

## Chapter 2

### Classification, Appearance Of Angels

Scriptures reveal various ranks, functions and organization of angels. The exercise of power or authority differs greatly by their angelic office and mission from God. There are various classes, orders, and appearances of angels. Their position, rank, and standing are determined by God. In Jewish rabbinical literature and in the Talmud there are ten angelic classes. We will be looking at the classes or orders of angels that are clearly presented in the Bible.

#### *Angel (Hebrew - malak / Greek –angelos)*

Malak and angelos incorporate all of the angelic host. It is difficult to tell if there is a separate order of angels or if this is a general term to describe all angelic beings. We are not told exactly how many angels there are or how many are in each order or class of angels. Scriptures indicate there is an innumerable host of millions of angels.

**Daniel 7:10 NIV** Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened.

**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.

#### Appearance of angels

Not much is said about the general appearance of angels.

One thing that is said is they have wings and are multiplied millions in number. When they appear to individuals, they have the ability to take on the appearance of a man or God's mighty warring angels.

#### *Cherubim - plural of cherub*

The cherubim are presented as guarding and covering angels in Scripture.

- They first appeared at the entrance to the Garden of Eden, where God placed them to guard the way of the "Tree of Life" with flaming swords from fallen man (Genesis 3:24).
- Moses was instructed to place replicas of two cherubim on the Mercy Seat above the Ark of the Covenant where God met with His people (Exodus 25:18-22, Psalm 80:1). The Mercy Seat was a type of God's throne and the divine holiness was guarded by the cherubim. They are seen around the throne of God, (Exodus 25:18; Psalms 80:1; Psalms 99:1; Isaiah 37:16; Hebrews 9:5).
- They were also represented in the design of the inner curtain of the tabernacle and the veil, (Exodus 26:1)
- Solomon had two cherubim made to stand inside the inner sanctuary of the Temple that were made of olive wood and overlaid with gold and stood 15

feet tall, (1 Kings 6:23-28).

- God is seen riding upon the chariot of God carried by the cherubim, (2 Samuel 22:11; Psalms 18:10, Ezekiel 1).

### Appearance of Cherubim

Cherubim are an exotic and beautiful being that are covered with precious stones. They are presented in various forms. Ezekiel describes Satan who was a guardian anointed cherub before his fall.

**Ezekiel 28:13-14 NKJV** You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering: The sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created. “You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones.

The four living creatures that Ezekiel saw below the throne of God were cherubim.

**Ezekiel 1:5-8 NKJV** Also from within it came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: they had the likeness of a man. Each one had four faces, and each one had four wings. Their legs were straight, and the soles of their feet were like the soles of calves’ feet. They sparkled like the color of burnished bronze. The hands of a man were under their wings on their four sides; and each of the four had faces and wings.

The four living creatures have two wings on each side of their body. Two wings touched another being and two wings covered their own body, (Ezekiel 1:11). These four living creatures are probably the same ones that John saw around the throne.

**Revelation 4:6-8 NIV** Also before the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal. In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle. Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.”

The cherubim are mentioned in several scriptures as living beings in various forms that abide near the throne of God.

### The Seraphim

This is a plural of the word seraphs. Seraphim means “burners.” They are

presented in a form that is similar to a man. They are identified with the six winged living creatures that surround the Throne of God, (Revelation 4:6-8).

**Isaiah 6:1-4 NIV** <sup>1</sup>In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. <sup>2</sup>Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. <sup>3</sup>And they were calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.” <sup>4</sup>At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. ...

Isaiah saw the seraphim surrounding the throne of God. These angels are expressive of the holiness which demands cleansing before serving. Seraph means “burning ones” because of their appearance. They are servants around the throne of God, singing His praises, and doing His bidding. While the cherubim are below the Throne of God, the seraphim stand above the Throne. (Isaiah 6:1-2)

### *Archangels*

The term archangel occurs twice in Scriptures. Revelation 8:2 refers to seven angels that stand before God. These are probably the archangels. No description is given for the appearance of this order or class of angels.

The three angels that are named in the Scriptures are Michael, Gabriel, and Lucifer. Michael is the only angel named as an archangel. Lucifer is a cherubim. Gabriel’s order of class of angel is not defined.

**1 Thessalonians 4:16 NIV** For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

**Jude 9 NIV** But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!”

*Michael the archangel has his own angels.*

**Revelation 12:7 NIV** And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back.

Revelation 8:2 speaks of seven angels in the presence of God.

**Revelation 8:2 NIV** And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets.

*The apocryphal book of Enoch 20:1-8 enumerates seven angels of power.*

*(The apocryphal books are not inspired Scripture, but are traditional writings.)*

**Enoch 20:1-8** And these are the names of the holy angels who watch. **Uriel**, one of the holy angels, who is over the world and over Tartarus. **Raphael**, one of the holy angels, who is over the spirits of men. **Raguel**, one of the holy angels who takes vengeance on the world of the luminaries. **Michael**, one of the holy angels, to wit, he that is set over the best part of mankind and over chaos. **Saraqael**, one of the holy angels, who is set over the spirits, who sin in the spirit. **Gabriel**, one of the holy angels, who is over Paradise and the serpents and the Cherubim. **Remiel**, one of the holy angels, whom God set over those who rise.

