

Spiritual Warfare 311: Angels as a Network



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Angels as a Network: God's Other Way of Knowing

Judeo-Christianity and its scriptures have always held that God is omniscient, or all-knowing. Within the compound word omniscience we can see the two words that form it: the prefix “omni,” meaning “all”, and the word “science,” meaning “knowledge”.

omniscience: the quality or state of being omniscient

Etymology: Medieval Latin *omniscientia*, from Latin **omni-** + *scientia*

knowledge – more at science

– Encyclopedia Britannica Deluxe Edition, 2004 CD-ROM

omni-: all : universally

Etymology: Latin, from *omnis*

– Encyclopedia Britannica Deluxe Edition, 2004 CD-ROM

science: 1: the state of knowing: knowledge as distinguished from ignorance or misunderstanding

– Encyclopedia Britannica Deluxe Edition, 2004 CD-ROM

Simply put, the orthodox Christian view is that God is omniscient meaning that God has all knowledge or knowledge of all things.

omniscient: 1: having infinite awareness, understanding, and insight 2: possessed of universal or complete knowledge

– Encyclopedia Britannica Deluxe Edition, 2004 CD-ROM

In Christian theology omniscience therefore means that God possesses a full, detailed, and complete knowledge, awareness, and understanding of (what for us includes) past, present, and future events (and even thoughts).

Passages such as Hebrews 4, 1 John 3, Romans 9, and 1 Peter 1 are often pointed to in support of this concept.

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

1 John 3:20 For if our heart condemn us, **God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.**

Romans 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

1 Peter 1:2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

In addition, as covered in our Calvinism and Open Theism studies, from the earliest times orthodox Judeo-Christianity has always held that God's omniscience did not contradict or have any implications restricting human freewill. Later however, within the Calvinist (or Reformed) theological system that emerged later (and in the 4th century, under Augustine) God's omniscience has been taken to be deterministic.

Determinism – in philosophy, **theory that all events, including moral choices, are completely determined by previously existing causes that preclude free will and the possibility that humans could have acted otherwise.** – Encyclopedia Britannica Deluxe Edition, 2004 CD-ROM

And, as a reaction against the determinism that Calvinists usher in with omniscience, a more recent theological school has emerged. This school of thought, called Open Theism, actually denies God's omniscience and denies that God has any faculty that automatically allows him to know all things. To the contrary, Open Theism asserts that God does not know everything (especially regarding the future) but instead God's knowledge is partial and God must acquire information through information gathering just like other intelligent beings. Of course, Open Theists quickly clarify that God's information-gathering abilities far outstrip the much more limited capacity of his creatures. Nevertheless, to the Open Theist, even God's abilities are limited. Moreover, for Open Theists, God's knowledge of the future is merely a matter of God's relatively superior ability to make what amounts to highly probable guesses due to his relatively larger awareness of facts.

Like Calvinism, Open Theism and its errors are not the subjects of this study. Nor will this study in any way question God's omniscience as understood in orthodox terms. God is indeed omniscient and that omniscience in no way undermines or negates freewill, just as the scriptures teach and just as the earliest Jews and Christians believed. However, while God is omniscient as scripture plainly asserts, scripture also describes in very clear terms another way that God has set up to acquire and disseminate information.

The reason for briefly describing both Calvinism and Open Theism here is twofold. First, many of the passages describing this secondary approach to information might otherwise be misunderstood as supporting Open Theism. In fact, once we understand why this secondary approach is in place, we will see that the passages asserting this secondary approach to information do not negate God's omniscience at all. Second, if the reasons for this secondary approach to information were not spelled out that could lead to the false impression that this approach serves no purpose and is merely illusory, just as Calvinists interpret all scriptural indications against their deterministic omniscience as illusory. In fact, neither the meaning of the passages nor the system of information they describe is illusory.

A Scriptural Paradox – God With and Without Omniscience

As indicated above, even though God is omniscient, starting very early on in scripture we begin to find clear indications that God has arranged for another way of gathering information. The detailed how's and why's of this secondary avenue of information are important to properly understanding why it does not negate God's omniscience. And these early passages hold some fundamental keys to understanding those how's and why's from the ground up.

For instance, Genesis provides a couple of prominent examples where God is shown as not using omniscience. The first of these examples comes in Genesis 3. After Adam and Eve have sinned the Word of God encounters them in the garden.

Genesis 3:6 And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, **she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.** 7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. 8 **And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day:** and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. 9 **And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where *art* thou?** 10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I *was* naked; and I hid myself. 11 **And he said, Who told thee that thou *wast* naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?** 12 And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. 13 And the LORD God said unto the woman, What *is* this *that* thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

How does God respond to Adam and Eve? Is God portrayed as having an omniscient knowledge of what Adam and Eve have done? Does he already know that they have sinned through some omniscient attribute? No. Here in Genesis 3, at the very beginning of creation, we have God portrayed, not as already knowing that Adam and Eve had sinned. Rather, God discovers that they have sinned

through investigation. He asks Adam where he is. Adam states that he hid because he was afraid and because he was naked. Does God express a knowledge of who told Adam he was naked or does he ask Adam? He asks him. And then God asks if Adam has eaten of the tree of knowledge which he commanded him not to eat from. The entire series of events here definitely does not seem to convey God operating with divine omniscience.

Similarly, in Genesis 18 we have the record of God's visitation to Abraham, which precedes the destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Towards the end of the first part of God's visitation with Abraham, the text turns towards the issue of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Genesis 18:20 And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; 21 I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know. 22 And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the LORD.

In verse 20, we see that besides visiting Abraham to announce to him that he will have a son, God has also come to deal with the situation in Sodom and Gomorrah. In verse 21, God states that he is going to go to these two cities and see whether they have done all the wicked things that he had heard so that he may know himself. The description in the text is not one of God utilizing the kind of knowledge we would call omniscience. But rather, by contrast, the text describes God acquiring greater certainty and seeking to acquire knowledge he does not have. This passage seems to present some problems for the traditional understanding of omniscience. Because if God has omniscience wouldn't he already know if Sodom and Gomorrah were worthy of destruction?

Similarly, Genesis 22 records for us God's asking Abraham to offer up his son Isaac as a sacrifice.

Genesis 22:1 And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, *here I am*. 2 And he said, **Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering** upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

The entire premise of this chapter (beginning in verse one) is that God is going to test Abraham. But before we hastily conclude that the test is solely for Abraham's benefit we should take a look at the end of the chapter.

Genesis 22:10 And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. 11 And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here *am I*. 12 And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: **for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.**

In verse 12, we see that it is because Abraham was going to sacrifice Isaac as God commanded him that God was able to know that Abraham feared him. There may have been some benefit for Abraham also, but the passage indicates that the primary purpose of the test was for God to learn whether Abraham would fear and obey him. Again, this portrayal does not seem to fit very well with the traditional view of God's omniscience. For if God has a full knowledge of past, present, and future events how did God not already know whether Abraham would obey him and sacrifice Isaac? Why did God need to test Abraham and watch the results before he knew if Abraham would be faithful and fear and obey him?

