

"BE LIKE AN ANGEL"

PROLOG

TALK ABOUT ANGELS IN ALMOST ANY GROUP - AND PEOPLE LOOK AT YOU ^{AS IF YOU} WERE AN ALIEN FROM ANOTHER PLANET, OR YOU HAD ESCAPED FROM YOUR KEEPER AT THE FUNNY FARM.

SOMETIMES I WONDER WHERE EVER DID THE IDEA COME FROM THAT BELIEVING IN ANGELS IS A BIT TOO MUCH FOR NORMAL CHRISTIANS

COURTED
MARRIED
ONE

UNFORTUNATE, BUT TRUE - OURS IS A NATION OF CLOSET BELIEVERS IN ANGELS. THESE ARE THE MOST OF PEOPLE HOPING THAT SOMETIME, SOMEWHERE, SOMEHOW THEY WILL MEET SOMEBODY WHO WILL LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND... SOMEONE WHO WILL SAY... "WELCOME ABOARD! I'M AN ANGEL BELIEVER TOO!"



" BE LIKE AN ANGEL "

O.T. - Exodus 3/ verses 1 - 8, end with "a land flowing with milk and honey.'

N.T. - ~~Matthew~~ ^{MATTHEW} 3/ 16 & 17 and Acts 4/ 1 - 11

The Bible teaches us that ~~we are~~ ^(WE ARE) for a little while a little lower than the angels. In Revelation 22/ 9 they instruct us to worship only our creator. We are not to worship angels...only God.

Throughout the ~~Old~~ ^{AND} ~~New~~ testaments there is comment about encounters with angels. Today, the interest in angels has been reflected in the popular television series " Highway to Heaven ". Talk shows feature programs about angels. Articles and books including " Billy Graham's "Angels, Angels, Angels," "A Rustle of Angels" written by the man and wife team Marilyn Carlson Webber and Dr. William D. Webber, and " Brush of an Angel's Wings" by Charlie W. Shedd can be found in libraries and book stores. They contain true stories based on written accounts of real people with real names and addresses and their encounters and experiences with angels. The paramount purpose of these books is to glorify God by telling of His love and care for us, His children, as seen and experienced in the ministering of His angels. He wants us to be encouraged by letting us know that angels are still very much on the job ministering to us in our midst today.

Where does the word "angel" come from? The Hebrew word for angel is "MAL'AKH"...The Greek word is "AGEL'LOS". Both words mean "messenger"...one of the most important and frequent duties assigned to God's angels. These supernatural heavenly beings act as God's messengers to us humans and also act as God's agents who carry out His will.

The word "angel" appears 292 times in 35 books in the Bible. Other words are also used..."Cherubim", "Saraphs", "Ministring Spirits", "Sons of God", "Chariots of God", "Holy Ones", "Morning Stars", "Thrones", "Powers", "Rulers", "Authorities", "Heavenly Bodies" and "Miracles". Many biblical scholars would also include the four living creatures and the 24 elders in Revelations 4/6-10. Everytime you open your Bible there is the rustle of angels.

We know that angels come from God...created by Him. Billy Graham writes in his book on angels..."Even the angels would cease to exist if Jesus, who is almighty God, did not sustain them by His power. According to the Bible, God created Adam and Eve, and from this first human couple came the rest of human kind...brought into this world by human birth. But, angels are created by God. Psalm 148 states "Praise Him all His angels for He commanded, and they were created. Angels are a company. Human people are a race.

When were angels created?...The common assumption is that they were created in the beginning. In the beginning there was God, then He created the angels. Angels were present at the creation. In Job 38/9 it says that when the world was created "The Morning Stars sang together, and all the angels shouted for joy."

How many angels are there?...The apostle John reported seeing ten thousand times ten thousand angels encircling the throne of God. That would be 100 million angels in one place if we are to take that account literally. In Hebrews 12/22 it says "thousands upon thousands of angels in joyous assembly"...which would indicate that the number of angels is beyond human comprehension or count.

