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Ministering Spirits: A Study of Angels in the Bible

July 20 - August 24, 2008

Presented by Dr. Curt Scarborough

Ministering Spirits:
A Study of Angels in the Bible

by
Dr. Curt Scarborough

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A Brief Biography of Dr. Curt Scarborough

- * Native of Benton, Illinois (son of a coal miner)
- * Married 50 years to RuthAnn Jent (Baptist pastor's daughter)
- * Both are alumni of Southern Illinois University and Southwestern Baptist Seminary
- * Curt & RuthAnn have two married children and seven grandchildren
- * The couple now resides in St. Charles, Missouri
- * Members of Morning Star Church, St. Charles, MO
- * RuthAnn: Preschool Minister, 35 years in St. Louis churches (retired)
- * Dr. Curt: Minister for 21 years in Baptist churches in IL, TX, and MO
- * Dr. Curt holds 5 earned and 2 honorary doctoral degrees
- * Joined FreeWay Foundation professional staff in 1975
- * President and CEO of FreeWay Foundation, 1983 - 2007
- * Founder and Chancellor, Pillsbury College & Seminary, 1991 - Present
- * Author of more than 90 books, including 5-volume commentary on all chapters of every book in the Bible (Expository Studies textbooks)
- * Hobbies: plays woodwinds; cares for retired racing greyhounds

I am praying for you today that our true teacher the Holy Spirit will come along side you and teach you as you study. It is my fervent prayer that God will bless you as you continue to develop your skills for studying His word, and that these lessons will ultimately result in you being able to bless others.

Blessings upon you as you study,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Curt Scarborough". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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Discussion Questions about Angels

1. Everything you always wanted to know about angels:
 - Who are they?
 - Where did they come from?
 - When did they originate?
 - Where are they now?
 - How many are there?
 - What are their names?
 - What do they look like?
 - Do they all have wings and feathers?
 - Do people become angels when they die?
 - Do they still function on earth today?
2. What rank or place in God's creation do angels hold, as compared with the position held by the human race?
3. What about "fallen" or dark angels, devils, and/or demons? Did they ever intermarry with human beings? If so, where are their half-breed monster-children? Why doesn't Almighty God just annihilate Satan and his angels?
4. What are the responsibilities and assignments of angels; why are they here? (Do people really have "guardian angels"?)

Topics for Thought and Meditation

- * Since Jesus Christ is the Son of God, anointed with power by the Holy Spirit, why did He need any help from angels?
- * Which unique blessings come to Christians directly from the Holy Spirit of God, as compared with those blessings that come to believers through God's holy angels?

Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Angels

1. Who are they?

The word “angel” comes from the Greek word “angelos,” which means “messenger.” The matching Hebrew word “mal’ak” has the same meaning . . . (see the book of Malachi.) Angels (messengers) are mentioned at least 108 times in the Old Testament and 175 times in the New Testament.

Sometimes the Bible uses these words for human beings, as in Job 1:14; Isa. 42:19; Mal. 3:1; 2:7; Lk. 7:24; 9:52; Rev. 1:20. Sometimes, the Bible speaks figuratively of things or events as “messengers”: the pillar of cloud (Ex. 14:19), or as pestilence or plagues (II Sam. 24:16-17). But usually “angel” describes the whole range of spirits whom God has created, including both good and evil angels, and special categories such as cherubim, seraphim, and archangels.

Angels are supernatural beings distinctly separate from the race of man: Heb. 1:14; I Cor. 6:3; 15:39-41.

2. Where did they come from?

Angels were created by God (Psa. 148:2-5; Col. 1:16) sometime prior to the creation of man. The Bible speaks about the creation of angels; therefore, it is clear that they have not existed from all eternity (Neh. 9:6).

3. When did they originate?

The time of their creation is never definitely specified, but it is most probable that it occurred in connection with the creation of the heavens in Gen. 1:1. It may be that God created the angels immediately after He had created the heavens and before He created the earth, for according to Job 38:4-7, “the sons of God shouted for joy” when He had laid the foundations of the earth.

4. Where are they now?

According to numerous Scriptural references, angels are present both in heaven and on the earth. They travel at the “speed of thought” . . . Almighty God’s thought, which is infinitely faster than the speed of light (186,000 miles per second).

5. How many are there?

While the Scriptures give no definite figures, we are told that the number of angels is very great (Dan. 7:10; Matt. 26:53; Heb. 12:22; Rev. 5:11). It appears that all angels were created at one time. No new angels are being added to the number, and God put a permanent stop to their procreation attempts in the days of Noah, at the time of the flood. Angels are not subject to death nor any other form of extinction; therefore, they do not decrease in number. It seems reasonable to conclude that there are at least as many spirit beings in existence as there will have been human beings in all their history on earth.

6. What are their names?

Three angels are mentioned by name in the Bible, and many scholars believe that these are archangels: Michael (Dan. 12:1-2; Jude 9; Rev. 12:7); Gabriel (Dan. 8:15-17; 9:21; Lk. 1:11-13, 19, 26); and Lucifer (Satan) (Isa. 14:12; Ezek. 28:13-14; Lk. 10:18; Rev. 12:8).

Apparently, there are ranks among angels, a hierarchy that includes the archangels (I Thes. 4:16; Jude 9), principalities, powers, thrones, dominions (Col. 1:16; Eph. 1:21; 3:10; 6:12; Col. 2:15). Angels also are called "Sons of God" (Job 1:6; 38:7), "Holy Ones" (Psa. 89:5, 7), Watchers (Dan. 4:13, 17, 23), Host (I Sam. 17:45), and Prince (Dan. 10:13, 21; 12:1).

Sometimes the evil angel spirits are called by their chief characteristic, such as the spirit of . . . antichrist (I Jn. 4:3), bondage (Rom. 8:15), divination (Acts 16:16), dumb (Mk. 9:17, 25), error (I Jn. 4:6), fear (II Tim. 1:7), foul (Mk. 9:25; Rev. 18:2; jealousy (Num. 5:14, 30), or they assume another identity-name, such as "Legion" (Mk. 5:9; Lk. 8:30).

7. What do they look like?

Since angels are spirits (Heb. 1:7; Psa. 104:4; Lk. 24:37-39) rather than physical beings, they do not have to be visible at all (Col. 1:16; II Kgs. 6:17). When angels do appear, they generally appear in the form of men (Gen. 18:2-6; 19:1-3; Heb. 13:2). Angels in the Bible never appear as cute, chubby infants; they are always full-grown adults. When people in the Bible saw an angel, their typical response was to fall on their faces in fear and awe, not to reach out to tickle an adorable baby!

