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# Angels and the Spirit World

# Angels and the Spirit World

**ANGELS. Who, what, are they? Where did they come from? What does the Bible say about angels? Do humans go to heaven and become angels? Do they have bodies? What do they look like? Do they have wings? How do they compare with human beings? Are all angels good? Do we have guardian angels? What is their job description? If angels and demons can't die, what is the point of their engaging in battle? What are the different types of angels? Do Christians have the authority to command angels? Who is the angel of the Lord?**

**A**ngels. We've all heard of them. There are God's angels, the devil's angels, Hell's Angels, the Los Angeles Angels, Blue Angels, Charlie's Angels, angel food cake, and a plethora of others names, places, and things that confiscate the name. The most common question we hear asked about angels is, "How many angels can dance on the head of a pin?" It is sometimes used as a term of endearment. But really, what *are* angels?

The 1828 edition of *Webster's Dictionary* has seven varied definitions of the word "angel" as follows:

1. Literally, a messenger; one employed to communicate news or information from one person to another at a distance. But appropriately,
2. A spirit, or a spiritual intelligent being employed by God to communicate His will to man. Hence angels are ministers of God, and ministering spirits. Hebrews 1.
3. In a bad sense, an evil spirit; as, the angel of the bottomless pit (Matthew 25; 1 Corinthians 6; Revelation 9).
4. Christ, the mediator and head of the church (Revelation 10).
5. A minister of the gospel, who is an ambassador of God (Revelation 2 and 3).
6. Any being whom God employs to execute His judgments (Revelation 16).
7. In the style of love, a very beautiful person.

Everywhere in Scripture the existence of God and angels is confidently assumed. The only recorded exceptions were non-believers (Psalm 14:4; 53:1, KJV throughout) and an antagonistic party who did not believe in angels, the resurrection, or spirit (Acts 23:8), called the *Sadducees* (that's why they were sad, you see!) The teaching of Scripture is that angels do, indeed, exist. Their existence is taught in at least 34 books of the Bible. Christ knew of and taught the reality of angels (Matthew 4:11; 18:10; 26:53; Luke 22:43). He should know—He created them before the creation of the world (Job 38:7; Colossians 1:16).

Belief in angels is found in just about every religion and culture throughout the ages, including Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Islam, Bahai, Sikhism, and, of course, nearly every denomination and sect of Christianity.

Interestingly, many of these accounts are strikingly similar.

Since the Bible does not treat the subject of angels individually, the existence and orders of angelic beings can only be determined by searching the Scriptures line upon line, precept upon precept, throughout the Bible (Isaiah 28:9–11). All throughout the Bible, there are numerous incidental details that furnish us with ample information in passing. Their personal existence is plainly implied in such passages as Genesis 16:7, 10, 11; Judges 13:1–21; Matthew 28:2–5; and Hebrews 1:4.

The topic of angels is a vast subject. Many articles and books have been written about them. This booklet will be a compilation of scriptures about angels and the spirit world. Enjoy.

### Who or What Are Angels?

Many of our preconceived notions about angels come from unfounded tradition, medieval art works, or the media, which is more interested in ratings and ticket sales than truth.

To many, the word “angel” conjures up false images of winged, baby cherubs, wearing haloes and playing harps while floating on nebulous clouds. Many museums harbor precious works of art portraying angels as winged, shoulder length-haired, white-robed Caucasians, which are a far cry from the way the Bible describes them. To find the truth about angels and the spirit world, we need to consult what the *Bible* says about them instead of relying upon dreams, folklore, and traditions of men.

The word “angel” is applied in Scripture to an order of invisible supernatural beings whose business it is to act as God’s messengers to men, and as agents who carry out His will. Angels are created beings composed of “spirit” essence rather than physical matter. Every reference to angels in Scripture is in the masculine gender.

The Bible calls angels by their job description: “ministering spirits” (Hebrews 1:14). They do not have *physical* bodies like humans. Jesus proclaimed that “a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have” (Luke 24:37–39).

Most have bodily parts, hands, feet, head, faces, hair, mouths, voices, eyes, and other parts like men (See Genesis 18:2,4, 8; 19:1–22; Judges 13:6). Hebrews 1:14 tells us they are all “ministering spirits, sent forth to minister [help, aid] for them who shall be heirs of salvation.” Angels are also characterized as “sons of God” (Job 1:6; 2:1) and “morning stars” (Job 38:7) or light bringers.

It appears that all angels were created at one time, and that no new angels are being added to the number. Angels are not subject to death or any form of extinction; therefore, they do not decrease in number. It seems reasonable to conclude that there are at least as many spirit beings in existence as there

will have been human beings in all their history on earth.

Contrary to what some teach, angels are *not* glorified human beings, nor do human beings become angels at death. They are not, nor ever will be, a part of the divine God Family. They are specially created beings, not a race descended from a common ancestor (Luke 20:34–36). Human beings are sometimes called “sons of men,” but angels are never called “sons of angels.”

We notice immediately that each has the suffix “el” attached to their names. “El” is a shortened name for God, their maker.

Some may deny any distinct personality of individual angels, claiming they are impersonal forces of energy dispatched to accomplish the will of God, but the Bible teaches otherwise. Individual names imply individuality. The fact that two of their names, Michael and Gabriel, are given, establishes the point sufficiently (Daniel 12:1; Luke 1:26). The lack of more names was a safeguard against giving undue honor and worship to these creatures. Angels were dispatched by God as agents to act in His name, not in their own names. Hence, when Jacob asked an angel for his name, he refused to give it (Genesis 32:29). The angel who approached Joshua, when asked to identify himself, replied only that he was “prince of the army of God” (Joshua 5:14). When Samson’s parents asked an angel for his name, he withheld it, saying, “Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret?” (Judges 13:18). The apostle John attempted to worship angels and was twice rebuked: “See thou do it not...Worship God” (Revelation 19:10; 22:8, 9).

### General Facts About Angels

Following is a list of some general facts about angels with supporting references you can look up in your Bible (1 Thessalonians 5:21). To derive full benefit from this study, you should look up each scripture in your own Bible and perhaps even mark or chain reference them for future reference. (Our free booklet, *How to Study Your Bible*, contains a whole chapter on *how to mark your Bible*.)

- Angels were created by Christ before the earth (Job 38:4–7; Psalm 148:2–5; Colossians 1:16). It is clear that they have not existed from all eternity (Nehemiah 9:6; Psalm 148:2, 5).
- Angels know and delight in the Gospel of Christ (Ephesians 3:9, 10; 1 Peter 1:12).
- They execute the purposes of God (Numbers 22:22; Psalm 103:21; Revelation 5:2).
- They execute the judgments of God (2 Samuel 24:16; 2 Kings 19:35; Psalm 35:5–6; Isaiah 37:36; Acts 12:23; Revelation 14:6–10; 16:1).
- They are distinct from human beings (Psalm 8:4–5), not a race descend-

ed from a common ancestor (Luke 20:34–36). We are called “sons of men,” but angels are never called “sons of angels.”

