

## INTRODUCTION

Today I'll be bringing you the fourth and final message in the series Angels All Around Us. I hope that during this study you have been informed to understand the Bible, the Word of God, has much to say about angels and about how people in their everyday walk of life have had many experiences in which they think they encountered an angelic being. In the first message we talked about all the fantasies and the facts about angels. Much of what people in America believe about angels is based more on folklore and superstition than the word of God. As I have shared with you there will continue to be in the months and years to come a profusion of books and interest on angels, but we must be careful that we make sure all the things we are hearing about angels line up with the inspired word of God. A lot of the stories we hear are just amazingly fantastic and plug more in to what you might call reincarnation or spiritism so we've got to be careful to judge every account in light of God's word. We also learned angels have a wonderful ministry to us. They protect us; they work with us; they deliver God's messages to us; and last week we learned about how angels ministered with and to the Lord Jesus Christ. I told you a couple of weeks ago that one of the main roles angels play is delivering messages. The word *angel* means "messenger."

Today I'd like to talk to you about "The Message of Angels." Some time ago I asked the computer software program I have called, "Quickverse," to print out every verse in the Old Testament and New Testament that had anything to say about angel, angels, cherubim, seraphim, spirits and thirty-five pages later, single-spaced, I had a thick stack of pages of every verse in the Bible that spoke about angels. I went through and highlighted every time an angel spoke and I was looking for some kind of a trend. I believe I found it. There are three messages that seem to appear over and over in the word of God that angels give.

## MESSAGE #3: SPEAK UP

We're going to do the opposite of a countdown to the top forty. We're going to do a countdown to the top three messages in terms of prevalence in the word of God. The first thing we're going to talk about is the message angels give in the Bible that is the third most common and that is the message, "Speak up!" We'll read about one incident where an angel gave directions to "speak up" for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 5:17-20. "Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out. 'Go, stand in the temple courts,' he said, 'and tell the people the full message of this new life.'"

You'll notice the angel came in the middle of the night and we're going to learn today that that's when angels do a lot of their work. But in the middle of the night the angel came, woke them up, delivered them from prison and then he delivered this message. He said, "I want you to go and stand and speak up. Tell people about what Jesus Christ has done for you." As you study the word of God, you'll find that many times angels have told people to go and speak up for Christ. I told you earlier in this study that angels do not preach the gospel to lost people, because angels

don't understand the gospel. They've never been lost; they've never been saved, and so, it would be wonderful it would be easier for us if God would just send evangelistic angels all throughout the world and preach the gospel, but he doesn't do that. We're the ones to preach the gospel. Sometimes angels come to us and whisper in our ear—sometimes audibly sometimes in our spiritual ear—"Speak a word for the Lord Jesus Christ." That's what the angel told Peter and John and the others. If you'll look at this message, you'll notice we see a trend in two different directions.

### **a. A Christian may be directed to speak to an unbeliever**

First of all sometimes a Christian may be directed to speak to an unbeliever. Turn to Acts chapter 8. By the way, all of our scriptures today are in the book of Acts, all that have to do with angels. And these three messages are found in Acts. We see Philip, one of the seven deacons, was given a message by an angel.

Acts 8:26. "Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, 'Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.'"

If we took the time to read all of it, you'll know he went down there and was directed toward a eunuch, a man from Africa, and the angel wanted him to go and tell that man about Jesus Christ. If you'll look down at verse 29, it says, "The Spirit told Philip..." Spirit may be capitalized and, indeed, it may be the Holy Spirit, but in keeping with the context chances are it's talking about this ministering spirit who was the one giving him the message. Verse 26 tells us specifically it was an angel. The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stand near it."

Acts 8:30-31, 35. "Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. 'Do you understand what you are reading?' Philip asked. 'How can I,' he said, 'unless someone explains it to me?' So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. the man read from the book of Isaiah...Then Philip began at that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus."

Sometimes an angel directs a believer to go to an unbeliever and speak to them. Have you ever in your daily routine looked at somebody and wondered "I wonder if that person knows Jesus Christ?" And you heard a voice that seemed to say to you, "Why don't you speak to that person about Christ." I've heard that voice many times and whether it's the Holy Spirit or whether it's a ministering spirit—it doesn't matter. God is trying to direct us many times to speak to people about Jesus Christ. So, first of all sometimes an angel may direct a believer to speak to an unbeliever.