From these passages we can see that we arrive at an apparent paradox regarding God's omniscience. Sometimes God is portrayed as having an omniscient knowledge and sometimes God is portrayed as not having an omniscient knowledge. The Calvinist typically looks at the verses where God is described as omniscient, but ignores verses where he is not. The Open Theist typically looks at the verses where God is not described as omniscient, but ignores verses where he is. To each group the passages that support their point of view are the more informative while the passages that disprove their view are dismissed in some sense as illusory.

But which is it? Is God omniscient or isn't he? The solution to this dilemma is readily available in the scripture despite the fact that many people may not have considered it. And there is a quick and easy way to find it.

A Biblical Model Explaining the Apparent Paradox

Matthew 24 records Jesus' Olivet Discourse in which he describes the events and timing of his return to establish the kingdom of God on earth.

Matthew 24:3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? ...33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. 34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. 35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. 36 But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

Here in this passage Jesus makes a very curious statement. In verse 36, Jesus states that knowledge of the exact day and hour of his return is known only by the Father. Mark records the same statement from Jesus as Matthew in chapter 13 of his gospel, but with one additional point. Mark informs us that Jesus includes himself as among those who do not have this knowledge.

Mark 13:32 But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

In making this statement Jesus provides insight into our current question. Here we have Jesus ascribing the kind of omniscient knowledge of the future that we've documented God having elsewhere in the scripture. Specifically, God is shown to have a true omniscience, a knowledge of an innumerable number of events, causes, free choices, and actions that result in future events thousands of years later – right down to the exact day and hour. But Jesus assigns this omniscient foreknowledge to only one person of the Trinity, God the Father. At the same Jesus also informs us that he himself (another person of the Trinity), does not use that kind of omniscience.

It might also be argued that Jesus is also excluding the Holy Spirit from having this kind of omniscience in part because Jesus identifies only the Father as possessing it. But whichever category we place the Holy Spirit into at this point one thing is clear from Jesus' teaching. While one person of the Trinity possesses an omniscient knowledge there are times when at least one or both of the other persons of the Trinity do not have or at least do not utilize that omniscient knowledge. However, we have yet to discuss exactly why the other persons of the Trinity (including the Son at least, but also probably the Holy Spirit) do not always act with that kind of omniscience.

A few questions emerge from this. First, why is it the case that all of the persons of the Trinity do not possess omniscient knowledge at all times? And second, could the model that Jesus describes here be at work elsewhere throughout the scripture?

This scriptural fact is undeniable regarding the Word after his incarnation. Jesus is clear over and over again that he himself was not the source of what he taught and prophesied during his life on earth. Rather he depended upon the Father in heaven for the words which he passed on to his disciples.

John 8:26 I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; **and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him.** 27 They understood not that **he spake to them of the Father.** 28 Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am *he*, and *that* **I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.**

John 12:49 **For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.**

John 14:10 Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? **the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works...**24 He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: **and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.**

In these passages and throughout his ministry Jesus credited everything from his power to do miraculous works to everything he taught us (including prophecy of the future) to the Father. The question is, is this model, which was clearly at work during Jesus' 33 years of life on earth, also what we see occurring in other biblical passages where God is described as operating without omniscience?

The Word and the Spirit Don't Operate With Omniscience

To answer this question we must first recognize that the Person of God who we have seen in these Old Testament passages operating without omniscience is indeed the Word of God, which later became flesh. Because this information is examined much more thoroughly in our Trinity Study we will not reexamine it here. What we do know from that study is that the Person of the Trinity called the Word of God is described throughout both the Old Testament and in the Gospels as operating without complete omniscience, without a full knowledge of all things past, present, and future.

But we also see that the Person of the Trinity known as the Father is credited as the source of that knowledge by Jesus during his life on earth. And we see that Jesus relates that this same situation is true for the Holy Spirit who also receives information and knowledge of the future from the Father.

We can also add that this same process continues to operate between the Father, the Word, and the Spirit even after Jesus' resurrection, glorification, and ascension into heaven. The Book of Revelation makes this clear.

Revelation 1:1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified *it* by his angel unto his servant John:

Revelation 4:1 And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. 2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? 3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. 4 And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. 5 **And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.** 6 And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. 7 **And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.** 8 **And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four *and* twenty elders fell down before the Lamb,** having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. 9 And they sung a new song, saying, **Thou art worthy to take the book, and to**

open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

So we know that the model Jesus articulates in Matthew 24:36 is true for his own general relationship with the Father both before, during, and after the incarnation. And we also are informed by Jesus that the same model is true for the Holy Spirit. John records for us in his gospel that like the Incarnate Word, the Holy Spirit would not speak of his own, but that what he taught us and told us of the future was instead from the Father.

John 16:13 Howbeit **when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.** 14 He shall glorify me: **for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.** 15 **All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.**

John 14:25 **These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.** 26 But the Comforter, *which is the Holy Ghost*, whom the Father will send in my name, **he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.**

John 15:26 **But when the Comforter is come,** whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father,* **he shall testify of me:**

So, we can now confirm that the model Jesus provides for us in his Olivet Discourse is not just a particular and peculiar case regarding only the singular event of the exact day and hour of Jesus' return. Instead, it is the general model that is in operation among the members of the Trinity. With regard to omniscient knowledge, the model seems to be this: The Father operates with an omniscient and non-deterministic knowledge. The Word and the Spirit receive information from the Father's omniscience and pass it on to men. (We might further suggest from John's gospel and the Book of Revelation that the Spirit receives what he hears from the Word.)

Recognizing that this model is in place solves the dilemma created by the Old Testament passages, which portray God not operating with omniscience. What we learn is that the Word and the Holy Spirit at times operate with omniscient knowledge that they receive from the Father. But at other times, the Word and the Spirit operate without that omniscient knowledge and instead seek to acquire knowledge through personal investigation and interaction.

Why the Different Modes of Knowledge Among the Trinity?

The reason for this distinction between the Father, the Word, and the Spirit is also available through a study of scripture. From the scripture it is clear that the three Persons of the Trinity have taken on different roles in order to carry out their plan for creation. That this is the case is not really much of a revelation. And we can also see that this differentiation of roles involves one Person of the Trinity (the Word) humbling himself in regard to his divine attributes and instead submitting to another Person of the Trinity (the Father).

This humbling and diminishing has several purposes. First, it was done to accomplish the salvation of men. Paul speaks of this in Hebrews 2.

