

PARANORMAL

RECALL

Icebreaker:

Have you ever had an experience where you believe an angel was either watching over you, protected you, assisted you, interacted with you etc.? Explain to the group your experience.

Introduction:

We can define angels as follows: Angels are created, spiritual beings with moral judgment and high intelligence, but without physical bodies. There are different types of angels, and they can only be in one place at one time.¹

REVEAL

Several Points to Consider Regarding Angels:

Human beings and angels (using the term broadly) are the only moral, highly intelligent creatures that God has made. Therefore we can understand much about God's plan and love for us when we compare ourselves with angels.

1) Angels show the greatness of God's love and plan for us

2 Peter 2:4 says "God did not spare the angels when they sinned, but caused them into hell and committed them to pits of nether gloom to be kept until the judgment" And we read in Hebrews, "For surely it is not with angels that he is concerned but with the descendants of Abraham" (Heb. 2:16) We see, therefore, that God created two groups of intelligent, moral creatures. Among the angels, many sinned, but God decided to redeem none of them. This was perfectly just for God to do, and no angel can ever complain that he has been treated unfairly by God. With humans, God could have let all of us go on our self-chosen path toward eternal condemnation. But God decided to intervene and offer forgiveness to those who will receive Him.

2) Angels remind us that the unseen world is real

2 Kings 6:17 says "the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha," This was a great angelic army sent to Dothan to protect Elisha from the Syrians. The psalmist, too, shows an awareness of the unseen world when he encourages the angels, "Praise him, all his angels, praise him, all his host!" (Psalm 148:2) An unbelieving world may dismiss talk of angels as mere superstition, but Scripture offers it as insight into the state of affairs as the really are.

3) Angels carry out some of God's plans

Scripture sees angels as God's servants who carry out some of his plans in the earth. They bring God's messages to people (Luke 1:11-19). They also carry out some of God's judgments such as bringing a plague upon Israel (2 Sam 24:16-17), smiting the leaders of the Assyrian armies (2 Chron. 32:21), and striking Herod dead because he did not give God glory (Acts 12:23). Angels also patrol the earth as God's representatives and carry out war against demonic forces.

¹ Lesson questions and the Reveal and Reflect sections have been taken from the book *Systematic Theology* by Wayne Grudem p.397- 411

REFLECT

Our relationship to angels:

Now that you are acquainted with the function of angels, let's examine what our relationship to angels should look like according to Scripture. Feel free to come up with some talking points that are relevant to your group.

1) We should be aware of angels in our daily lives

Scripture makes it clear that God wants us to be aware of the existence of angels and of the nature of their activity. We should not assume that Scripture's teaching about angels has nothing whatsoever to do with our lives today. Rather, there are several ways in which our Christian lives will be enriched by an awareness of the existence and ministry of angels in the world even today.

-When we come before God in worship, we are joining not only with the great company of believers who have died and come into God's presence in Heaven, "the spirits of just men made perfect," but also with a great throng of angels, "innumerable angels in festal gathering" (Heb 12:22-23)

-Angels are watching our obedience or disobedience to God through the day. Even as we think our sins are done in secret and bring grief to no one else, we should be sobered by the thought that perhaps even hundreds of angels witness our disobedience and are grieved.

-On the other hand, when we are discouraged and think that our faithful obedience to God is witnessed by no one and is an encouragement to no one, we can be comforted by the realization that perhaps hundreds of angels witness our lonely struggle, daily "longing to look" at the way Christ's great salvation finds expression in our lives.

2) Cautions regarding our relationship to angels

-Beware of receiving false doctrine from angels. The Bible warns about this: "But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:8)

-Do not worship angels, pray to them, or seek them. Angel worship was one of the false doctrines being taught at Colossae (Col. 2:18). Also, we are to pray only to God, who alone is omnipotent and able to answer prayer and who alone is omniscient and therefore able to hear all his people's prayers at once. Praying to angels implicitly attributes to them a status equal to God, which we must not do.

-Do angels appear to people today? In the earliest period of the church's history, angels were active. (Acts 8:26, 10:3-6, 12:6-11). Therefore, there seems no compelling reason to rule out the possibility of angelic appearances today. However, an angelic appearance today would be unusual. If one should (apparently) occur, we should evaluate it with caution. But there is no convincing reason for saying that such an event absolutely could not happen, particularly in a time of extreme danger or intense conflict with the forces of evil.

RECOGNIZE

Know the Truth(s):

Don't feel pressured to answer every question listed below. Focus instead on productive conversation that allows every member of the group time to engage.

- 1) How might this study of understanding angels affect how you think about angels from now on?
- 2) What difference would it make in your attitude in worship if you consciously thought about being in the presence of angels when you were singing praises to God?
- 3) How does it impact you to know that angels are watching you right now? What attitude or attitudes do you think they have as they watch you?
- 4) Have you ever experienced a remarkably elevated sense of joy just after seeing someone pray to receive Christ as personal Savior?

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- 5) Do you think one aspect contributing to that joy might be that angels are also rejoicing with you because a sinner has repented?
 - 6) How can the example of angels who joyfully and faithfully perform their assigned tasks, whether great or small, be of help to you in the responsibilities that you face today, whether at work, at home or in the church?

RESPOND

Your assignment this week:

Spend a few days this week meditating on the truth that angels are watching you, encouraging you, and cheering for you. Ask the Lord to help you be sensitive to the role angels play in your daily life.

Spend some time this week in prayer reflecting on how God loves you so much so that, unlike the angels, he would offer you forgiveness instead of wrath. How does that move your heart? How might you share this good news with those in your sphere of influence?