



# Media Spotlight

A BIBLICAL ANALYSIS OF RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR MEDIA

## SPECIAL REPORT

# ANGELS ON ASSIGNMENT

## OR DEMONS OF DECEPTION?

by Albert James Dager

The Scriptures record many instances of angels being used by God to serve His people and to give revelations of truth. Hebrews 13:2 tells us that we should be kind to strangers for the reason that "some have entertained angels unawares."

According to some today, angels are once again appearing among men, and are performing miracles to prove their identity. These allegations have opened doors in churches and in the Christian media for those who make these claims.

Prominent among these testimonies is that of Dottie Rambo who claims to receive songs from angels who appear to her in her special "angel room."<sup>1</sup>

Betty Maltz, in *Angels Watching Over Me* (Fleming H. Revell Co.), writes of her and others' encounters with angels.

Benny Hinn, pastor of Orlando Christian Center in Orlando, Florida states that he has had "many instances" of angelic contacts.<sup>2</sup>

Rebecca Brown, in her books, *Set The Captives Free* and *Prepare For War*, has gleaned a large audience by her testimony of angelic visitations in conjunction with her "deliverance ministry."

Charles and Annette Capps claim that our positive confession releases angels to work for us, while our negative confession binds them from being able to help us. Charles Capps states that God told him that, most of the time, we, not God, assign them their tasks.<sup>3</sup>

This surge of interest in angelic visitations received initial impetus from the testimony of Roland Buck, the late pastor of the Assembly of God Christian Life Center in Boise, Idaho. His story was published by Charles and Frances Hunter under the title, *Angels on Assignment*. In its first few months of publication sales were in the tens of thousands. Since then many in the Church have turned their focus to angels.

### SUPERNATURALISM: TWO SOURCES

The supernatural manifestations of God's power are reality. So, too, is the fact that angels are still among us, working to accomplish the will of the Father in the earth. We must not limit God except to say that He will never be false to His Word, and that all actions taken by Him or His angels will never contradict Scripture.

We should also be aware, however, that Satan and his hosts appear as angels of light. Because something has supernatural origins does not mean it is of God. And because an angelic being claims to come from God doesn't mean he did. All things must be tested by God's Word.

The basic premise of *Angels on Assignment*, as well as the myriad other books written on the subject of angels, is that they are still on the job working to bring men to salvation. While the Scriptures do not state their purpose other than to minister to those who will be heirs of salvation (Hebrews 1:14), in the broad sense we cannot argue with that premise. Since they are working in accordance with God's eternal plan it stands to reason that their efforts would create conditions to fulfill that plan.

Supernatural occurrences must be tested by the Bible. Satan and his hordes perform miracles in such a convincing manner that even the most "spiritual" Christian might lose himself in his experience and forget where lies the truth.

### TESTING THE BOOK

Due to the continued popularity of *Angels on Assignment*, and the rash of testimonies of alleged angelic visitations since its publication, it seemed important that we once again take a look at this landmark book's claims, and test them by the Word of God. This is especially important because of some of the instructions Buck gave for Christians which may have a serious impact upon their faith.



*Angels on Assignment* is replete with information on God's grace and love, and how Jesus' blood atones for sin. It tells of God's concern for our loved ones and of His diligence in pursuing them. Buck gives evidence of lives changed for the better as a consequence of ministry based upon information provided by angels.

Yet changed lives are not the final evidence that one's words are true; the Mormon Church may claim changed lives based upon the revelations given to Joseph Smith through the angel Moroni. Alcoholics Anonymous claims changed lives through their Twelve Steps program. One must change his life in relation to the will of the Father and according to the truth of Scripture. Those who minimize the role of doctrine would disagree, but the Scriptures themselves testify of the need for pure doctrine relative to our obedience to God:

*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. (I Timothy 4:6)*

*Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. (I Timothy 4:13)*

*Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. (II Timothy 4:2)*

The responsibility of the teacher is that he hold "fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers" (Titus 1:9).

Of course, even messages from Satan contain scriptural truth. The difference is that, whereas messages from God are fully truthful, those from Satan contain only the truth necessary to pull off his deception.

