

What Does
the Bible

Teach
about

ANGELS?

25/01/26

Please Read Hebrews chapter 1 by way of introduction

Common Myths

The topic of angels is often misunderstood because of ignorance. Many religions and churches teach different things, but the best way to get to the truth is investigate the Word of God.



That angels have wings is a common perceptions – based on catholic imagery. They do NOT.

The Catholic church confuses symbolic ideas and figures in the Bible with literal: for example - Cherubim are described with wings. But this is just a symbolic creature described in visions, and not to be confused with angels. not a real thing. The adding of wings to angels started in the 4th century because of copying earlier beliefs and ancient cultures.

For example, the Egyptian Horus, and the Greek goddess victory – Nike where the tick on sportswear trainer comes from. – an angel's wing!



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But in the Bible as we will see, angels do not have wings. Just one passage will show this: Hebrews 13:2

Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. If they had wings you would soon know it as you'd get feathers in the hallway, and the wings get caught in the front door!

Fallen angels

In some religious quarters there seems to be as much talk about fallen angels as any other angels. It really is understandable why some people get confused with religion, as there seem to be so many of them, all saying different things. This myth proves the point that the only way to find the truth, is to go back to the one book where religion started. Just doing a quick check – the words ‘fallen angel’, or ‘rebellious angel’ or ‘bad angel’ – are not found in the Bible at all! There is no description of an angel of God falling out of heaven in the Bible. Instead, the myth has evolved out of people getting confused, and not reading the Bible properly and mixing up various verses to fit their own ideas. It is true there are two passages which mention angels sinning, but we will show later that this refers to human beings, in fact.

What does the Bible say?

The opening reading is important, as it explains what angels do today, and what is their purpose. Hebrews 1:14: *Are they (angels) not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?* The Apostle here, describes angels as ministering spirits. In verse 7 the Apostle uses a similar phrase: *7: And of the angels he saith, Who makes his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.*

Angels as spirits and who they are ministering to:

the Greek word for minister is of interest. It is *leitourgos*. This means in the Greek, a public servant. They are sent forth to minister to serve those who will inherit salvation! This is a thought that might not have always occurred to everyone. The perception by many is of angels swooping around all, in white clothe with grand stork's wings, keeping an aloof and holy detached distance from the lowly sinning nasty humans. But it isn't the case at all. The Apostle is describing, that to the believers - who are *heirs together of the grace of life*, of salvation in Christ, the angels - are servants to them! They function as helpers to them, they are there to assist the believers. That is what angels are for. Let's look at the background and history.

Angels in the Beginning

God uses the angels as his messengers and helpers, and used them to follow his instructions to create the heavens and the earth. In Genesis 1:26 we read *And God*

said, *Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.* The word for God here is *Elohim* in Hebrew. It is a plural word meaning ‘Mighty Ones’. When God says ‘*Let us make*’, it is referring to the *mighty ones* through whom His instructions are performed. These Mighty Ones are none other than the Angels of which are talking about this afternoon, which were there from the very beginning.

This can be seen in Psalm 104:1-5: *Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty... who stretched out the heavens like a curtain: Who makes his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire: Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever.*

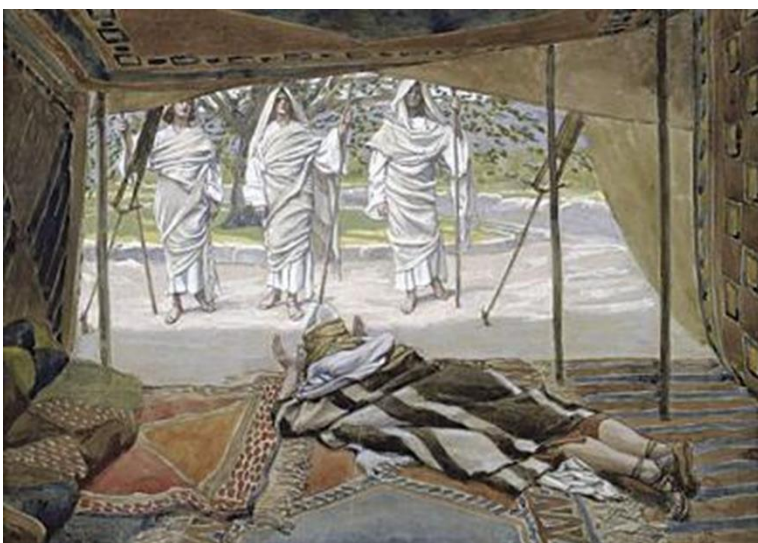
That such angels were present at creation, carrying out Yahweh’s instructions, is confirmed by God himself in Job 38:4, 7: *Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?*

The angels or Elohim were created by the Lord God to carry out His instructions.