With the possible exception of one debatable passage (Zech. 5:9), angels always appear as males rather than as females (Mk. 16:5). Sometimes an angel appears to be a man with a special brightness or with other unusual features (Dan. 10:5-6; Matt. 28:2-5; Lk. 24:4; Acts 1:10; 10:30; Rev. 4:6-8). Apparently, Christians in the early church believed that a person's guardian angel looked like that individual (Acts 12:15).

8. Do they all have wings and feathers?

Scripture describes cherubim and seraphim as having wings (Ex. 25:20; I Chron. 28:18; Isa. 6:2,6; Ezek. 1:4-25; 10:1-22; 11:22; Rev. 4:6-8). Most scholars believe that these

cherubim and seraphim are a special kind or type of created angelic being. Other verses talk about angels flying, and we assume that wings would be useful for that flight (Dan. 9:21).

However, since angels are spirits, I suspect that they can move around without having to depend on wings. Most references to angels in the Bible say nothing about wings, and in passages like Gen. 18-19, it is certain that no wings were visible. Further, how could some persons “entertain angels unaware” (Heb. 13:2) unless angelic spirits can and do take on human appearance when occasion demands?

9. Do people become angels when they die?

No. Angels are not glorified human beings. Matt. 22:30 explains that angels do not marry or reproduce like human beings, and Heb. 12:22-23 says that when we get to the heavenly Jerusalem, we will be met by “myriads of angels” and “the spirits of righteous men made perfect” . . . two separate and distinct groups. Angels are a company or association, not a race descended from a common ancestor (Lk. 20:34-36). Human beings are called the “sons of men,” but angels never are called the “sons of angels.”

10. Do they still function on earth today?

Even after the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, angels gave guidance to Philip (Acts 8:26) and Cornelius (Acts 10:1-8). Angels delivered believers from prison (Acts 5 and 12). An angel encouraged Paul on board ship (Acts 27:23-25) and earlier, an angel strengthened Jesus after His temptation (Matt. 4:11) and in the Garden of Gethsemane (Lk. 22:41-44).

God often uses angels as His means of answering prayers of His people (Dan. 9:20-24; 10:10-12; Acts 12:1-17). According to Jesus’ story of Lazarus and the rich man, angels carried the spirit of Lazarus to heaven when he died (Lk. 16:22). Angels now are standing as guardians at the gate of the eternal city (Rev. 21:12, 25). Also, at the end of the age, angels will play an important role in executing God’s final judgment.

Angels continue to minister for those who will inherit salvation (Heb. 1:14). But, the Bible issues these warning about angels: do not worship them (Rev. 19:10; 22:8-9; Col. 2:18-19), and do not heed doctrines from them (Gal. 1:8; II Cor. 11:14).

What rank or place in God's creation do angels hold, as compared with the position held by the human race?

1. Angels are not greater than man.

- * Angels are ministering servants of the elect of God (Psa. 104:4; Heb. 1:7, 14).
- * Angels will be judged by men (I Cor. 6:3).
- * Man was created a higher order than the angels. The word translated "angels" in Psa. 8:4-5 ("Elohim") actually means "Godhead" as in Gen. 1:1. The verse should be translated: *"What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him? For You have made him a little lower than the Godhead (Elohim), and have crowned him with glory and honor," Psa. 8:4-5; Heb. 2:6-7.*

2. How do angels and men compare?

- * Angels are wiser and greater in knowledge than man (II Sam. 14:17, 20), but they are not omniscient (Matt. 24:36; Mk. 13:32; I Pet. 1:12).
- * Angels are stronger than men (Gen. 19:1, 11; Psa. 103:20; Matt. 28:2-7; Acts 5:19; 12:7, 23; II Thes. 1:7; II Pet. 2:11), but they are not omnipotent (Dan. 10:13).
- * Angels are more noble than man, but they are not omnipresent (Dan. 9:21-23; 10:10-14).

3. Angels are subject to God (I Pet. 3:22).

- * Angels are immortal (Lk. 20:36), but they are created beings (Psa. 148:2-5; Col. 1:16).
- * Angels are not to be worshipped (Col. 2:18; Heb. 1:4-5, 13), and they do not accept sacrifices (Judg. 13:15-16).
- * God said that no man could see Him and still live (Ex. 33:20), but seeing an angel will not cause a person to die (Judg. 6:22-23; 13:6, 19-23).
- * It is good to recognize the significance of angelic ministry, but any overemphasis upon their service to man is not desirable (Col. 2:18).

4. Who is the "Angel of the Lord" in the Old Testament?

- * To Hagar, the "Angel of the Lord" speaks as though he was the Lord God (Gen. 16:7-14).
- * To Abraham, the "Angel of the Lord" speaks in the first person as though he were Almighty God (Gen. 22:9-19).
- * To Moses, the "Angel of the Lord" identifies himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Ex. 3:1-6).
- * There are several other examples in Scripture where the "Angel of the Lord" speaks as God in the first person; many Bible translations capitalize this Angel to identify his divinity. *(Along with a number of other Bible scholars, I identify this "Angel of the Lord" as Jesus Christ, the Son of God in pre-incarnate form, sometimes called "The Angel of the Theophany.")*

What about “fallen” angels, devils, and/or demons?

The devil is not a myth, symbol, or legend; he is very real. Originally, Satan was an angel of God in heaven (I Tim. 5:21; Matt. 18:10; 25:31; Mk. 8:38; 13:32), but through his own pride, he became corrupt. His original name was Lucifer, meaning “Son of the Morning” (Ezek. 28:11-17; Rev. 12:7-9; Isa. 14:12-15).

The devil positioned himself as God’s enemy, and he constantly tries to hinder God’s work. Satan and his angels “kept not their first estate (or principality), but left their own habitation” (II Pet. 2:4; Jude 6-7; Matt. 25:41; Eph. 6:12). However, Satan is limited by God’s power, and can do only what God permits (Job 1:6 - 2:8).

The name Satan means “Accuser” (Rev. 12:10). He actively looks for people to attack (I Pet. 5:8-9). Also called “Abaddon” and “Apollyon” meaning Destroyer and Destruction (Rev. 9:11), Satan likes to pursue believers who are vulnerable in their faith, who are spiritually weak, and/or who are isolated from other believers. Even though God permits the devil to do his evil work of stealing, killing, and destroying (Jn. 10:10), God is in control. Jesus has complete power over Satan, having defeated him through His death and resurrection.

