



# ANGELS

In Our Midst

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**"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." Hebrews 13:2**

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## Preface

This is an eBook about angels. We will explore the concept of angels and search the scriptures to learn all we can. We will seek to answer these questions:

1. Do angels have wings?
2. Are there good and bad angels?
3. Is there an army of angels?
4. Do angels communicate with humans?
5. Are there different types of angels?
6. What do angels do?
7. Do we have a guardian angel?

We will look for noted authors and seek their opinions. However, the Bible will be our primary source for information. We will look at history and how angels have been involved in the affairs of men. We will look at the future to see what roles angels will play in God's final solution of world events.

# Introduction

Do you believe in angels? I know some folks that say they believe in angels but do not believe in God. Go figure! If angels exist, there has to be a God and if there is a God, there has to be a heaven where He dwells and life eternal because angels are eternal beings.

The Bible is the most creditable source for learning about angels. I would stay away from those who speak of angels as though they were his or her next-door neighbors. Lots of folk claim experiences that are self-motivated from an egocentric perspective. Most are a part of the New Age movement that pushes angels and spiritualism. However, we can know about angels because of the Bible.

## Angels Are Created Beings

Angels are part of God's creation and make several appearances in the Bible. In Colossians, Paul tells us that Jesus created everything. "For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things were created through him and for him" ([Col 1:16](#)). When Paul speaks of the "thrones and dominions," he is talking about angels. We also see many characters in the Bible speak about angels, including Jesus.

We are plagued with falsehoods and even lies concerning Angels. Angels are real. They are not a fabrication of someone's mind. However, in today's world, there are probably as many misconceptions about angels as there are angels in heaven.

## Common Misconceptions

Here are a few common misconceptions that we sometimes may hear but have no bases in Scripture:

*Angels have bodies like human beings.* Angels, technically, have no physical bodies. [Hebrews 1:14](#) describes them as "ministering spirits." However, God allows them to come in the appearance of man while they are communicating with people on earth. We get a glimpse of how mighty

angels are when Pilot told his best guards to protect the tomb where Jesus was laid. An angel appears and rolls back the stone and the Bible states, “And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men” (Matthew 28:4). Some of the best Roman soldiers could not stand before the grandeur of an angel.

***Angels know all things.*** In Psalm 103, David refers to angels as “mighty ones who do his word.” This provides evidence that angels are strong but are still submissive to God, who is both omnipotent and omniscient. We also know that angels are very wise but not all knowing from Matthew 24:36, where Jesus is talking about the Day of the Lord and He communicates that angels are not aware of when that day will come.

***The only purpose of angels is to protect heaven from evil spirits.*** This misconception stems from a lack of understanding of the purpose of angels. God uses angels for a variety of purposes. Some angels are ministering spirits that guard and protect God’s people (Heb. 1:14, Mark 1:13). Some angels deliver messages from God to humans (Luke 1:26-38, Luke 24:4-7, Rev. 1:1), and many angels ceaselessly worship God in heaven (Rev. 5:11-12).

***Everyone has a guardian angel.*** There is no convincing evidence in Scripture that every person has their own specific guardian angel. There are angels who protect, guard and minister to God’s people (Ps. 91:11-12), but the wicked have no angels of God to protect and guide them. They have only demonic spirits that seek to torment them, kill their dreams, steel their peace and destroy their destiny.

I am convinced of their existence. I believe in angels because the Bible plainly teaches that they exist. From Genesis to Revelation we read all about them. At least 250 Bible passages speak of angels. The last book of the Bible alone has 80 references. Surely, with so many Scriptures about them, it is a subject worthy of our careful attention.

Both the Hebrew word *mal’ak* and the Greek word *angelos*, from which we get the word “angel,” simply mean “messenger.” People often mistook angels for ordinary people, but these heavenly messengers are greater than mortal beings. And they are not all alike.

# The War in Heaven

Revelation 12:7-12

7And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, 8And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

10And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. 11And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. 12Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

The good angels are referred to as “The Angelic or Heavenly Host” The Bible also refers to “**The Angel of The Lord.**” His proper name is not given but King David, the psalmists said, “The angel of the LORD encamps round about them that fear him, and delivers them.” **Psalm 34:7** Many theologians believe that the angel of the Lord was a reference to Jesus in the Old Testament.

## Portrait of An Angel

Angels are personal and moral beings. Angels are always portrayed with personal attributes, including intelligence, volition, and a moral nature. Their wisdom and power are vastly superior to our human abilities (2 Sam. 14:20; Ps. 103:20), but their knowledge is by no means exhaustive (there are “things into which angels long to look into,” 1 Peter 1:12; as well as facts they do not know, Matt. 24:36).

The angels are a mighty multitude. Without giving any hint as to their actual number, Scripture makes it clear that the angelic host is a vast and imposing army. The expression “host of heaven,” often used to signify the angels (Deut. 4:19; 2 Chron. 18:18; Luke 2:13), suggests an innumerable throng (see Jer. 33:22).

The angels were apparently created all at once, yet individually. They are never portrayed as a race descended from a common ancestor (Luke 20:34–36). Humans are called “sons of men,” but angels are never called “sons of angels.” As a matter of fact, Jesus emphatically said that angels do not marry (Matt. 22:30). As to gender, they are always referred to with masculine pronouns — but since they have no feminine counterparts and are spiritual beings who do not procreate, it would seem that they cannot meaningfully be categorized as either male or female.

But they are nonetheless organized in ranks and legions similar to a massive army. Again, the expression “host of heaven” evokes the idea of an armed company. Jesus said on the night of His betrayal that he could have instantly summoned “more than twelve legions of angels” to fight on His behalf (Matt. 26:53).

The orders of angels are not fully enumerated or explained by the Bible. But the angelic host includes at least one archangel, the seraphim, and the cherubim. The archangel, Michael, is named in Daniel 10:13, 21; Jude 9; and Revelation 12:7. He seems to be the highest of all angelic creatures. Only one other holy angel, Gabriel, is explicitly named (Dan. 8:16; 9:21; Luke 1:19, 26). Some think he is therefore similar in rank to Michael, but Scripture doesn’t actually designate Gabriel as an archangel.

Angels are God’s unseen ministers. One of the most interesting questions of all about angels has to do with their unseen service on behalf of believers. Scripture portrays angels as caretakers of God’s providence on our behalf — “ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation” (Heb. 1:14). In Matthew 18:10, Jesus (speaking of His own tender care for little children) said, “I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven” — suggesting that specific angels have guardianship of specific individuals. And Hebrews 13:2 says, “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” Very little further explanation of the angels’ service to humans is given. Many are tempted to inquire into the matter in search of specifics that Scripture doesn’t reveal. (Exerpts from *Tabletalk Magazine*...article by Phil Johnson)

## **Three Functional Categories of Angels**

By function, angels fill three categories:

1. **Warring Angels**...This includes the great army of angels that stand at the gates of heaven, at the gates of hell and stand ready to deliver the saints from harm
2. **Ministering Spirits** that are caretakers of God's providence and ministers to those who will inherit salvation.
3. **Angels of Worship** that praise God before His throne day and night.