This is demonstrated in Psalm 103:20: *Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word.*

The word angel in Hebrew is *Malak* and means messengers. In the New Testament the word for angel is ἄγγελος -angelos meaning one who brings tidings. -a messenger. Both these words are used of mortal men and of immortal beings. This is a point we will return to, but please remember this. Angel according to the Bible are ministers, they are messengers, they can be mortal, ie normal men and women, as well as immortal spirit beings.

Appearing to Abraham



Moving on through the Bible, from the time of creation, in Genesis 18 we learn something more concerning the role of the angels and how they function together. We are told in verse 1 that the LORD, Yahweh appeared unto Abraham, but this could not have been the All Powerful Creator because as He informed Moses in Exodus 33:20 *You cannot not see my face: for there shall no man*

see me, and live. So God sent his messengers, the angels. So the Lord Yahweh actually appeared to him in the appearance of three men, and Abraham ran out to

meet them and requested, Let a little water be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: As the record goes onto show Abraham did not realise they were angels. They obviously didn't have wings. We remember the earlier point: *Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.* The Genesis record states that despite Abraham standing in front of three men, that he *stood yet before the LORD, that is Yahweh.* The only way to reconcile this, and as we shall see many other occasion, is to appreciate the role of angels, that they represent God, they are his official envoys or ambassadors. In much the same way as – excuse the cheap comparison – President Trump officially attends NATO and UN meetings using his envoys and ambassadors.

Another example is in business - various companies and organisation have representatives, no one considers them to be either the company, or the organisation, the representative is a messenger informing the customer of the activities and the goods made by the company. In a similar way the angels are God's representatives, or manifestations. Understanding this answers a number of supposed difficulties and contradictions found in the Scriptures. For example in John 1:18 the apostle states, *No man hath seen God at any time* Paul also writes in 1Timothy 6:16 that *God is dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man has seen, nor can see:* GOD is not seen by any mortal directly but there are mortals who have seen His angelic representatives.

As God said to Moses, Exodus 33:20: *You cannot see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live* - but when Jacob was in Peniel wrestling with the angel he says, Genesis 32:30: *I have seen God face to face, and my life is*



preserved. Whereas Hosea states Hosea 12:4: *Yes, he had power over the angel, and prevailed.*

As with representatives and officials, there are different ranks among the angels. For example archangel in the New Testament literally means the chief messenger.

Different Ranks

With the example of the three men sent to Abraham, two appear to be of lower rank, as is seen by the way after they had informed Abraham and Sarah would have

a son, we read that the LORD (Yahweh) went his way. Then we learn that the other two had gone to on to a place called Sodom, so one of the angels was the name bearer, but the other two angels had another job to do. The scriptures states Genesis 19:1: *there came to Sodom at evening, two angels*. They said they were going to destroy the place, but in verse 29 it says that God, Elohim destroyed the cities of the plain. We can begin to see what the angels are used for and a little about them.

There are other examples of where angels have visited men and women, yet appeared to be ordinary men



An example of this is with Gideon when he was threshing wheat by the winepress. Gideon does not recognise the person who has come to talk to him and refers to him respectfully as Adonay, meaning my Lord. The angel talks to him for some time, but Gideon does not realise his visitor is an angel until he causes fire to rise up out of the rock that consumes the

gift of flesh and unleavened bread. Gideon expresses astonishment, *Alas Adonay Yahweh - Lord God- for I have seen an angel face to face*. A similar occurrence was experienced by the mother and father of Samson, not until the angel ascended in the fire of the burnt offering did they realise that the “man” was actually an angel of the Lord.

The character of angels

As we have said, angels project the character and reaction of God depending upon their mission, and to whom they have been sent. To the heirs of salvation to the believers, they show great compassion and kindness. We can see that by the tenderness shown to Hagar the Egyptian servant of Abraham, who had been treated badly, yet turned to God for help: Genesis 21:17 *And God heard the voice of the lad. Then the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said to her, What ails you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is.*

They are sent to strengthen and lift up: Daniel 10:19 *And he said, O man greatly beloved, fear not! Peace be to you; be strong, yes, be strong! So, when he spoke to*

me I was strengthened, and said, "Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me.