Did Jesus ever appear in the form of an angel?... Many Bible scholars would answer "Yes". There is general agreement that "The Angel of the Lord" in the Old Testament is a visible appearance of Christ to humans.

At times, in the Bible, angels are clearly ANGELS. Other times the angel is identified with God. This is the case with the Old Testament use of the phrase "The Angel of the Lord." There is evidence to support that view. There are times when "The Angel of the Lord" turns out to be none other than God Himself. When Hagar ran away from Sarah, the Angel of the Lord found her, and promised to do himself what only God can do. This can be found in Genesis 16/ 10-20. The account continues in verse 13..." She gave this name to the Lord who spoke to her..." You are the God who sees me...the Angel

of the Lord.". and in this case the " Lord" ...
Yaweh or Jehovah...are CLEARLY ONE AND THE SAME.

When this angel appeared to Moses in the well-known account of the burning bush found in Exodus 3/2 it says, "The Angel of the Lord" appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush.". Two verses later it says " God called to him from within the bush." Here and other places in the Old Testament the words for God and Angel of the Lord are used interchangeably.

Do angels ever die?...No. Jesus clearly taught in Luke 20/26 that once created angels never die.

Do angels know everything?...No, Angels have super-human knowledge. They know more than we do, but ^{SURE} God ~~is~~ KNOWS ALL. omniscient. Informed by God, they do know some future event as seen in Luke 1/ 13-16 and God's plan for the world as seen in Revelation 17/18. However, they do not know the day or hour when Christ will come again. There are also some things they do not fully understand including the suffering of Jesus on the cross for the salvation of us humans. In Peter 1/1-12 in says " Even angels long to look into these things.

Do angels have emotions?...Yes. They sang for joy at the creation of the world. They rejoice when one sinner REPENTS ~~repents~~. They express reverence and awe in their worship of God.

How strong are angels?...They have tremendous strength. They are stronger and more powerful than any human. In scripture they are called "the mighty ones", and "God's powerful angels."

Where do angels live?... The Bible repeatedly uses the phrase " the angels in heaven." Heaven may be considered as home for the angels, ~~but this is not the case~~ ^(However). There is a difference of opinion about the heaven where holy angels live. Some angels never leave the courts of heaven, Apparently the saraphs spend their time continuously in worship before the throne of God. We learn this in Isaiah 6/1-6. And, in Luke 1/19 Gabriel identifies himself as one who stands in the presence of God.

It is clear that all angels do not stay in what ^{WE} humans or earthlings would call their primary residence. A guardian angel, for example, would be present on earth with the person in his charge.

What do angels do in heaven?... They worship God. In Revelation 4 we catch a glimpse of the ceaseless worship of God by the angles..." Day and night they never stop saying " Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is, and is to come." Because of God's infinite worthiness, the worship of angels never ceases.

It's easy for us humans to underestimate the importance of worship. In the devine scheme of things it is the most important activity. A part of our problem is that we are more attuned to the physical than the spiritual. This changes when believers enter heaven , and putting away earthly things enter into the manifest presence of God.

Angels administer God's government... passages such as Paslm 103/19 point out that as God rules over all

creation, He uses angels to do His will and carry out His bidding.

What do angels do on earth?...

1. They serve as guardian angels.
2. Warrior angels do battle for God. Sometimes the mere sight of a warrior angel is enough to frighten people to deter them from their intended evil acts.
3. Angels carry out God's justice. Tens of thousands of angels were at Mount Sinai at the giving of the law. God provided angels to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. God warned the fleeing Jews..." Pay attention to him and listen to what he says. Do not rebel against him. He will not forgive your rebellion, since my name is in him.
4. Angels give encouragement....they come at different times to rescue people from discouragement. The words they speak bring comfort and cheer. The presence of an angel is enough to assure a person of God's love and care.
5. Angels strengthen people....They come to help a person through a time of pain, suffering or hardship. In this role they do not rescue a person from an ordeal. They do, however, help the individual to face whatever may come. The angel who ministered to Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane is an example of this type of angel ministry.

