

## Gabriel: Angels Long to Look Into These Things

1Peter 1:12-12 -

By Russell Muilenburg

Sunday, 20 December 2009 00:00

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1 Peter 1:12 *Angels Long to Look Into These Things* □      &quot;Don't be afraid.&quot;  
That's how I usually start my conversations with humans.

&quot;Don't be afraid.&quot; For some reason, whenever I make an appearance, people seem to fall down. They can't talk. They become terrified. At least, whenever I appear as I really am.

You see, I am Gabriel, and I stand in the presence of God. And so, when I travel as I really am--when I really want to make an impression, if you know what I mean--I travel with the Glory of God. Yes, even the faintest trailing wisps of His glory that cling to my garments have made the most powerful soldiers melt with fear on some of my earthly visits.

And so, I start most of my conversations with humans by saying, &quot;Don't be afraid.&quot; Really. Because most of the time God sends me to talk to someone, it's because he chosen them for something special, not bad.

I am Gabriel, and I am a messenger of God. That's what the word &quot;angel&quot; means--messenger. For instance, I was the one who told Daniel the meaning of King Belshazzar's vision of the ram and the male goat. Daniel fell on his face when he saw me. Out cold.

On another occasion, I explained to Daniel how to interpret the vision of the 70 weeks. A lot of people are still trying to figure out what that all means, and to be honest, so am I. But, I'm just a messenger. I just pass on what I'm told. I'm not always supposed to understand it, my job is just to see that the message gets delivered.

Take the last three messages I've delivered, for instance. I've never delivered three more important messages, I know that. But that doesn't mean they all make sense to me.

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First, I was assigned to go and speak with the old priest Zechariah.

Zechariah was a rarity among your kind, a truly upright man. Oh, he was touched by the disease of sin that affects you all, I'm not saying that he wasn't. But he really made an effort to uphold the Law and to serve the Lord. None of you would have had any reason to say anything bad about him, and the Master was truly pleased with him.

And yet, Zechariah had a problem. He and his wife, Elizabeth (a gem of a woman), were very old and they hadn't had any children. Now, this is one of the things I don't really understand--we angels don't have children. But, apparently, being childless in that day was a real source of shame. People tended to believe you had done something wrong if you didn't have children. That God was angry with you.

And so, that was a point of real sorrow for Zechariah and Elizabeth. They loved God, they served Him with all their hearts, but they didn't know why He refused to bless them with a child. My message would change all that. I was sent to tell them they were going to have a son.

I met Zechariah in the temple, in the holy place, right outside of the holy of holies. He was burning incense while the people in the courtyard were in the middle of prayer, he was as close to God as anybody on earth could possibly get.

And then I showed up. Not looking like I do now, mind you--that wouldn't have made much of an impression--I let him see me in full Messenger of God mode. His response was pretty typical--I thought he was going to have a heart attack. (Now, don't get me wrong, it's not like I enjoy scaring people senseless. But when people get a message from God, they ought to have some reason to believe it's really from Him, right?)

This is what I said, "Don't be afraid, Zechariah, Jehovah has heard your prayers, and He is pleased to answer them. You will become a father. Your wife Elisabeth will bear a son, and together you will name him John. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord...He will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous--to make ready a people prepared for the Lord"

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This is the part I didn't really understand. Oh, I knew that God was fulfilling some of the old prophecies. I knew I was telling Zechariah that he and Elizabeth were going to give birth to the voice predicted by Isaiah who would "In the desert prepare the way for the LORD." I knew that this John, whose birth I had just promised, was going to be the forerunner predicted by Malachi and the others who would announce the coming of my Lord into the world.

I knew all that, I just didn't understand why it had to be this way. I just didn't understand what drastic action the Lord had in mind.

Well, anyway, Zechariah didn't believe me at first. The penalty for his disbelief was the loss of his voice until the child was born. But I kept my eye on him after I spoke with him, and you know what? Everything happened just as my message had said it would. Even though they were very old, Zechariah and Elizabeth had a baby, and there was never quite such a song of praise on earth as the one Zechariah sang the day that little boy was born.

But before John was born, I had another errand to run. Another message to deliver for God that I knew the meaning of well enough, but still didn't quite understand.

This time I was sent to speak to a young woman, a girl really. She was a maiden pledged to be married to a carpenter, living in the little village of Nazareth.

