

# Clarifying Angels and Our Relationship to Them

April 11, 2021

## Introduction:

### Definition:

Angel - a word signifying, both in the Hebrew and Greek, a "messenger." They serve as superhuman beings in various ways to fulfill God's providential concerns in relation to the world and man.

The Old Testament word for angel is (malak) which occurs 114 times; the New Testament word is (angelos) which occurs 169 times. They are mentioned 273 times in 34 biblical books.

### The word "Angel" (messenger) is used not only for celestial beings, but also for:

For ordinary messenger (Job 1:14; 1 Sam 11:3; Lk 7:24; 9:52)

For prophets (Isa 42:19; Hag 1:13)

For priests (Mal 2:7)

For pastors of a church (Rev 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14)

It is also applied to such impersonal agents as:

the pestilence (2Sam 24:16; 17; 2Ki19:35)

the wind (Ps 104:4)

## The nature of angels

It is significant to note that in the Scriptures angels belong to the realm of mystery. They come and go; they speak and disappear; they act and are nowhere to be found. Often they appear in highly important moments in biblical history, for example in the New Testament at the birth of Jesus (Lk 2:13), at His resurrection (Mt 28:2-6), and at His ascension (Ac 1:10), and they will appear at His future return (Mt 16:27). Angels never call attention to themselves but invariably point to something else – often mysterious, even incomprehensible. They always seem to be a part of God's action and have their existence alongside or in relation to Him. The being of angels is a matter of little biblical interests: the activity is much more a matter of interest. (Renewal Theology; by J Rodman Williams)

## 1. Angels are moral beings, they possess will (Isa 14:12-15; Jude 6).

### Angels belong to two categories: holy and the unholy.

**The holy angels** are messengers of God, they are the primary concern of the Scriptures.

They are God's angels (Gen 28:12; 32:1; Lk 12:8-9; 15:10; Jn1:51) .

Or Christ's angels (Mt 13:41; 13:27; 24:31; 2Thes 1:7),

They are often simply called "angels", with the understanding that they are holy (sinless) and good (Mk 8:38; Lk 9:26; Rev 3:5).

**The unholy angels** are messengers of Satan; they are fallen angels, having lost their former standing before God, because of their sin (Isa 14:12-17; 2Pt 2:4; Jude 6)

Jesus said that eternal fire has been prepared for the devil and his angels (Mt 25:41).

Demons and unclean, evil spirits are fallen angels and are frequently mentioned in the Scriptures.

## 2. They are spirit beings (Heb 1:14; Ps 104:4).

**Angels are incorporeal**, they have no bodies (Lk 24:39).

At times, in the Scriptures, they appear in human form

(Gen 18:2; 19:1-10; Jos 5:13-14; Mk 16:5; Lk 24:4; Ac 1:10).

Heb 13:2 Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.

**Angels are invisible beings** (2Ki 6:15-20; Col 2:18) **but can appear as:**

Ordinary men (Gen 18:1-3; Heb 13:2).

Radiant beings (Dan 10:6; Lk 24:4)

**They are not bound to any particular place.**

They are like the wind, moving freely and invisibly. There is no limitation, no barrier, to the movement of angels.

“Who makes his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire ...” (Ps. 104:4).

They suddenly appear and disappear. for angels belong to another dimension beyond that of our spatio-temporal existence.

**Their abode is in heaven**, and from there they may move to any earthly place at any moment and just as quickly return.

In Jacob's dream in Gen 28:12, the angels of God were ascending and descending on a ladder between heaven and earth. Their ascent and descent are not from one physical sphere to another, but from the transcendent realm into our world of space and time.

**Angels are wholly spiritual beings, therefore, are bound by no earthly limitations.**

In Luke 24:37–39, Jesus said, “a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.” But this does not mean that they are not real individual creatures, both finite and spacial. However, they stand in a freer relation to time and space than Man. Many can be present at one time in a very limited space. They are certainly not omnipresent. Each is only in one place at one time.

