



Questions about angels...

We've been taking a look at what the Bible says about angels in our Wednesday noon Bible study. One thing we've found (over and over) is that many popular ideas about angels are not biblical. In other words many of these popular ideas are born from Hollywood scripts or people's imaginations, but not grounded in truth. Like the idea that people become angels when they die. The Bible is clear that angels are angels and people are people. Angels may from time to time temporarily take on human form, but people will never become angels. If we are human now, we will be human in eternity.

Question One: Do angels have wings?

Yes and no. Whenever the Bible uses the term "angel" to describe the spirit-beings that serve God, it never refers to them as having wings. On the other hand, the Bible does depict both the cherubim and seraphim as having wings. The cherubim and seraphim are spiritual beings that appear to have been granted the most trusted positions in the King's (God's) court, but they are never specifically called "angels." (And if the picture that comes to mind when you hear the word "cherub" is that of a chubby-cheeked toddler with wings, you might want to check out Ezekiel chapter one for the accurate - but not nearly as cute - picture of them.)

Question Two: Do people have guardian angels?

Guarding/protecting/rescuing is definitely a function of angels that we see quite often in the Bible. A couple of well-known instances are found in Daniel 3 and Daniel 6 where angels protected Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the fiery furnace and Daniel in the lion's den. The cherubim also are seen guarding - not people, but the tree of life and the throne of God.

Psalms 91:11-12 specifically talks about God sending his angels to guard and protect. Acts 12:12-16 is one passage that hints at the idea of each person having a "guardian" angel. In this case the person is Peter. And in Matthew 18:10 Jesus' comment about angels and little children is also taken to indicate the possibility of specific angels assigned to guard specific people. Although both of these passages hint at the idea of specific "guardian" angels assigned to specific people, neither passage *proves* that idea.

There are some things we can say with certainty about angels and their guarding/protecting/rescuing function:

- God does send angels in answer to prayer.
- Guarding/protecting/rescuing is one of many ways angels are sent to serve believers (God knows exactly what we need angels to do for us in any situation.)
- They have the power to rescue us from any situation or from any evil.
- They don't save us from every bad situation or consequence. God sees the "big picture" and knows when rescuing best serves His eternal purpose for us and when it doesn't.

One writer summed up by saying, "These [Bible] verses do not prove that every believer has a guardian angel at all times, but they do prove that God will use these guarding angels for that purpose when and where He sees fit."

Thanks for asking,
Pastor David

Send your questions to pastor@livingwordlutheran.net