



Angels

By

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Chapter 1

Angels

Much is written about angels biblically and secularly.

There are varied ideas on the existence, being, and what constitutes or makes an angel. Superstitious and fallacious ideas about angels have arisen from these diverse beliefs. As we consider the subject of angels, we will address what they are. Although the Bible condemns the practice, some religious persuasions promote the worship of angels. The Bible is clear that angels are servants or ministers of God to the redeemed.

What are angels?

The word “angel” is derived from the Hebrew word “malak” and the Greek word “angelos,” refers to a messenger, envoy, minister or one who is sent from God. Angels are an order of heavenly being that is superior to man in power and intelligence. They are ambassadors, messengers and representatives that carry out the purpose and plan of God. By nature, angels are spiritual beings.

The Form And Nature Of Angels

Angels are spirit beings.

Hebrews 1:7 NIV In speaking of the angels he says, “He makes his angels winds, his servants flames of fire.”

Psalms 104:4 NIV He makes winds his messengers, flames of fire his servants.

Hebrews 1:14 NIV Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?

What is a “spirit being” like?

A spirit being is not the same as a human being. In their various classifications and forms, angels may become visible or invisible.

The nature of angels is superior to the human nature.

Hebrews 2:7 NKJV You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, And set him over the works of Your hands.

Humanity was created a little lower than angels, but was given authority over the works of God’s hands. This is further described in verse 9.

Hebrews 2:9 NKJV But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.

Jesus was born of a woman for the purpose of suffering death to accomplish

the redemption and salvation of man. As a man, He was made a little lower than the angels. The implication is that Jesus was subject to death and the angels are not. Angels are created to continue to exist perpetually after their creation.

Angels have power and knowledge that is greater than human knowledge and power.

2 Peter 2:11 NKJV Whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord.

In being and power, angels are greater than the strongest or greatest human being. However, they are not greater than God their Creator.

Angels are subject to God.

Genesis 19:12-13 HCSB Then the angels said to Lot, “Do you have anyone else here: a son-in-law, your sons and daughters, or anyone else in the city who belongs to you? Get them out of this place, for we are about to destroy this place because the outcry against its people is so great before the LORD, that the LORD has sent us to destroy it.”

Two angels were sent to Sodom to utterly destroy the place with fire and brimstone.

Psalms 103:20-21 NKJV Bless the Lord, you His angels, Who excel in strength, who do His word, heeding the voice of His word. Bless the Lord, all you His hosts, You ministers of His, who do His pleasure.

Since they are His messengers, ministers and mighty angels, they are subject to God and minister and function according to His pleasure.

Angels exist to serve God in five ways:

1. to “bless the LORD” in worship and service
2. to “do His word” concerning activities in heaven and earth
3. to heed the voice of God’s word
4. to minister on God’s behalf
5. to do God’s pleasure

As created beings, angels fall under the omnipotent sovereign rule of almighty God. Jesus is the Lord of hosts of angels.

There are two hosts of spirit beings known as angels.

The hosts of angels are either holy angels or fallen angels.

The fact of the existence of angels can be found throughout the entire Word

of God. The Bible refers to angels over 273 times. Fallen angels will be discussed later.

Initially, all angels were created holy.

As such, they were created to carry out God's will and sovereign purpose. They were created as free moral agents with the ability to obey, disobey, sin, fall, or remain true to their original state. The term "angel" is not a personal name, but a title that describes their office or being. The hosts of angels in all of their varied classifications were created to be at the disposal of the Lord. The word "angel" is always used in the masculine gender. Sexuality or gender persuasion is never ascribed to angels.

Where do angels come from?

Angels are a host of spirit beings created by God. They were not brought into being by reproduction or evolution, but by direct determined creation of God. Contrary to some false concepts, humans never become angels.

What are angels?

Angels are spirit beings created by God to be holy to the Lord and His servants and messengers. The Bible declares what they have done, are doing and shall do in the future. They are presently "*sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation,*" (Hebrews 1:14). Angels were uniquely created by God in a different form or composition than man or any other created being. Although they are spirit beings, they have a body or form.

The Creation Of Angels

Angels were the first and highest created beings.

They were already present at the time of creation of the earth and rejoiced when God created the world (Psalms 148:2, 5; Job 38:4-7). Angels were created by God and for God.

Psalm 148:2 NKJV Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts!

Psalm 148:5 NKJV Let them praise the name of the Lord, For He commanded and they were created.

Angels possess power and might

Although angels are not omnipotent or all powerful, they do possess the great power that God has given them. Examples of their power and strength are recorded in several instances.

- In 2 Kings 19:35, the angel of the LORD put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the Assyrian army.
- An angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought the apostles out, (Acts 5:19).
- When Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him

down and he was eaten by worms and died, (Acts 12:23).

- In the Book of Revelation the mighty angels of God are sent to bring judgment and the wrath of God on the whole earth.

In a series of questions on the origin, structure and fate of the world, God challenged Job's knowledge of His control over all things.

