

BIBLE CHALLENGE 2019

Week 13: March 24-30

What are Angels Like?

Read: Genesis 3:1,13; Deuteronomy 32:17; 2 Samuel 24:16; 2 Kings 19:35; 1 Chronicles 21:1; Job 1:6-9,12; 2:1; 38:7; Psalm 8:5; 91:11-12; Isaiah 6:2; 14:12; 27:1; Ezekiel 10:9,14; 28:13-19; Daniel 6:22; 8:16; 9:21-22; 10:13,21; 12:1; Zechariah 3:1-2; Matthew 4:1-11,24; 9:34; 10:1; 12:24-26; 13:19,38-41; 18:10; 22:30; 25:41; Mark 3:22; 5:9; Luke 1:19,26; 2:13; 4:5; 8:12; 11:15; 16:22; 22:31; John 8:44; 13:2; 14:30; Acts 5:3; 2 Corinthians 2:11; 4:4; 11:3,14; Ephesians 2:2; 3:10; 4:27; 6:12-13; Colossians 1:16; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:9; 1 Timothy 3:6-7; 4:1-2; 2 Timothy 2:26; Hebrews 1:6,14; 2:16; 12:22; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8-9; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6,9; Revelation 1:20; 2:24; 5:11; 9:11; 12:7-12; 16:13; 19:9-10; 20:7-8. Read Ezekiel 1 in full.

When it comes to Angels, fascination and speculation abound. And, when it comes to speculation, a lot of bad ideas have crept into Christian thinking with respect to these beings. Perhaps one of the most important things to remember is that these beings are but servants of the Living God, not unlike humans. Our tendency is to bow and worship them, but we must not; God alone is worthy of worship.

In broad strokes, what we know about angels is that they were created beings...made most likely on day 1 of creation, though some people would hold that they were made on day 4 of creation along with the stars (as stars are sometimes symbolic of angels). We know that they neither marry, nor are given in marriage (thus they do not have children) and we know that the third of the angels that fell in Satan's rebellion are destined for eternal destruction with no chance of salvation; Jesus died for fallen men, not fallen angels.

We should also note in general that the word "angel" in both Hebrew and Greek refers to a messenger and so sometimes the text uses the word to refer to a human messenger and sometimes it is used to refer to a heavenly messenger. Context is the key to understanding the kind of messenger it is, but to avoid confusion, most of our English translations will render the word "messenger" when they believe it to refer to a human messenger and the word "angel" when referring to a heavenly messenger.

Types of Heavenly Angels:

Cherubim: In Ezekiel and in Revelation, these angels are referred to as "living creatures" and are described as having multiple sets of wings, faces on all sides of their heads, and eyes all over their bodies. They are frightful creatures to imagine, so unlike the winged babies that are often called "cherubs" in modern western-culture. The portrayal of these beasts as child-like creatures goes back to medieval theologians who taught that the spirits of children that died before adulthood would circle around the throne of God singing praises for eternity. These children were called, *Putto*, in Latin theology and were depicted after the Greek image of Cupid. Many historians attribute their popular depiction to the Italian painter, Donatello.

Seraphim: Literally, their name most likely means "burning ones" in Hebrew (there is some debate currently due to some recent archaeological evidence, but a consensus has not been reached amongst scholars). Even apart from the debate, these creatures are described as being fierce, intimidating, and in no way human. The only place we have them depicted for sure is in Isaiah 6, though some suggest that these are the beings that announce the birth of Christ to the Shepherds in Luke 2. In each of these cases, they are singing praise to God.

Arch-Angels: There are several names that the Bible gives to these angels. They are also known as "Chief Princes" and "Heads of the Princes." And there are two that are given human names: Michael and Gabriel. The medieval church speculated that there were seven such "arch-angels," but the Bible only gives us justification for two. They are also described as young men in the scriptures, with

no mention of wings or halos, as westerners typically depict them; again, speculation abounds regarding angels.

Types of Fallen Angels:

Satan: Satan is most commonly considered to be the leader of the angels, the serpent from Genesis 3, and the great dragon from Revelation 12 (also Leviathan from Isaiah 27). Literally, Satan means "accuser" and he is called "the accuser of the brethren." He rebelled against God at some point in between the end of Genesis 2 and the beginning of Genesis 3 as he had not been given the grace to restrain from sin. And so, with his fall, he seeks to bring down the human race as well.

Devil: Devil comes from the Greek word, *diabolos*, which has found its way into Latin and other Romance languages. Literally, his name appropriately means, "slandering adversary." Names like Satan, Lucifer, Beelzebul, and others are given to these creatures (noting that Lucifer comes from the Latin translation of Isaiah 14:12).

Demons: A more generic name for fallen angels that engage in warfare against God's elect on the earth. Most remain unnamed and are creatures set for destruction.

