

MORE Seed and Bread

BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM
THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT ANGELS?

By M.B. Hammond

Angels, angels everywhere! Nowadays anywhere you go you see some kind of representation of an angel. Chubby cherubs and flying females with wings masquerading as angels on statues, wall plaques, broaches, paintings, and other artifacts. There's even a very large city in Southern California named in Spanish for them. But do people really know anything about them? In Scripture angels are not females but, instead, are very male messengers sent to mankind.

The term for angels in Hebrew is *malak* and it occurs 106 times, while the Greek term is *aggelos* (pronounced angelos, New Testament) which occurs 172 times. (The city of *Los Angeles* is indirectly derived from that Greek term and officially is "El Pueblo de la Nuestra Senora de los Angeles" [The Town of Our Lady Queen of the Angels]). In **Young's Analytical Concordance** the identical definition of both terms is "agent, messenger." In E.W. Bullinger's **Critical Lexicon And Concordance** it says, "*aggelos* is derived from the root *aggello*, a verb meaning to tell or deliver a message." It is notable that the book of Revelation has by far the most occurrences (70) of any book in Scripture.

Angels have an important position in God's plans, present, past, and future, and their different activities and services are well-described in Revelation. We find angels mentioned in 34 of the 66 books of Scripture, although more prominently in some than others. From most of the references it seems that angels are very similar in appearance to men, and they do not have wings as the cherubim. Whether this is an assumed image for contact with men or their common appearance we cannot be sure, however, the book of Hebrews gives us some more insight. Another fact that is important is that only two angels are given names. The first is Gabriel, the divine messenger sent to Daniel (Dan. 8:16, 9:21), and to Mary and Zacharias (Luke 1:19, 1:26), in each case giving them knowledge of things to come. The other is Michael, the archangel, who is called the "**prince of your people**" (meaning Israel, Dan. 10:13, 10:21, 12.1). He seems to be more of a warrior angel, contending with Satan for Moses' body (Jude 1:9) and conquering Satan and casting him and his angels to the earth (Rev. 12:7). It is apparent from the content of these messages that the angels are prepared to battle the forces of evil, and defend God's possessions, property and beings from danger when called for.

One common concept about angels that most people agree on is that they are part of the heavenly host and called "sons of God" (Job 1:6). The throne of God in Revelation 4 pictures 24 elders sitting around the throne, clothed in white garments with golden crowns on their heads (Rev. 4:4), and the seven lamps of fire burning before the throne which are the seven Spirits of God (Rev. 4:5). Also, there were "four beasts full of eyes before and behind" (Rev. 4:6). From the description in 4:7-8 they closely resemble the four living creatures seen by Ezekiel (Ezek. 1:5-26). In Ezekiel 10:2 they are called "cherubim." In Ezekiel 1:6 they are said to have four wings, four faces (Ezek. 10:10,10:14), wheels and identical likenesses (Ezek. 10:10). These beings are not angels, but the highest order of God's creation standing closest to the throne (Rev. 4:6). In Ezekiel 28:14 Satan is identified as the "anointed cherub that covereth" giving us an insight into his high position in creation. Revelation reveals that John ... **heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts (cherubim) and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; ...and every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and forever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped Him that liveth for ever and ever** (Rev. 5:11-14). We note that the distinctions between the beings of the heavenly host (also called the "mighty ones") gives us some picture of God's hierarchy and levels of power. There is no given number of angels, but they seem to be the most numerous part of the heavenly host.

Satan was of the highest level, and must have deceived many angels to line up with him. Even angels can sin as Genesis 6:1-4 suggests, **The sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful and took wives for themselves, whomever they chose** (Gen. 6:2). The angels seem to be male in gender and the result of this

union was the Nephilim who were the mighty men of old or the giants of the ancients (Gen. 6:4). It is likely that they were sterile, but subject to Adamic death as men are. Some of these existed even after the flood, and such a one was Goliath of Gath, being over 10 feet tall (1 Sam. 17:4), who was slain by David (1 Sam. 17:50), the shepherd, by his sling and the help of God. Peter declares the outcome since the offending angels were not subject to Adamic death, **For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell (*tartarus*, God's dungeon) and committed them to pits of darkness reserved for judgment, and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly** (2 Peter 2:4-5). While angels cannot die for Adam's sin, it is clear that they are subject to God's destruction as is Satan. Revelation says, **And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are** (were thrown) ... (Rev. 20:10). This is the destruction of Satan, and all the angels who rebelled against God.

