



*The Supernatural &
the Scent of Rain*

DECEMBER 22, 2019

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- The scent of rain and Advent itself are impossible to account for apart from the reality of the supernatural
- Two supernatural realities operative in the story of Jesus' birth that are integral and normative for the Christian life: prophecy and angelic activity
- The supernatural is almost impossible to miss in the Christmas story – it's everywhere: dreams, words, angels, visions, prophecy
- Matthew 1:18-25



Prophecy is an Aspect of the Normal Christian Life

- **1 Corinthians 14:1,3b,4a,5a** ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION
“Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. ³ ... the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. ⁴... the one who prophesies builds up the church. ⁵ Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy.”
- The place of prophecy in everyday Christian life and its purpose is clear: strength and encouragement and comfort



Children of Prophecy



Prophecy in the Birth Narrative of Jesus

- **Matthew 1:20-21** NEW LIVING TRANSLATION

As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. “Joseph, son of David,” the angel said, “do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. ²¹ And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”



Prophecy in the Birth Narrative of Jesus

- **Matthew 1:22-23** NEW LIVING TRANSLATION

All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord's message through his prophet: ²³ "Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means 'God is with us.'"



The New Age of Angels?



“Large majorities of the adult American public believe in miracles (75%), heaven (73%), and angels (71%).”

[Results of The Harris Poll®, in a nationwide survey of 2,126 U.S. adults surveyed online between November 10 and 17, 2008 by Harris Interactive®.]



The Biblical Purpose of Angels



- Angels carry out God's judgment (2 Sam. 24:16)
- Angels serve God (Psalm 103:21)
- Angels praise and worship God (Psalm 148:2)
- Angels are messengers (Matthew 1:20-21)
- Angels protect God's people (Psalm 91:11)
- Angels bring revelation (Rev 1:1; 19:9)
- Angels minister to Christians (Hebrews 1:14)



Some Additional Facts about Angels

- Angels do not marry or die (Mt. 22:30; Lk. 20:36)
- Angels will be judged by mortals (1 Corinthians 6:3)
- Satan disguises himself as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14)
- Angels who sinned were thrown into hell (2 Peter 2:4)
- Angels should not be worshiped (Revelation 22:8-9)



Angels — Are They Really Necessary?

- Question: if we have Holy Spirit, why do we need angels?
- Jesus was strengthened and ministered to by angels — following his wilderness temptation (Mt. 4:11) and in Gethsemane (Lk. 22:42-43)
- Others who were served by angels after Holy Spirit was given: Peter, Cornelius, Paul, John



Angels are Winds and Flames of Fire

- **Hebrews 1:7** NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION
Of the angels he says, “He makes his angels winds, and his servants flames of fire.”



Angels are Winds and Flames of Fire

- **Acts 2:1-4** NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. ² Suddenly a sound like the blowing of **a violent wind** came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ They saw what seemed to be **tongues of fire** that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.



Angels

- Don't become fascinated with angels—the only object worthy of our fascination is the Lord Jesus
- They point us to Jesus and minister to us so we can do his work – his supernatural work
- We can ask God to send them



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- All this should strike us as more than interesting, though it's certainly that
- It's essential and important—the supernatural is meant to be a normative aspect of our personal and corporate life
- The scent of rain and Advent itself are impossible to account for apart from the reality of the supernatural





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