

# “Touched by an Angel Lately?”

Psalm 139: 7-11 (stored under that); Psalm 23: 4; & Matthew 28:16-2

3/15/2000 – Maryvale Drive Presbyterian Church, Philip Siddons

## Psalm 139: 7-11

*Where can I go from Your spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend to heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in the place of the dead, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the furthest limits of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me fast. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light around me become night, even the darkness is not dark to You; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to You.*

## Psalm 23: 4

*Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for You are with me;*

## Matthew 28:16-20

<sup>16</sup>Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. <sup>17</sup>When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. <sup>18</sup>And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup>Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Imagine getting God’s phone number and getting dumped into voice mail. Perhaps you might hear this: “Thank you for calling the offices of God’s kingdom. Please select one of the following options: Press 1 for **general requests**. Press 2 for **thanksgiving**. Press 3 for **complaints**. Press 4 for **healing**. Press 5 for help with the IRS. Press 6 for **rain**. Press 7 for “just saying hi!” Press 8 for **lottery winning numbers** (good luck, we just guess too). Press 9 for all other inquiries. Press 0 or the star key(\*) to repeat this menu.

Then suppose you pressed 1 for General Requests and you heard this: “I’m sorry, all the angels are helping other believers right now. Please remain on the line. Your prayer is important to us and will be answered in the order it was received.”

If you would like to speak to: **Gabriel**, Press 11. For **Michael**, Press 22. For a directory of other **Archangels**, Press 33. For a directory of **Seraphim and Cherubim**, Press 44. If you’d like to hear **King David sing a Psalm** while you are holding, please press 100, wait for the beep

and enter the Number of the Psalm, followed by the pound key (#).

To find out if a loved one has been assigned to **Heaven**, Press 66, enter his/her social security number, press the pound key (#), their date of Birth (pressing the zero before single decimal months or days), then press the pound key (#) twice. For reservations in one of the Many Mansions, press the keys on your touch pad: J-O-H-N (then) 3-1-6.

For answers to nagging questions about dinosaurs, the age of the earth, where Noah’s Ark is located, Darwin, Hitler, why innocent people suffer and UFO’s, please wait until you arrive here. They can only be fully explained after you attend the initial three-dimensional time travel history of the universe seminar held in star gate 45 immediately after your welcoming party.

If you are Lucifer, Press 666 and your call will be automatically transferred to accounting and put on eternal hold. If our computers determine that you have already called once today, please hang up and try again tomorrow. This office is closed for the weekend. Please call again on Monday after 9:30 but before 4:30 ACST (Absolute Celestial Standard Time) when the humming bird races begin. Please call again soon, but never on Sunday, that is OUR day of rest.<sup>1</sup>

The passages read from David’s poetry and Jesus’ last words on earth to His disciples were God’s ways, through the Scriptural revelation, of reminding us that God is a personality Who is near to us and with us throughout our lives. Certainly the disciples’ experiences of being with Jesus for those few years, motivated them to be willing to live out their years spreading the good news and even dying for their faith. And down through history, people have always wanted further assurance that God is with us in a personal way.

After the middle-ages of the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, the artists of the Italian Renaissance in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries began to portray God and Jesus as more personal, . . . more human. Someone we would reach out and touch and see in the midst of common weekly experiences. Jesus was powerfully portrayed as one Who was not only present

<sup>1</sup> Anonymous, from the Internet.

but Who sacrificially served and suffered for us, . . . Who wept, was depressed and Who was passionate about life.

You remember the three ‘O God’ movies about two decades ago. God was portrayed by George Burns who was a cigar-smoking, stand-up comedian but kindly old uncle-like character. We liked how he was totally unselfconscious and very casual despite his seemingly unlimited power (which he was not that interested in demonstrating). We could feel comfortable with this kind of God because he was there, relaxed (despite how we might be feeling) and apparently in control (without any effort or worry on his part). We have almost the identical character in the new animated television show called “God, the Devil and Bob.”<sup>2</sup>

Because our world is more connected and information is overwhelmingly more forthright, we know that thousands have flocked in various places in Brazil to witness the appearance of what was believed to be Mary appearing in a bathroom window, crucifixes with palms dripping with blood. They’re passing around the Internet a picture of storm-toppled tree in the wake of a hurricane with a dark cloud (above in the sky) which, if turned sideways, looks like a silhouette of a 1<sup>st</sup> century robed person thought to be Jesus. We’re skeptical about everything, and yet we crave some sign of the presence of God in our lives.



One CBS show on Sunday night we watch is Touched By An Angel. If you haven’t seen it, it revolves around the jobs of three angels who are sent into various people’s lives to help them in their turning points of crisis.

It’s refreshingly devoid of unnecessary theology and esoteric denominational dogma and ritual. The three



<sup>2</sup> Tuesday nights on NBC.

angels, even the angel of death, embody total compassion, Godly wisdom and they are compelled to remind people, at every point, that ① God absolutely loves them, ② that they are to trust God and lastly ③ do the good that is already known and in their heart. Those three things represent the essential tone and goals of Jesus as portrayed in Luke’s gospel. But those who are highly focused on justice and the ultimate judgment of oppressors and violent people, find just these three things woefully inadequate – completely missing the serious and ominous warnings Jesus gave to those who ultimately tortured and murdered Him.

But still, wouldn’t it be comforting and assuring to have some of these angels appear in our lives? Wouldn’t it finally and conclusively set everything in our lives straight – giving us absolute peace and comfort if someone was saying these things to us while they suddenly began to emanate a warm light and glow? Would we **believe** and **trust** and **do good** if we actually saw an angel? To what ends does God have to go in order to get our attention? If God allowed you to visibly see God’s actual presence, in a way that didn’t terrify you, would God have to appear on your television during prime time?

The thing is, God is by you now in a way that is totally independent of your thinking about it or being in the mood to be open to it. God is beside you *now* whether you want to believe it or not.

God has also appeared to you and has personally told you specific things you are to be doing with your mind, your heart and your behavior. You were personally told these things in no uncertain terms. You were told many times and in numerous ways – in creative and impressive ways. Did you get it? Once you perceived, in hindsight, that something profound had been put before you, did you do it? Did you take God seriously?

God is with you now. ① God absolutely and unconditionally loves you. ② Trust in the Lord with all your heart and soul and don’t rely just on what you think you know. ③ In all that you do, acknowledge the presence of God and God will direct you as you make your way along as best as you can.<sup>3</sup>

There; . . . you’ve been told again. ■

<sup>3</sup> Proverbs 3:5-6