

Seen of Angels

First Timothy 3:16 – 4:6

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~ The Bible doesn't say Jesus saw angels; it says angels saw Him! Angels beheld Christ at His virgin birth, at His baptism, and at His crucifixion. Well, if you're like me, you're interested in studying the Word of God because you sincerely desire to know what God says about, well, everything; but mainly because we want to see Jesus on every page of Scripture. Frankly, if you say you love the Bible, but your main interest is not locating Christ in every word of His Word, which produces obedience – then you don't really love Him – you only love yourself. Harsh? You bet your life it is. John said, *"... in this is life eternal: that they might know Thee, the only True and Living God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent."* Only a liar and deceiver would have you believe differently, my beloved.

That renders this series of safari reports from Paul the apostle's first letter to a young preacher named Timothy absolutely imperative. It is critical that this section of Scripture be understood properly, correctly and completely; so that our hearts might be stirred, and our lives eternally transformed. That's the one and only mission of this Spiritual Safari: to teach the entire Word of God to the entire world in the sound doctrine of the apostles. We seek the Lord Jesus Christ in every word, on every page, in every chapter, verse and sentence throughout Holy Writ. Candidly, I cannot promise you that I can reveal Him on every page; but He is there. If you earnestly desire Him, He shall appear. So, if you have prayed for wisdom, judgment and discernment, and have read this brief passage that we will examine in this report, then you are ready to seek Christ Jesus today....

III

16 And, without question, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

IV

1 But the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons;

~ This chapter begins with a total contrast to the great creed of the church found in chapter three verse sixteen. God came to this earth in the flesh; and, in that verse, Paul is teaching the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. This also speaks of Christ's existence before His incarnation; which was a spiritual body of existence, of course. That was His form in the tabernacle and temple when He was in the form of God and in the form of the Word – the book of the law of the Lord; being the effulgence of God's glory and the expressed image of His substance.

Today, naturally, we worship God in Spirit and in Truth. From that condition – not seen with human eyes – Christ came into our reality where we could comprehend Him. Jesus entered into our human condition by becoming a man while still retaining all of the essential attributes of His Spirituality – although those qualities were veiled. If Christ had not become a human being, then you and I could never really know anything substantial about God. To put it simply, John said, “... *the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.*” Without that reality, you and I know even less than Old testament saints.

Well, even when Christ came into this world, He did not appear to men as Who He really was; in turn, men did not recognize Who He was: the One Who, in the beginning, was God, was with God, and by Whom all things were created that were created. That little helpless baby lying in an animal stall in Bethlehem was the visible image of God, friends. He had all power of Heaven and earth – even at that time; but, having laid aside His glory, yet proclaiming to be the Son of God, man considered Him an usurper and blasphemer. So, man hated Him and persecuted Him – and they still do – to this day. Naturally, man oppressed and murdered Him as a result. Man's ignorance – as in, yours and mine – is why they called Jesus a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief. Christ didn't have any sorrows or grief of His Own, my beloved – that was *YOUR* sorrow and *YOUR* grief He took upon Himself. Therefore, He was not justified in the flesh; but He was justified in

the Spirit. Today, Christ has risen from the dead, and returned to the right hand of God the Father in Heaven; and man can no longer touch or hurt Him – but they can deny Him.

The “*latter times*” in verse one speaks of the last days in the life of Paul the apostle. Most people assume this speaks of the last days of the church on earth before the rapture – but I don’t think so. Remember, when Paul was in Ephesus, he warned them that wolves would come into the church disguised as sheep, and that they would deceive believers. Frankly, the apostasy began at *that* time. When John wrote his epistles, he said, “... *already there are many antichrists...*” Error had already entered the early church almost from its conception.

Today, most modern churches have spun completely out of control, and have entered an orbit of degrading heresies. The first great church was the Coptic Church in Northern Africa; which produced some of the greatest saint’s man has ever known, such as Augustine, Tertullian, and Athanasius. Even so, the North African church went off the deep-end of blaspheme, led by men like Origin and Clement of Alexander – who over-spiritualized everything and took their teachings back to Buddha and the transmigration of the soul – and all of that. That’s how they departed from the faith, and their heresies are what is known as modernism today; although modernism has several different names and myriad forms, such as liberalism. The labels are constantly being revised, because they live in total confusion. They employ interchangeable definitions so anything can be interpreted from any perspective. Constantly updating their deceptions is the key to perpetuating evil.

“*Depart*” in verse one is the Greek word “*apostesontai*” – and defines that which does not have the coming of Christ in view. Today, we have every possible blasphemous spin-off teaching – from American Mormonism to the Jehovah’s Witnesses to the Seventh Day Adventist cult to the Satanic Roman Catholic Church to the Chinese Eastern Lightning – all of which have variations and different names – and all who claim Jesus in some form or fashion; but, they have one common denominator: they deny His future imminent return. They reject the Lord Jesus Christ – the Man in the Glory – and deny He will return to rapture His church from the world, and establish

His Kingdom by dashing the rebellion with a rod of iron like a potter's vessel. That's all a bit too strong for them. When we get over to the second epistle to Timothy, in chapter three at verse one, Paul will say, "... *in the last days there shall come perilous times*" – THAT is a technical term that WILL speak of the last days of the church on earth – and, my friends, we have certainly reached that era; it simply cannot be otherwise – although no man knoweth the day nor the hour of Christ's return.

