

The Twelve Most Important Things to Know about Angels

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Angels — *The Twelve Most Important Things to Know About Them*

1. They really exist. Not just in our minds, or our myths, or our symbols, or our culture. They are as real as your dog, or your sister, or electricity.
2. They're present, right here, right now, right next to you, reading these words with you.
3. They're not cute, cuddly, comfortable, chummy, or "cool". They are fearsome and formidable. They are huge. They are warriors.
4. They are the real "extra-terrestrials", the real "Super-men", the ultimate aliens. Their powers are far beyond those of all fictional creatures.
5. They are more brilliant minds than Einstein.
6. They can literally move the heavens and the earth if God permits them.
7. There are also evil angels, fallen angels, demons, or devils. These too are not myths. Demon possessions, and exorcisms, are real.
8. Angels are aware of you, even though you can't usually see or hear them. But you can communicate with them. You can talk to them without even speaking.
9. You really do have your very own "guardian angel". Everybody does.
10. Angels often come disguised. "Do not neglect hospitality, for some have entertained angels unawares" — that's a warning from life's oldest and best instruction manual.
11. We are on a protected part of a great battlefield between angels and devils, extending to eternity.
12. Angels are sentinels standing at the crossroads where life meets death. They work especially at moments of crisis, at the brink of disaster — for bodies, for souls, and for nations.

Why do people think it's stupid to believe in angels?

One reason is a mistake about themselves: the failure to distinguish between (1) sense perception or imagination (which is a kind of inner sensing) and (2) reason, or intelligence, or understanding. We don't *see* pure spirits, and we can't *imagine* them. That doesn't mean we can't *know* or *understand* them. We can see and imagine the difference between a five-sided figure (a pentagon) and a six-sided figure (a hexagon), and we can also intellectually understand that difference. We cannot, however, sense or imagine the difference between a 105-sided figure and a 106-sided figure. Both *look* to us simply like circles. But we can *understand* the difference and even measure it exactly. So we can understand some things we can't see. We can't see qualities like good and evil either. What color or shape or size is evil? Yet we can understand them. We can imagine our brains, but not our minds, our personalities. But we can know them.

Many who deny angels deny or are unaware of the spiritual half of themselves. Angels are a touchstone of "know thyself". So are animals.

Aren't angels irrelevant today? This is the age of man, isn't it?

Yes, this is the age of man, of self-consciousness, of psychology. And therefore it is crucial to "know thyself" accurately today. The major heresies of our day are not about God but about man.

The two most destructive of these heresies — and the two most popular — are angelism, confusing man with an angel by denying his likeness to animals, and animalism, confusing man with an animal by denying his likeness to angels.

Man is the only being that is both angel and animal, both spirit and body. He is the lowest spirit and the highest body, the stupidest angel and the smartest animal, the low point of the hierarchy of minds and the high point of the hierarchy of bodies.

More accurately stated, man is not both angel and animal because he is neither angel nor animal; he is between angels and animals, a unique rung on the cosmic ladder.

But whichever way you say it, man must know angels to know himself, just as he must know animals to know himself, for he must know what he is, and he must know what he is not.

Hierarchy and inequality among angels sound unjust and unfair. Is God an elitist?

First, God's justice is not equality. Neither is nature's.

- God the Creator is not equal to any of his creatures, but he is supreme.
- Among his creatures, spiritual creatures (angels and men) are superior to merely biological creatures.
- Among spiritual creatures, angels are more intelligent than men.
- Even within our own species, men are not all equal in intelligence, in quickness, in wisdom, in memory, or in many other things.
- And, of course, humans are superior to animals. If you doubt this, you'd better stop eating fish or start eating humans.
- Higher (more intelligent) animals are superior to lower (less intelligent) animals. That's why we prefer dogs to worms as pets. Even biologists rank species in a hierarchical

order. The more complex they are, the more conscious they are and the more sophisticated their functions.

Second, the hierarchy of angels over men parallels the hierarchy of men over animals, and the hierarchy within angels parallels the hierarchy within animals. If the arrangement of animals tells us something about the Creator's style and principles and preferences, it's reasonable to expect to find his style and principles and preferences manifested in angels too.

Third, justice does not mean equality, even among men. It means treating unequals unequally — giving an A to a student who answered 95 out of 100 questions correctly and an F to a student who answered only 45.

Many traditional societies, like those of classical Greece and Confucian China, saw justice as essentially an inequality, a harmony among *different* things: organs in the body, members in a family, heavenly bodies in the cosmos, musical notes in a song, classes in the state, faculties in the soul. The President is not necessarily a superior *person* to his military chief of staff but his *office* is. Justice demands the chief of staff obey his "superior", even if the latter has shortcomings.

Fourth, resentment against some kind of superiority is one of the seven deadly sins. It is called envy, and it is the only sin that never gave anyone any kind of pleasure at all.

In the Divine Comedy, Dante discovers that there are many unequal levels even in heaven. He asks Piccarda, who is on heaven's lowest level, whether she is not discontented with her lowly place and whether she longs to move up closer to God, to see more of God and receive more joy. Her answer is that no one in heaven is dissatisfied with his place or envious of anyone else: "From seat to seat throughout this realm, to all the realm is pleasing. [That is, each citizen is pleased with the kingdom as a whole; the whole is present to each individual.] For in his will, our hearts have found their peace. T. S. Eliot called this the profoundest line in all human literature.

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