



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V25 N48 December 3, 2023

FROM THE REALMS OF GLORY

“Identified Flying Objects”

Isaiah 6:1-3; Colossians 1:15-16; Revelation 5:11-12; Jude 6

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Bible Study

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

“For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”

Hebrews 4:12



Are angels
real?

Advent and angels, the two just go together. Consider the carols we sing at Christmas that have “angels” in the title: “Angels from the Realms of Glory,” “Angels We Have Heard on High,” and of course, “Hark the Herald Angels Sing,” not to mention numerous others that have “angels” in the lyrics. The connection was established through the various announcements angels made to people surrounding the birth of Jesus. There were six.

First, an angel appears to Zechariah to announce the birth of John the Baptist (c. fall 6 B.C.). Once when he was on duty serving beside the altar of incense, an angel of the Lord appeared to him. When angels appear out of nowhere to unsuspecting people, they typically have to speak calming words. To calm Zechariah’s fear, the angel spoke these words to him: “Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord . . . He will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah . . . to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (Lk 1:12-15a, 17b).

Second, six months later (c. spring 5 B.C.), an angel, who identifies himself as Gabriel, appears to a virgin named Mary, living in the town of Nazareth. To her he said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you . . . Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God.” Then he explained, “You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.” To her “How will this be, since I am a virgin?” question, the angel explained, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God” (Lk 1:28, 30-33, 35).

Third, perhaps three months after that (c. sum-

mer 5 B.C.), having learned that Mary is pregnant, Joseph, a righteous man, has in mind to divorce her privately, but before he does, an angel of the Lord appears to him in a dream. In the dream the angel told him, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins” (Mt 1:20-21).

Fourth, another six months pass, and Jesus is born in Bethlehem (c. winter 5/4 B.C.). Joseph and Mary traveled there to register for the census that took place *before* Quirinius was governor of Syria (c. A.D. 6), and while there, Jesus was born. An angel announced Jesus’ birth to shepherds that were in nearby fields watching their sheep. The angel said, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” At that point the angel was joined by an angelic host praising God saying: “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.” (Lk 2:10-12, 14).

Fifth, approximately two years pass before angels make another appearance in connection with the birth of Jesus. Following the visit of the Magi, Herod decided to eliminate any would be contender to his throne by having all the boys in Bethlehem under two years old killed, perhaps about twenty children in all. But prior to that an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “‘Get up,’ he said, ‘take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him’” (Mt 2:13).

And finally, *sixth*, after Herod’s death (c. 4 B.C.) the angel appears again to Joseph in Egypt. He told him, “Get up, take the child and his other and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child’ life are dead” (Mt 2:20).

1

EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

Read Isaiah 6:1-3

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."

Read Colossians 1:15-16

15 *The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.*

Read Revelation 5:11-12

11 *Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. 12 In a loud voice they were saying:*

"Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!"

Read Jude 6

6 *And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their proper dwelling – these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.*

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

In Isaiah 6:1-3

- Circle "seraphim" in v. 2.
- Circle "covered" in v. 2 (3x).
- Circle "holy" in v. 3 (3x).

In Colossians 1:15-16

- Circle "image" and "firstborn" in v. 15.
- Underline "thrones" "powers," "rulers," and "authorities" in v. 16.

In Revelation 5:11-12.

- Bracket "numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand" in v.11.
- Circle "the lamb" in v. 12.

In Jude

- Box "but" indicating *contrast* in v. 6.
- Circle "bound" in v. 6.

What one word would you use to describe the **TONE** of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the **THEME** of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

Isaiah 6:1-3

1. The *Seraphim* don't fit the typical description of angels. How so?

2. Put the meaning of "holy" in your own words.

3. Describe the function of this order of angelic beings in Isaiah 6:1-3.

Colossians 1:15-16

4. Summarize the point of this passage as far as "the Son" and "invisible" angelic beings is concerned.

5. What do you infer about angelic beings from the four terms "thrones," "powers," "ruler," and "authorities" (v. 16)?

Revelation 5:11-12

6. What do you infer about angels from verse 11?

7. Describe the function served by the angels in this passage.

Jude 6

8. Explain the *contrast* in verse 6.

9. These fallen angels are bound *where* until *when*?

10. **Discussion:** Talk about what makes you think angels are personal beings and what you think their primary function is based on these passages.

