

Ministering Spirits



A Study Of Angels In The Bible

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Ministering Spirits

Terms And Descriptions Of Angels

INTRODUCTION

1. The subject of angels has certainly become a popular one...
 - a. Bookstores are filled with books dealing with angels
 - b. Popular TV shows and movies depict angels working in our lives (“Highway To Heaven”, “Touched By An Angel”, “The Preacher’s Wife”, “It’s A Wonderful Life”)
2. Angels were an important part of the Jewish religion...
 - a. Angels assisted with the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai - cf. **Deu 33:2; Psa 68:17; Ac 7:53; Ga 3:19**
 - b. They appear throughout the history of Israel, coming to Abraham, Daniel, and many others
3. Angels also serve an important role in the Christian faith...
 - a. They are described as “ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation” - **He 1:13-14**
 - b. They have certainly ministered in the past - cf. **Lk 1:11-38**
 - c. They will certainly minister at the time of Christ’s return - cf. **Mt 13:36-43**
4. But to what extent do they minister in the present...?
 - a. This is a subject that is prone to much speculation
 - b. It is easy to get caught up in idle myths and fables
 - c. About which we are warned to avoid - cf. **1 Ti 1:3-4; 4:7; 6:20; 2 Ti 2:16; 4:3-4**
-- **Yet angels are a Biblical subject, therefore worthy of careful consideration**

[With a desire to be content with what the Bible reveals on the subject of angels, we begin this study with a look at some **terms** and **descriptions** regarding angels...]

I. TERMS USED IN CONNECTION WITH ANGELS

A. THE WORD ‘ANGEL’...

1. The Hebrew word **malak** (found 103 times in the OT) simply means “messenger”
 - a. It can refer to a human messenger - **1 Kin 19:2**
 - 1) It is applied to the prophet Haggai - **Hag 1:13**
 - 2) It is applied to a priest - **Mal 2:7**
 - 3) It is applied to both John the Baptist and Jesus in prophecy - **Mal 3:1**
 - 4) The name of the prophet Malachi comes from the same word
 - b. It can refer to a divine messenger - **Gen 28:12**
 - 1) Supernatural or heavenly beings sent as messengers to men
 - 2) Agents who carry out the will of God - **ISBE**
2. The Greek word **angelos** likewise means “messenger”
 - a. The word occurs 175 times in the NT

- b. Of men, it is used only 6 times in the NT

B. OTHER TERMS APPLIED TO ‘ANGELS’...

1. **Sons of God** - God’s sons by virtue of His creation - cf. **Job 1:6; 38:7**
2. **Holy ones** - suggesting they belong to God, ‘set apart’ for His purposes - **Psa 89:5,7** (NASB, NIV)
3. **Watcher, watchers** - likely referring to angels - cf. **Dan 4:13,17,23**
4. **Host** - denoting the armies of heaven, which likely included angels - cf. **1 Sam 17:45**
5. **Archangel** - used twice, once in connection with Michael - **1 Th 4:16; Jude 9**
6. **Prince, chief princes, great prince** - used in the book of Daniel - **Dan 10:13,21; 12:1**
6. Paul used terms that may refer to angels - cf. **Co 1:16; Ep 1:21; 3:10**
 - a. **Principalities** (archai)
 - b. **Powers** (exousiai)
 - c. **Thrones** (thronoi)
 - d. **Dominions** (kyriotetes)
 - e. **Powers** (dynamesis)

-- Yet these are sometimes distinguished from angels (**Ro 8:38; 1 Pe 3:22**), and at times described as negative forces (**Co 2:15; Ep 6:12**)

[It quickly becomes apparent that the Bible has a lot to say about angels. More about angels can be gleaned from the Bible as we consider...]

II. DESCRIPTIONS OF ANGELS

A. THEIR NATURE AND ATTRIBUTES...

1. **They are spirit beings**
 - a. Called “spirits”, suggesting they do not have corporeal bodies - **He 1:14**
 - b. Though they did reveal themselves at times in the form of human bodies - **Gen 18:3**
 - c. They do not function as human beings in such things as marriage - **Mk 12:25**
 - d. They are not subject to death - **Lk 20:36**
2. **They are created beings**
 - a. They are part of the creation that is to praise Jehovah - **Psa 148:1-5**
 - b. They were created by Christ, among all other things - **Co 1:16**
3. **They are innumerable**
 - a. An innumerable company - **He 12:22**
 - b. John’s descriptions suggests their number is countless - **Re 5:11**
4. **They are a higher order than man**
 - a. Man was created lower than the angels - **He 2:6-7**
 - b. Angels are not capable of death - **Lk 20:36**
 - c. They have greater wisdom, though limited - **2 Sam 14:20; Mt 24:36**
 - d. They have greater power, though it too is limited - **Mt 28:2; Dan 10:13**
5. **They always appeared as men**
 - a. Never as women or children, always clothed
 - b. Other than Cherubim and Seraphim (whose classification as angels is suspect), they never have wings - though cf. **Re 8:13; 14:6**
 - c. Many times they were so disguised as men they were not first identified as angels - **Gen**

