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## Angels - A Biblical Study of the Doctrine

### ANGELS – A BIBLICAL STUDY OF THE DOCTRINE

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

**INTRODUCTION:** Angels are spiritual beings created by God who help carry out His work as agents and messengers and to glorify Him. The Bible presents no specific doctrine of Angels. The Bible ASSUMES that God is attended by a company or HOST of heavenly beings who are subordinate to Himself and who share His company and reflect His glory and majesty. Angels always appear in relation to God and humanity in the role of servants. There are both good and bad angels (Revelation 12:7), but because bad angels are allied with the devil, or Satan, they have considerably less power and authority than good angels.

#### **I. What is an angel? Where did angels come from?**

##### **A. The word "angel" is derived from the Greek word *angelos*, meaning**

- "messenger." (**1 Thessalonians 4:16.**)
- The Hebrew word *mal'akh* likewise translates "messenger"
- In both OT and NT root word means "Messenger" whether human or Divine.
- When the messengers are from God the words are translated in English as "Angel".
- Both in Hebrew and Greek the word is applied to human messengers (**1 Kings 19:2; Luke 7:24.**)

-In Hebrew it is used in the singular to denote a Divine messenger, and in the plural for human messengers, although there are exceptions to both usage's.

The word "angel" is applied in Scripture to an order of **supernatural or heavenly beings** whose business it is to act as God's messengers to men, and as agents who carry out His will. Angels are Beings - a class of beings who inhabit the expanse of the Heavens. As emissaries of God, they are elect (**1 Timothy 5:21 NIV** "I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels..."). It is applied to the prophet Haggai (**Haggai 1:13**), to the priest (**Malachi 2:7**), and to the messenger who is to prepare the way of the Lord (**Malachi 3:1**).

##### **B. Other Hebrew words and phrases applied to angels**

- C. Sons of the Elohim (God) (**Genesis 6:2, 4; Job 1:6; 2:1**)
- D. Members of the class of the heavenly powers - called a "council" or "assembly" or "congregation" of mighty or "Holy ones" - a name suggesting the fact that they belong to God. (**Psalms 29:1; 89: 5-7**)
- E. "watcher," "watchers" (**Daniel 4:13, 17, 23**).

**Other expressions are used to designate angels collectively:**

- "council" (Psalm 89:7), where the reference may be to an inner group of exalted angels;
- "congregation" (Psalm 82:1; 89:5);
- "host," "hosts," as in the familiar phrase "the God of hosts."

In New Testament the word **ággelos**, (angel) when it refers to a Divine messenger, is frequently accompanied by some phrase which makes this

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meaning clear,

- e.g. “the angels of heaven” (**Matthew 24:36**).
- “Holy Angels” (**Luke 9:26**) - set apart unto God
- “Elect Angels” – (**1 Timothy 5:21**) Does not seem to apply to all.
- “Ministering Angels” – (**Hebrews. 1:14**)
- Angels belong to the “heavenly host” where “host” means a multitude or throng (**Luke 2:13 NAS** “*And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host*”).
- In reference to their nature they are called “spirits” (**Hebrews 1:14 NIV** “*Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?*”).

Paul evidently referred to the **ordered ranks** of supra-mundane beings in a group of words that are found in various combinations, namely, “principalities,” “powers,” “thrones,” “dominions”. These words are apparently used in a good sense in **Colossians 1:16**, where it is said that all these beings were created through Christ and unto Him. **NAS Colossians 1:16** *For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created by Him and for Him.*

In most of the other passages in which words from this group occur, they seem to represent evil powers. We are told that our wrestling is against them (**Ephesians 6:12**), and that Christ triumphs over the principalities and powers (**Colossians 2:15**; compare **Romans 8:38**; **1 Corinthians 15:24**).

In two passages the word “archangel” or chief angel, occurs: “the voice of the archangel” (**1 Thessalonians 4:16**), and “Michael the archangel” (**Jude 1:9**) suggesting a high or chief rank or position.

## Specially Designated Angels:

**Cherubim: Psalm 99:1 Ezekiel 10:1-22**

**Seraphim: Isaiah 6:2**

Living creatures” “beasts” - **Revelation 4:6 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.*”

Possibly these are all the same creature types yet we know very little about them from Scripture. They are composite beings having the appearance of various animals though generally having the face of a man.