When Lucifer (Satan) rebelled in heaven (Rev. 12:7-9), he took one-third of the angels of God with him (Rev. 12:4). These “fallen” angels are referred to as demons, evil spirits, or devils. They are at war against God and His people. This spiritual warfare still is taking place between the powers of darkness and the powers of light (Dan. 10:13, 21; Eph. 6:10-18).

Satan is a tempter (Gen. 3:1), a troubler (Job 1:6-7), and an accuser (Rev. 12:10; Zech. 3:1). Satan masquerades as an angel of light (II Cor. 11:14), and is described as a lion seeking whom he may devour (I Pet. 5:8-9). However, God’s people have nothing to fear because “greater is He who is in us (the Holy Spirit), than he who is in the world (Satan),” (I Jn. 4:4).

In the end, Satan and his angels will be cast into the lake of fire, and he will never recover. In eternity, we will be safe from the devil forever (Rev. 20:10). Jesus Himself predicted the final defeat and destruction of Satan and his angels by hell fire (Matt. 25:41).

The “Sons of God” (Gen. 6:2, 4) refers to angels who rebelliously left heaven to take human women as wives. This reinforces the pre-flood evil in the world, for God abhors interbreeding of unlike species. The sons of God and their wives produced half-breed monster children . . . giant “mighty men” who were wiped out by the flood.

In I Pet. 3:18-20, Christ proclaimed, through His resurrection, the fruits of His victory to “spirits in prison” (demon spirits). These spirits apparently were behind the corruption of the world in Noah’s day. This proclamation is part of Christ’s sovereignty over “angels and authorities and powers” (I Pet. 3:22). Nothing is said of a response from the hearers, and this passage does not teach a second chance for salvation for those who refuse the truth of the gospel in this life.

II Peter 2:4-7 continues Peter's theme of sinning angels and the flood in Noah's day. The "spirits in prison who formerly were disobedient" (I Pet. 3:19-20) are "the angels who sinned . . . cast down to hell and delivered . . . into chains of darkness . . . reserved for judgment" (II Pet. 2:4).

In Jude 6-7, "the angels who did not keep their proper domain" are the lustful "Sons of men" (fallen angels) mentioned in Gen. 6:1-4. These dark angels descended and cohabited with women who lived before the flood. The sin of these demons is compared to the sexual immorality associated with Sodom and Gomorrah (Jude 7). These fallen angels (unlike the host of the demonic angels roaming the earth today) are confined, awaiting the judgment of Almighty God, when they will be cast into "the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41; Mk. 1:24).

God created the angels as immortal beings, meaning that they cannot die. Although Almighty God has the power and authority to totally annihilate any and every thing He has created, He has chosen not to do so. Instead of wiping out Lucifer (Satan) and his wicked angels when they rebelled, God exiled them to live on planet Earth. In fact, these demonic spirits are playing a part in Sovereign God's eternal plan of salvation for mankind.

What about "demon possession"?

A more accurate word for that affliction, referring to persons who are controlled by demons, would be "demonized," as in Matt. 4:24 and 8:33. A prime purpose of Jesus' earthly ministry was to overcome the power of Satan and to destroy his works, I Jn. 3:8.

In Jesus ministry, some of the diseases He healed were caused by demons: muteness (Matt. 12:22; Mk. 9:17, 25), deafness (Mk. 9:25), blindness (Matt. 12:22), and bodily deformity (Lk. 13:10-17). Demons do cause some mental problems (Matt. 8:28; Acts 19:13-16; Mk. 1:23-24; Jn. 10:20; Lk. 9:37-42). But the Bible does not teach that demons are responsible for all physical, emotional, or mental ailments. The Gospel writers frequently distinguished between sickness and demon possession (Matt. 4:24; Mk. 1:32; Lk. 6:17-18).

The method used by Jesus and His disciples to cast out demons differed radically from the magical methods so often used in that time. Through His authoritative command, Jesus expelled them (Mk. 1:25; 5:8; 9:25). His disciples did the same, by the authority of Jesus' name (Lk. 10:17; Acts 16:18). Attempting to cast out demons without the power of God is an extremely dangerous practice (Acts 19:13-16). In some very difficult cases, prayer coupled with fasting is necessary before a demon can be exorcised or cast out (Mk. 9:29).

What are the duties of angels? Why are they here?

1. Angels were created for two primary reasons.

First, angels were created for ministry to God (worship):

Neh. 9:6; Psa. 148:2; Isa. 6:2-4; Matt. 18:10; Lk. 2:13; Heb. 1:6; Rev. 5:11-12; 7:11.

Second, angels were created for ministry to man (the “heirs of salvation”):

Gen. 28:12; Psa. 104:4; Matt. 4:11; Mk. 1:13; Heb. 1:7, 14.

2. Specific duties have been assigned to angels.

* Angels minister to the physical needs of God’s people.

(1) They provide protection and deliverance from danger.

Gen. 19:1, 11, 15; Psa. 91:11-21; Dan. 6:22; Matt. 26:53; Acts 5:18-19.

(2) They can impart physical strength to man in his time of need.

Dan. 10:8-11, 16-19; Matt. 4:11; Mk. 1:13; Lk. 22:43.

(3) They even are sent with a supply of food for man’s nourishment.

I Kgs. 19:5-9.

(4) “Guardian angels” (plural) are assigned by the Father to each individual, and these angels always are alert to God’s will (Matt. 18:10). *Interestingly, early Christians thought that guardian angels looked like the believers they were assigned to protect (Acts 12:15).*

* The angel Gabriel imparted skill and understanding to Daniel concerning the vision he had received from God (Dan. 9:21-23; 10:14).

* Angels serve as a supernatural means of communication between God and man.

(1) For direction.

Lk. 1:11, 19, 26; Matt. 1:20; 2:13, 19-20; Acts 8:26; 10:3-6, 22.

(2) For encouragement.

Gen. 21:17-19; Dan. 10:12; Acts 27:23-24.

(3) For revelation.

Rev. 22:6, 16.

(4) For delivery of God’s word (the law).

Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19; Heb. 2:2.

(4) For interpretation of divine visions.

Dan. 7:16; 8:15-19; 9:21-23; 10:14; Zech. 1:9-19; 4:1-14; 5:1-3; Rev. 17:7.

* Angels are sent by God to execute His judgment upon the unrighteous.