- They are higher than man (Psalm 8:5; Hebrews 2:9).
- They can take on the appearance of humans (Hebrews 13:2).
- Angels never appear as cute, chubby infants! They are always full grown adults.
- They are without power to reproduce after their kind (Mark 12:25).
- Since they are spirit beings, angels do not die (Luke 20:36), but had a beginning; are not eternal like God (1 Timothy 1:17; 6:16).
- They are innumerable (Luke 2:13; Hebrews 12:22; Revelation 5:11).
- They are glorious (Luke 9:26).
- They are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation (Hebrews 1:14).
- They have intellect (1 Peter 1:12), emotion (Luke 2:13), and will (Jude 6).
- Angels rejoice over every repentant sinner (Luke 15:7, 10).
- They are not to be worshipped (Colossians 2:18; Revelation 19:10).
- They worship God (Psalm 103:20–21; 148:1–2; Revelation 7:11).
- They are powerful and mighty in body (Isaiah 37:36; 2 Thessalonians 1:7–10; Revelation 18:1).
- They can eat for pleasure and hospitality (Genesis 18:8; 19:3).
- They are heavenly spirit beings (Psalm 104:4; Matthew 18:10; Matthew 22:30; Matthew 24:36; Hebrews 1:14).
- Angels are subject to Christ (1 Peter 3:22; Philippians 2:9–11).
- Some of the angels are organized into armies (Psalm 68:17).
- They are organized into principalities and powers with thrones (Colossians 1:16; 2:16; Romans 8:38; Ephesians 6:10–18; 1 Peter 3:22).
- They are interested in earthly affairs (1 Peter 1:12).
- They will be judged or ruled by saints (Daniel 7:18, 27; 1 Corinthians 6:3).
- Good angels are “elect” angels (1 Timothy 5:21).
- They are limited in knowledge (Mark 13:32).
- Angels are sometimes agents of God’s wrath (Genesis 19:1; Numbers 22:22; Judges 5:23; 2 Samuel 24:16; Psalm 35:5; 37:36; Acts 12:23).
- Some are guardian angels (Matthew 18:10).
- They will accompany Christ at His Second Coming (Matthew 16:27; 25:31; Mark 8:38; 2 Thessalonians 1:7).

#### Angels Were Created by Christ Before the Creation of the Earth

In Colossians 1:16, Paul says Christ created the angels in their various orders: “For by him [Christ] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions,

or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.” Yet as we have already seen from Job 38:4–7, angels “shouted for joy” as God created the earth. They had to be present before the earth was created in order to shout for joy at that time!

Since God created man “a little lower than the angels” (Hebrews 2:7), it follows that angels have a greater mental capacity than man. They are super-human in power and strength. Angelic knowledge and power were displayed when two angels brought flaming destruction upon Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:13, 24). On another occasion, a single angel killed 185,000 of the Assyrian army (2 Kings 19:35).

#### Angels Are Organized Into Orders or Ranks

Most holy angels are not named in the Bible, but are described only as “elect angels” (1 Timothy 5:21).

The term “sons of God” is sometimes applied to angels (Job 1:6; 38:7; Daniel 3:25) and sometimes to men, because God created them. Angels, like men, were susceptible to temptation and to sin, and thus we read of “angels that sinned” (Isaiah 14:12; 2 Peter 2:4; Luke 10:18; Jude 6).

The Bible uses the word *son* for a son, grandson, son-in-law, or as a term of endearment (1 Samuel 24:16). In Luke 3:38, even Adam was called “the son of God” because he was not born of woman, but God created him.

God is not the author of confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33). As with the visible creation, so also in the invisible realm there is order and rank among the angels. Christ created thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers (Colossians 1:16) and, having been seated at the right hand of God, He is far above them (Ephesians 1:20), and they are subject to Him (1 Peter 3:22). Therefore Paul was persuaded “that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38–39).

Just as God has physical laws to govern the universe, so He has orderliness and organization among the angels. Each was created for a purpose.

- Daniel 10:13 mentions Michael as one of the “chief princes.”
- Archangels are mentioned only twice in the Bible (1 Thessalonians 4:16 and Jude 9).
- Seraphim (Isaiah 6:1–3) have to do with worship of God.
- Cherubim (Genesis 3:22–24) guard God and His holiness.
- Most holy angels are not named in the Bible but are described only as “elect angels” (1 Timothy 5:21).
- Some are called “beasts” or “living creatures” (Ezekiel 1:5, 13–15, 19; 3:13).
- In the Book of Revelation, four beasts, or living creatures, are described

as being “in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne...full of eyes before and behind” (Revelation 4:6). Their role is not described, but seem to be associated with the 24 elders in giving praise and worship to God (Revelation 5:8, 14; 19:4).

The pyramidal grading of angels is clearly seen in fallen angels, as Paul makes clear in this admonition: “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand” (Ephesians 6:10–13).

These are spirit beings in rebellion against God with whom we as saints must wrestle. Principalities are beings of the highest rank and order in Satan’s kingdom. The powers derive their authority from and execute the will of the chief rulers. Then there are the world rulers of the darkness of this age, followed by wicked spirits in the heavenlies.

Daniel gives us an example of wrestling with such beings. After Daniel prayed and fasted for three weeks, Gabriel appeared and said, “From the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia” (Daniel 10:12–13).

The prince of Persia here is the satanic prince who was ruling the kingdom of Persia for Satan, recognized in Scripture as being the god and ruler of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4).

The foremost angel, both in power and authority, is Michael the archangel (Daniel 10:13, 21; 12:1; Jude 9; Revelation 12:7). In Daniel 12:1 we read, “And at that time [the time of the events of Daniel 11:36–45] shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.”

Ranking very high among the angels in privileges and honor are the seraphs (Isaiah 6:2, 6; SEE SERAPHIM IN SIDEBAR). These angelic beings appear by name in only two places in the Bible, Isaiah 6:2 and 6:6, but are mentioned by description in several other passages.

Only three angels are given proper names in the Scripture: Michael, Gabriel, and Hallel, the Latinized name for Lucifer.