Hebrews 2:7 Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: 8 Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing *that is* not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. 9 **But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death,** crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. 10 For it became him, for whom *are* all things, and by whom *are* all things, **in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings....**14 **Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;** 15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. 16 **For verily he took not on *him* the nature of angels; but he took on *him* the seed of Abraham.** 17 **Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto *his* brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.** 18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

Another aspect of this is that without taking a humbler and less glorious form the Word would not have been able to come unto men, because mortal men cannot see God in his glorious and true form and live. This is stated for us by the Word of God directly in Exodus.

Exodus 33:17 And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name. 18 **And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.** 19 **And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee;** and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. 20 **And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.** 21 And the LORD said, Behold, *there is* a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: 22 And it shall come to pass, **while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by:** 23 **And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen.**

And John repeats this truth in the opening chapter of his gospel and his epistle.

John 1:18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.

1 John 4:12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

Jesus himself says the same thing in John 6.

John 6:46 Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.

So, in order to accomplish God's plan of salvation one Person of the Trinity (the Word) took on a humbler guise and diminished his divine attributes in order to accommodate the interaction with men that would be necessary in order to accomplish our salvation. This culminated in the Incarnation, wherein the Word took on the ultimate diminishing of his divine attributes and became man. But we also have seen that this intentional diminishing was occurring in a limited form in the Old Testament times as well.

Second, the Word diminished his divine attributes in order to demonstrate for men (and angels) how we are to humble ourselves and submit to God (and in order to act as a servant to the benefit of others as well). Paul says this directly in Philippians 2.

Philippians 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: **7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient** unto death, even the death of the cross. **9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; 11 And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

And, as we can see plainly from Philippians 2 (as well as other passages of scripture examined in the Trinity study), this diminishing of divine attributes is voluntary on the part of the Word (and by extension the Spirit also). The Word and the Spirit do so of their own accord and can resume whatever degree of these attributes at any time at will.

Summary of the Biblical Model of God's Knowledge

Without spending as much time on it here, we have seen in our Trinity Study and our Revelation Chronology study that the Holy Spirit is operating in the guise of an angelic being. Thus, we have one Person of the Trinity, the Word, humbling himself and becoming a man and then (through the resurrection) becoming a glorified man equal to angels, in order to show men and angels how to act toward God and in order to accomplish the salvation of sinful men. And we have another Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, acting as an angel in order to show angels and men how to act and in order to help accomplish the salvation of men. And the Father, remains in the seat of authority, as God upon the throne of creation, holding and exercising all of the divine attributes of the Godhead in coordination with the other two Persons of the Trinity.

Thus, we have a model that explains what we see in the scripture and is itself provided and explained in the scripture. And what does our model show? Our model demonstrates that God, in the person of the Father, operates with total, non-deterministic omniscience, while the Word and the Holy Spirit do not normally operate with such an omniscience in their interaction with creation, but coordinate with the Father for such knowledge.

So we have identified the modes of knowledge that the Godhead operates with. One mode of divine knowledge is the divine omniscience exercised by the Father. On the other hand, there are two means of knowledge used by the Word and the Spirit. The first is through revelation from the Father. The second is through investigation and acquisition as exemplified in the cases of Abraham (Genesis 22) and Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18) that we looked at earlier.

At this point, we have only barely begun to look at the mode of knowledge exercised by the Word and the Holy Spirit. We do know that the Word and the Spirit do not, at least in a general sense, operate by taking recourse to their divinely inherent attribute of omniscience. Instead, we have seen that they either rely upon the Father's disclosure or upon more normative means of knowledge acquisition.

In the first case, where the Father is the source of knowledge, information proceeds in a linear direction with the Father as the source. In this mode of information transmission, knowledge is distributed from the Father to the Word and the Spirit. From there it is distributed through one of several means.

First, we have seen that in Old Testament times the pre-incarnate Word of God often came to deliver God's message to men on earth. There are countless examples of this beginning in the garden of Eden, where it was the Word of God that walked in the garden with Adam and Eve. It was the Word that visited Abraham. It was the Word that visited Moses. It was the Word that came to the prophets.

Then the Word of God became man and continued his role of being the "angel" (in the sense of "messenger agent") of the Trinity to mankind. Throughout his life and ministry, Jesus Christ, the Word incarnate, carried on the task of delivering

God's teaching to men in an even more direct manner – as a man speaking with his fellow men.

However, it is clear through Jesus' own teaching in the Gospels as well as New Testament history that after his ascension into heaven, Jesus largely ceased to directly interact with men on earth. We have a few examples where he is portrayed speaking from heaven. But the role of coming down and delivering God's message to men on earth was taken on by the Holy Spirit. We have already looked at the verses in which Jesus explained that this would be the case to his disciples. (And our Trinity study goes into even further detail on this point.)

Angels Help Distribute God's Messages to Men

Beyond their own personal interaction with men, the Word and the Spirit at times employ angels to deliver God's message to men on earth. Prominent Old Testament examples include Gabriel's appearances to Daniel.

Daniel 9:21 Yea, whiles I *was* speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. **22** And he informed *me*, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. **23** At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew *thee*; for thou *art* greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.

We also see Gabriel assigned to similar tasks in the New Testament where he is sent to John the Baptist's father Zacharias and to Mary.

Luke 1:5 There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife *was* of the daughters of Aaron, and her name *was* Elisabeth. ... **8** And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, **9** According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.... **11** And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. **12** And when Zacharias saw *him*, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. **13** But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.... **18** And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years. **19** And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.

Luke 1:26 And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, **27** To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name *was* Mary. **28**

And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, *thou that art* highly favoured, the Lord *is* with thee: blessed *art* thou among women. 29 And when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. 30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. 31 **And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.** 32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: 33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. 34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? 35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. 36 And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. 37 For with God nothing shall be impossible. 38 And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

But what about other angels? Do we see any evidence in the Bible of other angels ever filling the role of giving God's message to men?

One example comes from a passage we've already looked at, Revelation 1.

Revelation 1:1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:

Here in Revelation 1 we see that the line of transmission goes from the Father to Jesus, from Jesus to an angel, and from the angel to John the Apostle. In our study on Revelation Chronology we discuss that this angel is, in fact, the Holy Spirit. Such an identification of the Holy Spirit fits very well with Jesus' description of the role of the Spirit in John's Gospel.

John 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you. 15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you.

John 14:25 These things have I spoken unto you, being *yet* present with you. 26 But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

John 15:26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

A similar description of John's receiving of the book from an angel is recorded in Revelation 10. But again textual cues that we discuss in our Revelation Chronology study lead us to conclude that this angel is probably the Holy Spirit.

Revelation 10:8 And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, *Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel* which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. **9** And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, **Give me the little book.** And he said unto me, **Take it,** and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. **10** And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. **11** And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

Regardless of who this angel is that is mentioned in chapters 1, 10, and 22, it is clear throughout the Book of Revelation that several other angels are involved in conferring and explaining the meaning of the vision to John.

In chapter 17, an angel comes to John to show and explain to him the mystery of the great harlot.

