness and courage. Notwithstanding he was physically the greatest sufferer of them all, he had words of hope for the darkest hour. . . . When there was a lull in the tempest, . . . he stood forth on the deck and said:

“ ‘Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete. . . . And now I exhort you to be of good cheer; for there shall be no loss of any man’s life among you, but . . . the ship [will be lost]. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar; and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer. . . .’

“At these words hope revived. Passengers and crew roused from their apathy, and put forth all possible exertion to save their lives.”<sup>42</sup>

#### **Angels and the Siege of Jerusalem**

“The long-suffering of God toward Jerusalem, only confirmed the Jews in their stubborn impenitence. In their hatred and cruelty toward the disciples of Jesus, they rejected the last offer of mercy. Then God withdrew His protection from them, and removed His restraining power from Satan and his angels, and the nation was left to the control of the leader she had chosen. Her children had spurned the grace of Christ, which would have enabled them to subdue their evil impulses, and now these became the conquerors. Satan aroused the fiercest and most debased passions of the soul. Men did not reason; they were beyond reason—controlled by impulse and blind rage. They became satanic in their cruelty. . . . Satan was at the head of the nation, and the highest civil and religious authorities were under his sway.”<sup>43</sup>

### Signs in the Heavens Over Jerusalem

"All the predictions given by Christ concerning the destruction of Jerusalem were fulfilled to the letter. . . . Signs and wonders appeared,<sup>j</sup> foreboding disaster and doom. In the midst of the night an unnatural light shone over the temple and the altar. Upon the clouds at sunset were pictured chariots and men of war gathering for battle. The priests ministering by night in the sanctuary were terrified by mysterious sounds; the earth trembled, and a multitude of voices were heard crying, 'Let us depart hence.' The great eastern gate, which was so heavy that it could hardly be shut by a score of men, and which was secured by immense bars of iron fastened deep in the pavement of solid stone, opened at midnight, without visible agency.

"For seven years a man continued to go up and down the streets of Jerusalem, declaring the woes that were to come upon the city. By day and by night he chanted the wild dirge, 'A voice from the east! a voice from the west! a voice from the four winds! a voice against Jerusalem and the temple! a voice against the bridegroom and the bride! a voice against all the people!' This strange being<sup>k</sup> was imprisoned and scourged; but no complaint escaped his lips. To insult and abuse he answered only, 'Woe to Jerusalem! woe, woe to the inhabitants thereof!' His warning cry ceased not until he was slain in the siege he had foretold."<sup>44</sup>

"[During the siege of Jerusalem (A.D. 66-70)] angels of God were sent to do the work of destruction, so that one stone was not left upon another that was not thrown down."<sup>45</sup>

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j. Christ predicted, there "shall arise false Christs and false prophets" (Matt. 24:24). False Christs and false prophets did arise, and in connection with them, signs and wonders appeared, which seemed to support Christ's prediction. But these were not from God. They were produced by Satan to confuse and mislead.

Especially in these last days we need spiritual discernment to understand how Satan works, for he will use similar ploys in the future. See footnote g on p. 213 for another example of how Satan works. See footnote k below and footnote i on p. 121 for examples of how Satan treats his captives.

k. The prediction of this "strange being," although true, was not from God. It was from Satan; for, "not one Christian perished in the destruction of Jerusalem" (GC 30), and this "man . . . was slain in the siege he had foretold." See footnote j above.

### Angels and John the Revelator

"Of Gabriel the Saviour speaks in the Revelation, saying that 'He [Christ] sent and signified it by His angel<sup>l</sup> unto His servant John.' Rev. 1:1. And to John the angel declared, 'I am a fellow servant with thee and with thy brethren the prophets.' Rev. 22:9, R.V. Wonderful thought—that the angel who stands next in honor to the Son of God is the one chosen<sup>m</sup> to open the purposes of God to sinful men."<sup>46</sup>

"God had a special work for . . . [John the Revelator] to accomplish. Satan was determined to hinder this work, and he led on his servants to destroy John.<sup>n</sup> But God sent His angel<sup>o</sup> and wonderfully preserved him. All who witnessed the great power of God manifested in the deliverance of John, were astonished, and many were convinced that God was with him, and that the testimony which he bore concerning Jesus was correct. Those who sought to destroy him were afraid to again attempt to take his life, and he was permitted to suffer on for Jesus. He was falsely accused by his enemies, and was shortly banished to a lonely island [Patmos], where the Lord sent His angel<sup>p</sup> to reveal to him things which were to take place upon the earth, and the state of the church down through to the end; her backslidings, and the position the church should occupy if she would please God, and finally overcome.