18:1-2; 19:1; He 13:2**B. THEIR CLASSIFICATIONS...**

1. **The archangel, the “great prince”**
 - a. Michael is called the archangel - **Ju 9**; cf. **1 Th 4:16**
 - b. Michael is called the “great prince”, who watched over Israel - **Dan 12:1**; cf. **10:21**
 - c. Michael is mentioned in **Re 12:7**
 - d. Some (JWs and others) believe Michael was the pre-incarnate Christ
2. **The chief princes**
 - a. Of whom Michael was one - **Dan 10:13**
 - b. Some would include Gabriel in this classification
 - 1) The angel sent to explain visions to Daniel - **Dan 8:16; 9:21**
 - 2) Who also made announcements to Zacharias and Mary - **Lk 1:19,26**
3. **The princes**
 - a. The term applied to angels in the book of Daniel - e.g., **Dan 10:13,21**
 - b. Also to what appear to be evil angelic forces - cf. **Dan 10:13,20-21**
4. **The Angel of the Lord**
 - a. An angel who seems to speak as the Lord Himself - e.g., **Judg 2:1; Gen 16:10-13**
 - b. Leading some to wonder if this was the pre-incarnate Christ
5. **Cherubim?**
 - a. Thought by some to be an order or class of angels, though others hold them to be a higher class of heavenly beings than angels
 - b. Whose purpose was to be “proclaimers and protectors of God’s glorious presence, His sovereignty, and His Holiness” - **C. Fred Dickason**
 - c. In the Bible...
 - 1) They stood guard at the Garden of Eden - **Gen 3:24**
 - 2) Their golden figures covered the mercy seat above the ark in the tabernacle - **Exo 25:17-22**
 - 3) Their designs graced the walls and veils of the tabernacle, and later in the temple - **Exo 26:1,31; 1 Kin 6:23-35; 7:29,36**
 - 4) They attended the glory of God in Ezekiel’s vision - **Ezek 1:1-28**; cf. **10:1-20**
 - d. Their description fits those of the four living creatures in Revelation rather than angels - cf. **Re 4:4-6**
6. **Seraphim?**
 - a. Six winged creatures attending the Lord in Isaiah’s vision - **Isa 6:1-13**
 - b. Whose name literally means “burning one”, also considered by many as a higher class than angels
 - c. Their work was to “praise and proclaim the perfect holiness of God” - **Dickason**
 - d. Their description is also akin to those of the four living creatures in Revelation rather than angels - cf. **Re 4:8-9**
7. **Satan and his angels**
 - a. Many believe that Satan is a fallen angel
 - 1) That he is “Lucifer”, a name applied to the king of Babylon - **Isa 14:1-12**
 - 2) That he was among the highest of God’s creation, a cherub whose fall and judgment is applied figuratively to the king of Tyre - cf. **Ezek 28:11-19**
 - b. Satan does have his angels, for whom condemnation awaits - cf. **Mt 25:41; Re 20:10**

- c. The doctrine of Satan and his angels (along with demons) will hopefully be examined in another study

CONCLUSION

1. With this brief introduction it should be apparent that...
 - a. The Bible has much to say about angels
 - b. It is easy to speculate about angels
2. My hope and prayer is that our future studies will...
 - a. Focus on what the Bible actually reveals
 - b. Avoid the vain speculation that is condemned

In the course of our study, we should never forget the One who deserves our greatest attention:

“For to which of the angels did He ever say: ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You’? And again: ‘I will be to Him a Father, And He shall be to Me a Son’? But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: ‘Let all the angels of God worship Him.’” (He 1:5-6)

Have we joined the angels in worshipping the Son, through our own faith and obedience...?

Ministering Spirits

Angels In The Old Testament

INTRODUCTION

1. We have seen that angels are “ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation” - **He 1:13-14**
2. Their ministry as “messengers” of God is evident in the Old Testament...
 - a. During the Patriarchal age, from the creation to giving of the Law at Mount Sinai
 - b. During the Mosaic age, from Mount Sinai to the time of Christ

[An understanding and appreciation of the ministry of angels may be gleaned by a survey of their appearances as revealed in the Old Testament...]

