

Angels

I. The Doctrine of Angels

A. Do Angels Really Exist?

The existence of angels is mentioned in at least thirty-four books of the Bible from beginning (Genesis) to end (Revelation). Jesus Christ also spoke of the real existence of angels on occasions when it would have not been necessary to do so (Matthew 18:10; 26:53)

B. What are Angels Like?

Angels are created, personal beings (Psalms 148:2, 5). They possess intelligence (1 Peter 1:12), emotions (Luke 2:13) and will (Jude 6). They are spirit beings (Hebrews 1:14), but not like God. They are limited by having angelic bodies, yet they are not as limited as human beings. Angels do not reproduce other angels (Mark 12:25); they do not die (Luke 20:36); and they are designated by the masculine gender in the Scriptures (Genesis 18:1-2). Some have wings with which they fly (Isaiah 6:2). The number of angels is uncountable (Hebrews 12:22).

Angels are organized: Michael is the only angel designated as an archangel (Jude 9) though there may be others (Daniel 10:13 he is called one of the chief princes). Under these top rulers there seem to be other angels in governing positions (Ephesians 3:10). Believers have a guardian angel assigned to them (Hebrews 1:14), and so do children (Matthew 18:10). Seraphim angels are particularly involved with the worship of God (Isaiah 6:1-3), and cherubim angels guard His holiness (Genesis 3:22-24; Ezekiel 1:4-5; 10:1-19).

C. What Do Angels Do?

1. Their ministry to God

Angels' primary ministry to God is to worship and praise Him. (Psalm 148:1-2; Isaiah 6:3; Hebrews 1:6; Revelation 5:8-13) They rejoice in what God does (Job 38:6-7); they serve Him (Psalm 103:20; Revelation 22:9); they appear before Him (Job 1:6; 2:1); they are instruments of God's judgments (Rev. 7:1; 8:2)

2. Their ministry to Jesus Christ

The angel Gabriel predicted His birth (Luke 1:26-33), they announced His birth (Luke 2:13), they protected Him as a baby (Matthew 2:13), they ministered to Him after His temptation (Matthew 4:11), they were prepared to defend Him from His enemies (though He didn't call upon them, Matthew 26:53), they strengthened Him in Gethsemane (Luke 22:43), they rolled away the stone from the tomb and announced His resurrection (Matthew 28:2, 6).

3. Their ministry to believers

Angels help believers (Hebrews 1:14) including being involved in answering prayer (Acts 12:7), giving encouragement in times of danger (Acts 27:23-24) and caring for believers at death (Luke 16:22; Jude 9). Believers minister to angels by showing them what redemption means in life (1 Corinthians 4:9; Luke 15:10; Ephesians 3:10-11). Believers will judge the angels and rule over them. (1 Corinthians 6:3; Hebrews 2:7-9)

4. Their ministry to the nations of the world

The archangel Michael is specially related to Israel as her guardian (Daniel 12:1). Other nations have angels assigned to them also (Daniel 10:21). Angels will also be involved in executing the judgements of the Tribulation period on the nations of the world at that time (Revelation 8, 9, 16).

5. Their ministry to unbelievers

It was an angel who struck Herod which resulted in his death as punishment for his arrogance (Acts 12:23). At the end of the church age, angels will act as the reapers who separate the righteous (believers) from the wicked (unbelievers - Matthew 13:39).