6. Angels are messengers...As we have said the word angel means "messenger". This is a major ministry performed by angels. This is illustrated in the Christmas story. Angels told Mary that she was to be the mother of Jesus. They explained the coming birth to Joseph, he ~~re~~ betrothed, and they announced the miracle to the shepherds and told Joseph to flee Herod's wrath and go to Egypt with the baby Jesus and his mother, Mary.
7. Angels help people realize that they have been cleansed from sin...The classic example is in Isaiah 6/6-7 . A seraph with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken ~~from~~ with tongs from the fire on the alter, flew to Isaiah. Touching Isaiah's mouth with the coal he said..." See, this has touched your lips. Your ~~guilt~~ ^{EVILT} is taken away and your sin atoned for."
8. Angels guide and direct the thoughts of people... Satan and his evil angels use their powers to tempt people to sin. God's holy angels help us to resist temptation...to guide and direct **our** daily activities. Angels may influence our thoughts without our even being aware of their ministry . This is the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer. Some suggest that God used His angels to guide and direct more frequently before the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Angels help bring a person to salvation... An angel directed Philip to go into the wilderness where he met the Ethiopian and led him to Christ. Another directed Cornelius to Peter who would tell him the good news and the saving grace of Jesus Christ. Both of these incidents are in the 8th and 10th chapters of Acts. We may infer that angels are also influencing people today toward faith in God even when an audible voice is not heard.

Angels are watchers... "A watcher, a holy one" is the description of the angel in Daniel 14/13. Angels are spectators, watching as we live our lives. Paul says we are a "spectacle" to them. Billy Graham says... "Our certainty that angels right now witness how we are walking through life should mightily influence the decisions we make. God is watching, and His angels are also interested spectators."

Angels are present at the time of death... Jesus taught that at death angels carry a person to heaven. What a wonderful and comforting thought.

Why don't guardian angels always save us?... The angels always do God's will, so the real question is "Why does God allow bad things to happen to good people?" This subject would require a complete book to even approach a satisfactory answer. One such book I highly recommend is "When God Doesn't Make Sense" written by the eminent Christian family counselor Dr. James Dobson.

Do angels help only good Christian people?...

Hebrews 1/14 says that all angels are ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation.

A question that perplexes many is " Why do bad things happen to good people. Some are even more disturbed by the question " Why do good things happen to bad people?

Angels are known to help ^{THOSE} who are not of the household of faith. The first time the ~~WORD~~ "angel" is used in the Bible the angel appeared to an Egyptian maidservant, Hagar, This is in Genesis 16. Sarah must have thought it was unfair ^I of God to send an angel to the troublemaker she disliked with a passion. However, it wasn't until years later, and after the angel had rescued Hagar and Ishmael from death, that three angels would come to Abraham and Sarah in their old age with news that they would soon ~~have~~ have a child of their own.

Why does God have angels that help unbelievers?...

God is a merciful God...noted for his loving ^I kindness. He makes the rain to fall on the just and the unjust alike. Apparently He provides guardian angels for everyone.

Well, all that being said about angels we should be encouraged to be like an angel. Look for ways to serve our creator, God. In the various accounts concerning angels ^I all the people angels helped seemed to be caught in some kind of situation in which they had a need that they were powerless to meet. At those times, God sent His angels.

It may well be angels are God's back up interveners. We, you and I can do many of the things that angels do. There are times when a person needs help...

a member of your family...a friend...even a stranger. They may need encouragement, support or direction. God's first choice may well be to use one of us here today to help in this instance. (George Wilkinson and Gene Galbraith) Perhaps then, if we as humans are unable, or unwilling to meet the need, then God sends His angels to help. So, we must be like angels. We must be alert and look for ways to help people in need.

