

# Who and What Are Angels?

*An angel is a spiritual creature without a body created by God for the service of Christendom and the Church.*

—Martin Luther

Some Christians believe that human beings turn into angels when they die. This is not true. As we learned in the first session, God created angelic beings sometime during the six days of creation. While the Bible does not give the account of the creation of angels, in two passages it does describe the creation of male and female (Genesis 1:26–27; 2:7–24). Humans, comprised of both a soul and a body, are an entirely separate order of created beings. They do not transform into angels at death.

12. Why do some believe that when people die they become angels? What comfort do you suppose they derive from such a belief?

## Invisible but Present

13. Read Luke 24:39; Acts 12:7; and Hebrews 1:14. What is the nature of God’s angels, and whom do they serve? How would you describe this to someone who is not a Christian?

14. Read Genesis 19:1 and Luke 1:11–12. In the Scriptures, how do angels frequently appear to believers when He wants to share a message with them? Why do you suppose this occurs?

15. Read Genesis 19:10, 15–16. What physical attributes did God give the angels that served Lot and his family?

16. Read Psalm 103:20 and 2 Thessalonians 1:7. Describe the abilities of God’s good angels.

17. Read Matthew 22:30. While angels are able to do many things that human beings cannot do, what are angels unable to do as purely spiritual beings?

18. Have you or a loved one ever had what you thought was an experience with an angel? If so, and if you feel comfortable doing so, please share your experience with the group.

## **A Unique Angel**

In the Old Testament, we read about a unique angel called “the angel of the Lord.” His uniqueness is seen in what he accepts from human beings that other angels do not accept. This raises the question as to whether this angel is something more than an angel.

19. Read Judges 6:11–24. What is the Angel of the Lord called in verses 14 and 16? How does this angel react when Gideon offers divine worship (vv. 18–21)?

20. Compare Judges 13 and Isaiah 9:6. The name of the Angel of the Lord is “wonderful” (Judges 13:18). Whom did Manoah and his wife believe they had seen (v. 22)? Who is wonderful (Isaiah 9:6)?

## **Choir Practice**

Though human beings do not become angels when they die, believing human beings have a close association with angels. That association finds expression here on earth in the Divine Service. The Divine Services are, in essence, choir practice for eternity.

21. Read 1 Corinthians 11:10 and 1 Timothy 5:21. What do these passages imply about angels and our Sunday morning worship services?

22. Read Luke 15:10. The angels rejoice whenever we repent of our sins. How may this affect how we approach confessing our sins privately to our pastor? to a neighbor we have wronged? publicly in the Divine Service?

## **Angelic Hymns**

The Bible records the actual hymns sung by angels on earth and in heaven. See if you can determine which angelic hymns correspond to those sung in our Lutheran liturgy:

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!” (Luke 2:14).

“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!” (Isaiah 6:3).

“Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen” (Revelation 7:12).

## **Point to Remember**

“Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!” Revelation 4:8

To prepare for “Ranks and Numbers of Angels,” read Daniel 7:10 and Ezekiel 10:1–22.