They are “angels” in the generic sense yet they are set apart as special beings. . In every reference to them they are always in the very presence of the Godhead. Some suggest they are the symbol of the highest properties of created life and of our ultimate glorification and eternal existence in the immediate presence of the Glorious Lord.

Note: Both terms in Hebrew and Greek describe more the FUNCTION or DUTY of angels rather than their nature. They tell us more what they DO rather than what they ARE.

There a “good angels” who worship and serve God and “bad angels” or “demons”

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who serve the forces of darkness". They are evil forces that are set against mankind for his destruction. These are fallen angels who are led by "the evil one" known variously as the "devil", "Satan" "Lucifer, etc. (See later notes)

## C. Angels are supernatural beings distinctly separate from the race of man.

They are both finite and spatial. They are able to enter the sphere of human life yet in no way are forced to conform to human existence.

**Genesis 28:12** "He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it."  
(Jacob's Dream)

- Angels are NOT the "spirits" of the departed.
- Angels are NOT "glorified" human beings.

Their appearance is as the occasion demands and often appears as humans – in human form. How else could we entertain angels unawares? (**Hebrews 13:2, Genesis 18**)

**1 Corinthians 6:3 NIV** "Do you not know that we will judge angels?"

**1 Corinthians 15:39-40** "All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fish. There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the glory of the earthly is another."

(**Hebrews 1:14**)

## II. THE NATURE OF ANGELS

### A. They were created by God the Son

**Psalms 148:2-5** "Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts! For He commanded and they were created."

**Colossians 1:16 NASV** "For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities" -- all things have been created by Him and for Him.

William George, in his Commentary of Hebrews states, "Angels as first created were after the image of God: the Purest, holiest and readiest to do goodness of any creatures. They are the most glorious of God's creatures." (**Daniel 10:5-6**)

Scripture is absolutely clear as to the existence of Angels as Creations of God, but the specific TIME – ORDER – PLACE and MANNER of the creation is not revealed leading to diverse opinions as to when and why they were brought into being.

They have not existed from eternity as have God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and as created beings their power and capacities are likewise inferior.

Some argue they were created on the 1st day of creation, as part of "Heaven" Moses never specifically mentions the creation of Angels. Yet, "heavens" includes all that is within them, which would seem to include angels given their heavenly affiliation and habitation. Angels are called the "Heavenly host" and the "armies of heaven".

**Luke 2:13.NIV** "Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,..." (**Genesis. 2:1**)

Note however: The creation record was not designed to provide history of celestial beings but to give a faithful account of the creation of the earth in connection with the rest of the solar system.

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NOTE: Much of secular mankind's debate over creation centers on that which is physical - demonstrative – measurable - provable. Yet, we must not forget the unseen immeasurable Heavenly realm of God's creation such as Angels, which none the less exist and give evidence of God's creative work.

## B. Being created, Angels are inferior to the Son of God.

They are not eternal beings. They are created BY the Son of God

**Colossians 1:16** *"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."*

## C. They were created prior to the existence of man

**Job 38:3-7** *"Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me.*

*"Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! While the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?"*

## D. They were created prior to the creation and existence of the world

(**Job 38:4-7** see above) Angels shouted while the dimensions of earth were marked off.

## E. They were created Simultaneously

It is assumed that all creation was completed at that time. No more will be added or created.

**Colossians. 1:16-17** *"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."*

This verse appears in the "past tense" of acts already completed.

**Genesis 2:1-2 NIV** *"Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work."*

## F. Angels are immortal - never die

They are not subject to death or any other form of extinction. Thus the number of angels will not decrease.

**Luke 20:36 NIV** *"and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels."*

**Hebrews 2:9 NIV** *"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels...because he suffered death...so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone."*

Had Jesus not become "lower" He could not have died from which we deduce angels do not die.

(Question - If everyone has a "guardian angel" as so many believe, and if the number of angels created is fixed, then God must have created a surplus of angels in excess of people, or God created enough to begin with for everyone that would be born and saved or else angels "guard" more than one person or else the number of angels is not fixed and God is still creating them!)

## G. Angels are "an innumerable company." The scripture is silent on the exact number but speaks of "multitudes" "legions" and "hosts" suggesting innumerable amounts. Countless

**Hebrews 12:22** *"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"*

**Revelation 5:11** *"Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the*

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*throne and the living creatures and the elders.”*

**Matthew 26:53** *“12 legions of angels”*

**Luke 2:13** *“a multitude of the heavenly host”;*

**Deuteronomy 33:2; Job 25:3; Psalms 68:17**

NOTE: God and Jesus Christ obviously know the number of angels since they created them.