*We will discuss these more in our questions and answers section*

## Biblical Examples of Angels In Action

The book of Hebrews calls angels “ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation.” (**Hebrews 1:14**) Here are a few ways angels minister.

**Provisions**...The Lord uses His angels to physically provide for His children. It was an angel who brought Elijah bread and water while fleeing from Jezebel after his victory on Mt. Carmel (**1 Kings 19:5-6**).

**Guidance**... But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. <sup>21</sup> And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. **Matthew 1:20-21**

**Encouragement**...And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. <sup>23</sup> For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, <sup>24</sup> Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. **Acts 27:22-24**

**Protection**...My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me. **Daniel 6:23**

**Rescue/Deliverance...** And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison. And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision.

When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him. And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews. **Acts 12:6-11**

**Healing...** Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him. **Matthew 4:10-11** Also in the garden, “ An angel came from heaven to strengthen him. During his agony as he prayed, "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground". (**Luke 22:44**).

## **My Wife’s Parking Angel**

There is one other type of angel that I cannot prove nor is there any reference in the Bible for but is interesting. It is my wife’s, “**Parking Angel.**” My wife really has one.

It’s a long story but in short, we were trying to attend a Christian meeting to see a special speaker and could not find a parking spot. She prayed and I laughed at the idea. Then she got a spot right in front of the church. She says it was her parking angel that gave her the spot. It’s been 15 years and every time she needs a spot, she looks to her angel to make one available and it is always right up front. Now I know this is not Biblical but it is an interesting true story about an angel that helps my wife to get a close up parking spot.

I am sure you will come across many more examples. These are just a few.

## Questions & Answers

**Can we communicate with angels?...**The Bible does not support human beings ever contacting angels. It does, however, support angels talking to humans. They are messengers from God.

**Do Angels Marry each other?...** For in the resurrection they (people) neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.” **Matthew 22:30**

**Was Satan an angel?...** The Bible nowhere explicitly describes Satan as an angel before he rebelled against God and was cast out of heaven. Assuming Ezekiel 28:12–18 is symbolic of Satan’s fall, Satan is described as a “guardian cherub.” Cherubs are angelic creatures, possibly the highest order of angels. So, in that sense, yes, Satan was an angel.

**Are fallen angels demons?...** When exactly God created angels is open for debate, but what is known for sure is that God created everything good because God, in His holiness, cannot create something sinful. So when Satan, who was once the angel, Lucifer, rebelled against God and fell from heaven (Isaiah 14; Ezekiel 28), one third of the angelic host joined his insurrection (Revelation 12:3-4,9). There is no doubt these fallen angels are now known as the demons.

**Where do evil angels get their power?...**The Bible declares that Christ utterly defeated Satan, “And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.” **Colossians 2:15** Thus Jesus stripped all evil forces of their power. The only power they have is the power we give them from our free will choices. That’s why we are to resist, stand in faith and give no place to the devil.

**Can or did angels intermarry with human beings?...** Nowhere in the Scriptures does it say that these "sons of God" spoken of in Genesis are angels. Also, if you look at the context of Genesis 6; Genesis 5 is talking about Adam's lineage. In chapter 5, the phrase that is repeated constantly is that Adam's descendants "begat sons". Or "begat sons and daughters". So,

according to the context, these "sons of God" are humans. If you turn to Deuteronomy 14:1, this also proves that the "sons of God" are actually humans. Plus, as we have seen already, angels are unable to procreate. In the resurrection, we will be like them, without sexual desires or abilities.

**Is God an angel?...**God is a triune being. He has no beginning or end. He always was and always is. He is the creator of all that exists. He is not an angel.

**Can angels harm humans...**Yes they can but usually do not. There is an example in the bible where angels blinded some of the men of Sodom who wanted to abuse the angels that were in Lot's house. **Genesis 19**. There was also a time where Jacob was touched by an angel when he was wrestling with him and was hurt. **Genesis 32:22-32**

**Do angels die?...** Angels do not die because they were originally created as spirit beings. They are eternal. **Luke 20:36** However, this is in the traditional sense meaning as a human would stop breathing and die. There is another meaning for death that says, death is the eternal separation from God. The being does not cease to exist. It does however exist in total darkness, separated from God and alone. We call this place Hell.

**What is an archangel?...** The word "archangel" occurs in only two verses of the Bible. First Thessalonians 4:16 exclaims, "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 verse 9 declares, "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!'" The word "archangel" comes from a Greek word meaning "chief angel." It refers to an angel who seems to be the leader of other angels.

Jude verse 9 uses the definite article "*the* archangel Michael," which could possibly indicate that Michael is the only archangel. However, Daniel 10:13 describes Michael as "one of the chief princes." This possibly indicates that there is more than one archangel, because it places Michael on the same level as the other "chief princes." So, while it is possible that there are multiple archangels, it is best not to presume upon the Word of God by declaring other angels as archangels. Daniel 10:21 describes Michael the archangel as "your prince," and Daniel 12:1 identifies Michael as "the great

prince who protects." Even if there are multiple archangels, it seems that Michael is the chief among them.

**Are angels male or female?...** There is no doubt that every reference to angels in Scripture is in the masculine gender. The Greek word for "angel" in the New Testament, *angelos*, is in the masculine form. In fact, a feminine form of *angelos* does not exist. There are three genders in grammar—masculine (*he, him, his*), feminine (*she, her, hers*), and neuter (*it, its*). Angels are never referred to in any gender other than masculine. In the many appearances of angels in the Bible, never is an angel referred to as "she" or "it." Furthermore, when angels appeared, they were always dressed as human males (Genesis 18:2, 16; Ezekiel 9:2). No angel ever appears in Scripture dressed as a female.

The only named angels in the Bible—Michael, Gabriel, Lucifer—had male names and all are referred to in the masculine. "Michael and his angels" (Revelation 12:7); "Mary was greatly troubled at his [Gabriel's] words" (Luke 1:29); "Oh, Lucifer, son of the morning" (Isaiah 14:12). Other references to angels are always in the masculine gender. In Judges 6:21, the angel holds a staff in "his" hand. Zechariah asks an angel a question and reports that "he" answered (Zechariah 1:19). The angels in Revelation are all spoken of as "he" and their possessions as "his" (Revelation 10:1, 5; 14:19; 16:2, 4, 17; 19:17; 20:1).

Some people point to Zechariah 5:9 as an example of female angels. That verse says, "Then I looked up—and there before me were two women, with the wind in their wings! They had wings like those of a stork, and they lifted up the basket between heaven and earth." The problem is that the "women" in this prophetic vision are not called angels. They are called *nashiym* ("women"), as is the woman in the basket representing wickedness in verses 7 and 8. By contrast, the angel that Zechariah was speaking to is called a *malak*, a completely different word meaning "angel" or "messenger." The fact that the women have wings in Zechariah's vision might suggest angels to our minds, but we must be careful about going beyond what the text actually says. A vision does not necessarily depict actual beings or objects—consider the huge flying scroll Zechariah sees earlier in the same chapter (Zechariah 5:1–2).

