

Angels

Introduction:

Christians are different from others in many ways.

One way - the world is striving for what they see about them.

Christians look at things not seen

2 Corinthians 4:18

“while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

Angels are one part of what is not seen, yet too often not looked at.

Angels are mentioned nearly 300 times in the Bible.

With many, the subject of angels is a question of myth or reality. Some questions that naturally arise relative to angels include the following: Who are they and where did they come from? What do they look like? What are the attributes of angels? What do they do? What’s their destiny?

Who are they and where did they come from?

Angels are Created beings:

1. Job 38.4-7 Angels shouted for joy at the Creation of the earth
2. Nehemiah 9.6 They were created by God
3. Psalm 148.1-5 They were created then called upon to praise God
4. Ephesians 3.14-15 They are part of God’s family in heaven
5. Hebrews 12.22-24 - They are innumerable...
6. Colossians 1.15-17 – They are described as occupying thrones, having dominions, principalities, and powers...
7. Not disembodied or glorified human beings – Matthew 22.29-30 (...will be AS...not will BE)
8. Compared with Luke 20.34-36 this passage also shows they do not procreate – all were created at once and none have been added since then?
9. Nor can they die – Luke 20.36

Angels are free to make choices (“Free Moral Agents”):

1. Some do the will of God – Psalm 103.20-21
2. Some chose not to do the will of God – Jude 6; 2 Peter 2.4
3. Higher than man, but lower than God, Christ and the Holy Spirit – Hebrews 2.7; 1.14

What do they look like?

Angels are Invisible to unaided human vision:

1. Balaam’s donkey – Numbers 22.31
2. Elisha and the King of Syria – 2 Kings 6.15-17
3. Able to take any form which God chooses:
 - a. Moses and the burning bush – Exodus 3.2
 - b. Often appeared as men:

- i. To Abraham & Lot – Genesis 18.1-2; 19.1-2
- ii. Jacob wrestled with one – Genesis 32.22-28
- iii. One appeared as a young man to announce the resurrection – Mark 16.5
- iv. Two of them proclaimed Jesus would return – Acts 1.10-11
- c. The Cherubim of the Tabernacle and Temple are portrayed with wings – Exodus 25.20
- d. The famous description of the Seraphim in Isaiah’s vision – Isaiah 6.2ff
- e. And Ezekiel’s description of the six-winged creatures (Later called Cherubim) – Ezekiel 1

Attributes of angels:

1. Superhuman in knowledge, but not omniscient as is God.
 - a. An angel told Abraham he would have a son by next year – Genesis 18.10
 - b. The angel Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, told Zachariah that Elizabeth would have a son, and he would be called John – Luke 1.11-19
 - c. An angel appeared to Mary to announce the virgin birth – Luke 1.26-37
 - d. The first announcement of His birth was by angels to shepherds outside Bethlehem – Luke 2.13-14
 - e. But they don’t know everything:
 - i. Desire to look into some things – 1 Peter 1.10-12
 - ii. Don’t know the time of the end – Matthew 24.36

2. Superhuman in strength and power, but not omnipotent as is God.
 - a. Two angels smote the men of Sodom with blindness – Genesis 19.11
 - b. An angel destroyed 70 thousand men from Dan to Beer Sheba – 2 Samuel 24.15-17
 - c. An angel of the Lord killed 185,000 Assyrian mighty men – 2 Kings 19.35-36
 - d. An angel stopped the mouths of lions so that Daniel was not hurt – Daniel 6.22
 - e. An angel of the Lord rolled away a stone from the Lord’s grave – Matthew 28.2-4
 - f. An angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought out the apostles saying “Go and stand and speak in the Temple to the people all the words of this life” – Acts 5.19
 - g. An angel of the Lord smote King Herod so that he was eaten by worms and died – Acts 12.23
 - h. An angel caused Peter’s chains to drop off and caused prison doors to open on their own – Acts 12.10
 - i. Peter would later write “Whereas angels, though greater in might and power...” 2 Peter 2.11
 - j. Psalm 103.20 “Bless the LORD, you his angels that are mighty in strength, that fulfill His word, harkening to the voice of His word.”
 - k. But they are not omnipotent; the Lord told the angel to stay his hand when the angel was destroying the Israelites – 2 Samuel 24.15-16

3. Superhuman in swiftness and speed of travel from heavens to earth
 - a. The angel Gabriel was sent immediately to Daniel “while he was still praying” – Dan. 9.20-23
 - b. Angels are presented in the scriptures as capable of passing over any great space at an inconceivable speed
 - c. They are not omnipresent or everywhere at the same time as is God
 - i. Example of the angels who visited Abraham at Mamre
 - ii. They then went to Sodom and Gomorrah

- iii. When the commandment went forth, Gabriel went forth – Daniel 9.20ff
- iv. The same angel was sent from the presence of God to a city of Galilee to speak with the virgin Mary – Luke 1.26-35
- d. Angels are then NOT omnipresent, but must be sent

The Mission of Angels (What Angels DO):

They serve primarily as the ministers of God's providence

1. Psalm 34.9 "The angel of the Lord encamps about those who fear Him"
2. Hebrews 1.14 "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to do service for the sake of those who shall inherit salvation?"
3. "Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven." Matt. 18.11
4. They are anxious for the salvation of sinners – Luke 15.10
5. They carry the saved home when they fall asleep in Jesus – Luke 16.22-23
6. They compose God's family in heaven – Hebrews 12.22
7. They compose God's armies in heaven, and sometimes on earth
 - a. We read about 300 times in the Old Testament "The God (or LORD) of hosts..." – 2 Sam. 5.10
 - b. We read of the Lord of Sabaoth (armies, hosts) – Romans 9.29; James 5.4
 - c. They have fought on behalf of God's people on earth – Joshua 5.13-15
 - d. They fight on behalf of God in heaven – Revelation 12.7
 - e. One gave us a glimpse into that world at Daniel 10.1-15
 - f. The entire book of Revelation – angels mentioned 51 times (even subtracting the 7 times it refers to messengers to the churches, it still talks more about angels than any other book in the Bible)
8. They stand before God and worship Him – Revelation 5.11-12
9. They are not to be worshiped – Rev. 22.8-9

What is going to happen to them?

Those who have chosen to do the will of God:

1. They will help carry out the Judgment on that Day –
 - a. Matthew 13.39 – Angels will be the "reapers" at the end of time harvest
 - b. They will separate the wicked from among the just – verse 41
 - c. Matthew 25.31 – They will come with the Lord when He sits on His throne to judge
 - d. 1 Thessalonians 4.15ff – The Lord will descend with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trumpet of God...
 - e. 2 Thessalonians 1.7- They will appear with the Lord "in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God..."
2. Will be the companions of the redeemed in the new heaven and earth – Heb. 12.22; Revelation 21.12

Much of the structure of this material was taken from Angelology by Rex Turner, Sr.