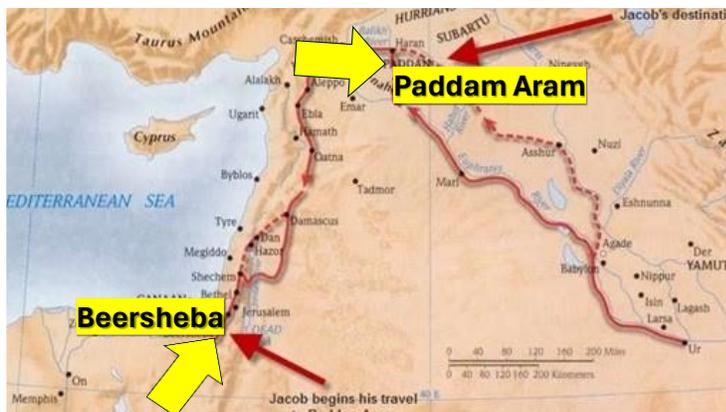




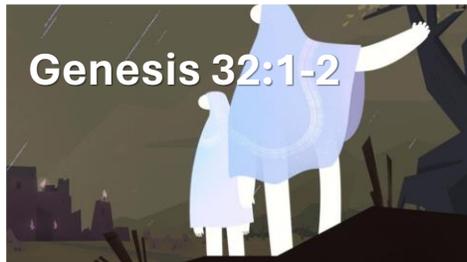
Today we return to our study of the life of Jacob. When Jacob was a young adult, his parents, Isaac and Rebekah, sent him to live in Paddam Aram with Rebekah's family...



... because his twin brother Esau planned to kill him in revenge for stealing from him the blessing of their father.

Jacob lived in Paddam Aram for twenty years. While there he married two sisters and their maidservants.

While there eleven boys and one daughter were born to him.  
After twenty years, God prompted Jacob to leave Paddam Aram and return to Canaan.



v.1 - “Jacob also went on his way..”

When Jacob left Paddam Aram he did not inform Laban, because he feared his uncle would harm him or refuse to let Jacob’s family go with him.

This was why when Laban left to shear his sheep, Jacob hurriedly packed up and fled.

Three days later when Laban found out Jacob had left, he pursued him and did catch up to him after a seven day chase.

It was not a happy reunion.

Harsh words were spoken.

But eventually Laban and Jacob came to an understanding.

They entered into a covenant where they promised not to harm each other.

They made a heap of stones as a sign of their covenant, which also served as a boundary marker.



Laban promised Jacob he would not go past the marker and Jacob promised Laban the same.

The next day Laban returned home to Paddam Aram, and as Jacob continued on his way...

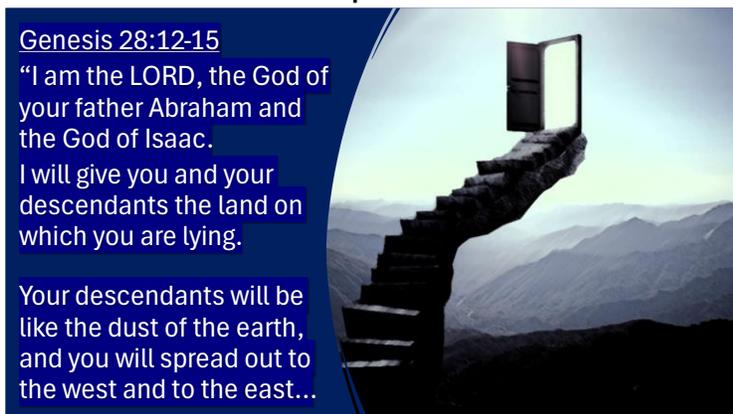


When Jacob had left Canaan twenty years earlier, his first night out, as he slept rough, he had a dream.

In that dream he saw...



In the dream God spoke to Jacob and said...