### **b. An unbeliever may be directed to seek a Christian**

But the second point about this, and it is very interesting, is an unbeliever may be directed by an angel to seek a Christian. It's interesting how God orchestrates rendezvous between two people.

Acts 10:1-2. "At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he

gave generously to those in need and they prayed to God regularly."

He sounds like a pretty good man, doesn't he? But the Bible specifically says this man was not a Christian. He wasn't saved yet! Look at it again, because there are some people who think they are devout, God-fearing and give money and pray, thinking surely they are a Christian. You can do all those things and still not be born-again.

Acts 10:3-5. "One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, 'Cornelius!' Cornelius stared at him in fear. 'What is it, Lord?' he asked. The angel answered, 'Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial before God. Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter.'"

We can stop there, but I want you to understand what's happening. The angel directed Philip to go and speak to an unbeliever, but also in this incident an angel directed a lost person, Cornelius, to seek a Christian, for that Christian to come and preach to him. As I said earlier why didn't that angel who appeared to Cornelius just say, "Cornelius, all that sin and come short of the glory of God the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Cornelius, as many as received him to them gave you the power to become the sons of God. Cornelius, if you will just repent of your sins, place your faith in Jesus Christ and make Jesus your Lord, you, Cornelius, can be saved." Why didn't the angel give that message? Because that is not the job of angels— that's *our* job—and angels may even sometimes direct lost people to us.

One night I was out visiting as part of a CWT (Continuing Witness Training) and we went to a home and nobody was there. But as I was walking away from the house, I heard a voice as clear as I have ever heard a voice that said, "Go to the house next door." So I went to the house next door, not knowing who was there and knocked. An elderly man came to the door and we told him we were visiting from the church and asked him if we could speak to him. He was very kind and said, "Come on in." We went in and began to share the gospel with him. For those of you who have been through CWT, it was kind of like the film; it went so perfect, you couldn't believe it. He just was so hungry to receive Christ. We led him through the plan of salvation and he prayed and he invited Jesus to come into his heart. After we had finished and given him a little tract, "Welcome To God's Family," he said, "Now I want to tell you something. Last week I went to the doctor and the doctor x-rayed my chest and he told me that he found a spot on my lungs." and the man said, "I was so afraid that night I laid in bed and I looked up at the ceiling and I said, "God, I don't even know who you are or where you are, but I'm in trouble. Would you send somebody to tell me how I can get right?" Isn't that amazing? I wasn't even going to that house but as we were leaving the house where nobody was home, it was as if God directed us to go to that home next door. Sometimes God does that. The incidences we have in our lives that sometimes we don't know what caused it sometimes if we look back and we are very careful, it might have been the voice of an angel.

Let me give you another incident in my life where it seemed like an angel seemed to tell me to speak up to go and speak to somebody. When I was a senior at Sanford University, my wife, Cindy had already graduated from Auburn and was teaching Special Education while I was finishing my last year of college. On the weekends we drove to Prattville, Alabama where I was

Minister of Youth at First Baptist Church. One week, some of my preacher boys from that church—high school students who'd surrendered to preach—came up to Sanford to visit. We were driving down the big, main highway in front of the university and as we were approaching a main intersection, we were stopped and traffic was backed up. About a quarter of a mile in the distance we could see all kinds of emergency vehicles: fire trucks, ambulances, police cars. It is against my nature to be what's called a "rubbernecker," you know someone who goes by a wreck and stops and looks. I usually try to stay out of the way and let those trained personnel take care of those kinds of things. I've never stopped at any kind of an accident unless I happen to be the very first one there or see it happen. I stay out of the way. But on that particular afternoon as we stopped a voice seemed to say to me, "Go up there, you are needed," and I couldn't even see what was happening up there.

