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*I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of the finest gold around his waist. His body was like chrysolite, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of the multitude.* Daniel saw a man of vision... an angel.

There has been a massive interest in angels since the 1980s. There are angel shops, TV documentaries on them, and a library of angel books are published. Some of this is good, but some disregards what the Bible says. e.g. Angels are usually drawn with wings, and some people say that when we die we become angels. Those things are myth.

There's so much in the Bible on angels, yet not much of it is taught. My formal teaching on angels at Moore College was: "Hebrews 1:14 says they are ministering spirits from God. God sends them to do his bidding, whether it's to give a message, or do some act. They usually do not have wings, but can appear normal or more fancy. It appears some angels fell, and that is where the devil and evil angels came from. There is not much more importance about angels, any questions?"

Angels appear many times in the Bible. They are in stories, history and poetry. Angels are spiritual beings. Jesus spoke about them many times, including Luke 20:36, when he was speaking about the resurrection. He says we won't be angels, but we will be like them in 2 ways: When we are raised, we will not marry or give in marriage just as angels do not, and we will not die again.

Today, I want to talk on 3 areas:

[1] What do they look like?

[2] What are their major roles? and

[3] How much attention should we pay them?

[1] What do they look like? Christmas angels are shiny, haloed and winged, and maybe have a fairy godmother wand as well. That Man of Vision in Dan 10 is flashy too. A man dressed in linen, a belt of finest gold - body like chrysolite - face like lightning - eyes like torches, arms and legs like burnished bronze, and voice like a crowd.

Maybe because the Christmas angels were in the sky, or because cherubs and seraphs have wings, most angels are drawn with wings. But Daniel 10 did not mention wings. I cannot find a Biblical angel (as distinct to cherubs and seraphs) described as having wings. Revelation 14 has 3 flying angels, but we are not told how they flew (with Qantas?).

Most often angels are described as men. They are mistaken for men, fed and spoken to without people realising they are angels. Hebrews 13:2 says *Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by doing so some people have entertained angels without knowing it.*

But sometimes, they are recognised straight away. Something about them tells people immediately that they are angels. When the women went to the tomb, they saw an angel or 2 sitting on the rock. Those angels were shining. Also, the glory of the Lord shone around the angel who announced the birth of Jesus to the shepherds.

Some angels shine. And these angels usually brought much fear to those who saw them. Their 1st words are generally *Peace! Don't be afraid!*

Most Christians will only see angels in heaven, not on earth. And we may be tempted to doubt that they exist. But God is real, and so are his angels, and we may entertain them unawares.

[2] What are their major roles? They do what God wants unless they have rejected Him, and are evil angels (demons).

The most prominent role of angels in the Bible is to deliver messages. They are the heavenly telegram bearers or messengers, which is what the Hebrew and Greek words for angel means. They are also part of the Host of heaven, who praise God continually, just as they did in the sky when the shepherds were told of Jesus' birth.

From time to time, God has sent them to do His will on earth. Sometimes that has meant bringing judgment. e.g. 1 Chronicles 21:15, God sent his angel to destroy the people of Jerusalem. In Revelation, angels deliver many punishments as they pour bowls of God's wrath, blow trumpets etc.

But not only do they bring judgment, they also guard God's people. There are guardian angels. In Genesis 48:16, Israel says God's angel delivered him from all harm. Exodus 23:20 says *See, I am sending an angel ahead of you to guard you along the way and to bring you to the place I have prepared.* In Numbers 22, an angel stops Balaam's donkey, and prevents God's people being cursed. In Matthew 2:19-23 an angel warned Joseph to escape to Egypt with Mary and baby Jesus. In Acts 5, Peter was let out of jail by an angel. And Jesus says in Matthew 18:11, that each little one of his has an angel in heaven, constantly seeing God's face.

The final major role, is their role on the last day. When Christ returns, he will come on the clouds, with the angels. Angels will then harvest the earth, gathering everyone, both dead and alive. They will

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then sort out the wheat from the chaff, the sheep from the goats, the good fish from the rest. And they will escort chaff to the fire after judgment.

[3] How much attention should we pay them? If they come from God, we should take great care to obey them. Balaam would have been destroyed if he had disobeyed. And they are God's messengers, so if we disobey, we disobey God.

But angels come to serve us as Hebrews 1:14 says *Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation.* They are here from God to serve us.

However, we must be very careful, for not all angels are from God. 2 Corinthians 11:14 says *Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.* And part of our function on the judgment day is to judge angels, presumably the evil ones, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6:3: *Don't you know we'll judge the angels?*

And I will end with 2 warnings, from Galatians 1:8 and Colossians 2:18 *But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned. and Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions.*