

## WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT ANGELS?

Angels are a wondrous part of God's creation. In Scripture, angels are messengers, warriors, and servants. The word "angel" comes from the Greek word "angelos," which means messenger. Angels are spiritual beings endowed with great power and beauty. In 2 Chronicles 32:21, one angel dispatched a human army of 185,000 soldiers. Though angels are spiritual beings, without bodies of flesh and bone, they have the ability to appear in human form (Gen. 19:1-22).

Angels have many functions. They praise God (Psalm 103:20), serve as messengers to the world (Luke 1:11-20, 26-38; 2:9-14), watch over God's people (Psalm 91:11-12), and are sometimes instruments of God's judgment (Matt. 13:49-50).

The Bible notes that at some point in the distant past, Satan led a rebellion in heaven (Isaiah 14:12-15). Most theologians believe that angels were given a one-time opportunity to choose for or against God, and that those who chose against God were removed from heaven.

Some believe that Revelation 12:4 indicates that a third of the angels followed Satan in the rebellion. Most of the fallen angels (demons) currently work with Satan to try to thwart God's plans—*some fallen angels are held in a special place of judgment* (I Peter 3:19-20; II Peter 2:4; Jude 1:6). God will judge Satan and his followers in the future.

Scripture notes:

- *"Then shall he [Jesus] say also unto them on the left hand, depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matt. 25:41).*
- *"For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." (2 Pet. 2:4).*

## What does the Bible say about angels?



- *"And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." (Jude 6).*
- *"And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." (Rev. 12:9).*

The Bible notes that angels were created by Christ (Col. 1:16), they carry out the will of God (Psalm 103:20; Matt. 6:10), they worship God and Christ (Phil. 2:9-11; Heb. 1:6), are wise (2 Sam. 14:20), mighty (Psalm 103:20), holy (Matt. 25:31), and innumerable (Heb. 12:22).

Though great in beauty, power, and glory, angels are not to be worshipped (Col. 2:18; Rev. 19:10; 22:9)—they are the created, not the Creator.

### **Are there 'orders' or 'kinds' of angels?**

Yes, the Bible notes that there are different kinds or orders of angels—with each having different characteristics and roles. *Cherubim*, *Seraphim*, and *Archangels* are three such distinctions.

- **Seraphim:** The word "seraphim" (the singular is saraph) is likely a translation of 'fiery ones,' and probably stems from the fiery imagery often associated with the presence of God (Cf. Ezek. 1:27). Isaiah the prophet noted that "Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings; with two [they] covered [their] face, and with two [they] covered [their] feet, and with two [they] flew" (Isaiah 6:2). These spiritual beings have the great privilege of standing in the presence of Almighty God and leading the heavenly realm in praise (Isaiah 6:3).
- **Cherubim:** Cherubim are typically represented as having wings, feet, and hands. However, their form is so majestic and mysterious that their descriptions can vary—sometimes they have two faces (Ezek. 41:18) and sometimes four (Ezek. 10:21). Cherubim are angels of great honor. Their likeness was incorporated into the design of the Ark of the Covenant (1 Sam. 4:4; Psalm 80:1; 99:1) and the Temple (Exodus 26:31; 2 Chron. 3:7; 1 Kings 6:26ff). Ezekiel 28:14 indicates that Satan (Lucifer) was of this order of angelic beings.
- **Archangels:** The word "archangel" is not found in the Old Testament. References to Michael

the archangel are found in 1 Thess. 4:16 and Jude 9. Archangels appear to be angels of authority—a kind of Captain of the heavenly hosts. Only two archangels are noted by name in Scripture (though some non-canonical writings include additional names: *Enoch (9:1, 20:9) names Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, and Uriel as archangels. The book of Tobit notes there are seven archangels (12:15).* Michael the archangel seems to be a warrior angel (Rev. 12:7; Dan. 10:13, 21; 12:1). He is also given the privilege of announcing the return of Christ: *"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first."* (1 Thess. 4:16)

The other archangel noted by name in Scripture is Gabriel. He is referenced in both the Old and New Testaments. He is mentioned in Daniel 8:15-26 and 9:21-27. In the New Testament, he is mentioned in Luke 1:11-20, 26-38. He seems to lead in presenting important messages from God to humanity (*I.e., Gabriel was sent by God to inform Mary that she was with Child*).

### **Is Satan an angel?**

The word *Satan* is more of a title or descriptor rather than a name. The word Satan comes from the Hebrew transliteration of the word *adversary*. Therefore, Satan is the one who opposes God. Satan is the most powerful of the fallen angels. Satan is also known as Lucifer (a word that comes from the King James Bible translation of the phrase "*Morning Star*" in Isaiah 14:12). It is important to note that Satan is not a symbol for evil or a personification of evil—he is a personality, a created being who desires to destroy all that God loves.

Heavenly angels are eternal beings who carry out the will of the Father, serve His creation, oppose the Lord's enemies, and lead in praise. Fallen angels are demons who, with Satan, will be judged by the Father and are fated to an eternity of torment.