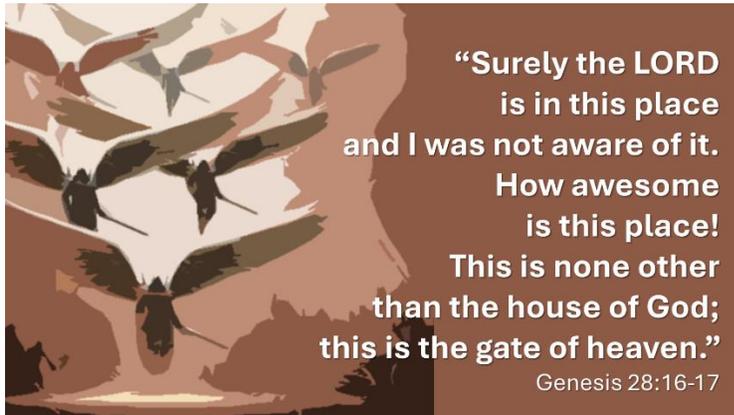
Genesis 28:12-15

“...to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring.

I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised.”



When Jacob awoke from that dream he said to himself...



As Jacob went on his way... as he travelled back to Canaan... God once more allowed him to see what was normally invisible.

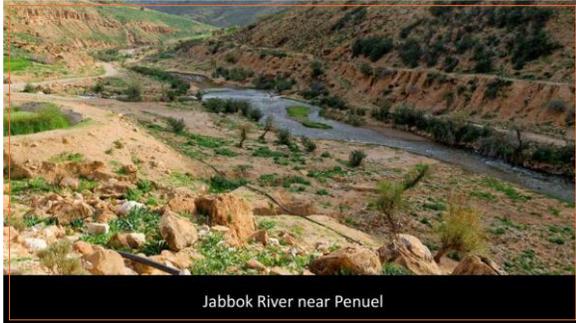
He was met by the angels of God.

When he saw them he said...



Jacob named this place, v.1c ... ‘Mahanaim.’

It was on the eastern side of the Jordan River n.e.ar the Jabbok River



Jabbok River near Penuel



Why did Jacob choose this name?

Because it was revealed to Jacob that God's camp was in the midst of his own camp.

There is a precious truth revealed in this verse.

We often think of the unseen heaven as being far, far away... on the other side of the universe.

But the scripture reveals that the unseen realm is close at hand.

God is near.

His holy angels are among us.

But why at this point ... did God choose to send his angels to meet Jacob?

And why were Jacob's eyes opened to see them?

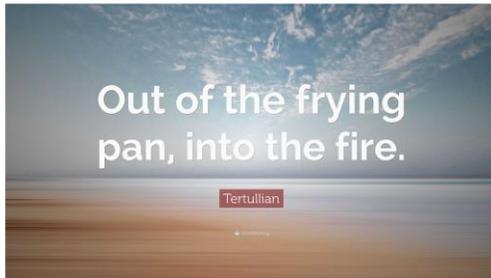
Wasn't God's ongoing faithfulness to Jacob enough?

God had guarded Jacob's life for twenty years.

God had kept Laban from harming him.

God had generously blessed Jacob... and would continue to do so.

The angels met Jacob because he was about to go...as Tertullian wrote...



In this present time, it is the will of God that his people live by faith, and not by sight.

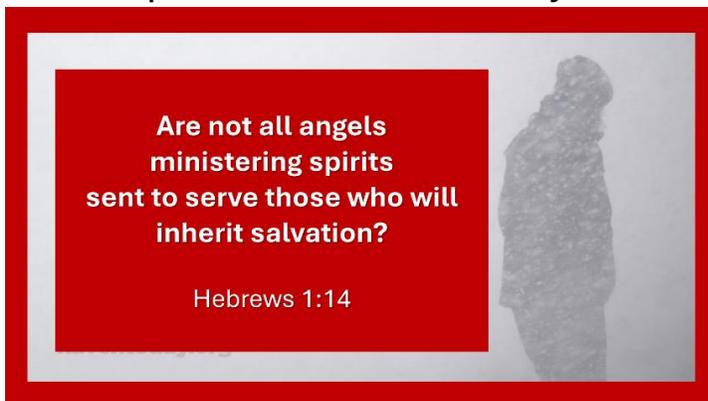
But it is God who chooses to encourage his people in the manner of his choosing.

