

GOD'S HEAVENLY MESSENGERS

“Praise him, all his angels, praise him, all his heavenly hosts... Let them praise the name of the Lord, for he commanded and they were created.” —PSALM 148:2 & 5

There has always been a great deal of interest in angels; some of it good, and some of it not so good. What God has revealed we may know and believe with confidence, but what He has not revealed, we must be very cautious about. So what does God tell us about angels?

The word ‘angel’ literally means ‘messenger’, and this is primarily how we are to understand them, as messengers or representatives of God. They belong to the heavenly court and are created beings. Colossians 1:16 says, “For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible... all things were created by him and for him.” Angels pre-date the physical universe and therefore pre-date humanity. God asks Job, “Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation ... while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?” (Job 38:4 & 7) Angels celebrated the foundation of the earth.

Angels, of course, are an altogether different species to humanity. We cannot see them as human beings with wings. They are sexless, neither male nor female, and can never die. Luke, speaking of Christians after the resurrection of the dead, says, “...and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels” (Luke 20:36). Humanity is lower than the angels, but with privileges angels do not have. 1

Peter 1:12 tells us there are things that even angels long to look into but are unable to; the fact that we may be indwelt by the Holy Spirit, receive salvation and be united with Christ. Angels do not experience that.

There are three things Scripture tells us we must not do concerning angels. We are not to pray to them. 1 Timothy 2:5 says there is one mediator between God and men who is Jesus Christ. Secondly, we are not to worship angels. “Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize” (Colossians 2:18). Thirdly, we are not to seek angels. Angels act on God’s initiative alone and are usually sent without us knowing.

There are 24 separate occasions in Scripture of angels making visitations to earth. In addition, there are more than 300 references to angels in 34 books of the Bible. Angels represent God on earth, and some of their biggest work is yet to come, preparing for that climactic event in history when they will accompany Jesus Christ on His return to earth.

PRAYER: Dear Lord, thank you for allowing me the privilege of being indwelt by You, and for the work of angels on our behalf.

TO REFLECT UPON: How would I best define angels?