

## God and His Angelic Host

*Sermon Delivered By James Moriello at Firm Foundation Christian Church,  
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*“At that time, Michael shall stand up...” (Daniel 12:1a)*

We will continue reading from the beginning of our text so that we can get the context of the whole passage: *“the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, every one who is found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.”* (Daniel 12:1b-3). So the context of our passage here in Daniel Chapter Twelve is prophecy relating to the end times. The Archangel Michael—and I call him an Archangel because Jude does—will be used of God to deliver Israel from trouble (Jude 9). God in His revelation through Daniel goes beyond that by speaking of the Resurrection and the individual believers who will be delivered from trouble and everlasting damnation by the gracious intervention of our Mighty God into the affairs of human history (Amen). Indeed, those individuals who have put their faith in God will be raised to eternal life in His presence. In this way, Daniel 12:1-3 is reminiscent of what we talked about last week in Daniel 9:24-27. In both places, God answers the prayer for the nation, but He goes beyond that. He has a plan beyond national deliverance of the nation of Israel. His plan is of individual deliverance of not only those who come to faith in Messiah in Israel, but also those Gentiles who come to faith in Christ through all ages. That was accomplished by the death on the cross of His Son, and His Resurrection prophesied of here—which was His victory over death (1 Corinthians 15:54-55).

I am now going to give you a little bit of a primer on angels throughout Scripture. We are going to go through relatively quickly. Angels appear on the scene throughout Scripture from Genesis all the way through Revelation. However, there is relatively little information given about angels themselves. There is no extended chapter in the Bible that teaches the doctrine of Angelology in its entirety apart from a particular context. So we are going to be cautious here because the Scripture says that *“the secret things belong to the LORD”* (Deuteronomy 29:29). What God hasn't revealed, we don't need to know in order to understand the fullness of the Christian faith as God has designed for it to be revealed to us. What we do know is that angels are created beings (Psalm 148:1-5). Angels are not eternal beings—only God is eternal (God in all His Fullness: God the Father, God the Son, and God the

Holy Spirit). God is eternal while angels were created at a point in time. We already have Lucifer the Devil in the Garden tempting Eve very early on, so he already exists in Genesis 3. It (the creation of angels) had to have occurred either in the first five days of the creation account or at some point before that. We can only theorize since God's Word is not dogmatic on the subject. Why were angels created? I suppose we could come up with dozens of reasons why they were created. But let's just break it down to two. First, angels were created to worship God, just like we are. In fact, everything God has created was created for the purpose of testifying to His goodness and His love. Second, angels were created to be ministering spirits to those on earth—specifically in what we might call 'time as we know it'. This has a number of different facets to it including being angelic messengers, declaring and executing God's judgment, and also working individually in our lives—which we're going to talk about in some detail when we get to the application part of our message. Although innumerable angels inhabit the heavenly realm (the spirit world, if you will), on rare occasions they are manifested visibly on earth. When they are manifested visibly on earth, they are always manifested in the male gender. Angels, strictly speaking, are asexual. That is, they do not marry and are not given in marriage (Matthew 22:30). Some angels are winged. For instance, seraphim are found in Isaiah 6 in the throne room of God. They are said to be angelic beings—winged angels. Some angels are winged, but probably not all. Angels are moral creatures with intelligence and a will. Some angels are called elect and some are considered fallen after the order of Lucifer (1 Timothy 5:21; Luke 10:18). The amazing thing though is that no provision was made for the sin of angels. Jesus Christ came down and He died for sinners—sinful men and women of the human race made in His likeness and image (Romans 5:8; Genesis 1:26-27). But He did not die for angels, and so the fallen angels do not have any atonement provided for them and their sin. And so fallen they will remain to wreak havoc throughout time as we know it until they finally meet their end. For instance, the angels who kept not their first estate are chained up in Tartarus, a holding compartment for fallen angels (Jude 6). Now humans are given a second chance, and a third chance, and a fourth chance, and a fifth chance. We have the God of many chances. Praise God for that! Praise God for that! Anytime we get on the boat sailing out to Tarshish, God has a boat for us to bring us back. Now all of these things are very interesting--this teaching about angels. One of the reasons we gather here together for corporate worship is to be instructed in the Word of God and to have the sense of it expounded. But knowledge without application is not going to do a whole lot of good, so I am going to suggest to you some applications this morning. The first application is twofold. **Angels are active in human affairs.** First, they are active in the macro picture—the big picture. Second, the angels are active on the micro level—in individual lives. Secondly, God's love is shown in their activities. **God's love is shown in the activities of angels.** I will tell you why I say that. Then we are going to conclude

with the point—the point of everything—that ***angels are never to be worshipped, for only God is worthy.***