## H. They neither marry nor reproduce

Unlike the human family, each angel is a direct creation of God. No procreation.

**Matthew 22:28-30**

**Luke 20:34-36** (When the Sadducees who regarded angels as merely symbolic expressions of God's actions tried to trap Jesus) Jesus replied, *“The people of this age marry and are given in marriage. But 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, and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection.”*

We conclude there is no procreation for to do so without marriage would be to contravene the Word of God.

This does not necessarily suggest that Angels are “neuter” in gender since in scripture they are always referred to in the masculine – never in the feminine gender.

## I. Angels are free moral beings who held their own destiny within the power of their own choice.

**2 Peter 2:4 NAS** *“For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment”*

**Jude 6 NIV** *“And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home-- these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.”*

The word “abandon” in Greek is an “active” verb suggesting an intentional affirmative action by the angels. Sin is a choice. We do not know their actual sin committed. **Ezekiel 28** suggests Satan's sin to be pride and disobedience. If so, applied to the angels it suggests they were not satisfied with the dignity once assigned them under the Son of God but aspired higher.

**Ezekiel 28:17-18** *“I will cause your hordes to fall by the swords of mighty men-- the most ruthless of all nations. They will shatter the pride of Egypt, and all her hordes will be overthrown. Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings. “Son of man, wail for the hordes of Egypt and consign to the earth below both her and the daughters of mighty nations, with those who go down to the pit.”*

**Isaiah 14:11-15** *“All your pomp has been brought down to the grave, along with the noise of your harps; How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, “I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.” But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit.*

**Matthew 25:41** *“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’”*

**Revelation 20:10** *“And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”*

## J. Angels reside in Heaven - the highest habitation of all creatures – around the throne of God in His presence.

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**Matthew 18:10** "...angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in Heaven"

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

- K. Angels are superior to humans. They are able to move in manners not possible for the human physical body. (Judges 13).**

**Psalm 8:5 KJV** "For thou hast made him (man) a little lower than the angels,"

Note: Hebrew word used is "Elohim" used of God or heavenly beings and not "Malak" the normal word for angels.

- L. Angels are Beings of Great might and power**

**2 Peter 2:11 NIV** "yet even angels, although they are stronger and more powerful..."

**Psalm 103:20 NAS** "Bless the LORD, you His angels, Mighty in strength, who perform His word, Obeying the voice of His word!"

**Revelation 18:1 NIV** "After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven. He had great authority, and the earth was illuminated by his splendor."

One angel destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah; one angel rolled away the stone of the tomb; one angel killed the first born of Egypt, etc.

Note: Their power is DELEGATED by God. (2 Thessalonians 1:7 NIV "... when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels.")

They are mighty but not ALMIGHTY!

**Thus the Trinity or Godhead is above angels and angels are in a realm above man in many respects: dignity, status, strength, etc.**

- M. Angels are beings of splendor**

**Revelation 18:1 NIV** "After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven. He had great authority, and the earth was illuminated by his splendor." (or "glory")

- N. Angels are beings of great wisdom –**

**2 Samuel 14:17 NIV** "And now your servant says, 'May the word of my lord the king bring me rest, for my lord the king is like an angel of God in discerning good and evil. May the LORD your God be with you.'"

**2 Samuel 14:20 NIV** "Your servant Joab did this to change the present situation. My lord has wisdom like that of an angel of God-- he knows everything that happens in the land."

**Mark 13:32 NAS** "But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone."

- O. Worship of Angels is forbidden**

**Colossians 2:18 NAS** "Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind"

- P. Angels are to be judged by the saints**

**1 Corinthians 6:3 NAS** "Do you not know that we shall judge angels? We are not told "what" the saints are to judge concerning angels."

- Q. Angels comprise an "order" of heavenly supernatural beings.**

This suggests a division in STATUS and WORK. Possibly all angels ARE NOT EQUAL in Power and Authority.

**Archangel: 1 Thessalonians 4:16 NIV** "For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel "

**Jude 9 NIV** "But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil"

**Michael** – appears as archangel to have a special relation to Israel. He fights for them / protects and guards. **Daniel 10:13**

**Gabriel** – In the presence of God awaiting orders.

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**Luke 1:26** – sent to Mary at birth of Jesus

**Luke 1:19** – To Zacharias to announce birth of John

Gabriel has prominent work in relation to coming of the Lord. Special assignments suggest various levels of authority / power.

