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(P. Outline -

ANGELIC CURIOSITY

I Peter 1:12

Which things the angels desired to look into. Good news is so wonderful that even the angels in Heaven would give a great deal to know more about it. We are but ankle deep in our knowledge of the wonderful things that God had done for us. We are still in the beginning of the alphabet as far as knowledge is concerned.

Dr. Carroll one time said, " when you follow the trail of an angel - you are on a good trail. " You can follow the trail of an angel through the Bible. And just as far as Revelation - and you will find out that the angels are interesting. In this world, even back yonder when God created it. They were represented as being in Solomon's temple. They investigated the question of salvation and the shed blood at the mercy seat. As the cherubim looked on. They are not only at the cradle but at the tomb. The shining angel made the announcement at the Resurrection. Paul says, that whenever God's people come together, let the women cover their heads. Because of the angels. They are there. There are angels hovering around.

The word angel means messenger. And it occurs 108 times in the Old Testament and 165 times in the New Testament. We do not know how many angels there are. But they are said to comprise a great company - Heb. 12:22. There is no increase of angels by generation - such as among human beings. Matt. 22:30. For each angel is a distinct creature, directly by God, without any other agent. Angels are not the departed spirits of men. Nor do men at death become angels. Angels have been given a superior position in creation to that of man. Heb. 2:6-7. What is man, that though art mindful of him. Or the son of man that though visited him. Thou madest him a little lower than the angels. Psalm. 8:4-5. Yet after regeneration, man obtains a relationship to God. Which enables him to qualify for judging angels.

I Cor. 6:3. Christ, entered the human sphere, and was for a time made lower than the angels. Heb. 2:9. Of course, upon his resurrection and ascension back to Heaven, he regained superiority over all creatures. Heb. 4:14, 9:24.

Besides this distinction of the angels, we find that they are honored by the high experience. To lead the praise of God in the halls of Heaven. They are qualified for service to man. But to which of the angels, said he, at any time - sit on my right hand until I make mine enemies a footstool. Are they not all ministering spirits. Sent forth to minister to them, who shall be heirs of salvation. Heb. 1:13-14.

Man is God's highest order of creation on earth. Angels have been given responsibility of ministering generally to the needs of man. And assisting in the restoration of fellowship with God.

There are but few angel faces seen in this selfish world. We observe that Stephen, that sweet calm man, is said to have had the face of an angel. Acts 7:60.

In reviewing the story of Jacobs dream, a Sunday School teacher asked the class, why did the angels use the ladder when they had wings. One bright pupil quickly replied, because they were (molting.)

Little Hugh had been fascinated about the sermon he had heard on angels, and as he was telling a friend about it - they got into an argument. The little friend insisted that all angels had wings. But Hugh disagreed. It isn't true, insisted Hugh, our preacher says that (some of them are strangers in underwears.)

Let us take this text tonight and see what we can find in the way of angelic curiosity. Three words will do for this time. Preliminary curiosity, profound curiosity, profitable curiosity.

I. PRELIMINARY CURIOSITY

The Scripture is very clear here - in V. 10, it says the prophets have inquired and searched diligently. They have prophesied at the grace of God and had a concern to search within the confounds of redemption. The thing that we see in the preliminary curiosity is that the Apostles carried out this search. And chain after chain, and link after link - we discover that men have searched out something of the Scriptures to find out this marvelous truth.

Among those in this preliminary search, we discover the angels.

Now there is a kind of curiosity that is contemptable. It consists in the wrong attitude of prying into matters that may be none of our business. Or, a search into something that we will never discover the answer too. The angels were concerned about divine power. And among those who searched, the Bible may have revealed a great deal concerning their curiosity for their comfort.

Now they tell us that some angels have fallen because of pride. How this happened, we do not know. But we find here, that these holy angels witnessed the mercy of God. And they had a deep concern and were excited to investigate along with the prophets.

Now exactly ^{what} an angel looks like - we do not know. The Psalms says, who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.