Revelation 17:1 And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, **Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:** **2** With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. **3** So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. **4** And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: **5** And upon her forehead *was* a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. **6** And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. **7** **And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery** of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.

In chapter 19, another angel tells John something he must write.

Revelation 19:9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed *are* they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. **10** And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See *thou do it* not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

In chapter 21, an angel shows John the holy city, the New Jerusalem.

Revelation 21:9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. 10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

And again in chapter 22, John is instructed by an angel not to seal up the words of the Book of Revelation.

Revelation 22:6 And he said unto me, These sayings *are* faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. 7 Behold, I come quickly: blessed *is* he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. 8 And I John saw these things, and heard *them*. **And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things.** 9 Then saith he unto me, See *thou do it* not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God. 10 **And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.**

Chapter 14 describes that angel proclaiming the gospel to people on earth.

Revelation 14:6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

Clearly we can see that the Book of Revelation repeatedly describes that one of the important roles of angels is to help transmit God's message to men. But how much can we know about this angelic role? Is it a rarity or is it one of their primary duties?

One answer to this question comes from the fact that the common term that we use to identify these immortal spirits is "angel," which in both Hebrew and Greek means "messenger." Though it is truly exhibited in the scripture that some angelic beings have other tasks, which we will cover later, the very association of the term "angel" with these beings strongly implies that carrying God's messages to men is one of the primary, defining duties that many of them perform.

Further evidence that angels serve primarily as messengers between God and men comes from other passages outside of the Book of Revelation that show angels operating in this capacity. Zechariah is one of those books.

Throughout his book of prophecy, Zechariah interacts with both the Word of God and with angels who assist God in communicating his message to Zechariah. An example of this is found in chapter 3.

Zechariah 2:3 And, behold, the angel that talked with me went forth, and another angel went out to meet him, **4** And said unto him, **Run, speak to this young man, saying,** Jerusalem shall be inhabited *as* towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein: **5** For I, saith the LORD, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her.

This pattern also occurs in the other prophetic books of the Old Testament where we see the Word of God speaking to the prophet assisted at times in some capacity by angels. A survey of biblical texts easily reveals a clear case that angels commonly assist God in conveying divine messages to men on earth. Further New Testament information to this effect can be found in several passages.

Common Interaction With Angels

In John's first epistle he instructs the church to try the spirits to see whether they are of God.

1 John 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. **2** Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: **Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:** **3** And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

This passage begs the question, if it wasn't normal to the experience of the early church to receive messages from angelic spirits, then what need was there for John to instruct the church to test them? The very need for the instruction clearly indicates that angelic spirits did commonly appear to the early church with messages from God (and sometimes not from God).

Likewise, Paul's letter to the Galatians gives indications that it was not out of the ordinary for the church to be visited by angelic beings bearing instruction or messages. As such Paul warns the church about this just as John does.

Galatians 1:6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: **7** Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. **8** **But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.** **9** As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

Again if the idea of angels conducting messages to the church was merely a rarity or a hypothetical then why all the warnings? The apostolic instructions convey

their perception of a very real and commonly experienced phenomenon. And, as indicated above, not only were godly angels conveying true messages of God and sound doctrine, but ungodly angels and demons were also circulating false information, false prophecy, and false teaching.

1 Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter **times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.**

2 Corinthians 11:13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. 14 And no marvel; **for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.** 15 **Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness;** whose end shall be according to their works.

In fact, the ability to discern between good and evil angelic spirits is even one of the spiritual gifts that the Holy Spirit saw necessary to equip the church with.

1 Corinthians 12:7 **But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.** 8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; 9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; 10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; **to another discerning of spirits;** to another *divers* kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: 11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

While we're on the subject of spiritual gifts that Paul discusses in 1 Corinthians we might speculate some on the gift of tongues mentioned here right after discerning of spirits in verse 10. The gift of tongues possessed by the early church apparently involved two aspects, speaking and interpreting. Paul indicates this just one chapter later in 1 Corinthians 13.

1 Corinthians 13:30 Have all the gifts of healing? **do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?**

Typically tongues are thought of as serving the function of enabling the early church to communicate the gospel to people of other nations whose language they had not learned. That this is certainly one of the functions of this gift is demonstrated in Acts 2.

Acts 2:1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 4 **And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.** 5 **And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.** 6 Now

when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? 8 **And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?** 9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, 10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretes and Arabians, **we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.** 12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?

However just a few verses after his remarks in 1 Corinthians 12 about the gifts of the Spirit, Paul makes the following comment about tongues.

1 Corinthians 12:30 Have all the gifts of healing? **do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?** 31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way. **13:1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels,** and have not charity, I am become *as* sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

Here in verse 1 of chapter 13 Paul indicates that one of the manifestations of the gift of tongues was the ability to speak in the languages of angels. Now it is easy to see why the church would benefit from the Holy Spirit enabling them to speak in the tongues of other nations. Through this gift Christians who had not studied other languages would not be inhibited from sharing the gospel with people with whom they could otherwise not communicate. But what is the purpose of the church being able to speak in the languages of angels?

At least implied by Paul's statement is that men were enabled by the Holy Spirit to speak in angelic languages so they could communicate with angels. We might suppose that this likewise involved either speaking in the angelic tongue themselves or being able to interpret the words of an angel spoken in an angelic dialect.

A second reason to consider this possibility coincides with Paul's listing this gift right after his mention of the discerning of spirits. We have begun to see that it was not an uncommon experience for the early church to have interaction with angelic spirits. This being the case the early church would need to be equipped to interact with such beings, foremost by being able to test or discern in some way whether they were from God. This included examining their messages to determine whether it was in doctrinal accord with Jesus' teaching.

However, before the church could examine the content of any angelic message, they would first have to be able to understand it. And that would require them to be able to at least interpret the angelic tongue and second speak the angelic language back to the spirit in order to test it as John instructed.

In suggesting that this may have been the case we have not suggested anything beyond what is already stated in the scripture. First, we have seen that angels have their own languages. This clearly indicates that angelic communication is like our own in that it involves verbal expression. And second, just as the early church sometimes encountered men that God wanted them to share with who didn't speak their language, they might also encounter angels who didn't speak their language.

One last New Testament verse that we should note before moving on can be found in Hebrews 13. This passage indicates common interaction between angels and men on earth in verse 2, where Paul indicates that it is a simple matter of fact that in being hospitable to strangers, Christians had encountered angels.

Hebrews 13:2 Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: **for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.**

The Roles of Angels

Now there are other scriptural facts that we can add to our case of discovery about the role of angels in the Bible. In Hebrews we are given the very plain statement that angels are sent to minister to those who will inherit salvation.

Hebrews 1:13 **But to which of the angels** said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? **14 Are they not all ministering (3010) spirits, sent forth to minister (1248) for them who shall be heirs of salvation?**

The Greek words translated as “ministering” and “minister” in verse 14 are informative. The first word Paul uses, translated as “ministering,” is Strong’s number 3010.

