

## The Cross: Song of Angels Rev. 5:11-12

The Cross of Christ certainly is and always will be the chief fascination of the redeemed. But there are others besides the inhabitants of this lower world who draw near in trembling admiration.

Science has always held out a hope of other life systems in the far off reaches of space. For them it is nothing but reasonable speculation. For us, as believers in supernatural revelation, we are only concerned to know those worlds which have been, are and are being affected by the economy of redemption. **There are three:**

- There is the world of men.
- There is the heaven where Jesus Christ dwells in perfectly sympathy and fellowship with unfallen angels and the spirits of just men made perfect.
- There is hell, the everlasting abode of fallen angels and men who live and die without God and without hope.

We have seen something of how the cross affects the character and condition of the world. We've seen how the Cross disarms and disgraces the spiritual hosts of wickedness in high places.

1. **But there is another class of beings who contemplate the Cross with deep emotion. Cf. V. 11.** Angels- those pure and celestial spirits the scriptures call angels; those creatures who retained their original integrity.
  - a. **They are called the 'Holy Angels' and the 'Elect Angels'** because they were *preserved* from the rebellion and confirmed in holiness and happiness.
  - b. **They are exalted in nature and station.** They are above men in intelligence. **Cf. Ps. 8.** They dwell with God in heaven. They '*stand before*' Him serving in His temple and executing His commission towards this world.

2. **What relationship have they to the cross?** They are not 'redeemed.' It is 'people' who were ransomed. **Cf. Vv. 9-10.** Yet they were not careless spectators.
  - a. **They were present during the rebellion and fall.** Though we can never know precisely what their relation was to Satan it is clear they remained lovingly loyal to God. No doubt sorrow and shame gave way to righteous indignation in the garden.
  - b. **They willingly offered themselves as ministering spirits for the sake of those who were to inherit salvation.** They no doubt were motivated by love for God, allegiance to the Son. Their love for men was no doubt motivated by God's love for the world.
  - c. **They faithfully serve throughout the totality of the progress of redemption.** Paul says that it is one of the mysteries of godliness that Christ was "**seen of angels.**" Peter spoke of "**things into which angels long to look.**" This is pregnant with meaning. Not only was His whole progress from Bethlehem to Calvary observed, but the whole design from the garden to the final issues.
    - i. They frequently attended Christ' appearances as "the angel of the Lord."
    - ii. Though that age was preparatory to His incarnation the angels served. They were executioners of His displeasure, agents of protection for His favored vessels.
    - iii. As the time drew nigh for the Son of Righteousness to rise they were given the task of communicating the news.
    - iv. When the fullness of time arrived they heralded the birth. They furnished the Christ child safe conduct to Egypt and back.

- v. They ministered to Christ when He was exhausted in the wilderness and strengthened Him in the garden.
- vi. They were never far from the shameful tribunal. They guarded the sepulcher and moved the stone to reveal the glorious news of the arrival of the first fruits of the resurrection.
- vii. They watch over the Church delivering saints as they did the apostles, in accordance with the will of God, rejoicing over the conversion of each newly converted elect one. They are there at the death of each one to usher them safely into Abraham's bosom.

3. **Why is the cross the song of Angels? V. 12.**

- a. **Love for the one who hung on it.** Strong love makes one keenly interested in all that concerns the beloved.
- b. **The facts surrounding the cross are reason enough!** They are not indifferent to any of the works of God- certainly not this greatest of works. What are the facts of the cross? The great sufferer, His tremendous designs of wisdom and mercy. The cross tells of His truth and grace, His humiliation and exaltation, of His kingdom being set up in the hearts of millions in the face of His malignant foe, to the acknowledgment of the universe!
- c. **The blessings secured by the cross.** The angels are of perfect benignant character. They delight in holiness and the happiness holiness secures. Their exaltation above the world does not prevent them from taking interest in its welfare. The salvation of a single sinner is of great delight to them. There is a sense where the magnitude of salvation prior to consummation is better understood by their unsullied minds.

- d. **The cross promotes their own interest.** The rebellion broke out in their own race. By attaching themselves to Christ they enter the fearful conflict that involves their own. Each victory is theirs as well. Each kingdom set back is the advance of all that is disgraceful among the race.
- e. **The cross affords them a unique view of the glory of God.** The cross is the medium by which all the infinite perfections of God can be seen. All His attributes shine through the prism of His holy love.

**Implications:**

- Will the cross hold such fascination for the angels and so little for you?
- Will the cross elicit such sacrifice and love from the angels and so little from you?
- Will the cross draw out such thunderous praise from the angels and so little from you?

In heaven ***“they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels of God.”*** Those who feel no interest in the cross are destitute of all those traits that are marked out. With a heart like that heaven would be the abode of intense misery to those who take no pleasure in the wonders of redeeming love.