



Angels At Work

12/14/2011 - Jim Johnson

One of the most dramatic and celebrated parts of the Christmas story has to do with the arrival of angels. But what do we know about them? The most important thing is to know that they are "ministering spirits." (Heb. 1:14) created to assist God in the carrying out of His divine purposes. When it comes to the Christ child the angels had a very special charge from God to watch over and protect him - so that He might be able to accomplish his mission. (Matt. 4:6)

I. Angels were present at the _____ of Christ.

- A. An angel _____ Mary to give birth to Christ. - Luke 1:26-27
Such a startling angelic visit may have been needed in order for Mary to understand and agree to such an incredible journey.
- B. An angel _____ Joseph to become the guardian of Christ - Matt. 1:19-21
Thanks to this angel the child was given a male guardian.
- C. Angels _____ his birth to the shepherds. - Luke 2:8-14
The mission of these angels was simply to herald the arrival of the King.
- D. An Angel _____ Joseph of danger. - Matt. 2:13
The mission of the angel in this case was to protect the Christ child.
- E. An angel _____ them as well. - Matt. 2:19-20
The mission of the angel was to reposition Jesus back in Israel.

II. Angels were present through the _____ of Christ.

- A. Angels _____ for Christ after His temptation. - Matt. 4:11
After the devil had tried and failed to tempt Christ the angels came and began to minister to Him. This service included support and encouragement, and that they even brought Him food.
- B. An Angel _____ Christ at Gethsemane. - Luke 22:42-43
At Gethsemane Jesus cried out to God to remove the burden of Calvary three times. Though the Father was not willing to say yes, He did send an angel to provide the emotional and spiritual strength He needed to carry on.

III. Angels were also present for the _____ Christ.

- A. Angels were at the _____ for the resurrection. (John 20:12 included two)

1. An angel _____ away the stone. – Matt. 28:1-2

With little effort an angel dislodged the large circular stone leaving the empty tomb free to be inspected.

2. An angel _____-the resurrection. – Matt. 28:3-5

An angel was the first to declare to the world that Christ was risen! His mission was to reveal to all what had happened in that sealed tomb.

B. Angels _____ the Ascension. – Acts 1:10-11

At the Mount of Olives the angels functioned like prophets foretelling of the return of Christ.

C. Angels will _____ Him back again. – Matt. 25:31

One day Christ will arise and return to this earth – to bring judgment and to establish His 1,000 year reign and He will be escorted by a massive army of angels.

IV. The angels were missing during the _____ . – Matt. 26:53-55

The time that Christ most needed assistance – was while He hung on the cross. And yet we have no record at all of their appearance. They were either not there or at the least sidelined. There is no mention of them. There is certainly much they could have done to ease the pain and assist Him. They could have been there if He had asked (Matt. 26:53.) But He didn't.

He refused the assistance of angels because Christ, and Christ alone was the Lamb of God, uniquely able to take away the sins of the world (1 John 2:2.) He alone had to suffer the full brunt of God's wrath. He alone had to step up and endure the judgment that was due to mankind. If there would have been angels assisting Him there on the cross, it would have raised terrible unanswerable questions. And yet it was His aloneness on the cross that was the greatest burden to bear. (Matt. 27:46)

Angels were on duty and assisting with every facet of Christ's life and ministry except the crucifixion. But because of this, we can be certain that He suffered the full wrath of God on our behalf, so that we can enjoy the grace and mercy of God today.

V. REFLECTIONS

Have you received the gift He died to obtain? If not, it is time to recognize your lostness and need of this Savior. For the rest of us – when you think of the throngs of angels that surrounded Christ at His birth take time to also think about the absence of angels at the cross, and thank God for what Jesus did for you.

THE NEXT STEP

Use this section in your personal or family devotions to better apply the truth.

1. Think through the various Christmas songs about angels. Do the lyrics reflect biblical truth?
2. What do you suppose the angels were doing during the crucifixion?
3. The Scripture says that angels rejoice over the lost one that comes to Christ. Have you given them occasion to party?