

# Angels

In the eternity past, long before God created our universe and the human race, He created the angelic beings called angels (Job 38:7). In most cases, the word angels denote heavenly beings. The Greek term *aggelos* and Hebrew *malakh* both mean messenger, an order of created beings, superior to man, belonging to heaven and engaged in the service of God. Angels are spiritual supernatural, eternal, and celestial beings with no material bodies but may assume the human form when necessary (Heb. 1:14, Luke 24:4, Acts 10:3).

The term chosen by Scripture to denote angels gives us the clue to the function by which they are primarily to be known and understood. They are God's messengers or ambassadors. They belong to His heavenly court and service. Their mission in heaven is to praise God (Rev. 4:5). They devote themselves to doing God's perfect will (Ps. 103:20) and by this activity they behold His face (Matt. 18:10).

In the eternity past, they accompanied God in His work of creation (Job 38:7), though they themselves are also creatures (Psalm 148:2, 5). They also assist in God's providential ordering of human historical affairs (Daniel 12:1). Above all they are active in the divine work of reconciliation (from Genesis 19:1-2 onward). In fulfillment of their mission, they declare God's will or decree (Luke 1:26-27) and do His work (Matt. 28:2).

There seems to be some ordering in their ranks; some are referred to as archangels, as over against those who are referred to as simply angels (1 Thess. 4:16; Jude 9). Angels have various ranks and functions that glorify God. The function of angels may be seen clearly from their part in the saving mission of Jesus Christ. They are naturally present when this both begins with the nativity (Luke 1-3) and ends with the resurrection (Matt. 28:2) and ascension (Acts 1:10). They also assisted the church in its early ministry (Acts 5:19; 10:3).

Finally, they will come with Christ when He returns in glory (Matt. 24:31) and separate the righteous and the wicked. They will play an important role in the events of the end time (Rev. 7:1-11).

Angels accompanied Christ in the work of redemption and declares His work of salvation, praising the God of grace and glory and summoning men and women to participate in their worship (Luke 1:46). There seems to be only two angelic recorded appearances between Christ's birth and resurrection: at the beginning of His way to the cross in the temptation and then before the crucifixion itself at Gethsemane.

This is perhaps because Christ had to tread His way of atoning self-giving alone, and in His humiliation He is made a little lower than the angels (Heb. 2:9), though exalted far above them by nature. They rejoice at sinners repenting (Luke 15:10) and will hear the Son of man confess those who will confess Him (Luke 12:8).

The Bible offers only a few hints about the nature of angels. Belonging to the heavenly sphere, they cannot be properly conceived of in earthly terms. They are mostly described in relation to God, as God's angels (Ps. 104:4). The two angelic names, Michael and Gabriel, emphasize this relationship with the "e" suffix attached to Hebrew name of God. It is as God's angels, perhaps, that they are called "elect" in 1 Tim. 5:21. Hebrews 1:14 described them as "ministering spirits" (Ps. 104:4) who assist the believers in pains.

Among the heavenly beings mentioned is made of the seraphim (Isaiah 6:2) and the cherubim. Cherubim guarded Eden after the expulsion of Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:24). They form God's chariot at His descent (Ps. 18:10). Figures of cherubim adorned the Ark (Ex. 25:17) and Solomon's temple (1 Kings 6:23), so that Yahweh is enthroned above the cherubim (1 Sam. 4:4; Psalm 80:1). Ezekiel offers an elaborate visionary description (Ezek. 1:10; 9:3; 10:15-22) in which their form is human (1:5) but symbolical traits stress their glory and spiritual excellence.

Of the angels named, Michael is called "the great prince" (Dan. 12:1) and the other angels seem to be led by Him (Rev. 12:7), though God Himself, of course, is the Lord of hosts and Prince of the host (Dan. 8:11). The man who appeared to Joshua was an angel, the commander of the army of the Lord, (Hos.12:4). Gabriel, the other angel named in canonical Scripture, is the angel of the annunciation (Luke 1:26). The apocryphal archangels (Raphael, Uriel, Jemeil Tob) are all fictitious.

The error in so much angelology was to deal with angels apart from the biblical doctrines. Even regarding their function there was a tendency to rationalize or to focus interest on the idea of the guardian angel (Matt. 18:10). Though they come in human form, the angels are essentially non-corporeal. Even if they were present at the time of creation, they are still creatures (Ps. 148:2, 5). They form an ordered unity, yet their plurality entails the existence of individuals within the totality, with a possible gradation in function. As compared to humans they have the advantage of being in God's immediate presence and serving as His direct messengers, and seem to play some role in or over the nations (Dan. 10). But when men and women respond to God's saving work in Christ they are raised above angels (Heb. 1:14), and will finally judge them (1 Cor. 6:3), for even angels are not faultless in God's eyes (Job 4:18; 15:15).