The confusion about genderless angels comes from a misreading of Matthew 22:30, which states that there will be no marriage in heaven

because we “will be like the angels in heaven.” The fact that there will be no marriage has led some to believe that angels are “sexless” or genderless because (the thinking goes) the purpose of gender is procreation and, if there is to be no marriage and no procreation, there is no need for gender. But this is a leap that cannot be proven from the text. The fact that there is no marriage does not necessarily mean there is no gender. The many references to angels as males contradict the idea of genderless angels. Angels do not marry, but we can’t make the leap from “no marriage “to” any gender.”

Gender in language, then, is not to be understood strictly in terms of sexuality. Rather, the masculine gender pronouns applied to spirit beings throughout Scripture are more a reference to authority than to sex. God always refers to Himself in the masculine. The Holy Spirit is never described as an “it.” God is personal and authoritative—thus, the personal pronouns in the masculine gender. It would simply be inappropriate to refer to heavenly beings as anything other than masculine because of the authority God has granted to them to wield His power (2 Kings 19:35), carry His messages (Luke 2:10), and represent Him on earth.

**What do angels look like?...** Angels are spirit beings (Hebrews 1:14), so they do not have any essential physical form. But angels do have the ability to appear in human form. When angels appeared to humans in the Bible, they resembled normal males. In Genesis 18:1-19, God and two angels appeared as men and actually ate a meal with Abraham. Angels appear as men many times throughout the Bible (Joshua 5:13-14; Mark 16:5), and they never appear in the likeness of women.

Other times, angels appeared not as humans, but as something other-worldly, and their appearance was terrifying to those who encountered them. Often, the first words from these angels were “do not be afraid,” because extreme fear was such a common reaction. The keepers of Jesus’ tomb became as dead men when they saw the angel of the Lord (Matthew 28:4). The shepherds in the fields in Luke 2 were “sore afraid” when the angel of the Lord appeared and the glory of the Lord shone around them.

As for physical characteristics, angels are sometimes described as winged. The images of cherubim on the ark of the covenant had wings that covered the mercy seat (Exodus 25:20). Isaiah saw winged seraphim in his vision of the throne of heaven, each one having six wings (Isaiah 6:2). Ezekiel, too,

saw visions of winged angels. Isaiah 6:1-2 depicts angels having human features—voices, faces and feet. Angel voices are heard singing and praising God in several other passages. The angel at Jesus' tomb is described as having a brilliant appearance: "His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow" (Matthew 28:3).

Whatever appearance angels take on, there is reason to believe they are incredibly beautiful. Ezekiel tells us that Lucifer was "lifted up" in pride over his beauty. In addition, beings such as angels, who are continually in the presence of God, would be expected to have extraordinary beauty because God's glory is reflected upon all that is around Him.

**Why did some angels rebel against God?...**Most theologians believe that Lucifer's cry to replace God with himself is recorded in the bible, "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. **Isaiah 14:14**. His bid for the throne of God was why 1/3 of all the angels followed him in a war that was waged in heaven and where he lost and all of them were thrown out.

**Who or what is the Angel of the Lord?...** The precise identity of the "angel of the Lord" is not given in the Bible. However, there are many important "clues" to his identity. There are Old and New Testament references to "angels of the Lord," "*an* angel of the Lord," and "*the* angel of the Lord." It seems when the definite article "the" is used, it is specifying a unique being, separate from the other angels. The angel of the Lord speaks as God, identifies Himself with God, and exercises the responsibilities of God (Genesis 16:7-12; 21:17-18; 22:11-18; Exodus 3:2; Judges 2:1-4; 5:23; 6:11-24; 13:3-22; 2 Samuel 24:16; Zechariah 1:12; 3:1; 12:8). In several of these appearances, those who saw the angel of the Lord feared for their lives because they had "seen the Lord." Therefore, it is clear that in at least some instances, the angel of the Lord is a theophany, an appearance of God in physical form.

The appearances of the angel of the Lord cease after the incarnation of Christ. Angels are mentioned numerous times in the New Testament, but "*the* angel of the Lord" is never mentioned in the New Testament after the birth of Christ. There is some confusion regarding Matthew 28:2, where the KJV says "the angel of the Lord" descended from heaven and rolled the stone away from Jesus' tomb. It is important to note that the original Greek has no article in front of *angel*; it could be "the angel" or "an angel," but the

article must be supplied by the translators. Other translations besides the KJV say it was “an angel,” which is the better wording.

It is possible that appearances of the angel of the Lord were manifestations of Jesus before His incarnation. Jesus declared Himself to be existent “before Abraham” ([John 8:58](#)), so it is logical that He would be active and manifest in the world. Whatever the case, whether the angel of the Lord was a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ (Christophany) or an appearance of God the Father (theophany), it is highly likely that the phrase “the angel of the Lord” usually identifies a physical appearance of God.

**Do We Have Guardian Angels?...** [Matthew 18:10](#) states, “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.” In the context, “these little ones” could either apply to those who believe in Him (v. 6) or it could refer to the little children (vs. 3-5). This is the key passage regarding guardian angels. There is no doubt that good angels help protect ([Daniel 6:20-23](#); [2 Kings 6:13-17](#)), reveal information ([Acts 7:52-53](#); [Luke 1:11-20](#)), guide ([Matthew 1:20-21](#); [Acts 8:26](#)), provide for ([Genesis 21:17-20](#); [1 Kings 19:5-7](#)), and minister to believers in general ([Hebrews 1:14](#)).

The question is whether each person—or each believer—has an angel assigned to him/her. In the Old Testament, the nation of Israel had the archangel (Michael) assigned to it ([Daniel 10:21](#); [12:1](#)), but Scripture nowhere states that an angel is “assigned” to an individual (angels were sometimes sent to individuals, but there is no mention of permanent assignment). The Jews fully developed the belief in guardian angels during the time between the Old and New Testament periods. Some early church fathers believed that each person had not only a good angel assigned to him/her, but a demon as well. The belief in guardian angels has been around for a long time, but there is no explicit scriptural basis for it.

To return to [Matthew 18:10](#), the word “their” is a collective pronoun in the Greek and refers to the fact that believers are served by angels in general. These angels are pictured as “always” watching the face of God so as to hear His command to them to help a believer when it is needed. The angels in this passage do not seem to be guarding a person so much as being attentive to the Father in heaven. The active duty or oversight seems, then, to come more from God than from the angels, which makes perfect sense because God alone is omniscient. He sees every believer at every moment, and He alone

knows when one of us needs the intervention of an angel. Because they are continually seeing His face, the angels are at His disposal to help one of His “little ones.”

It cannot be emphatically answered from Scripture whether or not each believer has a guardian angel assigned to him/her. But, as stated earlier, God does use angels in ministering to us. It is scriptural to say that He uses them as He uses us; that is, He in no way needs us or them to accomplish His purposes, but chooses to use us and them nevertheless (Hebrews 1:7). In the end, whether or not we have an angel assigned to protect us, we have an even greater assurance from God: if we are His children through faith in Christ, He works all things together for good (Romans 8:28-30), and Jesus Christ will never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5-6). If we have an omniscient, omnipotent, all-loving God with us, does it really matter whether or not there is a finite guardian angel protecting us?

