



Revelation 4

Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy,
and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it,
because the time is near. 1:3

The letters to the seven churches are now complete. They form the indispensable, practical background for all which follows in the remainder of the Book. *(The only way to prepare for the End Times is by repentance, faithfulness, and patient endurance!)* The Christians of Asia Minor have been presented with a personal message from the risen and glorified Lord of the Church. **Through these seven churches that message goes out to the people of God in every place and time during these end times.** While correction and commendation have varied with the different congregations every letter included the challenge to persevere and overcome. The **time of testing is at hand**, for **we have entered upon the last days** and the intensifying conflict between good and evil which signals the onset of the final era of human history. The grim words of the angel's warning in Revelation 12:12 characterize these times: *"Woe for the earth and for the sea; because the devil is gone down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time."*

John is now swept up in the Spirit to the very gates of heaven so that he may convey to us a great word of consolation and courage for the coming tribulation. He is presented with a magnificent vision of the sovereign God upon His eternal throne in full command of all of the shifting tides of human events as they surge toward the fulfillment that He has designed for them. From where we stand evil appears to be triumphant and evil men seem to have the power to control the destinies of other men and nations. God's people appear to be helpless pawns in the hands of mighty forces beyond their control. **But John's vision assures us that these appearances are deceiving.**

GOD UPON HIS THRONE REMAINS IN ABSOLUTE CONTROL OF HISTORY.

The Lord reigns. As dark clouds of impending persecution gather on the horizon, the mighty song of the elders, angels, and saints reverberates across the vast reaches of heaven to remind us that our all powerful and all knowing

God Is Still In Control!

Read Revelation 4:1-11

The Throne of God in Heaven

God in His absolute majesty and holiness

4:1 BEHOLD!

The text literally says: "After this I saw **and behold...**". This is not mere physical sight. It is rather the prophetic vision of divine revelation. The prophet sees a doorway, standing open before him, which leads to heaven ... It is God who has opened this door and who provides St. John with the unique

access which the open door represents ... The mighty voice of Christ invites the Revelator to enter heaven -- “Come up here.” The Lord promises to disclose to John “what must take place after this.”



- † Having described the present situation of the church in the seven letters, Jesus now prepares to unveil the future, as the imagery of the sealed scroll in chapters 5-6 will further indicate.
- † **The scope of the visions to be revealed pertains to the entire New Testament era, the last days which began with the death and resurrection of Jesus and which will continue until the Lord returns in judgment.** Thus, the encouragement and the warning of this book of prophecy are relevant not only for the first century Christians of Asia Minor but also for the twentieth century Christians of today's world for we both live in the last days. Dr. L. L. White, *Revelation*, p.104
- † **The Open Door** Christ is the “door” (John 10) who has forever opened heaven through His death and resurrection. The curtain is torn down (Matt 27:51); the veil is removed (Heb 10:19-20)

1:1 “Must” The mystery of God's Foreknowledge and Man's free choice

When the Lord says that these things must happen, he indicates clearly that the future is already determined and that what John would surely come to pass. The statement is reminiscent of the many passages which say that the Scriptures must be fulfilled. These are not guesses concerning the future, but revelations of the God who sees the future as clearly as he sees the present and the past. **The foreknowledge of these future events on God's part does not make them happen, but because God sees the future exactly and correctly it is impossible for him and the men through whom he foretells the future, to be mistaken.** In that sense the event must happen, even though many of them happened to the free choice of men.

4:2 BEHOLD!

A second dramatic “Behold!” marks the beginning of the new vision in the Greek text. Unfortunately, and unexplainably, once again the NIV omits this highlight.

4:2 In the Spirit

Experientially he was taken up into heaven though his body was actually still on the island of Patmos.

The End Times, 4 Views, p.3

- ✓ John is in this state for rest of Revelation
- ✓ Reminiscent of St. Paul in **2 Corinthians 12:1-4**

4:2 A Throne In Heaven

This is one of only four Biblical texts which describe visions of God's heavenly throne. The other three are in **Isaiah 6:1-8**; **Ezekiel 1:4-28**; and **Daniel 7:9-10**. The divergences in these descriptions serve to remind us that the details of each vision are imagery which must not be confused with literal descriptions of physical places and historical events. [See the end of these notes for printed texts](#)

† A “throne” is the official seat of a king, the place from which he exercises the royal prerogative of judgement. It is a prominent symbol for God’s power and authority exercised in judgment throughout Revelation, occurring **thirty-seven times** in the Book. The throne of God is placed at the center of a vast throne room of indescribable beauty around which everything else in this vision of heaven is oriented. In this way **John emphasizes the universal sovereignty of God and His absolute control over all reality.** Dr. L. L. White, *Revelation*, p.105

God is seated on His Throne?