They are sent to comfort and reassure those who are worried and anxious : Luke 1:13: *Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard...* Luke 1:30: *Then the angel said to her, Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God...* Luke 2:10: *Then the angel said to them, Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.* Matthew 28:5: *But the angel answered and said to the women, Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified..* They are messengers certainly not to be afraid of, but are kindly and loving, and caring. These same Divine messengers not only project the message of God, but His happiness, seen on several occasions, - for example at the birth of Jesus: Luke 2:13: *And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God,* just as they did when the first Adam was created (Job 38:7) their ongoing happiness is celebrated by Jesus especially when sinners repent from their ways - Luke 15:7,10 *...I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents.*

We remember that their job is to do the will of God, and be His messenger, and help those who are Believers in God.

How do they help?

Jesus taught his followers to pray... *lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil* (Matthew 6:13). Using examples, we can build the picture of how believers are protected from evil: We have the example of how they helped Lot escape Sodom, going back to Genesis: Genesis 19: 15 - 16: *And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and two daughters, which are here; lest you be consumed in the iniquity of the city. And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the Lord being merciful unto*



him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city. We see how they physically intervened, manoeuvring him out of the city. Likewise, they struck the wicked sodomites with blindness. Direct involvement. They had all the appearance of normal men, as the sodomites could see no difference. But what a difference they made, as soon the city was a pall of flame and fire. This is how so many have been helped, in scripture, there are many examples. David said this in

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

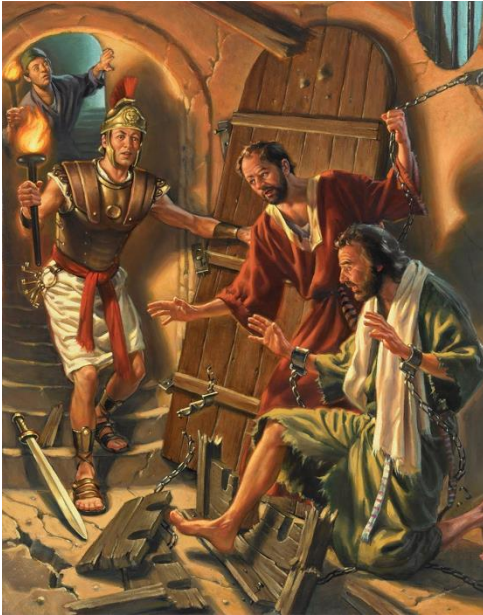
There is the example of when the angel Gabriel visited Daniel in 9:21 -23, and also in 10: 11-12 in these passages Daniel describes how he is visited by an angel, Gabriel, in the evening, and he touched him and said *I am come to give you skill and understanding. From when you first began to pray, apply your mind, and humble yourself, I was told to come to you, because you are very much loved, now think about this, and understand what you have been shown.* What a wonderful and encouraging way of building someone up. How kind does this show the God in heaven - our Father, how personal, intimate, and deeply loving. What an effective way of helping. Being loved. Being given skill and understanding. Nothing dramatic. Just a word of kindness, a touch. Knowing you are loved. Maybe we are visited by angels more often than we realise. We need to look around us! Messengers from God come in all shapes and sizes, as we shall learn.

Jesus knew this. He was dependent upon the presence of His Father, and he felt that very much. So much so, in itself it became a temptation to test it. He recalled the Psalm 91: 11 -12 *For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.* He knew it to be true, that so much in his life was overruled, nothing was an accident. In the end, he resisted the urge to test it, there was no need. When that urge left him, an angel came and proved the point! And accompanied him out of that wilderness.

When do they help?

God is watching all the time – we recall 2 Chronicles 16:9 *For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.* As Nebuchadnezzar was forcibly educated, and acknowledged, he described the angel as a watcher and an holy one (See Daniel 4: 13,17,23) Nothing is missed. We might not be aware, but as Daniel was told, - when he first began to pray – he was heard. Not ages afterwards, when God could fit him in, but exactly at the right moment – directly, and when it really mattered. If we are loyal, and apply our minds to the gospel, the presence of the Angel is always there, and able to help - when it is needed. We like Daniel, must be humble and ask for that help. It will not be long arriving.