Gen. 19:1-25; II Sam. 24:16-17; II Kgs. 19:35; Isa. 37:36; I Chron. 21:15;

II Chron. 32:21; Ezek. 9:2, 5, 7; Matt. 13:41-42, 49-50; 24:30; Acts 12:23;

Rev. 7:1-2; 8:2-13; 9:15; 15:1.

* Angels escort believers, upon their death, into the presence of God.

Lk. 16:22.

The Bible does not reveal to us whether every angel of God carries out the same tasks, or whether some of them specialize in certain areas of service.

The unnamed angels who appear most often in the Scripture carry out a variety of tasks, all designed to serve God. Here is a summary of those major responsibilities.

1. Worshiping

Worship and praise is the main activity of angels portrayed in heaven (Isa. 6:1-3; Rev. 4-5)

2. Revealing

Angels serve as messengers to communicate God's will to men. They helped reveal the law to Moses (Acts 7:52-53), and served as the carriers of much of the material in Daniel and Revelation.

3. Guiding

Angels gave instructions to Joseph about the birth of Jesus (Matt. 1-2), to the women at the tomb after the resurrection (Matt. 28:1-7), to Philip (Acts 8:26), and to Cornelius (Acts 10:1-8).

4. Providing

God has used angels to provide for physical needs, such as food for Hagar (Gen. 21:17-20), Elijah (I Kgs. 19:6), and Christ after His temptation (Matt. 4:11).

5. Protecting

Angels keep God's people from physical harm and danger, as in the cases of Daniel and the lions, and his three friends in the fiery furnace (Dan. 3 and 6).

6. Delivering

Angels are sent to deliver God's people out of danger once they are in it; angels released the Apostles from prison (Acts 5 and 12).

7. Strengthening

Angels strengthened Jesus physically after His temptation (Matt. 4:11).

8. Encouraging

Angels encouraged the Apostles to keep preaching after releasing them from prison (Acts 5:19-20), and an angel told Paul that everyone on his ship would survive the impending shipwreck (Acts 27:23-25).

9. Answering prayer

Angels often are used by God as His means of answering the prayers of His people (Dan. 9:20-24; 10:10-12; Acts 12:1-17).

10. Transporting

Angels escort and transport the spirits of believers at the time of their death into the presence of God. Jesus related the story of Lazarus whose spirit was carried by angels into "Abraham's bosom" when he died (Lk. 16:22).

Angels Visit Abraham and Lot

(Genesis 18:1-22; 19:1-29)

I Concentration: on angels who appeared to Abraham and Lot

1. Three angels visited Abraham and promised him and Sarah a son, 18:1-15.
2. The Angel of the Lord told Abraham of coming judgment on Sodom, 18:16-22.
3. Two of the three angels went on to visit in Lot's home in Sodom, 19:1-11.
4. These angels rescued Lot and part of his family from doomed Sodom, 19:12-29.

II. Meditation: on the events in Genesis 18

1. Abraham did not recognize his visitors as heavenly angels; (neither did Lot).
2. The angels ate the food prepared for them by Abraham; (and by Lot).
3. The Angel of the Lord prophesied the miraculous birth of Isaac; and the Angel of the Lord read the mind (thoughts) of Sarah . . . feats only God (not angels) can do.
4. One of the three "men" (angels) is revealed as the Lord God (vv. 13, 17, 20, 22).
(*"The Angel of the Lord" will be studied in detail in session #5 of this series.*)

III. Meditation: on the events in Genesis 19

1. The two angels rescued Lot from the sex-crazed men of the city and struck these wicked Sodomites with blindness.
2. The angels revealed God's plan and their mission of deliverance to Lot.
3. The angels urged Lot's family to flee from Sodom, finally having to physically drag them out of the city.
4. The angels revealed God's mercy (vv. 16, 19), pointing out that Sodom could not be destroyed until Lot's family had gotten into safety.

IV. Revelation: on the spiritual truths revealed in these events

1. Angels (who are spirits) are able to disguise themselves in human form.
2. A primary mission of angels is to protect God's people from harm.
3. Angels have supernatural (but not divine) abilities: they are wiser than man, but only God is omniscient; they are stronger than man, but only God is omnipotent.
4. Angels are sent to reveal God's mercy as well as to execute God's judgment.

V. Applications: as a Christian, I need to . . .

1. Treat strangers with courtesy and hospitality, because they could be disguised angels sent from God, Heb. 13:2.
2. Pay attention to unsolicited words of advice and direction, because these could be messages of encouragement or warning from God.
3. Exercise keen spiritual discernment, because Satan and his fallen angels also may appear and give false prophetic words . . . even performing wonders and miracles to prove their authenticity, II Cor. 11:13-15; Matt. 7:22-23.
4. Thank God for His great mercy and deliverance, while also warning unbelievers of His coming judgment.

An Angel and the Prophet Elijah

(I Kings 19:1-16; II Kings 1:1-17)

I Concentration: on the angel who appeared to Elijah

1. When Elijah fled from Queen Jezebel, an angel fed him twice, I Kgs. 19:1-7.
2. With the strength of that food, Elijah traveled forty days to Mt. Horeb (Sinai) where he heard God's "still, small voice," I Kgs. 19:8-18.
3. An angel told Elijah what to say to King Ahaziah, II Kgs. 1:1-4.
4. Following divine intervention to protect Elijah, the prophet spoke the message given to him by the angel, and the prophecy came to pass, II Kgs. 1:15-17.

II. Meditation: on the "angelic benefits" seen in these passages

1. The angel ministered to Elijah's physical needs, providing him food.
2. The angel ministered to Elijah's emotional needs, allowing him to rest peacefully and recover from his depression and "battle fatigue."
3. The angel gave Elijah a message to deliver, and the courage to deliver it to the king in spite of the danger involved.
4. The angel gave Elijah protection and deliverance from the armed forces coming out to capture him.

Note: In both these events, God used an angel to minister to Elijah's needs and bring him into the place where he could experience His presence and proclaim His word.

III. Revelation: on God's divine methods for supplying the needs of His people

(as illustrated by the various ways God provided food to Elijah)

1. Ravens brought food to Elijah, I Kgs. 17:2-7.
2. The widow of Zarephath (whose son was raised to life) fed Elijah, I Kgs. 17:8-16.
3. An angel of God prepared food for Elijah, I Kgs. 19:4-8.
4. Spiritual lessons from these experiences in the life of Elijah:
 - (1) God always provides for our needs, Phil. 4:19.
 - (2) God works in different ways to accomplish His purposes, Isa. 55:8-9.
 - (3) Each method used reveals God's miraculous power, Psa. 62:11.
 - (4) Each miracle is associated with a revelation about God, such as these in the life of Elijah: God controls nature's animals, God resurrects the dead, and God speaks to man.