I. THE PATRIARCHAL AGE

A. BEFORE THE FLOOD...

1. ‘Sons of God’ (angels?) shouted for joy at the Creation - **Job 38:7**
1. ‘Cherubim’ (angels?) were placed at the east of the Garden of Eden to guard the way to the tree of life - **Gen 3:24**
2. ‘Sons of God’ (angels?) cohabitate with ‘daughters of men’ - **Gen 6:1-4**; cf. **2 Pe 2:4**; **Jude 6**

B. IN THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM...

1. The Angel of the Lord appeared to Hagar in the wilderness - **Gen 16:7-14**; cf. **21:17**
2. Two angels together with the Lord appeared to Abraham - **Gen 18:1-2**
3. The same two angels appeared to Lot before destroying Sodom - **Gen 19:1-22**
4. The Angel of the Lord prevented Abraham from sacrificing Isaac - **Gen 22:11-18**
5. Abraham was confident that an angel would guide his servant in finding a wife for Isaac - **Gen 24:7,40**

C. IN THE LIFE OF JACOB...

1. In his dream at Bethel, Jacob saw angels ascending and descending on a ladder up to heaven - **Gen 28:12**
2. The angel of God spoke to him in a dream, telling him to return to Canaan - **Gen 31:11-13**
3. Angels of God met him on his return at Mahanaim - **Gen 32:1-2**
4. He wrestled with a “Man”, who is later called as “the Angel” - **Gen 32:24-30**; **Hos 12:4**
5. Toward the end of his life, he refers to “the Angel who has redeemed me from all evil” - **Gen 48:15**

D. IN THE LIFE OF MOSES...

1. The Angel of the Lord appeared to him at the burning bush - **Exo 3:1-2**; cf. **Ac 7:30,35**
2. The Angel of God led the Israelites out of Egypt - **Exo 14:19**

[When the nation of Israel came to Mount Sinai, the Law was given, ushering in a new dispensation. It too was a time in which angels ministered to the people of God...]

II. THE MOSAIC AGE

A. ON THE WAY TO THE PROMISED LAND...

1. God's angel led Israel through the wilderness - **Exo 23:20-23**; cf. **32:34; 33:2; Num 20:16**
2. The Angel of the Lord appeared to Balaam's donkey, and then to him - **Num 22:22-35**
3. Some believe "the Commander of the Lord's Army" was the Angel of the Lord - cf. **Josh 5:13-15**
4. The Angel of the Lord rebukes Israel at Bochim - **Jud 2:1-6**

B. IN THE TIME OF THE JUDGES...

1. Through Deborah the Angel of the Lord tells Israel to curse Meroz - **Jud 5:23**
2. The Angel of the Lord appears to Gideon - **Jud 6:11-24**
3. The Angel of the Lord appears to the parents of Samson - **Jud 13:1-23**

C. IN THE DAYS OF THE KINGS...

1. The Angel of the Lord was sent to destroy the people of Israel after David's census - **2 Sam 24:15-17; 1 Chr 21:14-18,26-30**
2. The Angel of the Lord fed Elijah - **1 Kin 19:5-7**
3. The Angel of the Lord sent Elijah with messages to the king of Samaria - **2 Kin 1:3,15**
4. The Angel of the Lord slew 185,000 men of the army of Assyria - **2 Kin 19:35; 2 Chr 32:20-22; Isa 37:36**; cf. **Isa 63:9**
5. Isaiah sees 'seraphim' praising the Lord on His throne - **Isa 6:1-7**

D. IN THE YEARS OF BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY...

1. Ezekiel sees 'cherubim' (angels?) in several visions - **Ezek 1:1-28**; cf. **10:1-20**
2. Nebuchadnezzar praised God for sending His Angel to deliver Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego - **Dan 3:28**; cf. **3:24-25**
3. They appeared (as 'watchers') in Nebuchadnezzar's dream - **Dan 4:13,17,23**
4. God sent His angel to shut up the lions' mouths when Daniel was in the den - **Dan 6:22**
5. Gabriel interpreted several visions for Daniel - **Dan 8:15-17; 9:21-23**
6. A "certain man" appeared to Daniel and revealed what certain "princes" (like Michael, the archangel) were doing - **Dan 10:4-13,21; 12:1**

E. IN THE PERIOD FOLLOWING THE RESTORATION...

1. The Angel of the Lord appeared in Zechariah's eight visions
 - a. The vision of the horses - **Zech 1:7-17**
 - b. The vision of the horns - **Zech 1:18-21**
 - c. The vision of the measuring line - **Zech 2:1-5**
 - d. The vision of Joshua, the high priest - **Zech 3:1-10**
 - e. The vision of the lamp stand and olive trees - **Zech 4:1-14**
 - f. The vision of the flying scroll - **Zech 5:1-4**