**What are cherubim? Are cherubs angels?...** Cherubim/cherubs are angelic beings involved in the worship and praise of God. The cherubim are first mentioned in the Bible in 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.” Prior to his rebellion, Satan was a cherub (Ezekiel 28:12-15). The tabernacle and temple along with their articles contained many representations of cherubim (Exodus 25:17-22; 26:1, 31; 36:8; 1 Kings 6:23-35; 7:29-36; 8:6-7; 1 Chronicles 28:18; 2 Chronicles 3:7-14; 2 Chronicles 3:10-13; 5:7-8; Hebrews 9:5).

Chapters 1 and 10 of the book of Ezekiel describe the “four living creatures” (Ezekiel 1:5) as the same beings as the cherubim (Ezekiel 10). Each had four faces—that of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle (Ezekiel 1:10; also 10:14)—and each had four wings. In their appearance, the cherubim “had the likeness of a man” (Ezekiel 1:5). These cherubim used two of their wings for flying and the other two for covering their bodies (Ezekiel 1:6, 11, 23). Under their wings the cherubim appeared to have the form, or likeness, of a man's hand (Ezekiel 1:8; 10:7-8, 21).

The imagery of Revelation 4:6-9 also seems to be describing cherubim. The cherubim serve the purpose of magnifying the holiness and power of God. This is one of their main responsibilities throughout the Bible. In addition to

singing God's praises, they also serve as a visible reminder of the majesty and glory of God and His abiding presence with His people.

**What are Seraphim? Are they angels?...** The seraphim (fiery, burning ones) are angelic beings associated with the prophet Isaiah's vision of God in the Temple when God called him to his prophetic ministry (Isaiah 6:1-7). Isaiah 6:2-4 records, "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. And they were calling to one another: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.' At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke." Seraphs are angels who worship God continually.

Isaiah chapter 6 is the only place in the Bible that specifically mentions the seraphim. Each seraph had six wings. They used two to fly, two to cover their feet, and two to cover their faces (Isaiah 6:2). The seraphim flew about the throne on which God was seated, singing His praises as they called special attention to God's glory and majesty. These beings apparently also served as agents of purification for Isaiah as he began his prophetic ministry. One placed a hot coal against Isaiah's lips with the words, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for" (Isaiah 6:7). Similar to the other types of holy angels, the seraphim are perfectly obedient to God. Similar to the cherubim, the seraphim are particularly focused on worshipping God.

**What are familiar spirits?...** The word *familiar* is from the Latin *familiaris*, meaning a "household servant," and is intended to express the idea that sorcerers had spirits as their servants ready to obey their commands. Those attempting to contact the dead, even to this day, usually have some sort of spirit guide who communicates with them. These are familiar spirits.

Leviticus 19:31; 20:6, 27; and Deuteronomy 18:9-14 refer to "mediums and familiar spirits" and forbids being involved with them, as they are an abomination to the Lord. A medium is one who acts as a liaison to supposedly contact or communicate with the dead on behalf of the living. In reality mediums are contacting demons who convince the mediums that they are "familiar" and can be trusted and believed. The practices associated with mediums and familiar spirits were banned in Israel, and the punishment for practicing such things was death.

Familiar spirits and spirit guides are under the control of their master, Satan. They influence people to spread lies and deceit in order to thwart the kingdom of God. To knowingly open oneself to the work of demons is an evil thing: "Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD" (Deuteronomy 18:10-12a).

Some avenues through which demons or "familiar spirits" can gain entrance into a person's life are divination, transcendental meditation, visualization, necromancy, witchcraft, drugs, and alcohol. These are all activities that believers are exhorted to avoid. Instead, we are to be filled with the Holy Spirit, with love, with joy, and with the fullness of life that comes from Jesus Christ. We are also to be on guard, "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" (Ephesians 6:12).

**Do angels have wings?...** The most common image of an angel is essentially a human being with wings. This is not Biblical. The Bible often presents angels as appearing as human beings. However, this does not indicate that angels in their essence resemble human beings. Further, the Bible very rarely describes angels as having wings. However, there are definitely two types of angels mentioned in the Bible that have wings: Cherubim (Exodus 25:20; Ezekiel 10) and Seraphim (Isaiah 6). Cherubim and Seraphim are two types of angels, possibly the two highest orders of angels. So, this much is clear, some angels do have wings.

The Bible tells us that angels are spirit beings (Hebrews 1:14). The descriptions of the Cherubim in Ezekiel chapter 10 and the Seraphim in Isaiah chapter 6 are highly unusual. It is clear that Ezekiel and Isaiah were having trouble accurately describing the amazing visions they saw of Heaven and the angels. As spirit beings, it is unclear as to why the angels would require wings. A spirit being does not need wings in order to fly. The angels are not bound by the laws of the physical universe. So, do angels have wings? Yes, some angels do have wings. However, we should not limit what the angels can or cannot do based on our limited understanding of the wings angels possess as described in the Bible.

**Do we become angels after we die?**... Angels are beings created by God (Colossians 1:15-17) and are entirely different from humans. They are God's special agents to carry out His plan and to minister to the followers of Christ (Hebrews 1:13-14). There is no indication that angels were formerly humans or anything else—they were created as angels. Angels have no need of, and cannot experience, the redemption that Christ came to provide for the human race. First Peter 1:12 describes their desire to look into the Gospel, but it is not for them to experience. Had they been formerly humans, the concept of salvation would not be a mystery to them, having experienced it themselves. Yes, they rejoice when a sinner turns to Christ (Luke 15:10), but salvation in Christ is not for them.

Eventually, the body of the believer in Christ will die. What happens then? The spirit of the believer goes to be with Christ (2 Corinthians 5:8). The believer does not become an angel. It is interesting that both Elijah and Moses were recognizable on the Mount of Transfiguration. They had not transformed into angels, but appeared as themselves—although glorified—and were recognizable to Peter, James and John.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, Paul tells us that believers in Christ are asleep in Jesus; that is, their bodies are dead, but their spirits are alive. This text tells us that when Christ returns, He will bring with Him those who are asleep in Him, and then their bodies will be raised, made new like Christ's resurrected body, to be joined with their spirits which He brings with Him. All believers in Christ who are living at the return of Christ will have their bodies changed to be like Christ, and they will be completely new in their spirits, no longer having a sin nature.

All the believers in Christ will recognize one another and live with the Lord forever. We will serve Him throughout eternity, not as angels, but along with the angels. Thank the Lord for the living hope He provides for the believer in Jesus Christ.

**What are territorial spirits?** ... "Territorial spirits" is a term some Christians use to identify demonic occupation of a specific geographic location. Ironically, it is also a term pagans use to describe an otherworldly presence believed to be residing in a specific geographical location.

The Christian concept of territorial spirits comes from passages such as

Daniel 10; John 12:31; John 14:30; John 16:11; Mark 5:10; and Ephesians 6:12. All of these passages imply that fallen angels have been given some type of responsibility over a certain area. Thus, they seem to be territorial. However, we need to remember that this teaching is inferred; the Bible never explicitly delineates a hierarchy of demonic authority in the world. What the Bible is clear about is that demons are at work in the world and that believers are very much involved in a battle against them.