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l. When the inspired writings speak of "His angel," they usually refer to Gabriel, Christ's special angel. However, see footnotes m and o below. For the probable reason Gabriel was chosen to be Christ's special angel, see p. 36.

m. Although Gabriel is the angel chosen by God to open His purposes to sinful men, he is not the only angel engaged in disclosing God's plans to the prophets. See footnote q on p. 143. Gabriel's companion, the second covering cherub is also used by God to communicate with the prophets, and so is Christ; for, "the mighty angel [in Rev. 10:1] who instructed John [the Revelator] was no less a personage than Jesus Christ" (Ms. 59, 1900, quoted in 7BC 971).

Thus, while God the Father is free to use any angel He chooses, Gabriel is "Heaven's delegated messenger" (RH Feb. 8, 1881), the one especially "chosen" for this purpose (DA 99).

n. AA 570, says that "John was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil; but the Lord preserved the life of His faithful servant" by sending Gabriel, "His angel," to rescue him. See footnote c on p. 137 for "His angel" rescuing Daniel in the lion's den.

o. "His angel" is Gabriel. See footnote m above in this chapter. See also Ch. 3, pp. 35-39, for information concerning the reason for Gabriel's being called "His angel"—Christ's special angel.

p. "His angel," in other words, Gabriel. See DA 99, quoted on this page.

“The angel from heaven<sup>q</sup> came to John in majesty. His countenance beamed with the excellent glory of heaven. He revealed to John scenes of deep and thrilling interest concerning the church of God, and brought before him the perilous conflicts they were to endure. John saw . . . [the people of God] pass through fiery trials, and made white and tried, and, finally, victorious overcomers, gloriously saved in the kingdom of God. The countenance of the angel grew radiant with joy, and was exceeding glorious, as he showed to John the final triumph of the church of God.

“John was enraptured as he beheld the final deliverance of the church, and as he was carried away with the glory of the scene, with deep reverence and awe he fell at the feet of the angel to worship him. The angel instantly raised him up, and gently reproved him, saying, ‘See thou do it not; I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus; worship God;’ for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.’

“The angel then showed John the heavenly city with all its splendor and dazzling glory. John was enraptured and overwhelmed with the glory of the city. He did not bear in mind his former reproof from the angel, but again fell to worship before the feet of the angel, who again gave the gentle reproof, ‘See thou do it not; for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them that keep the sayings of this book; worship God.’”<sup>47</sup>

### **Christ Visits John on Patmos**

“Christ, the royal messenger, came to John when on his sea-bound isle [Patmos], and gave him the most wonderful revelations of Himself, and of what was to take place in the world’s history prior to His second appearing.”<sup>48</sup> (See Rev. 1:12-18 for John’s reaction.)

q. This was Gabriel.

r. Gabriel is not the Holy Spirit, as some have speculated. For example, in 1891 “Brother Chapman” put forth the “idea” of “the Holy Ghost’s not being the Spirit of God, . . . but the angel Gabriel” (Lt 7, 1891, quoted in 14MR 175). The fact that Gabriel, Christ’s special angel, refused worship establishes that he was not Deity. On the other hand, “the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5), did not forbid people from worshiping Him. See Matt. 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; Mark 5:6; John 9:38; etc. For an exception, see John 20:17.

s. John the Revelator “was visited by Christ, whom he had not seen [in person] since the ascension” (RH May 16, 1899). “It was . . . [o]n the Sabbath . . . [the day of the Lord {Rev. 1:10}, that] the risen Saviour made His presence known to John” (YI April 5, 1900). “But Oh, how changed is His appearance! John had seen him clothed in an old purple robe and crowned with thorns. Now He is clothed with a garment of heavenly brightness, and girt about with a golden girdle” (Ms 99, 1902, quoted in 7BC 955), and John “fell at his feet as one dead” (Rev. 1:17). See footnote h on p. 139.

