

# ANGELS

*Who They are What They Do*



## A Study Outline

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# ANGELS

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## A. Why study angels?

1. Angels play a prominent role in Scripture.
2. They have an important function in the overall plan of God as well as in the lives of believers.
3. If we are to study the complete plan of God, then the study of angels is necessary.
4. A study of angels reminds us of the reality of the unseen world.
5. Understanding what the Bible says about angels will clear up ignorance on the subject.
6. Realizing that angels are observing us will encourage us to live more consistent lives.
7. Understanding that angels protect believers will comfort us in times of trouble.
8. We also have their example of devoted service to God.<sup>1</sup>

## B. What are angels?

1. Angels are created, spiritual beings with moral judgment and high intelligence, but without physical bodies.<sup>2</sup>
2. There are accounts in the Bible where angels have appeared in the form of human beings with physical bodies (angelophanies).
3. The Hebrew word for angel, *malak* is found 103 times in the OT and simply means "messenger."
4. The Greek NT word *angelos* also means "messenger."

## C. Characteristics of angels

1. They are spirit beings but not equal with God (Heb. 1:13-14)
2. They are invisible (Col. 1:16)
3. They do not marry<sup>3</sup> (Matt. 22:30; Mark 12:25)
4. They never die (Luke 20:36)
5. They are higher than humans (Heb. 2:6-7a)
6. They/some have wings with which to fly (Isa. 6:2)
7. They are inquisitive (1 Pet. 1:12)
8. They have emotions (Luke 2:13-14, 15:10)
9. They have great strength (Psa.103:20; Isa. 37:36)
10. They were susceptible to temptation and sin but God decided to redeem none of them (Jude 6; 2 Pet. 2:4)
11. They are innumerable (Heb. 12:22)
12. They are organized<sup>4</sup> (Eph. 3:10)

## D. What are the types of angels?

1. Chief Princes: These are a group of superior angels (Dan. 10:13). Michael apparently is the foremost

because he is the archangel.<sup>5</sup>

2. Governmental Rulers: There are several types of governmental rulers referred to in the Bible, whether they are distinct or simply descriptive overlaps is uncertain. They include:
  - Rulers or principalities (Rom. 8:38; Eph. 1:21; 3:10; 6:12; Col. 1:16; 2:10, 15), b)
  - Authorities or powers (Eph. 1:21; 2:2; 3:10; 6:12; Col. 1:16; 2:10, 15; 1 Pet. 3:22)
  - Powers (2 Pet. 2:11)
  - Spiritual forces of evil in heavenly realms (Eph. 6:12),
  - Various rulers with every title that can be given (Eph. 1:21; Col. 1:16; 2 Pet. 2:10; Jude 8)
3. Archangel: As an archangel, Michael was considered to be a special guardian of Israel (Dan. 12:1), and "one of the chief princes" (Dan. 10:13, 21).
  - He contended for the body of Moses (Jude 9), and may have been the one who spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, or Horeb (Exod. 3:2)
  - He led (will lead) the battle in heaven against Satan (Rev. 12:7)<sup>6</sup>
4. Announcing Angel: Gabriel, the only other angel known by name, is seen in the Bible as an announcing angel which may suggest another rank (Luke 1:19; 26-30).
5. Cherubim: Cherubim are another order of angels, apparently a very high order because Satan was a cherub (Ezek. 28:14, 16).
  - Their role is seen as guardians of God's holiness by guarding the way to the tree of life in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:22-24).
  - The incorporation of cherubim in the decoration of the tabernacle and temples may also suggest their role as guardians (Exod. 26:1; 36:8; 1 Kings 6:23-29).
  - Cherubim will also be part of the millennial temple (Ezek. 41:18-20).
6. Seraphim: The only reference to seraphim (seraphs) is found in Isa. 6:2-7. They are seen as six-winged creatures which are loudly proclaiming the holiness of God as they covered their faces and feet

#### **E. What do angels do?**

1. Their primary function is to praise, worship, and serve God (Ps. 103:20; 148:1-2; Isa. 6:3; Heb. 1:6; Rev. 5:8-13; 22:9).
2. They rejoice in what God does (Job 38:6-7).
3. They ministered to Christ (Luke 1:26-33; 2:13; 22:43; Matt. 2:13; 4:11; 26:53; 28:2).
4. They minister to believers (Heb. 1:14).
5. They rescued Peter when he was in prison (Acts 12:5-11).
6. They encouraged Paul when he was in danger (Acts 27:23-24).
7. They carried Lazarus (beggar) to Abraham's side<sup>7</sup> (Luke 16:19-22).
8. They will be involved in executing the judgments of the Tribulation Period on the nations of the world (Rev. 8, 9, 16).
9. They killed Herod for his arrogance (Acts 12:23).
10. They will separate the saved from the unsaved at the end of the age (Matt. 13:37-39; Rev. 14:14-16).
11. They remind us that the unseen world is real (2 Kings 6:17; Ps. 148:2; Heb. 12:22).
12. They are examples for us (Matt. 6:19, "as it is in heaven..." Isa. 6:3; Rev. 5:11-12).