In Daniel 10, for example, an angel struggled against a demonic adversary the entire time Daniel was praying and fasting. It wasn't until the end of Daniel's spiritually focused time that the angel finally broke away and came to Daniel. Ephesians 6 exhorts believers to stand firm against our spiritual adversaries and to remain alert and ready for battle. There is no doubt that our struggle on Earth is mirrored in some way in the spiritual realm.

The problem inherent in the term “territorial spirits” is that some Christians believe it is their duty to engage territorial demons in spiritual warfare. This, however, cannot be justified by Scripture. There is not a single instance in the Bible where someone actively sought out a demon in order to engage it. Demon-possessed individuals were encountered, and some were brought to Jesus and His disciples for healing, but the disciples didn't go looking for demons to cast out of people. No one in the Bible ever prayed that the “demon princes” of a town be “bound” from working their will against the residents of that town.

Territorial spirits, although not explicitly a scriptural idea, may very well exist, as seen in the previous passages. Whether or not a spirit is “territorial” is really not that important, though. What is important is our response. A believer in Christ has no biblical support to engage in prayer-led spiritual warfare against demons. Rather, a believer needs to be aware that there is a spiritual battle and to take it seriously (1 Peter 5:8). Our lives need to be focused on prayer and on growing in faith. Should we ever encounter a demon, we definitely have the Christ-given authority to deal with it, but we should not go looking for them, territorial or otherwise.

**What are the different types of angels?...** Angels fall into two categories: the “un-fallen” angels and the fallen angels. Un-fallen angels are those who have remained holy throughout their existence and accordingly are called “holy angels” (Matthew 25:31). In Scripture, generally when angels are mentioned, it is the class of holy angels in view. By contrast, the fallen

angels are those who have not maintained their holiness. Holy angels fall into special classes, and certain individuals are named and mentioned. Michael the archangel is likely the head of all the holy angels, and his name means “who is like unto God?” (Daniel 10:21; 12:1; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Jude 9; Revelation 12:7-10). Gabriel is one of the principal messengers of God, his name meaning “hero of God,” and was entrusted with important messages such as those delivered to Daniel (Daniel 8:16; 9:21), to Zacharias (Luke 1:18-19), and to Mary (Luke 1:26-38).

Most holy angels are not given names but are described only as “elect angels” (1 Timothy 5:21). The expressions “principalities” and “powers” seem to be used of all angels whether fallen or holy (Luke 21:26; Romans 8:38; Ephesians 1:21; 3:10; Colossians 1:16; 2:10, 15; 1 Peter 3:22). Some angels are designated as “cherubim,” which are living creatures who defend God’s holiness from any defilement of sin (Genesis 3:24; Exodus 25: 18, 20; Ezekiel 1:1-18). “Seraphim” are another class of angels mentioned only once in Scripture in Isaiah 6:2-7 and are described as having three pairs of wings. They apparently have the function of praising God, being God’s messengers to Earth, and are especially concerned with the holiness of God. Most of the references to holy angels in Scripture refer to their ministries, which cover a wide field of achievement. They were present at creation, the giving of the Law, at the birth of Christ and at His resurrection, at the Ascension, and they will be present at the Rapture of the Church and the Second Coming of Christ.

In stark contrast to the company of holy angels, the fallen angels are also innumerable and are described as fallen from their first estate. Led by Satan, who was originally a holy angel, the fallen angels defected, rebelled against God, and became sinful in their nature and work. Fallen angels have been divided into two classes: those who are free and those who are bound. Of the fallen angels, Satan alone is given particular mention in the Bible. When Satan fell (John 8:44; Luke 10:18), he drew after him one third of the angels. Of those, some are reserved in chains awaiting judgment (1 Corinthians 6:3; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6), and the remainder are free and are the demons, or devils, to whom reference is constantly made throughout the New Testament (Mark 5:9, 15; Luke 8:30, 1 Timothy 4:1). They are Satan’s servants in all his undertakings and share his doom (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10).

**Is there an angel of death?** ... The idea of an “angel of death” is present in several religions. The “angel of death” is known as Samael, Sariel, or Azrael

in Judaism; as Malak Almawt in Islam; as Yama or Yamaraj in Hinduism; and as the Grim Reaper in popular fiction. In various mythologies, the angel of death is imagined as anything from a cloaked skeletal figure with a sickle, to a beautiful woman, to a small child. While the details vary, the core belief is that a being comes to a person at the moment of death, either actually causing death or simply observing it—with the purpose of then taking the person’s soul to the abode of the dead.

This “angel of death” concept is not taught in the Bible. The Bible nowhere teaches that there is a particular angel who is in charge of death or who is present whenever a person dies. Second Kings 19:35 describes an angel putting to death 185,000 Assyrians who had invaded Israel. Some also see Exodus chapter 12, the death of the firstborn of Egypt, as the work of an angel. While this is possible, the Bible nowhere attributes the death of the firstborn to an angel. Whatever the case, while the Bible describes angels causing death at the command of the Lord, Scripture nowhere teaches that there is a specific angel of death.

God, and God alone, is sovereign over the timing of our deaths. No angel or demon can in any sense cause our death before the time God has willed it to occur. According to Romans 6:23 and Revelation 20:11-15, death is separation, separation of our soul-spirit from our body (physical death) and, in the case of unbelievers, everlasting separation from God (eternal death). Death is something that occurs. Death is not an angel, a demon, a person, or any other being. Angels can cause death, and may be involved in what happens to us after death—but there is no such thing as the “angel of death.”

**Do angels appear to people today?**... In the Bible angels appear to people in unpredictable and various ways. From a casual reading of Scripture, a person might get the idea that angelic appearances were somewhat common, but that is not the case. There is an increasing interest in angels today, and there are many reports of angelic appearances. Angels are part of almost every religion and generally seem to have the same role of messenger. In order to determine whether angels appear today, we must first get a biblical view of their ancient appearances.

The first appearance of angels in the Bible is in Genesis 3:24, when Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden. God placed cherubim to block the entrance with a flaming sword. The next angelic appearance is in Genesis 16:7, about 1,900 years later. Hagar, the Egyptian servant who bore

Ishmael to Abraham, was instructed by an angel to return and submit to her mistress, Sarai. Abraham was visited by God and two angels in Genesis 18:2, when God informed him of the impending destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The same two angels visited Lot and instructed him to escape the city with his family before it was destroyed (Genesis 19:1-11). The angels in this case also displayed supernatural power by blinding the wicked men who were threatening Lot.

When Jacob saw a multitude of angels (Genesis 32:1), he immediately recognized them as the army of God. In Numbers 22:22, an angel confronted the disobedient prophet Balaam, but Balaam did not see the angel at first, although his donkey did. Mary received a visit from an angel who told her that she would be the mother of the Messiah, and Joseph was warned by an angel to take Mary and Jesus to Egypt to protect them from Herod's edict (Matthew 2:13). When angels appear, those who see them are often struck with fear (Judges 6:22; 1 Chronicles 21:30; Matthew 28:5). Angels deliver messages from God and do His bidding, sometimes by supernatural means. In every case, the angels point people to God and give the glory to Him. Holy angels refuse to be worshiped (Revelation 22:8-9).

