

“Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being Tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests,” – (being the five most important political actors, and the two most important religious figures, of that part of the Roman Empire at that time) – “the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.” Luke 3:1-4.

This was certainly glorious business that Heaven was transacting in Heaven and on earth, the day John the Baptist received His call and holy commission to commence preaching his uncompromising message in the wilderness, up and down the Jordan River. The mighty Roman Empire was strutting and conquering and enlarging its borders all over the so-called civilized world. In this unique situation, we have a 100% accurate bit of secular history blended with inspired church history – because Dr. Luke, Paul’s traveling and evangelizing companion, is the historian.

Beloved, I make these points, because I think it is very important for us to pause often and put some form of this question to ourselves, in each of life’s important circumstances; to wit: What do the angels think? What about the other holy Inhabitants of our future home? Like, the spirits of just men made perfect? And, *“seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses.”* Hebrews 12:1. And, remember, an innumerable company of angels are on duty at all times to assure our safety and security; to wit: *“Are they (the angels) not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?”* Hebrews 1:14. *“There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.”* Psalm 91:10-12. *“This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. (And how?) The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.”* Psalm 34:6,7. *“And I (the Lord Jesus Christ) say unto you, Make to yourselves friends (in Heaven) of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.”* Luke 16:9.

Scripture everywhere holds forth the blessed doctrine that these and many more of our fellow Elect who have preceded us in Heaven, are rejoicing in our exploits for the King, in which they also have an interest; to wit:

“Praise ye the Lord. Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints (in Heaven and on earth). Let Israel rejoice in him that made him; let the children of Zion be joyful in their King...For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people; he will beautify the meek with salvation. Let the saints be joyful in glory; let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand; to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; To execute upon them the judgment written; THIS HONOR HAVE ALL HIS SAINTS. Praise ye the Lord.” (Psalm 149:1,2,4-9)

At some level, all the saints and angels in Heaven are engaged with us in the conflict of the ages; they love us; and they are mighty interested in looking on to see how we are doing in the battles below. John Owen (1616 - 1683): *“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.”* **Hebrews 12:1**. This is an elegant metaphor, alluding to the striving of runners in Greek games, where multitudes of spectators filled the arena, looking on, to encourage those that contended by their cheers and applauses. So it is with us in our patient perseverance; all the saints of the Old Testament do as it were stand looking on us in our striving, encouraging us in our duty, and ready to testify to our successes. They are all placed about us to this end; we are compassed with them. The Scriptures themselves have encompassed us with them; so that when we are in our trials, which way so ever we look in it, we may behold the face of some or other of these worthies looking on us, and encouraging us. On one occasion the apostle Paul charged the young preacher Timothy with doing his duty, not only **‘before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ,’** unto whom he was to give his account, but **‘BEFORE THE ELECT ANGELS’** also, who were to be witnesses of what he did therein, **1 Tim. 5:21**; to wit: **‘I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, AND THE ELECT ANGELS, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.’** **1 Tim. 5:20**. And it is not unusual for us, in all our trials for the profession of the faith, to consider that the eyes as it were of all that have gone before us in the same, or the like, or greater trials, are upon us, to bear witness of how we acquit ourselves.”

Furthermore, Beloved, sometimes it is well to consider ourselves, (or think of ourselves in many respects) – as one great family, in Heaven and Earth; to wit: *“Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, OF WHOM THE WHOLE FAMILY IN HEAVEN AND EARTH IS NAMED.”* **Ephesians 3:13-15**. And, think, Beloved. Think what a family it is! Spend some time, often, studying the **eleventh chapter** of the grand old **Book of Hebrews**. There you will find faithful renditions of all the traits of character of the family members of God’s true family of His Elect children. The Holy Ghost put all the important biographical data together for selected members of the Election according to grace. Much of it is not flattering material – but all of it is true and faithful and necessary for us to have. These are all members of our family, all with our traits of character; to wit: Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sara, Moses, Moses’ Parents, Rahab the Harlot. Having singled out these eleven for individual attention, the Holy Ghost lists the following for glorious group treatment; to wit:

“And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephtha; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again; and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection; And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment; They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy;) They wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise; God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.”