The first is Gabriel (*Man of God*), who seems to be God’s chief messenger. It was Gabriel who was sent to Daniel to explain the vision he had seen of the ram and the he-goat, and to reveal to him the prophecy of the “70 weeks.” Daniel calls him “the man Gabriel,” and one that had “the appearance of a man” (Daniel 8:15; 9:21). He was also sent to Mary the mother of Jesus, and to Zacharias the father of John the Baptist, to foretell the birth of their sons. To Zacharias he said, “I am Gabriel that stands in the presence of God” (Luke 1:19, 26).

The second angel given a proper name is Michael (*Who is like God*). Michael is referred to as a “prince” (Daniel 10:13, 21) and is the only angel given the title “archangel,” although some students of God’s Word insist there were three archangels: Gabriel, Michael, and Lucifer. The word “archangel” is used only twice in the Bible, and refers to Michael. He is called “Michael *THE* archangel” only in Jude 9, and is probably also the unnamed archangel of 1 Thessalonians 4:16. Michael appears as the heavenly patron and champion of Israel—as the watchful guardian of the people of God against all foes, earthly or demonic. In short, it appears Michael was “the toughest dude on the block”! Could there be other archangels? While it is possible there are multiple archangels, it is best not to presume upon the Word of God by declaring other angels as archangels. The third angel mentioned by name is Satan himself and is mentioned by several titles.

Cherubim are described in detail in Ezekiel 10:1–22. Ezekiel describes these creatures as having wings, hands, and many eyes, and as being surrounded by “spinning wheels” (Ezekiel 19:8–12) and “full of eyes round about” (Ezekiel 10:12). These angelic beings once guarded the tree of life in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:24). Golden cherubim had a place in the tabernacle in the wilderness (Exodus 25:18–20; 37:7–9) and also in Solomon’s temple (1 Kings 6:23–28; 8:7; 2 Chronicles 3:10–13; Hebrews 9:5). In the book of Revelation, John makes reference to creatures similar in appearance to those described in Ezekiel’s vision (Ezekiel 10:16; Revelation 4:6). According to some scholars’ *figurative* interpretation, cherubim are assumed to have the intellect of man, the



**Popular depiction of Michael the Archangel defeating Satan the Devil**

strength of an ox, the courage of a lion, and the free movement of an eagle.

As agents and deputies of God, angels serve as responsible executioners of the divine purpose, be it protection and deliverance of God's people or destruction of the wicked (Genesis 19:1–26).

#### Advantages and Limitations

Since God created man “a little lower than angels” (Hebrews 2:7), it follows that angels have extraordinary power and mental capacity compared to man. “Bless God, O you angels of his, mighty in power, carrying out his word” (Psalm 103:20).

Angels, too, can travel at tremendous speeds, far exceeding the limits of the physical world. Thus when Daniel was praying, God dispatched an angel to answer his prayer; and the angel arrived within moments, even before the prayer was concluded (Daniel 9:20–23).

As God's ministers, the angels have benefited greatly by observing history and mankind's undertakings from the beginning of the creation of man. Angels ministered on behalf of Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Isaiah, Daniel, Zechariah, Peter, Paul, and John, to mention but a few (Genesis 22:11; 31:11; Joshua 5:14, 15; Isaiah 6:6, 7; Daniel 6:22; Zechariah 1:9; Acts 5:19, 20; 7:35; 12:7, 8; 27:23, 24; Revelation 1:1). Their messages contributed to the writing of the Bible. In the book of Revelation, angels are mentioned many more times than in any other Bible book. Innumerable angels are seen around the great throne of God; seven will blow the seven trumpets, while another seven pour out the seven bowls of God's wrath. Revelation 14:6 prophesies an angel flying in the midst of heaven “having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.” Another announces, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen” (Revelation 14:8).

But for all their higher mental and spiritual powers, angels have their limitations. For example, they do not know the “day and hour” of Christ's return (Mark 13:32). They take a keen interest in the fulfillment of God's purposes, yet there are some things they do not understand, and desire to look into (1 Peter 1:12). They rejoice at the repentance of one sinner who repents (Luke 15:7, 10), as they watch the “theatrical spectacle” of man's doings here below. What a mysterious and marvelous exhibition we must be!

#### Different Commissions, Different Appearances

So why do some angels have four wings, some six wings, and others have no wings at all?

Since angels are spirits, they aren't limited to appearing in just one kind of physical form, as human beings are. Angels may show up on earth in whatever way best suits the purposes of their missions. Sometimes, angels

## Seraphim

There are various types of angels. Seraphim, the Hebrew plural of *seraph*, are angels of the highest order in the celestial hierarchy. Seraphim are mentioned only twice in Scripture (Isaiah 6:2, 6), but they are referred to by description in other places such as Isaiah 6:2 and Revelation 4:8. The identity of the 24 elders is not certain, but they are surely created beings, as other angels are (Revelation 19:4).

“I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each had *six wings*: with twain he covered his face [some speculate as a token of humility], and with twain he covered his feet, [perhaps a token of respect] and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.... Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar. And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged” (Isaiah 6:1–7).

Overall, the seraphim's prime function seems to be involved with the worshipping of God.

manifest in ways that make them appear to be human beings, sometimes as glowing apparitions. The Bible says in Hebrews 13:2 that some people have offered hospitality to strangers whom they thought were other people, but in fact they “have entertained angels unawares.” At other times, angels appeared in a glorified form making it obvious they were angels, but didn't have wings. Angels may also appear in their glorified form with wings and appear as beings of light. When they do, they may inspire people to praise God. In nearly every case, when an angel appeared to men, they were absolutely terrified and had to be told, *Fear not* (Genesis 15:1; Exodus 14:13; 20:20; Isaiah 41:10; Daniel 10:12; Matthew 28:4; Mark 16:5–6; Luke 24:37–39; Daniel 10:19; Luke 2:10; Acts 27:24). Daniel was so terrified at the appearance of angels that he “fainted, and was sick *certain days*” (Daniel 8:27).

Such expressions as “like the angels” (Luke 20:36), indicate that whenever angels appeared to man, it was usually in a human form (Genesis 18:2;

19:1, 10; Luke 24:4; Acts 1:10).

However, some of the angels do *not* look like men. Some would appear as fearsome, frightening, and Hollywood-hideous looking creatures to men, namely seraphim and cherubim. Ezekiel 1:8–14 describes the cherubim as having the likeness of a man with four wings and four faces, depicting those of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle, and feet like a calf. The numerous depictions of cherubim show their many different roles; their initial duty had been the protection of the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:24). They had the visage of burning coals of fire, “and the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning” (Ezekiel 1:14; Daniel 10:6).