**There are 2 groups of Angels:** Elect and Non-elect (lost or “bad” angels)

**Matthew 25:41** Jesus refers to the “devil and his angels”.

“His” (devil’s) angels are to be distinguished from those of God – Holy beings.

**Ephesians 6 lists “orders” and levels of bad or demonic angels:**

**Ephesians 6:12 NIV** “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”

The very nature of the words “ruler” and “authority” suggest there must be subordinates over which to rule – thus “levels” or orders of demons.

**REFLECTION:** Divine revelation was designed to afford us information on many points relating to the government of God, both in heaven and on earth; but primarily to make us wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. We should not expect it therefore, to make us perfectly acquainted with the whole economy of the celestial world. Yet, instruction on angelic beings is extensive and should awaken in us a spirit of inquiry that leads us to aspire to conformity to these wonderful Holy beings and unite with them in acts of worship before the throne of our glorious Creator.

### III. THE FUNCTION OF ANGELS

- **How does the work of angels compare to the work of the Holy Spirit?**

Of course the Holy Spirit is not created but is a person of the Triune God so there is no direct comparison with Angels Both communicate and act upon the Will of God but there are certain functions and roles of the Holy Spirit which are described in part for us in the Scriptures which may differ from the functions angels perform. Note, however, that God is sovereign and may act or direct angels to act in any function or capacity He so chooses so no absolute distinctions may be drawn. .

Angels appear to relate more to the outward physical affairs of people in ways which primarily affect and are detected by our senses. The Holy Spirit appears to work in more of an inward spiritual manner imparting truth, understanding and the Will of God within the heart of people. **John 16:13** *But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.*

Angels give more of an **outward** guidance while the Holy Spirit gives more of an inward instruction. The work of angels covers a wide range of activity that could only be accomplished by those specially created and endowed by God.

- **Angels sing, praise and worship God.** This is the primary reason they exist  
**Revelation 5:11-12** “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. In a loud voice they sang: “Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!”  
**Luke 2:13; Psalm 103: 20; 148:2**
- **They do God’s work with Joy.**  
**Job 38:7 NIV** “while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?” (their response at God’s creative work)

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- **Angels work in both the earthly and Heavenly plane.**  
*Psalm 103:21* "Praise the LORD, all his heavenly hosts, you his servants who do his will."
- **Angels watch for and anticipate doing Will of God**  
*Matthew 18:10* "... For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.
- **Help Execute God's Divine plan**  
Example: Gave the Law to Children of Israel  
*Galatians 3:19* "What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator."  
*Acts 7:53* "you who have received the law that was put into effect through angels but have not obeyed it."  
(*Hebrews 2:2*)
- **Angels proclaim Jesus and His ministry.**  
*Revelation.22:16* "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star."  
NOTE: This suggests Jesus Himself as control over angels and likewise sends them.
- **Angels announce the works of the Lord - sometimes with instruments:**  
*Revelation. 9:13* "The sixth angel sounded his trumpet"  
*Revelation 10:7* "But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he announced to his servants the prophets."
- **Drive spirit horses:**  
*Zechariah 6:1-5* "'I looked up again-- and there before me were four chariots coming out from between two mountains ...I asked the angel who was speaking to me, "What are these, my lord?" The angel answered me, "These are the four spirits of heaven, going out from standing in the presence of the Lord of the whole world."  
(*II Kings 2:12; 6:13-17; Zechariah 1:7-11*)
- **They stand guard.**  
*Genesis 3:24* "After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life. "  
*Revelation 21:12* "It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates"
- **They wage war in actual bodily combat**  
*Revelation 12:7-9* "And there was war in heaven. Michael and his Angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. "  
*Daniel 10:20* "So he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? Soon I will return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I go, the prince of Greece will come;"
- **They execute God's judgments**  
*Acts 12:23* "Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died."  
*2 Samuel 24:16* "When the angel stretched out his hand to destroy Jerusalem, the LORD was grieved because of the calamity and said to the angel who was afflicting the people, "Enough! Withdraw your hand.""  
(*Genesis 19; 2 Kings 19:35; Matthew 13:41-42*)
- **They protect and deliver saints**  
*Psalms 34:7* "The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them."  
*Psalm 91:11* "For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways;"  
*Genesis 19:10* "But the men (angels) inside reached out and pulled Lot back into the house and shut the door."