If you ask *"How does God who is a Spirit sit on a throne?"* then remember that when someone asked Luther what God was doing before Creation, Luther answered, *"He was creating switches to use on people who ask foolish questions."*
Revelation, P.A. Bartz

† **Someone sitting on it** With the characteristic Hebrew reluctance toward the utterance of the holy name of God by mortal men, John simply designates the throne occupant as “someone sitting on it.” This is without doubt **God the Father as He is later distinguished both from the Lamb (5:5,7; 6:16; 7:10) and from the Spirit (4:5; 19:4).** To be seated upon the throne carries the connotation of reigning as Judge and King throughout the Book of Revelation. Dr. L. L. White, *Revelation*, p. 106

† **Jasper, Carnelian, Emerald, and Rainbows** The use of glittering gem stones to symbolize the unapproachable brightness of God’s glory is an echo of the Old Testament prophecy of Ezekiel 1:26-28, 10: 1,4-5,9

- **Note some Law/Gospel in the images:** “carnelian” is a fiery red stone that appears to flicker with the blaze of consuming flames. Fire is often utilized in Scripture as the symbol for **God’s judgment** (i.e. the blazing eyes of Christ in 1:14). The “rainbow,” on the other hand, is the emblem of **God’s mercy**, the sign of His gracious promise after the flood that the world would never again be destroyed by water (Genesis 9:8-17). Dr. L. L. White, *Revelation*, p.109
- Altogether, the majesty of this appearance is not one to terrify us, but to remind us of the covenant of grace which he made with us in Christ Jesus, which is shining before us as a beacon of light unto eternal hope. Kretzmann, *Popular Commentary*, p.605-606
- Through the finished work of Christ, the penalty, power, and presence of sin are ultimately done away with, and the innocence of creation is restored. The End Times, 4 Views, p.4

4:4 Twenty-four Elders *12 Tribes + 12 Apostles = The One, Holy, Christian, and Apostolic Church*

Now the heavenly entourage around the throne of God is described. The first group to be mentioned consists of twenty-four elder/thrones. Twelve in Scripture is the representative number of the people of God, the Church, derived from the Twelve Tribes of Israel. Our Lord deliberately selected twelve apostles to reflect and balance the Old Testament number... **The twenty- four elder/thrones which encircle the throne of God thus represent the entire people of God from both the Old and the New Testament eras.**

† The definition of the Holy Christian Church is **All believers of all times and all places:** believers from both OT times and NT times, the totality of God’s People

† The **12 Tribes of Israel** are the sons of Jacob; cf. Genesis 35:22-26: **Rueben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, Benjamin, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher.** (Remember: Levi and Joseph did not receive land. Levi became the priests and received cities and pastures rather than land. Joseph received Levi's portion (a double share) and it went to his two sons: Ephraim and Manasseh.)

† The **12 Apostles** are (based on Acts 1): **Peter, James, John, Andrew, Phillip, Thomas, Matthew, Bartholomew, James son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, Judas son of James, and Matthias** (who replaced Judas Iscariot). There is no provision for the Apostle Paul.

† Note the 12 Tribes + 12 Apostles reoccurrence in [Rev 21:12-14](#)

† The fact that “thrones” are designated as the elder’s seats is reminiscent of Christ’s promise to His disciples that in the coming day of judgment they would be seated on “**twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.**” (Matthew 19:28).

† While there is general consensus as to the significance of the twenty-four thrones, the specific identity of the twenty-four elders seated upon them has been the subject of widespread debate. **Are these elders men, or are they angels?**



Are These 24 Elders Men, Or Are They Angels?

ANGELS

The preponderance of the evidence seems to support the view that the elders in this text are a special rank or category of angels - heavenly beings of high authority that belong to the court of God in heaven. Dr. L. L. White, [Revelation](#), p.110

- Whenever these elders appear in Revelation they are always grouped with angels rather than men (cf. Revelation 7:9-11; 19:1-4).
- The elders’ song of praise (5:9-10) refers to humanity in the third person - “them,” “they” - -- thus distinctly differentiating between the singers and the subject of the song.
- The elders are also consistently distinguished from the host of saints before the throne (i.e. 7:9-11) but are grouped with other categories of angels (i.e the four living beings).

MEN: ALL BELIEVERS

The golden crowns on their heads, as well as the thrones upon which they sit, are symbols of royal authority. Their white garments symbolize the righteousness which is theirs through faith in Christ Becker, p.84

The Elders represent the triumphant church in heaven, including both the Old and the new Testament saints. Weidner, p.68

These elders are not angels, for two things mark them, white robes and crowns of gold, the rewards of conflict, endurance, and victory (3:4-5, 2:10) Weidner, p.68

4:5 Thunder & Lightning

They are the physical manifestations of God's majesty and power. When God presented the Law to Israel at Sinai, His appearance upon the crest of the mountain was indicated by these same fearsome signs. (Exodus 19:16)

- † Throughout the balance of the Book the flash of lightning and the rumble of thunder are used to signal the appearance of God and the imminence of His judgment (cf. Revelation 8:5; 11:19; 16:18). Dr. L. L. White, [Revelation](#), p.112

4:5 Seven Lamps and Seven Spirits of God

Once again (cf. 1:4) the Holy Spirit is presented as "the seven spirits of God." In this instance, His presence is indicated by seven brightly burning lamps. The image is drawn from the prophecy of Zechariah where the ministry of the Holy Spirit is also represented by a seven branched lampstand (cf. Zechariah 4:1-6).

- † The picture is similar to the golden menorah which burned perpetually in the tabernacle and the temple (Exodus 37:17-24).
- † Fire in Revelation represents judgment and these blazing torches signal the coming of God's wrath upon sinful humanity.