I am always amazed at the people through whom my Master chooses to accomplish His plans. This girl--Mary--was also upright in heart, and of very noble character--but she was hardly in the center of the world. She and her fiancé were not movers and shakers, they were not people of influence. YOU never would have picked them if you were looking to change the course of history, but that's the way God is. When He goes to work, He leaves no doubt that it is His hand at play.

I found her in her parents' home. I said: "Be happy, Mary. You are one of the most blessed women on earth."

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Of course, Mary was startled and afraid, but not like Zechariah or even Daniel. Mary seemed less afraid of me than she was puzzled by my greeting. What did I mean that she was the most blessed woman on earth?

"Don't be afraid, Mary," I continued. "You have found favor with God." That seemed to calm her. I gave her the message I had been sent to deliver. I told her that she would conceive and bear a son, and that her son's name should be called Jesus. I told her that her baby would be great and be called the Son of the Most High. I told her that Jehovah would give her son the throne of His father David, and there would be no end to His reign. That's the message I was sent to deliver.

She was quiet for a moment. Then she raised a modest question. She wondered how she could be pregnant, since she had never known a man. She was a virgin. How could this happen?

Details, details. Here I was, announcing the great theological event in history, and she wanted to talk biology. But in another way, it was a very important question. For clearly, what I was announcing would mean nothing if it was not tied to the blood and water, life and death issues of physical human existence. How do you explain a miracle?

I did my best. I told her that the Holy Spirit would come over her in such a way that she would become pregnant. I told her that the One born from her would be both God and man. I reminded her that her aged cousin Elisabeth was already in the sixth month of her pregnancy. Wasn't that a miracle, too? I said, "Nothing is impossible with God."

Mary smiled a good smile. Maybe thinking of Elizabeth being six months pregnant helped her understand. She believed. She said, "I am the Lord's servant, may it be to me as you have said." My mission was completed.

But if it all made sense to Mary, I have to admit it wasn't exactly making sense to me. I mean, I knew what I was saying, I understood that the child I had just promised her was going to come from God. I understood that my Master Himself was going to be that baby. I understood all of that. But, you've got to admit, it didn't exactly make sense. I mean, my Lord was going to become...one of you. He was actually planning to put on flesh and blood and be...human.

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Now, don't get me wrong. It's not like I don't like humans. There's nothing we angels desire to see more than for you all to serve and honor God. Our whole purpose is to help you believe in Him and worship Him. We know that the Master loves you and desires your love in return, and ever since the sin problem we've been battling to help you love Him right. We've always known that He has had a plan for your salvation. But for that plan to include Him actually becoming human--well, you have to admit, that's pretty amazing.

Then there was the third message I had to deliver. It was nine months later--by your time. It wasn't such a surprise that I was asked to deliver this one, but it is probably the most important of them all.

It was right after Mary gave birth. The LORD had really gone to be a baby. He'd allowed Himself to be born in a stable--in fact, he wanted it that way--and He was fulfilling all the prophecies of old. He was even born in Bethlehem, in old King David's hometown.

My human contacts this time were a bunch of shepherds on the hills outside of Bethlehem. Again, I couldn't get over how the Lord chose the unlikeliest humans to work with. This time I didn't go alone. This time I took the whole heavenly host with me and we lit up the night sky.

The shepherds, of course, were terrified. But they got the message well enough. I told them: "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you, he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." And then all of the other angels joined me and we put on a concert for the ages. We glorified God and song to the heavens. If I may be allowed to say so, it was quite a performance.

And so, my Lord became a human. My final message said it all, He had come to be a Savior. I knew well enough what that meant, I knew the prophecies of Isaiah and the others. I knew that meant He had come to die. I knew that He was going to give Himself as a sacrifice. I knew that He was going to solve the sin problem by becoming sin Himself.

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And I really was glorifying Him for it. I mean, what wondrous love is that? We'd been longing for your salvation, and now it was going to be accomplished. And He was going to do it Himself. Now, for sure, we'll be joined forever in eternity by those of you who can sing the song of the redeemed. Now we'll hear the songs that only the lost and found can sing.

But, I've got to admit, it's still hard for me to understand. What is it like to be loved so much that God would give up His place in heaven to die in your place? I can't even fathom it. Do you understand what a great salvation you have? Do you realize how privileged you are to know redemption such as this?

We may not always understand it, but I tell you truthfully--nothing brings quite as much joy to us angels as the good news that God has acted to save men. Nothing.

And so I say, embrace your great salvation. Do not be afraid.

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1Peter 1:12-12 (ESV)

12 It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look. ( [ESV](#) )