

JACOB'S STORY

- Familiar story of Jacob, the deceiver, who eventually becomes Israel, the prince
- Jacob loved comfort; he was "a plain man, dwelling in tents" (Genesis 25:27) - "Mama's Boy"
- He deceived Esau out of his birthright (double portion) - Esau thought it useless without blessing!
- With the help of his mother Rebekah, he deceived Isaac into giving him the blessing as well
- He fled from Esau's wrath; he saw the vision of "Jacob's ladder" at Bethel ("the HOUSE of God")
- After 20 years of God's blessings, he meets another angel in his worst crisis (facing Esau again); this time he wrestles until daybreak and is forever changed at Peniel ("the FACE of God")

THE EXISTENCE OF ANGELS

- The existence and activity of angels is ASSUMED in Scripture; the word angel means "Messenger"
- Over 230 times we find them carrying out their work; they were present at every crisis in history
- There are two hosts of angels: the servants of the Almighty, and the servants of Satan
- Angels were the first and highest order of created things; they were created a "host" not a "race" - each angel was directly created, not born like a human (each one sinned directly also!) - their numbers are eternally unchanged; God is their CREATOR, but He is our FATHER!
- Angels have some type of "spiritual body" that can appear to man when God wills it
- Only Cherubim and Seraphim are described as having wings (Seraphim have six wings); angels can "fly swiftly" (Daniel 9:21), but this may refer only to speed, not form of movement
- There are "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" (Revelation 5:11), or "an innumerable company" of angels (Hebrews 12:22) - we cannot comprehend their number
- Hebrew tradition states that there are 12 archangels and 70 angels serving as princes over the 70 nations divided at the Tower of Babel, a heavenly "Sanhedrin" (Jesus chose 12, later sent out 70)
- We know only three archangels: Lucifer (leader of worship in Heaven), Michael (protector of God's people Israel), and Gabriel (messenger of Messianic revelation); each governed 1/3 of angels (?)
- Angels are spoken of as: Watchers, Hosts of God, Holy Ones, Ministering Spirits, Flames of Fire, Elect, Sons of God, Morning Stars, Sons of the Mighty, Princes, Thrones, Dominions, Powers
- We are forbidden to worship angels, but it is an equal error not to believe in them
- Since "angel" means "messenger" the word is sometimes used of human servants of God ("angels of the 7 churches"), and even God appeared in OT at times as "the Angel of the Lord" (a theophany was a temporary manifestation of God; the incarnation was a permanent manifestation of God; Jesus' body still exists in a glorified state!) - only the context reveals if it is God, a man, or an angel
- Most theologians think Jacob wrestled with a Theophany, since this "Angel of the Lord" was spoken of as God, had a wonderful secret name, and was said to redeem Jacob (Gen. 32:29-30, 48:16)
- Maybe theophanies ("appearance of God") were because God couldn't wait to be with us!

THE MINISTRY OF ANGELS

- In the OT, an angel ministered to Hagar and Ishmael when they were cast out, three angels brought God's promise to Abraham and Sarah, two angels rescued Lot out of Sodom, an angel called to Abraham to spare Isaac, an angel gave Moses the revelation of God's name, angels present at giving of Law, an angel warned Balaam of his disobedience, an angel destroyed 70,000 Israelites when David disobeyed, an angel strengthened Elijah, an angel slew 185,000 Assyrians, an angel preserved Daniel in the lions den, an angel preserved the three Hebrew boys in the fiery furnace
- In the Life of Christ, angels announced His birth to Mary, Joseph and the shepherds, angels ministered to Him in His temptation, angels ascended and descended upon Him in His ministry (John 1:51 - Jesus was the ladder!), an angel strengthened Him as He prayed in Gethsemane, an angel rolled the stone away from His tomb, two angels stood guard after His resurrection, two angels spoke to the disciples at His ascension (Acts 1:11 - "Why stand ye gazing up into Heaven?")
- In the Early Church, an angel opened prison doors to release the apostles, an angel sent Philip to the desert to witness, an angel told Cornelius to send for Peter (NOTE THAT THE ANGELS COULDN'T PREACH THE GOSPEL; THEY DIRECTED MEN TO THE CHURCH), an angel rescued Peter out of prison, an angel killed Herod for his pride, an angel stood by Paul in a terrible storm

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM ANGELS?

- **WORSHIP:** Angels never accept worship from man, but direct all worship to God.
Revelation 5:11-12 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and and blessing.
- **WISDOM:** The wisdom of angels has increased over time as they have beheld the dealings of an all-wise God with mankind and the rest of His creation.
- **OBEDIENCE:** Angels immediately and unquestioningly obey God.
Psalm 103:20-21 Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. Bless ye the LORD, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure.
- **STRENGTH:** Angels are strong only because they exercise God's power. They are mighty, but God is almighty.
- **HOLINESS:** Angels serve God in holiness because God is holy.
Revelation 4:8 And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.
- **MEEKNESS:** Only fallen angels ever rose up in sinful pride. If God sent two angels to earth, one to rule an empire and another to sweep the streets, they would never even consider switching places. They delight only in His will.
- **JOY:** Angels rejoiced at God's creation; they also rejoice at His new creation - us!
Luke 15:10 Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

ENCOUNTERING THE SUPERNATURAL

- When Jacob had his vision of the ladder, God wasn't just staging a show. He merely pulled back the curtain on angelic activity which occurs constantly in the supernatural realm.
- Angels minister to us because we are the heirs of salvation!
 - *Hebrews 1:14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?*
 - *Psalm 34:7 The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.*
- THE LADDER IS STILL THERE! Angels still minister to the saints of God today.
- We do not command the angels; we simply pray to God and He commands them on our behalf.
- HOWEVER, LIKE JACOB YOU CAN HAVE AN ENCOUNTER WITH SUPERNATURAL POWER AND STILL NOT BE CHANGED. His attitude after seeing the "ladder" was "If God [does these things] ... then shall the Lord be my God." (Genesis 28:20-21)
- Jacob visited the HOUSE of God (Bethel), but he still hadn't seen the FACE of God (Peniel)!
- This is a problem of epidemic proportions today, and is why we see so little commitment! We want God's power, but He wants us to want His presence, to trust Him when we don't "see" His power.
- AFTER JACOB HAD WRESTLED WITH GOD FACE TO FACE, HE WAS FOREVER CHANGED!
- His attitude when he wrestled with God was: **DETERMINATION** ("I will not let thee go, except thou bless me" - 32:26), **REPENTANCE** ("What is thy name? And he said, Jacob - DECEIVER" - 32:27), **DESIRE** ("Tell me, I pray thee, thy name" - 32:29), **GRATITUDE** ("and my life is preserved" - 32:30)
- **All of God's great saints walk with a limp!** But what looks weak to the world is strong in God!