I've got to give you a little background so this will make sense to you. Once a week, Cindy and I had a Bible Study in our married students' apartment and some of the kids from our church in Prattville, who were now students at Sanford, would come and bring their friends. One of the friends that one of the girls brought, Sandy, was from Talladega, Alabama. She was coming to our Bible Study and we got to know her. She was a freshman. Well, I don't know why, but for some reason I got out of my car and these two preacher boys got out with me. We walked a quarter of a mile up there and there was a bridge. As we walked up there, we saw a car had gone off the road, missed the bridge and was in the water with its wheels sticking up and the water was covering everything except the very bottom of the car which was sticking up. I wondered how anybody could get out of that and even survive. After I looked at that, I looked over at the fire truck and there seated on its step talking to a fireman and an EMT was a girl with a blanket wrapped around her and she was weeping. I looked at her and she looked up at me and immediately I recognized her: It was Sandy, the girl who'd come to our Bible Study. She was just beside herself she was so nervous she was crying and the moment she saw me it was a friendly face and she jumped up and she rushed over to me and I hugged her and she was just crying. The EMT said, "Do you know her?" and I said, "Yes, sir." They had already checked her and physically there was nothing wrong with her and she was so relieved somebody she knew was there who could give her comfort and strength and could take her back to school. It seemed as if God knew I was there and that she needed somebody she knew, so I walked up there and I said, "Is there anything I can do to help?" I was needed at that place and I had never, and I don't guess since, have ever had that kind of voice before.

But you know that's really not the most amazing thing about that incident. Sandy said as she missed the bridge and her car was going off, falling into the water, she said she felt hands under her arms pulling her out of the car. The amazing thing was her hair was not wet, her clothes were not wet, I don't know any way she could have gotten out and to this day she doesn't know how she got out of that car—but she believes God miraculously delivered her. You say, "Well, that was just coincidence. It was just hysteria at a tragedy like that." Well she happened to believe God delivered her and I happened to believe God delivered me a message to go up there and to help her. So sometimes angels say, "Speak up!" So, listen. Sometimes an angel may be directing you to speak to somebody.

## **MESSAGE #2: WAKE UP!**

Here's message number two in prevalence: "Wake up!" Remember I told you, ladies, that you're no more like an angel than when you punch your husband in the ribs and say, "Wake up!" during church. I want you to notice there is a direct correlation between the activity of angels and the prayers of God's people.

Acts 12:5. "So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him. The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side [the King James Version says, "he smote him." Basically, the angel just poked him in the ribs] and woke him up. 'Quick, get up!' he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists."

The next few verses reveal that it's obvious Peter was kind of blown away by what was taking place—he was speechless and wandering around in a daze, because the angel had to tell him everything to do.

Acts 12:8-10. "Then the angel said to him, 'Put on your clothes and sandals.' And Peter did so. "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me,' the angel told him. Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision. They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him."

As you read the Bible, you will be amazed at how many times an angel comes to wake somebody up. For instance, in the Old Testament Lot and his family were asleep and the two angels visiting them woke them up in the middle of the night and said, "Hurry up! Get up and get dressed. We've got to leave here, because God is about to pour out his judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah." Elijah was asleep and the angel came to Elijah and said, "Wake up and eat!" Zechariah saw an angel in a dream. Joseph who was the step-father of the Lord, Jesus Christ, saw an angel in a dream. I don't know why it is, but for some reason angels operate a lot of times at night and sometimes in dreams. I'm one that says you need to be very, very careful about trying to find a message from God in every dream you have, because sometimes weird dreams may be the result of cabbage and ice cream on an upset stomach so, don't try to find a message from God in every dream you have but, the Bible does say sometimes people have received messages from angels in dreams.

It's interesting as I have received letters from people how many of them talk about how angels have appeared to them at night. This lady, who asked that her name not be used, writes, "In 1975 I was living in Utah where I shared an apartment with a girl from Australia. Once I had gone to sleep while my roommate was out. At about 2:00 a.m. I was called out of a deep sleep by a male voice calling my first name. The voice said at least two times as I was awaking gradually, "Get up and lock your door." As soon as I was awake, the message no longer was audible. It was intense. I rationalized that Cindy would not leave the door unlocked, because I did not want to get up in the cold, but the message was far too strong. I got up and observed that the front door was locked, but the prompting kept urging me to check the kitchen door that opened into an alley

behind the apartment complex. I froze with fear as I saw that the door, which we virtually never opened, was indeed unlocked. That internal voice almost shouted, because it was as if I could not move so great was my sense of danger. The voice said, "NOW!" I ran, locked the door, and chained it, just as I did, I heard from the alley a human sounding noise like footsteps and someone tried to turn the doorknob. To this day, I have believed an angel woke me audibly and then guided me to lock that door!"