Law and Gospel

Flashes of lightening went out from the throne, and the shrieks and the loud blasts of the roaring storm and the peals and mutterings of thunder, all of which proclaimed aloud wrath and judgment and destruction, the almighty power of God in carrying out his sentences. At the same time, however, the lamps, or torches, of the sevenfold spirit of God were quietly burning before the throne. The Spirit of God, working through the gospel of the love of God in Christ, comes to us with his illuminating power, and gives us, and sustains in us, the light in the warmth of true spiritual life. Though God is terrible in his justice, yet the fire of his grace and love is a source of light and life to all that received Christ Jesus as their Savior. Kretzmann, [Popular Commentary](#), p.605-606, adapted

4:6 Sea Of Glass, Clear As Crystal

John appears to have some difficulty describing the next feature of the vision. That difficulty is indicated by the phrase "*what looked like*." Words can hardly describe it because he had seen nothing exactly like it on earth. He can only draw a limited comparison between that which is seen in the vision and its earthly description. It reminded him of an ocean made out of glass.

- † The image is adapted, as is so often the case in Revelation, from Ezekiel's prophecy (1:22).
- † The glassy sea before the throne of God signifies the **perfect peace and order** which must exist in the presence of the Holy God. Before Him there is no conflict or disorder. The fact that this remarkable sea of glass is "clear as crystal" further emphasizes the purity and holiness of God. Dr. L. L. White, [Revelation](#), p.114

4:6-7 Four Living Creatures This image is “difficult to determine” ^{Becker}

At the center of the vision, in immediate proximity to the throne of God and encircling it, are the four living beings. They are simply called “zoa” from the Greek verb which means “to live” (as in the English word “zoology” – the study of living things).

- † Four is the earth number in the numerological symbolism of the Bible, evidently derived from the four points of the compass, the four directions. The fact that there are “four living creatures” thus serves to link these magnificent beings to the **animate creation**, all the life forms fashioned by the Creator God. **They represent God’s total creation worshipping God!**
- † It is clearly evident that these beings are **an exalted order of angels**, both from their proximity to the throne of God, and their detailed similarity to the earlier visions of Ezekiel and Isaiah.
- † Like the **CHERUBIM Of Ezekiel** they are four in number (Ezekiel 1:5); they are associated with the lion, the ox, a man, and an eagle (Ezekiel 1:10); and they are covered with eyes (Ez1:12).
- † Like the **SERAPHIM Of Isaiah**, they have six wings (Isaiah 6:2) and sing virtually the same song of praise and glory to God (Isaiah 6:3).
- † **Covered with Eyes** The point of this imagery is the watchful and comprehensive knowledge which has been granted to these remarkable angels.
- † **Lion, Ox, Man, Eagle** Next, the distinct characteristics of each of the four living beings is carefully noted. In Ezekiel’s vision, each cherub has four faces, a lion, an ox, a man, and and eagle. John uses the same four animals but divides them among the four beings, assigning only one to each angel. The four animals were probably selected as being representative of basic forms of animal life: the lion – wild animals; the ox – domesticated animals; the man – humankind; and, the eagle – the birds. Thus the responsibility / representation of these angels for the entirety of animate creation is stressed. Dr.

We are thus led to conclude that they materially represent the ideal pattern of the true relation of creation to its God.

Weidner, p.68

L. L. White, Revelation, p.114-116 adapted **Psalm 150:6**

- From olden times the Church has seen in these cherubs the types of the Four evangelists: **Matthew**, who emphasizes the human descent of Christ, being the man cherub; **Mark**, who stresses the victorious power of Christ, being the lion cherub; **Luke**, who pictures the sacrificial act of Christ in giving his own body for the sins of the world, being the ox cherub; and **John**, who emphasizes the divine origin of Christ and his return to God, being the eagle cherub. Kretzmann, Popular Commentary, p.605-606
- Historically, some scholars have presented these theories concerning the meaning of the faces: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; OR the 4 gospels OR 4 aspects of Christ’s work OR 4 corners/winds of the earth OR 4 elements: fire, earth, air, water OR 4 stages of Christ’s life. *Over twenty different interpretations have been offered to explain what this creature represents, not to mention the interpretation that says that this is a flying saucer! On passages like this it seems everyone tries to find his own pet ideas represented. Of such passages Luther wrote in the last years of his life, "Many have tried their hands at it, but until*

this very day they have attained no certainty. Some have even brewed it into many stupid things out of their own heads." Revelation, P. A. Bartz

○ **Most of these explanations are extremely fanciful or mere surmises.** Weidner, p.71

- † The **multiple wings** serve to emphasize the swiftness and speed with which these angels carry out the will and command of God. The emphasis on the angels' all seeing eyes is reiterated and expanded in the phrase . . . These remarkable creatures exercise unceasing vigilance as they serve and obey the will of their Creator.

4:8 Holy! Holy! Holy!

The four living beings exist to sing the praises of God. **As the representatives of creation, they perform the function that creation was meant to fulfill.** They do so without pause or interruption --- "**day and night they never stop saying.**" This incessant praise does not preclude other activities on their part. In fact, they are depicted carrying out a variety of duties at functions at the command of God (i.e. Revelation 6:1,3,5,7). Each of those tasks becomes yet another expression of the continuous praise of God.

