

## Podcast Episode 21: Angels, Part 3

**QUESTION: What are angels like, how do we interact with them, what are they here to do, and how are they different from us and from other heavenly beings?**

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DENVER: There's a time involved in the visit and the dialogue between the angel and Zacharias. We tend to somehow think that spiritual phenomenon are outside of time and space, and while they are outside of time and space because we don't control them in our environment, they control this environment; we don't control theirs-- the fact is that when they come to our time and space, they are in our time and space, and time lapses. And this dialogue took a while.

But we have a problem with Zion, because when the Lord sets about to destroy, the Lord cannot destroy the righteous. And He's going to obliterate life on the earth, except for those who are in the Ark or those in Zion. The wicked can't come against them, and all are going to be destroyed.

So what do you do? Well, we've got a new status for humanity. And the new status is you take them into heaven. But you don't take people into heaven without an associated calling. There is no reason ever to take a person off the earth, even if they're righteous. Abraham died-- Abraham died and was buried. Christ died, and He was more righteous than any who ever lived-- you don't take them off the earth unless they have a calling to minister. So we have a calling to minister. Enoch in his city (who could not be destroyed when the Lord was going to destroy) and his city were called. And they were given two callings: their first assignment is as ministering angels, not only here but elsewhere; and their second calling-- I don't want to appear irreverent, but they're really, I mean they're the crowd, they're the cheering group backing up the Lord at His coming. They are the ones-- when He comes in the clouds with the angels-- that group is Enoch's people. They are the certifiers; they are the testifiers; they are the chorus; they are the entourage.

You know, there's a reason why our tin-horn dictators and our phony idols have an entourage-- it's to mimic the real deal. Because when the Lord comes again in His glory, He's going to come with an entourage. So they got the job, Enoch and his folk.

So while he was in the act of calling upon God, he discovered a light appearing in his room *"which continued to increase until the room was lighter than at noonday, when immediately a personage appeared at my bedside, standing in the air, for his feet did not touch the [ground]"* (Joseph Smith-History 1:30). As an interesting aside, I want to ask the question, Why? Why did

Moroni stand in the air, his feet not touching the ground? It's an interesting topic we're not going to talk about here. It's off-subject, it won't get us Zion anyway, but there's "stuff" here.

Oh, and look at this: *“He had on a loose robe of most exquisite whiteness. It was a whiteness beyond anything earthly I had ever seen; nor do I believe that any earthly thing could be made to appear so exceedingly white and brilliant. His hands were naked, his arms also, a little above the wrist; so, also, were his feet naked, as were his legs, a little above the ankles. His head and neck were also bare. I could discover he had no other clothing on but this robe, as it was open, so that I could see into his bosom”* (Joseph Smith-History 1: 31). Notice this-- this is not ceremonial garb. As a consequence of which, I can tell you that it's okay to be buried without temple regalia, because you're not going to be wearing that stuff in the resurrection anyway, if you inherit what the angels of God, including Moroni (who is certainly exalted), wear.

You can read about the description of what Christ wears in the scriptures as well. Ceremonial garb is just that-- it is ceremonial garb. It is designed to teach you about the creation, to endow you with certain knowledge about the process of being exalted. But it is not the attire that you'll see on the streets of heaven. I actually think-- I think they look Egyptian. I think their attire looks Egyptian, but that's neither here nor there.

This is a guy who is wearing only a robe. It's not ceremonial. He doesn't have shoes on his feet; he doesn't have a bonnet on; he doesn't have a variety of things that we would associate with ceremonial dress. You can read a description of Christ's attire in 3 Nephi 11:8. And the description there is very much like the description that we have here-- Christ and Moroni wearing the same kind of thing.

And then, hey, just for the fun of it, let's go back to Exodus 28. I want to revert back to my Cecil B. DeMille-esque stuff [spoken in vocal imitation]: *“And these are the garments which they shall make; a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a brodered coat, a mitre, and a girdle: and they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. And they shall take gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen”* (verses 4-5) ...and yellow and green and purple and orange and white and.... (Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat). I'm sorry. You can read it, it's in here. Ooh, the *“ouches of gold,”* and the *“chains of pure gold at the ends; of wreathen work...”* (verses 13-14)-- I mean, He dresses you in funny attire, okay?

