



THE SHEPHERD'S VOICE

*Daily Devotion at Zion + Sept. 27, 2020 AD + **Pentecost Season***

This Week: Angels and Our Devotion

Do we care about angels? Yes!

As we confess in the Nicene Creed, God is the Father almighty, “maker of all things, seen *and unseen*.” God has filled creation, from its highest heights to its molten depths, with more than the eye can see, a vast, hidden beauty that includes the four beasts (Rev. 4:6-8), the many-faced cherubim (Ezekiel 1:5-11), the bright seraphim of Isaiah (Isaiah 6:2-6), and who knows how many more? We should not suppose that our Creator would have limited His creation what we can observe and categorize.

Yet we shall see them one day, and even now they serve you!

“Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?” (Heb. 1:14) Angels fed the prophet Elijah (1 Kings 19) and ministered to Jesus following His temptation (Matt. 4:11). They announced good news to holy Zechariah, the blessed Virgin, and the shepherds (Luke 1-2), and our Lord Jesus speaks of His disciples all having angels who look up on the face of the Father in heaven (Matt. 18:10). God sends angels to care for the people of God, and so the Church has always included mention of the angels in its devotion and worship.

So how might these heavenly helpers strengthen us in our daily prayer? Keep reading to find out!

About the Cover Art

We give thanks for angels on the feast of St. Michael and All Angels, or Michaelmas (Sept. 29). The cover of this week's Shepherd's Voice portrays the chief work of St. Michael, namely, the defeat of the devil at the end of the world (Rev. 12:10-17). The devil is symbolized as a serpent (as in the Garden of Eden), and Michael's many-layered wings testify to his status as a ruling (“arch”) angel. The regal burgundy of his cape proclaims that he does not fight by his own power, but by the power of the precious blood of heaven's King, Jesus Christ. (image from a medieval manuscript)

Who Are the Angels? A Brief Summary of What Holy Scripture Says

Clarifying what they are *not* helps clarify what they *are*: 1) They are not humans who have died. They are their own creature, different from human beings (Nehemiah 9:6, Colossians 1:16). 2) They are not babies with wings. That image never appears in Scripture. 3) They are not portrayed as feminine or female, but usually as masculine in character (Genesis 18:2, Luke 1:11-12)—which is not to say that they are men, for they are not human, but angelic. 4) They are not divine or “little gods.” First, they were created by God. Second, they don’t do things that God does—for example, God is everywhere, but angels must “travel” from one place to another (Daniel 10:12-14, Luke 1:19). 5) There are different kinds of angels: bright seraphim (Isaiah 6:2), beast-like cherubim (Ezekiel 10:14), and others that carry other names: thrones, powers, authorities, rulers (Colossians 1:16), archangels, and angels. 6) Though scary, they bring good news (Luke 2:9)!

Daily Readings for the Week of October 4 (Pentecost 18)

S Job 38:1, 18-41 Revelation 18:1-8 Matthew 5:21-26	Th Job 28:1-28 Acts 16:25-40 John 12:27-36a
M Job 40:1-24 Acts 15:36-16:5 John 11:55-12:8	F Esther 1:1-4, 10-19 Acts 17:1-15 John 12:36b-43
T Job 40:1, 41:1-11 Acts 16:6-15 John 12:9-19	Sa Esther 2:5-8, 15-23 Acts 17:16-34 John 12:44-50
W Job 42:1-17 Acts 16:16-24 John 12:20-26	

These readings correspond to pages 327-358 in Volume IV of For All the Saints. To acquire For All the Saints or other devotionals, please contact the church office.

Including the Angels in Our Devotion *How and Why*

1. The Angels Enlarge Our Praise. Lutherans do not *pray* to angels, because God has asked that we pray to Him *only*. But Christians, including Lutherans, have always recognized that angels join Christians in their worship, right there in the very moment of our preaching and praise (1 Cor. 11:10). As we sing in the popular hymn, “Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones” (by Athelstan Riley):

Ye watchers and ye holy ones,
Bright seraphs, cherubim and thrones,
Raise the glad strain, Alleluia!
Cry out, dominions, principedoms, powers,
virtues, archangels, angels' choirs,
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Or as the pastor chants at Holy Communion: “And so, with the Church on earth, *and the host of heaven, we sing your praise and join their unending hymn . . .*” So since they are present, we may call upon the angels to join us in praising and worshiping God, or we may speak of them when we tell God how awesome He is: “All angels adore you, O Lord.”

2. Asking God for Their Help. Since angels are “ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation” (Hebrews 1:14), they are a gift of God to us, and we may ask Him for them and their protection. Martin Luther did this at the end of his morning and evening prayers: “Let your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe have no power over me.” As with all of the Christian life, believing what God says about His angels is a matter of saying “amen” and “yes” to what He has promised to give. We therefore say “yes” to angels and ask God to send them, that we may be defended and preserved in keeping with God’s will.

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