Help can arrive in obvious angelic ways: when Paul and Silas were thrown in prison they were miraculously released Acts 5: 19 -20: *But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.*



And in not so obvious ways: 16: 25 -26: *And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.*

Sometimes the angel is seen – Nebuchadnezzar thought he had thrown three friends into the fiery furnace, but he was amazed saying: *Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.*

Sometimes the angel is not seen: God promised Exodus 23: 20 -21: *Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him.* They were told. They saw the evidence in the cloud, and the pillar of fire. In the Rock that followed them. In the manna, in the quails. But they hardened their heart and would not believe. Ah, to so many, it was all coincidence. All down to their own cleverness.



Case Study: A unique example?

An angel of God named Gabriel was sent to Nazareth to give a message about the birth of the Messiah. It was the same name as the Angel who appeared to Daniel some 500 years before. It could be the same Angel, but Gabriel simply means in Hebrew: Man of God. We have already spoken about the angelic host praising God, at the birth of His Son, but as Jesus became a man, and endured much temptation in the wilderness, when he was faint and suffering, we read that angels came and ministered to him (see Matthew 4:11) In his darkest hour in the garden of Gethsemane, we read of how an angel appeared unto him from heaven, strengthening him (Luke 22:43) When he died, and rose from the dead, two angels sat inside his tomb. So aware was Jesus, of the Angelic presence in His life, that he frequently speaks of the angels in his teaching, recorded 12 times in the gospel of Matthew. At every stage of Jesus' life, the Angel was there. As we shall see, maybe this example is not so unique after all.

Before moving on, it is worthwhile noting that Angels by their very make-up, are helpful – created by God to minister. We notice their cooperation, and the way they help one another as well. A good example of this is recorded in Daniel 8, where two angels interact to help Daniel understand a vision, and then in chapter 10, how one angel describes to Daniel how he was being resisted in his work of influencing the King of Persia for three weeks, and then how another angel (described as Michael which means: who is like God, more a title than a name) came to help him achieve what was required. Of course, Angels have been given the power to easily coerce kings and rulers into fulfilling the will of God, but Daniel was being shown the behind-the-scenes look at the Angelic example of cooperation, collaboration and teamwork that the Servants of God on earth should emulate and follow.

They do not know everything

One of these sayings of Jesus recorded in Matthew highlights another aspect. Being servants to God, and as functionaries, in ensuring His will is fulfilled, they do not have a mind of their own, but derive it from the Holy Spirit of God, who made them in the first place. They do not know all the will of God, but only what has been given to them, for the job in hand, or the events they are working on. Jesus said Matthew 24: 36: *But of that day and hour knows no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. The context of this was* referring to the time of the Coming of the Son of man. The angels are ignorant of the time – just as we are. Similarly Peter shows that the angels are not all wise and all knowing like God is: 1 Peter 1:12, where details and fulfilment of the gospel, the angels desire to look into. If they knew everything, they wouldn't desire to look into it would they?

Guardian Angels

This is an aspect people today talk about a fair bit, even though they might not believe in God, they still believe they have a guardian angel. That is the belief that everyone on earth has an allocated angel who looks after them. In fact, this idea comes from ancient Persia, from the Zoroastrian religion, and it is obviously not very well thought through. Still it is suggested that every believer has a guardian angel. It may be, but it cannot be insisted. Passages in the Bible are referred to such as Jesus words in Matthew 18:10 *Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.* Jesus took a little child from the crowd, and was referring to little children. Are little children, believers, who understand the gospel? Angels are ministering spirits to those who are heirs of salvation, not the ignorant, and immature, which is why false doctrines such as infant sprinkling, christening are so wrong. What Jesus was referring to in fact, was that people who humble themselves as little children, they are ministered to by angels, just as Daniel was.

Some refer to Acts 12:12 -15 to prove that we have guardian angels: ...14 Peter was released from prison as we saw earlier, and he made his way to a friend's house, who was so surprised she forgot to open the door, instead telling everyone inside that Peter was standing outside. they said she was mad, but as she continued . Then said they, It is his angel. From this, people say, the early disciples believed in personal guardian angels. Some of the people in Mary's house may well have believed it. They may not have all been disciples. It does not say they were. Additionally, many said they thought Rhoda was mad. They were not right about that, they were confused, they did not understand, so there is no need to take what they were saying at face value. The point we are making is this, it is dangerous to read into the Bible what it does not say. There may well be a special guardian angel allocated to every believer. But it cannot be proved, and the scripture does not actually say so.

What is true as we have shown that they care, protect and oversee the affairs of those who believe to assist them to grow spiritually before God. We have also seen how the same angels are used by God to bring about justice and punish evildoers.