First, angels are active in human affairs. Now our text is just one of many places in Scripture where angels are involved either directly or indirectly in human affairs. Michael is the protector of Israel here in Daniel Chapter Twelve, and again in Revelation Chapter Twelve. That is another passage referring to Michael the Archangel. And by the way, Michael is the head of the angels. In God's Kingdom everything is done decently and in order, for a kingdom divided against itself will not stand. Let us read the account given in the first twelve verses of the twelfth chapter of Revelation. *“Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth. And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne. Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days. And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, “Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time”*” (Revelation 12:1-12). Here we have Michael the Archangel and his angels in heaven active in human affairs. They are active in spiritual warfare and in human affairs as well. Now this woman that we find in Revelation Chapter Twelve is not Mary as some teach, but she represents Israel. This is the one who has a garland of twelve stars representing the twelve tribes of Israel. She is the one from whose loins would come the Child who would rule all nations with a rod of iron. This is the definition of Jesus Christ—the victorious Jesus Christ in His Second Advent. The woman who has fled to the wilderness is Israel in the second half of the Tribulation—the 1,260 days, or three and one half years during which time they go to the place God has prepared for her. There is good evidence that this place is Bozrah (in the Hebrew) or Petra (in the Greek) from the writings of the Minor Prophets. That aside, the point is that angels

are seen here involved in human affairs on a macro level. Angels are active in the cosmic struggle of good versus evil. Which side are you on in the warfare? You are on one side or the other, or you are in no man's land. You might as well be in the enemy camp if you are in no man's land—you will be caught in the crossfire. Which camp are you in? Notice in verse four the reference to Satan's rebellion. One third of the stars of heaven (a euphemism for angels) are cast down to the earth. And so we see here that two thirds of the angels (I believe the best way to interpret this, but hesitate from being too dogmatic on this) stick with the true God Yah and the other third follow Lucifer and that little prideful thing that he's got going on relating to opposition to God. And so the holy angels outnumber Lucifer and his angels two to one. God's angels outnumber the devil and his angels two to one. Even better than that, he (the devil) is outnumbered when it comes to 'Gods' one to nothing. One to zip. This is a shutout. Two to one with the angels. Then one to nothing. Victory is sure, my friends. No overtime, no overtime in this battle—the cosmic battle between good and evil. Therefore, if God be with you, who can be against you, be it people, or principalities, or powers? (Romans 8:31). So the devil doesn't have any power over you unless you invite him in, or unless you play games with him and the things that he holds out there for you. Those things God allows that you might be tested and (in passing the test), your faith (in Christ) might be vindicated. That's God's perfect will through the testing. But beware of taking this too far. Beware of trying to take on the devil and his angels yourself. You see, he's been about this business for six thousand years. He's got a little bit of practice, you've only got a few decades (of practice). The Sons of Sceva learned this the hard way. And even the Archangel Michael, when the dispute arose about the body of Moses, the Archangel Michael said to Satan, "*The Lord rebuke thee.*" (Jude 9). He wasn't going to take (the devil) on one on one. He looked right to God and He appealed to the All-Powerful God, the One Who has Satan beat one to nothing, to rebuke the devil. Now you've got people running around today trying to rebuke the devil themselves. Anybody who does that acts foolishly for they know not what they are dealing with. Instead, look towards Him. Boldly approach the throne of God in your time of testing (Hebrews 4:16). Don't try to take evil on by yourself, because without Christ you can do nothing (John 15:5). You have no power in yourself. Your power is derived from Him. There is nothing in ourselves. Now having looked at the angelic activity in the big picture, let's now turn to their activities in individual lives. Personal angelic activity is generally unseen and unnoticed by us in time. Now we've got a couple examples from the Old Testament that we'll look at. There's the visible example of the angels who visited Abraham and Sarah and provided encouragement in their faith, fellowship in their time of need, and revealed to them the coming judgment for the sin of Sodom: namely homosexuality (Genesis 18-19). There is also the invisible example where Job is tested for the purpose of strengthening his faith and (his) going on the witness stand to prove the righteousness and faithfulness of God before the angels in heaven (Job 1). Then in the New Testament we have Gabriel making his

announcement to Mary that she will soon have a supernatural kind of conception—the virgin birth. We have the messenger angel who proclaimed to the shepherds in the fields the glorious birth of our Savior Jesus Christ (Luke 2:8-14). And the heavenly host were right there to praise and proclaim the goodness of God through it all. These things affirm angelic intervention into human affairs on an individual level. Now what about ‘Touched by an Angel’—we all love ‘Touched by an Angel’. Tess and Monica and Raphael are not mentioned in the pages of Scripture. Neither is Andrew for that matter. But there is a little bit of truth in that show. There are some things in there that do line up with the Scriptures. You never know when angels just might show up at your doorstep as they did with Abraham (Hebrews 13:2). I was watching one of these things on television years back. They had (the actor who portrayed) Andrew on there and he tells this very interesting story. He would get on a plane and he would fly all over the country to get on these sets. Every time he would get on a plane, he would sit down and take the window seat. Then some man or woman who has seen ‘Touched by an Angel’ a couple times would sit down right next to him and they would look to their left and (unsettled) would kind of inch over and then they would move to the seat across. Then after awhile, the whole area where he was sitting would be cleared out. People would be looking around saying ‘I wonder who it is (that he is coming to take home)’. There is a little bit of truth to this angel of death concept because one of the ministries of angels according to our Lord Jesus Christ is to carry the Christian to heaven at their death. We find this in that passage about Lazarus and the rich man. We read that he (Lazarus) is carried away to heaven by the holy angels (Luke 16:22). So not only is Jesus Christ Himself with us. When we die, we go into the very presence of Christ (Luke 23:43). We are carried there by angels right into the presence of God. Abraham’s bosom is the euphemism that is used here. It is an Old Testament euphemism (I’m simplifying here a little bit) for heaven, the place where God is. People have complicated this to death with the different compartments of heaven and all of this sort of thing but suffice it to say (believers go to) the place where God is; heaven. What about guardian angels? This is one of those areas where the I don’t think the Scripture gives us sufficient evidence. We can’t prove guardian angels per se from the Scriptures. We find some allusions (to guardian angels), or what you might call in a court of law circumstantial evidence. Psalm 91:11 talks about angels having charge over us in a very personal sense—making sure we don’t dash our foot upon a stone. By the way, this is the same passage that Jesus was tempted with (Psalm 91 has Messianic applications). He was tempted to throw Himself down from that temple and He won’t dash His foot against a stone (Luke 4:9). This is one of temptations that the Adversary put to Him. But nevertheless, it is a comforting and encouraging thought that there are innumerable angels all around that God has sent to us as ministering spirits for those who will inherit salvation (Hebrews 1:14,12:22).

