

## STUDY THREE – THE CHARACTERISTICS AND TITLES OF ANGELS I

*“But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” (1 Corinthians 2:14)*

### INTRODUCTION

A characteristic is an attribute or an inherent part of someone. A “title” describes someone’s position. Studying the characteristics and titles of angels as revealed in the Bible provides foundational knowledge of these wonderful servants of God.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF ANGELS

- **Angels are invisible spirit beings.**

*“But to which of the angels has He ever said: “sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool”? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” (Hebrews 1:13-14)*

*“Who makes His angels spirits, His ministers a flame of fire.” (Psalms 104:4)*

- **Angels are radiant from being in God's presence.**

*“And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid.” (Luke 2:9)*

The glory of the Lord makes angels radiant. They reflect His glory, not their own. Their radiance is majestic and awe inspiring, as described by Isaiah (Isaiah 6); Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1); Daniel (Daniel 7 and 9); and John (Revelation 1).

- **Angels are awesome in appearance.**

*“And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone from the door and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men.” (Matthew 28:2-4)*

*“And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed.” (Mark 16:5)*

Their appearance is sometimes associated with fire:

*“Who makes His angels spirits, His ministers a flame of fire.” (Psalms 104:4)*

*“And to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Thessalonians 1:7-8)*

- **Angels can assume human form.**

Angels can assume human form on occasion, their form depending on the function of their mission. Abraham and Lot both had angels visit them in the form of humans. They talked and dined with them (Genesis 18:2-8 and 19:1-22). We are advised to entertain strangers, for some have entertained angels without knowing it (Hebrews 13:2).

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- **Angels appear in supernatural ways.**

Both the Old and New Testaments repeatedly confirm that angels also appear in dreams and visions. It is only through spiritual perception that you can see them because...

*“But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” (1 Corinthians 2:14)*

Without spiritual perception, one will be like Balaam who did not see the angel in the pathway (Numbers 22) and Gehazi who did not see the angel army surrounding him and the prophet (1 Kings 6).

- **Angels are sexless and do not procreate.**

Although they are spoken of in the Bible in a masculine gender, angels are sexless.

*“Jesus answered and said to them, “The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage” (Luke 20:34-35)*

- **Angels are immortal.**

*“...nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.” (Luke 20:36)*

- **Angels are truthful.**

*“Then he said to me, “These words are faithful and true.” And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place.” (Revelation 22:6)*

- **Angels are faithful.**

Despite Israel’s unfaithfulness during their wilderness journey, the angel with them remained faithful:

*“In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His Presence saved them; In His love and in His pity, He redeemed them; and He bore them and carried them all the days of old.” (Isaiah 63:9)*

- **Angels have emotions.**

They express joy:

*“Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.” (Luke 15:10)*

They express desire:

*“Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into.” (1 Peter 1:10-12)*

- **Angels are elect.**

The angels that are elect are those who God foreknew would love and serve Him instead of joining in Satan’s rebellion:

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*“I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality.” (1 Timothy 5:21)*

- **Angels observe us.**

They observe the Church:

*“... to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 3:10)*

They witness the salvation of sinners:

*“Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.” (Luke 15:10)*

The fact that angels rejoice over our salvation confirms that they observe us and are concerned about our spiritual condition before God.

- **Angels have a will.**

Like men, angels were originally created by God with a free will. Satan, who was originally an angel, sinned because of his own choice. He repeatedly declared, “I will...” (Isaiah 14). Other angels, exercising their own power of choice, joined Satan in his rebellion. Jude speaks of them in verse 6: “And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day.”

There is no evidence that angels continued to sin after Satan’s fall in which he drew one third of the angels with him. It is possible that the angels were confirmed in their position through this experience, just as Believers will be confirmed in a sinless state in eternity.

- **Angels have appetites.**

Abraham’s angelic visitors dined with him:

*“Then the LORD appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, and said, “My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant. Please let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. And I will bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh your hearts. After that you may pass by, inasmuch as you have come to your servant.” They said, “Do as you have said.” So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, “Quickly, make ready three measures of fine meal; knead it and make cakes.” And Abraham ran to the herd, took a tender and good calf, gave it to a young man, and he hastened to prepare it. So, he took butter and milk and the calf which he had prepared and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree as they ate. (Genesis 18:1-8)*

*“Men ate angels’ food; He sent them food to the full.” (Psalms 78:25).* The Bible also states that the Israelites ate angel’s food (manna) during their wilderness (Psalm 78:25).

- **Angels are intelligent.**

Angels possess intelligence that is superior to that of humans. They know by revelation God’s plan for the world:

*“Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, “Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth*

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*committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.”*  
**(Revelation 17:1-2)**

*“The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand to heaven and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there should be delay no longer...”* **(Revelation 10:5-6)**

- **Angels function under authority.**

*“Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!””* **(Jude 1:9)**

- **Angels are communicative.**

The Bible is filled with the accounts of angels speaking, interpreting, informing, warning, and comforting people. They are God’s communicators to the heirs of salvation.

Angels speak a heavenly language:

*“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.”* **(1 Corinthians 13:1)**

Job speaks of the “stars” and “sons of God” (angels) singing and shouting at the time of creation:

*“When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?”* **(Job 38:7)**

The book of Revelation describes an angel preaching the Gospel:

*“Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people”* **(Revelation 14:6)**