Destroying angels

In 1 Chronicles 21:15 God sent an angel to destroy Jerusalem and it's inhabitants it: In Genesis 19: the Angel was sent to destroy Sodom, in Exodus 12, the destroying angel passed over the houses redeemed by blood to destroy all the firstborn in Egypt, in fact, Psalms 78:49 informs us that all the plagues were due to Angels of calamity, just a tiny list of many examples. In fact we know that the Angels are instrumental in tearing down and ending, finishing great empires, as Jesus was given control



over the angels – see Matthew 26:53, made higher than the heavens, all power being made subject to him, it is through Jesus that the will of God has been purposed through the angels to bring to pass the fulfilment of the Revelation of Jesus Christ – angels who were sent to hurt the symbolic earth and sea for example, in Revelation 7:2,3, and to gather God's elect from the four winds, and so many more examples. Angels that no doubt brought about the destruction of Jerusalem in AD70, the great winter which destroyed Napoleon's army in Russia, or brought about the great wind which turned the Spanish Armada, or enabled a

remnant to escape the gas chambers of Nazi Germany. The events in history, overruled by the Angelic host.

Representatives of God Including mortals

We mentioned earlier that not all angels are spirit beings, but they can also be humans, messengers sent by God. One excellent example is the Priesthood which God ordained. When under the Law judges were appointed to determine offenses and crimes, because they officiated on behalf of God they were described as ‘elohim’ translated as the word judges. The priests officiated on behalf of the law of God. It is why in Ecclesiastes 5:6 Solomon counsels, *Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, (malak) that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands?* Sadly this position of responsibility was not appreciated so we can read in Malachi 2:7-9, *For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger (malak) of the LORD of hosts. But you are departed out of the way; you have caused many to stumble at the law; ... therefore have I also made you base before all the people.*

Both Peter and Jude make reference to ‘*angels that sinned*’ (2Peter 2:4 and Jude 6) *For if God spared not angels that sinned, but cast them down to the grave, and committed them to pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;* and Jude writes in a similar way. These passages we mentioned right at the beginning, were referring to the messengers, *malakim*, the angels, or priests of Isarel, who failed in their duty of teaching the word of God.

A further example of mortal men being used as angels, is found in James 2:25, *Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, (same word as angels) (ἄγγελος) and had sent them out another way?* Referring to the two human spies.

Apostles were angels

In Paul’s first letter to Timothy (3:16) we find another mention of angels. *And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: 1) God was manifest in the flesh, 2) justified in the Spirit, 3) seen of angels, 4) preached unto the Gentiles, 5) believed on in the world, received up into glory.*” Looking at this closely: 1) “God was manifest in the flesh” Jesus through faith and obedience revealed the character of his Father though partaking of our flesh and blood nature that has brought forth sin in everyone else. 2) “Justified in the Spirit” In every way possible the Spirit justified Jesus claim to be the sinless son of God, by his Father’s voice from heaven, by being able to perform miracles and by his resurrection from the dead. 3) “Seen of angels” Having been raised from the dead he provided his

apostles with a complete assurance that he had been raised from the dead enabling them to become true apostles, ones sent as totally reliable witnesses.

Equal to the angels

With this in mind that human beings can also be very useful messengers of angels for God, it is the will of God, that human beings so learn to love the ways of God, that they allow their character to become transformed that themselves can be also used as angels. It is interesting that Jesus taught that in the Kingdom of God on earth, which will soon be established, that believers who have been faithful will be rewarded a place of responsibility to teach in that Kingdom, SLIDE 30 and Jesus describes them in Luke 20:36 *Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection*

Equal to the angels? That sums up how effective angels have been and are today, to project the will of God, and to give hope and a target to work towards to be an extension of God's power? Well, that is the promise. However, if we must rule, first we must serve, and the angel's role is to serve. Therefore, the lesson to all of us: in looking at how angels serve us now, is how we should serve one another -just like they do us. If we don't, we will not be worthy to even be considered.

Greater than the Angels

One last point. We remember at the beginning, angels were created without free will. Created to do a job. But those who are rewarded with eternal life, immortal life, are so rewarded because they did have free will, and used it to serve God, to be a minister, to be a messenger in this life. For them, then in some ways they will be greater than angels! 1 Corinthians 6: 2,3 *Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?* That is in the Kingdom to come, the faithful will be invited to organise angels to bring about the purpose of God. Lets hope this inspires us to be better messengers.