In the case of Jacob, that encouragement came through the angels of God who met him.

Their encouragement helped prepare Jacob for his face to face encounter with God... and his reunion with Esau.

In our passage, we are reminded, that though unseen, God's holy angels are among us.

The scripture teaches that they are among us as...

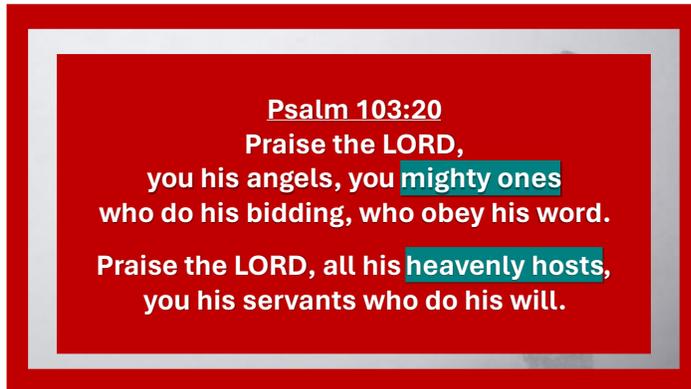


All of them, not some, but all of them... were created by God to be ministering spirits.

What is it that angels do?

Directed by God, they make everything work together for good as Romans 8:28 says.

While the story of the Bible does not focus primarily upon angels, we are provided with much detail about them.



The angels are “mighty ones.”

The word “heavenly hosts” means “armies.”

The angels are a heavenly army... who are committed to God; who obey God; who do his will.

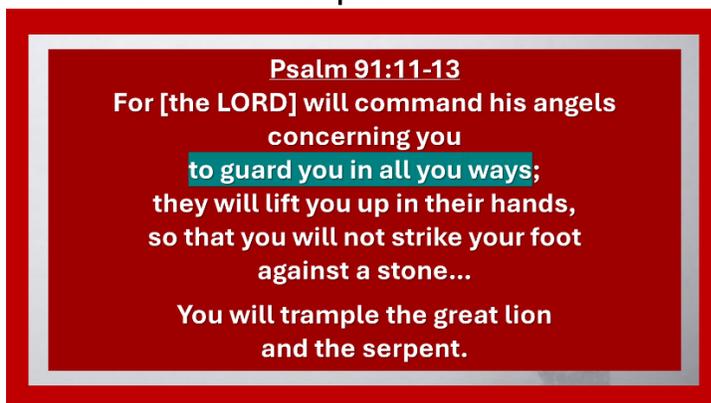
What is God’s will for them?

That they serve those who will inherit salvation.

We may not visibly see the angels of God but these glorious beings, who wield tremendous power live to serve God by serving the people whom God has redeemed.

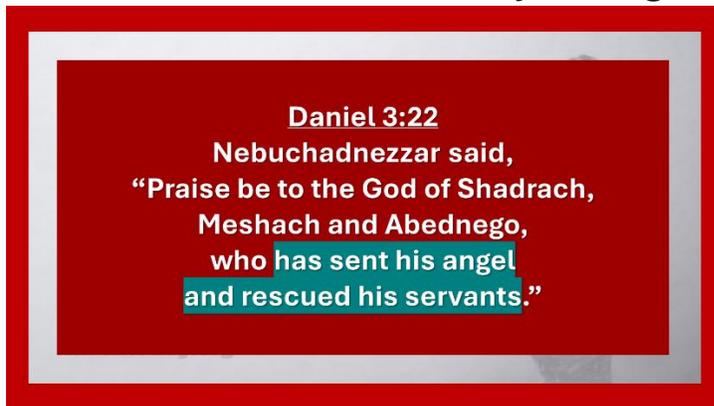
What specifically do angels do?

Psalm 91:11-13 explains ...