According to modern reports, angelic visitations come in a variety of forms. In some cases, a stranger prevents serious injury or death and then mysteriously disappears. In other cases, a winged or white-clothed being is seen momentarily and is then gone. The person who sees the angel is often left with a feeling of peace and assurance of God's presence. This type of visitation seems to agree with the biblical pattern as seen in Acts 27:23.

Another type of visitation that is sometimes reported today is the "angel choir" type. In Luke 2:13, the shepherds were visited by a heavenly choir as they were told of the birth of Jesus. Some people have reported similar experiences in places of worship. This experience does not fit the model so well, as it typically serves no purpose other than to provide a feeling of spiritual elation. The angel choir in Luke's Gospel was heralding some very specific news.

A third type of visitation involves only a physical feeling. Elderly people have often reported feeling as though arms or wings were wrapped around them in times of extreme loneliness. God is certainly the God of all comfort, and Scripture speaks of God covering with His wings (Psalms 91:4). Such reports may well be examples of that covering.

God is still as active in the world as He has always been, and His angels are certainly still at work. Just as angels protected God's people in the past, we can be assured that they are guarding us today. Hebrews 13:2 says, “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” As we obey God's commands, it is quite possible that we may encounter His angels, even if we do not realize it. In special circumstances, God allowed His people to see His unseen angels, so God’s people would be encouraged and continue in His service (2 Kings 6:16-17).

We must also heed the warnings of Scripture concerning angelic beings: there are fallen angels who work for Satan who will do anything to subvert and destroy us. Galatians 1:8 warns us to beware of any “new” gospel, even if it is delivered by an angel. Colossians 2:18 warns against the worship of angels. Every time in the Bible when men bowed down before angels, those beings firmly refused to be worshiped. Any angel who receives worship, or who does not give glory to the Lord Jesus, is an imposter. Second Corinthians 11:14-15 states that Satan and his angels disguise themselves as angels of light in order to deceive and lead astray anyone who will listen to them.

We are encouraged by the knowledge that God's angels are at work. In special circumstances, we might even have one of those rare personal visitations. Greater than that knowledge, however, is the knowledge that Jesus Himself has said, “Surely I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20). Jesus, who made the angels and receives their worship, has promised us His own presence in our trials.

**Does the Bible prohibit or promote praying to angels? ...** While there is no verse, which explicitly states, “You shall not pray to angels,” it is abundantly clear that we are not to pray to angels. Ultimately, prayer is an act of worship. And, just as angels reject our worship (Revelation 22:8-9), so they would also reject our prayers. Offering our worship or prayer to anyone but God is idolatry.

There are also several practical and theological reasons why praying to angels is wrong. Christ Himself never prayed to anyone but the Father. When asked by His disciples to teach them to pray, He instructed them, “This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven...’” (Matthew 6:9; Luke 11:2). If praying to angels were something we, as His disciples,

are to do, this would have been the place for Him to tell us. Clearly, we are to pray only to God. This is also evident in passages such as Matthew 11:25-26, where Christ's prayer introduction begins with "I praise thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth..." Jesus not only begins His prayers by addressing the Father, but the content of His prayers usually requests assistance that could only be granted by someone with omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent powers. Praying to angels would be ineffective because they are created beings and do not possess these powers.

The case against praying to angels can also be made by reviewing John 17:1-26 where Jesus prays on behalf of His followers, requesting multiple blessings on them from God the Father, including sanctification, glorification, and preservation of the saints. These three blessings can only come from the source that presently holds them, and again, angels simply do not have this power. Angels cannot sanctify us, they cannot glorify us, and they cannot guarantee our inheritance in Christ (Ephesians 1:13-14).

Second, there is an occasion in John 14:13 when Christ Himself tells believers that whatever we ask in His name, He will accomplish because He pleads directly with the Father. Offering a prayer up to angels would fall short of an effective and biblically guided prayer. A second occasion in which Christ mentions that prayers must be offered up in His name alone occurs in John 16:26. This verse conveys the message that, after Christ's ascension to heaven, He acts as an intercessor to the Father for all believers. Neither angels nor any other created being is ever depicted as an intercessor with the Father. Only the Son and the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:26) can intercede before the Father's throne.

Last, 1 Thessalonians 5:17 tells the believer to pray without ceasing. This would only be possible if a believer has access to a God who is always present and available to listen to the pleas of every person at one time. Angels do not have this ability—they are not omnipresent or omnipotent—and as such are not qualified to receive our prayers. Prayer to the Father through Christ is the only necessary and effective means by which we can communicate with the Father. No, praying to angels is absolutely not a biblical concept.

**Do angels have free will?** ... Although the Bible mentions angels over 250 times, the references are usually incidental to some other topic. Learning what the Bible has to say about angels can certainly aid in an understanding

of God and His ways, but what is learned about the angels themselves must be drawn from implicit, rather than explicit, descriptions.

Angels are spiritual beings who have personalities that include emotions (Luke 2:13), intelligence (2 Corinthians 11:3), and wills (2 Timothy 2:26). Satan was an angel who was cast out of heaven along with many other angels who decided to follow him and chose to sin (2 Peter 2:4). In terms of free will, the Bible reveals this was an exercise of their ability to choose (Jude 1:6).

Some scholars believe there was a sort of “probation period” for the angels, similar to the time when Adam and Eve were in the garden. Those angels who did not choose to sin and follow Satan have become the “elect” angels (1 Timothy 5:21), confirmed in holiness. These angels are also referred to as “holy angels” (Mark 8:38) and “holy ones” (Psalms 89:5).

Even if the elect angels are confirmed in their holiness, it doesn’t mean they have lost their free will. Certainly, every living creature has choices to make at any given moment. The holy angels might have the *ability* to sin, but that does not in any way mean that they *will* sin.

To help understand this issue, we can consider the life of Christ. Christ was “tempted in every way” (Hebrews 4:15), yet He did not sin. Jesus had the ability to choose whatever He pleased (John 10:17-18). However, Jesus’ first priority was always to please His Father, and that is always what He chose (John 4:34). If Christ, who was 100 percent human (as well as 100 percent divine), could live in a sinful environment and face daily temptation, surely holy angels who live in a purely holy environment can freely choose good over evil. The elect angels praise God because they choose to; they obey God because that is what they desire most to do (see Jonathan Edwards’s *Freedom of the Will*).

Humans have free will, but they struggle with sin because the human nature has been corrupted by sin. This is why all humans sin (Romans 5:12) and find it much more difficult to “be good” than to “be bad.” The holy angels are without a sinful nature. They are not inclined toward sin but rather toward righteousness, doing everything that pleases God.

It doesn’t actually matter whether or not holy angels have the freedom to sin. They have a free will, but the Bible makes it clear they will not sin. The

apostle John, in describing heaven, wrote there will be no mourning, crying, or pain there (Revelation 21:4), and anyone who does evil will never be permitted to enter (Revelation 21:27). The angels who are part of heaven are sinless.