Commentary On The Text

The four passages addressed in this issue of *The Scrolls*, one from the Old Testament and three from the New, have but one thing in common—angels. In the *first*, Isaiah 6:1-3, the prophet describes his famous vision, his vision of Yahweh, the sovereign ruler over creation, attired in his royal accoutrements, surrounded by seraphim, which he saw c. 740 B.C., the year king Uzziah died. One commentator observes: “The images and language used to describe God emphasize majesty (‘seated on a throne’), transcendence (‘high and exalted,’ ‘the train of his robe filled the temple,’ ‘the temple was filled with smoke’), and holiness (‘Holy, holy, holy’)” (John N. Oswalt, *The NIV Application Commentary: Isaiah*, 126). The angels that surround the LORD are “seraphim,” heavenly beings not mentioned elsewhere in Scripture, which don’t fit the typical description of other angels, that is, they don’t look like young men (Ge 19:1-5, 10-11; Mt 28:2-5; cf. Mk 16:5; Lk 24:4). In fact, they appear almost “dragon-like.” They have six wings. “Covering **their faces** with **two wings** indicates their humility before God. Their covering **their feet** with **two** other wings may denote service to God, and their **flying** may speak of their ongoing activity in proclaiming God’s holiness and glory” (John A. Martin, “Isaiah,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, 1045). While their number is not given, the sound of their voices—either the loudness of or the number of their voices—causes the doorposts and thresholds of the temple to shake. The seraphim are intelligent, personal, spirit beings who willingly serve the LORD by worshipping him and declaring his holiness throughout creation.

In the *second*, Colossians 1:15-16, Paul corrects the Colossian heresy by putting angels in their proper place. While much has been written regarding the false teaching that infected the church at Colosse, one undeniable element of it involved the worship of angels. According to the *NIV Study Bible*, “To accomplish this goal [of debunking the false teaching], he exalts Christ as the very image of God (1:15), the Creator (1:16), the pre-existent sustainer of all things (1:17), the head of the church (1:18), the first to be resurrected (1:18), the fullness of deity in bodily form (1:19; 2:9) and the one who reconciles all things to God (1:20-22) (2010). According to verse 15, angels are not “the image of the invisible God;” the Son is. And angels are not the “firstborn over all creation;” the Son is. Angels are not creators; they are creations. And as created beings like the rest of creation, they were created by the Son and for the Son, not vice versa. Paul’s words leave no room for the veneration of angels above the Son.

In the *third*, Revelation 5:11-12, John sees in a vision a Lamb “looking as if it had been slain”—a clear reference to Jesus Christ (Jn 1:29)—the only one found wor-

thy to take a scroll from the hand of “him who sat on the throne” (5:1), break its seals, and read what was written on it. The Lamb takes the scroll from the hand of God, and as he prepares to read it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders encircling the throne fall down before him and sing a new song:

“You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth” (5:9-10).

Then immediately, they are joined by an innumerable host of angels who sing:

“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!” (v. 12).

On John’s vision, which extends through verse 14, one commentator writes: “In his vision John saw every created thing in every part of the universe giving praise to God the Father (‘Him who sits on the throne’) and to the Lamb. The creatures in view must be intelligent beings capable of worship who can fully appreciate God and the Lamb, not the stars, planets, and animals. This probably involved a forward (proleptic) look to the end of the history of planet earth, when every creature will bow the knee to Jesus Christ and glorify God (cf. 5:10; Phil. 2:8-11)” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on Revelation,” 2023 ed., 118, planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/revelation.pdf). Myriad angels exist to bring honor, and glory, and praise to God and the Son.