They either have bodies or power to move in different ways. They are endued with understanding and with affection. And what are we to think of the understanding of an angel. Who can conceive to that extent in his knowledge.

These angels know not the time nor the hour of Christ's second coming. Not withstanding this limit. They still extend their knowledge and survey what has been taking place for generations. The work of God's creation and most, the redemption of providence.

Now there are in this preliminary curiosity, we need to think about the strength of an angel - it is astonishing. One of them, and a fallen one, could raise a whirlwind to level Job's house with the dust, and destroy all of his children at once.

A single angel passed through the Syrian camp and slew 185,000 soldiers in a night.

The strength of an angel is implied of the slaughter of the first born of man and beast in the great land of Egypt. On that night of the passover.

The strength of the angel is represented in the four angels of the revelation. One standing at each corner of the earth, had power to hold in check and confine the winds of Heaven.

The number of angels in this preliminary curiosity is countless.

Rev. 5:11 Behold I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne - & the
Number of Angels & Johns was 10,000 times 10,000 & Thousands & Thousands -
-5-
There are myriads upon myriads of them. They are in Heaven. And they range

wide. And they desire to make an examination of the things of our salvation.

11 Part of thy name divinely stands, on all ~~of~~ thy creatures ^{write} right, they show the labor of ~~thy~~ hands, or impress of thy feet; But when we view thy strange design, to save rebellious worms, when vengeance and compassion join, in their divinest forms. Our thoughts are lost in reverent awe, we love and we adore. The first archangel never saw, so much of God before. "

The angels are ever ready to leave their ancient seats and sing, and make their ways to earth on a mission of God.

But their preliminary curiosity is in the world's redemption through Christ. Peter talks about this in the sufferings of Christ. And the glory should follow. He said it was a long time a subject of investigation by the prophets. Who worked under inspiration. They were diligent in their research when they bore witness to it. And they inquired one of another. And they searched the sacred writings of men. And they wondered at the display of God's love.

"God at time and in diverse manners, spake unto the Father by the prophets. And the angels in their great investigation of a plan of redemption, which originated in the divine mind of God. And was found in the types of sacrifices, and in priest, and in kings, and in prophets. All of them, looking into the sufferings and the glory of the saviour.

Now if this curiosity ^{gets} the attention of the angels, why does it not keep awake the attention of men. The expectation of the world until Jesus himself appears.

Thus it is the faith of good man to uphold and to maintain that they were searching what - or what kind of spirit of Christ, would be when he had testified before of his sufferings. And these things would follow.

The prophets searched them out and they did not understand all of their predictions. But they gave a general view of God's design. And they described the sufferings of Christ as a man, as sorrows. That his suffering was going to be as a substitute. Not for himself or for his friends. But for a world of enemies.

They foretold that these sufferings should be the remedy. Where Adam's sin and his corrupt nature. And that finally, that the Lord had layed on him the iniquity of us all. The iniquity of us all was met and made in him - as all the rivers meet in the sea. The punishment due us, was layed on him.

Now the angels and the curiosity made a preliminary study - just as the prophets. They wanted to know something of the background of this. And of course, the next part of the glory of their study would be that of the conqueror. As he came to triumph and to deliver by his own blood those from ruin of death, Hell, and the grave. There was the glory of saving men, the glory of the resurrection, the glory of his followers.

The glory of the ministry of reconciliation - here the whole deity is known. Nor

dare a creature guess, which of the glory is brighter shown - the justice or the grace.

God is just. Man is guilty. God is pure. Man is polluted. God is love.
The carnal mind is emity against God. How can they be reconciled. Jesus came to put away sin. But the sacrifice of himself. To publish the glorious doctrine that God is in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.

Whether a man is rich, or young, or poor or sick - or in good health, we may be all reconciled to God and be saved.