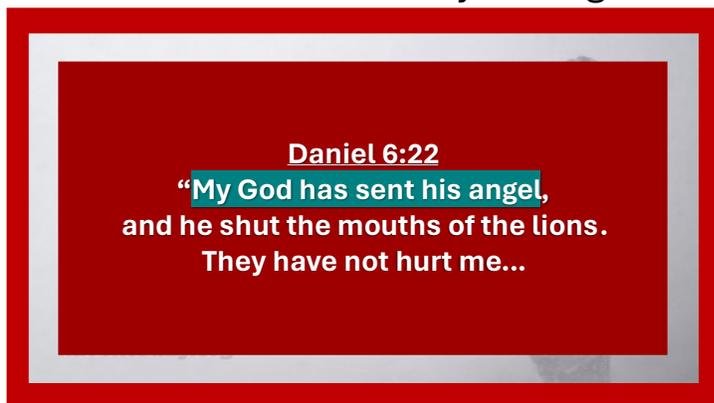
This is what Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego experienced when they refused to worship the king's idol... and were sentenced to die by burning.

The LORD rescued them... by an angel...



Daniel also experienced the help of angels as promised in Psalm 91. When he was charged with worshiping God rather than the king, he was sentenced to die by being thrown into a lion's den.

But God rescued him... by an angel...



The angels announced the birth of Jesus.



The gospel of Mark says that after his baptism, but before he began his public ministry, the Spirit of God led Jesus into the desert. There he fasted for forty days.

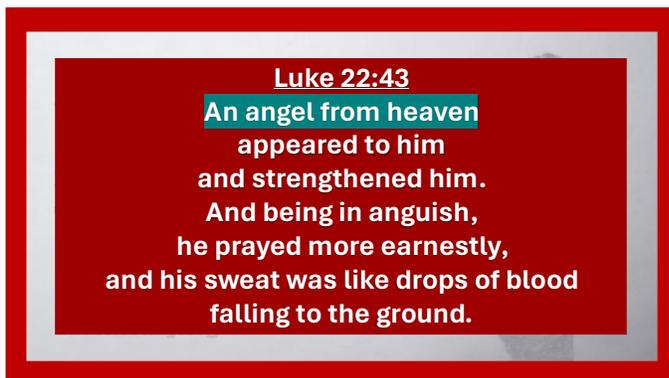
During this time Satan unsuccessfully tempted Jesus.

When his test was over... look at what the Father did of Jesus.



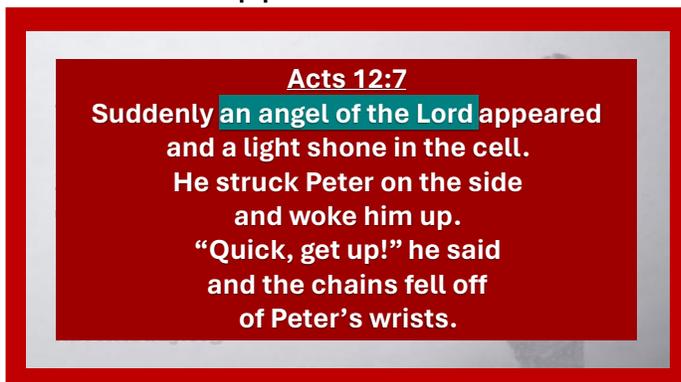
In the garden of Gethsemane, the night before he was crucified, Jesus prayed to the Father.

Look at how the Father answered his prayer.



King Herod arrested and imprisoned Peter.

The night before Peter's trial was to begin, as he slept in a prison cell... this happened...



Peter was miraculously rescued by God.

An angel was sent to him.

The angel caused Peter's chains to fall off.

The angel led Peter past sleeping guards ... and the angel caused the iron gates leading to the city to open by themselves.

When Paul was being transported to Rome to stand trial, the boat he travelled on was caught in a hurricane that violently battered the ship for fourteen days.

All aboard that boat lost hope of being saved.

In that desperate situation... an angel of God appeared to Paul and encouraged him.

Paul in turn encouraged his travel companions by saying to them...

**Acts 27:23**  
Last night **an angel of the God**  
whom I am and whom I serve  
stood beside me and said,  
"Do not be afraid, Paul.  
You must stand trial before Caesar;  
and God has graciously given you  
the lives of all who sail with you."

Isn't God amazing?!

He is the refuge and strength of his people.