Apostates are those who once professed to believe the Scriptures and the great tenets of truth found only in the Word of God, but who have now come to the place where they reject them entirely. Frankly, I do not believe they ever truly trusted Christ as their Savior; but, rather, they had some ulterior motive, such as trouble in their life, or desperate sorrow. So, they were looking for some relief; but they never genuinely intended to obey Christ's commandments at all. There is a very thin line between truly being saved and being a make-believer. The make-believer's faith will ALWAYS come to shipwreck, sooner or later. Of course, if salvation is genuine, we can never lose that. However, because faith and grace are gifts, it is possible to throw that gift away without using it. That reality should cause every single one of us to bow down in prayer and ask God to examine our hearts right now. If you will not ask the Lord to examine your heart and mind, then I seriously doubt you have ever really accepted the gift of salvation by grace through faith. "*The faith*" is the body of truth in the Scriptures. That's why I always insist that one cannot believe what they do not know. If you are totally ignorant of the Bible, you can never know if you believe it. Impossible.

"*Seducing*" is wandering and roving. It is the same word for "*vagabond, deceiver and seducer*." Satan is called all of those things in Scripture. There are many different reasons given as to why people depart and wander off from the faith; including becoming highly intellectual, scientific developments that deceive them into thinking they cannot believe without scientific evidence and man-made philosophies – but that's NOT why. No, the ONLY reason men depart from the faith is because they give heed to satanic seducing spirits. "*Doctrines of demons*" are teachings by demons. They draw away those who never truly accepted Christ. Evidently, evil spirits lead false teachers professing satanic error. Today, we have myriad

misleading pastors who have no earthly idea what the faith is. They insist they preach the Gospel, but they never get around to actually doing it. They manufacture prophecy that fits and furthers their personal agenda, develop a strict course of self-help, self-motivational techniques, and they constantly espouse prosperity “*devotionals*” – but the death of Christ for our sins, and His resurrection from the dead according to the Word of God for our justification, just aren’t part of their program in any way, shape or form. Today, in this material age, there is also a return to spirit-world teachings; and a great emphasis is being placed on demonism. *MANY* people are highly interested in antichrist. They read and write profusely on demonism and spend countless hours talking about it.

Candidly, I believe we are seeing a real manifestation of demons in the church today. The main indicator is the music; wholly unbiblical – and deceptively dark. We are told to try the spirits and see if they are good; because there are many seducing spirits. So, the real test is whether or not we believe God was manifest in the flesh. Frankly, that’s the only way anyone can test the doctrines of demons. Showing the devil a clean life and a pure conscience is the only way to resist him. Sticking around and engaging the devil is a losing proposition for the genuine child of God. The devil *WILL* ultimately seduce us if we give him enough of our time. If we are running around casting out demons, we are doing the wrong thing; you need to stay clear of that, because we are expressly warned to do so.

Now, to be fair, and in the interest of a complete Bible study, I should add that the pagan can never be an apostate, because they have never professed to believe God in the first place. Most of them have never heard the Gospel; so that is altogether different. Apostasy can only be a product of the organized church which will continue on in this world after the rapture of the true and living church. We, as believers, test everyone by their acknowledgement of the deity of Christ Jesus. Only those who can succinctly state that they are redeemed by His resurrection are members of the true and living church. That is exactly what Paul is talking about here; and that is what the Holy Spirit is speaking of, and expressly warning against now....

2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

3 Forbidding to marry, and demanding others to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

~ *“Speaking lies in hypocrisy”* would be better translated *“through the hypocrisy of men who speak lies.”* These people pretend to be positively pious in their pretension. They present themselves as super-duper religious saints. I am suspicious of anyone who claims to have some special gift. For example, those who talk about sinless perfection scare me to death. Those of us who are not liars and don't deceive ourselves *KNOW* good and well we still sin. You'll necessarily lie to yourself to profess to be without sin. See, if we are assured we are righteous in Christ, it will humble us – not make us proud. In fact, the first thing we are going to discover is how little we really know. Most of you who have read these safari reports must think to yourself, *“... wow, this Andrew Hunt thinks he knows everything.”* Well, the truth is: all I really know is that I sure have a lot of nerve teaching the Bible this way – seeing how I know so little about it. Let's keep that as our little secret, okay?

Even with as much as I study the Bible, and as much as I pray for wisdom, judgment, and discernment, I recognize I am really quite ignorant of the Word of God. All I truly know for certain about the Lord Jesus Christ is that, whereas, I was blind, now, I see. However, there are those who *never* study the Bible properly, correctly and completely and, yet, think they are fundamental conservative scholars and act like authorities. The reality is: they know absolutely *NOTHING* whatsoever about *ANYTHING* – let alone the Bible. Those are the ones who speak lies and hypocrisies, and who have their conscience seared with a hot iron. *“... having their conscience seared with a hot iron”* is more accurately translated *“... branded in their own flawed consciences with a hot iron.”* A brand is what a rancher uses to identify his cattle – and Satan does the same thing by branding his children. All of these errors were taught by the Essenes, an ascetic group down by the Dead Sea, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found. They were not Christian, but were in existence during the earthly ministry of our Lord.

They are still around today, and they always pretend to be something that they are not....

4 For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving:

5 For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

~ So, our Spiritual Safari ends this leg of our expedition through the entire Word of God with a passage that should settle the question about diet and meat. The diet faddist always makes certain rules and regulations about eating; and they always exhibit a disdain for those who eat whatever they object to – and they constantly feign a concern for and cry about the poor little animals killed to sustain human life. Well, “... *by the Word of God*” means to return thanks – for everything. If you give God thanks for whatever you do, then it sanctifies that thing for your body. Any genuine child of God should be able and ready to warn other believers about all of these apostasies from false teachers – but not by simply calling other people false teachers – because that accusation is always made by the false teachers. No, we must be capable of articulating our point of view by teaching the words of faith from the Scriptures with a tender, loving, and sincere conscience. That means learning to allow the Spirit of God to speak through us. We need to recognize how important this is, and never compromise with Holy Writ. These are all the things I am trying to do for you, by the way, my dear readers....

6 If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained ~

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