- † The song of the four living beings echoes the glorious anthem of Isaiah's serephim: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of His glory!" (Isaiah 6:3).
- † This is the "Trisagion" (Greek), the "Tersanctus" (Latin), the threefold affirmation of the essential holiness of God.
- † These words constitute the most exalted expression of praise to God in all of Scripture. Their sublime substance go as far as human thought and expression can go in ascribing to God the glory due His Name.
- † Through the balance of the hymn, the "trisagion" is reflected in three divine names (**Lord God Almighty**) and three divine attributes (**was, is, is to come**) so that three segments of threes provide the exquisite structure of the heavenly song. White, Revelation, p.117

Liturgical Note

We use a similar song called the Sanctus in the Holy Communion liturgy which celebrates the **sacramental presence of Christ** in the Lord's Supper.

*Holy, holy, holy,
Lord God of Sabaoth;
heaven and earth are full of thy glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is He that cometh
in the name of the Lord
Hosanna in the highest!*

Holy Lord Who Was
Holy God Who Is
Holy Almighty Who Is To Come

4:8 “Who Was, And Is, And Is To Come.”

The Lord is transcendent — above and beyond this universe of time and space. He has no source, or point of origin. He is the Source and the Beginning of all that is. Therein lies the basic difference between the Creator and the creature. This is the great God of power and might. This vision is bestowed upon His faithful people for their consolation and encouragement!

† This is really a **longer expression of God's Name YAHWEH – I AM (Exodus 3:14–15). He always was, is, and always will be.**

† “This is no abstract theology of God. Through John, the readers are being given information from the heavenly, secret council room of the Lord...**This is to enable the suffering readers to perceive His eternal purpose and so motivate them to persevere faithfully through tribulation.**”

Dr. L. L. White, [Revelation](#), p.118

4:9-11 Praise Leads To Praise

One song reverberates in another as ever widening circles of worship resound throughout the heavens. The same pattern of antiphonal song will be seen in subsequent chapters as the hosts of angels and saints add their voices to the mighty chorus (cf. Revelation 5:8- 14; 7:9-17).

The song of the four living beings is characterized as giving “glory, honor, and thanks”. All that is expressed about God by those whom He has created ought to be “**doxology**,” an uninterrupted burst of praise that ascribes to God the **glory** due His Name. **Honor** refers to the reverent awe of the creature in the presence of the Creator. **Thanks** from which the English word “eucharist” is derived, is the creature’s natural and appropriate desire to give thanks to God and to express a sense of gratitude for that which God has made and done. The song of praise is directed to “**Him who sits on the throne and who lives forever and ever.**” This apt description of the eternity of God is based on Daniel 4:34 and 12:7. Earthly rulers rise and fall, but the reign of the Sovereign Lord endures forever.

Dr. L. L. White, [Revelation](#), p.119-120

4:9 They lay their crowns before the throne...

The elders’ action in casting down their golden crowns before God’s throne **signifies their homage before God and their subordination to Him. By removing their crowns and placing them at His feet they acknowledge that the victory and power which the crowns represent are not their doing, but the work of God.**

† The classic hymn “**Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!**” is based on this text.

“Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore Thee
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee,
Which wert and art, and evermore shall be.

4:11 Our Lord and God

The identification of God with the title “**our Lord and God**” in Revelation may be a deliberate rejection of the Roman senate’s blasphemous presumption in assigning that title (Latin - “dominus et deus

noster”) to the emperor. The Roman historian Suetonius reports that Domitian, the occupant of the imperial throne at the time Revelation was written, was one of the few emperors arrogant enough to claim the designation during his own lifetime. In most cases, the title was bestowed posthumously.

4:11 God the Creator

The basis for the exclamation of God’s worthiness to receive glory, honor, and power is identified in the phrase which follows - “*for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.*” The joyful celebration of God’s identity as the Creator of all things is a regular theme in Scripture. The threefold repetition of the text -- “*You created all things*” -- “*by Your will they were created*” -- “*and have their being*” - emphasizes that ***everything that exists has its origin in God.*** The theme of this hymn (Rev 4) is God the Creator, while in Revelation 5 the elders praise God the Redeemer. The praise in Rev 4 is given to the Father on the throne, while in Rev 5 it is directed t the Son (Lamb) before the throne. The End Times, 4 Views, p.3

Of Creation	Doctrine of Creation terms & ideas to know
<p>5. We teach that God has created heaven and earth, and that in the manner and in the space of time recorded in the Holy Scriptures, especially Gen. 1 and 2, namely, by His almighty creative word, and in six days. We reject every doctrine which denies or limits the work of creation as taught in Scripture. In our days it is denied or limited by those who assert, ostensibly in deference to science, that the world came into existence through a process of evolution; that is, that it has, in immense periods of time, developed more or less of itself. Since no man was present when it pleased God to create the world, we must look for a reliable account of creation to God's own record, found in God's own book, the Bible. We accept God's own record with full confidence and confess with Luther's Catechism: "I believe that God has made me and all creatures." <small>LCMS Brief Statement, 1932</small></p>	<p><i>Hexameron</i> <i>Ex Nihilo</i> <i>Trinity</i> <i>Word</i> <i>All Things</i> <i>“Very Good”</i> <i>Imago Dei</i> <i>Garden Of Eden</i> <i>Protoevangelium</i></p>

As the opening scene of the vision surges to its triumphant conclusion, the throne of God ---majestic symbol of His eternal, sovereign power --- stands supreme, exalted, and serene forever. John’s message for struggling believers is unmistakably clear: **Stand firm! Do not despair! The Lord God reigns omnipotent!** Dr. L. L. White, *Revelation*, p.122

As the visions continue, God’s repentant people (Rev. 2-3) are to keep this mighty and majestic vision in front of them as they face the trials of the end times.