It takes only a small dose of cyanide to destroy an otherwise healthy body. In the same way, if the words of a man or an angel contain a small dose of serious error it would be better not to listen to those words no matter how much truth they contain.

### BUCK'S TESTIMONY

Inasmuch as Buck claimed to have been visited by angels on a regular basis for over two years,<sup>4</sup> and that God had taken him directly to His throne room for visits,<sup>5</sup> it's imperative that we determine whether there are any errors of a serious enough nature to warrant rejection of his testimony. Consider, however, that *any* error of any magnitude, if attributed to a message from God or from one of His angels, is sufficient to disqualify the testimony.

Buck claimed that the "chain of strange happenings in my life date back to January 21, 1977 when I became God's guest."<sup>6</sup> According to his testimony, this is when God took him up to His throne room "where the secrets of the universe are kept!"<sup>7</sup> During his visits with God he was given an "overlay of truth."<sup>8</sup>

### DOES GOD FORGET?

Buck claims that God showed him the records of Abraham and Sarah. He saw things that were not recorded in Scripture; all the good things they did as hospitable hosts to strangers, etc. Then he says:

One thing I could not find was the places where Abraham stumbled. When Abraham lied to the king of Egypt, saying that his wife was his sister, it was not recorded there! The time his faith was weak and he laughed because of unbelief in God's promise that a man of his age could be a father, was not recorded there.

"God, where is the other book?"

"I have no other book for believers."

"Where did you write about the failures of Abraham which I have seen recorded in your own words in the Bible?"

"I have no other book. I DO NOT RECORD FAILURE IN HEAVEN."<sup>9</sup> (See Heb 10:17-18)<sup>9</sup>

Buck points to Hebrews 10:17-18 to substantiate this claim:

*And their sins and iniquities I will remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.*

According to Buck, this is supposed to assure us that God forgives and forgets. We need have no concern that our failures will be brought up to us. He claims that God told him "When I forgive, I not only forget the thing for which I have forgiven them, but I even forget that I forgave."<sup>10</sup>

Would a little logic be out of order here? If God forgets that He forgives, how can He remember that He ever forgave anything? What's more, does He not know His own Word that records the things He supposedly forgot?

Hebrews 10:17-18, rightly understood in its proper context, tells us that once the blood of Christ covers our sins they will not condemn us to eternal separation from God. But we know that we will one day stand before Christ and give an account of ourselves (Romans 14:12).

If we were to forego the luxury of picking and choosing which Scriptures we favor, we'd have to look at Hebrews 10:17-18 alongside of other Scriptures:

*Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.*

*If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.*

*If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.* (I Corinthians 3:13-15)

*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.* (II Corinthians 5:10)

That God forgets and holds no remembrance even of having forgiven us, is not supported by Scripture. That we must one day account to God for our actions is.

### REPENTANCE UNIMPORTANT

Buck offers some strange words about how one may receive salvation. His account of how he led a man to the Lord reveals an unscriptural mindset:

One man came into my office asking if there was help anywhere. He said, "This is the fifth church I have come to. I have to find God."

"You have come to the right spot here." I didn't even ask him what his sin was. I just said, "When you feel my hands on your head, I want you to say the name of Jesus just as loud as you can! He has been nudging you, he has been waiting for you to call." That man shouted one word, "JESUS!" and the Lord heard him and instantly life came into him!<sup>11</sup>

Is salvation not dependent upon our repentance? Or does God just forgive us because we say "JESUS!" loud enough?

While sin is occasionally mentioned in Buck's book, it is generally downplayed. Perhaps that's because, according to Buck, sin is "not on God's priority list at all." In fact, Buck claimed that "God said his purpose is to make us 'Son' conscious instead of 'sin' conscious."<sup>12</sup>

Catchy phrase. But is it scriptural?

*And when he [the Holy Spirit] is come he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.* (John 16:8)

*Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.* (I Timothy 5:20)

*Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.* (James 5:20)

The Scriptures record some 900 times the words "sin," "sins," "sinner," "sinned," "sinneth," "sinest," and "sinning"—not, I assure you, without reason. If we are not made conscious of sin there is no way we can repent!