God goes through in the ceremonial attire, and He dresses you up. And the purpose of the dress is ceremonial, to communicate to you through symbolism, knowledge about certain things. But they are not an end, they are a symbol: six days of creation, six articles of clothing, each one of which can be associated with one of the days of creation. Therefore, as you enter through the veil

it is as if the entirety of all creation is redeemed in your person. You represent salvation for the entirety of creation, because in you-- should you be able to be rescued-- creation, itself, continues. These are symbols. They communicate to the mind ideas, ideas that are eternal. They're not ends in themselves.

Once again, Joseph is called by name-- this is verse 33. He was afraid; the fear soon left him. The reason he was afraid was because he was seeking forgiveness of his sins. A perfectly white, bright lit individual appears, who represents the cleanliness of heaven itself. Joseph, in contrast to that, he's inquiring to know about his sins. Now a visibly cleansed being stands before him; he's afraid. And why was he afraid? Because, once again, you see the remarkable contrast. "I know what lies in my heart. I know what failings I have had, and I know this being can see through me. Therefore, I need something that will remove from me my fear." *"He called me by name."* It's the same thing. Moroni dispels it by letting him know, "We have a brotherhood; we have a relationship." *"Fear soon left me. He called me by name..."* He tells him about the stuff, the accoutrements that he's going to be handed in verse 34 and 35. But then he gets in verse 36, and this is where-- ooh, this is where we got something now. This is Moroni delivering a message.

We have a great deal to look forward to that the Angel Moroni, instructing Joseph Smith, covered with him on that night when he first appeared to him, promising that these things were going to come to pass, and they still had not yet come in. Going back to *Joseph Smith-History* 1:41, when he referred to Joel, he says that: *"...the fullness of the Gentiles was soon to come in."* The "fullness of the Gentiles" is something different than "the times of the Gentiles." The times of the Gentiles have been with us. The fullness of the Gentiles is when we turn a leaf, and their opportunity comes to an end.

Notice that in addition in verse 41, that there were many other passages of scripture and many other explanations that he doesn't mention here that the angel offered. How often, when an angel comes to instruct, does the angel simply open the scriptures? When you look at what happened with the Lord on the day of His resurrection before He appeared to the twelve, and He walked the afternoon on the road to Emmaus with Cleopas and, I believe, Luke-- He spent the afternoon opening to them the scriptures. Angels instruct using the scriptures. The Lord, on the day of His resurrection, spent the afternoon talking about the scriptures. Joseph Smith, when he was trying to figure out which church he should join, labored over the scriptures. And yet, we think we needn't perform that same labor or become familiar with that same canon of scripture. And I'm telling you, that the more you have inside you in familiarity with the words of scripture, the more able you are to comprehend the doings of God in your own life and in the lives of all those around you and in the time in which you live. So don't let it be lost on you that what the angel Moroni spent the night doing with Joseph was discussing scripture. And don't let it be lost on

you that he returned again to deliver, another time, a message involving expounding the scriptures.

In any event, back in those days, I thought all you people had these things. And then there was the patriarchal blessing that I got which said, and this is a quote, that “you will again be in the presence of your Father in Heaven, while in the second estate.” That’s in my patriarchal blessing. And I thought, “Well, of course, it belongs there. That’s what we do, isn’t it? We’re Mormons! I mean, we’re on God’s team! God likes us; He’s paying really close attention to us.” In any event, I thought we were related to God in an intimate way because, well, the heavens were open. And therefore, it was not to me shocking when I encountered an angel. And I have encountered many of them. And all of them leave a vivid and permanent impression. I can tell you that it’s been nearly 40 years since the first time I met with an angel, and I can still close my eyes and see the scene this minute.

This stuff happens. My experiences matter only because I can testify that it happens. The authenticity of God’s message is not proven by the means of delivery. Even if an angel comes-- an angel can come and mislead you. The only way to distinguish between what is and what is not of God is through the medium of sacrifice. Because when you do this, the vessel is clean. And when the vessel is clean before God, then even an angel of light cannot mislead you. Because what they offer is darkness, and you can tell it, because they have not the power to mislead.

