

THE AUDIENCE

“His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Eph. 3:10,11).

It is obvious that the church has an audience. We are the light of the world and are like a city set upon a hill that cannot be hidden (Matt. 5:14). The Jerusalem church had an audience and enjoyed “the favor of all the people” (Acts 2:47). The enemies of Jesus also saw what the church was doing and when Peter and John healed a crippled man they complained **“Everybody in Jerusalem knows they have done an outstanding miracle, and we cannot deny it” (Acts 4:16).**

This brief article is designed to do two things. First, to expand our thinking so that we realize that the “rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms” are in our audience. And second, to admonish one another to be on our best behavior. Most people behave differently when they know they are being watched. Paul said it like this: **“Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should” (Eph. 6:19,20).**

CONSIDER YOUR AUDIENCE

As in the preceding verse, we need to declare the gospel fearlessly, as we should. We are constantly being watched! Remember what Paul wrote to the Colossians: **“Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone” (Col. 4:4-6).**

When attempting to communicate it is always wise to consider your audience. This should be obvious. When your audience is children you may want to get down on your knees so that you can look them in the eye. Your vocabulary, of course, will be age appropriate. It would be foolish to speak like a child to an audience of rocket scientists, and vice versa.

A special measure of care is therefore appropriate when our audience is angels. Yes! Angels are watching! There is rejoicing in the presence of the angels when one sinner repents (Lk. 15:10). Our conduct on earth is being observed in the heavens. God allows the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms to see what we are doing for a specific purpose. God wants them to see in the church His manifold wisdom. Let us act with honor so we will not disappoint our Heavenly Father.

Jesus was constantly aware of His audience. At the tomb of Lazarus, for example, his primary audience were human beings curious to see what would happen. Jesus knew that God would answer His prayer without having to say anything. He chose to pray out loud, however, because of His audience. Jesus said: **“Father, I thank you that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me” (Jn. 11:41,42).** It seems that Jesus prayed out loud for the benefit of his audience. Perhaps He cursed the fig tree out loud for the same reason (Mk. 11:14). His primary audience on these occasions was not angels but men. The angels, of course, were still interested in what He did.

Please consider these other examples as they emphasize the fact that wisdom requires us to tailor what we say to be appropriate to our audience:

- Jesus said to His disciples: **“I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear” (Jn. 16:12).**
- Paul said: **“Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly – mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet read for it” (1 Cor. 3:1,2).**
- The writer of Hebrews wrote: **“We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God’s word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.” (Heb. 5:11-14)**
- In Acts 13 we have a message that Paul preached in a Jewish synagogue, and in Acts 17 we have a message he preached to a group of Pagan philosophers. The messages were different because the audiences were different.
- Etc.

A GREAT CLOUD OF WITNESSES

The writer of Hebrews reminds us that we are surrounded by a “great cloud of witnesses” (Heb. 12:1). Who are these witnesses? Later in the chapter he specified that they are:

- **“thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly”**
- **“the church of the firstborn whose names are written in heaven”**
- **“God the judge of all men”**
- **“The spirits of righteous men made perfect”**
- **“Jesus the mediator of a new covenant”**
- **“The sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel”**
- **(Heb. 12:22-24)**

We obviously should behave in a way that is appropriate to our audience!

As we have already said, God intended the “rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms” to see His manifold wisdom through the church. Angelic beings are obviously interested in what happens on earth:

- As we have already mentioned, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels when one sinner repents (Lk. 15:10).
- Paul wrote: **“We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to men” (1 Cor. 4:9).**
- Women are to dress appropriately “because of the angels” (1 Cor. 11:10).
- Paul wrote to Timothy: **“I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, to keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism.” (1 Tim. 5:21)**

- Angels are vitally involved in what we do. Note: **“Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?” (Heb. 1:14).**
- Note also: **“Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.” (Heb. 13:2)**
- Peter wrote: **“Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.” (1 Pet. 1:10-12).**
- THESE SCRIPTURES SHOULD BE SUFFICIENT TO EMPHASIZE THAT ONE PURPOSE FOR THE CHURCH IS TO MAKE KNOWN TO THE PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS IN THE HEAVENLY REALMS THE MANIFOLD WISDOM OF GOD!
- WE DO HAVE AN AUDIENCE!

REMEMBER! ONLY GOD IS OMNISCIENT

Isaiah put it like this: **“I am God, and there is none like me. I make known the end from the beginning and from ancient times, what is still to come” (Is. 46:9,10).**

This is important to remember as it reminds us that many things God commanded were not for His own information, but for the principalities and powers in the heavenly realms. God already knew what would happen, but they didn't!