IV. Applications: on the "still, small voice" of God

The period immediately following a great spiritual victory quite frequently is followed by a time of great spiritual vulnerability. In such cases, Father God deals with His people just as He dealt with Elijah in I Kings 19:

1. A word of **affection**, vv. 9, 13 - God tenderly and gently speaks our name with compassionate concern: "I love you, and I am taking care of you."
2. A word of **reflection**, vv. 11-12 - God leads us to stand up and observe His mighty power revealed: "I am omnipotent . . . well able to supply all your needs."
3. A word of **direction**, vv. 15-17 - God gives us a purpose in life, a destiny to fulfill, a task that will outlive us: "I have a vision of destiny, a divine purpose for your life."
4. A word of **correction**, v. 18 - God, with merciful understanding, shows us our errors and misconceptions: "I will discipline you to make you a better person, a more effective servant."

The Angel of the Lord and Moses

(Exodus 3:1-14; Acts 7:30-38)

I. Concentration: on Moses' encounter with The Angel of the Lord

1. The angel of the Lord appeared in a flame of fire from a bush, Ex. 3:2.
2. The angel is identified as "The Lord" and "God," Ex. 3:4, 6, 14.
3. The ground was holy because God is holy, v. 5; Lev. 11:44-45; Josh. 5:15.
4. Stephen spoke of this Angel of the Lord, Who on Mt. Sinai gave Moses the Ten Commandments, Acts 7:30-38.

II. Meditation: on other persons who saw and experienced "The Angel of the Lord"

1. Hagar, Gen. 16:7-14.
2. Abraham, Gen. 22:9-19.
3. Gideon, Judg. 6:11-24.
4. Others: Zechariah 1-6, Isaiah 63:9; David, as in Psalm 34:7.

III. Revelation: The Angel of the Lord is Jesus Christ, the Son of God

1. In spite of the fact that no man can see God and live (Ex. 33:20), Moses saw God "face to face" at the burning bush, because this Angel was the Son of God in His pre-incarnate form (God in human flesh; "Immanuel").
2. In Exodus 3, the Angel of the Lord receives worship, which belongs to God alone, Rev. 22:9. (*Lucifer was expelled from heaven for trying to receive such worship.*)
3. The Angel of the Lord forgives sin, something that only God can do, Ex. 23:20-25.
4. The Angel of the Lord is identified by name as the Messiah:
 - * Judg. 13:18 - His name is "Wonderful," as in Isa. 9:6.
 - * Mal. 3:1 - Messiah is called "Messenger (Angel) of the Covenant."(*Interestingly, The Angel of the Lord is identified by Moses as the pillar of cloud and fire, Ex. 14:19; and Paul wrote that Christ was the Rock giving water to the Israelites in the wilderness, and that Israel's sin was in tempting Christ, I Cor. 10:4, 9.*)

IV. Applications: as a Christian, I need to stand on "holy ground" . . .

1. Holy ground is the place where I can hear God speaking my name personally: "Moses, Moses," v. 4. *God repeated Moses name (and mine), making the call personal and unmistakable.*
2. Holy ground is the place where I can transact spiritual business with God: "Here I am!" vv. 5-9. *I must respond to the Lord's calling of my name, and confirm my commitment to follow His plan and purpose for me.*
3. Holy ground is the place where I can discover new spiritual insight about God's character and heart: "I AM," v. 4. *I am privileged to experience God and discover first-hand that He sees, hears, loves, and works to save His chosen people.*
4. Holy ground is the place where God reveals His purpose and His promise to me personally, vv. 10-12. *Upon my submission to God's will, He puts me on the road of fulfilling His destiny: glorifying His name and blessing other people.*

Prayer: Lord, make me a "burning bush" . . . planted on Your mountain, filled with Your radiant presence, burning brightly (not burning out) with Your glory, and causing people (through Your power) to turn aside, draw near, and experience You.

"Father God, plant me . . . fill me . . . illuminate me . . . and use me. Amen!"

Cherubim and Seraphim

(Ezekiel 10; Isaiah 6)

I. Concentration: on these living creatures as revealed in the Scriptures

1. Cherub (singular); cherubim (plural) comes from a word meaning “noble.”
2. Seraph (singular); seraphim (plural) comes from a word meaning “princely” (also carrying with it the idea of fiery ones; burning zeal; dazzling brightness).
3. Cherubim have the figure and heads of men, but with four faces; they have straight legs, feet like calves, and four wings; they are described as burning torches, and are associated with wheels, God’s throne, and a rainbow, Ezek. 1 and 10.
4. Seraphim have the shape and appearance of a human, but with six wings, Isa. 6.

II. Meditation: on cherubim as seen in Scripture

1. Guardians of Paradise, Gen. 3:24.
2. Bearers of God’s throne, Psa. 18:9-10; 104:3; 80:1; 99:1; I Sam. 4:4.
3. Winged creatures of fire, Ezek. 1 and 10.
4. Living creatures, Rev. 4 and 5.

III. Observations: on cherubim as decorations, symbols, and ornaments

1. On the Mercy Seat, Ex. 25:18-22; 37:7-9; Num. 7:89; Heb. 9:5.
2. On the curtains and veil of the tabernacle, Ex. 26:1, 31; 36:8, 35.
3. In Solomon’s temple, I Kgs. 6:23-35; II Chron. 3:7-14; 5:7-8.
4. In the temple of Ezekiel, Ezek. 41:18-25.

IV. Meditation: on seraphim as seen by Isaiah

1. Isaiah saw the Lord on His throne, high and lifted up, Isa. 6:1.
2. He saw seraphim, having six wings, above the throne, Isa. 6:2.
3. The seraphim praised God, saying, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory!” Isa. 6:3.
4. One seraphim touched Isaiah’s mouth with a live coal taken with tongs from the altar, saying, “Behold, this has touched your lips; your iniquity is taken away, and your sins purged,” Isa. 6:6-7.

V. Revelation: on the spiritual significance of these creatures

1. Whether cherubim and seraphim can rightly be called angels may be uncertain; they certainly are “ministering spirits,” and perhaps they are a higher class or order of angels, Heb. 1:7.
2. If cherubim and seraphim are akin to the “living creatures” in the book of Revelation, they seem to be distinguished from angels, Rev. 4:6-8, 5:11.
3. The cherubim emphasize the love, goodness, mercy, and forgiveness of God.
4. The seraphim emphasize the holiness, righteousness, glory, and majesty of God.