Isn't that amazing? I've had other letters people have written me about driving along and falling asleep and suddenly it's as if a voice awoke them before they had an accident. That's happened a number of times.

### **a. Whenever you awake suddenly, listen and pray**

What is the lesson that we can learn from this? You may want to look at your outline again. This has been a real blessing to my heart. Here's something we can learn from this: Whenever you awake suddenly, listen and pray. I am one of these kinds of guys that never has any trouble going to sleep. On the average, it takes me about four seconds to go to sleep when my head hits the pillow. My wife is not like that, and some people aren't, but I'm just one of those that I just have no trouble going to sleep and I usually sleep soundly all throughout the night and wake up very refreshed. But like most of you, there are times when suddenly in the middle of the night, I'll just wake up. For years I just didn't know what was going on but I want to tell you, since I have done this study on angels, every time that has happened since, then whenever I awake in the middle of the night, I always listen and almost every time God lays someone on my heart that I should pray for. I listen and I'm asking myself, "All right I'm awake now. God, did you awake me for some reason? Did you send an angel to awake me to tell me to pray for somebody?" And I just start praying and sometimes I'll pray maybe even for an hour almost solid, but I use that time I wake up in the middle of the night to listen to God and to pray for somebody. So, I want to challenge any of you who when you wake up in the middle of the night suddenly don't get scared don't get worried listen to God and start to pray. It's amazing how many times an angel will come to us while we are asleep and say, "Wake up! Wake up!"

### **MESSAGE #1: CHEER UP!**

Sometimes angels say, "Speak up." That's the third most prevalent message. Sometimes angels say, "Wake up." That's the second most prevalent message and drum roll, please...the number one most common message in the Bible angels give is what I call "Cheer up!" That's the positive side of it. The way they usually say it is, "Do not be afraid." or "Fear not." And they say that so many times when they appear to people. I could give you many, many examples. When the angel appeared to Zechariah, he said, "Don't be afraid." When the angel appeared to Mary, twice he said, "Do not fear." When the angels appeared to the shepherds on that first Christmas morning, they said, "Fear not." When the angel appeared there at the tomb of the Lord Jesus Christ and they were shaking with fear, the angel told the women, "Do not be afraid."

Turn to Acts 27, and let's see this demonstrated. The last part of the book of Acts reads like an adventure novel. As the apostle, Paul was on his way to Rome, he was in a terrible shipwreck but not a person's life was lost, and the reason why is in Acts 27:22. Now you've got to set the scene

Paul is a prisoner on this ship and they are in the middle of a terrible storm and this is what Paul says in verse 22. He is speaking to all the people on board this ship in the middle of a storm.

Acts 27:22. "But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed."

I always kind of liked that verse, because it's the old "good news/bad news" kind of thing. It's kind of like the lady who called her husband. They just got a new car and she said, "I've got good news and bad news. The good news is that the airbag works on our car." And Paul says, "The good news is nobody's going to die but the bad news is the ship is going to have a wreck and it's going to be lost." How does he know this?

Acts 27:23-24. "Last night an angel of the God whose I am and whom I serve stood beside me and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously give you the lives of all who sail with you.' So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me. Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island."

When you belong to God and when you serve God, that's when God will be sending angels to speak to you. What are you afraid of? What do you fear right now? Do you fear what's happening in your family? In your marriage? Are you afraid of what's happening in the economy? If you will listen, I believe God's message to you today could be "Don't be afraid. Cheer up."

I have received a number of accounts where people had a message from an angel and this was the message "Cheer up. Don't be afraid." I received a very moving lettering from a lady who writes about when she was a child. She was in the hospital and because of a bone tumor in her leg, she was scheduled to have her leg amputated. This is what she writes: "My parents were so consumed in their own problems. I know that they were torn up about me, but I still felt so alone. There was nowhere to turn. I was only fourteen, so young and so scared. One night, shortly before I went back to the hospital for the amputation of my leg, God did something very special for me, an experience so wonderful that it will live with me forever. I went to bed, but was awakened by something. I remember feeling so frightened. My room was cold and misty. At first I thought I must be dreaming, but I sat up, blinked my eyes over and over. I even pinched myself. I was very much awake. The mist soon took form at the end of my bed. It was a beautiful person dressed in all white. The fright I felt turned to complete calm. In fact, I have never felt that calm and peaceful since. He called my name and said to me 'Be not afraid. The Lord has sent me.' He said that yes I was to lose a leg, but I would not die. I was to trust God always and I would be all right. 'He will take care of you.' He faded out of my room and I was never afraid about losing my leg after that. I have done a lot of things in my lifetime. I feel so privileged that God chose to comfort me at a time when no one else but Him could. I still remember the experience like it happened last night."