Angels of God are majestic and glorious beings (Ps. 148:2-5, Col. 1:16). They are superior in power, strength and intelligence than men (2 Pet. 2:11). Although they are endowed with superior intellect and wisdom (2 Samuel 14:17, 20), but they are not omnipotent (Ps. 103:20) and not omniscient (1 Pet. 1:21). The Bible clearly warns us not to worship them (Col. 2:18, Rev. 19:20). Angels were created with a volition freedom and capacity for making free will decision (Jude 6, Gen. 1:31).

The men are equal to them after resurrection to eternal life (Luke 20:34-). They are to be judged by mature believers of the Church Age (1 Cor. 6:3). The elect angels of God in no way will speak or act contrary to God's will, purpose and God's Word (Gal. 1:8). Angels are not sexual beings so they do not marry. Angels appeared in human form but never appeared in sub-human form or in the form of animals (Acts 10:3, 30). They always appeared as men, never as women and never as infant without wings (Gen. 18:2, 19:1, Heb. 13:2, Jos. 5:13).

They appeared fully clothed not naked. There is no recorded appearance of angels in the Bible to unbelievers (Matt. 24:37-39. Luke 24:4, Dan. 10:5-6, 18). There are numerous terms for angels like the sons of Gods (Job 38:7), a phrase prior to angelic rebellion was applied generally to all angels of lower rank, but became exclusively designated for demons after the angelic revolt (Gen. 6:2-4, Job 1:6).

Angels of God are also called heavenly beings referring to all ranks (Ps. 29:1, 89:61) or Holy Ones (Ps. 89:5-7) or Heavenly Hosts (Luke 2:13), or Hosts of Armies (1 Samuel 1:11) and Holy Myriads (Jude 14). They are called Holy Angels or Angels of God (Luke 9:26, 12:8) or God's Angels (Heb. 1:6, Ps. 103:20).

Some angels announced beforehand the birth of some of God's select servants [Gen. 18:9-, Judg. 13:2-24, Luke 1:13, 2:8-15]. Certain angels on some occasions forewarned the righteous of imminent danger or threatening disaster, destruction or calamity [Gen. 18:16-19, Matt. 2:13, Dan. 8:1]. Certain angels guided and instructed some righteous believers when the Canon of the Scripture was completed [Acts 7:38, 8:26, Gal. 3:19]. Certain angels interpreted dreams and visions for some select servants of God [Zech. 1:9, Dan. 7:16, Rev. 17:7].

Angels destroyed the enemies of God's people and in some occasion defended them [Ex. 12:23, 29]. Angels are sentry guards over believers, client nation and local spiritual churches [Ps. 34:7, 91:11, Matt. 18:10]. They are watchers over the universal Church of Christ [Rev. 1:20]. They are the ministering Spirits to the Church Age believers under the undeserved sufferings. They assist in the divine judgment of unbelievers and divine discipline of the reversionistic believers (Rev. 18; 1, Mark 13:27). They praise God continually in the past, present, and future (Revelation 19:1-3). They are always praising God with real praises. Angels are spiritual beings created by God to glorify Him.

Existence of angels:

- Angels are found in thirty-four books of the Bible in two hundred seventy-five references.
- Christ taught the existence of angels (Matt. 18:10; 26:53).
- The angels are a distinct order of creation and have been given a heavenly position, or sphere, above the sphere of man (Ps. 8:5; Heb. 2:7-9 and Rev. 5:11; 7:11).
- Angel means "messenger." They are always referred to in the masculine gender.

The personality of angels:

- Intellect (1 Pet. 1:12).
- Emotions (Luke 2:13).
- Will (Jude 6) -- able to leave their first estate.

Creation of Angels:

- Colossians 1: 15-17 Angels are not a race but a host. They are the sons of God (Job 1:6), not of other angels.
- They were created (Job 38:6, 7) at some point in time before the creation of the physical world.
- The angels were created in a state of holiness (Jude 6). They are innumerable (Heb. 12:22).

The nature of angels:

- They are spirit beings (Heb. 1:14).
- They do not reproduce (Mark 12:25).
- They are masculine except in Zech. 5:9 (feminine gender used two times).
- They do not lie (Luke 20:36).
- They are distinct from human beings (Ps. 8:4,5).
- They are not the spirits of the dead.
- They have great power (II Pet. 2:11).

The ministry of angels to believers:

- Help believers in general (Heb. 1:14).
- Involved in answering prayer (Acts 12; 7).
- Give encouragement (Acts 27:23-24).
- Guardian angels (Heb. 1:14; Matt. 18:10).
- Observe Christians' experiences (1 Cor. 4:9)
- Interested in evangelistic efforts (Luke 15:10).
- Care for believers at death (Luke 16:2; Jude 9).

The ministry of angels to unbelievers:

- Michael is Israel's guardian (Daniel 12:1).
- Involved in executing the judgments of the tribulation period (Rev. 8,9 and 16).
- Bring punishment to unbelievers (Acts 12:23).
- Involved when the Lord returns to establish His kingdom (Matt. 13:39).



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