3010 leitourgikos {li-toorg-ik-os'}
from the same as 3008; TDNT - 4:231,526; adj
 AV - ministering 1; 1
 1) relating to the performance of service, employed in ministering

As we can see this word, which simply means service, is only used in this one instance in the New Testament, but it is related to another word that occurs three times, Strong’s number 3008.

3008 leitourgeo {li-toorg-eh'-o}
 from 3011; TDNT - 4:215,526; v
 AV - minister 3; 3
 1) to serve the state at one's own cost
 1a) to assume an office which must be administered at one's own expense

- 1b) to discharge a public office at one's own cost
- 1c) to render public service to the state
- 2) to do a service, perform a work
 - 2a) of priests and Levites who were busied with the sacred rites in the tabernacle or the temple
 - 2b) **of Christians serving Christ, whether by prayer, or by instructing others concerning the way of salvation, or in some other way**
 - 2c) of those who aid others with their resources, and relieve their poverty

One of the definitions of this Greek word includes instructing men in matters concerning salvation. Paul uses it this way in Romans 15 when he speaks of his preaching the gospel to the Gentiles.

Romans 15:16 That I should be the minister (3011) of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

The second Greek word Paul uses in Hebrews 1:14 is Strong's number 1248.

1248 diakonia {dee-ak-on-ee'-ah}

from 1249; TDNT - 2:87,152; n f

AV - ministry 16, ministration 6, ministering 3, misc 9; 34

- 1) service, ministering, esp. of those who execute the commands of others
- 2) **of those who by the command of God proclaim and promote religion among men**
 - 2a) of the office of Moses
 - 2b) of the office of the apostles and its administration
 - 2c) **of the office of prophets, evangelists, elders etc.**
- 3) the ministration of those who render to others the offices of Christian affection esp. those who help meet need by either collecting or distributing of charities
- 4) the office of the deacon in the church
- 5) the service of those who prepare and present food

Again we can see that this Greek word simply conveys the idea of service. However, as the definition indicates, throughout the New Testament this word is used to specifically refer to the proclaiming or sharing the gospel. In Acts 1 it is used that way to refer to the apostolic role of declaring the resurrection and teaching of Jesus Christ.

Acts 1:22 Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, **must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection...** **25 That he may take part of this ministry (1248) and apostleship,** from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.

It has a similar meaning in Acts 6, where it is contrasted with service toward material needs and instead is used to refer to instructing the church in the Word of God.

Acts 6:4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, **and to the ministry (1248) of the word.**

Paul uses this same word in Acts 20 and Romans 11 to refer to his commissioning by God to proclaim the gospel.

Acts 20:24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so **that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry (1248), which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.**

Romans 11:13 **For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as** I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify **mine office (1248):**

And lastly, Paul speaks of Timothy's work as an evangelist wherein he went abroad to other areas to proclaim the gospel to different peoples in different areas.

2 Timothy 4:5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, **do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry (1248).**

We cannot prove definitively from the use of these words that the book of Hebrews is referring to angels delivering messages to men. Certainly, the Greek words themselves can speak of other types of service (including caring for our physical needs) which angels are also shown doing throughout the scripture. The point is that this statement in Hebrews corroborates and fits well with what we already know, that one of the duties that angels perform includes delivering instruction from God to the church.

But what else do angels do in the service that God has given them? Besides sharing God's words with men we see them performing many other tasks. They may take care of peoples' needs, such as after Jesus was tempted by the devil in Matthew 4.

Matthew 4:11 **Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.**

Angels at times are sent to guard and protect men.

Psalm 91:9 Because thou hast made the LORD, *which is* my refuge, *even* the most High, thy habitation; **10 There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. 11 For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. 12 They shall bear thee up in *their* hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.**

Matthew 4:6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for **it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in *their* hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.**

Luke 4:10 For it is written, **He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee:** 11 And in *their* hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

While Psalms 19, Matthew 4, and Luke 4 refer to angels guarding Jesus, there are other verses that show angels performing this type of task to men. This includes Genesis 19 where two angels rescue Lot from the violent attacks of the men of his city and conduct him and his family to safety before Sodom and Gomorrah are destroyed.

Genesis 19:1 And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing *them* rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground;...9 And they said, Stand back. And they said *again*, This one *fellow* came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, *even* Lot, and came near to break the door. 10 **But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door.** 11 **And they smote the men that *were* at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door.** 12 And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring *them* out of this place: 13 **For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it.** 14 And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law. 15 And when the morning arose, **then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.** 16 And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: **and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.**

Similarly, in Acts 12, God sent an angel to deliver Peter from those who planned on putting him to death. (Note: With regard to the definite article “the” in the phrase “the angel of the Lord,” Acts 12 may be the Holy Spirit himself here and not simply an ordinary angel. More information on this can be found in the Trinity study.)

Acts 12:1 Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth *his* hands to vex certain of the church. 2 **And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.** 3 **And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also.** (Then were the days of unleavened bread.) 4 **And when he had apprehended him, he put *him* in prison,** and delivered *him* to four quaternions

of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people. 5 **Peter therefore was kept in prison:** but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him. 6 And when Herod would have brought him forth, **the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison.** 7 **And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon *him*,** and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, **and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from *his* hands.** 8 **And the angel said unto him,** Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and **follow me.** 9 **And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision.** 10 When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him. 11 **And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod,** and *from* all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

But besides these acts of service, angels also play a very important role in one other aspect of God's interaction with men on earth. As we start this next portion of our study, it is important to keep in mind that we are not denying the omniscient knowledge that is exercised by God the Father. Instead we are continuing to develop our understanding of the Word and the Spirit's normal method of interaction with creation without direct use of divine omniscience.

An Angelic Information Network

As we fill in more of the details what we will see is that angels function as a sort of an information gathering network, which not only serves to pass God's message on to men, but which also gathers information on the affairs of men and passes it up the chain of command to the Word and the Spirit who present it in intercession before the throne of God the Father in heaven. This process does not in any way contradict the omniscience of the Father, for Jesus states very clearly that God knows what we need before we ask him.

Matthew 6:8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

However, despite the fact of the Father's omniscience, we have seen that the Word and the Spirit typically operate by another method of information distribution, one that does not normally involve them directly accessing their divine omniscience. The New Testament conveys that the Word and the Spirit both intercede for us and conduct our needs and our prayers before the Father in heaven. Paul discusses how the Holy Spirit performs this role for us in Romans 8.

Romans 8:26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: **for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession (5241) for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.** 27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what *is* the mind of the Spirit, because **he maketh intercession (1793) for the saints according to the will of God.**

Paul's point here in Romans 8:26-27 is that because we don't always know exactly what to pray for ourselves, the Holy Spirit fills in the gap on our behalf and asks that God's will be done in our lives. The two related Greek words used in this passage bear out this meaning.