Everyone can be misled unless the course in life that they pursue is according to God's will. All gifts can be compromised. Look at Mormon chapter 9. I want to go to verse 27 of Mormon chapter 9: *“O then despise not, and wonder not, but hearken unto the words of the Lord, and ask the Father in the name of Jesus for what things soever ye shall stand in need. Doubt not, but be believing, and begin as in times of old, and come unto the Lord with all your heart, and work out your own salvation with fear and trembling before him. Be wise in the days of your probation; strip yourselves of all uncleanness; ask not, that ye may consume it on your lusts, but ask with a firmness unshaken, that ye will yield to no temptation, but that ye will serve the true and living God.”*

You don't acquire favor with God in order to consume what He gives to you on your lusts, to satisfy your ambition, to become someone great in the eyes of everyone else. It doesn't happen that way. And if you try to turn it in that way, you'll meet the same kind of unfortunate end that we see happening time and time again by the ambitious and the unscrupulous, the knavish and the foolish. Be wise in the days of your probation. Strip yourselves of all uncleanness. Check your thoughts. Focus them on something that is light and true and pure. Because in the end, none of us have anything to be proud of. In the end, the only thing that matters is if God will vouch for us in the day of judgment. And if He will and if He does, then it's a gift.

Oh, I want to do this one, too. Go to Moses chapter 1. Look at verse 8: *“And it came to pass that Moses looked, and beheld the world upon which he was created....”* Moses beheld the world-- why, to me this is very interesting because he's describing a view that is very often in scripture referred to as being “caught up into an exceedingly high mountain.” This is a view up and looking down, in any event. Move to verse 18: *“And again Moses said...”* Now he's talking, because Satan has come during this interlude appearing as an angel of light, tempting him. Verse 18, Moses said: *“I will not cease to call upon God, I have other things to inquire of him: for his glory has been upon me, wherefore I can judge between him and thee. Depart hence, Satan.”* The defect that Moses perceived in what Lucifer was saying, tempting him, did not consist merely in the presence of the-- I mean, this is an angel.

If you go to Section 76 and the description-- an angel, in a position of authority in the presence of God, was cast out. That in not a being who, to look upon, would appear to be a vile creature. That would be someone who, to look upon, would appear to be a being of light, a being of glory, an angel of light. The reason Moses could discern between them had nothing to do with the appearance-- it had to do with the content. It had to do with the Spirit. It had to do with what he radiated. And what Moses was able to discern was that this was not the source of something which he, Moses, chose to take in, as a consequence of which he could judge between him and say, “You-- you I disprefer.”

When you look at the *Joseph Smith-History*, “thick darkness”-- I talked about this last time. The Orson Hyde account of that talks about the thick darkness that gathered around him. It consisted of the adversary benighting his mind with doubts, brought to his soul all sorts of improper pictures. The reason why it is possible to do that, and more easily so with many of us, is because we have ingested into ourselves all kinds of improper images which can then be summoned back up.

Look at 2 Nephi chapter 9. This is one of the early sermons given by Jacob, and we're going to look at verse 9. *“And our spirits must have become like unto him, and we become devils, angels to a devil, to be shut out from the presence of our God, and to remain with the father of lies, in misery, like unto himself; yea, to that being who beguiled our first parents, who transformeth himself nigh unto an angel of light, and stirreth up the children of men unto secret combinations of murder and all manner of secret works of darkness.”* It's not the physical appearance nor the transformation that takes place. It is the content, which is why you need to know that the course that you are pursuing is in accordance with the will of God. Because once you have made the required sacrifice, you acquire the required knowledge.