No matter what may happen on earth, God is on His Throne and is in complete control. . . What an encouragement that would be to the suffering saints of John’s day and of every age of history. The End Times, 4 Views, p.3

4 Throne Visions In Scripture

Revelation 4:1-11

1 After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." 2 At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. 3 And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and ruby. A rainbow that shone like an emerald encircled the throne. 4 Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads. 5 From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. In front of the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God. 6 Also in front of the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal. In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. 7 The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle. 8 Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under its wings. Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, 'who was, and is, and is to come.'" 9 Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, 10 the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: 11 "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."

Isaiah 6:1-8

1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. 2 Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. 3 And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." 4 At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. 5 "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty." 6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. 7 With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for." 8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

Ezekiel 1:4-28

4 I looked, and I saw a windstorm coming out of the north—an immense cloud with flashing lightning and surrounded by brilliant light. The center of the fire looked like glowing metal, 5 and in the fire was what looked like four living creatures. In appearance their form was human, 6 but each of them had four faces and four wings. 7 Their legs were straight; their feet were like those of a calf and gleamed like burnished bronze. 8 Under their wings on their four sides they had human hands. All four of them had faces and wings, 9 and the wings of one touched the wings of another. Each one went straight ahead; they did not turn as they moved. 10 Their faces looked like this: Each of the four had the face of a human being, and on the right side each had the face of a lion, and on the left the face of an ox; each also had the face of an eagle. 11 Such were their faces. They each had two wings spreading out upward, each wing touching that of the creature on either side; and each had two other wings covering its body. 12 Each one went straight ahead. Wherever the spirit would go, they would go, without turning as they went. 13 The appearance of the living creatures was like burning coals of fire or like torches. Fire moved back and forth among the creatures; it was bright, and lightning flashed out of it. 14 The creatures sped back and forth like flashes of lightning. 15 As I looked at the living creatures, I saw a wheel on the ground beside each creature with its four faces. 16 This was the appearance and structure of the wheels: They sparkled like topaz, and all four looked alike. Each appeared to be made like a wheel intersecting a wheel. 17 As they moved, they would go in any one of the four directions the creatures faced; the wheels did not change direction as the creatures went. 18 Their rims were high and awesome, and all four rims were full of eyes all around. 19 When the living creatures moved, the wheels beside them moved; and when the living creatures rose from the ground, the wheels also rose. 20 Wherever the spirit would go, they would go, and the wheels would rise along with them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. 21 When the creatures moved, they also moved; when the creatures stood still, they also stood still; and when the creatures rose from the ground, the wheels rose along with them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. 22 Spread out above the heads of the living creatures was what looked something like a vault, sparkling like crystal, and awesome. 23 Under the vault their wings were stretched out one toward the other, and each had two wings covering its body. 24 When the creatures moved, I heard the sound of their wings, like the roar of rushing waters, like the voice of the Almighty, like the tumult of an army. When they stood still, they lowered their wings. 25 Then there came a voice from above the vault over their heads as they stood with lowered wings. 26 Above the vault over their heads was what looked like a throne of lapis lazuli, and high above on the throne was a figure like that of a man. 27 I saw that from what appeared to be his waist up he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire, and that from there down he looked like fire; and brilliant light surrounded him. 28 Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. When I saw it, I fell facedown, and I heard the voice of one speaking.

Daniel 7:9-10

9 "As I looked, "thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. 10 A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened.



What About . . .

Angels

It seems as though angels have captured the imagination of people everywhere. Unfortunately, there is a lot of misinformation about angels, along with superstitions and unscriptural understandings. This pamphlet will provide a Biblical perspective on angels.

Do angels exist?

The Word of God—not popular television shows or magazine articles—is our only reliable source for knowing what angels are, and what they do. The Bible teaches us that angels were made by God during the six days of creation. Before creation there was only God (John 1:1-3), and after creation, we are told that on the seventh day God “rested from all the work of creating he had done” (Gen. 2:3b). The Bible does not indicate on which day of creation God made angels. But angels are very real.

What does the word “angel” mean?

The word “angel” comes from a Greek word that means “messenger.” Angels are God’s messengers. Elsewhere in the Bible, angels are described as spirits (cf. Acts 23:9; Heb. 1:14). The word “angel” is actually a description of what they do.

What are angels?

Angels are spirits. They are beings who do not have a physical body. Jesus Himself said, “a spirit does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have” (Luke 24:39). Evil angels too are described as not having “flesh and blood” (Eph. 6:12). In the Scriptures, when angels do appear in human form, this is only a momentary appearance for those who need to see them. Angels are not gods. They are God’s creation and serve His holy and perfect will. The good angels are said to be “ministering spirits” (Heb. 1:14), sent by God to serve us, His people.

Are angels human?

Human beings are the crown of God’s creation. Only of human beings, and no other creature, did God say, “Let us make man in our own image” (Gen. 1:26). Furthermore, the Scriptures reveal that only into human beings did God breathe the breath of life (Gen. 2:7). Also, God did not give angels rule over His creation. This privilege He gave only to mankind (Gen. 1:26-28). Angels are not human beings. They exist as spirits who serve God and His people.

Do human beings become angels when they die?