The glory of (regeneration) of the human heart and human character, man a sinner - the mind that has been ruined. Truly is something to understand. Now people today who look at man in his best state, could you see in his uneducated condition - roaming in the forest, practicing witchcraft, paganism, full of sin. What makes you to differ from others of your race. The Gospel of Christ. But for this, you would have been the same that they are. The power of regeneration - a spiritual resurrection. A spiritual life is a wonder to the Jew and to the Gentile.

And this is going to bring souls to Heaven through his suffering, and through his design, many souls are going to be brought to God in Heaven.

The world does not glorify God. The glory due to his name is not found in man because he likes ease and pleasure. The glory - the idea of glorifying God never enters the mind of sinful man. Even the mind of those who have a multitude of

religions.

Where the Gospel mission is accomplished, the divine work has been done. The great plan is at work, and God is in it. And the angels are interested in it. They make preliminary studies in their curiosity.

II. PROFOUND CURIOSITY

The second part of this text is which things the angels desire to look into.

→ Profound attention here is indicated. "Stooping down too, they are presented here earnestly intended to find out a thing. For example, it is difficult and a mysterious writing here - they were bending or pouring over it. The same word used here to describe the attitude of the Disciples at the tomb. They looked in.

So the extensive preparation for the Gospel could not attract the attention of the angels. Who must have seen the scaffolding being built. And erected. And their minds looked way back with a profound interest. And the illusion here is that they looked back to the priest and the victim of the altar and sanctuary. The services of the religious life by the Levites. The mysterious type - were those things the angels desired to look into. Indeed, this is something of the term that is used in this text. It means to stoop, or to bend over. Just being a desire to look.

It has something to the reference to the Cherubim - bending over the mercy seat in the most holy place. They were represented as bending over the arc of the covenant. Which, with its sacred content - where once a year the blood of atonement was sprinkled by the priest on the mercy seat. Symbolic of God's presence. The arc of the covenant was located in the holy of holies. It's lid was gold. And the cherubim bending over with their wings, looking with amazement at what was taking place, and the glory of God. A great symbol. In the arc was the table of the laws. They were connected with the scheme of redemption. By virtue of the atoning blood.

Aaron's rod that budded and blossomed and brought forth almonds and it was there layed up as a memorial to the fact that here was a type of the unchanging, everlasting priesthood of the son of God. The golden censor which descending with sweet smelling savor, represented the prayers of all the saints. Which through his mediation would go up before the acceptance of God. The manna layed up in the arc, in the most holy place, was the miracle of God's support in the wilderness. A type of the bread of life. If a man eat, he shall live.

The angels had profound curiosity. To look into the things that have been happening and prophesied. They seem too much - too great. They were not all given at once. They stretched way back down the line, from the promised in Eden. What great work these angels had to look into. The angels had to trace from Isaiah and Elijah, Samuel, Joshua, Ennoch, and to Seth. And all the chosen seed. And what a series of miracles. Down to Jacob who saw them ascending and descending. Upon that mystic ladder between Heaven and earth. Ministering somehow to the heirs of salvation. These ones.

At Sinai in the holy place, where the law was given by the dispensation of God and his angels. How desirous they must have been to find out the full spiritual impact

of all the communications of God.

Somehow I believe that they are constantly in church. They long for the fullness of time to come. And to the tribe of Judah to prevail.

They know now that Jehovah, the Old Testament - was to be Jesus in the new. That our wonderful redeemer was seen of angels. And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us.

The development takes place on such a magnificent scale. For unto us is born a child. A son is given. All Heaven is happy about it. And they come down to earth to learn about these mysteries.

They seem to tune their hearts when there is some soul to be born. And they were there in the same country - shepherds abiding, keeping watch over their flocks by night. And the angel of the Lord came upon them. And the glory of the Lord shone upon them. The angel had a message - fear not, I bring you tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.

Suddenly, there was an angel, with the angel - a multitude of Heaven and Earth. Praising God and saying, glory to God in the highest.

In all of his toils and conflicts here - their sovereign ~~they~~ attend. And pause and wonder how at last, this scene of love will end.