(Hebrews 11:32-40)

Beloved, the parenthetical thought in the above passage; to wit: – (“*Of whom the world was not worthy,*” Hebrews 11:38.) – contains a profound truth, which is universally ignored by the unregenerate masses, but which is wonderfully comforting to the church militant (i.e., those saints of God yet alive on the earth and who regularly engage the Satanic and demon-possessed enemies of grace in mortal combat – THAT is the church militant). Yes. And THAT is the Westboro Baptist Church; whose faithful members have chosen – and regularly are, Moses-like:

“Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.”
(Hebrews 11:25,26)

Thus you see how the humble servants of God at WBC mirror the Old Testament saints as well as the New Testament saints, in their daily exercise of saving, supernatural FAITH, which is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen; and by which supernatural FAITH, WBC’s members expect to receive good report cards from their Heavenly Father; to wit: *“But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”* Hebrews 11:6.

This is a good place to remember the seminal question to this sermon; to wit: WHAT DO THE ANGELS THINK? What difference does it make what anybody or thing thinks or says where issues of the soul are involved? Let God be true, and every man a liar. *“Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?”* Isaiah 2:22.

“The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it; surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand for ever.”
(Isaiah 40:6-8)

“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.”
(Hebrews 13:5,6)

Never mind what man may think about this or that vital issue. WHAT DO THE ANGELS THINK? – WHO STAND IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD?

A big Washington DC news outlet recently said, *“Westboro Baptist Church manages to unite all of America against Westboro Baptist Church.”* WHAT A BEAUTIFUL COMPLIMENT (!)(!)(!) The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) made sounds that encouraged us to believe that maybe our words from God have reached further than America, and that the Washington newspaper quote above ought to be, *“Westboro Baptist Church manages to unite all the world against Westboro Baptist Church.”* What do the angels think about this situation? I’ll tell you what they think. They think that when God’s Word speaks to any issue respecting spiritual matters, THAT MATTER IS SETTLED FOR EVER; to wit:

“Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man’s sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy; for, behold, your reward is great in heaven; for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets. But woe unto you that are rich! For ye have received your consolation... Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! For so did their fathers to the false prophets.” (Luke 6:22-26)

“And ye shall be hated of ALL men for my name’s sake; but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.” (Matthew 10:22)

“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.” (Matthew 5:10-12)

In his letter touting the glorious benefits of suffering afflictions and patience for the Christian Pilgrim – which said Treatise was addressed *“to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting,”* James 1:1; James offered the following advice; to wit: *“Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of SUFFERING AFFLICTION, AND OF PATIENCE. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.”* James 5:10,11.

Beloved, in the midst of describing those glorious sufferings, afflictions and patience withal (see, **Hebrews 11:32-40**), an impatient and exuberant apostle Paul injected a glorious parenthetical thought, which he could not wait till the end of the paragraph to express; to wit: (***“OF WHOM THE WORLD WAS NOT WORTHY.”*** Hebrews 11:38.) Notice how this amazing declaration is tucked in the midst of an immediate context describing those worthies who are identified as those of whom this filthy world of degenerates and perverts does not deserve to live; to wit: *“They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented. (Bang!) (OF WHOM THE WORLD WAS NOT WORTHY;) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.”* Hebrews 11:37-38.

Beloved. I tell you that these people all around us – depicted in concentric circles of mass populations – ever-enlarging as they move outward from WBC until all the world of planet Earth’s nations, kindreds, peoples, tongues and tribes is included. I tell you – and God’s Word for it – that these people do not deserve to have even one member of Westboro Baptist Church breathing the same air as you godless reprobates. I tell you, Beloved – to paraphrase **Hebrews 11:38**: THIS EVIL WORLD IS NOT WORTHY OF WESTBORO BAPTIST CHURCH. And, Beloved, when in the fulness of time the blessed hour comes for us to transition from this world to the next, the experience will be altogether comfortable and beautiful beyond compare – befitting none other than Almighty God, the King of Glory. The glorious event was well adumbrated when King Ahasuerus, King of the Medes and the Persians, wanted to reward Mordecai for saving the king’s life, and sought advice as to the best way to honor Mordecai; to wit:

“So Haman (Mordecai’s deadly enemy) came in. And the king said unto him, What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor? ...And Haman answered the king (thinking the king meant him, Haman), For the man whom the king delighteth to honor, Let the royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head; And let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king’s most noble princes, that they may array the man withal whom the king delighteth to honor, and bring him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honor.” (Esther 6:6-9)

This adumbrates (i.e., foreshadows) in a general way our entry into Heaven: *“For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”* 2 Peter 1:11.

I love you. Amen.