### ANGELS OR DEMONS?

Subsequent to his visits to the throne room of "God," Buck began to experience angelic visitations. He admits that he never thought to ask these angels for any credentials or proof that they were of God. A big mistake. However, one of the angels did offer "proof" that he was sent from God:

I didn't ask this angel to identify himself, or to give any credentials. But he said, "To set your mind at ease as to the authenticity of this visit, to erase any doubts from your mind, I want to give you some scripture references where I am referred to in God's Word, and it's settled there!" and that is what he did! he was the angel who was with Zacharias, with Paul at the shipwreck, with Moses to scatter the enemies, and with Joshua.<sup>13</sup>

This is somewhat weak evidence. Because someone claims to be something doesn't make it so—even by citing biblical references. Any devil could say the same thing, so it's hardly "settled there!"

A true angel of God would offer more than a claim to have been at those places with those men. This is pretty flimsy "proof." But more important, the credentials leave some good reason for rejection when they are checked against Scripture.

According to this angel's testimony, he was the one who appeared to Zacharias and to Joshua (Joshua 5:13-14). In Luke 1:19 we find the angel identifying himself to

Zacharias as Gabriel. And, in fact, the angel to whom Buck was speaking initially identified himself as Gabriel. But another angel by the name of Chrioni allegedly told Buck that he was the one with Joshua spoken of in Joshua 5:13-14.<sup>14</sup> In those verses we see the angel telling Joshua that he is the captain of the host of the Lord.

*And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?*

*And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant?*

*And the captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so. (Joshua 5:13-15)*

It is generally held that this captain of the host of the Lord was the preincarnate Christ. This would hold true for two basic reasons: 1) Joshua fell on his face and worshipped him (this a true angel from Heaven would never allow [Revelation 19:9-10]); 2) The captain of the host told Joshua to take off his sandals because the ground upon which they were standing was holy (similar to the command given Moses by the angel of the Lord in Exodus 3:5.)

There are many times in the Old Testament when a member of the Godhead is called the "angel of the Lord." The word "angel" means "messenger," and can refer to an angel from Heaven, or to a man. In some cases it refers to the Word of God in His preincarnate state. Such was the angel of the Lord who appeared to Moses in the burning bush (Exodus 3). This is borne out in verse 4 where we read that "God called unto him out of the midst of the bush." And in verse 6, He identified Himself: "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob."

Because he was in the presence of God, and not just in the presence of some angel servant of God, Moses was commanded to take off his shoes, "for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." No angel servant ever made such a demand of men.

Now if, as Buck claimed, the angel who appeared to Joshua was the same one that appeared to Zacharias, then he is Gabriel. Thus Gabriel, who was with Zacharias, would be the captain of the host of the

Lord. But in another place Buck says that an angel by the name of Chrioni (pronounced like Moroni?) identified himself as the one with Joshua spoken of in Scripture. Since Buck identifies Gabriel and Chrioni as different persons, he creates an insurmountable barrier to credibility. Gabriel is now Chrioni. Or is he the Word of God? Or is Chrioni the Word of God?

In spite of these glaring errors, the Hunters insist that they have checked the testimony of Buck against the Bible and, according to their reasoning, it is entirely substantiated. But there are other "new revelations" that Buck related which are contrary to Scripture.

### **SATAN IS OUT OF IT**

According to Buck's angelic visitors, Satan doesn't know what's happening:

I thought it was extremely interesting when Gabriel said that Satan doesn't know what is going to happen. He cannot foretell the future and he cannot read the minds of people. He is extremely nervous because he doesn't know exactly what's going on, but he is hoping some how to slow down whatever it is that God is doing! Gabriel said since the Holy Spirit monitors everything on earth, he will not allow him to do this. When he sees the activity of Satan becoming dangerous, he dispatches hosts of angels to straighten out the situation.<sup>15</sup>

The next worst thing to not believing in Satan is to believe he is a klutz rather than the powerful being who leads the demonic principalities and powers. We might not want to glorify him, but we'd be fools to underestimate his power and to disregard the Scriptures' warnings about him. Certainly God's Word does not portray Satan in the same light as this angelic visitor.

