

# FIRST WEDNESDAY || New Hope Church

## WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT ANGELS?

### Some Biblical Stories that Include Angels

- ▶ Jacob wrestles with an angel (Genesis 32:22-31).
- ▶ An angel guided Moses during the exodus from Egypt (Exodus 14:19).
- ▶ An angel closed the mouths of lions in the lion’s den (Daniel 6:21).
- ▶ Angels appear to Mary and Joseph and shepherds (Matthew 1, Luke 1-2).
- ▶ An angel comforts Jesus in Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:43).
- ▶ An angel freed Peter from prison (Acts 12:1-11).
- ▶ Angels with accompany Jesus when he returns (Matthew 24:30-31).

### Some Details about Angels

- ▶ The word angel literally means ‘messenger’.
- ▶ Angels are mentioned at least 118 times in the Old Testament and 188 times in the New Testament.
- ▶ Bible defines two groups of angelic messengers.
  - Holy angels that carry out the commands of God.
  - Fallen angels that carry out acts of deceit and wickedness.
- ▶ Angels were created as a separate order of beings with an internal hierarchy that includes at least one archangel (*Michael*; Jude 9), plus cherubim, seraphim, principalities and powers and thrones and dominions (Jude 9; Daniel 10:13; 8:16; Genesis 3:24; Isaiah 6:2; Ephesians 3:10; 6:12; Colossians 2:10; 1 Peter 3:22).

Heavenly Being	Description
<u>Spirits</u>	General term for supernatural beings without bodies.
<u>Angels</u> “Messengers”	Spirits sent as messengers or agents from God; evil or fallen angels serve the Devil. Not often described; sometimes appear in white robes or as bright light.
<u>Cherubim</u>	Heavenly winged beings that fiercely guard the tree of life, the ark of the covenant, the temple, and the heavenly throne room.
<u>Seraphim</u> “Burning One”	Heavenly winged guards in God’s throne room.
<u>Archangels</u> “Chief Princes”	Chief or ruling angels. Michael is the only archangel named in Scripture.
<u>Thrones</u> , powers, rulers, authorities, dominions	Spiritual beings that rule—typically for evil—over human affairs.

- ▶ There is also the Angel of the Lord mentioned in the Old Testament who is Jesus Christ (Genesis 16:7-14; 31:11-13).
- ▶ Angels are spirits, they are beings who don’t have bodies (Psalm 104:4; Hebrews 1:7).
- ▶ Yet we see demonic spirits have the capacity of to inhabit the bodies of humans (Matthew 12:43–45; Luke 11:24–26).
- ▶ Throughout the Bible angels appear in various forms including: with wings, in human form, with no form but only as bright flashes of light, and no visual appearance at all with only their voices heard.

- ▶ Angelic beings play many different roles serving many different purposes in the bible including messenger, guide, healer, protector, and warrior.
- ▶ In the Bible angels carry out many different tasks including:
  - Praising, worshiping, and rejoicing
  - Making appearances on God’s behalf
  - Acting as God’s instrument of judgment
  - Bringing answers to prayers
  - Making announcements and delivering news
  - Providing guidance
  - Observing and overseeing
  - Encouraging and caring
  - Supporting and protecting

## A General History of Angels and Satan

- ▶ The angels were created by God before or during the creation of the Earth (Gen 2:1; Job 38:4-7).
- ▶ Satan (Lucifer, the Devil) appears at least 52 times in the Bible.
- ▶ Satan (*śāṭān*) is Hebrew for adversary.
- ▶ Devil (*diábolos*) is Greek for slanderer.
- ▶ He is seen in the Old Testament, is mentioned in every book of the New Testament, and Jesus taught his existence (Matthew 4:1-11; John 8:44).
- ▶ He was originally created by God as a good angel.
- ▶ Satan originally had an exalted position with God, and was the protector of God’s throne (Ezekiel 28:11-14).
- ▶ He resided in the holy mountain of God, was powerful and perfect in wisdom, beauty, character and conduct.
- ▶ While in heaven, Satan became filled with violence, pride and untruth, and sinned in rebellion against God (Ezekiel 28:15-17).
- ▶ He desired to share God’s position, control the host of heaven, and God’s chosen people. He envied and desired God’s glory, power, and authority (Isaiah 14:12-15).
- ▶ There was a great battle in Heaven and Satan, at his rebellion, was cast out of Heaven along with the angels who followed him, 1/3 of all angels (Revelation 12:3-9).
- ▶ The core of Satan’s sin was that he wanted to be like God, which still characterizes his work on earth still today.
- ▶ Satan now works to steal, kill, destroy, and devour (John 10:10; 1 Peter 5:8).
- ▶ He disguises himself as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14).
- ▶ Satan will eventually be thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, no longer able to deceive or destroy (Revelation 20:10).

## Answering Common Questions About Angels

### 1. *Should we seek out interactions with angels?*

- Many people say, “Angels have a lot to tell us about God and life.”
- No one in the Bible ever pursues communication with angels, or recommends seeking to hear from angels.

- When an angel appears to people in the Bible, it always comes as a total surprise to them.
- The most common opening words of an angel to a human are “Fear not” or “Do not be afraid” (Genesis 21:17; Matthew 28:5; Luke 1:13, 30; 2:10).
- You can’t believe everything you hear from angelic beings any more than you can believe everything you hear from other people.
- When God’s angels speak to human beings, they don’t contradict the Bible.
- The apostle Paul warns Christians not to accept another gospel, even if it comes from an angel (Galatians 1:6–9).

## 2. *Do we each have a guardian angel?*

- Many people say, “Angels are assigned as bodyguards for every child.”
- Though angels are certainly concerned with the affairs of humans (Hebrews 1:14), the Bible makes no mention of Guardian Angels (specific angels assigned to certain people).
- Some people think that Jesus referred to guardian angels when he spoke about “little ones” (children) and “their angels in heaven” in Matthew 18:10.
- In context, Jesus isn’t assuring people that children will never come to harm; instead, he’s warning adults never to be the cause of children “stumbling” or sinning (verses 3–6).
- These angels aren’t watching the children, but looking to God— probably awaiting orders from God to avenge anyone who despises or abuses children.
- No biblical text gives any indication that angels assist us with our money or business, or help us work out our family problems.
- Rather, the Bible tells us to look to God for guidance and help in all our daily concerns.

## 3. *Should we expect angels to visit us?*

- Many people say, “Angels are appearing to people all the time.”
- Angel appearances are usually important and generally uncommon.
- The Bible does not teach or suggest that we should expect angels to visit or appear to people.
- Hebrews 13:2 tells us about angels in disguise but the main point is that we should show hospitality to strangers, not that we might normally encounter angels.
- This verse probably refers to the hospitality that Lot showed to visitors who did turn out to be angels (Genesis 19).
- Though it is uncommon to be visited by an angel, it is clearly possible.

### **A Final Thought**

- The Bible tells us that one day, we will judge angels (1 Corinthians 6:3).

### **FOR FURTHER STUDY:**

1. *Angels: What the Bible Really Says About God’s Heavenly Host.* Michael S. Heiser.