In Hebrews 1 Paul makes several comparisons between Jesus Christ and the angels. After extolling the glories of Jesus Christ and confirming His deity, he says in verse 4 (New American Standard Version, NAS), **Having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent (superior) name than they.** Paul quotes several Psalms to tell us what angels do not possess. In it he says (Heb. 1:5-7), **For to which of the angels did God ever say such words as these: Thou art My Son, today have I begotten Thee (Psa. 2:7)? Or, again: I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be a Son to me (2 Sam. 7:14)?** And when He again brings the firstborn (preeminent One) into the world He says, **And let all the angels of God worship Him (Psa. 97:7).** And of the angels He says, **Who makes His angels winds (spirits) And His ministers a flame of fire (Psa. 104:4).** Then from verses 8-12 Paul extols Jesus Christ as the Righteous One, the creator of the heavens and the earth, the ruler of the universe. In Hebrews 1:13-14 he comes back to the angels saying, **But to which of the angels has He ever said, Sit at My right hand until I make thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet? Are they (the angels) not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?**

In Hebrews 2 Paul goes on to explain (Heb. 2:5-8), **For He did not subject to angels the world to come concerning which we are speaking. But one has testified somewhere saying, What is man that Thou rememberest him, or the son of man that Thou art concerned about him. Thou hast made him for a little while lower than the angels; Thou hast crowned him with glory and honor, and hast appointed him over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet (Psa. 8:4-6).** Christ therefore took the form of a man, **Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is the devil (Heb. 2:14).** Clearly, God has planned for men to play an important part in His future Kingdom. However, in Colossians a book written for today, Paul warns us: **Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize (in Christ) by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind. (Col. 2:18).** In Revelation 22:8-9 we are warned, **And, I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things. And he said to me, Do not do that; I am a fellow-servant of yours and**

of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book; worship God. We, too, should not worship angels, but we need to recognize them as a basic and essential part of God's contact with His creation.

It is true that in Biblical times the angel of the Lord did appear to Moses in the burning bush (Exod. 3:2), and God did provide angels as protection and support. Examples include when Abraham sent his servant back to his home country to find a wife for Isaac (Gen. 24:7), and when the angel of the Lord led Israel out of captivity in Egypt (Num. 20:15-16). Satan even attempted to quote Scripture for his purposes when tempting Christ (Matt. 4:1-11) saying, **If you are the Son of God, cast yourself down, For He will give His angels charge concerning you, and On their hands will they bear You up, lest You strike Your foot against a stone** (Psa. 91:11-12), **Jesus said to him, On the other hand it is written, You shall not put the Lord your God to the test** (Deut. 6:16).

Even King David in his psalms wrote of the protecting power of angels where he said, **This poor man cried and Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him, and rescues them** (Psa. 34:6-7). Concerning David's enemies it says, **Let them be like chaff before the wind, with the angel of the Lord driving them on. Let their way be dark and slippery, with the angel of the Lord pursuing them** (Psa. 35:5-6). Of course, when the Lord was angry with Israel, **He sent upon them His burning anger, fury and indignation and trouble, a band of destroying angels** (Psa. 78:49).

Those words were said in a day when God was acting in an obvious and manifest way among men. In contrast, we are now living in the time of God's silence and His work is in secret. Men claiming to have a word from God are suspect and people who have had visions of angels and other psychic phenomena are speaking from an unknown source. The real problem is that men today will write and say things about angels that cannot be confirmed by Scripture. By not recognizing the truth that we are living in the Dispensation of the Grace of God (Eph. 3:2), men today take anything that is unfamiliar or seemingly supernatural as being from God as opposed to being satanic. God is working in His own hidden way to protect mankind from destruction by Satan's power, including war or terrorist actions. So instead of making icons out of angels, let us be found worshipping Jesus Christ and giving Him the full honor, glory and praise that He really deserves!

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