Look at Alma chapter 30. This is an explanation given at the bad end of Korihor, as judgments were upon him, and he was writing his final confession for his death. Verse 53 of Alma chapter 30: *“But behold, the devil hath deceived me; for he appeared unto me in the form of an angel, and said unto me: Go and reclaim this people, for they have all gone astray after an unknown God. And he said unto me: There is no God; yea, and he taught me that which I should say. And I have taught his words; and I taught them because they were pleasing unto the carnal mind; and I taught them, even until I had much success, insomuch that I verily believed that they were true; and for this cause I withstood the truth, even until I have brought this great curse upon me.”*

You see, he was convinced by the devil, who appeared unto him in a form of an angel. It's not always that the adversary comes to you with murderous intent. Sometimes he comes to appeal to your vanity, to your pride. Well, pride is such a sinkhole it can get most people there-- oh, you can have acclaim, you can have wealth. No, you acquire what you need to acquire as a consequence of sacrificing for God. And in that process, you will endure criticism, rejection, opposition, the world's hatred. You may even be cast out. But you obtain what you obtain from God by sacrifice.

In 12-- verse 12, or paragraph 12-- of this Lecture 6: *“But those who have not made this sacrifice to God do not know that the course which they pursue is well pleasing in his sight; for whatever may be their belief or their opinion, it is a matter of doubt and uncertainty in their mind; and where doubt and uncertainty are there faith is not, nor can it be. For doubt and faith do not exist in the same person at the same time; so that persons whose minds are under doubts and fears cannot have unshaken confidence; and where unshaken confidence is not their faith is weak; and where faith is weak the persons will not be able to contend against all the opposition, tribulations, and afflictions which they will have to encounter in order to be heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ Jesus; and they will grow weary in their minds, and the adversary will have power over them and destroy them.”* Well, he'll darken their minds, and after having darkened their minds, leave them in a position in which they are simply unable to have faith, at least in the right things, in order to understand the things of God.

Look in verse 9 of this Sixth Lecture. About halfway through there's a sentence that begins: *“And in the last days before the Lord comes....”* So this is before the Second Coming of the Lord, but it's in the last days, *“...he is to gather together his saints who have made a covenant with him by sacrifice.”* Not a covenant to sacrifice. You can go make a covenant to sacrifice every day the temple is open. Making a covenant to sacrifice is not at all the same thing as making a covenant by sacrifice. It's only through actually sacrificing that it is possible for the Lord to make a covenant with you.

*"Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice" (Proverbs 50:3-5).* That gathering will be made-- not by man or men or institutions-- that gathering will be made by the angels of heaven who hold the keys of responsibility for that. That you can read in D&C 77:11.

Joseph saw the Father and the Son, and he testified about it, and he described them. I've seen the Father, and I've seen the Son, and they've both spoken with me. The only reason I mention that is to give you confidence that it can happen. It should happen to you. You should be talking with Them. They can tell you what you need to know. And don't be at all surprised if the subject about which you need to converse with the Lord consists almost entirely of a discussion about the scriptures. Don't be surprised if an angel comes to minister to you, if the topic about which the angel would like to converse involves the scriptures. And don't be surprised if the Lord authorizes someone to deliver a message, and the message consists in expounding the scriptures. Because on the road to Emmaus, beginning at Moses and all the prophets, what Christ did was open up to them how all things testified of Him. Well, all things testify of what is currently getting at last underway. And make no mistake about it, it is getting underway. And I don't care where you look, I don't care what society you look at, I don't care what economy you observe, what culture you observe-- the earth and all of the people on her are waxing old like a garment. And do you know what they do with garments that are old? They're burned. The way to preserve yourself consists in having faith in God, and the conditions upon which faith in God is obtained are exactly the same for you as they were for Moses and Abraham and all of those who have ever had faith, Joseph Smith being the latest great example of that.

Now, I want to take another detour into parsing things in a way that you might not have considered before. And for this I want to go to Doctrine and Covenants section 128, and I want to look at verse 21. This is Joseph-- this is Joseph writing a letter that got canonized. And he's talking about all the stuff that had gone on in the process of getting the restoration fully established on the earth. And he mentions in this letter that he writes these things: *"And again, the voice of God in the chamber of old Father Whitmer, in Fayette, Seneca county, and at sundry times, and in divers places through all the travels and tribulations of this Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints..."* So the voice of God has been there throughout all of this, as Joseph presided and as the Church rolled forth. *"And the voice of Michael [Mich-a-el] the archangel; the voice of Gabriel ["El" being the name of God], and of Raphael, and of divers angels, from Michael or Adam down to the present time, all declaring their dispensation, their rights, their keys, their honors, their majesty and glory, and the power of their priesthood; giving line upon line, precept upon precept; here a little, and there a little; giving us consolation by holding forth that which is to come, confirming our hope!"*