“The mighty angel who instructed John [in Rev. 10] was no less a personage than Jesus Christ. Setting His right foot on the sea, and His left upon the dry land, shows the part which He is acting in the closing scenes of the great controversy with Satan. This position denotes His supreme power and authority over the whole earth. The controversy has waxed stronger and more determined from age to age, and will continue to do so, to the concluding scenes when the masterly working of the powers of darkness shall reach their height. Satan, united with evil men, will deceive the whole world and the churches who receive not the love of the truth. But the mighty angel demands attention. He cries with a loud voice. He is to show the power and authority of His voice to those who have united with Satan to oppose the truth.”<sup>49</sup>

“The thirteenth chapter of Revelation presents a power that is to be made prominent in these last days. Let all understand that it is Christ, the Captain of the Lord’s host, who gave these visions to John. Christ came in person to the lonely isle of Patmos, and showed John the things that must be, [things] that were of the highest importance to His people, through the person of His highest angels.”<sup>50</sup>

“All the heavenly universe saw the result of the conflict with the aged disciple and his separation from his companions in the faith. God and Christ and the heavenly host were John’s companions on the Isle of Patmos. From them he received instruction which he imparted to those separated with him from the world.”<sup>51</sup>

### **The Three Angels of Revelation 14**

“Christ is coming the second time, with power unto salvation. To prepare human beings for this event, He has sent the first, second, and third angels’ messages. These angels represent those who receive the truth, and with power open the gospel to the world.”<sup>52</sup>

t. The book of Revelation contains numerous references to angels, some of them are literal angels, some symbolic, and some both literal and symbolic. Thus, the third angel of Rev. 14:9 symbolizes the people who bear the message of Rev. 14:9 (see Lt 1f, 1890, quoted in 3SM 405). At the same time he is “the third angel [who] is binding or sealing . . . [God’s people] for the heavenly garner” (EW 89). He is the angel who reports that his sealing work is done (see GC 613). Thus, the third angel is also the sealing angel. Concerning the sealing angel, TM 444, 445 says, “The . . . mightiest of angels has in his hand the seal of the living God. . . . It is the voice of this highest angel that had authority to command the four angels to keep in check the four winds until this work was performed.” Hence, Gabriel is not only the third angel of Rev. 14, but he is also the angel with the seal of God. Cf. Eze. 28:12, NASB.



### **Angels in the Middle Ages**

"In the thirteenth century<sup>u</sup> was established that most terrible of all the engines of the papacy—the Inquisition. The prince of darkness wrought with the leaders of the papal hierarchy. In their secret councils, Satan and his angels controlled the minds of evil men, while unseen in the midst stood an angel of God, taking the fearful record of their iniquitous decrees and writing the history of deeds too horrible to appear to human eyes."<sup>53</sup>

### **The Protestant Reformation**

"The banner of the ruler of the synagogue of Satan was lifted high, and error apparently marched in triumph, and the reformers, through the grace given them of God, waged a successful warfare against the hosts of darkness. Events in the history of the reformers have been presented before me. I know that the Lord Jesus and His angels have with intense interest watched the battle against the power of Satan, who combined his hosts with evil men, for the purpose of extinguishing the divine light."<sup>54</sup>

### **Angels and Luther**

"While one day examining the books in the library of the university, Luther discovered a Latin Bible. . . . With mingled awe and wonder he turned the sacred pages; with quickened pulse and throbbing heart he read for himself the words of life, pausing now and then to exclaim, 'Oh, if God would give me such a book for my own!' Angels of Heaven were by his side, and rays of light from the throne of God revealed the treasures of truth to his understanding."<sup>55</sup>

"When enemies appealed to custom and tradition, or to the assertions and authority of the pope, Luther met them with the Bible and the Bible alone. Here were arguments which they could not answer; therefore the slaves of formalism and superstition clamored for his blood, . . . but Luther did not fall a prey to their fury. God had a work for him to do, and angels of Heaven were sent to protect him."<sup>56</sup>

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It is this "highest angel," who reports that his sealing work is finished. He is none other than Gabriel (see BE Sept. 3, 1900, and Ms 115, 1897, quoted in 5BC 1110). Thus, Gabriel symbolizes, not only the people giving the message of Rev. 14, but he is the sealing angel. u. From the close of the New Testament until the rise of the Advent movement early in the nineteenth century the inspired writings have little to say about angels.

"[In the face of papal power] here was one lone man who had stirred the rage of priests and people. He was summoned to Augsburg to answer for his faith. He obeyed the summons. Firm and undaunted he stood before those who had caused the world to tremble—a meek lamb surrounded by angry lions—yet for the truth's sake, and for Christ's sake, he stood up undaunted, and with holy eloquence, which the truth can alone inspire, he gave the reasons of his faith.