They could strengthen him in the hour of darkness. As he went to drink that bitter cup. And they could be with him on that cross. Amazed - they saw that awful sight. The Lord of glory died.

There was not an angel in Heaven whose eyes were not fixed upon Calvary. And when it was finished - they accompanied his spirit. His sacred tomb, they waited for the moment and arrived. And how ready they were to roll away the stone and sing their anthems, to their rising God.

They brought his chariot from the sky to bear him to his throne, clap their triumphant wings and pride, the glorious work is done.

But all of this did not satisfy their curiosity. They desired to look profoundly into these things. And into the discoveries they had made. All the angels of God worshipped and assembled with the Messiah. And of course, this theme embraces the universe. And they are ready to gather together God's love from the four winds to escort this great body to Heaven. And they look forward with deepest interest.

The angels are astonishingly intelligent. But whatever their range is - they have a particular interest in the Gospel. It has been nearly now 2,000 years that have rolled by since Jesus suffered, and still they desire to look unto those things. They have not comprehended it. If I think in my own imagination to look at the facts of the

record, how mysterious they have been. Through the depths of the wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable are his judgements and his ways of finding out.

As we think about the angels who have studied this for thousands of years uninterrupted, and they have gathered to survey the works of God without any clouds in the way, you will not believe the mysteries of redemption because you cannot comprehend them. You only believe - love and obey.

They had profound wonder in this curiosity. Not only did they bow, with profound attention - just for a sideline glance. To look over the lid of this great gift of God to man. Though he was rich, though for our sakes became poor. And though his poverty, we might become rich.

The angels have seen their fallen companions. And they have witnessed what happened in the garden, and they witnessed what happened on the cross. And they wonder at the opposition of the systems of this world. The race of man has fallen. All are diseased. There is one remedy - one for all. And the rejection of this remedy is ruin. And the angels wonder at this.

III. PROFITABLE CURIOSITY

We have talked about the preliminary curiosity that they had. And the profound interest that they had. Now let us think about the thing that makes their investigation so profitable.

First of all, they delight in the knowledge. Being pure spirits - they find the knowledge of the coming Saviour was joyful. They sang Heavenly music. At his resurrection and ascension - they had only praises to sing about the plan of salvation, as they discovered this new knowledge.

11 The bright lamps burned brighter. And they are compared to a flame and fire. They not only shine but they burn with zeal. The Gospel reveals God to man. And they delight to study this-- and they praise God and love God for this knowledge.

This is a very important knowledge because it deals with moral benefits. Now the angels do not need redemption we know. But they discover the way that redemption brings morality to people. And angels are better acquainted with this. As they are deeply impressed by the power of God.

And they witness how Christ can release a man from sin. And how a man can sing at midnight the praises of God. And how a man can become a martyr. And how a man can pray even for his murderer.

They discover that this knowledge is profitable and beneficial to man. They know they are interested in us. And what they are able and willing to do - we learn from the Bible. God employs them in the affairs of his kingdom.

Would God expell man from the Garden of Eden. He put an angel to guard the gateway to the tree of life.

And there was a vision of the ladder from heaven to earth.

In Egypt, when the first born died - the angel gives the blow. Daniel, who was preserved among the lions, shut their mouths.

Herod who would destroy the infant Jesus, an angel put Joseph on flight to a place of safety.

Jesus agonized in the garden, and an angel strengthens him. When he dies on the cross, forsaken of friends. In that dark hour, they spread their wings around to be with him. It was an angel that rolled a stone from the door of the tomb.

Angels were with him on the Mount of Ascension.

And returning to the gazing men of Galilee - what took place beyond the cloud, of vail.

God's cause and God's people are still in the world. Angels take an interest in these.

Missionaries are called to go with the word - who shall go with me. An angel was the divine answer. They were with Moses, the prophets, the Apostles, with his

preachers in prison. They deliver to Paul and John.