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**Genesis 19:11** "Then they struck the men who were at the door of the house, young and old, with blindness so that they could not find the door."

(Acts 5:19; Acts 12:7-10; Daniel 3:25-28, Daniel 6:22; 2 Kings 6:18)

- **They bless and minister to saints and to Jesus**

**1 Kings 19:5-7** "Then he (Elijah) lay down under the tree and fell asleep. All at once an angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat." The angel of the LORD came back a second time and touched him and said, "Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.""

**Matthew 4:11** "Then the devil left him (Jesus), and angels came and attended him."

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

(Acts 10; Daniel 6:22)

- **Angels speak to people**

**Acts 8:26** "Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road--the desert road--that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.""

**Acts 12:7-8** "Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. "Quick, get up!" he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists. Then the angel said to him, "Put on your clothes and sandals." And Peter did so. "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me," the angel told him."

- **They appear to people in various forms**

**Acts 7:35** "This is the same Moses whom they had rejected with the words, 'Who made you ruler and judge?' He was sent to be their ruler and deliverer by God himself, through the angel who appeared to him in the bush."

- **Angels give guidance to saints**

**Acts 12:8-9** "Then the angel said to him, "Put on your clothes and sandals." And Peter did so. "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me," the angel told him. Peter followed him out of the prison,"

**Acts 8:26** "Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road--the desert road--that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.""

- **They guard and defend nations and people groups**

**Daniel 10:13-21**

**Daniel 12:1** "At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise."

**Daniel 10:20** "So he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? Soon I will return to fight against the prince of Persia,"

**Daniel 11:1** "And in the first year of Darius the Mede, I took my stand to support and protect him.)"

- **They help each individual saint**

**Matthew 18:10** "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."

**NOTE:** This verse does not say there is an "individual" guardian angel created or assigned for each person. The Bible does not teach the concept of individual guardian angels. Instead, it teaches something much greater – that there are innumerable angels available at God's disposal to assist and protect the believer.

- **They strengthen, comfort and cheer in times of trial**

**Acts 27:23-24** "Last night an angel of the God whose I am and whom I serve stood beside me and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.'"

**Luke 22:43** "An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him." (Jesus in the garden)

(Matthew 4:11; 1 Kings 19:5-8)

- **They are concerned with the Salvation process**

**1 Peter 1:12** "... when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things."

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**Ephesians 3:10** "His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms," They discover the astonishing work of God's grace in Christ as they observe His plan of salvation being worked out in and through the church.

**Luke 15:10** "In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." They witness confessions.

- **They lead the lost to gospel workers**

**Acts 10:3** "One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, "Cornelius!""

**Acts 10:4-5** "Cornelius stared at him in fear. "What is it, Lord?" he asked. The angel answered, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter."

- **They guide gospel workers to the lost**

**Acts 8:26-27** "Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road--the desert road--that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch,"

- **They help prepare us for salvation**

**Acts 10:4-5** "Cornelius stared at him in fear. "What is it, Lord?" he asked. The angel answered, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter."

The angel gave him a "preview" of his salvation and what he should do in order that his salvation might be realized.

- **They bring answers to prayer**

**Daniel 10:12** "Then he continued, "Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them."

**Luke 1:13** "But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John." (**Daniel 9:21-23, Acts 10**)

- **They observe our ministry and worship**

**1 Corinthians 11:5** "And every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head--it is just as though her head were shaved."

**1 Corinthians 11:10** "For this reason, and because of the angels, the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head."

**Timothy 5:21** "I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, to keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism."

**1 Corinthians 4:9** "For it seems to me that God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like men condemned to die in the arena. We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to men."

- **They appear in dreams**

**Matthew 1:20** "But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit." (**Matthew 2:13-19**)

- **They minister before God**

**Revelation 8:2-4** "And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets. Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel's hand."