5241 huperentugchano {hoop-er-en-toong-khan'-o}

from 5228 and 1793; TDNT - 8:238,1191; v

AV - make intercession for 1; 1

1) to intercede for one

1793 entugchano {en-toong-khan'-o}

from 1722 and 5177; TDNT - 8:242,1191; v

AV - make intercession 4, deal 1; 5

1) to light upon a person or a thing, fall in with, hit upon, a person or a thing

2) to go to or meet a person, esp. for the purpose of conversation, consultation, **or supplication**

3) **to pray, entreat**

4) make intercession for any one

Using the same Greek word, Paul also states in Romans 8:34 that Jesus intercedes for us before the throne of God in heaven.

Romans 8:34 Who *is* he that condemneth? ***It is Christ that died***, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, **who also maketh intercession (1793) for us.**

And the book of Hebrews makes it clear that Jesus' role as our high priest under the New Covenant involves him going before God in a manner similar to that of the high priests of the Old Testament in order to make prayers and intercessions for us, God's people.

Hebrews 7:22 By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. 23 And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: 24 But this *man*, because he continueth ever, **hath an unchangeable priesthood.** 25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, **seeing he ever liveth to make intercession (1793) for them.** 26 For such an high priest became us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; 27 Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.

28 For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, *maketh* the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

Paul affirms this role of Christ in 1 Timothy 2 as well.

1 Timothy 2:5 For *there is* one God, **and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;**

So, we can see clearly from these passages that though Jesus informs us clearly in Matthew 6 that the Father knows our needs before we ask him, it is also the case that Jesus and the Holy Spirit conduct our prayers and make intercession before God the Father for us in heaven.

Beyond this however, we can see further evidence from the scripture that not only do the Holy Spirit and Jesus perform this function, but that angels assist them in this work. The first example we will cite comes from Revelation 8, where we see an angel depicted in very clear language as presenting our prayers before the throne of God the Father in heaven.

Revelation 8:3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; **and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.** 4 **And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.**

In our Revelation Chronology study we laid out the case that the angel described here in Revelation 8 is, in fact, the Holy Spirit carrying out the role that we have just seen Paul ascribe to him in Romans 8. But we also know from elsewhere in Revelation that other angels also help perform this task.

Revelation 5:8 And when he had taken the book, **the four beasts and four and twenty elders** fell down before the Lamb, **having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.**

In chapter 5 of Revelation, we see that the 24 elders and the four living creatures are also seen conducting the prayers of the saints before the throne of God the Father. The angelic beings called living creatures are also described in Ezekiel's visions in chapters 1, 9, and 10 where they are called cherubim.

The Full Structure of the Angelic Network

At this point in our study the top of our model of an angelic information network has been filled in quite well by the scripture. At the top of this network we have the Word and the Holy Spirit interceding and presenting our prayers before God the Father's throne in heaven. There are also angelic beings in heaven who assist the Word and the Spirit in presenting our prayers before the Father.

But the scripture also fills us in on the middle portion of the structure of this angelic information network. The Book of Daniel informs us that there are angelic beings, which hold authority over particular nations or groups of people. In chapter 9 of Daniel, an angel again comes to Daniel to give him understanding concerning the future of God's people. From a study of Daniel we can see that this angel is in fact Gabriel, whom Daniel has identified earlier in the book as coming to him at God's command to help him understand.

Daniel 8:16 And I heard a man's voice between *the banks of Ulai*, which called, **and said, Gabriel, make this *man* to understand the vision.**

Daniel 9:21 Yea, whiles **I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly,** touched me about the time of the evening oblation. 22 And he informed *me*, and talked with me, and said, **O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding** 23 **At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee;** for thou *art* greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.

In chapter 10, Gabriel informs Daniel of why he did not arrive earlier to answer Daniel's prayer.

Daniel 10:11 And he said unto me, **O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee,** and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling. 12 **Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.** 13 **But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.** 14 Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision *is* for *many* days.

In Gabriel's explanation to Daniel we can clearly see that there are angelic beings who hold the authority over various nations of men. In verse 13, Gabriel explains that the angelic prince of the Persians delayed his coming to Daniel. In the final verses of Daniel 10, Gabriel states that after the angelic prince of Persia is defeated the angelic ruler of Greece will come.

Daniel 10:20 Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? **and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come.** 21 But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and *there is* none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince.

And in chapter 9, Gabriel informs Daniel that after the Messiah comes and is killed the Roman people will destroy Jerusalem and the Temple.

Daniel 9:26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: **and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary;** and the end thereof *shall be* with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

If we take note of how Gabriel phrases his description of Jerusalem's destruction here in verse 26, it is clear that he is indicating that the Romans are the people of the prince who is to come. In light of the fact that the Book of Daniel includes a series of prophecies outlining a succession of kingdoms prior to the coming of the kingdom of God and the fact that Daniel 10 clearly indicates that there are angelic princes over two of these kingdoms (Persia and Greece), we can see that Daniel 9:26 is referring to the people of the kingdom of another future angelic prince. From the description of the succession of kingdoms described by Daniel as well as from history itself, we know that this angelic ruler is the prince over the Roman Empire.

As we pull this all together we can see that Gabriel informs us that there are angels who have been given authority over the nations and peoples of men. Our study on Revelation Symbols examines how the Book of Revelation coincides with the Book of Daniel and describes the same succession of earthly kingdoms and the angelic princes that ruled over them. (See especially Revelation 17:9-11.)

Moreover, Deuteronomy also confirms that God divided the nations and set them under the angels. The New International Version (NIV) of Deuteronomy 32:8 says, "When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when he divided all mankind, he set up boundaries for the peoples according to the number of the sons of Israel." However, the footnote on this verse states "Masoretic Text; Dead Sea Scrolls (see also Septuagint) *sons of God*." In other words, some Masoretic Texts and the Septuagint say that the nations are divided according to the "sons of God" rather than the "children of Israel." The phrase "sons of God" is an early term for the angels as indicated by Genesis 6:1-4 and Job 1:6, 2:1, and 38:7. This rendering in some Masoretic Texts and the Septuagint makes sense given the fact that the nations were first divided in Genesis 10 and 11, long before there was a nation of Israel, let alone a particular generation of Israelites, to be numbered. However, there were at that time a set number of angels.

And furthermore, this same interpretation is not only confirmed by Daniel and New Testament passages below, but also by Deuteronomy 4, which indicates that specifically that the nations of earth were divided unto the "host of heaven" even the "stars." In scripture, both "stars" and "host of heaven" are referential not only to the physical stars but the angels as well.

Deuteronomy 4:19 And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest **the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven,** shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them, **which the LORD thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven.**

But this Old Testament teaching that there are angelic rulers over the nations of men is affirmed elsewhere in the New Testament.

