

Week 31 – Tough Questions – Are there Girl-Angels? How Does God Heal?

Hey, this is Tim Perry here, pastor of Spiritual Discovery at Christ Community Church. I want to welcome you now to Week 31 of Tough Questions. We're going to continue doing what we did last week by taking some questions from our kids. So this is sort of a Kids Connect version of Tough Questions. If you've been tracking along with 4:4 and been doing the reading related to that, we're taking a little bit of a detour to deal with some questions that our kids are sending in.

Here's one I'm going to deal with this week first. It actually came from two different kids:

Kyla writes in and asks, **"God, why did you create angels?"** Great question! Then Caroline asks this, **"Are there girl angels?"** That was a very cool question. I really enjoyed researching that.

Well, let's look for a minute at what the Bible says about angels because that gives us a huge clue as to why God made them and who they are. When you open your Bible and when you read in the Old Testament – the word in Hebrew that is used for "angel" is a word called "malak". You could probably even say that word with me if you want. It's kind of like our big word of the week here in Tough Questions. In the Greek language that the New Testament was written in, the word "angelos" is used, and I bet if you look carefully at that word you can see exactly where we get our word "angel" from.

Now what's true of both of these words is that they literally mean the word "messenger". So when we see these words in the Bible, we can say, "Oh – messenger – that's what an angel is basically – a messenger." And think about all the different places in the Bible where God sent an angel to be a messenger. It runs all the way through the Old Testament and on into the New Testament. When Abraham is about ready to sacrifice Isaac back in Genesis Chapter 22, God sends an angel to interrupt him – to give him a very important message – "you don't need to sacrifice Isaac." Moses, when he encounters God at the burning bush – sees an angel in the form of a fire in this bush. Gabriel is sent a couple of times in the New Testament to different couples. He sent first of all to Zechariah and Elizabeth. They were about to give birth to a cousin of Jesus – John the Baptist. And then Mary, when she's wondering about what God is going to do in her life and how God is going to use her – he sends Gabriel to her as well and announces that she's going to be the mother of Jesus – a very special birth and a very special baby. So that was a very important message that God sent an angel to accomplish. Then when Jesus is actually resurrected from the dead and the women go to the tomb to see Jesus' body – who is there? A couple of angels to make a very important announcement to give a very message that Jesus is not here – he's risen.

Then one I caught as I read through the end of the Gospels is that Jesus when he's resurrected and then ascends to heaven, there are two angels present at the

ascension to tell everybody gathered around there that “Hey don’t worry, the same Jesus is going to come back someday.”

So basically angels are messengers who give very important messages from God to God’s people.

Here are a couple of other things that angels do if you read through your Bible:

Angels guarded the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve had to leave Eden. There were two cherubim that stood by the garden’s entrance and vended off anyone from coming back in the garden.

There was a presence of angels when God’s people were leaving the nation of Egypt and God used an angel to escort them out and to protect them.

Daniel in the lion’s den is protected from harm by angels.

God sometimes sent judgment in the form of an angel. God was judging His people in 2nd Samuel 24 and David had to intervene because an angel was there just about ready to destroy the City of Jerusalem.

An angel is also responsible for a huge victory in Hezekiah’s day. We just read about that a couple of weeks ago in Project 4:4.

Then there are lots of examples of spiritual warfare in the Bible where angels are the main ones doing battle on the forefront against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms that human beings can’t see with our eyes.

So there are a few things that angels wind up doing. They protect people; they watch over us, they give special instructions to God’s people in special points in history.

Well, I want to get to that other question – the one that Caroline raised about girl angels. What about angels and their gender? The Bible really doesn’t have a whole lot to say about angels having gender so we don’t really believe that angels are male and female in the same way that people are male and female. Most times, angels are portrayed as men in the Bible, but there’s an interesting example in the Book of Zechariah that I came across when I was researching this. Zechariah 5:9 gives us an example of angels that could possibly be portrayed as women. Listen to this and this comes from Zechariah’s prophetic vision in chapter 5 of his book.

Zechariah says, “I lifted my eyes and I saw and beheld two women coming forward (well, that just sounds like women, but keep reading) the wind was in their wings. (So these are women with wings – what do you think that might be?) They had wings like the wings of a stork and they lifted up a basket between earth and heaven. Then I said to the angel who talked with me, “Where are they taking the basket?”

Now this is a fascinating vision of the end times that Zechariah is portraying and giving to God's people. But in that vision is a feminine image of the angel. And that's kind of interesting, isn't it?