**Luke 1:19** "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."

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**(Revelation. 14:15-19)**

- **They bind Satan and guard his abyss**  
**Revelation 20:1-2** "And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years."
- **They gather the elect at the 2nd coming of Christ**  
**Matthew 24:31** "And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other."
- **They separate the righteous from the wicked**  
**Matthew 13:41-42** "The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."  
**Matthew 13:49 NIV** "This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous"
- **They accompany Christ to earth**  
**Matthew 16:27** "For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels,"  
**Matthew 25:31** "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory"  
**2 Thessalonians 1:7** " ...This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels."
- **They receive departed spirits**  
**Luke 16:22** "The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried."  
**(Jude 9)**  
Note: we are not told that angels minister to unbelievers.
- **They give prophecy and revelations**  
**Revelation 1:1** "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John,"  
**Acts 7:35** "This is the same Moses whom they had rejected with the words, 'Who made you ruler and judge?' He was sent to be their ruler and deliverer by God himself, through the angel who appeared to him in the bush."  
**Daniel 8:19** "He said: "I am going to tell you what will happen later in the time of wrath, because the vision concerns the appointed time of the end."  
**Revelation 17:7 NIV** "Then the angel said to me: "Why are you astonished? I will explain to you the mystery of the woman and of the beast she rides, which has the seven heads and ten horns."  
**Revelation 22:6 NIV** "The angel said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place.""  
**(Hebrews 2:2, 2 Kings 1:15, Daniel 9:21-23, 10:10-20)**
- **They impart God's will**  
**Acts 5:19** "But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out. "Go, stand in the temple courts," he said, "and tell the people the full message of this new life.""  
**Revelation 22:6 NIV** "The angel said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place.""  
**(Acts 10:1-6)**
- **Angels will be primary agents in the judgments and tribulation to befall the earth**  
**Revelation 15:1 NIV** "I saw in heaven another great and marvelous sign: seven angels with the seven last plagues-- last, because with them God's wrath is completed."  
**Revelation 7:2 NIV** "Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given

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power to harm the land and the sea.”

**Revelation 21:9 NIV** “One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues”

## SOME QUESTIONS REVISITED:

### Q - Do they really have wings?

**A** - Scripture never specifically describes angels as having wings. Only the spirit beings cherubim, seraphim and the “living creatures” are said to have wings. The conception of angels as winged beings, so familiar in Christian art, finds no support in Scripture.

The cherubim, seraphim and symbolic living creatures of **Ezekiel 1:6, Isaiah.. 6:2** and **Revelation 4:8**. are represented as having wings. If you consider these beings to be “angels” then at least some angels DO have wings. While the specific word “angel” is never used in the Bible to describe these heavenly beings, most scholars consider them to be classified as a form of angelic being. Note however, wings are never associated with beings simply described as “angels”.

· **Exodus 25:20 NIV** “The cherubim are to have their wings spread upward, overshadowing the cover with them” (appearing on the Ark of the Covenant)

· **1 Chronicles 28:18 NIV** “and the weight of the refined gold for the altar of incense. He also gave him the plan for the chariot, that is, the cherubim of gold that spread their wings and shelter the ark of the covenant of the LORD.” (as used in the temple)

· **Isaiah 6:2, 6 NAS** “Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings; with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.”

· **Isaiah 6:6 AS** “Then one of the seraphim flew to me,”

· **Ezekiel 1:4-25; 10:1-22; 11:22**

· **Ezekiel 10:19 NIV** “While I watched, the cherubim spread their wings and rose from the ground,”

· **Revelation 4:6-8** “Also...around the throne, were four living creatures...the fourth was like a flying eagle. Each of the four living creatures had six wings...”

Recall, also, that even if certain angels do have wings, there are recorded times in the Bible when angels appeared in human form apparently without wings because they were mistaken as humans. (**Genesis 18:2** appearance to Abraham). Thus, wings are not a permanent fixture on every angel but instead wings seem to be available as the mission or appearance so demands. As we have seen, angels are spirit beings who appear to assume the bodily form necessary to accomplish the Divine mission assigned by God.

### Q – Do angels fly?

**A** – Yes, the scripture gives evidence of angels flying. Note however, that because angels are spirit beings they do not have to “flap” their wings as a bird to fly and indeed most angels may not even have wings to flap.

In **Daniel 9:21** and **Revelation 14:6**, angels are represented as “flying”. This however, does not necessarily imply the presence of wings.