No, human beings do not become angels when they die. The Scriptures are clear on this point. Until the last day, the

souls of the dead are before the Lord, enjoying peace and rest in His presence, awaiting the final day when they will receive glorified bodies for all eternity (see 1 Cor. 15; 1 Thess. 5:17; Rev. 7).

Are angels intelligent beings?

The Bible describes angels as having both intelligence and a will. The good angels know and follow the wisdom of God, which He has revealed through Christ to His church (Eph. 3:10). They gladly serve us, who are the heirs of the salvation Christ has won for us (Heb. 1:14). However, angels do not know all things. For instance, they do not know the thoughts of our hearts (1 Kings 8:39).

How powerful are angels?

Angels are extremely powerful beings. They are described as “mighty ones” (Ps. 103:20; 2 Thess. 1:7). The good angels guard and protect God’s children (Ps. 91:11-13). The power of the angels is never unlimited, but is always subject to the will and authority of God.

Evil angels too are powerful beings. The Bible tell us that they hold captive all unbelievers (Luke 11:21-22; Eph. 2:2). Believers in Christ are able to withstand the temptation of evil angels through the power of God (Eph. 6:10-17).

Where are angels?

Angels, like God, do not inhabit the same physical dimension that human beings inhabit. From time to time, they are ordered by God to appear in our physical dimension. Thus, while there are times when angels will make an appearance at a distinct place (cf. Acts 12:7), they remain beings that inhabit no physical space.

How many angels are there?

The Bible does not give us an exact number, but does clearly teach that there are incredibly large numbers of angels who serve God. Scripture speaks of “ten thousand times ten thousand angels” (Dan. 7:10). Elsewhere Scripture speaks of “a great company of the heavenly host” (Luke 2:13).

From every indication in the Bible, there are an unimaginably large number of angels, of whom we are totally unaware most of the time. There is a fixed and limited number of angels, never increasing or decreasing. Unlike human beings, angels do not marry and have children (Mark 12:25). They are immortal.

Are all angels the same?

Within the large numbers of angels there are apparently cer-

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tain orders or classes of angels. Scripture speaks of “cherubim” (Gen. 3:24; Ps. 80:1), “seraphim” (Is. 6:2), “thrones or powers or rulers or authorities” (Col. 1:16), “archangel” (1 Thess. 4:16).

Also among the evil angels there are ranks and classes of angels (Matt. 25:41). Satan is described as the “prince of the devils” (Luke 11:15). It is pointless, however, to try to invent complicated divisions and ranks of angels, since Scripture itself does not provide us with this information.

What are evil angels, and what do they do?

Originally, all angels God created were good and did His will perfectly. At some point after God created them, some angels chose to rebel against Him. They fell away from God and into great sin and evil. At that point, they were confirmed in their evil condition. There is no hope for them. In Matt. 8:29, they recognize that there will be a time when they must suffer eternal torment and punishment for their rebellion against God.

Satan is the chief evil angel, the “prince of demons” (Luke 11:15). Here is how our Lord Jesus Christ describes Satan: “He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44).

When precisely the evil angels rebelled and fell away from God we cannot say for sure, but we do know it was some time at the very beginning of the world. Most Christian church fathers believe that the evil angels’ original sin was pride, based on the fact that Satan’s temptation of Adam and Eve was an appeal to their pride. Also, 1 Tim. 3:6 indicates that pride was the cause of the devil’s condemnation.

The devil is our great enemy, who “prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour” (1 Pet. 5:8). The Bible tell us that the devil is the cause of unbelief in the world (Eph. 2:1-2). Every person who does not believe the good news of Christ Jesus is thinking and doing what the devil wants. Unbelievers are described in the Bible as being in the devil’s kingdom and under his power (Acts 26:18; Col. 1:13). The very fact that people do not realize this, and even deny it, is the devil’s greatest deception. The devil is so deceptive, at times he will even disguise himself as an “angel of light” (2 Cor. 11:14). In fact, the Old Testament once refers to Satan as “Lucifer,” which means, “light bearer” (Isa. 14:12; KJV).

We need to keep in mind that all the Bible says about evil angels, and their eternal punishment, is for the purpose of making us recognize the need to repent and to believe in God’s Son, Jesus Christ, who has ransomed mankind by His death, and saved us for eternal life, not in hell, but in heaven.

What do good angels do?

Good angels enjoy the blessing of being able to see God. They are in the immediate presence of God, always beholding

His great glory, majesty and power (Matt. 18:10). This is called the “beatific vision,” which all Christians will enjoy one day when they are in heaven.

God’s Word reveals the following things about the activity of good angels: They praise God (Is. 6:3; Luke 2:13), and they are the Lord’s servants in the world and in the Church (Ps. 103:20-21; Heb. 1:14).

God sends angels to serve and to protect Christian believers in their work and their callings in life (Ps. 91:11-12). They attend to the dying (Luke 16:22). They care for children (Matt. 18:10). Angels are deeply interested in all that occurs in the Church. They adore and take great joy in the work of Jesus Christ for the salvation of the world (Luke 2:13; Eph. 3:10). They rejoice over every sinner who repents (Luke 15:10).

