

ANGELS

The word "angel" simply means "messenger". We want to study this subject, but we have no intention of being wise above the revealed word of God. We do, however, need to study some plain things that are said about angels in God's word so that we can maybe have a better understanding of the subject.

WHAT IS THE ORIGIN OF ANGELS? Angels are created beings (Col. 1:16; Psa. 148: 1 - 5). Only God is "*from everlasting to everlasting*" (Psa. 90: 2). God created angels with a free will (II Pet. 2:4). They were created before man was created because the devil had already sinned when man was created (Gen. 3: 1 - 6). They do not marry nor reproduce (Luke 20: 34, 35). Only man, of all the spirit beings, has been given the power to reproduce himself. The God-head does not reproduce itself, neither do angels reproduce themselves. Man does have this power, and God has given strict laws concerning the use of this power. God's law is that reproduction take place in marriage (Gen. 2:24; Heb. 13:4).

GOD CREATED AN UNNUMERABLE COMPANY OF ANGELS (Heb. 12:22). Angels are referred to in the Bible as "*His hosts*" (Psa. 103: 21; 148: 2). The word "hosts" means "a mass of persons (*Strong*); "any great multitude" (*Webster*). From this we know that God has a great multitude of angels.

ANGELS ARE A HIGHER ORDER OF RATIONAL CREATURES THAN MAN. Jesus took on Himself the nature of man, not the nature of angels (Heb. 2:16). Man's nature is lower than the angels (Heb. 2:9; Psa. 8:5). Angels are immortal beings (Luke 20: 35 - 36). Christians will not reach the state of immortality until the resurrection (Rom. 2:7; I Cor. 15: 50 - 54; Luke 20: 35 - 36).

ANGELS ARE MESSENGERS OF GOD TO CARRY OUT HIS BIDDING:

1. God sent an angel to Hagar (Gen. 16: 7 - 13).
2. God sent two angels to Sodom to destroy it (Gen. 19:13).
3. God sent an angel to appear to Moses (Ex. 3: 2).
4. The angel of God went before the camp of Israel (Ex. 14:19).
5. The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream (Matt. 1:20).
6. God sent Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, to Zacharias to tell him of the birth of John (Luke 1: 13, 19).
7. Gabriel appeared to Mary and told her of the birth of Jesus (Luke 1: 26 - 27).
8. The angel of the Lord delivered the apostles from prison (Acts 5: 18 - 19).
9. The angel of the Lord spake to Philip and told him where to go (Acts 8: 26).
10. An angel comforted Paul (Acts 27: 23).
11. Angels are used by God today in the care of His children (Heb. 1: 14; Matt. 18:10).

ANGELS HAVE GREAT INTEREST IN MAN'S SALVATION: Peter said that angels desired to look into what God had planned for man's redemption (I Pet. 1: 10 -12), but God did not reveal it to angels until it was revealed to man. God kept it hid in His mind (I Cor. 2:9; Eph. 3:9). When God revealed it to man and established His church He made it known to angels (Eph. 3: 10).

What we do is beheld by the angels of heaven. Paul said that the apostles were made "*a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men*" (I Cor. 4:9). Paul charged Timothy before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels (I Tim. 5:21). When angels behold the church they see God's manifold wisdom (Eph. 3:10). When a sinner repents the angels in heaven rejoice (Luke 15: 8, 10).

Angels are used by God in the care of His children (Heb. 1:14; Matt. 18:10). I do not believe that the Bible teaches the idea of "guardian angels", nor that the angels interfere with man's free will. The angels do not work today out of harmony with God's established laws. Their work is within what we call "divine providence".

THERE SEEMS TO BE RANK AMONG ANGELS: Michael is called the archangel (Jude 9). This term means "chief or captain of angels". Michael is called "*one of the chief princes*" in Daniel 10: 13. Gabriel is an angel who stands in the very presence of God to serve Him (Luke 1:19).

FOUR CHARACTERISTICS ANGELS HAVE:

1. Angels have great strength. The psalmist said, "*Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word.*" (Psa. 103:20). Peter said angels have power and might (II Pet. 2: 11). Paul said when the Lord comes the second time He will have with Him "*his mighty angels*" (II Thess. 1:7).
2. Angels have intelligence. They desired to look into what God had planned for man's redemption (I Pet. 1: 12). They rejoice when a sinner repents (Luke 15:7). They do the commandments of God (Psa. 103:20). They can sin (II Pet. 2:4). Only an intelligent creature can do these things.
3. Angels render service. The Hebrew writer said, "*Are they not all ministering spirits*" (Heb. 1:14).
4. Angels have great swiftness. Gabriel, who standing in the presence of God (Luke 1:19) at the beginning of Daniel's prayer, reached Daniel before his prayer ended, "*being caused to fly swiftly*" (Dan. 9: 20 -23). This shows how fast angels can move from one place to another. We learn from Revelation 4:7 that one of the living creatures around the throne of God "*was like a flying eagle*" -- this showing the swiftness with which the angels serve the Lord.

ANGELS ARE LIMITED CREATURES:

1. They worship God (Heb. 1:6).
2. They are not to be worshipped by man (Rev. 22: 8 - 9; Col. 2:18).
3. Their knowledge is limited (Matt. 24:36; I Pet. 1:12).
4. They are creatures that continue to learn (Eph. 3:10).
5. They can sin (II Pet. 2:4; Jude 6).
6. They are not omnipresent like God, but it seems they do have far-flung presence (I Cor. 4:9; Luke 15: 7, 10).

ANGELS WILL BE USED BY GOD IN JUDGEMENT:

1. When Jesus comes the second time to judge the world He will bring "*all the holy angels with him*" (Matt. 25:31; II Thess. 1:7).
2. If we have confessed Him before men, He will confess us before the angels of God (Luke 12:8 - 9).

3. In the end of the world God's angels will gather the wicked and cast them into hell (Matt. 13: 38 -42).
4. So, angels will have a part in the judgment.

My hope is that you will study these things in the context of Bible teaching on angels. If you find I have come to a wrong conclusion, you need to reject my error and hold to the truth.

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