**They are not to be worshipped.** Except on those special occasions when God chooses to allow men to see them, angels are invisible to human sight and men are unconscious of their presence.

It has been suggested that the reason that they are mostly invisible is because of the human tendency to worship them.

The Scripture plainly warns against such a practice.

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

Rom 1:25 For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. (Rev 19:10; 22:8-9)

### **3. They are created beings.**

Neh 9:6 “You alone are the LORD. You have made the heavens, The heaven of heavens with all their host ... (Col 1:16; Gen 2:1; Eph 3:9; Ps 148:2, 5).

They are not spirits of departed people nor are they glorified human beings (Heb 12:22-23).

### **4. They have great power and might.**

They are stronger than men. Much is said in the Scripture concerning the power and strength of the angels, though nowhere is it indicated that they are omnipotent. Their power is derived from God.

Ps 103:20 Bless the LORD, you His angels, Mighty in strength, who perform His word, Obeying the voice of His word! (1Chr 21:14-15; Ac 5:19; 12:7; 1Pt 3:22; 2Pt 2:11; 2Thes 1:7; Rev 20:1-2)

### **5. They possess intelligence.**

They are more intelligent than men. The angels have superhuman wisdom and intelligence (Dan 9:21-22; 10:14; Mt 24:36; Rev 19:10; 22:8-9).

Though the knowledge of angels is great, they are not omniscient. There are certain things they would like to know:

1Pt 1:10-12 As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, 11 seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. 12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look.

## **6. They are neither male nor female, they do not marry.**

Angels were all created at one time, and there is no propagation among them; baby angels are never born (Mt 22:30; Mk 12:25; Lk 20:34-36).

Angels are always referred to in the masculine gender, which is always used of those in whom there is no sexual distinction. Though we read of the “sons of God” we never read of the “sons of angels.”

## **7. Their personalities**

Angels possess every feature of personality. They are personal individual beings. They are rational beings (2Sam 14:20). They possess emotions (Lk 15:10); have desires (1Pt 1:12); feelings (Lk 2:13) and will (Jude 6). They render intelligent worship (Ps 148:2).

## **8. Though finite they are innumerable.**

Heb 12:22 But you have come to Mount Zion ... and to myriads of angels

Rev 5:11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, (Mt 26:53; Lk 2:13; Dt 33:2; Ps 68:17)

Ten thousand times ten thousand is one hundred million. Thousands of thousands could not be less than four million. So, you have a minimum total of one hundred and four million angels. No doubt the main thought being conveyed by all these verses is that within the comprehension of man their number is innumerable. God, who knows all things, knows the number of angels.

## **9. They are immortal, they never die.**

Lk 20:36 for they cannot even die anymore, because they are like angels, and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. (Mt 22:30)

They are not omnipresent (Dan 10:12).

They are not omnipotent (Dan 10:13; Jude 9).

They are not omniscient (Mt 24:36).

## **Names for the Angels**

1. Ministers - signifying their religious virtues and spiritual service (Ps 103:20-21; 104:4).
2. Host - speaking of their military service (Gen 32:1-2; Jos 5:14; 1 Sam 17:45; Ps 89:8)
3. Chariots - which may refer to their swiftness (2Ki 6:16-17; Ps 68:17; Zec 6:5).
4. Watchers - speaking of their duties as supervisors and agents (Dan 4:13, 17).
5. Sons of the mighty - which may refer to their awesome strength and power (Ps 29:1; 89:6).
6. Sons of God (Gen 6:2, 4; Job 1:6, 2:1; 38:7).
7. Holy Ones - saints, referring to their total separation to the will of God (Ps 89:7; Dan 8:13).
8. Stars - which indicates both their number and their brightness (Job 38:7; Ps 148:2-3; Rev 12:3-4).

### **References Used:**

Renewal Theology; by J Rodman Williams  
Willmington's Book of Bible Lists  
Nelson's Topical Bible  
Easton Bible Dictionary  
Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary  
The Great Doctrines of the Bible  
A survey of Bible Doctrine; by CC Ryrie  
Every Angel in the Bible; by L. Richards