Scripture mentions the presence of angels at every great event in the Kingdom of God. Angels were present when God gave His law on Mount Sinai (Deut. 33:2; Gal. 3:19). Angels were present at the conception, birth, resurrection and ascension of our Lord (Luke 1:26; 2:11; Mark 1:13; 24:5ff; Acts 1:10ff). Angels will come with Jesus when He returns on the last day (Matt. 13:41ff.; 24:31).

The Bible tell us that angels are present in the public worship of Christians (1 Cor. 11:10). God also uses angels to help the family and to preserve law and order (Gen. 24:7; Matt. 18:10; Dan. 10:13).

How are we to treat angels?

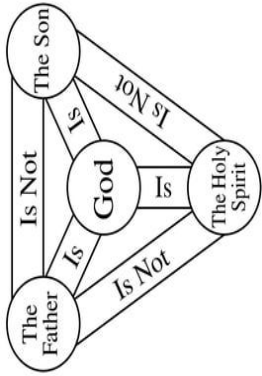
We need to praise and thank God for good angels. We are told that we are to take care not to offend them through sin and unbelief (1 Cor. 11:10; 1 Tim. 5:21). But the Scriptures are also clear that we must not pray to angels, nor offer them our worship. The angels themselves protest any worship given to them (Rev. 22:8-9).

As believers, we have the privilege of having angels surrounding us and protecting us and working to do God’s good and perfect will in our lives. Our hope and trust is always in God, whom we know sends His angels to watch over us and to see us through whatever difficulty in life may come our way.

Because of our Lord Jesus Christ’s perfect life and sacrificial death for the sins of the world, we have the assurance of the complete and total forgiveness of all our sins. We know that God loves and cares for us as His own dear children. Furthermore, we know that the Lord sends His angels to care for us in order that some day we may join them, and all the company of heaven, in seeing God and singing His praises for all eternity.

— Dr. A. L. Barry
President

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

<p><i>I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified; who spoke by the Prophets.</i> NICENE CREED</p>	<h1>GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT</h1> <p><i>If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"</i> Luke 11:13</p>	
<p>Names and Titles</p> <p>Holy Spirit Ps 51:11 ; LK 11:13 ; Eph 1:13 ; 4:30</p> <p>God Acts 5:3 Acts 5:3-4</p> <p>Power of the Highest Luke 1:35</p> <p>Spirit of God Genesis 1:2 ; 1 Cor 2:11</p> <p>Eternal Spirit Hebrews 9:14</p> <p>Comforter John 14:16, 26 ; 15:26; 16:7</p> <p>Spirit of truth John 14:17 ; 15:26</p> <p>Seven Spirits of God Revelation 1:4 (Isaiah 11)</p> <p>Other Names and Titles: Spirit of the Lord God Spirit of the Lord Spirit of the Father Spirit of Christ Spirit of the Son Spirit of life Spirit of grace Spirit of prophecy Spirit of adoption Spirit of wisdom Spirit of counsel Spirit of might Spirit of understanding Spirit of knowledge Spirit of the fear of the Lord Spirit of holiness Spirit of revelation Spirit of judgment Spirit of glory</p>	<p>SMALL CATECHISM</p> <p>I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith; even as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith; in which Christian Church He forgives daily and richly all sins to me and all believers, and at the last day will raise up me and all the dead, and will give to me and to all believers in Christ everlasting life. <small>3rd Article of Creed</small></p> <p>“CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT”</p> <p>Jesus has 2 Natures: a divine nature and a human nature. His Divine nature comes from His “conception by the Holy Spirit” (Luke 1:35). Jesus is fully, 100% God. At the same time, is He is fully, 100% Man, born of the Virgin Mary.</p>	<p>Regeneration / New Birth Jn 3:5, Titus 3:5-8 (Holy Baptism)</p> <p>Conversion 1 Cor 12:3, Rom 8:9 (faith)</p> <p>Sanctification 1 Cor 6:11 (Holy living)</p> <p>Good Works 1 Thess 4:7-8</p> <p>Fruit of the Spirit Galatians 5:22-23 (Given to all)</p> <p>Gifts of the Spirit Rom 12:4-8 (Given to individuals)</p> <p>Indwelling 1 Cor 3:16, 6:19ff (Mystical Union)</p> <p>Intercession Romans 8:26-27</p> <p>Internal Witness Romans 8:6</p> <p>Inspiration of Scriptures 2 Peter 1:21</p> <p>Creation Genesis 1:3</p>
 <p>SYNONYMS</p> <p>The Bible uses many different verbs and images to teach us about the presence and work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, including:</p> <p>The Spirit guides you, fills you, comes to you, is poured out on you, lives in you, leads you, sanctifies you, seals you, intercedes for you, helps you, renews you, encourages you.</p>	<p>CONFIRMATION DAY PRAYER</p> <p>May God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, give you His Holy Spirit, the Spirit of wisdom and knowledge, of grace and prayer, of power and strength, of sanctification and the fear of God.</p>	<p>HOLY “GHOST”?</p> <p>The English terms "Holy Ghost" and "Holy Spirit" are complete synonyms: one derives from the Old English <i>gast</i> and the other from the Latin <i>spiritus</i>. The NT Greek word for “spirit” is <i>pneûma</i> – πνεῦμα (wind, breath, spirit). The theological study of the Holy Spirit is sometimes referred to as “Pneumatology”.</p>
	<p>MEANS OF GRACE</p> <p>The Means of Grace are the ways that God the Holy Spirit creates faith in the hearts of Christians, forgives their sins, gives them eternal salvation and causes them to grow spiritually. The efficacy of these means does not depend on faith or man; the efficacy of these means rests in God alone, who has promised to work through these means.</p>	<p>SIN AGAINST HOLY SPIRIT</p> <p>Blasphemy against the Spirit is a conscious, informed rejection and reviling of the Spirit after the Spirit has provided ample testimony that Jesus is the Christ. <small>Luke, Just p.501</small></p>
	<p>Danger: ENTHUSIASM</p> <p>Accordingly, we should and must constantly maintain that God will not deal with us except through his external Word and Sacrament. Whatever is attributed to the Spirit apart from such Word and Sacrament is of the devil.</p> <p><small>SmallCate Articles, III, VIII, 9-10</small></p>	<p><small>DJB/CActs 2/ Holy Spirit Chart</small></p>