Ephesians 3:10 To the intent that now unto **the principalities and powers in heavenly places** might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

Ephesians 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against **principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.**

Colossians 1:16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, **whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers:** all things were created by him, and for him:

So we can see that angels form a structure of authority, a chain of command from heaven over nations and peoples on earth. Some of these angelic beings (in fact, it seems the majority of them) act against God's will and misuse their authority to spread false teaching and oppress God's people. Indeed, at the very top of the structure, the chiefs of the satanic angels are shown at times accusing God's people and working against the intercessory work of the Word and the Spirit on our behalf. The Book of Zechariah provides an example of this.

Zechariah 3:1 And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. **2** And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: *is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?* **3** Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. **4** And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. **5** And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD stood by.

In fact, in chapter 10 of the book of Daniel, the angel Gabriel specifically says that of all the angelic princes, only Michael, the angelic prince over the Jewish nation, came to help him in his struggle against the angelic prince of Persia.

Daniel 10:13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: **but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me;** and I remained there with the kings of Persia...**21** But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: **and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince.**

Revelation 12 depicts a similar picture where we see the highest of the satanic angels along with all of those who are under him cast from heaven. As they are cast out by Michael and his angelic forces, the comment is made describing the devil as "the accuser of the brethren," who "accused them before God day and

night.” Again, it is Michael who is shown resisting them. At this time, an army of angels are described as being on Michael’s side assisting him against the satanic adversaries.

Revelation 12:7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, 8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. 10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: **for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.** 11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

Earthbound Angelic Reconnaissance

Throughout the Old Testament, there are several passages in which we see both satanic and godly angels working to gather information against or in favor of men. We have already seen in Genesis 18-19, how the Word took two angels with him to investigate Sodom and Gomorrah. But another early example of angels gathering information on the affairs of men on the earth comes from the Book of Job.

Job 1:6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. 7 **And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.** 8 **And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that *there is* none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?** 9 **Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?** 10 **Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.** 11 **But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.** 12 **And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath *is* in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.**

Job 2:1 Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD. 2 **And the LORD said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.** 3 **And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that *there is* none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?**

and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause. 4 And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, **all that a man hath will he give for his life.** 5 But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, **and he will curse thee to thy face.** 6 And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he *is* in thine hand; but save his life. 7 **So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD,** and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.

What we can begin to see from Job is a pattern where angels go into the earth and then report back to God about what they have seen and that this process is a regular occurrence from very ancient times. In these particular exchanges, God asks one of the satanic angels if he has observed Job's faithful obedience during his visitation of the earth. In response, the satanic angel accuses Job before God by saying that he is only faithful to God because God protects him and treats him well.

From 2 Chronicles, Zechariah, Revelation, we can see that there are seven godly angels whose duty involves surveying the earth for God in search of godly men so that God may act on their behalf.

2 Chronicles 16:9 For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of *them* whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars.

Zechariah 4:10 For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with **those seven; they are the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth.**

Revelation 4: 5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and *there were* seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

Revelation 5:6 And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and **in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.**

These seven angels, who are called the "eyes of the Lord," are responsible for surveying the earth for godly men. In the Book of Revelation they are also credited with helping to administrate the vision of the book to John the Apostle as well as helping him to understand it in the same way we see Gabriel (who is probably one of these seven angels) helping Daniel throughout his book.

Revelation 1:4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; **and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;**

Revelation 17:1 And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:

Revelation 21:9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

Even the name for these seven angels “eyes of the Lord” is indicative of a network of angels which watch mankind. In fact, this is why Daniel calls angels “watchers” in chapter 4 of his book.

Daniel 4:13 I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven;...17 **This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men,** and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men...23 And whereas the king saw **a watcher and an holy one coming down from heaven,** and saying, Hew the tree down, and destroy it; yet leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and *let* his portion *be* with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him;

Throughout the books of Kings, Samuel, and Chronicles, these angelic watchers are depicted as taking account of the lives and actions of the kings of Israel.

1 Kings 11:33 Because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, **and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as did David his father.**

1 Kings 14:8 And rent the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it thee: **and yet thou hast not been as my servant David, who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his heart, to do that only which was right in mine eyes;**

1 Kings 15:5 Because David did *that which was right in the eyes of the LORD*, and turned not aside from any *thing* that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.

1 Kings 15:11 And Asa did *that which was right in the eyes of the LORD*, as *did David his father.*

1 Kings 22:43 And he walked in all the ways of Asa his father; he turned not aside from it, doing *that which was right in the eyes of the LORD*:

nevertheless the high places were not taken away; *for* the people offered and burnt incense yet in the high places.

2 Kings 10:30 And the LORD said unto Jehu, Because thou hast done well in executing *that which is right in mine eyes, and* hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that *was* in mine heart, thy children of the fourth *generation* shall sit on the throne of Israel.

2 Chronicles 14:2 And Asa did *that which was good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God:*

And these same seven angels rejoice when they see Zerubbabel (a descendant of King David) take up the plummet and begin to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple after the exile of God's people to Babylon.

Zechariah 4:10 For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel *with those seven; they are the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth.*

Peter, borrowing similar terminology, even indicates in his epistle that angels likewise play a role in attending to our prayers just as we have seen in the Book of Revelation.

1 Peter 3:12 For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears *are open unto their prayers:* but the face of the Lord *is* against them that do evil.

In the Book of Zechariah, we are given lengthy descriptions of this angelic network operating in conjunction with the Word of God (described in this passage as the Angel of the Lord) in investigating and gathering information on the state of affairs of God's people and the nations of the earth.

Zechariah 1:8 I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees that *were* in the bottom; and behind him *were there* red horses, speckled, and white. 9 Then said I, O my lord, what *are* these? And the angel that talked with me said unto me, I will shew thee what these *be*. 10 **And the man that stood among the myrtle trees answered and said, These *are they* whom the LORD hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth.** 11 **And they answered the angel of the LORD that stood among the myrtle trees, and said, We have walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest.** 12 **Then the angel of the LORD answered and said, O LORD of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah,** against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years? 13 **And the LORD answered the angel that talked with me *with good words and comfortable words.*** 14 **So the angel that communed with me said unto me, Cry thou, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy.** 15 **And I am very sore displeased with the heathen *that are* at ease: for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction.** 16 **Therefore thus saith the LORD; I am returned to**

Jerusalem with mercies: my house shall be built in it, saith the LORD of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem. 17 Cry yet, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad; and the LORD shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem. 18 **Then lifted I up mine eyes, and saw, and behold four horns.** 19 And I said unto the angel that talked with me, What *be* these? And he answered me, **These *are* the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.** 20 **And the LORD shewed me four carpenters.** 21 **Then said I, What come these to do? And he spake, saying, These *are* the horns which have scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head: but these are come to fray them, to cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up *their* horn over the land of Judah to scatter it.**