VI. Applications: as a Christian, I need to . . .

1. Like the cherubim, behold the love and goodness of Almighty God . . . thanking Him for His mercy and forgiveness.
2. Like the seraphim, behold the holiness and righteousness of Almighty God . . . praising Him for His glory and majesty.

Ezekiel's Vision of 4-Faced Angels

(Ezekiel 1:1-28)

I. Concentration: on the contents of this chapter

1. Ezekiel ("God Strengthens") was a priest who was taken into Babylonian captivity along with King Jehoiachin in 597 BC; Ezekiel's prophetic visions began when he was 30 years old, and his ministry to the exiles continued for about 20 years, vv. 1-3.
2. The first part of Ezekiel's initial vision involved a great storm coming from the north, bringing four strange living creatures, vv. 4-14.
3. The second part of his vision portrayed a wheel within a wheel, which contained the spirit of these living creatures, vv. 15-21.
4. The third part of his vision focused on a glorious throne in the firmament upon which sat a man whose appearance was of the likeness of the glory of the Lord, vv. 22-28.

II. Meditation: on the four faces of the angels, v. 10 (see Rev. 4:7)

1. The face of a man - symbolizing identification with humanity.
2. The face of a lion - symbolizing courage and nobility.
3. The face of an ox - symbolizing strength and faithful service.
4. The face of an eagle - symbolizing vision and swiftness.

III. Revelation: on the spiritual significance of God's angels appearing to Ezekiel

1. The appearance of these angels coming in a whirlwind indicated that these were beings created by the power of Almighty God, v. 4.
2. These angels were controlled by the Spirit, and they were on a mission to serve God by ministering to God's people in Babylon, vv. 12, 20.
3. These angels were associated with a raging, holy fire, signifying cleansing and purification, vv. 4, 13; Isa. 6:1-7.
4. These angels were totally awesome in appearance and very difficult for Ezekiel to describe; angels are able to change or disguise their appearance, II Cor. 11:14-15; Heb. 13:2.

IV. Applications: as a Christian, I need to perceive these spiritual truths . . .

1. Angels are real spiritual beings, not figments of someone's imagination; they appear many times in the Scriptures . . . including in their most important missions on earth: to announce Christ's birth, resurrection, and return.
2. If Jesus, the Son of God Who was filled with the Spirit, needed the help of ministering angels following his great temptations and deep turmoil of heart (Matt. 4:11; Lk. 22:43) . . . surely I also need the assistance of ministering angels in my life today.
3. Angels are examples to me on how to serve God . . . going where He sends, doing what He wills, immediately!
4. Angels usually appear as human beings (face of a man) to provide me with courage (lion), strength (ox), and spiritual vision (eagle).

“I Saw the Lord . . . High and Lifted Up”

(Isaiah 6:1-13)

I. Meditation: on the contents of this chapter

1. In the year King Uzziah died (740 BC), Isaiah visited the temple where he had a vision of the Lord, sitting on the throne, being worshipped by angels; the temple shook and was filled with smoke, vv. 1-4.
2. Isaiah confessed his sin, and an angel touched his lips with a coal from the altar, symbolizing his forgiveness and cleansing, vv. 5-7.
3. The Lord asked, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?” and Isaiah volunteered, “Here am I, send me”; the Lord told him to preach, although the people would not listen, vv. 8-10.
4. Isaiah asked, “How long?” and the Lord told him that the nation would be defeated and taken away into captivity, but that a small remnant (a tenth) of the “holy seed” would return, vv. 11-13.

II. Meditation: on Isaiah’s divine vision and call to service

1. Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up, being worshipped as holy and glorious by angels; although no man ever saw Almighty God, he did see the Son of God, Jesus Christ, Jn. 1:18; 12:37-41.
2. Isaiah saw himself as an unclean sinner among a nation of unclean sinners, standing unworthy and condemned before Almighty God. (*A true shepherd must realize that, in the eyes of God, he is not spiritually superior to his wayward flock.*)
3. Isaiah’s repentant confession resulted in his receiving God’s mercy and grace . . . forgiveness and cleansing.
4. It was not until after Isaiah had seen the Lord, had confessed his own sin and the sin of the nation, and had received salvation and deliverance, that then he heard God’s voice stirring his heart about the need for a man to accomplish a divine task . . . and he volunteered.

III. Revelation: on the spiritual implications seen here

1. The closer a man comes to the glorious presence of the holy God, the more aware he becomes of his own sinful condition.
2. Before the Lord issues a divine call to a minister, He first burdens that chosen man’s heart with the needs of the people he will be serving.
3. God always takes the initiative to provide atonement and cleansing for a repentant, contrite heart; a sinner cannot save himself!
4. God’s divine call to preach His message does not guarantee that the people (congregation; church) will hear or follow.

IV. Applications: as a Christian, I need to . . .

1. Cultivate a spiritual awareness in order to be able to “see” God.
2. Avoid pride and arrogance; I am merely a sinner saved by grace!
3. Live in an attitude of perpetual repentance, always sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s promptings.
4. Refuse to become discouraged; spiritual results are in God’s hands.

Lucifer, Son of the Morning

(Isaiah 14:1-32)

I. Concentration: on the contents of this chapter

1. Isaiah prophesied that the Lord would have mercy on the nation, and would restore to them the Promised Land, vv. 1-2.
2. He said that when God gave Israel rest from sorrow, fear, and bondage, they would sing a taunting proverb against fallen Babylon, vv. 3-11.
3. Continuing the victory song, the people would refer to the king of Babylon as a type of Satan, here called Lucifer, meaning “Light Bearer”; he fell from heaven because of his ambitious pride that presumed to usurp the Lord’s throne, and his rebellious self-will that asserted his independence from the Most High God, vv. 12-21.
4. Isaiah predicted the ultimate and complete destruction of Babylonia, Assyria, and Philistia, vv. 22-32.

II. Meditation: on Lucifer’s 5-fold pride and self-will (vv. 13-14)

1. “I will ascend into heaven.”
2. “I will exalt my throne above the stars of God.”
3. “I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north.”
4. “I will ascend above the heights of the clouds.”
5. “I will be like the Most High.”

(Study also Lk. 10:18; Rev. 12:7-9; and Ezek. 28:2-19.)