In the *fourth*, Jude 6, the writer warns false teachers, who were “trying to convince believers that being saved by grace gave them license to sin since their sins would no longer be held against them” (*The NIV Study Bible*, 2140), reminding them that God has judged apostasy in the past. The angels who sinned being a prime example, implying that history antedates the account of creation that culminates in the creation of Adam. The angelic apostasy is described ever so briefly in terms of a *contrast*: “And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority *but* abandoned their proper dwelling—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.” Jude’s point? “The apostates in his day had also abandoned a position of great privilege and blessing, namely, the opportunity to serve and glorify God. God would also judge them severely because of their departure” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on Jude,” 2023 ed., 18, planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/jude.pdf). The rebellious angels Jude referred to are now bound awaiting judgment. There appear to be different fallen angels from Satan’s agents who are at work in the world today.

Word Studies/Notes

Isaiah 6:1-3

v. 2 **Seraphim** “Seraph” literally means “burning one,” “perhaps suggesting that these creatures had a fiery appearance (cf. CEV, TEV ‘flaming creatures; NCV ‘heavenly creatures of fire’)” (*Net Bible*, 3tn on Isa 6:2). “Fiery angels attended the LORD of armies. ‘Seraphim,’ a transliteration of the Hebrew word, probably means ‘burning ones.’ This is the only reference to seraphim as angelic beings in Scripture. Usually this Hebrew word describes snakes (cf. Num. 21:6; Deut. 8:15; Isa. 14:29; 30:6). What [Isaiah] saw may have been dragon-like creatures” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on Isaiah,” 2023 ed., 63, planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf). Clearly angels are not all alike.

v. 2 **covered** “They covered their faces, as we do when we are in the presence of something extremely brilliant, to hide and protect themselves from the superlative glory of God” (Constable, 63-64). Perhaps, like “bowed heads,” “covered faces” are marks of humility in the face of grandeur.

v. 3 **Holy, holy, holy** “Hebrew sometimes uses repetition for emphasis. (See *IBHS* 233-34 §12.5a; and *GKC* 431-32 §133.k.) By repeating the word ‘holy,’ the seraphs emphasize the degree of the Lord’s holiness” (*Net Bible*, 5tn on Isa 6:3). Holiness is not an attribute of God; it is the sum total of all of his divine attributes. Together they define the “wholly otherness” of God. He is truly unique. The idea is captured in the title of John S. Feinberg’s theological work, *No One Like Him: The Doctrine of God*.

Colossians 1:15-16

v. 15 **image, firstborn** “The concept of image involves three things: likeness (Christ is the exact likeness of God, a mirror image, cf. Heb. 1:3), representation (Christ represents God to us), and manifestation (Christ makes God known to us [cf. John 1:18]) (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on Colossians,” 2023 ed., 27, planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/colossians.pdf; see also Curtis Vaughn, “Colossians,” in *The Bible Expositor’s Commentary*, vol. 10, 181-82). ‘Firstborn’ (*prōtotokos*) is used of Christ, in addition to the passage under study, in Colossians 1:18; Romans 8:29; Hebrews 1:6; and Revelation 1:15) . . . It may denote either priority in time (cf. Moff., *Am. Trans.*) or supremacy in rank (NIV). In the present passage perhaps we should see both meanings. Christ is *before* all creation in time; he is also *over* it in rank and dignity. The major stress, however, seems to be on the idea of supremacy” (Vaughn, 182).

v. 16 **thrones . . .** “All things” is emphasized through the use of two *merisms*: “in heaven and on earth,” and “visible and invisible.” The following four terms — “thrones or powers or rulers or authorities” — “are describing spiritual beings and are elaborating on the word *invisible*,” and

refer to the entire angelic realm of both good and bad angels (Douglas J. Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, PNTC, 122, 23).

