

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Red Bud, Illinois

Adult Bible Study

*"Angels, Angels Everywhere"*

IV. What Angels Are Like

What words would you use to describe the personality of an angel? \_\_\_\_\_

As it is with the appearance of angels, our understanding of their characteristics comes as much from popular piety and human opinion as it does from the Bible. In this section of our study we will see what God's Word says angels are like.

**What characteristics of angels do each of these passages highlight?**

2 Samuel 14:20 (spoken to King David) *"My lord has wisdom like that of an angel of God—he knows everything that happens in the land."* \_\_\_\_\_

*Psalms 103:20 Praise the Lord, you His angels, you mighty ones who do His bidding, who obey His word.*  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Zechariah 1:11-13 And they reported to the angel of the LORD, who was standing among the myrtle trees, "We have gone throughout the earth and found the whole world at rest and in peace." Then the angel of the LORD said, "LORD Almighty, how long will You withhold mercy from Jerusalem and from the towns of Judah, which You have been angry with these seventy years?" So the LORD spoke kind and comforting words to the angel who talked with me.*  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Matthew 22:30 (Jesus says) "At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven."* \_\_\_\_\_

*Luke 9:26 (Jesus says) "If anyone is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels."* \_\_\_\_\_

*Luke 15:10 (Jesus says) "In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."* \_\_\_\_\_

*Luke 20:35-36 (Jesus says) "But those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage, and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection."* \_\_\_\_\_

*Acts 12:7 Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. "Quick, get up!" he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists.* \_\_\_\_\_

*2 Thessalonians 1:6-7 God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with His powerful angels.* \_\_\_\_\_

*Hebrews 2:5-7 It is not to angels that He has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking. But there is a place where someone has testified: "What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the angels; You crowned him with glory and honor."* \_\_\_\_\_

While angels possess great knowledge, they are not all-knowing (*omniscient*) as God is. What they do know is what God has given them to understand.

While angels have great power, they are not all powerful (*omnipotent*) as God is. What they can do is what God has given them power to do.

The presence of angels is *illocal*, that is, while they can occupy a definite space, they are spiritual beings independent of space. However, angels are not *omnipresent* as God is. They only can be in one certain place at any one time.

Angels possess great holiness. This attribute is theirs because they dwell in the presence of a holy God.

Martin Luther says this about the wisdom of the good angels: “The good angels are far more sensible and wise than the evil angels, because they have a mirror into which they look, a mirror that the devil does not have. It is called the *facies Patris*, the face of our Lord God. This is why one good angel is far wiser than all the devils put together. The good angels are much mightier, too, for they stand in the presence of Him whose name is *Omnipotens*, the Almighty.” (from a *St. Michael’s Day sermon, September 29, 1530*)

Luther comments on Genesis 22:11 with these words about angels: “The good angels bring terror, that is, they come with a certain majesty...so that the people to whom they come are frightened. Thus Mary is filled with fear upon seeing the angel” (Luke 1:29).

#### V. A .The Number of Angels

How many angels can dance on the head of a pin was a common question debated among theologians during the middle ages (before there was golf and the internet to occupy their spare time). We may ask this question in fun, but we never will come up with the right answer. The ancient Jewish Talmud suggests that every Jew has 11,000 guardian angels assigned at birth. One thing we do know: there are plenty of angels available for us. Now we turn to what the Bible says about the number of angels.

#### **How many angels are referred to in these passages?**

*2 Kings 6:15-17 When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. "Oh, my lord, what shall we do?" the servant asked. "Don't be afraid," the prophet answered. "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them." And Elisha prayed, "O LORD, open his eyes so he may see." Then the LORD opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.* \_\_\_\_\_

*Daniel 7:9-10 As I looked, thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took His seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of His head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before Him. Thousands upon thousands attended Him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, and the books were opened.* \_\_\_\_\_

*Matthew 26:52-53 "Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. Do you think I cannot call on My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?"* \_\_\_\_\_

*Hebrews 12:22-24 But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.* \_\_\_\_\_

*Revelation 5:11-12 Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they sang: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!"* \_\_\_\_\_

Martin Luther, commenting on the rescue of Lot from Sodom in Genesis 19, says this about the number of angels: “We Christians should have the sure knowledge that the princes of heaven are with us, not only one or two, but a large number of them, as Luke records (2:13) that a multitude of the heavenly host was with the shepherds. And if we were without this custody, and God did not in this way check the fury of Satan, we could not live for one moment.”

**Luther’s Morning Prayer: I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.**

*Next Lesson: The Ranks of Angels and Guardian Angels*