Perhaps every Christian has a guardian angel. It may be there is one angel to every Christian - or a score of them. Or one may have charge of a score of Christians. Some of the ancient fathers believe that every city had a guardian angel. And one in every house in every land.

None of us know how much we are indebted to angels, for our deliverance.

But one thing we know, that it is profitable - because angels have witnessed the whole history of the world. Long before there was the struggle even before light and darkness. And long before there was a transgression. We shall learn that they were faithfully standing by.

Let me point out something of the ministry of angels. That I think is very consistent with your life and with mine.

First, of all - angels are with us in times of distress. I think they minister in these times of perplexity. When Hagar fled into the wilderness from her problems and was so ready to give up - the angel of the Lord appeared for her direction.

When Herod plotted the destruction of the infant Saviour, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph and Mary and directed them.

The angel directed Cornelius to send for Peter when he was in distress about his soul.

It is when we are in the affliction of distress and sorrow that angels come. When Christ was tormented in the wilderness by the tempting devil - they came and ministered unto him. And during the dark moments of his deep agony they appeared unto him and an angel strengthened him.

→ The second thing is give us deliverance in danger. In the Scripture we read the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them and fear him. And delivereth them.

Psa 91:11 → The promise is "he will go and give his angels charge over thee. To keep thee in all of thy ways."

There are records in the Bible that literally fulfill this. Paul was tossed by a storm at sea - as a despised prisoner. And an angel stood by him during the danger and darkness of that night to console him and assure him of safety.

Righteous Lot was delivered from the destruction of Sodom. By this very instrument - an angel. Gen 19:16 Angels laid hold upon Lot as he lingered, his wife, 2 daughters. The Lord being merciful unto him, brought him forth & set him without the city."

It was thus when Elisha from the Syrian army was delivered.

Dan 6:22 "My God hath sent his Angels & hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me!" It was an angel that closed the jaws of the lions and spared Daniel.

Dan 3:28 Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, & Abednego who hath sent his angels to deliver them from the furnace of fire.

An angel entered the dungeon of Peter. And broke off the fetters from his hands. Who knows but what there are protecting angels who watch over us in times of danger. Disease, or accident - these many things in which the powers of the world work against us.

Finally, I think the angels minister at death - the release of the body and our admittance into Heaven. It is clearly a parable - the rich man and Lazarus. It is said that the beggar died and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. What are the precise offices which the angels perform for the dying saint. We have no means to know. And yet, such a fact in the death chamber - the righteous light up. Bright angels are from glory come. They are around my bed in my room. They wait to waft my spirit home. All is well - all is well.

Hebr. 1:14 Angels minister spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of Salvation?

Tis sweet to rest in lively hope - that when my change shall come, angels shall

hover around my bed and waft my spirit home.

Heb. 12:22 "But ye are come into Mount Zion, & unto the city of the living God & the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels" -
Mehur you want to shout for joy -

In view of these remarks then, how entirely complete do we find the provisions of our salvation. There is nothing wanting. Ample arrangements have been made for every emergency possible. Here is the great atonement of Christ - the gift of the Holy Spirit, and being surrounded by the guardianship of angels. The pattern of Almighty God for his people. How comforting this is in this stroke of life. The angels of the Lord are round about us. And help us on our way.

Why there is no way you can tell the Christian that he will have no friends in Heaven. Or that there will be no one interested in him. You cannot tell him

that there will not be angels that will guard his path in his final journey home.

Even the darkness of the grave become ~~the~~ glory when it is revealed by the presence of angels. When you pass through Jordan, the angels are ever active and are engaged - even now.

Angels from the realms of glory
Wing your flight for all the earth
Ye who sang creation story
Now proclaim Messiah's birth.

Come and worship, come and worship
Christ the newborn king.

If this is the thing that the angels desired to look into, how can any man fail to give his profound attention to this all important matter just now. Rev. 5:11, Isa. 6:3., ~~Phil. 2:5~~, Heb. 1:14.