

**Matthew 24:30-31; 25:31-33**  
**End Times: Role of Angels**  
**November 9 & 10, 2014**

<sup>24:30</sup> "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. <sup>31</sup> And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other. <sup>25:31</sup> "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. <sup>32</sup> All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. <sup>33</sup> He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

A few years ago, a Harris poll indicated that about 72% of Americans believe in angels. I was actually surprised about that number. I thought it would be lower than that. However, before I got my hopes up too high, I read about another poll that was conducted by National Geographic back in 2012 that said that nearly 36% of Americans believe in UFO's, 77% of Americans believe that there are signs that aliens have visited earth, and nearly 80% believe the government has covered up information about aliens and UFO's.

Now, I don't know where you might fall in those numbers, but I think they are rather fascinating. What do people think of angels? For some people, I think, believing in angels is like believing in the Tooth Fairy. Many years ago, I recall a conversation that I had with someone about angels. The question was asked: *"Do you believe in angels?"* I answered with "yes" and then began to talk about what God's Word says about angels. I was quickly interrupted with the question: *"If angels are real, then make one appear right now. I want to see one!"* As much as I would have liked to make one appear, it didn't happen.

But what do you think about angels? I think we often think about angels being these kind gentle spirits, kind of like the old TV show: *"Touched by an Angel."* Yet, when we look at angels in the Bible, they are there to either carry out God's Judgment or do battle with Satan and his angels. Revelation speaks about the arch angel Michael doing battle with the great dragon, Satan. God opened the eyes of Elisha's servant so that he could see **"the hills full of horses and chariots of fire."** (2 Kings 6:17). God sent an angel, who **"annihilated all the fighting men and the leaders and officers in the camp of the Assyrian King."** (2 Chron. 32:21) Or how about those angels who told Lot about Sodom and Gomorrah that **"we are going to destroy this place?"** (Gen. 19:13) Perhaps, this is a side that we don't always see when we speak of angels.

Therefore, as we continue to take a look at the End Times of this world, let us take a look at the role of Angels on that last day as we look at the words of our text under the theme: **"The Angels – The Gatherers and Dividers for the Lord."**

Who are the Angels? They were created by God sometime over the six days of creation. (Col. 1:16) yet, the Bible doesn't even tell us on what day they were created. Their official title of "Angels" means "messengers." They are God's foremost invisible creatures. They are powerful, but not ALL-powerful. Even though they are invisible, they can appear at any time. They watch over God's people. They protect his believers. We can all probably think of times in our lives in which we were shielded from harm. The only conclusion that we can draw is that God's angels were protecting us and stepped in.

Yet, they are creatures that do have a limit as to their intellect and will. They don't know when the world will come to an end. But they will be there to assist God when that day does come as Jesus says about his return: **"He will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other... he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats."**

**"Separate the sheep from the goats."** In these two chapters of Matthew, Jesus describes believers and unbelievers as sheep and goats. Why? Why **"sheep"** and **"goats?"** Neither one are very attractive animals. Sheep get dirty and they stay that way. Of all of God's animals, the sheep is the least able to take care of himself. Sheep are dumb. They are defenseless. They can't bite you or outrun you. When have you ever seen a sheep as a team mascot for a team?

Goats aren't much better. One of the marks of a goat is that it will eat almost anything. Goats will think that trash is delicious. They will feed themselves on almost anything. They can get almost anywhere – on roofs, on cliffs, over rocks, etc. Goats are arrogant. If they could speak, they would probably like to claim that they are *The King of the Mountain*. Think about it if you have ever seen a goat: it will often have its head in the air; while the sheep feed with their heads bent down.

Yet, there are differences between goats and sheep. Goats were kept for milk by shepherds in Jesus' day. But the meat of a lamb was much better than the meat of a goat. Goat skins became the standard for water bottles. But a lamb's wool was much better for warm clothing than goat's hair. But, perhaps, one of the biggest difference between the goat and the sheep, is its independence. Goats will go their own way and be much more independent. Sheep need a shepherd. And they are completely dependent on that shepherd for everything. Jesus describes himself as that shepherd. As believers in Christ, we are completely dependent on Jesus. Therefore, he is our Good Shepherd who **"will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other."**

On that Last Day, the Angels will have two dramatic different tasks. As the trumpet sounds, and we see Jesus descending from heaven, the Good Shepherd will send out his herdsmen to gather his sheep gently from all the four corners of the world. We no longer will be looking forward to being in heaven, on that day we will now be there.

Then things will change. The dividing will happen! The goats, the unbelievers, will be severed from God forever. The angels will be directed by God to separate the just from the unjust. The unbelievers will be sent to spend an eternity with Satan in the fires of hell. What a horrific sight that will be for those who have rejected God.

For God's people, it will be a day of rejoicing when this world comes to an end. For it is then we will hear those beautiful words of Jesus: **"Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world."** Amen.