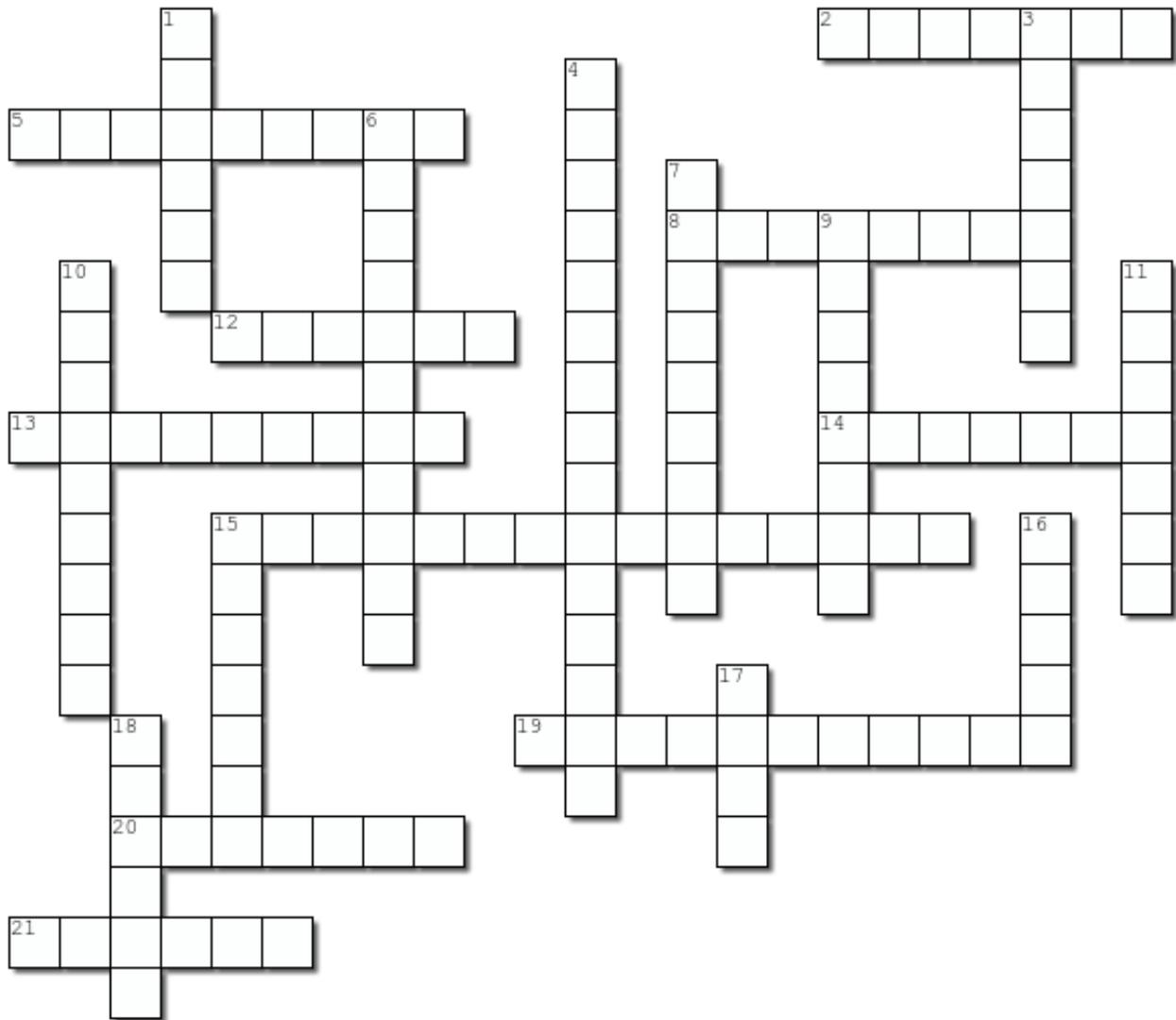
Cosmic Powers: Paul mentions "cosmic powers of this present darkness" in a more general way to speak of the spiritual warfare we face. They are described as the personification of evil and are arguably a form of, or another reference to, demons.

We should be reminded that the demons, like the other angels, were created sinless in the beginning creation. God elected to give some angels, though, the grace to restrain from sin; to other angels, he did not do this. And those without the grace to restrain from sin are the ones who fall (becoming demons and devils) and will remain forever under God's wrath without a mediator. In light of this, we ought not glamorize the role of the demon or a devil and we should not entertain the idea that they can be redeemed. There is only one place in creation that has been prepared for them, and that is the Lake of Fire.

The question about "guardian angels" often gets asked to me. What we can say for sure is that the Bible does not directly teach of such things. True, angels are sent to guard nations, churches, and even people at times, but to have an angel assigned to a person stretches the Biblical text a great deal, so we must be careful not to speculate too far as to such beings.

One final note, and this is regarding the Angel of the Lord. Many theologians have identified him not with a created being but as the Pre-Incarnate Son of God. This is because he does many things that no other "angel" has the right to do (remembering that the word "angel" means "messenger"). He accepts worship, speaks with the authority of God, is referred to as God, and in Jude 5, he is referred to as Jesus. More could be said about him, but space does not permit. If you would like to explore this more, touch base with me and I would be happy to give you each reference to who he is and what he is doing in Scripture. It is quite astounding.

Week 13: Angels



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Across

2. He assisted Gabriel against the Prince of Persia.
5. In Job, Angels are referred to in this way (3 words).
8. The Spirit tells us that during the _____, people will devote themselves to deceitful spirits and teaching of demons-2 wds
12. Ezekiel seems to refer to Satan as being this kind of angel.
13. Jesus is accused by the Pharisees of being in cahoots with this prince of demons.
14. The Devil is also known as the _____.
15. Cherubim are often referred to as _____ (2 words).
19. The devil is like a _____ so resist him (2 words)
20. In Revelation, the angels around the throne are numbered in this...
21. An angel shut the lion's mouths for this saint.

Down

1. The Angel of the Lord re clothed this High Priest as a sign that the High Priest was being washed clean of sin.
3. The devil is this to the brethren.
4. Because we fight a spiritual battle we need to take this up (4 words).
6. 'Give no _____ to the devil.'
7. The 'twisting serpent' of Isaiah who also showed himself in the Garden of Eden.
9. The church in this city had fallen into believing the 'deep things of Satan.'
10. The angels of God's children see the _____ (3 words).
11. This angel was sent to tell Mary and Elizabeth of their coming pregnancies.
15. This demonic name is the Latin translation of 'Son of Dawn.'
16. Who enticed David to take a census of Israel?
17. The devil was a _____ from the beginning.
18. Pagan people sacrifice to these fallen angels.