In Psalm 8:4–5, David asked, “What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the *angels*, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.” The Hebrew word translated “angels” here is *elohim*, usually translated “God.” Here the psalmist views man, created in God’s image, as a little lower than God. In Hebrews 2:6–8, the apostle Paul applied the passage to Christ as Son of Man.

### Cherubim

These are mentioned in several passages, which are too lengthy to quote; so we will give a brief description of them. Ezekiel saw them as the heavens were opened, seeing visions of God and of cherubim. The cherubim look much like men except that each one has *four faces* and *four wings* and feet like a calf. Two of their wings join tip to tip, and the other two cover their bodies. Their faces are like those of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle. Their general appearance is like fire and lightning. They move with the speed of lightning. They are connected to “wheels” which look like a wheel within a wheel, perhaps something similar to a gyroscope. The wheels are very high, look like beryl, and have many eyes in them. They have a firmament over their heads colored like a crystal. Above this firmament there is a throne on which God sits, and He has the appearance of a man. Fire and lightnings and glory are all about the throne, and a rainbow is round about the throne (Ezekiel 1:5–28; 8:1–4; 10:1–22). Cherubim appear to be used in guarding or protecting the holiness of God. Cherubim drove man from Eden and guarded the tree of life (Genesis 3:24). Lucifer was called “The anointed cherub that covereth” (Ezekiel 28:14). (*Dake’s Topical Index*)

The Hebrew *mal-'akh'* and the Greek *ag'ge-los* literally mean “messenger,” and are applied to both human couriers (1 Kings 19:2; Luke 7:24) and angelic messengers, although there are exceptions to both usages. When spirit messengers are indicated, the words are translated *angels*; if the reference is definitely to human beings, the rendering is usually *messengers* (Genesis 16:7; 32:3; James 2:25; Revelation 22:8). In the book of Revelation, certain references to angels may also apply to human living beings who were given a message (Revelation 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14). The term “angel” has been expanded to include various roles of protecting spirits, or to overseeing human beings, God’s heritage.

When the word *aggelos* is used in the New Testament, the context makes clear these are “the angels of heaven” (Matthew 24:36) or the “heavenly host” (Luke 2:13). Referring to their nature, they are called “spirits” (Hebrews 1:14).

The word “angel” is used many times to denote *any* agent or prophet God sends forth to execute His purposes. It is used of ordinary messengers (Isaiah 42:19; Haggai 1:13), of priests (Malachi 2:7), and ministers of the New Testament (Revelation 1:20). It is even applied to such impersonal agents as the pestilence (2 Samuel 24:16, 17; 2 Kings 19:35) and the wind (Psalm 104:3–4). The context must be consulted to determine who or what is being addressed.

The distinctive application of the word “angel” does not usually signify their nature, but their *office* as messengers. The appearances of angels sent to Abraham at Mamre (Genesis 18:2, 22 and Genesis 19:1), to Jacob at Peniel (Genesis 32:30), to Joshua at Gilgal (Joshua 5:13, 15), and as the angel of the Lord, were doubtless manifestations of Jesus Christ before He appeared in the flesh.

### How Many Angels Are There?

The Scripture gives no definite information as to the number of the angelic hosts of heaven. Daniel sees a great multitude of angels in his vision of the Ancient of Days: “A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and *ten thousand times ten thousand* stood before him” (Daniel 7:10).

The writer of Hebrews records “an innumerable company of angels” (Hebrews 12:22). John, in Revelation, wrote of the angels, “And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and *thousands of thousands*” (Revelation 5:11).

Some of the angels are organized into armies: “The chariots of God are *twenty thousand, even thousands of angels*: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place” (Psalm 68:17).



### Angels Are Normally Invisible to Human Eyes

When Elisha's servant became terrified about the armies surrounding them, Elisha prayed the Lord would open his eyes: "And he [Elisha] answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha" (2 Kings 6:16-17).

Numbers 22:22 reveals that Balaam, the mercenary prophet, was unable to see the angel of the Lord that was waiting to kill him, but Balaam's ass saw the angel and turned aside, probably in fear, crushing Balaam's foot against the wall, but sparing Balaam's life. This implies angels can be seen when and where they want to be, or are invisible to the human eye.

### Angels Are Interested in Earthly Affairs

Jesus indicated that heavenly angels are fully aware every time a sinner repents: "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance" (Luke 15:7). This interest is further illustrated by Paul's words to Timothy: "I CHARGE *thee* before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality" (1 Timothy 5:21). The word CHARGE, here, is from the Greek word *diamarturomai* and means to "solemnly charge, bear witness, or testify." It is from the noun *martus*, or "witness," where we get our word "martyr." Timothy's ministerial performance was going to be witnessed by elect *angels*. No minister is above Scripture, and the angels would bear witness accordingly. Paul added, "for we [apostles] are made a spectacle [display] unto the world, and to angels, and to men" (1 Corinthians 4:9).

### Angelic Activities Among Believers

- Angels bring messages (Exodus 3:2; Luke 1:13, 19; Matthew 1:20; Luke 1:30; Acts 10:3, 7, 22).
- Angels are called servants of heirs of salvation (Hebrews 1:14).
- They guard and protect (Psalm 91:11; Daniel 6:22; Matthew 18:10).
- They are used by God to answer prayer (Acts 12:5, 7-10).
- They announce judgments (Revelation 14:6-10).
- They execute judgments (Isaiah 37:36; Acts 12:23).

When people in the Bible saw an angel, their typical response was to fall on their faces in fear and awe (Revelation 1:17; 19:10).

### Are Angels Departed Souls of Humans Who Have Died?

Contrary to what many believe, angels are *not* the departed souls of humans who have died. The Bible plainly shows the state of the dead. We encourage you to verify the following passages in your own Bible and then *believe your Bible*, not the traditions of men. "For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything" (Ecclesiastes 9:5). "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do *it* with thy might; for *there is* no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest" (Ecclesiastes 9:10). "The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence" (Psalm 115:17). "For in death *there is* no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks" (Psalm 6:5)? "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish" (Psalm 146:4). "For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we *are* dust" (Psalm 103:14). "For the grave cannot praise thee, death can *not* celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth" (Isaiah 38:18). "For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do *this*, saith the LORD of hosts" (Malachi 4:1-3).

Where, then, did the angels come from? The Bible indicates that they were individually created by God before the founding of the earth (Job 38:4-7). The size of God's heavenly family may be hundreds of millions, perhaps billions or more! Some angels joined Satan in his rebellion—Daniel 7:10; Revelation 5:11; 12:7-9. (See our free booklets, *Born From Above—or Born Again?* and *Immortality—God's Gift to the Saints*.)