<p>JUSTIFICATION & THE HOLY SPIRIT</p> <p>Since the Bible defines unbelievers as being dead in their trespasses and sin (Ephesians 2: 1,5; Colossians 2: 13), there is nothing they can do by way of human reason or strength to be saved. Spiritually dead people can not make spiritual decisions. It is the Holy Spirit, working through the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, who brings the unbeliever to faith (Ephesians 2: 8-9). Theologically, this is called justification. In justification, the Holy Spirit acts upon the heart and will of the unbeliever externally. He operates through the Word of God that speaks to the human condition.</p> <p><small>"The Ministry Of The Holy Spirit" Don Matzat</small></p>	<p>THE SPIRIT GLORIFIES JESUS</p> <p>The ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus and to deliver to us the blessings of life and salvation that were won at Calvary. ... The Holy Spirit will not draw attention to himself (John 16:12-15). You will not find the Holy Spirit where the focus is upon the Holy Spirit. You will find the Holy Spirit where the Gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaimed in its truth and purity and where Jesus is worshipped as King over kings, and Lord over lords.</p> <p><small>"The Ministry Of The Holy Spirit" Don Matzat</small></p>	<p>SANCTIFICATION</p> <p>After conversion, the Christian is enabled to cooperate with the work of the Holy Spirit in sanctification. The Apostle Paul continually calls Christians to be active. We should think differently by setting our minds on the things of the Spirit (Romans 8: 5-8). We should deliver the works of our old sinful nature over to death and walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5: 16-25). We should sing spiritual songs and put the Word of Christ in our hearts (Colossians 3: 16). In sanctification, the work of the Holy Spirit is internal. While he still works through the vehicle of the Word of God that has been received into the heart, he sanctifies, leads, and guides the Christian via an internal operation, working upon the mind, the will and the emotions.</p> <p><small>"The Ministry Of The Holy Spirit" Don Matzat</small></p>
<p>THE SPIRIT AND THE WORD</p> <p>We must constantly handle, preach, bear, and inculcate the Word until the Holy Ghost comes. There is no other way to achieve the desired end. To sit in a corner, to gape heavenward, and to wait to see Him come is sheer folly. The Word is the only bridge and path by which the Holy Spirit comes to us.</p> <p><small>What Luther Says, #2052, p. 663</small></p>	<p>SUMMARY OF SPIRIT'S WORK</p> <p>[The] Spirit is involved in the works of calling, regeneration, uniting the believer with Christ, indwelling, filling, teaching, guiding, gifting, empowering, and sanctifying the believer. His primary ministry is to mediate the presence of Christ and the knowledge of God to the believer (John 16:13-14).</p> <p><small>https://bible.org/seriespage/pneumatology-holy-spirit</small></p>	<p>THE SPIRIT STRENGTHENS US</p> <p>When we struggle with fear and doubt, the Holy Spirit invites us to pray for comfort and hope. The Spirit—our Helper—does not give us over to discouragement, but strengthens us in our faith. He reminds us that Christ, our Savior from sin and death, holds us firmly in His undying grip, and helps us hold firmly to Him. The Spirit does not give us over to uncertainty, but consoles us, confirming in us the belief that God's Word is true and His promises sure. The Spirit gives us joy in the midst of grief, peace in the face of fear.</p> <p><small>"The Gift of the Holy Spirit", Dr. G. Bode</small></p>
<p>FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT</p> <p>Every Christian has been endowed with the Holy Spirit in Baptism, and is called to cultivate the fruit of the Spirit by the Spirit's power. Such fruit, all of which should be evident in the lives of <u>all</u> Christians, includes "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, humility, and self-control (Gal 5:22-23).</p> <p><small>1 Corinthians, Lockwood, p.427</small></p>	<p>GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT</p> <p>In addition to those attributes of Christ Himself (<i>Fruit of the Spirit</i>) which are manifest in various degrees in all His saints, God has seen fit to bestow extraordinary gifts upon particular Christians. The biblical language suggests that every Christian may have at least one of these uncommon gifts. ... Peter places spiritual gifts in two categories: gifts of speech and gifts of service (1 Peter 4:10-11).</p> <p><small>1 Corinthians Lockwood, p.426</small></p> <p>A summary of spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12 includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There are many and various gifts 2. The One Spirit (<i>Triune God</i>) gives the gifts as He pleases 3. Each Christian is gifted 4. The gifts are to be used in love and for the common good 5. There is no place for inferiority, envy, or discontent 6. There is no place for superiority, pride, or divisiveness 	