Well, Jesus had something very important to say about gender and angels – he was quizzed one time by people who were trying to trap him in an argument. And they proposed a hypothetical situation of a woman who had gone from one marriage to another to another and they asked Jesus, "Well, in heaven – whose wife is she really going to be?" And Jesus' answer gives us a clue about angels and gender. Jesus said this, *"Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God? When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven."* Mark 12:1

That verse has lead a lot of theologians and scholars to conclude that angels do not have gender in the same way that people do. It doesn't fit with God's purpose for them. There are no examples of baby angels anywhere in the Bible or angels having children.

So what can we conclude? Angels are very important messengers of God. They're sent on special tasks at special points in time to accomplish God's purposes for God's people. They often act as protectors in ways that people can't see, but benefit from.

So one thing that I'd like to conclude with is this: angels are very powerful beings, but they are servants of God just like humans are. So we should never worship them. When people encountered angels in the Bible, they were tempted to bow down and worship them because they were so awesome, and every time the angel or the messenger of the Lord, would say get up – don't worship me – I'm just a servant of the Lord.

So that's what angels are – messengers and servants of the Lord. Kyla and Caroline – thanks for sending in those questions – those were great!

Here's another great question we'll try to tackle today – **"How can God cure people with just one touch?"** Bailee, thanks for asking that question – it's a great question. There are gobs of examples in the Old Testament and the New Testament of God healing people through someone that He's given the power to heal. All they had to do was to touch that person and speak to them and they were healed. We don't see that quite as often today, but it happened all over the place in the Bible. How could God do that?

Well, here are two or three things to think about. First of all, God can heal because he has the power to do that. When Jesus came, he used his power to heal people. They brought to Jesus a boy in Mark Chapter 9 that had an evil spirit. The boy's father said, "Jesus – if you are able, can you cast out the demon – can you heal him – can you make him better?" Jesus was a little miffed at the guy and he said, "Can I?"

Of course I can!" And so the question became – "Do you believe that I can?" So Jesus combines his awesome power with our willingness to believe in him that he can do it. So that creates the circumstances in which he can work to heal people.

Jesus could also heal with a touch because Jesus healed with compassion. Think about the guy who had leprosy for a minute. Leprosy was a really contagious, nasty disease that no one wanted to contract. If you had leprosy, you had to alert everybody in your vicinity that you were sick and that you had leprosy – and everybody would get out of your way. So your question about Jesus healing with just one touch is very profound in the case of the leper because Jesus walked right up to him and did the unthinkable thing. He reached out and touched the leper. It was extremely important for that leper that Jesus heal him like that. It restored his dignity, it gave him his sense of worth again and it was a powerful way of communicating love, acceptance and compassion on the part of Jesus so the touch was so important in that example of Jesus healing somebody.

Then the last one that I want to talk about is the one my picture shows here. This is the guy whose friends drag him to a house where Jesus is teaching. They take him up onto the roof of the house, they bash a hole in the roof of the house and they lower him down right in front of Jesus. The way that Jesus heals this guy is really, really important to notice. Not only did he heal the guy of his physical ailment, but he started by forgiving him of his sins. That's another observation I want to make is that Jesus saw a connection between the physical and the spiritual when he healed people. Instead of saying, "Hey paralyzed guy – you can get up and walk off", Jesus stopped for a minute and everybody watched what he was going to do. He said, "My son, your sins are forgiven." Well, hey, the guy didn't come to Jesus because he was a sinner – he came to Jesus because he was a paralytic and Jesus demonstrated the connection between the physical and the spiritual by actually forgiving him of his sins first. Then because he had the power and the authority and the compassion to heal him and forgive his sins, he raised him up from his physical ailment.

Now that leaves us with a question and that is, does God heal today? Jesus gave his followers the power to actually heal and you see that in the New Testament. You see that in the Book of Acts. God's people were empowered to ask for healing on behalf of those who were sick and God would intervene and sometimes miraculously heal people. I believe He still does that today. The book of James says this:

"Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up." James 5:14-15

Then there's still this same connection between healing and forgiveness in what James is saying because he goes on to say this:

“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.” James 5:16

So to sum things up – yes, God has the power to heal with just a touch. Great question! Yes – God uses that power today in the lives of people. Sometimes people try to misuse that power and God doesn’t show up and people mess up this gift of asking for healing that God has given us.

But I want to encourage all of you – if you’re sick, if you need God’s touch in your life, ask for it. Find other Christians who believe that God can heal you and have them pray with you and for you. Also seek the Lord for the issues of sin in your life as well. Not only does he want you to be healed, he wants you to be forgiven.

Well, these have been great questions that you kids have been sending in. Us big people here are learning right along with you. Thanks so much – keep sending us your questions in Kids Connect and we’ll keep coming back here to my blog and answering them.

If you have any questions or comments about what I’ve said today, just hit on the comment tab down there and let’s dialog about it. Thanks again for being with me. It’s been Tim Perry, Pastor of Spiritual Discovery at Christ Community Church.