### Angels Actively Supported Christ and His Followers

From the beginning to the end of Christ's ministry, the holy angels of God followed His earthly sojourn with extreme interest. They announced His miraculous conception and birth (Matthew 1:20), they ministered to Him after His 40-day fast (Matthew 4:2, 11), and when He prayed in Gethsemane on His final night as a mortal human being (Luke 22:43). When the mob came to arrest Him, He could have called for no less than 12 legions of angels had He chosen to do so (Matthew 26:53). Angels also announced His resurrection (Matthew 28:5-7) and were present at His ascension into heaven (Acts 1:10, 11).

Thereafter, God's spirit messengers continued ministering to His servants

on earth, even as Jesus promised: “Do not despise one of these little ones; for I tell you that their angels in heaven always behold the face of my Father” (Matthew 18:10).

The angel of the Lord opened the prison doors for the apostles, and loosed the chains from Peter’s hands (Acts 5:19; 12:7), in addition to performing many other miraculous deeds. Although these mighty angels do not appear with the frequency in behalf of God’s servants as when they delivered the apostles from prison, nonetheless, God’s servants are assured of the ever present, invisible protecting armies, as real as those that surrounded the prophet Elisha and his servant. “For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways”

(Psalm 91:11; cf. Matthew 4:6). “Fear not: for they that *be* with us *are* more than they that *be* with them” (2 Kings 6:16). David said, “I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set *themselves* against me round about” (Psalm 3:6). “Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this *will I be confident*” (Psalm 27:3).

Angels are further shown accompanying Jesus Christ when He comes for judgment, separating the “wheat” from the “chaff” and the “sheep” from the “goats.” Angels will join with Michael in his war on the dragon and the demons at the birth of God’s Kingdom. They will also support the King of Kings in fighting the battle of that great day of God Almighty (Revelation 12:7–10; 16:14; 19:14–16).

#### Angels Come in Answer to Prayer

It is interesting to note that most often, angels come in answer to prayer. We have already seen this in several of the texts we’ve examined. When Peter was miraculously released from prison by an angel, just before he was to be executed, Luke is careful to note that it was while “*prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him*” (Acts 12:5). It was in the midst of Jesus’ *prayer* in the garden that an angel came to His aid (Luke 22:43). And Jesus knew that more angels would come to His rescue if He



Common but unbiblical depictions of angels



asked for them. Admonishing Peter for trying to deliver Him with a sword, Jesus said, “Thinkest thou that I cannot now *pray* to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels” (Matthew 26:53)? It was while Cornelius and Peter were *praying* that the angel appeared to them, leading to Cornelius’s conversion and that of his entire household (Acts 10:2, 9), which led to the conversion of the Gentiles.

Abraham understood the ministry of angels. While commissioning his servant to look for a wife for Isaac, Abraham spoke prophetically concerning angelic assistance, saying, “The LORD, before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way; and thou shalt take a wife for my son of my kindred, and of my father’s house.” Perhaps it was confidence in this word that encouraged the servant to *pray so specifically* that the girl he asked for a drink would also offer to water the camels—*Let her be the one You have chosen for Isaac’s wife* (Genesis 24:12–14, 40). We don’t know exactly how the angel prospered the way of this servant, but it could have been by prompting Rachel to respond exactly as the man had *prayed*.

Some vivid illustrations of angels coming in direct answer to prayer occurred in the life of Daniel. In chapter nine, after reading in Jeremiah that God would complete the desolations of Jerusalem in 70 years (Daniel 9:1–2), Daniel prayed a powerful prayer of confession for the sins of an entire nation (Daniel 9:3–19). While he was still praying, Gabriel came and said, “O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision” (Daniel 9:22–23). Samson, in his hour of trial, raised one last prayer to God before he brought the house down (Judges 16:28).

In chapter 10, Daniel described his vision and another angelic encounter that occurred after he had spent three weeks in prayer and fasting. Gabriel specifically told him that “from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words” (Daniel 10:12). In other words, “I am come to answer the *prayer* that you have prayed.”

#### Who Was the “Angel of the Lord”?

It is clear from John 1:1–3, 10; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:16–17; Hebrews 1:2; and Revelation 4:11 that God the Father created all things *through* Jesus Christ. Christ is the God-Being who, in the beginning, said the words, “Let there be light,” and who recreated the earth and populated it with every life form, including Man (Genesis 2:27).

The “angel of the Lord” is mentioned 79 times in the King James Bible. Some of the numerous appearances seem to be *theophanies*—manifestations

of God in visible form. The angel of the Lord appeared to Hagar, spoke as though he were *God*, and was called God by her (Genesis 16:7–13). The Bible says the angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in the burning bush, but then says *God* talked to Moses on that occasion (Exodus 3:2; Acts 7:30–38). Exodus 13:21 says the Lord went before Israel in a pillar of cloud, while Exodus 14:19 says the angel of God was with the pillar of cloud. The angel of the Lord appeared to Israel in Judges 2:1–5 and spoke as *God*. Judges 6:11–24 describes the appearance of the angel of the Lord to Gideon and then says the Lord looked on Gideon. Again, the angel of the Lord appeared to Manoah and his wife, and they believed they had seen *God* (Judges 13:2–23).

Other visitations of the angel of the Lord do not indicate whether they were appearances of the preincarnate Jesus Christ Himself or not, although frequently people assume they were. Examples are the appearances to Abraham at Mount Moriah and to Balaam (Genesis 22:11–18; Numbers 22:22–35). Sometimes the angel of the Lord is clearly not a manifestation of God, but an angel identified as a separate being other than the Lord God. Examples are the appearances to David and to Zechariah (2 Samuel 24:16; 1 Chronicles 21:15–30; Zechariah 1:8–19). The angel of the Lord in the New Testament apparently is nothing more than an angel, and is not Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:20; 2:13; 28:2; Acts 8:26).

In analyzing all these verses of Scripture, some say that the angel of the Lord is *always* a direct manifestation of God. However, some of the instances mentioned above do not support this view, and actually contradict it. Others maintain the angel of the Lord is a manifestation of God in some instances, and not in others. This second view seems to be consistent with the Scriptures.

A third view, however, is that the angel of the Lord is *never* the Lord but always a literal angel. To support this last view, one would emphasize that angels are mouthpieces, messengers, or agents of God. In other words, this view contends that it is proper to say “the Lord said” or “the Lord did” even though He said or did it through the agency of an angel. Under this view, a description of an act by God in the account of an angelic appearance is simply a shorthand way of saying God acted through the angel. Since the biblical writers make clear at the beginning of the accounts that an angel was the direct agent, no ambiguity or discrepancy needs to exist. In this view, the people who acknowledged the visitation of God were either mistaken in their belief that they had seen God Himself, or, more plausibly, they recognized that God was using an angel to speak to them and therefore addressed God through the angel. There is another way to reconcile this third view with verses of Scripture that identify the angel of the Lord with the Lord Himself: namely, the angel visibly appeared, but the Lord was also “invisibly pre-

sent.” Therefore, references to the Lord acting or talking could mean literally the Lord, and not the angel.

