

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
Red Bud, Illinois

Adult Bible Study
“Angels, Angels Everywhere”

IX. Angels as Servants of Christ's Church

Angels appear all over the pages of the Bible. It seems that God's people are constantly being visited by God's heavenly messengers. Do these angels continue to serve God's people now in the New Testament age? Why don't we experience angelic visitation like we see take place in the Bible? How do we judge those who claim to have seen angels in their lives in our day and age? We will consider and discuss these questions in this lesson.

Angels and the Old Covenant:

It was a common teaching among the Jews that God gave His law to the Israelites at Mt. Sinai through angels (Acts 7:37-38, 52-53 and Hebrews 2:2-3). Paul uses this as evidence that the Old Testament law has been superseded by God's New Covenant (Galatians 3:19-20).

Who is the One that is superior to the angels & reveals to us the New Covenant of God for our salvation?

Angels and the Early Church:

The Book of Acts contains a number of occasions where angels brought messages to God's people, served as agents of protection, or executed God's judgment. We have seen this in the case of Peter's imprisonment in Acts 12:7-11 and Paul's shipwreck in Acts 27:21-26. What do angels do in these other passages in the Book of Acts?

Acts 5:17-20 _____ **Acts 8:26** _____

Acts 10:1-8 _____ **Acts 12:21-23** _____

Angels and the Ministry of Christ's Church Today:

When angels take care of us, they do so for the glory of God and the preaching of God's holy Word.

What do the following passages say about how the ministry of the church affects Gods angels?

Luke 15:8-10 _____

(Jesus said) "Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Does she not light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? 9And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.' 10In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

1 Timothy 5:21 _____

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 Peter 1:12 _____

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.

Angels Appearing to People Now:

Many claim to have seen angels and received the benefit of their care. Obviously we know that this is possible. Not only has Scripture said that this can happen, the Bible has shown us that it has happened. Remembering that angels do God's work for the sake of the Gospel of Christ will help us judge people's claims of angel sightings. When an unbeliever in Jesus Christ claims to have seen or been helped by a good angel, we know that something is wrong. Any time a spirit leads us away from salvation through Jesus Christ as revealed in the Bible, we know that something is wrong.

How do the following passages warn us about trusting in “angelic visions”?

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 _____

For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. 14And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. 15It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.

Galatians 1:6-9 _____

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— 7which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! 9As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!

1 John 4:1-3 _____

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, 3but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.

It would seem from the Bible and from our daily lives that the frequency with which angels openly and manifestly participate in human affairs has diminished since the day of Pentecost.

What has God given us to replace the ministry of angels as His messengers according to the following passages?

Romans 10:17 Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

2 Timothy 3:14-17 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, 15and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Titus 3:5-6 He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night He was betrayed, took bread, 24and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." 25In the same way, after supper He took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of Me." 26For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

Who is at work through these activities? _____

What is the result of that work in our lives? _____

Despite the work of the Holy Spirit and the assurance of salvation we have in God's means of grace, God's angels still serve Him and His people on earth. If the child of God believes an angel in the appearance of a human has helped him/her out of trouble or danger, we cannot discount this experience. Especially if the circumstances surrounding that experience are beyond the explanation of the normal, we who realize the existence of God's ministering spirits can accept the possibility and even probability of angelic intervention in our lives.

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: Angels in Art and History