

What Does The Bible Say About Angels?



Introduction. In our previous lessons we considered what angels are and the meaning of the words associated with them along with what the Bible tells us about various classifications of angelic beings. In this lesson we will end our study with a consideration of what the Bible says about the work of angels in the Old & New Testaments.

I. The Work of Angels in the Old Testament.

- A. Abraham and the angels. Genesis 18:1-3 Note: Lord appeared to Abraham – 3 men (these looked like men) – 16-22, 33 & 19:1 Note: Two went to Sodom, rescued Lot – Lord talked with Abraham.
- B. Jacob's Dream. Genesis 28:10-12
- C. Law given by angels (Acts 7:51-53). Hebrews 2:2 speaks of the Mosaic law as "the word spoken through angels." Galatians 3:19 says of the law "it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator."

Some argue that in these passages "angel" is used in its primary sense of messenger. Yet the passage in Hebrews 2:2 comes just before the declaration in vs. 7 that man is "a little lower than the angels" – thus this is talking about heavenly angels. Acts 7:35 the Lord speaking in the bush was an "Angel."

- D. Daniel and angels. Daniel 6:16-22

II. The Work of Angels in the New Testament.

- A. Zacharias and the angel (Luke 1:8-14).
- B. Mary and the angel (Luke 1:26-32).
- C. Joseph and the angel (Matthew 1:20-25).
- D. Jesus and the angels (Matthew 4:11; Luke 22:43).
- E. Jesus' ascension (Acts 1:9-11).
- F. Apostles in prison (Acts 5:17-21; 12:5-10).

III. The Work of Angels in General.

- A. To Announce God's Messages. Birth of Jesus to Mary (Luke 1:26-32). Birth of Isaac to Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 18).
- B. To Rescue God's people (during the age of miracles). Peter was freed from prison (Acts 12:5-10). Daniel was saved from the Lions (Daniel 6:16-22).
- C. To Inflict God's Punishments (Acts 12:20-23).
- D. To Carry the Righteous to Paradise (Luke 16:19-22).
- E. To Gather the Saints unto Judgment (Mark 13:27).

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Lesson Three



IV. Questions About Angels.

- A. Does Each Person Have a Guardian Angel? Primary passage that addresses this - Matthew 18:10 *What does this say and what does it not say?* Angels associated with "little ones" (not all people). Nothing about one angel for each person - simply "their angel." Nothing about "guarding" the person simply watching and reporting to God. (Note: We know that angels see our behavior - Luke 15:10 "Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteht." – Daniel 4:17 may be a reference to angels calling them "watchers."

There are a number of ways this passage may be understood: Angels report to God what happens to the innocent that can't report for themselves. God assigns angels to observe what goes on. Could "angel" ever be a synonym for "soul" or "spirit"? Philo said – "If therefore, you consider that souls, and demons, and angels are things differing indeed in name, but one and identical in reality, you will then be able to discard that most heavy burden" (*On The Giants*. IV. 16 - Yonge. p. 153) Note: Hebrews 1:13,14 identifies angels as "ministering spirits". Acts 23:8 says of the Sadducees they say there is no "angel" or "spirit." Could it be that the Lord is saying God himself beholds the spiritual manifestations of these "little ones."

What ever this is teaching it is clear that there is no authority for men to pray to, rely upon or name a "guardian angel."

- B. Do Angels Operate Today? *We don't really know!*

We know this: Miracles were temporary: Tongues, Miraculous knowledge and prophecies were to end (I Corinthians 13:8-10). Miraculous angelic work served to confirm and preserve the word until complete revelation. Evil spirits were to depart during the reign of Christ (Zechariah 13:1-6). God doesn't show partiality (Acts 10:34).

If God miraculously helps some and denies others this miraculous angelic help that would be partiality. Any help offered by angelic powers now is not miraculous (i.e. contrary to natural law) now – freeing from prison, etc. That is not to say that God doesn't help us through natural means. *Could angels be God's means of sustaining natural laws?* If so then they help us every day. I don't believe today their is direct communication or assistance between men and angels.

1. Hebrews 1:13,14 Note: No indication of the time frame or the age it is referring to. Apostles minister to us through their work in the word. Angels have ministered to us through their work in God's scheme of redemption. — Spiritual or physical? *Who knows what is done in the spiritual realm which is for our benefit?*
2. Hebrews 13:2 Note: Same issue - what time frame. Abraham did this. *Does that mean we will?* If so it is a miracle! Brother Carrol Sutton has some observation at the end of his booklet on angels that may be of value:
 1. There is no evidence that an angel has ever saved a sinner from sins!
 2. There is no evidence an angel ever preached the gospel to anyone! (Note: They brought the preacher & student together)
 3. There is no evidence angels will appear to men today.
 4. There is no evidence that an angel will speak to a preacher to direct his message.