

Subject: *Biblical Truth about Angels – Part 1*

Scripture: *Hebrews 1:1-14*

An angel told Joseph about the birth of Christ (Mt. 1:18-23). An angel told Mary that the Holy Spirit would overshadow her and she would conceive baby Jesus (Lk. 1:26-28). An angel announced the birth of Christ to the shepherds (Lk. 2:8-15). During the Christmas season we see figures of angels everywhere—on cards, on wrapping paper, and in stores. We sing old familiar carols like *Hark the Herald Angels Sing* and *Angels We Have Heard on High*.

Angels are a key part of the Christmas story, but what's even more important, they are included as a part of God's Word, which is the revelation of God Himself. God is known by His attributes and by His works, especially His work of creation and His work of redemption. Since angels are prominent in the Bible, they should be of interest and importance to us.

THE EXISTENCE OF ANGELS

Some people may choose not to believe in angels. Some might doubt their reality because we can't see the spirit world like we can see the physical world. In the NT there was a Jewish sect called Sadducees who did not believe in the existence of angels or the supernatural world.

Acts 23:8 For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.

1. Angels are mentioned often in the Bible:

- angels are mentioned in 24 out of 66 books
- holy angels are mentioned 24 times in the OT
- holy angels are mentioned 152 times in the NT
- holy angels are mentioned 67 times in Revelation (more than any other Bible book)

2. Angels are mentioned throughout the Bible: (they are not confined to one time or place)

- angels are mentioned from Genesis to Revelation
- angels are mentioned in 24 OT books and 18 NT books
- Christ spoke about angels (to doubt or deny the reality of angels is to reject and discredit the teaching of Jesus)

THE NATURE OF ANGELS

1. Angels are spirit beings. Although they may appear in human form (Gen. 18:3), they are called *ministering spirits* (Heb. 1:14). They are invisible, though at times they can become visible to human eyes (Col. 1:16). We should understand the important distinction that God is the uncreated Spirit, but angels are created spirits.

2. Angels are created beings. Angels are not eternal like God. They did not evolve, nor were they formerly children or human beings. They were all created as angels by God's command (Ps. 148:2-5; Col. 1:16), and are called "the sons of God" (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7). They were all created apparently at the same time before God created the physical world (Job 38:6-7). They are called a "company," not a race (Heb. 12:22). The number of angels remains the same. They do not marry or reproduce (Mt. 22:28-30). Like all other beings, the angels were created for God's pleasure and glory (Col. 1:16; Rev. 4:6-11).

Charles Spurgeon preached a sermon dealing with angels in which he said:

“The Almighty God, who dwelt alone, was pleased to manifest himself by created works, which should display his wisdom and power. When he came to create living creatures, there, too, are distinctions that we must note. From the worm up to eagle, from the eagle to the man, from the man to the angel; such are the steps of creating goodness in the fashion of things animate. He hath not followed any fixed rule in his creation; but he hath done exactly as it pleased him.”
(*New Park Street Pulpit*, vol. 2, sermon 90).

3. Angels are personal beings. They have personal qualities as intelligence (2 Sam. 14:17, 20; Mt. 24:36; 28:5), but they are not omniscient like God. Their knowledge is increasing through the years as they have observed the actions of God and man. With a holy curiosity they seek to understand salvation, since they have never received God’s grace through Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 1:12). They have emotions (Job 38:7; Lk. 15:7, 10; Rev. 5:11, 12), and they have a will (Ps. 103:20-21; 1 Pet. 1:12).

4. Angels are vast in number (Lk. 2:13; Heb. 12:22; Rev. 5:11). The population of angels was fixed at their creation, but their number is known only by God. The Bible does not give an exact number of angels, but it suggests a vast number beyond calculation (1 Kgs. 22:19; 2 Chron. 18:18; 2 Kgs. 19:35; Dan. 7:10; Mt. 26:53; Lk. 2:13; Heb. 12:22; Rev. 5:11). Revelation 12:3-4 indicates that Satan lured one-third of the angels to defect and join his rebellion against God. These angels became evil angels or demons. Two-thirds of the angels remained faithful to God and are referred to as elect angels (1 Tim. 5:21), therefore the number of holy angels is twice the number of evil angels.

5. Angels are immortal (Lk. 20:36). They are not subject to physical death.

6. Angels are superior to humans (Ps. 8:4-5; Heb. 2:6-7; 2 Pet. 2:11). Angels were created before humans and they have greater power than men. In referring to Christ as a man it is said that he was made “a little lower than the angels.”

7. Angels are inferior to Christ (Heb. 1:4-5). Unlike Christ, angels are created beings.

8. Angels are not to be worshiped (Col. 2:18; Rev. 22:8-9).

9. Angels are powerful (but not omnipotent) (Ps. 103:20; Mt. 28:2; 2 Pet. 2:11).

An impressive example of their awesome power is found in 2 Kgs. 19:35. One angel killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night. This destroys the myth that angels are weak, feminine creatures. Imagine the awesome power available to Christ when He said that God the Father could send twelve legions (72,000) angels to rescue Him (Mt. 26:53).

10. Angels do not marry (Mt. 22:30; Mk. 12:25). They have no male or female gender, although when they appear they do so as men (Gen. 18:1-8; 19:1-8; Mk. 16:5; Lk. 24:4).

11. Angels are God’s messengers. The word *angel* means "messenger" or one who is sent. A word of caution is in order here. God’s primary means of sending His messages is Scripture, the written words of God. Another word of caution: God uses believers, not angels, to proclaim the message of salvation.

12. Angels are localized (not omnipresent) (Dan. 9:21-23). They are not bound to only one location, but they are mobile. They are able to travel from heaven to earth and earth to heaven (Gen. 28:12; Dan. 9:20-23; 10:1-13, 20; Jn. 1:51).

