

Angels — Part I

Can you think of a moment in your life when you were strangely protected — maybe a fall, an auto accident, or a foolish stunt as a kid? As you recall an event, can you accept that you may have been protected by an angel? Angel or angels are spirit beings, created by God, and mentioned 293 times in the Bible. The very word “angel” is derived from the Greek word that means messenger and the Hebrew equivalent also means messenger.

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

Hebrews 1:14 — **Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?**

When they were created is not clear, but they pre-date the creation of the material universe. In fact, they witnessed the creation and rejoiced over it....

Job 38:4-7 — **“Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth. Tell me, if you know so much. Who determined its dimensions and stretched out the surveying line? What supports its foundations, and who laid its cornerstone as the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?”**

Angels are not eternal, as God is, but created and dependent creatures. They are, however, immortal and ever-lasting. In their ordinary form, they are spirits without flesh and blood. They are intelligent, voluntary, active, and therefore personal agents. They are apparently superior to man in his present state. They are possessed of superhuman power, yet it has limits; they are mighty but not almighty. Their power is delegated.¹

Angels live every day in the presence of the Lord. They know the will of God and do it. They are tuned into the voice of their Master. They are eager to align their plans with his. They are devoted to fulfilling the sovereign will of God.²

They protected the life of Jesus. Gabriel told Mary and declared his name. They announced his birth to the shepherds. They told Joseph & Mary to take Jesus to Egypt. They ministered to Jesus after the temptations and when he sweat blood in Gethsemane. They informed women at tomb that Christ had risen from the dead. They received Jesus in his ascension from earth, and will lead in Jesus’ second coming, as well as oversee the final judgment.

Angels are always God-honoring and pointing people to God. They stood between the Israelites and their enemies when Moses parted the Red Sea. They struck down Assyrian forces that threatened the city of Jerusalem. They stayed Abraham’s hand when, in obedience to God, he was about to slay his son. They assured Zechariah that despite his wife’s age they would have a son, John the Baptist. They will ultimately separate believers from unbelievers at the final judgment. And, they told Nathaniel that

he would see heaven opened and the angels ascending & descending on the son of man.

They stand in the presence of God & worship him. They rejoice in God's works. They execute God's will, guide the affairs of nations, and minister to God's people. They guard the elect dead, and guide and guard individual believers.

In Biblical appearances, they always manifest as men. There is no mention of them having wings... however the idea comes from a group of special angelic beings called Seraphim and Cherubim who reside in the throne room of God in Heaven.¹

Seraphim are described as having six wings in Isaiah.

Isaiah 6:2 — **Attending him were mighty Seraphim, each having six wings. With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew.**

Seraphim are the worship leaders who cry out **"Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole world is full of his glory."**

Cherubim are depicted with four wings in Ezekiel

Ezekiel 1:5-6 — **From the center of the cloud came four living beings that looked human, except that each had four faces and four wings.**

Cherubim have flaming swords **"to guard the way to the tree of life."** God told Moses to place the images of two Cherubim on the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant.

The exact number of angels is not revealed, but it is very large. Ten thousand angels appeared to Moses on Mount Sinai. David saw twenty thousand at one time. When John was raptured in the throne room of God, he saw ten times ten thousand, or as the NASB puts it: "myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands." The book of Hebrews says there are "innumerable myriads." After Satan's fall, an angel named Michael became the chief of God's heavenly host. Michael is the only angel referred to in the Bible as an "archangel"³

Certain angels are designated in connection with a particular function they perform. An angel who has power over fire, the angel of the waters, the angel of the abyss, the angel who binds Satan. Two of the three series of judgments in Revelation are announced by angels. Each letter to the seven churches in Revelation 2-3 is addressed to the "angel" of that church.⁴

Another angel VIP is Gabriel.

Gabriel emerges in the Scriptures as God's premier messenger. He appeared to Daniel twice, first to interpret a vision concerning the Antichrist, and second, to present the prophecy of the 70 Weeks of Years. In the New Testament, Gabriel serves as an angel of annunciation. He was the one who proclaimed to Zacharias that his wife would give birth to a prophet named John (the Baptist). And he is the angel who told Mary that she would be the mother of the Messiah.³

When angels speak to a person, they always use that person's native language. Yet, they have a language of their own that they use among themselves

1 Corinthians 13:1 — **If I speak in tongues of human beings and of angels but I don't have love, I'm a clanging gong or a clashing cymbal.**

Other things angels were involved in: They closed the mouths of lions. They rolled back the stone at the grave of Jesus. And they loosed thick chains to free Peter.

The law was given to Moses through angels. Abraham was informed by angels that Sarah would have a child. Lot was warned by angels of the coming destruction of Sodom & Gomorrah. Joseph was visited by angels three times in dreams, and was assured Mary was a virgin.

An angel also told Joseph to take his family and flee to Egypt and was informed when it was safe to return to Nazareth.³

An angel killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers attacking Jerusalem. Angels tormented the Jews when they rebelled in the wilderness. God's end times judgment on the nations will be through angels.

Ministry and Protection are key for us as God's children.

Psalms 91:11-12 — **For He will give His angels charge concerning you, To guard you in all your ways. They will bear you up in their hands, that you do not strike your foot against a stone.**

Hebrews 12:1 — **Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us....**

Who makes up the cloud of witnesses that surround us? Angels? Saints past? A figure of speech. The word therefore reminds us to note the context of the setting from Chapter 11. It seems the "cloud" is made up of the representative lives of past saints, and the angels that watch over our individual lives, our church, and our nation.

We are surrounded by the saints of the past in a unique way. It's not that the faithful who have gone before us are spectators to the race we run. Rather, it is a figurative representation and means that we ought to act as if they were in sight and cheering us on to the same victory in the life of faith that they obtained. These are those whose past lives of faith encourage others to live that way, too. That the cloud is referred to as "great" indicates that millions of believers have gone before us, each bearing witness to the life of faith we are now called on to live.⁵

- 1 Emery Bancroft
- 2 Jack Graham
- 3 David Reagan
- 4 Charles Ryrie
- 5 gotquestions.org