**Are there angels among us?** ... Our society has a fascination with the supernatural, and angels receive a lot of attention. We see bumper stickers, jewelry, T-shirts, movies, and TV shows that glorify angels, especially guardian angels. Some people allege having encounters with angelic beings and contend that there are angels among us.

Maybe you have heard the stories: a mysterious man rescues someone in peril, but as soon as the victim is safe, the mystery person vanishes into thin air, to the confusion of the one he helped. A young woman walking alone passes a would-be rapist lurking in the shadows but is not harmed; the foiled attacker later admits he did not bother the girl because of “the two large men walking on either side of her.” A woman is prevented from getting on an elevator by a strange, intense-looking man in white clothes; the elevator doors close, and the elevator immediately plunges down the shaft, killing everyone on board—but the body of the man in white is never found.

We could interview people all day long about their theories on angels and never arrive at the truth. The exclusive authority on angels is the Bible. Throughout Scripture, we see numerous instances in which angels were an integral part of God’s plan. One verse alludes to the possibility of angels walking among us today: “Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it” (Hebrews 13:2). The obvious reference is to Abraham, whose angelic visitors appeared to him as mere men (Genesis 18). This verse may or may not confirm that angels are indeed walking among us unawares; “have shown” is past tense, so present-day encounters are not explicitly mentioned.

There are dozens of scriptural examples of angelic encounters, so we know that God can and does use angels to accomplish certain things. What we don’t know for sure is how often angels allow themselves to be seen by people. Here are the basics about angels from the Bible: angels can instruct people (Genesis 16:9), help people (Daniel 6:22), deliver messages to people (Luke 1:35), appear in visions and dreams (Daniel 10:13), protect people (Exodus 23:20), and help carry out God’s plans.

We know that God created angels, and He uses angels in His plan. Angels have a sense of individuality, as some have names (such as Gabriel and Michael) and all have different responsibilities within the angelic hierarchy.

But do they walk among us? If God so chooses to use them in His custom-made plans for us, yes, they absolutely can walk among us doing God's will. Angels are mentioned in Genesis and in Revelation and witnessed the creation of the world (Job 38:7). God has used His heavenly host from the beginning of time and will still use them at the end of time, according to Scripture. It is quite possible that many people today have met or seen an angel without realizing it.

If angels do walk among us, it is because they are serving a God-ordained purpose. The Bible mentions demons who wander the earth with no purpose other than to destroy (Matthew 12:43). Satan and his demonic force can probably appear physically, much like holy angels can. Satan's purpose is to deceive and kill. Satan "masquerades as an angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:14).

**An important note:** angels are not to be glorified or worshiped (Colossians 2:18). They are entities who carry out God's will, and they refer to themselves as "fellow servants" with us (Revelation 22:9).

Regardless of whether we actually experience angelic encounters, the most important thing is that we experience salvation through Jesus Christ. He is beyond all angels and all humans, and He alone is worthy of worship. "You alone are the LORD. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you" (Nehemiah 9:6).

**What are the names of the angels in the Bible?** ... The Bible describes angels as powerful spiritual beings whom God created to perform specific jobs both in heaven and on earth. And although the Bible often mentions a "host" of angels, it only names a few.

Gabriel is the most well-known named angel to appear in Scripture. Each time He is mentioned, we see him act as a messenger to impart wisdom or a special announcement from God. In the book of Daniel, Gabriel appeared to

the prophet Daniel in order to explain some visions God gave Daniel about the end times (Daniel 8:15–27; 9:20–27). While Daniel still had trouble wrapping his mind around the visions, Gabriel’s explanations, along with other biblical information about the end times, have allowed us to come to some conclusions about how the end times will play out.

Gabriel also appears in the New Testament. He appears to Zacharias in the temple to herald the news that Zacharias’s wife, Elizabeth, would give birth to John. Gabriel also approaches Mary with the announcement of the birth of Christ. Later, Joseph receives guidance in a couple visits from Gabriel. Because of the monumental importance of these history-shaping announcements, it seems likely that Gabriel is one of God’s chief messengers.

The second angel the Bible calls by name is Michael, who functions very differently from the angel Gabriel. Michael is an archangel, which means “chief angel”; this title indicates that Michael holds a high rank in heaven. Although it is not certain that Michael is the only archangel, the possibility exists, according to Jude 9, where Michael is referred to in definite terms as “*the* archangel Michael.” If other archangels exist, it is likely that Michael leads them.

When Michael appears in the Bible, it is usually in a battle of some type. He wars with the fallen angels (those who sinned against God and became demons) and Satan on behalf of God and His people. Michael appears several times in the book of Daniel as a warrior (see Daniel 10:21 and 12:1). In one instance, the angel Gabriel describes Michael as fighting against the demonic “prince of the Persian kingdom,” enabling Gabriel to reach Daniel and explain the visions to him (Daniel 10:13).

Michael is also seen in the Book of Revelation, when he battles the great dragon—Satan—during the end times (Revelation 12:7–9). The fact that Michael is leading an army of angels against Satan himself testifies to Michael’s high rank and power.

If fallen angels are included in the list of angels who are named in the Bible, two more names should be mentioned: Lucifer/Satan and Apollyon/Abaddon. Lucifer rebelled against God and was thrown down from heaven along with the angels who followed him. Before his rebellion, Lucifer was a beautiful and powerful being; but he coveted equality with the

Most High God and therefore became unholy and cursed (Isaiah 14:12–18; Luke 10:18). He is now known as Satan and is God’s chief enemy who seeks to deceive and destroy all of mankind (John 10:10). Apollyon/Abaddon is another fallen angel, mentioned in Revelation 9:11, who leads an end-times demonic army.

**What are unclean spirits? Are unclean spirits demons?...** An unclean spirit is simply a New Testament synonym, a more descriptive Jewish term, for a demon. The terms *unclean spirit* and *demon* seem to be interchangeable in Scripture. There is no clear difference in their definitions. Some translations refer to them as “impure spirits.”

Throughout the New Testament, the term *unclean spirits* (*akathartos* in the Greek language) is mentioned over twenty times. Throughout those passages we read that unclean spirits can possess people and cause them sickness and harm (Matthew 10:1; 12:43; Mark 1:26; Luke 4:36; 6:18; Acts 5:16; 8:7), that they are searching for someone to possess if they are not currently possessing someone (Matthew 12:43), that some are more unclean or evil than others (Luke 11:26), that unclean spirits can interact with one another (Mark 5:1–20; Matthew 12:45), and that unclean spirits are under God’s authority and must submit to Him (Mark 1:27; 3:11; 5:8, 13).

An unclean spirit or demon is “unclean” in that it is wicked. Evil spirits are not only wicked themselves, but they delight in wickedness and promote wickedness in humans. They are spiritually polluted and impure, and they seek to contaminate all of God’s creation with their filth. Their foul, putrid nature is in direct contrast to the purity and incorruption of the Holy Spirit’s nature. When a person is defiled by an unclean spirit, he takes pleasure in corrupt thoughts and actions; when a person is filled with the Holy Spirit, his thoughts and actions are heavenly.