13. Angels dwell in heaven (Mt. 22:30; Lk. 2:13, 15; Eph. 3:10). Angels leave heaven from time to time on assignment from God.

14. Angels may be visible or invisible . For example, they were visible in their visit to Sodom (Gen. 18:2; Heb. 13:2) and to Christ's tomb (Jn. 20:11-12). They were invisible at first to Balaam (Num. 22:31) and to Elisha's servant (2 Kgs. 6:15-17). Angels may have a dazzling appearance (causing humans to respond in fear) (Lk. 1:29; Dan. 10:5-13; Mt. 28:2-3). They sometimes appear in white clothing (Acts 1:10). Angels are glorious creatures (Lk. 9:26).

15. Some angels rebelled against God ("the angels that sinned" 2 Pet. 2:4; "the angels which kept not their first estate"(Jude 1:6). Jesus referred to hell as a place "prepared for the devil and his angels" (Mt. 25:41). Evil angels are called "demons" and "unclean spirits." God provides no salvation or forgiveness for rebellious, evil angels.

16. Some angels remained faithful to God ("the holy angels," Mk. 8:38; Rev. 14:10; "the elect angels," 1 Tim. 5:21).

17. Holy angels respect spiritual authority (2 Pet. 2:11; Jude 1:9). All angels, both evil and holy, must ultimately submit to God's authority (Job 1:6; 2:1; Mt. 26:53; 1 Pet. 3:22).

18. Holy angels are obedient (Ps. 103:20-22; Mt. 6:10; Mt. 26:53). Their obedience is prompt and complete. In Christ's Model Prayer we are taught to pray: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Holy angels stand ready to hear God's command and do His will (Mt. 18:10).

19. Holy angels rejoice with God (Job 38:7; Lk. 15:10).

20. Holy angels worship God (Isa. 6:1-3; Lk. 2:13; Hebrews 1:6; Rev. 4:6-11).

How are angels similar to humans?

- Both are created by God
- Both are accountable to God
- Both are personal beings
- Both are privileged to know and serve God
- Both have limitations (with respect to space, knowledge, and power)
- Both are created to worship and glorify God

How are angels different from humans?

- Angels are superior in nature, power, and abilities
- Angels are spirit beings with no permanent physical body
- Angels do not marry or reproduce
- Angels do not die
- Angels may be invisible or visible
- Angels are not included in God's plan of salvation

BIBLICAL TRUTH ABOUT ANGELS – PART 1

The Existence and Nature of Angels

We are going to begin our study of angels by looking at the existence and nature of angels. Do angels really exist and what are they like? What does the Bible teach?

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- Christ spoke about angels

THE NATURE OF ANGELS

1. Angels are _____ beings. Although they may appear in human form (Gen. 18:3), they are called *ministering spirits* (Heb. 1:14). They are invisible, though at times they can become visible to human eyes (Col. 1:16).

2. Angels are _____ beings. They were all created as angels by God's command (Ps. 148:2-5; Col. 1:16). They are called “the sons of God” (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7). The angels were created for God’s pleasure and glory (Col. 1:16; Rev. 4:6-11).

3. Angels are _____ beings. They have personal qualities as intelligence (2 Sam. 14:17, 20; Mt. 24:36; 28:5), emotions (Job 38:7; Lk. 15:7, 10; Rev. 5:11, 12), and will (Ps. 103:20-21; 1 Pet. 1:12).

4. Angels are _____ in number. The Bible does not give an exact number of angels, but it suggests a vast number beyond calculation (1 Kgs. 22:19; 2 Chron. 18:18; 2 Kgs. 19:35; Dan. 7:10; Mt. 26:53; Lk. 2:13; Heb. 12:22; Rev. 5:11).

5. Angels are _____ (Lk. 20:36). They are not subject to physical death.

6. Angels are _____ to humans (Ps. 8:4-5; Heb. 2:6-7; 2 Pet. 2:11).

7. Angels are _____ to Christ (Heb. 1:4-5).

8. Angels are not to be _____ (Col. 2:18; Rev. 22:8-9).

9. Angels are _____ (Ps. 103:20; Mt. 28:2; 2 Pet. 2:11). An impressive example of their awesome power is found in 2 Kgs. 19:35.

10. Angels do not _____ (Mt. 22:30; Mk. 12:25). They have no gender, although they do appear on earth as men (Gen. 18:1-8; 19:1-8; Mk. 16:5; Lk. 24:4).

11. Angels are God's _____.

12. Angels are _____ (Dan. 9:21-23). They are able to travel from heaven to earth and earth to heaven (Gen. 28:12; Dan. 9:20-23; Jn. 1:51).

13. Angels _____ in heaven (Mt. 22:30; Lk. 2:13, 15; Eph. 3:10).

14. Angels may be _____. They may have a dazzling appearance (causing a response of fear) (Lk. 1:29; Dan. 10:5-13; Mt. 28:2-3). They sometimes appear in white clothing (Acts 1:10). Angels are glorious creatures (Lk. 9:26).

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16. Some angels remained _____ to God ("the holy angels" Mk. 8:38; Rev. 14:10; "the elect angels" 1 Tim. 5:21).

17. Holy angels _____ spiritual authority (2 Pet. 2:11; Jude 1:9). All angels, both evil and holy, must ultimately submit to God's authority (Job 1:6; 2:1; Mt. 26:53; 1 Pet. 3:22).

18. Holy angels are _____ (Ps. 103:20; Mt. 6:10; Mt. 26:53).

19. Holy angels _____ with God (Job 38:7; Lk. 15:10).

20. Holy angels _____ God (Isa. 6:1-3; Lk. 2:13; Heb. 1:6; Rev. 4:6-11).

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