**Psalm 46:1**  
God is our refuge and strength,  
an ever-present help in trouble.  
Therefore, we will not fear,  
though the earth give way  
and the mountains fall  
into the heart of the sea,  
though its waters roar and foam  
and the mountains quake with their surging.

The LORD is our ever-present help.

And his help comes to us... through the holy angels... who are ministering spirits.

Let me make several points of connection regarding this revealed truth.

In the vision seen by Daniel in chapter 7 of his book, as he described the Ancient of Days, Daniel also made this note about the holy angels...

Daniel 7  
The Ancient of Days took his seat...  
His throne was flaming with fire...  
Thousands upon thousands attended him;  
ten thousands times ten thousand  
stood before him.

100 million mighty angels!

As Elisha once told his servant, **“Those who are with us are more than those who are against us.”**

Is this not what was impressed upon Jacob?

But we are not to fixate upon the angels.

We don't pray to them.

We don't command them to do such and such for us.

The Bible is clear.

We fix our eyes on... Jesus our Savior.

We pray to ... our heavenly Father.

We make our requests... of him.

And our Father answers and helps us in the manner he chooses.

We've focused on these two verses in Genesis 32 because it is important that we understand that God helps his people... through his holy angels... though... what they do for us... is rarely... if ever seen by us.

Those who are with us... are many... and are more than... those who are against us.

Here is the second connection.

Jesus was once asked who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. He called a child to come to him and then he said to his disciples: **Unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.**

The teaching of Jesus in Matthew 18 is not about children, but about the followers of Jesus... who must become like little children... if they are to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Having said that, Jesus made this statement that is beyond stunning...

Matthew 18:10  
See to it that you do not look down  
on one of these little ones.  
  
For I tell you  
that **their angels in heaven**  
always see the face of my Father  
in heaven.

John Piper wrote that the little ones being spoken of in Matthew 18 are God's adopted daughters and sons.

You can read more of this in his article entitled: The Surprising Role of Guardian Angels.

The NT teaches us that the Creator of the universe is our Father... and the Lord of the unseen and seen realms... is our eldest brother.

We cannot have, as John Piper says, a safer, more exalted position as a human being than to have God as our all-caring, all-proving Father and Jesus as our all-authoritative Lord.

Our security, our confidence, our hope is that we belong to God. And our Father manifests his care for us... through his powerful, glorious angels who stand in the most privileged place in the universe... before the face of God.

These mighty angels are always ready to do God's bidding. They live for his pleasure. This is who ministers to us on behalf of our Father.

**Here is the third and last point of connection.**

Just as the angels of God were created to be ministering spirits, so are the people of God.

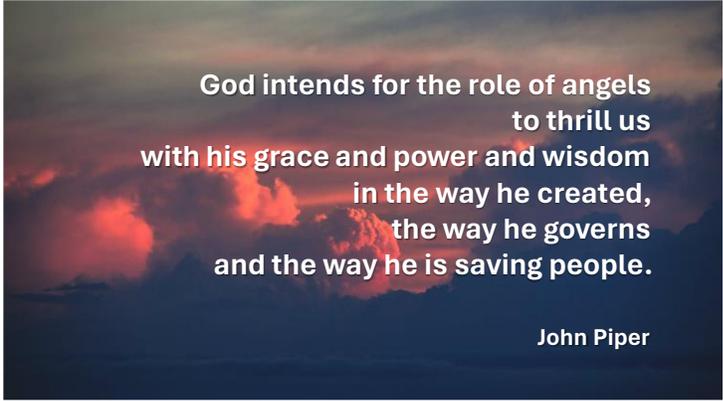
Through faith in Jesus... we have become a new creation.

Born of the Spirit, we have a new nature that is like the nature of Jesus who came, not to be served, but to serve and to give his life in ransom for many.

As he does with his angels, so God does with the redeemed. He graciously involves us; he allows us to work alongside of him; to be mediators of his grace into this broken world.

To serve others on Jesus' behalf is not an onerous task...but one of great privilege.

This subject of angels leads us to praise our great and glorious God.



Our God truly is amazing!