Job 38:4-7 NIV "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. ⁵Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone— ⁷while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?

Before the stars, planets, earth and man, angels were created and were in the presence of God. They rejoice and shouted for joy when they observed God's creative power.

Their Creation Is Affirmed.

This list of created things appears to be in consecutive order in Psalm 148. The angels were created before the sun, moon, stars, heavens, and waters above the sky are mentioned.

Psalm 148:2-5 NIV⁸⁴ ²Praise Him, all His angels, praise Him, all His heavenly hosts. ³Praise Him, sun and moon, praise Him, all you shining stars. ⁴Praise Him, you highest heavens and you waters above the skies. ⁵Let them praise the name of the LORD, for He commanded and they were created.

The creation of angels, sun, moon, stars, happened at the command of God.

Colossians 1:16-17 NIV For by Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

The creation of angels appears to be one simultaneous act.

They were created an innumerable host. Throughout the ages of time, the same angels have ministered according to God's plan. The various degrees of thrones, powers, rulers or authorities refer to the different spiritual and earthly rulers. These visible and invisible forces that are working in the world are subject to God.

Angels Can Become Visible.

Angels have bodies of some kind and perform bodily acts, but not like our bodies. They can appear in the outward appearance or form of a man.

- In Genesis 18, three men appeared to Abraham at the terebinth trees of Mamre. One of these was the Lord Jesus and the other two were angels that were sent to destroy Sodom.
- In Genesis 19:1-3 the angels were visible to Lot who prepared food for them and they ate.
- Zacharias was ministering in the holy place when the angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. He announced the birth of John the Baptist, (Luke 1:11-25). When Zacharias questioned how this could be, he was made mute until the child was born.
- The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth... (Luke 1:26). After giving Mary the message from God about her conception and birth of the Son of God, the angel departed.
- Later, an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him to not be afraid to take Mary for his wife, for the child she conceived was of the Holy Spirit, (Matthew 1:20).
- After Jesus' resurrection, two angels in white were seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot, and announced His resurrection, (John 20:12).

Due to their form and physical makeup, angels have the ability to work in the visible or invisible realm.

As with all created things, angels are subject to the supremacy of Christ. (Colossians 1:16-17) No creature is autonomous, independent, self-sustaining and self-existent, all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

Angels may be manifested in the form of man.

Masculine pronouns are always used in referring to them.

Matthew 28:2-6 NIV ²There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. ⁴The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. ⁵The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. ⁶He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.

Sexuality, in the human sense, is never ascribed to angels.

Matthew 22:30 NIV At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.

Several things are implied by this verse. In heaven, people will be similar though not identical to the angels. Life in heaven will not be an extension of

this present temporal existence. Jesus was not teaching a genderless existence, but was affirming a new and glorious existence in heaven. As such, marriage and being given in marriage will not be present in heaven. Our bodies will be transformed to be like Christ's glorious body, (1 Corinthians 15:35-49; 2 Corinthians 5:1-5). This also indicates the state of angels that they do not marry or reproduce.

Angels will never die.

Luke 20:35-36 NIV ³⁵But those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage, ³⁶and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection.

Angels never cease to exist, grow old or pass away. The number of angels never decreases or increases, unless God creates more angels. They were created immortal and infinite spirit beings. Immortal means not subject to death. Infinite means not limited to the boundaries of time or space. This gives angels the ability to function in heaven and on earth and throughout the ages of mankind and time. Unless God should create more angels, the hosts of them will remain numerically static throughout their eternal existence since they do not have offspring or procreate.

Angels are innumerable.

Hebrews 12:22 NIV But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly.

(NASB) myriads of angels

(NKJV) an innumerable company of angels

(NLT) countless thousands of angels

Daniel 7:10 NLT and a river of fire was pouring out, flowing from His presence. **Millions of angels ministered to Him; many millions stood to attend him.** Then the court began its session, and the books were opened.

Matthew 26:53 NIV Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? (a legion was 6,000)

Luke 2:13-14 NIV Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest...

Revelation 5:11 NIV84 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.

All of these Scriptures convey a sense of immensity of number of angels beyond all human computation.

The normal abode of angels is heavens.

Revelation 5:11 NIV 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.

Revelation 7:11 NIV All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God,

In their original state, all the angels were holy and dwelled in the presence of God. At that time, the heavenly host of angels were occupied doing the bidding of the Lord of host, God almighty. Sometime before the creation of the world some of the angelic hosts rebelled against God and lost their exalted position. Lucifer, (*Satan, the devil*) lead the revolt against God. We will discuss this more when we look at the fallen angels.

Discussion

Before God created the universe and all that is in it, angels were created.

What does that mean? Where were they?

1. In the presence of God
2. In eternity before the known time
3. Before the creation of the known universe

When God created the universe, stars, planets, earth, animals, and man, the angels were present.

1. They witnessed God's creation of all of these things.
2. They sang and rejoiced.
3. They were witnesses of God's creative power.