**Tobit 12:15** reads: "I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels who offer up the prayer of the saints and enter in before the glory of the Holy one."

*What Gabriel said of Himself in Luke 1:19, is said here of the seven angels, "who stand before the presence of God".*

Michael, the Archangel, is the head or the prince of angels.

His name means "who is like unto God." He is the messenger of law and judgment. Michael is mentioned five times in Scripture. In Daniel 10: 3, Michael is called "one of the chief princes." In verse 21, Michael was the only one to support Daniel against Satan. In Daniel 12:1 Michael, the great prince who protects God's people, will arise in the end times and will deliver them. In Jude 9, Michael opposed Satan concerning the body of Moses

**Revelation 12:7 NIV84** And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back.

*Gabriel means "man of God" or "hero of God."*

He is named four times in Scripture. Gabriel was given important messages from God to be delivered to Daniel, Zacharias and Mary, the mother of Jesus.

**Daniel 8:16 NIV** And I heard a man's voice from the Ulai calling, "Gabriel, tell this man the meaning of the vision."

Gabriel delivered to Daniel a revelation of the vision of the "seventy weeks." Gabriel explained the meaning of the vision to Daniel.

**Daniel 9:20-23 NIV** While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel and making my request to the LORD my God for his holy hill— <sup>21</sup>while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice. <sup>22</sup>He instructed me and said to me, "Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding. <sup>23</sup>As soon as you began to pray, an answer was given, which I

have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed. Therefore, consider the message and understand the vision:

Gabriel delivered the message to Zacharias announcing the birth of John, the forerunner of Jesus.

**Luke 1:19 NIV** The angel answered, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news."

Gabriel announced the birth of the Savior to the virgin, Mary.

**Luke 1:26-27 NIV** In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary...

### *Guardian Angels*

**Psalms 91:11-12 NIV** For He will command His angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.

**Matthew 18:10 NIV** See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.

It is difficult to know if guardian angels are a class or ministry of angels. According to this text, there are at least two angels assigned duties to protect and guide each believer. These guardian angels are not usually visible.

**Psalms 34:7 NLT** For the angel of the LORD is a guard; he surrounds and defends all who fear him.

**Psalms 34:7 HCSB** The Angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him, and rescues them.

### *Appearance*

**Psalms 91:4 NIV** He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.

Those who have witnessed the ministry of guardian angels have seen them in different forms. Sometimes they appear dressed in white with wings and other times they appear as a man. Always when they minister, they manifest a sense of God's holiness and power. They only minister according to God's command and will. Elisha prayed that the Lord would open the eyes of his servant so that he could see the horses and chariots of fire and the angels of the Lord all around them, (2 Kings 6).

### **The Ministry of Holy Angels**

All of the function and ministry of angels is at the discretion and will of God. Their service to God is diverse and is not limited to their order or class of angel.

Angels must have the permission and direction of God to act in relation to the events and activities on earth.

### *They praise and worship God.*

Their primary function is to praise God night and day, (Job 38:7; Isaiah 6; Psalms 103:20; Psalms 148:2; Revelation 5:11).

**Hebrews 1:6 NIV** God says, “Let all God’s angels worship him.”

All angels worship God audibly with singing and other forms of praise.

### *Ministry to the heirs of salvation*

- Rejoice at the salvation of a sinner, Luke 15:10.
- Protect from harm, Psalms 34:7; Psalms 91:11; Matthew 18:10.
- Observe the activities of the church, 1 Corinthians 11:10; 1 Timothy 5:21; Ephesians 3:10; 1 Peter 1:12.
- Encourage in times of extreme trial, Genesis 28:12-13; Genesis 32:1-2; Acts 5:19-20; Acts 12:5-15; Acts 27:23-24
- Minister to the saints of God, 1 Kings 19:5-7; Acts 10:3-7; Hebrews 1:14.
- Deliver and keep from enemies, Psalms 34:7; Psalms 91:11-12; Daniel 6:22; 2 Kings 6:16;
- Convey and confirm the Word, Galatians, 3:19; Hebrews 2:2; Revelation 14:6
- Give guidance and wisdom, Matthew 1:20; 2:13,19,20; Acts 8:26; 10:3-5
- Involved in conveying believers into the afterlife, Luke 16:22.
- Angels are heavily involved in the Day of Judgment, Matthew 13:30, 39; 49, 50; 2 Thessalonians 1:7. They are mentioned more than fifty-seven times in relation to the judgments between Revelation 7 and 20.

### *The ministry of angels is as diverse as God’s command and will.*

They mediate the special revelation of God, communicate His blessings to individuals, and execute judgment on the wicked. Angels minister as God directs throughout the ages of mankind. We are never instructed to pray for angels or request their help. Our detection of the ministry of angels is always after they have been dispatched by God. It may surprise you to know that angels are present before we recognize a need.

**Psalm 91:11 NKJV** For He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways.

**Psalm 34:7 NKJV** The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, And delivers them.

**Hebrews 1:14 NKJV** Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?

When we look at the fallen angel we will consider the thrones, dominions, principalities, powers, and rulers of darkness.