Whether or not Satan can foretell the future shouldn't even be a question. Psychics abound today, and many of their predictions are accurate. If men with a limited mental ability can foretell the future, certainly Satan, as the brightest of the angels, can. Isn't he the one who gives fortune tellers and psychics their powers?

To say that Satan cannot read minds is careless. If he can plant ideas into people's minds, even believers (Acts 5:3), he must have some psychic abilities. And certainly his power and presence are being felt in the world today as seldom before.

The Bible tells us plainly that evil will increase as we approach the end of this age. Satan will actually be given greater license to work his evil in order to test the hearts

of men. If we ignore these warnings in favor of Buck's angelic messages of peace and light, we will be in trouble.

### **STOP PRAYING FOR LOVED ONES**

One of Buck's angels brought the magnificent news that the prayers of the Church have been answered. It is not necessary to continue praying for our loved ones:

Since God said that your prayers are already answered, those who have laid their loved ones before him in sincerity and in faith can stop praying right now! The angel said they can start praising God right now. He is on the job, and has released the forces to bring about circumstances which would make it hard for these people to resist God.<sup>16</sup>

I don't care what some "angel" says, I'm not going to stop praying for my loved ones until I see the results. Call me one of little faith, but Jesus said to pray with diligence (Luke 11:18; 18:18).

When we stop praying we lay down a powerful weapon.

### **THE POPE IS OUR LEADER**

Buck claimed that he was given by God a list of 120 future predictions. But he was not to make these known until God allowed it. (They were written on a piece of heavenly paper that turned to ashes and went the way of Moroni's golden tablets [Poof!]).

Number 113 of the 120 events which God entered on this paper from my book in heaven on January 21, 1977, was the selection of a new pope. God told me the pope has no more influence with him than the least of his saints, and has no greater privileges, but because his influence with man is great, his choice is God's concern. Therefore, in order to help in the restoration of his fragmented body, God had chosen a man named Karol Wojtyla of Poland. This prophecy was fulfilled October 16, 1978 when he began his reign as Pope John Paul II.<sup>17</sup>

To begin with, prophecy revealed after the fact (this book was published in 1979) is worthless. But these discrepancies aside, whether Buck got this revelation before or after Wojtyla was elected pope is not as important as the news that God is going to use the pope to bring the "fragmented" Body of Christ together.

Considering John Paul's pronouncements that the church must renew its devotion to Mary and the saints, as well as his continuing to retain unscriptural teachings as pertinent to his concept of true faith, it is obvious that he is not qualified to be the unifier of Christianity. This is especially questionable in light of his declaration that

evangelical Christianity is "sowing confusion among the people and, unfortunately, could very soon dilute the coherence and unity of the evangelical message."<sup>18</sup>

Should we not be concerned at the many evangelical Christians who are desirous of unity with the Vatican? It seems incongruous that Harald Bredesen's choice of John Paul II as recipient of the 1990 "Prince of Peace" award is supported by many notable leaders in evangelicalism.<sup>19</sup> The man who has declared war on evangelical Christianity will receive the "Prince of Peace" award from those who call themselves evangelical Christians.

And what of the involvement of many evangelicals in AD2000, dedicated to the charismatic renewal's joint effort with Roman Catholicism to evangelize the world by the year 2000?<sup>20</sup> Is something not out of order here? Under whose authority will new converts eventually come? Many will end up in the Catholic Church.

Do not David DuPlessis' endorsement of the alleged appearances of the Virgin Mary at Medjugorje, Yugoslavia,<sup>21</sup> and John Wimber's article, "Why I Love Mary," in the Roman Catholic publication *New Covenant*, indirectly lend credibility to Roman Catholic teachings on Mary as co-redemptrix and "Mother of God"?<sup>22</sup> Particularly when it appeared with other articles extolling her alleged sinlessness and perpetual virginity?