So, I want to suggest to you that Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael are known to us as those who have come, though they were part of the “El,”-- or in the plural form, the Elohim-- they came, and they served here. They came, and they ministered here. *Michael* descended, and he came to the earth, and he was known as Adam in mortality. *Gabriel* came to the earth, and he was known in mortality as Noah. There is a big debate over the identity of the *Raphael*. I’ll tell you what I think, and you can take it or leave it. *Raphael* is the name that was given to the man who in mortality we know as Enoch.

Now there are four angels who preside over the four corners of the earth. And Joseph surely knew that. And Joseph mentions the names of three of the four, but he leaves the fourth one out. And I find the absence of the fourth one rather extraordinary. The fourth one's name is *Uriel*, also one of the Elohim. And although there are those who will absolutely cry heresy, throw dirt on their hair, tear their clothes because they are scholars, and they are bonafide, and they know I’m talking out of my hat (but I’d remind you Joseph talked out of his hat, too)-- that fourth and missing, unmentioned angel is *Uriel*, who in mortality was known to us as John.

Adam is the one in the East, the angel who is considered the one who presides over and has control of the air, which is apt because into Adam was given the breath of life in the beginning. Raphael is in the South, and he is associated with the power of fire, which is apt because of his fiery ascent with his people into heaven. Gabriel is the angel in the West who has the power over water, which is apt because in mortality, he managed through the flood. And Uriel, though not mentioned, is the one who in the North has the power over the earth, which is apt because he remains upon the earth, and he is the guardian at one gate, with Elijah at the other end. But you can take and leave all that as you will. I find the mention here in this letter by Joseph of these individuals and these powers and these four, three of whom are named, to be interesting. Though he does mention “divers angels from Michael or Adam down to the present time.”

MAN 1: *“As this vision closed, the heavens were again opened to their view, and they saw and beheld, and were endowed with knowledge from the beginning of this creation to the ends thereof. And they were shown unspeakable things from the sealed record of Heaven which man is not capable of making known but must be revealed by the Powers of Heaven. They beheld Michael, the archangel; Gabriel and Raphael, and divers angels, from Michael or Adam down to the end of time, showing in turns their dispensations, their rights, their keys, their honors, their majesty and glory, and the Powers of their Priesthood; giving line upon line, precept upon precept; endowing them with knowledge, even here a little, and there a little; holding forth hope for the work God was yet to perform, even the revelation of all things which are to come upon the earth until the return of the Lord in glory with His holy angels-- to pour out judgment upon the world, and to reward the righteous” (Answer and Covenant, p. 4).*



MAN 2: *“And the angels are given charge to watch over and protect my people” (Answer and Covenant, p. 9).*

DENVER: *“I will visit my house, which the remnant of my people shall build, and I will dwell therein, to be among you, and no one will need to say, Know ye the Lord, for you all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. I will teach you things that have been hidden from the foundation of the world and your understanding will reach unto Heaven. And you shall be called the children of the Most High God, and I will preserve you against the harvest. And the angels sent to harvest the world will gather the wicked into bundles to be burned, but will pass over you as my peculiar treasure” (Answer and Covenant, p. 11-12).*

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The foregoing are excerpts taken from remarks given by Denver at various lectures, discussions, and meetings over the past 11 years, including:

- Denver’s talk entitled “Christ’s Discourse on the Road to Emmaus,” given in Fairview, Utah on April 14, 2007;
- His talk entitled “The Mission of Elijah Reconsidered,” given in Spanish Fork, UT on October 14, 2011;
- Denver’s *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #1 entitled “Be of Good Cheer,” given in Boise, ID on September 10, 2013;
- Denver’s *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #2 entitled “Faith,” given in Idaho Falls, ID on September 28, 2013;
- Denver’s *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #5 entitled “Priesthood,” given in Orem, UT on November 2, 2013; and
- The presentation of “Answer and Covenant,” given at the Covenant of Christ Conference in Boise, ID on September 3, 2017.