Be like an angel...tell the good news. God used an angel to tell Mary the good news of the birth of Jesus. Angels announced His birth to the shepherds in the fields. Angels told the good news of the risen Christ at Easter..!"He is not here! He is risen!"

We too can tell the Good News of salvation. 1st Peter tells us that angels wonder about our great salvation as followers of Jesus Christ. In Acts 23 **I** an angel told Paul that he would not be drowned at sea but would bring God's message to the people in Rome. God did not send messages by angel very often ^{IN} Biblical times. It was reserved for special occasions, and that seems to be true today.

Can we, like angels, tell the future?...Not in the sense of being fortune tellers. But, in the Bible God has revealed the blessed hope that Jesus will come again. We humans can and should be telling this message to all who will listen. In Acts 1/10-11, when Jesus ascended into heaven, two angels proclaimed God's message that Jesus would come again. So, be like an angel. Tell the Good News that Jesus is coming again.

Be like an angel...give God's directions. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] God expects us humans to follow His directions as they are found in the Bible. God's word is clear. We are to share the Good News ..the Gospel with others. We are to do it with confidence. We are God's messengers...God's ambassadors for Christ. And, today more than ever, the world needs to hear and learn about God's values, God's ~~values~~ ^{MORALS} and God's laws.

Be like an angel. Help protect those in need...

We have ~~guardian~~ ^{GUARDIAN} angels who minister to us the believers and others. They set an example that we are to help others in time of need. It is said that if you want to meet Jesus today, go where there is ~~is~~ a need . Jesus could almost always be found with the poor, the needy, the sick, the oppressed...and He still can be found there today. The Bible clearly teaches that every believer is to be concerned with those in need, and offer help where possible.

We love meeting our friends here at Trinity on

Sundays or at other times of fellowship and instruction. But, we must always be aware of the shy persons...the quiet ones who feel that for some reason or other they do not fit in. In the movie " Home Alone", the young boy is accidentally left at home when his family goes on vacation. He blames himself for ~~their~~ his family's evident disappearance. Feeling bad and blue and lonely he finds his way into a church. He confides to an old gentleman sitting near him saying..." I don't know what I'm doing here. I feel like I don't belong anywhere." The old gentleman replies..." The church is

the right place to go when you feel that you don't belong." That's good advice. But, God expects us to be ministering angels to those who feel that they don't belong anywhere. So, be like an angel. Help those who enter our doors. Make them feel welcome. Let them know that they are not alone in God's house.

Be like an angel! Worship God at all times. In the scriptures we find that a major activity of angels is worshipping God. Sometimes worship is referred to as the " forgotten jewel " of the church. Not so in the Bible. Angels are well aware of the greatness and majesty of God when they sing Holy!, Holy!, Holy!. The scriptures report that they worship God at all times. We, as humans, can join that glorious worship at all times too. Isn't it wonderful to know that as we worship together here or individually in our prayer life, the angels are joining us as we proclaim our praises to God.

The liturgical church recognizes this as a part of the liturgy during each church worship service. The pentecostal, charismatic church also recognizes this as they raise their hands and voices toward heaven in praise and adoration.

And, let us not miss the example the angels set for us in Luke 15/10..." There is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God when one sinner repents." Like the angels, let us make it a major priority to rejoice when someone becomes a Christian and share our joy by welcoming them. Let's serve God with loving obedience.

Let us do it knowing that we are for a little while a little lower than the angels...and at times we can serve God and help people by being like angels.

Let us pray...

Father, God, creator of all that is good, as humans we marvel and wonder at the angels you have created. We can only speculate as to the scope of their ministry here on earth and in heaven. We pray that we too can serve you in our limited human capacity by doing our utmost to minister to our fellow humans by being like angels as best we can. In Jesus name we pray...Amen.