Revelation 5:11-12

v. 11 **numbering . . .** “The word order ‘myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands’ may seem anticlimactic. ‘The word order is deliberate, and the resultant anticlimax brings even more emphasis to the expression. When ten thousand is multiplied by itself, even this does not match the number of angels involved. The leftover still comes to a figure amounting to a thousand multiplied by itself. This is an apocalyptic symbol for countless thousands of angels who lift their voices in this great doxology’” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on Revelation,” 2023 ed., 117-18, planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/revelation.pdf).

v. 12 **the Lamb** I.e., Jesus, “the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (Jn 1:29). The angelic host “joined in saying with a loud voice, ‘Worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour [*sic*], and glory, and blessing.’ The sevenfold attributes ascribed to the Lamb sum up their worship and adoration” (John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 119-20).

Jude

v. 6 **but** “A group of angels also did not remain in their privileged position near God but left that sphere and so incurred God’s wrath. Some interpreters believe that Jude alluded here to Genesis 6:1-44 and possibly on the expansive interpretation of it in 1 Enoch (but cf. Matt. 22:30). Others believe that he was referring to the rebellion of some angels that resulted in Satan’s expulsion from heaven. The second explanation seems more probable to me . . . The rebellious angels that he referred to are now in bondage and await God’s judgment (cf. 2 Peter 2:4). These appear to be different fallen angels from Satan’s agents who are at work in the world today, namely, the demons, who have considerable freedom” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on Jude,” 2023 ed., 17, 18, planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/jude.pdf).

v. 6 **bound** “The fallen angels were consigned to the nether darkness, and bound in eternal chains.: 1 Enoch is full of it! Imprisoned now, their fate will be sealed in Gehenna at the Day of Judgment. Let the false teachers take note” (Michael Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, TNTC, 179-80). “There is an interesting play on words used in this verse. Because the angels did not keep their proper place, Jesus has kept them chained up in another place” (*NET Bible*, 29sn on Jude 6).



APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

There is a myriad of angelic beings who glorify God in their diversity and support his unfolding plan of redemption.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

Remember the first few months of parenthood when your sweet little one kept you up all night long? No amount of bouncing, patting, shushing, feeding, burping, diaper changing, noise machining or endless-circle-walking around the house would help. Just about the time you were pushed to the edge of exhaustion, that little darling would crash on your chest drooling in their milk coma. The frustration of the night would instantly melt away, and you'd fall hard in love with your baby all over again, thinking, "What an angel!" Where did that expression come from? We think of things being angelic when they are calm and kind and peaceful. While there certainly are angels you could attribute these characteristics to, there's so much more about angels that the average person, present company included, doesn't know or understand. This Christmas, we have an opportunity to dive into the deep end of our Bible and discover the true nature and character of angels and what they have to do with the birth of our Savior. This is the perfect time for family discipleship! Be open and vulnerable with your kids. It's likely this information will be new to your whole family, so open the Bible and discover God's Word together. Give your kids a sense of wonder by taking the time to do the Family Scrolls and ponder what you're learning. Help your kids understand the truth of God's Word compared to the false teaching of the world. We want our kids' understanding of truth to be based on Scripture. We're looking forward to going on this journey with you this holiday season!

What Does The Bible Say?

Read Isa 6:1-3; Col 1:15-16, Rev 5:11-12, Jude 6

1. What were the angels doing and saying in the Isa 6:1-3?
2. What were the angels doing and saying in the Rev 5:11-12?
3. From the Jude passage, what did the angels abandon and where are those angels now?

What Do You Think?

Do you think there are angels today? Why or why not?

What Do You Do?

Draw a picture of an angel and write down what you think you know about them (what they look like, where they live, what they do, etc.).

CORE COMPETENCY: Bible Study

I read the Bible to know who God is and what He wants from my life.

MEMORY VERSE: Isaiah 41:10

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

KidPIXCOUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- I completed my Bible Study
- I memorized this week's verse
- I brought my Bible to church
- I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE

PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)

I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have four children: Elijah, Levi, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

The Scrolls Bible Study is a spiritual growth resource of Central Bible Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

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