In summary, it is evident that the angel of the Lord in the Old Testament was not always God Himself. A person can plausibly maintain that the angel of the Lord was never an actual “theophany,” but he cannot seriously contend that the angel of the Lord was *always* a theophany. The simplest explanation is that the phrase, “the angel of the Lord” sometimes refers to a theophany of God, but at other times denotes nothing more than a commonplace angel doing the Lord’s work.

### Is There Any Way to Contact My Guardian Angel?

You can’t trust every angel (1 John 4:1). The Bible makes it clear that trying to contact an angel is dangerous for several reasons:

- **Caution!** Not all angels are good. Some are pure evil. “And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:14). Satan is “the great counterfeiter,” and *deception* is his game.
- Satan was a created angelic being as were his followers, the “fallen angels” (devils, or demons). If you actually “contacted” an angel, how would you know whether the angel was a “godly” angel or a lying, fallen one? For that matter, how would you know whether that angel was really *your* guardian angel (Matthew 18:10)?
- The Bible classifies some angels as “elect” (1 Timothy 5:21) or “holy angels” (Matthew 25:31; Mark 8:38). All angels were originally holy, enjoying the presence of God (Matthew 18:10) and the environment of heaven (Mark 13:32). Other angels oppose God under the leadership of Satan (Matthew 25:41; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; and Ephesians 6:12). There is actually a great unseen conflict raging that goes beyond anything we can imagine. It is not, however, a fight between two equal and eternal forces (Ephesians 6:12). God, who created all beings, is still in charge, and once He has used the wicked angels to accomplish His purposes, He will bring them to a final defeat.
- God strongly warns us to stay away from those who claim to communicate with the spirit world (mediums or spiritists). Leviticus 19:31 warns us, “Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God.”

As personalities, angels have the power to communicate with one another (1 Corinthians 13:1), the ability to talk various languages of men (Numbers 22:32–35; Daniel 4:23; Acts 10:3–7), and the thinking ability with which to glorify and praise God (Psalm 148:2; Luke 2:13).

### The Sea Of Glass, the Four Beasts, and the Twenty-Four Elders

In both Revelation 4:6 and 15:2, we read of a mysterious “sea of glass” near the throne of God. The Bible does not give much detail about what this sea of glass actually is. Is it water that looks like glass? Is it glass that looks like water? What is John talking about?

Revelation 4:6 says, “Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal.” And Revelation 15:2 says, “And I saw *as it were* a sea of glass mingled with fire” (Revelation 15:2). In neither verse does John insist he saw a literal sea of glass; rather, he says, “There *was as it were* a sea of glass.” But, “mingled with fire”? The words of comparison make a big difference. It is one thing to say you were shocked—it is quite another thing to say you felt as though you were struck by a lightning bolt! Many have heatedly speculated about what these things mean.

It appears that what John saw was impossible to describe in so many words—it was so unlike anything he had seen that he was required to describe it using seemingly contradictory statements. Expressing the inexpressible may seem at times to demand an oxymoron. Whatever John saw, it obviously had the qualities of the sea and of glass and of fire. Perhaps it had the sea’s motion and vastness, and glass’s transparency and purity. Add to that the words “crystal” and “mingled with fire,” and chances are that John was trying to convey the vivid brilliance, vast expanse, and lucid purity of what he saw. Some believe it will act as a temporary holding place for the resurrected saints just before the return of Jesus Christ. Most will admit we just do not know at this time.

Comparing this with Ezekiel’s vision of living creatures that ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning (Ezekiel 1:4–21), of wheels and rings full of eyes, we gain insight into the indiscernible in the spiritual dimension that natural man has never seen. Daniel had visions so ethereal and frightening that we read, “And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days... and I was



Artists' conceptions of angelic beings



astonished at the vision, but none understood it” (Daniel 8:27).

John was shown a vision of a throng of beings around the throne of God including a sea of glass like crystal, and four beasts with six wings, four faces, and full of eyes, before and behind (Revelation 4:6–8). It is notable that each time a mortal human received a glimpse of the spirit world, they were told, “Fear not.” And no wonder!

Any time the prophets attempted to describe visions of the spiritual world, they were forced to use allegorical, metaphorical, or symbolic language, that can be quite confusing. God will reveal the fullness of the visions on a “need-to-know” basis when the time is right. Finite human language cannot fully describe infinite things. The human mind is too limited to apprehend all the realities of the spiritual realm. But we have this confidence: the prophets and apostles wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21), and the words they chose are the best possible communication. Daniel, Ezekiel, and John faithfully described what they saw, and we must faithfully attempt to “decode” their descriptions as best we can and take the rest by faith. For now, we see “through a glass darkly” (1 Corinthians 13:12) and, to a certain degree, the “sea of glass” and other heavenly verities will remain mysteries—until we see them for ourselves with glorified eyes and minds.

Many have wondered who are the 24 elders in the book of Revelation. They are mentioned only in Revelation 4:4, 10; 5:8, 14; 11:16; and 9:4. Only time will tell what the 24 elders are or represent. For now, their identity will remain another of God’s “best kept secrets.”

In conclusion, the apostle Paul said it best: “But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (1 Corinthians 2:9).

### The Devil and His Angels

*Do demons exist?* Your Bible says they do. The Bible speaks of demons as real, actual beings. However, Scripture’s depiction of demons is very different from the popular concept of them. The Bible describes demons as powerful but limited, and ultimately defeated creatures. They are angels who followed Satan in rebellion against God (Revelation 12:3–4). The Bible doesn’t give many details about demons, but what it provides is enough to dispel typical myths. The demons described in the Bible are literal evil spirits that do exist.

Satan is of the order of angels called cherubim (Ezekiel 28:14–15). He was originally the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. He was “as good as God could make him.” God created the angels with free will, and there came a time when they made a choice—would they continue to follow their Creator, or would they follow the enticements of Satan? Scripture reveals that approximately one-third of the angels (sometimes called “stars”) chose

to follow Lucifer in his rebellion (Revelation 12:4).

However, Satan is not omnipotent or infinite. God places absolute limitations on him (Job 1:12; 2:6), and he can be resisted by the Christian (James 4:7). Perhaps his greatest power is to spiritually deceive all the people on earth, save the few God is calling and working with (Revelation 12:9; 20:3). He will ultimately gather mankind to the battle of Armageddon at the end of the age (Revelation 16:13–14).