III. Revelation: on God’s responses to Satan’s five “I wills”

1. You will be thrown into hell, v. 15.
2. You will be made a horrible spectacle (“gazed upon”), v. 16.
3. You will be mocked and scorned, vv. 16-17.
4. You will never find a place of rest (“cast out of your grave”), enduring eternal, relentless torment, vv. 18-19.
5. You will suffer alone, in total isolation and solitary confinement, (“you will not be joined with them”) . . . separated from God forever, v. 20.

IV. Applications: as a Christian, I need to . . .

1. Guard against Satan’s twin temptations: ambitious pride and arrogant, rebellious self-will.
2. Pray for spiritual discernment because Lucifer (the Light Bearer) often “transforms himself into an angel of light,” II Cor. 11:13-15.
3. Give Satan no opportunity to attack, but stand against his wiles (deceitful schemes), Eph. 4:27; 6:11.
4. “Submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you,” Jas. 4:7; Matt. 4:10-11.

God Exposes Satan as “Leviathan”

(Job 41:1-34)

I. Concentration: on identifying “Leviathan”

1. Notice that “Leviathan” is capitalized as a proper name, whereas “the behemoth” (Job 40:15) is a generic name, as are all the other animals named in chapter 39.
2. “Leviathan” is given an entire chapter (34 verses), more than all the animals in chapter 39 combined (33 verses), and triple the number of verses used to describe the behemoth (10 verses).
3. “Leviathan” is mentioned elsewhere in the Scripture:
 - (1) Job cited Leviathan as associated with a curse, Job 3:8. (*Compare this verse with Gen. 3:1-19.*)
 - (2) The Psalmist wrote of God defeating (“breaking the heads”) of sea serpents . . . of “Leviathan,” Psa. 74:13-14; Gen. 3:15; again Leviathan is identified as a sea serpent in Psa. 104:25-26.
 - (3) Isaiah wrote of the Lord punishing and slaying with His severe, great, strong sword the fleeing and twisted serpent named “Leviathan,” Isa. 27:1; Rev. 1:16; 19:15. *Most Bible scholars identify Lucifer (Isa. 14:12-15) as Satan; later in that same chapter Isaiah wrote of “a viper . . . a fiery flying serpent,” v. 29.*
 - (4) John wrote about “the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan,” Rev. 20:2.
4. “Leviathan,” according to the words of the Lord God Himself, is more than a crocodile, a whale, a dinosaur, or a constellation of stars (all suggestions which have been made by Bible scholars to explain this fantastic creature); God said: “Out of his mouth go burning lights; sparks of fire shoot out. Smoke goes out of his nostrils, as from a boiling pot and burning rushes. His breath kindles coals, and a flame goes out of his mouth,” vv. 19-21.

II. Meditation: on God’s purposes in discussing “Leviathan”

1. Satan was introduced in Job 1-2 as the one who brought all the loss, death, and suffering into Job’s life; here in chapter 41, God pulled back the veil covering the spiritual realm to reveal to Job the real source of all his troubles and misery.
2. Job (or his biographer who authored this book) knew by divine revelation the events which occurred in heaven, as recorded in chapters 1 and 2; chapter 41 discloses, also by divine revelation, the ultimate defeat and “caging” of Satan which allowed Job’s restoration and blessing as seen in chapter 42.

(Continued)

God Exposes Satan as “Leviathan” (page 2)

3. In this chapter (Job 41), the Lord emphasized man’s weakness as compared with the super-human strength of Leviathan, who can be controlled and defeated only by Almighty God, vv. 10-11.
4. God here vividly and graphically portrayed Satan’s true malevolent nature: an ugly, evil monster with a heart of stone, v. 24.

III. Revelation: on pride . . . the basic sin of Satan (Leviathan), vv. 33-34

1. “On earth there is nothing like him,” v. 33; . . . “Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made,” Gen. 3:1. (See Rev. 12:9.)
2. “Which (Leviathan) is made without fear,” v. 33; even the other angels of God, who are greater in power and might than mortal man, are cautious when confronting Satan and his fallen angels, II Pet. 2:4, 11; Jude 9.
3. “He beholds every high thing,” v. 34; Lucifer attempted to exalt his throne above God’s, Isa. 14:13-14; he continues to tempt people to sin by appealing to the pride of life, I Jn. 2:16. (See I Tim. 3:6.)
4. “He is king over all the children of pride,” v. 34; Satan is called the “ruler of this world,” Jn. 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; he is called the “god of this age,” II Cor. 4:4; he offers “all the kingdoms of the world and their glory,” to those who will bow down and worship him, Matt. 4:8-9.

IV. Applications: as a Christian, I need to . . .

1. Cultivate spiritual perception (“be sober and vigilant”) so that I may recognize Satan even though he comes disguised as an angel of light, I Pet. 5:8; II Cor. 11:14.
2. Put on the armor of God so that I can stand and fight against the wiles of the devil, Eph. 6:10-18.
3. Control my temper, so that I do not give place to the devil, Eph. 4:26-27.
4. Resist the devil, so that he will flee from me, Jas. 4:7.

Angels Ministering to Jesus Christ

I. Concentration: on angels in the life of Christ

“Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man,” John 1:51.

(The prayers of Christians ascend to the Father in heaven through Jesus Christ, and the blessings of Almighty God descend to believers on earth through Jesus Christ. The Lord is “Jacob’s Ladder” connecting heaven and earth, as in Genesis 28:12.)

II. Meditation: on the ministering of the angels to Jesus

1. Angels ministered to the child Jesus:

* Gabriel appeared to Mary, Lk. 1:26-38, and to Joseph, Matt. 1:18-21.

* A single angel spoke to the shepherds, Lk. 2:8-12; then, a multitude of the heavenly host praised God, Lk. 2:13-15.

* An angel warned Joseph to flee to Egypt, Matt. 2:13, and later told him to return to Israel, Matt. 2:19-20.

2. Angels ministered to Christ during His earthly life:

* After the temptation, Matt. 4:11; Mk. 1:13.

* *Perhaps provided food, as was given to Elijah, I Kgs. 19:5-7.*

* In the Garden of Gethsamane, Lk. 22:41-44.

* *Perhaps provided assistance similar to that given to Daniel, Dan. 10:18-19.*

3. Angels ministered at Christ’s resurrection and ascension:

* To the women at the tomb, following Christ’s resurrection, Matt. 28:5-7; Mk. 16:5-7; Lk. 24:4-7, 22-23; Jn. 20:1-2, 11-13.

* To believers, at Christ’s ascension, Acts 1:9-11.