Second point: God's love is shown in their (angelic) activities. Generally speaking (with regard to angels), God's love is shown in the two major Dispensations, the events of which are recorded in the Bible. The first is the Dispensation of the Law beginning with the giving of the Law of Moses and ending with the Dispensation of Grace which was ushered in by the great work wrought by our Savior. The Law was received and mediated by angels. Now we don't find this written in the Holy Writ in Exodus, but we do find it in Stephen's testimonial (Acts 7:53). Now angels mediated the law which does a couple of things. It causes us to realize that we are sinners. Then once we get past that—once we get past the 'I'm all that' stage, it causes us to ask who is all that and go looking for that Savior and to seek His salvation and redemption. So the law is in essence a ministry of grace—our schoolmaster, our tutor to lead us to Christ (Galatians 3:24). The law was to lead the Old Testament saints to faith and trust in God's promises of the coming Messiah and Deliverer and Savior. Again, God's love is shown in the activities of angels in the message of grace given by angels to (Mary and) the shepherds in the fields—and we already alluded to that. God's love is shown in the activities of angels personally. Angels are "*ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation*" (Hebrews 1:14). Our inheritance is with Christ. Our inheritance is in the heavenlies. If you are saved, my friend, and you have come to a personal knowledge and a heart trust—putting all your eggs in one basket; if you have put them in the place of the Person of Jesus Christ, (then) God has poured out His love on you (John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8-9). Angels, I believe, minister in helping us get to that spiritual place (of knowing Jesus) and helping us move along in our spiritual life. God uses angels as ministering spirits in the sanctification process as we go along in our (Christian) lives. The other thing we can say about angels is that they may intervene in all kinds of ways but they will always intervene in a way consistent with Scripture. God Himself will never act in a way contrary to Scripture and neither would He appoint an angel to do something in a way that compromises His Holiness in any way or points us away from Him. So we have to be careful not to get to the point where we think a little bit too much of angels. Many people have come to the place where they have had this miraculous experience, or awakening, or whatever. Then they say 'I saw this angel, and I do believe (in angels) because of my experience'. That is all well and good, but know that the devil is the master deceiver and the master counterfeiter and the master duplicator. In fact, he himself is called (in the sense of counterfeiting) an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14). Therefore, many times these experiences are not of God, but they are actually demonically inspired in that they point the faith of people away from God and towards the supernatural in general—especially in unsaved people. Then the unsaved person thinks that they have faith in God because they connect angels to God in an intellectual way (only), but they really don't (have saving faith). They have faith in that particular experience and they say 'yes, I believe in angels', but they don't go further than that. They don't say 'I believe in Christ, and I believe that He died for me, and I believe that He rose

again, and I believe that He is seated at the right hand of power, and I believe that He intercedes for me, and I believe that when He said He made a place for me in heaven that He did it'. They (that don't apprehend these things by faith) don't get past this point and fall short of salvation. So be careful, and warn others who may be on that path where they are worshipping the angels or they are thinking a little bit too much of the supernatural to the exclusion of the Christ—the One who created all things both natural and supernatural. This leads us to our final point in closing.

Angels are never to be worshipped. Only God is worthy to be worshipped. Angels are created beings just like us and every time in Scripture when someone went to worship an angel, the angel turned around and said 'get up'. For it is written: "*You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for you created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created*" (Revelation 4:11). Good evangelism lesson! When you find someone worshipping something else, point them to Christ, the One who will never, never let them down. He is the One we can trust even to the grave and beyond. I hope this time, this teaching, and these applications were profitable to you (spiritually). As with every message and everything we do here (at Firm Foundation), I pray that the result is that it gets you more hooked on Christ, more in love with Him, and living closer to Him. May we live ever closer to Jesus Christ, the One who paid the ultimate penalty for us, and who loves us. Amen.