Satan has many names or titles, each describing something about his character. He is called Satan (adversary, enemy, accuser, Mark 3:15); devil (slanderer, deceiver, Matthew 4:1, 3); Lucifer (son of the morning, Isaiah 14:12); Beelzebub (dung god, Matthew 12:24); Belial (worthless, 2 Corinthians 6:15); wicked one (hurtful, evil, 1 John 5:18); tempter (enticer, 1 Thessalonians 3:5); prince of this world (John 12:31); god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4); prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2); and accuser of the brethren (Revelation 12:10). He is a murderer (John 8:44), a liar (John 8:44), and a confirmed sinner (1 John 3:8).

Popular culture frequently depicts demons in monstrous form. This includes drooling fangs, sharp claws, leathery wings, and so forth. Or they are portrayed as shadows or ghosts. In fact, the Bible never physically describes any fallen angel. As is the case with angels, demons are spiritual creatures with a primarily spiritual influence, so they are unlikely to have any set physical appearance. If they choose to take on a physical appearance, it actually makes more sense for them to choose something inviting rather than scary. “And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if *his ministers* [yes, Satan has ministers!] also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works” (2 Corinthians 11:14–15).

There is much speculation regarding the cause and manner of the evil angels’ “fall.” Sweeping all these theological speculations aside, we know only that the angels kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, and are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day (Jude 6; Matthew 25:41; 2 Peter 2:21). Isaiah 14:12–15 and Ezekiel 28:11–17 give much insight, indicating that Lucifer, working through the king of Babylon and later through the king of Tyre, became full of envy, pride, indignation, and rebellion against God Himself. As a result, Jesus reported, “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven” (Luke 10:18).

#### General Facts About *Fallen Angels*

- Satan is a created angel and the author of sin. He incurred the judgment of God by rebelling against His Creator (Isaiah 14:12–17; Ezekiel 28:11–19), by taking one-third of the angels with him in his fall (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 12:1–14), and by introducing sin (1 John

- 3:4) into the human race by his temptation of Eve (Genesis 3:1–15).
- One-third of the angels followed Lucifer in his rebellion against God (Revelation 12:4) and became devils, demons, or unclean spirits.
- They originally fell with Lucifer (Isaiah 14:12–17; Ezekiel 28:11–17; Matthew 25:41).
- Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14).
- They oppose saints (Romans 8:38–39; Ephesians. 6:10–13; Revelation 13:7).
- They are lying spirits (2 Chronicles 18:22).
- Demons are sinful and rebellious (Job 4:18; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6–7; Revelation 12:7–9).
- The Christian should never speak of Satan contemptuously (Jude 8–9).
- He uses men as instruments who masquerade as ministers of righteousness to further false doctrines (2 Corinthians 11:15; Galatians 1:6–9).
- Demons are sometimes used of God to further His purpose (Psalm 78:49; 1 Samuel 16:15).
- Demons also believe and tremble, but will not obey (James 2:19).
- The evil angels are to be punished (Matthew 25:41; Isaiah 24:21–23; 25:7; Jude 6–7).
- They make war with the saints (Daniel 7:21).
- They are to be cast out of heaven (Revelation 12:7–9).
- They are organized into principalities (Ephesians 1:21; 3:10; 6:12; Colossians 1:16).
- They deceive men (1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Corinthians 11:14).
- Christ is far better than all angels (Hebrews 1:4–5).

#### Did Fallen Angels Marry Human Females and Produce “Giants”?

Many “study Bibles” speculate, and consequently many people believe, that fallen angels had sexual relations with women and produced a race of *GIANTS*. “If it is in the notes of my Bible,” many reason, “it must be true.” But *is* it true? Beware of the devil’s footnotes in your study Bible! As whole-Bible believers, we must garner the pages of our Bibles to “prove all things” (1 Thessalonians 5:21), “line upon line, precept upon precept” (Isaiah 28:9–10).

The word translated “giants” in Genesis 6:4 is from the Hebrew word נָפִילִים, *nephilim*, a root word meaning “to fall.” One translation renders the word giants as *TYRANTS*. The “giants” in verse 4 were simply people of gigantic stature. Similar people are spoken of in later times, most notably Goliath and his family. How, then, can we understand Genesis 6:1–4? Human beings are *also* sons of God. This is not referring to becoming spiritual sons of God through conversion, but to the fact that *all* people are sons of God *by creation* (Luke 3:38). The attitudes and actions of these

“sons of God” were so wicked that they provoked God to send the Flood (Genesis 6:5, 11, 13).

Some have argued that the “giants” of Genesis 6:4 were super-beings resulting from unnatural unions between evil angels and women. However, the term translated *GIANTS* can refer to extraordinarily large men or to power-wielding monarchs. We are not told whether these “giants” were the progeny of the sons of God and daughters of men, or whether they were physical or political giants. We *are* told that they were on the earth both “in those days, and also afterward.” As the “mighty men who were of old, men of renown,” it appears that they were powerful monarchs whose unrighteous influence contributed to the spread of wickedness upon the earth.

Genesis 6:1–2 says, “And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.”

Many “pseudo-intellectuals” debate and disagree over the meaning of the words “the sons of God” in Genesis 6:2. Some people *read into* these verses the idea that it refers to angelic beings marrying women and producing a race of giants. The Geneva Bible comments that these were the children of the godly who began to degenerate.

The true scriptural meaning of these verses cannot be understood from the immediate context alone; nor is it disclosed in the Old Testament. Using the principle of “line upon line, precept upon precept” (Isaiah 28:10–13), we find the answer is only found in the New Testament—given by Jesus Christ who was the LORD God of the Old Testament and Creator of *both* angels *and* mankind before He was God manifested in the flesh.

When answering a question by a Sadducee about the resurrection, Jesus said, “For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as angels of God in heaven” (Matthew 22:30, Luke 20:34–36). Christ explained THAT IS IMPOSSIBLE, teaching that angels *don’t* marry, and, by implication, are sexless beings who cannot produce children (Luke 20:34–36).

*Human beings* are clearly the subject in Genesis 6—not angels. God said, “My Spirit shall not strive with *man* forever, for he is indeed *flesh*” (verse 3)—and, “I will destroy *man* whom I have created from the face of the earth” (verse 7).