4. Angels minister to Christ in the present and in the future:

* Angels worship Him around the throne, Rev. 5:11-14.

* Angels reveal future events to His followers, Rev. 1:1; 22:16.

* Angels will accompany Him at the end of the world, Matt. 16:27; 25:31; Mk. 8:38; I Thes. 4:16; II Thes. 1:7-10; Matt. 13:41-50.

III. Revelation: on why Jesus Christ, the Son of God, needed angelic assistance

1. In the Lord’s infancy and childhood as a human being, He was physically weak and vulnerable to Satan’s attempts to kill Him. *Angels protected Him from harm.*

2. During the Lord’s adult life, He experienced the usual frailties of humanity: hunger and fatigue. *Angels strengthened His physical body by supplying Him with food and rest.*

3. At the Lord’s resurrection and ascension, His followers needed encouragement and instruction. *Angels assisted Christ by providing these valuable services to them.*

4. At the Lord’s coming in judgment, believers will be separated from unbelievers. *Angels will assist Christ at that solemn time by casting Satan into hell, along with the other fallen angels and those persons who follow the devil, Matt. 25:41.*

IV. Applications: as a Christian, I need to rejoice in these truths . . .

1. The Lord sends His angels to protect me from physical harm.

2. The Lord sends His angels to provide for my physical needs.

3. The Lord sends His angels to encourage me and to guide my steps.

4. The Lord will send angels to escort me into His presence, Lk. 16:22.

Ministering Angels in the Early Church

I. Concentration: on angels in the lives of New Testament Christians

“(God) makes His angels spirits . . . Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?” Heb. 1:7, 14.

II. Meditation: on angels in the early church

1. Angels provided deliverance: to the apostles in prison (Acts 5:17-32), and to Peter in prison (Acts 12:5-19).
2. Angels provided guidance: sending Philip to meet the Ethiopian (Acts 8:26-40), and telling Cornelius to send for Peter (Acts 10:1-8, 21-22; 11:12-14).
3. Angels brought God’s judgment: King Herod’s pride brought him disease and death (Acts 12:21-23).
4. Angels brought encouragement: reassuring Paul that everyone on board would survive the shipwreck (Acts 27:17-36).
5. Angels brought revelation: Jesus sent an angel to reveal the future events to the Apostle John (Rev. 1:1; 22:16).

III. Revelation: on the spiritual implications of these truths

1. The Lord sent angels (“ministering spirits”) to provide deliverance to believers (“those who inherit salvation”). *This angelic service has to do with preserving one’s physical well-being (often associated with protection by “guardian angels”) in contrast to internal spiritual security of one’s soul and spirit provided by the Holy Spirit.*
2. The Lord sent angels to provide guidance to believers. *This angelic service has to do with specific, external directions to physical locations, in contrast to internal, moral and spiritual guidance provided by the Holy Spirit.*
3. The Lord sent an angel to punish a wicked man by afflicting his physical body with a fatal disease. *Angels frequently are seen in Scripture as instruments of God’s wrath and punishment, Isa. 37:36; Matt. 13:41-42, 49-50.*
4. The Lord sent an angel to calm and reassure a believer facing physical danger. This angelic service has to do with bringing emotional stability to a trembling soul, in contrast to the comfort and strength for one’s spirit provided by the Holy Spirit.
5. The Lord sent an angel to reveal future events to a believer. *This angelic service has to do with bringing a vision of God’s plan and purpose being accomplished in the visible, physical realm, in contrast to the spiritual discernment of invisible happenings in the “heavenly places” as revealed by the Holy Spirit.*

IV. Applications: as a Christian, I need to . . .

1. Ask with faith for the Lord to deliver and guide me (*“Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one,” Matt. 6:13*) . . . knowing that He sometimes answers by sending an angel to protect and direct us.
2. Ask for discernment when disease or other calamities occur, so I may discover whether God’s discipline is being administered to me (perhaps by an angel).
3. Ask for physical strength and boldness when I am facing discouragement and uncertainty, knowing that God’s answer may be delivered to me by one of His “ministering spirits” . . . maybe by an “unawares angel,” Heb. 13:2.
4. Guard against the human tendency to worship an angel (Col. 2:18), or to receive new doctrinal teachings from an angel (Gal. 1:8).

Angels Ministering to Christians Today

I. Concentration: on the ministry of angels to Christians

“Are they (God’s angels) not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?” Heb. 1:14.

II. Meditation: on what holy angels do for believers today

1. Holy angels rejoice when sinners repent, Lk. 15:10.
2. Holy angels, who are assigned to believers (“little ones”), instantly respond to God’s benevolent will in behalf of His people, Matt. 18:10.
3. Holy angels are used by God to accomplish His providential will in this world, Rom. 1:7-15; Acts 27:23-24; 28:14-16.
4. Holy angels are sent to test the degree of spiritual commitment of God’s people, as exhibited in their charitable acts toward other persons, Heb. 13:2.
5. Holy angels are sent to escort believers at death from this world into the presence of the Lord, Lk. 16:22.
6. Holy angels are now guarding the gates of the eternal city, Rev. 21:12, 25.
7. Evil angels act/react in ways opposite from those of the holy angels listed above.

III. Revelation: on the spiritual implications seen here

1. Angels rejoice in, but cannot participate in, the spiritual transaction of the new birth, by which believers become the children of God.
2. Although guardian angels probably are under “standing orders” from Almighty God to protect believers from harm, we are not to ask the angels directly for their help; angels obey Almighty God, so we are encouraged to ask Him for help, and His prerogative is to issue commands to angels.
3. Believers are not to thank the angels directly for their services to us (nor are we to praise them); our worship is to be addressed only to God, not to His angelic servants (or instruments).
4. Believers are not to ask for direction or guidance from angels; sometimes God may use His holy angels to give us some assistance in our journeys, but we must beware of evil, demonic spirits who delight in providing lies and false information, I Jn. 4:1-6; I Thes. 5:21.

IV. Applications: as a Christian, I need to . . .

1. Thank God for my salvation through Christ which, among many other blessings, elevates me to the position of “judging angels,” I Cor. 6:3.
2. Avoid the presumptuous sin of thinking that, because I do have guardian angels, I can deliberately place myself into precarious situations, while still expecting (taking for granted) that those angels will keep me safe, Matt. 4:5-7.
3. Avoid all forms of angel worship, Rev. 19:10; 22:8-9.
4. Be alert to, and guard against, deceiving spirits who teach doctrines contrary to the Scriptures, II Cor. 11:13-15; Gal. 1:8.