"They tried various means to silence the bold advocate for truth. They flattered and held out inducements; he should be exalted and honored; but life and honors were valueless to him, if purchased at the sacrifice of the truth. Brighter and clearer shone the word of God upon his understanding, giving him a more vivid sense of the errors, corruptions, and hypocrisy, of the papacy. His enemies sought to intimidate him, and cause him to renounce his faith, but he boldly stood in the defense of the truth. He was ready to die for his faith, if God required; but to yield it—never. God preserved his life. He bade angels attend him, and bring him through the stormy conflict, unharmed, and he baffled the rage and purposes of his enemies."<sup>57</sup>

When Luther appeared before the Diet of Worms, "had the eyes of the assembly been opened, they would have beheld angels of God in the midst of them, shedding beams of light athwart the darkness of error, and opening minds and hearts to the reception of truth."<sup>58</sup>

### **Angels and William Miller**

"God sent His angel to move upon the heart of . . . [William Miller, a New England] farmer who had not believed the Bible, and led him to search the prophecies. Angels of God repeatedly visited that chosen one, and guided his mind, and opened his understanding to prophecies which had ever been dark to God's people. The commencement of the chain of truth was given him, and he was led on to search for link after link, until he looked with wonder and admiration upon the Word of God. . . .

"Angels of God accompanied Wm. Miller in his mission. He was firm and undaunted. He fearlessly proclaimed the message committed to his trust. . . . Although opposed by professed Christians and the world, and buffeted by Satan and his angels, he ceased not to preach the everlasting gospel to crowds wherever he was invited, and sound the cry, 'Fear God and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come.'<sup>59</sup>

"The instigator of all evil sought not only to counteract the effect of the Advent message, but to destroy the messenger himself. Miller made a

practical application of Scripture truth to the hearts of his hearers, reprov- ing their sins and disturbing their self-satisfaction, and his plain and cut- ting words aroused their enmity. The opposition manifested by church- members toward his message, emboldened the baser classes to go to greater lengths; and enemies plotted to take his life as he should leave the place of meeting. But holy angels were in the throng, and one of these, in the form of a man, took the arm of this servant of the Lord, and led him in safety from the angry mob.”<sup>60</sup>

“Many ministers would not accept . . . [Miller’s] saving message them- selves, and those who would receive it, they hindered. The blood of souls is upon them. Preachers and people joined to oppose this message from heaven. They persecuted Wm. Miller, and those who united with him in the work. Falsehoods were circulated to injure his influence, and at differ- ent times after he had plainly declared the counsel of God, applying cut- ting truths to the hearts of his hearers, great rage was kindled against him, and as he left the place of meeting, some waylaid him in order to take his life. But angels of God were sent to preserve his life, and they led him safely away from the angry mob.”<sup>61</sup>

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1. 3SP 275, 276
  2. AA 78
  3. 3SP 278
  4. 1SG 83, 84
  5. AA 80-82
  6. 1SG 85
  7. BE Dec 10, 1900
  8. CC 332
  9. BE Dec 10, 1900
  10. 1SG 89
  11. AA 120
  12. EW 200
  13. AA 120
  14. EW 200
  15. AA 121, 122
  16. AA 124-126
  17. AA 159
  18. AA 133
  19. EGW 88 1746

20. AA 133
21. EGW88 1746
22. RH April 6, 1911
23. RH April 13, 1911
24. RH Oct 10, 1893
25. RH April 13, 1911
26. AA 135
27. Ms 127, 1907, quoted in 6MR 328, 329
28. 3SP 337
29. 5T 748
30. AA 147, 148
31. 3SP 344
32. AA 293
33. AA 211, 212
34. LP 74
35. RH June 29, 1905
36. 1SG 95, 96
37. AA 213, 214
38. 3SP 282, 283
39. AA 286-289
40. YI Nov 16, 1893
41. LP 254
42. LP 263-267
43. 4SP 29, 30
44. GC 30
45. Ms 35, 1906, quoted in 21MR 66
46. DA 99
47. 1SG 130, 131
48. ST Mar 3, 1890
49. Ms 59, 1900, quoted in 7BC 971
50. Ms 139, 1903, quoted in 18MR 33
51. Ms 150, 1899, quoted in 7BC 954
52. Lt 79, 1900, quoted in 7BC 978, 979
53. GC 59
54. Lt 48, 1894, quoted in 3SM 110
55. 4SP 96
56. 4SP 108, 109
57. 4bSG 118, 119
58. 4SP 124
59. 1SG 128, 132
60. GC 336, 337
61. 1SG 136