We need not *assume* that the phrase “sons of God” *always* refers to angels. In Isaiah 43:6–7, God calls those who are *called by His name* His *sons* and daughters. In the New Testament, *human followers* of Christ are called “sons of God” and “children of God” (see Romans 8:14, 16, for example). It makes sense, then, to conclude that the God-fearing *men* of the line of Seth were the “sons of God” of Genesis 6. The “daughters of men,” then, would be the

daughters of men from the line of Cain, who did *not* fear God. Marriages between these two lines corrupted the worship of God and resulted in increased violence and ungodliness in the earth.

*Halley’s Bible Handbook* raises the possibility that these sons of God were the descendants of Adam and Eve’s son *Seth*. Seth, the Bible records, was a son in the image of Adam, who was made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26; 5:1–3).

Speaking of Seth’s descendants, Genesis 4:26 adds, “*men* began to call on the name of the LORD,” a phrase that can also be rendered, “to be called after the name of the LORD”—that is, the “*sons of God*.” If so, the women, “the daughters of men” whom these “sons of God” married, were the descendants of unrighteous Cain. By marrying these women, the sons of Seth turned from God, leading Him to say that the entire world was then corrupt (Genesis 6:5–7, 12).

Some Alexandrian scholars believe that “sons of God” in Genesis 6:2 should be translated “sons of the gods” and refers to men who were *called* such, not in worship of the Creator, but of *pagan* deities. Their marriages would have been in *defiance* of the Creator God, since they lived contrary to His will. Indeed, in light of God’s characterization of a society so riddled with violence (verses 11, 13), it could be that such men forcibly took the women as wives.

Regardless of the debate, the idea that a *half-spirit, half-human* race of giants resulted from angels marrying women is clearly *NOT* what the Bible teaches! Neither angels nor demons (fallen angels) can impregnate women. The Bible repeatedly states that *kind* reproduces only after its own *kind*. Mismatches—cross-breeding with different genesis kinds—cannot reproduce. Additionally, since spirit beings do not die, this would raise the question, could a *half-spirit, half-human* being die? Thus, we can see where such non-biblical speculation can lead into long, sometimes heated, fruitless debates.

It should be noted that nothing is said of angels in the New Testament that is inconsistent with the teaching of Old Testament on the subject. Jesus said, “the scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35).

#### If Angels and Demons Can’t Die, What is the Point of Their Engaging in Battle?

Some have quoted Revelation 12:7, “And there was WAR in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,” and wondered, if angels and demons can’t die, what is the point of their engaging in battle? Good question. There are more questions about spirit beings than we can answer. Many times we have to “read between the lines,” making guesses and assumptions based on a few biblical facts. This

is one of them.

Scripture tell us, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). While you yield to God in all things, you are to yield to the devil in none. You are to resist and oppose him in whatever way he may approach you, whether by allurements, by flattering promises, by the fascinations of the world, by temptation, or by threats. See 1 Peter 5:9. Satan makes his way, and secures his triumphs, rather by art, cunning, deception, and threatenings, than by true courage; and when opposed manfully, he flees. The true way of meeting him is by direct resistance, rather than by argument; by steadfastly refusing to yield in the slightest degree, rather than by a belief that we can either convince him that he is wrong, or can return to virtue when we have gone a certain length in complying with his demands. No one is safe who yields in the least to the suggestions of the tempter.

Since angels do not have physical bodies, they cannot be hurt in the sense of suffering physical harm as human beings with a body can be hurt. Similarly, angels cannot die in that sense, either. Physical death is something that humans experience when their bodies cease working and their thoughts perish (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10; Psalm 6:5; 146:4). Since angels do not have physical bodies, they cannot experience physical death.

Scripture indicates that angels do encounter some perils in the spiritual world, perils that are beyond our normal experience or comprehension. An angel was sent with an answer to Daniel's prayer but was detained by "the prince of Persia" (a fallen angel/demon) and prevented from coming to Daniel for 21 days (Daniel 10:12-13). How was the angel detained? We are not told. Even though they are spirits, angels are not omnipresent, so they do have some kind of localized existence that apparently can be contained. When angels "contend" with demonic spirits, do they injure each other? Perhaps, but we are simply not told what this type of fighting entails. Perhaps they use some kind of a Star Wars-like "force field." When we are in battle with spiritual forces, we do not use physical weapons, but the armor of God described in Ephesians 6:10-18.

Since demons are fallen angels, we know that angels can suffer. When Jesus cast demons out, they sometimes feared that Jesus was going to torment them (see Matthew 8:29; Luke 8:28, 31). Legions of demons begged Jesus not to send them into the deep or abyss, apparently a holding place for fallen angels. At the final judgment, all of the fallen angels will be cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 12:7-10; 20:3, 10). If spirit beings cannot be harmed or destroyed, it appears they *can* be bound or incarcerated. Of course we know that "with God *all* things are possible" (Matthew 19:26). Or, to quote one famous comedian, "I brought you into this world, and I can take you out."

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Ephesians 6:10-18).

In conclusion, we do not have *all* the answers, but we have *many*. As beings bound by time and space, we have difficulty imagining the experience of spiritual beings (1 Corinthians 13:12).

We cannot at this time know everything there is to know about angels, just as we cannot now know every detail about events prior to man's creation, or all the details beyond God's 7,000-year plan. (Be sure to request our free booklet, *God's Seasonal Plan*.) God's Word provides all the vital information we need to make us "wise unto salvation" (2 Timothy 3:15). In other words, it tells us all we need to know in order to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18).

For further revelation regarding God, His plan for *you*, for all mankind, and things to come, study God's Word, the Bible. Read it. Heed it. And believe it. It will never lead you astray.

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For a more thorough understanding of more of God's mysteries and His plan for your life, we invite you to send for our free booklets, *Born From Above or Born Again?* along with *Man's Awesome Destiny; God's Seasonal Plan*; and *The Second Coming—and Beyond*. You may also subscribe to our quarterly flagship newspaper, *The International News*. All our publications are *free* (as per Matthew 10:8) for the asking.

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*This literature is published by the Church of God International, based in Tyler, Texas. Incorporated in 1978, the CGI has ministers and congregations scattered throughout the United States and Canada. We also have churches in Jamaica, the Philippines, and Australia.*

*The CGI's mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world (Matthew 28:19). We are blessed with four basic tools to accomplish this:*

- 1. Personal and local church evangelism.*
- 2. Television and radio broadcasting.*
- 3. Booklets, brochures, and study tapes.*
- 4. The Internet.*

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*All our materials and services are offered to the public free of charge. Many naturally ask us how we can afford to send out thousands of booklets and study tapes each month. The answer is simple.*

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*If you would like to visit a CGI congregation, or if you would simply like to speak with a CGI minister or representative with any questions you may have, feel free to write or call us. We will be delighted to serve you in any way possible.*

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***Thank you for the opportunity to serve you!***