As we read through this passage from Zechariah 1 we can see many of the same elements that we have noted in other passages. In verse 10, we see angels going to and fro in the earth just as were described in Job 1 and 2 and 2 Chronicles 16. These angels report back to the Word of God (the Angel of the Lord) who is there to investigate the state of affairs in the nations similar to what he did in Genesis 18-19 regarding Sodom and Gomorrah. Additionally, if we follow the story in context, we see that the angel referred to in verses 13-14 as “the angel that talked with me” and “the angel that communed with me” is in fact “the angel of the Lord” (the pre-incarnate Word) whom Zechariah first saw and began to speak with in verses 8-11. This is apparent from verses 12-13. Consequently, verses 12-14 refer to the Word relaying the information he received from the network of angels back to the Lord of Hosts (likely a title for the Holy Spirit) and also interceding for Jerusalem. And we see that as a result of this information gathering, the Word determines that he will trouble those nations, which are at ease after having scattered God’s people. (For more information on the Holy Spirit as the Lord of Hosts see section four of our “Priesthood and Kinsman Redeemer” study which discusses the New Testament Priesthood as well as the roles of the Word and the Holy Spirit in both testaments. Similar information and related concepts can also be found in our study, “Trinity Addendum: Patterns in the Testaments.”)

A similar scene is recorded in Zechariah 6.

Zechariah 6:1 And I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came four chariots out from between two mountains; and the mountains *were* mountains of brass. 2 In the first chariot *were* red horses; and in the second chariot black horses; 3 And in the third chariot white horses; and in the fourth chariot grisled and bay horses. 4 **Then I answered and said unto the angel that talked with me, What *are* these, my lord?** 5 And the angel answered and said unto me, **These *are* the four spirits of the heavens, which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth.** 6 The black horses which *are* therein go forth into the north country; and the white go forth after them; and the grisled go forth toward the south country. 7 **And the bay went forth, and sought to go that they might walk to and fro through the earth: and he said, Get you hence, walk to and fro through the earth. So they walked to and fro through**

the earth. 8 Then cried he upon me, and spake unto me, saying, **Behold, these that go toward the north country have quieted my spirit in the north country.**

Again in these passages we see angels being sent forth by the Word of God into the earth to survey the affairs of men. In fact, from all of these passages the phrase “walk to and fro throughout the earth” seems to be used with a sort of technical meaning to refer to angels being sent by God to survey the affairs of men on earth.

Angels Assigned to Each of Us

It seems quite clear that there is a great deal of angelic involvement and activity that is conducted under the Word of God and the Holy Spirit in gathering information from the earth. But in addition to angels being in charge of nations, angels surveying the affairs of the earth, and angels assisting in offering our prayers before God, we learn from Jesus’ own words in Matthew 18, that angels are involved with watching over men on an individual level (at least when we are children).

Matthew 18:10 Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven **their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.**

Jesus’ statement to the apostles conveys very clearly that there are angels over each human being and that while we are children our angels have constant access to the Father in heaven. This teaching fits very well with what we have already seen about the roles of Jesus and the Holy Spirit as well as what we have learned about angelic beings in regard to the nations. Now we see that this system of information gathering extends not only to groups of people, but to each person on earth.

(Incidentally, there is at least one alternate interpretation of Matthew 18:10. Rather than one angel being assigned to every child, it could be that perhaps a certain limited number of angels are assigned to represent children as a whole. However, this is regarded as a lesser possibility due to the fact that it would require a more peculiar structure that is not otherwise described or expounded in scripture. The simpler structural model in which each child has an angel assigned to him or her should be presumed.)

Summary of Our Study of God’s Modes of Knowledge

From this study we can see our model of the angelic network is filled out from top to bottom and that it moves in both directions. Through it we gain a clearer understanding of the roles of angels. We can see that interaction with angelic

beings may have been substantially more common to both the Old and New Testament experience of God's people.

In one direction, information from the Father is given to the Word and the Holy Spirit who then either directly share that information with men or assign the task to a godly angel such as Gabriel. From there men share that information with other men.

In the other direction, at the bottom we have individual angels assigned to each man (or woman) on earth when we are children. While we are young our angels have constant access to the presence of God the Father in heaven. These angels watch our lives and send reports up the chain of command, where decisions are made by God as to how to respond. These angels also may assist in sending our prayers up to heaven where they are presented by the Holy Spirit and by Jesus Christ before the Father's throne. (However, we should also note that we are repeatedly and strictly instructed by the Bible to direct our prayers and worship to God alone and never to angels. See Revelation 19:10, Revelation 22:8-9, Colossians 2:8, Matthew 6:9, and Luke 11:2.) And lastly, sometimes either our prayers or the responses to them may be frustrated or delayed from getting through by satanic angels.

As we move up the ladder we have seen that in addition to there being angels over each person, there are also angels over nations. These angels over nations and peoples seem to act together against God's plan so that Gabriel can report that only Michael assists him against these angelic princes. Angelic beings who have acted against God coordinate their efforts under their satanic leadership into a system designed to disseminate counter-information in the form of false doctrine and vain philosophies in order to deceive men into disobedience from God.

We have various angelic beings at the top of the model, which work with God and seem to serve directly under the Word and the Holy Spirit. These angels include the 24 elders, the four living creatures (or cherubs), and the seven "eyes." All of whom are depicted in scripture with either helping to conduct our prayers before the throne of the Father or in helping to gather information on the affairs of men on the earth.

And we have also seen that although this model is in operation it does not in any discredit the scriptural fact of the omniscience of God. However, through this biblically attested model, we can better understand how God has chosen to interact, and is shown interacting, with his creation in scripture.

What we have seen is that God the Father operates with an omniscient knowledge that is non-deterministic. On the other hand, the Word and the Holy Spirit engage in a more normative process of information sharing. They serve at various times in different capacities to distribute information from God the Father to angels and to men. And yet they also organize and commission angelic beings to gather information from earth and to gather our prayers for presentation to Father (who already omnisciently knows what we're going to ask).

Both of these models of divine knowledge are presented throughout the scripture with no contradiction. The purpose for this dichotomy seems to be two-fold. On one hand, the Word and the Spirit have clearly taken on roles within (and participating in) creation in order to accomplish God's plan of bringing all things unto himself. This, in part, has involved the Word and the Spirit voluntarily subordinating and submitting themselves to the Father in order to demonstrate for angels and men how to properly relate to God and to each other. Therefore, in accordance with this, we see the Word and the Holy Spirit commonly operating in a manner that is not unlike the way in which we finite, created beings operate with one another.

On the other hand, God the Father remains seated upon the throne of creation demonstrating and embodying for men and angels the divine authority and power that should inspire all to awe and submission. The three Persons of God have therefore given us a perfect model of how to live in fulfillment of God's design for each of us, first, in relationship with and loving service to God and, secondly to each other.