Some people hold the idea that unclean spirits or demons are deceased humans who may or may not have been evil while alive. However, we know the unclean spirits mentioned in the Bible are not referring to the dead, for several reasons. One, humans are never called “spirits” when the word *spirit* is used as a stand-alone term, without a possessive. In Scripture, men are said to have a spirit/soul (saying “his spirit” in Proverbs 25:28 and 1 Corinthians 5:5), but men are not called “spirits.” Another reason is that, once a person dies, he immediately goes either to eternal life with the Lord or to eternal darkness in hell (Hebrews 9:27; 2 Corinthians 5:6–8; Matthew

25:46). Human spirits, therefore, do not and cannot wander on earth in their spirit bodies. Any unclean spirit that wanders around, taking up residence in places or people or interacting with people in any way, is a fallen angel—a demon (Matthew 12:4). All unclean spirits mentioned in Scripture are demons, and all demons are definitely unclean, unholy, impure, evil spirits doomed to an eternity in hell (Matthew 25:41).

**Are the holy angels perfect, or do they sometimes fail God? . . .** Scripture contains many stories of angels doing God’s work. Angels are used in the Bible to protect believers (Psalm 91:11; Matthew 4:6), carry messages to humankind (Matthew 1:20; Luke 1:26–28; Daniel 9:20–21), and help judge the earth (Matthew 13:39–49). Angels praise God and intercede for believers (Psalm 148:2; Matthew 18:10), but they are not omniscient (Matthew 24:36). They are described as mighty beings that do God’s bidding and obey His word (Psalm 103:20). We know that God is perfect (Matthew 5:48) and that nothing imperfect can dwell in His presence. Since we know that angels do dwell in His presence (Matthew 18:10), we can assume that the holy angels are indeed perfect. Jesus calls them “holy angels” for a reason (Luke 9:26).

There are two passages in Job that seem to contradict the idea of angels being perfect. The first is Job 4:18, and the second is Job 15:15. These two verses are part of two separate speeches by Job’s friend Eliphaz, who is attempting to help Job make sense of his misfortunes. Job was a righteous man, a good man who feared God and lived blamelessly (Job 1:1). Therefore, the multiple tragedies he suffered seemed very odd to the religious minds of his friends, for they reasoned that God rewards the good with pleasurable things and the evil with painful things. From that wrong premise, they told Job that his pain and tragedy were the result of sin in his life. When Job maintained his innocence, his friends doubted him.

Eliphaz then steps forward and argues against Job’s innocence, using angels as proof: “If God . . . charges his angels with error, how much more those who live in houses of clay?” (Job 4:18–19). In other words, if even the angels are faulted before God, certainly human beings are incapable of living innocently! In another speech to Job, Eliphaz returns to the same theme: “If God places no trust in his holy ones, if even the heavens are not pure in his eyes, how much less mortals, who are vile and corrupt?” (Job 15:15–16).

There are two things that we must keep in mind. First, Eliphaz was not a truth-teller. In fact, at the end of the book of Job, when the Lord Himself appears, we read this: “[God] said to Eliphaz the Temanite, ‘I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken the truth about me’” (Job 42:7). Thus, it is important to always know who is speaking in the book of Job. The words of Eliphaz and the other two of Job’s friends are unreliable.

Second, in the verses previous to Job 4:18, we see that Eliphaz got his information from a spirit that had visited him in the night (Job 4:12–16). This spirit did not appear to Eliphaz the way the holy angels appeared to Daniel or Mary or Joseph. The holy angels came in the light, announced that their messages were from God, and told the humans they visited not to fear. The spirit that appeared to Eliphaz, on the other hand, frightened him, hid in the darkness, and whispered in his ear. It is certain that the spirit that appeared to Eliphaz was a demon, a fallen angel who was expressing its own bitterness at being charged with error by a holy God.

These two passages in Job, though they at first glance may appear to contradict the idea of holy angels, do not prove the imperfection of God’s angels. Instead, they prove the imperfection of man, who is easily deceived and must always ask God for wisdom instead of relying on his own susceptible intellect (see Proverbs 3:5–6; James 1:5).

**What are the heavenly hosts?**... On the night that Jesus was born, an angel announced the good news to the shepherds in the fields of Bethlehem. “Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel” and joined in praise to God (Luke 2:13). Most hymnals include “The Doxology,” one of the great hymns of the faith, and that song includes the line “Praise him above, ye heavenly host.” In both of these contexts, the heavenly hosts are God’s holy angels who dwell in God’s presence.

Basically, the word *host* refers to a great number of individuals or to an army. Modified by the word *heavenly*, *hosts* becomes a great number of angelic beings forming a celestial army under God’s command. There is a suggestion of rank and orderliness, of companies and divisions within that heavenly army. The heavenly hosts were created by God and are controlled by God.

One of God's names is "LORD of hosts," which occurs often in the Old Testament. In Hebrew, it is *Yahweh Sabaoth*, meaning "Lord of the heavenly armies" or "God of the heavenly hosts." The NIV translates the name as "LORD Almighty." See 1 Samuel 1:3; Psalm 24:10; Isaiah 22:14; Jeremiah 2:19; Amos 4:13; Haggai 2:9; Zechariah 8:6; and Malachi 2:16.

There are places in Scripture where the heavenly hosts include fallen angels, such as in 1 Kings 22:19. The prophet Micaiah relates a vision of God's throne room, where he saw "the whole heavenly host" standing on God's right and left (HCSB). One of these beings in the divine presence is a "deceiving spirit" (verse 22), so the term *heavenly hosts* can refer broadly to all angelic beings, holy and unholy.

Psalm 148:2 equates the parallel terms *angels* and *heavenly hosts*: "Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his heavenly hosts." Psalm 103:19–21 gives further information: "The Lord has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all. Praise the Lord, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word. Praise the Lord, all his heavenly hosts, you his servants who do his will." In this passage, the psalmist praises God for the extent of divine authority—there is no part of creation that is not under God's rule; His throne is "established." The heavenly hosts (the angels) praise the Lord; they are, in fact, God's servants who are at His beck and call. They dutifully obey God's commands, carry out His bidding, and acquiesce to His will.

As believers, we will someday inhabit heaven with God and the heavenly hosts. According to Hebrews 12:22, we have been called to the place where dwell "thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly." When Jesus returns to earth to establish His kingdom, "the armies of heaven [will be] following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean" (Revelation 19:14). In this context, the heavenly hosts are all those who inhabit heaven at that time: the redeemed of the church age, Old Testament believers, martyrs of the tribulation, and angels. The angelic army will be augmented by humans redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. We will not become angels, but we will be with them in glory.

## Conclusion

We have looked at angels from all sides. The one most worthy of our consideration is based upon Hebrews 13:2, “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” It is obvious that they are in our midst helping us to get through this life and to obtain life eternal. All the more reason we should be nice to strangers and seek to be a blessing. One day, a messenger may visit you.

*Questions and Answers were taken from GotQuestions.org*