**Daniel 9:21** “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.”

**Revelation 14:6 NAS** “And I saw another angel flying in midheaven,”

The Greek word used for “flying” in this verse is the same word used in

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**Revelation 4:7** where reference is made to the living creature being like a flying eagle. Thus, the idea of flying “like an eagle” is associated with the angel in **Revelation. 14:6**

**Revelation 4:7 NIV** “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.”

We must realize that the Bible uses the concept of “flying” in many different forms. Angels are able to make swift movement in the air or “fly” but again that does not imply a flapping of wings. For humans, the concept of “flying” likewise has various meaning other than the use of wings. Astronauts and pilots fly but they do not have “wings” that flap. The dictionary states that to “fly” also means to “float or soar in the air” such as a balloon which of course has no wings. Humanly speaking, flying suggests the ability to transcend or circumvent the effects of gravity to levitate. Thus, the answer to the question of whether angels fly is “yes” but we must be clear on the meaning of “flying” so as not to assume the false notion that all angels must have wings to flap in order to fly.

Some scholars have created a separate category for heavenly beings with wings and calling them winged angels, Cherubim and seraphim together with the “lining creatures of Revelation 4:6. They are composite beings having the appearance of various animals though generally having the face of a man.

They are “angels” in the generic sense yet they are set apart as special beings. In every reference to them they are always in the very presence of the Godhead. Some suggest they are the symbol of the highest properties of created life and of our ultimate glorification and eternal existence in the immediate presence of the Glorious Lord

## **Cherub, Cherubim (khehr' uh bihm)**

Class of winged spiritual beings who primarily function as guards or attendants to the divine throne. The Hebrew cherub (plural, cherubim), is of uncertain derivation. In the Old Testament it is the name of a class of winged beings who functioned primarily as guards (**Genesis. 3:24**) or attendants (**Ezekiel. 10:3-22**). The only New Testament reference to cherubim is in a description of the furnishings of the holy of holies (**Hebrews. 9:5**).

Scripture describes the appearance and activities of cherubim in 2 contexts: One is in the visions of the presence of God attended by living creatures (cherubim and seraphim, **Isaiah. 6:2-6; Ezekiel. 1:4-28; 10:3-22**). The other is Temple worship and the representations of cherubim which were a part of its furnishings (**Exodus 25:18-22; 1 Kings 6:23-35; 2 Chronicles 3:7-14**). The most impressive of the Temple cherubim were the large sculptures (probably winged quadrupeds) in the holy of holies. Certain texts envision God dwelling between, enthroned upon, or riding upon the cherubim (**1 Samuel 4:4; 2 Samuel 6:2; 22:11; 2 Kings 19:15; 1 Chronicles 13:6; 28:18; Psalm. 18:10; 80:1; 99:1; Isaiah. 37:16**). Even Ezekiel’s vision depicts the glory of God resting upon or between the cherubim as something of a living throne.

Fully understanding Ezekiel’s description of these creatures, however, is quite difficult. For one thing, his description of them is not complete enough to be unambiguous. Also, Ezekiel’s cherubim bear as great a similarity to Isaiah’s seraphim as they do to the Temple cherubim. The function of these heavenly, living creatures was that of attending the presence of the living God.

## **Seraphim (ser' a-fim is a plural word for Seraph whose origin in Hebrew is uncertain.)**

The word appears in **Isaiah 6:2** (Isaiah’s vision of Yahweh.), **Deuteronomy. 8:15, Numbers 21:6** and **Isaiah 14:29, 30:6** etc., and signifies a fiery serpent or “the burning ones,” sent by God as his instruments to inflict on the people the righteous penalty of sin.

Seraphim were also winged serpents whose images decorated many of the thrones of the Egyptian pharaohs. In some cases, they wore the crowns of the Egyptian kingdoms and were

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thought to act as guardians over the king. Israel adopted the symbolism for God's throne. Isaiah envisioned the seraphim as agents of God who prepared him to proclaim the Lord's message to Judah (**Isaiah. 6:2**)

These seraphim are august beings whose forms are not at all fully described. They had faces, feet, hands and wings. The six wings, in three pairs, covered their faces and feet in humility and reverence, and were used for sustaining them in their positions about the throne of Yahweh. One of them is the agent for burning (with a coal off the altar, not with his own power or person) the sin from the lips of the prophet.

Seraphim are in Jewish theology connected with cherubim as the highest orders of attendants on Yahweh, and are superior to the angels who are messengers sent on various errands. In the New Testament the only possible equivalent is in "the living ones" ("beasts" of the King James Version) in **Revelation 4, 5**, etc. Here, as in Isaiah, they appear nearest Yahweh's throne, supreme in praise of His holiness.