**F. Other terms related to angels**

1. Sons of God - God's sons by virtue of His creation - cf. Job 1:6; 38:7
2. Holy ones - suggesting they belong to God, 'set apart' for His purposes - Ps 89:5,7 (NASB, NIV)
3. Watcher, watchers - likely referring to angels - cf. Dan. 4:13, 17, 23
4. Host - denoting the armies of heaven, which likely included angels - cf. 1 Sam. 17:45
5. Archangel (ruling angel), used twice, once in connection with Michael - 1 Thess. 4:16; Jude 9
6. Prince, chief princes, great prince - used in the book of Daniel – Dan. 10:13, 21; 12:1
7. Paul used terms that may refer to angels<sup>8</sup> (cf. Col 1:16; Ep 1:21; 3:10)
  - Principalities (*archai*)
  - Powers (*exousiai*)
  - Thrones (*thronoi*)
  - Dominions (*kyriotetes*)
  - Powers (*dynamesis*)

**G. How do they relate to humans?**

1. They rejoice when someone repents and accepts Christ as their Savior (Luke 15:10).
2. They protect us<sup>9</sup> (Psa. 91:11-12).
3. Christians will someday judge angels (1 Cor. 6:3).
4. They are never to be objects of worship (Col. 2:18).
5. They are never to be viewed as mediators between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5).

**H. Misconceptions about angels**

1. Angels are mediators between God and man (cf. 1 Tim. 2:5)
2. Humans become angels when they die (cf. 1 John 3:2)
3. Angels are to be worshipped (cf. Rev. 22:8-9)
4. All angels are good (cf. Luke 8:1-2; Rev. 18:2)
5. Angels are omniscient (cf. 1 Kings 8:39; Psa. 139:2, 4; Acts 1:24)
6. Angels always existed<sup>10</sup> (cf. Col. 1:16; implied in Gen. 1:1—2:4; Psa. 33:6; Neh. 9:6; John 1:3; Rom. 11:36; Eph. 3:9; Heb. 1:2)

**I. What is Satan like and what does he do?**

1. Satan belongs to an order of angels called cherubim (Ezek. 28:14).
2. It may be that he was the highest created angel since Michael, the archangel, did not dispute with him about the body of Moses (Jude 9).
3. He is a real being.
4. He opposes God and the work of Jesus Christ. Satan's aim is to create an evil world (cosmos) that rivals God's kingdom but that leaves him out (Jas. 1:27; 4:4; 1 John 2:16).
5. He tempted Jesus, and he tempts humans to turn away from God and destroy themselves (Matt. 13:24-30; Luke 22:3; Acts 5:3; 1 Cor. 7:5; 2 Cor. 2:11; Eph. 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:26).

6. His primary tactics are deception, creating doubt, and preying on human desires (Gen. 3:1-7; 2 Cor. 11:14-15, "angel of light," Rev. 12:9).
7. He blinds the minds of unbelievers so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ (2 Cor. 4:4).
8. Satan belongs to an order of angels called cherubim (Ezek. 28:14). It may be that he was the highest created angel since Michael, the archangel, did not dispute with him about the body of Moses (Jude 9).
9. He shows intelligence and is cunning (2 Cor. 11:3)
10. He exhibits emotions (Luke 22:31; Rev. 12:17)
11. He has a will (Isa. 14:12-14; 2 Tim. 2:26)
12. He is a creature, not the Creator<sup>11</sup>
13. He is a spirit being
14. He was a model of perfection (Ezek. 28:12)
15. He was full of wisdom (Ezek. 28:12)
16. He was perfect in beauty (Ezek. 28:12-13b)
17. He was present in the Garden of Eden (Ezek. 28:13a)
18. He was anointed as a guardian cherub (Ezek. 28:14)
19. He was blameless until he sinned (Ezek. 28:15-16)
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#### **J. Satan's sin**

1. Satan's sin was pride (1 Tim. 3:6)
2. He wanted to be like God (Isa. 14:13-14)

**K. Satan's names in the Bible**

1. Accuser, adversary (Heb. Satan; Grk. Satanas)
2. Devil (Grk. diabolos)
3. Tempter (Matt. 4:3; 1 Thess. 3:5)
4. Beelzebub/Beelzebul (Matt. 12:24, 27; Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15, 18, 19)
5. Enemy (Matt. 13:39)
6. Evil one (Matt. 13:19, 38; 1 John 2:13; 3:12; 5:18)
7. Belial (2 Cor. 6:15)
8. Adversary (1 Pet. 5:8)
9. Deceiver (Rev. 12:9)
10. Great dragon (Rev. 12:3)
11. Father of lies (John 8:44)
12. Murderer (John 8:44)