Isn't that amazing? And those times in our lives when we are the most discouraged, the most despondent, when we are in the storms of life just like Paul was in the middle of a storm—if you are still and quiet, and you belong to God and you serve God, and it could be that you'll hear that

message of encouragement to "Cheer up." and "Don't be afraid." Well, those are the messages in the Bible that angels give.

As we conclude this study on angels, I wanted to give you a little epilogue and share with you, some practical lessons from our study on angels as we come to a conclusion. What can we take with us from this study of angels?

### **1. Be aware angels are there**

Number one. I just want to encourage you to be aware that angels are there. Hebrews 1:14 tells us that God has sent his ministering spirit to serve those who are heirs of salvation. As I've already said, don't become "angelic paranoids," always looking around but they are there and you just know that they are there.

### **2. It's okay to pray for angelic protection**

Number two. It's okay to pray for angelic protection. It's okay to pray for God to dispatch angels to protect you and to protect your loved ones and to deliver you. As I told you, we do not pray TO angels but it's okay to pray FOR angelic protection. In the book of Acts they were praying for Peter to be delivered and the angels came in response to his prayers. There is a passage I have listed for you in Daniel 10:4-19. We're not going to read it now, but go home and you read the tenth chapter of Daniel and you will see an amazing truth about the relationship of prayer and angels. Daniel prayed and the devil fought and interfered against his prayer and God had to send an angel for his prayer to be delivered. It is an amazing account. So pray for angelic protection. I pray for my daughters to be protected by angels when they are at school. Every time we travel I pray for God to send his angels to protect us as we travel. It's okay to pray for angelic protection.

### **3. Be kind to strangers**

Number three. Be kind to strangers. That's what Hebrews 13:2 says. It says, "Be hospitable to strangers because some have entertained angels unawares." Sometimes we may have encountered angels and not even have known it.

## **CONCLUSION**

I close with this story written by a college student about her roommate, Julie, who is a student at Vanderbilt University. It's an amazing story. Listen as I close. She writes about how late one Thursday night her roommate, Julie, drove down to the west end of Nashville, pulled into a parking lot near a bank in which stood an automatic teller machine surrounded by bushes. When she parked, she noticed a large man at the machine. (This is late at night in a bad part of town.) After he finished, she got out of her car, apprehensive in the dark lot, and began walking quickly toward the machine chiding herself for waiting so late to get the cash. Well, the man began walking toward Julie instead of toward the street and she was petrified that he was going to harm her. She lowered her eyes and continued walking and when he passed her, he said, "Just be careful. I'll be here if you need me." She was confused, but relieved that he didn't try to bother her as she reached the machine. When she inserted her card, however, she realized that there was

another man standing in the bushes waiting to rob someone. She found herself panicking, but noticed that the large man had not left. He was still standing at the curb behind her. She took her money ran to her car jumped in and locked the doors but when she turned to look for the man, he was nowhere in sight. Eager to thank the man, she pulled out onto West End, looked both ways and did not see him. She is convinced that the man was an angel. Be kind to strangers because you never know when you will entertain angels unawares.

## OUTLINE

Top three messages angels deliver in the Bible:

### #3: SPEAK UP!

- a. A Christian may be directed to speak to an unbeliever
- b. An unbeliever may be directed to seek a Christian

### #2: WAKE UP!

- a. Whenever you awake suddenly, listen and pray

### #1: CHEER UP!

Practical Lessons:

1. Be aware angels are there
2. It's okay to pray for angelic protection
3. Be kind to strangers



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To put it in Texas terms, “You’re mighty welcome to use any and all of my ingredients; just make your own chili!”

For the Joy...  
Pastor David Dykes