While many Scriptures prove the foreknowledge of God, here are a few examples from the life of David. In each instance David inquired of the Lord, and in each instance God told him in advance what was going to happen:

- David inquired of the Lord shall if he should fight against Keilah? The Lord said yes (1 Sam. 23:1-3).
- David inquired again and the Lord again said to go (1 Sam. 23:4,5).
- David inquired if the citizens of Keilah would surrender him to Saul and God said they would (1 Sam. 23:9,10).
- David inquired again if the men of Keilah would surrender his men to Saul and God said they would (1 Sam. 23:12-14).
- David inquired if he should pursue the Amalekites and God told him he would be successful (1 Sam. 30:8,9).
- David inquired if he should go up to one of the towns of Judah and God said to go (2 Sam. 2:1,2).
- David inquired if he should go fight the Philistines, and God said he would be victorious (2 Sam. 5:17-21).
- Again David inquired of the Lord and the Lord told him to circle around the Philistines and attack them in front of the balsam trees (2 Sam. 5:22-25).
- Etc.
- The point is that God is Omniscient and always knows what is going to happen. No one else does! That's one reason why these stories are in the Bible. There is no god like Jehovah!

The devil is supernatural, but he is not omniscient. If he knew the future, for example, he would never have tempted Judas to betray Jesus. Remember! It is through death that Jesus destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil. Further, the death of Jesus on the cross set free all those held in slavery by the fear of death (Heb. 2:14,15). Obviously the devil is not omniscient!

Angels are also supernatural, but not omniscient! They too need to see the manifold wisdom of God!

Remembering our heavenly audience helps us to understand many passages of Scriptures:

- Why did God put Adam and Eve in the garden when He knew in advance what they would do?
- Why did God allow Job to suffer when He knew in advance the outcome?
- Why did God command Abram to sacrifice Isaac when He already knew what he would do?
- Why did God deliberately guide Israel to an area where there was no water?
- Etc.

THE OBVIOUS ANSWER IS THAT GOD IS NOT THE AUDIENCE! GOD ALREADY KNOWS WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN. THE AUDIENCE IS NOT GOD IT IS THE PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS IN HEAVENLY REALMS. OUR AUDIENCE INCLUDES NOT ONLY MEN, BUT ANGELS, DEMONS, AND THE SPIRITS OF JUST MEN MADE PERFECT!

THE STORY OF JOB

Most are familiar with the story of Job. When the angels came to present themselves before the Lord, Satan also came with them. When the Lord asked Satan where he had been he replied that he had been roaming throughout the earth.

The Lord asked Satan: **“Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil” (Job 1:8).**

The answer was “yes”. Yes, Satan had considered Job. Yes Satan knew a great deal about him, but Satan didn’t know the future. He assumed that if Job lost his wealth he would curse God to His face. The devil was wrong!

Then Satan assumed that if Job lost his health he would curse God to His face. Again Satan was wrong!

God didn’t need to test Job for God knew in advance what Job would do. The test was to prove to the devil what Job would do. The test was to prove to the angels what Job would do. God, of course, also inspired the book of Job to be written so we could see what Job did too!

WE ARE NEVER ALONE

Many crimes are committed at night with the mistaken idea that no one is watching. Someone, however, is always watching. When the devil whispers in your ear that no one will know he is lying. In fact, the devil is himself the accuser of the brethren who accuses them night and day in the presence

of God (Rev. 12:10). Jesus Himself warned: **“There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs” (Lk. 12:2,3).**

Yes! We are never alone!

Yes! We always have an audience!

GOOD NEWS

The Scriptures teach that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). If the devil accuses us of these sins we will be forever lost. The “Good News” is that Jesus, Who speaks to God on our behalf, has destroyed all the evidence against us! Please consider:

- **“There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1).**
- **“Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow” (Is. 1:18).**
- **“As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us” (Ps. 103:12).**
- God promised: **“I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more” (Heb. 8:12).**
- **“Through him (Jesus) everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from the Law of Moses.” (Acts 13:39).**
- Etc.

PLEASE FOCUS ALL OF YOUR MENTAL ENERGY ON THIS GOOD NEWS. THE MIRACLE OF THE GOSPEL MAKES IT POSSIBLE FOR ALL THE EVIL THINGS WE HAVE DONE TO COMPLETELY DISAPPEAR!

THE ACCUSER OF THE BRETHREN HAS NO EVIDENCE AGAINST THE CHILD OF GOD!

THERE IS NO CONDEMNATION TO THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST JESUS!

OUR HEAVENLY AUDIENCE ONLY SEES THE GOOD THINGS THAT WE DO!

THIS IS JUST ONE WONDERFUL FACET OF THE MANIFOLD WISDOM OF GOD!

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