**L. What do fallen angels do**

1. Demons carry out the work of Satan in the world.
2. Their goal is the same as Satan's, to oppose God and the work of Jesus Christ.
3. Their tactics include dumbness (Mark 9:17), deafness and dumbness (Mark 9:25), blindness and deafness (Matt. 12:22), convulsions (Mark 1:26; 9:20; Luke 9:39), paralysis or lameness (Acts 8:7), and most particularly, they oppose the spiritual progress of God's people (Eph. 6:12).
4. They can disguise themselves as "servants of righteousness" (2 Cor. 11:15).
5. They promote idolatry (Lev. 17:7; Deut. 32:17; Ps. 106:36-38; 1 Cor. 10:20; Rev. 9:20).
6. They promote false religions (1 John 4:1-4; 1 Tim. 3:16—4:3; Rev. 2:20-24).

What demons can do	What demons cannot do
<p>They can thwart the purpose of God in every way (Dan. 10:10-14; Rev. 16:13-16).</p> <p>They can inflict physical and mental diseases (Matt. 9:33; Matt. 17:15; Luke 13:11, 16).</p> <p>They can possess animals (Mk. 5:13).</p> <p>They can possess unsaved people (Mk. 5:1-5; 7:25).</p> <p>They can promote false doctrine (1 Tim. 4:1).</p> <p>They can affect Christians (Eph. 6:10-12).</p>	<p>They cannot take full control of a Christian (because the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is more powerful than demons or Satan (1 Cor. 6:19-20; 1 John 4:4).</p>

**N. Final comments**

1. Christian's need not be afraid of Satan or his demons.
2. Remaining in close fellowship and dependency on the Holy Spirit ensures our protection (1 John 4:4).
3. We should be careful to avoid seeing every trial in life as being "Satanic."
4. Nevertheless, we are to be on guard against his attempts to get our focus off God.
5. While we live in Satan's evil domain we are to keep our minds renewed by remaining in God's Word (Rom. 12:2).
6. View angels as models of worship but do not worship them.
7. Find comfort in the fact that God's angels are available to help us in time of need.

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## END NOTES

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- <sup>1</sup> Don Stewart, Why Study Angels? <[https://www.blueletterbible.org/faq/don\\_stewart/don\\_stewart\\_4.cfm](https://www.blueletterbible.org/faq/don_stewart/don_stewart_4.cfm)>. Accessed October 24, 2016.
- <sup>2</sup> Grudem, *Christian Beliefs*, p. 53.
- <sup>3</sup> It is interesting to note that angels are always designated in the masculine gender (Gen. 18:1-2 but see Zech. 5:9 for a possible exception).
- <sup>4</sup> Charles Ryrie posits that if angels need to be organized in order to carry out God's will effectively, then so do God's people need to be organized for the same reason (Charles C. Ryrie, *A Survey of Bible Doctrine*: Chicago, IL, 1972), p. 90
- <sup>5</sup> The pseudepigraphical book of Enoch names Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Suryal, and Uriel as the principle angels who were privileged to stand around the throne of God (Enoch 9:1; 40:9). It also numbers seven angels as archangels (Enoch 20:1-7; cf. Tobit 12:15). Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Chicago, IL, Moody Press, 1999), 147.
- <sup>6</sup> Paul Little, *Know What You Believe: Connecting Faith and Truth* (Colorado Springs, CO: Cook Communications, 2003) 111.
- <sup>7</sup> "Abraham's side" is a figure of speech for the blessed life hereafter. According to the Old Testament, when a person died he went to "be with his fathers" (Gen. 15:15; 47:30; Deut. 31:16; Judg. 2:10). Ronald F. Youngblood, F. F. Bruce, and R. K. Harrison, ed. *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995), 11.
- <sup>8</sup> Yet these are sometimes distinguished from angels (Ro 8:38; 1Pe 3:22), and at times described as negative forces (Col 2:15; Ep 6:12)
- <sup>9</sup> However, as Grudem points out the idea of a specific guardian angel for each person is not clear in the Scriptures. Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 401-402.
- <sup>10</sup> We know that angels are all created beings, but we know nothing about the time of their creation (Bavinck, p. 279).
- <sup>11</sup> Assuming that Ezekiel 28:11-19 refers to Satan, this passage clearly states that Satan was created (v. 15). This means that he does not possess God's attributes of omniscience, omnipresence or omnipotence.
- <sup>12</sup> Assuming that Ezekiel 28:11-19 refers to Satan, this passage clearly states that Satan was created (v. 15). This means that he does not possess God's attributes of omniscience, omnipresence or omnipotence.