While Christians are with good reason concerned about the New Age Movement, abortion, pornography, and other evils in the world, many are being made vulnerable to the great delusion which, if it were possible, would deceive even the elect.

No man can unite Christianity, because all true Christians are already united by the Holy Spirit. It is God, not the pope, to whom we must look for unity. We recognize our brethren regardless of denominational ties. The wolves among us are being revealed according to God's timing.

### SOME CONTRADICTIONS

In reading the various testimonies of those who have allegedly had visitations from angels, there are conflicting reports. Most involve minor issues, but considering the claims of angelic sources, there should be no contradictions of any magnitude.

For example, Betty Maltz and Roland Buck say that angels minister to us, Benny Hinn says they *never* minister to us, they minister for us.<sup>23</sup>

As stated previously, Buck said that we should stop praying for our loved ones. Betty Maltz says we must continue to pray until we receive the answer.<sup>24</sup>

There is not enough room to enumerate all the discrepancies in the different testimonies. The important thing is that there are discrepancies. Therefore, let us heed Paul's words:

Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind (Colossians 2:18).

Although those who testify of angelic visitations disclaim the worshipping of angels, their very writings appeal to the fleshly mind easily utilized by mystical religion. As much as those who write books on the subject claim that they do not wish to glorify angels, that is the inevitable result. Were these books biblically-based teachings rather than alleged testimonies, they may have some value. As it stands, their contradictions demonstrate the unreliability of personal "experiences."

### CONCLUSION

All of the platitudes about God's love and Jesus' atonement contained in *Angels on Assignment*, though valid, are no more than we learned as babes in Christ. But they can gain one's confidence to believe some dangerous teachings and set the unwary up for the coming great delusion:

- 1) lay down your weapon of prayer. It is not necessary to be diligent;
- 2) don't be concerned about Satan's power. He's toothless;
- 3) forget about sin. Just think about Jesus and feel good;
- 4) don't convict others of sin in their lives. Be loving;
- 5) do not use your God-given understanding. Just seek more of the "Spirit";
- 6) don't worry about the consequences of sin. We have only rewards to look forward to—no chastisement;
- 7) accept the pope as the great unifier of Christianity.

This last point is the crux of this angelic deception. It stands to reason that if the pope was chosen by God as the unifier of Christianity, then that church's doctrines are acceptable, including the primacy of the pope. Therefore, it would benefit the cause of unity for all Christians to place themselves under his authority. His influence already extends over one fifth of the world's population, as head not only of the most powerful "Christian" church, but

of a sovereign political state recognized by virtually every major government on earth.

An important consideration: if Buck's claim that God revealed Wojtila to him before the election is not true (and the discrepancies prove it isn't), then it must be of Satan or Buck's own fabrication. But if Buck's claims of supernatural revelation are true, is it possible that John Paul II was *Satan's* choice for uniting Christianity?

The move back to Rome is the single most important factor to watch out for in today's climate of unity. We must be careful that our evangelism leads men to Christ, not to the pope. All the deep truths one presents—whether men or angels—mean nothing if in the end they lead to deception.

Paul warns us about such deceptions:

*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.*

### NOTES

1. Reba Rambo, guest on "Praise The Lord" (Irvine, CA: Trinity Broadcasting Network, circa January, 1987)
2. Benny Hinn, *War in the Heavens* (Dallas: Heritage Printers & Publishers, 1984), p. 17.
3. Charles Capps & Annette Capps, *Angels* (Tulsa: Harrison House, 1984), p. 75.
4. Roland Buck, *Angels on Assignment* (Kingwood, TX: Hunter Books, 1979), p. 13.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 178.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 166.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
18. *Seattle Times*, May 10, 1988, p. A2.
19. Benny Hinn, guest on "Praise The Lord" (Trinity Broadcasting Network, 7-14-88).
20. AD2000 Together, June, 1989
21. "What Mr. Pentecost Thinks About Medjugorje," *New Covenant*, October, 1984.
22. John Wimber, "Why I Love Mary," *New Covenant*, June, 1988, p. 12.
23. *War in the Heavens*, p. 12.
24. *Angels Watching Over Me*, p. 76.



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