- g. The vision of the woman in a basket - **Zech 5:5-11**
- h. The vision of the four chariots - **Zech 6:1-8**
- 2. These visions along with the message of Zechariah were used to encourage the completion of the temple following their return from Babylon - cf. **Ezr 5:1; 6:14**

F. IN THE SONGS OF ISRAEL...

- 1. "For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honor." - **Psa 8:5**
- 2. "The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, And delivers them." - **Psa 34:7**
- 3. "Let them be like chaff before the wind, And let the angel of the LORD chase them." - **Psa 35:5**
- 4. "Let their way be dark and slippery, And let the angel of the LORD pursue them." - **Psa 35:6**
- 5. "Men ate angels' food; He sent them food to the full." - **Psa 78:25**
- 6. "He cast on them the fierceness of His anger, Wrath, indignation, and trouble, By sending angels of destruction among them." - **Psa 78:49**
- 7. "For He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways." - **Psa 91:11**
- 8. "Bless the LORD, you His angels, Who excel in strength, who do His word, Heeding the voice of His word." - **Psa 103:20**
- 9. "Who makes His angels spirits, His ministers a flame of fire." - **Psa 104:4**
- 10. "Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts!" - **Psa 148:2**

CONCLUSION

- 1. Angels played important roles in the Old Testament...
 - a. Including the giving of the Law - cf. **Ac 7:38,53; Ga 3:19; He 2:2**
 - b. Who wondered at the scheme of redemption slowly being revealed - cf. **1 Pe 1:9-12**
- 2. They were truly ministering spirits...
 - a. Serving the faithful saints throughout the Old Testament
 - b. Serving the will of God as He prepared for the coming of His Son

Their service continued with the coming of Christ, which we shall consider in a future study...

Ministering Spirits

The Angel Of The Lord

INTRODUCTION

1. We have seen that there are many references to angels in the Old Testament..
 - a. The Hebrew word **malak** (found 103 times in the OT) simply means “messenger”
 - b. It can refer to a human messenger - e.g., **1 Kin 19:2**
 - c. It can refer to a divine messenger - **Gen 28:12**
 - 1) Supernatural or heavenly beings sent as messengers to men
 - 2) Agents who carry out the will of God - **ISBE**
2. In our previous survey of angels in the Old Testament..
 - a. We noted many references to “the Angel of the Lord” - e.g., **Gen 16:10**
 - b. Who speaks in the first person, as though it was the Lord Himself
 - c. You will note that some translations capitalize “Angel” (e.g., NKJV)
3. Who is “the Angel of the Lord”...?
 - a. “This phrase is especially employed to denote the Lord himself in that form in which he condescends to make himself manifest to man” - **Barnes** (commentary on **Gen 16:10**)
 - b. “It seems to denote some person of the Godhead in angelic form.” - **ibid.**
 - **Indeed, many believe that it was Jesus Christ, the Son of God in pre-incarnate form, sometimes called “the Angel of the Theophany”**

[Could this be? What other explanations might there be? In answer to such questions, let’s take a closer look at some of the...]

I. APPEARANCES OF THE ANGEL OF THE LORD

A. TO HAGAR...

1. When she was in the wilderness - **Gen 16:7-14**
2. The Angel speaks as though he was the LORD - **Gen 16:10-12**
3. Note carefully **Gen 16:13**
 - a. It was “...the LORD who spoke to her”
 - b. She called His name “You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees”
 - c. She said “Have I also here seen Him who sees me?”

B. TO ABRAHAM...

1. When he was about to sacrifice Isaac - **Gen 22:9-19**
2. The Angel speaks in the first person as though he were God
 - a. “you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.” - **Gen 22:12b**
 - b. “By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD...blessing I will bless you...” - **Gen 22:15-18**

C. TO MOSES...

1. At Mount Sinai, in the burning bush - **Exo 3:1-6**
2. The Angel identifies himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob - **Exo 3:6**

D. TO ISRAEL...

1. The Angel of God led the Israelites out of Egypt - **Exo 14:19**; cf. **Num 20:16**
2. God's angel led Israel through the wilderness - **Exo 23:20-23**; cf. **32:34; 33:2**
 - a. Note that God says "My Name is in Him"
 - b. This angel was called "the angel of His presence" - **Isa 63:9**; cf. **Exo 33:14-15**

[There are other examples where "the Angel of the Lord" speaks as the LORD in the first person (e.g., **Num 22:32**) or where the Angel and the LORD are described interchangeably (e.g., **Jud 6:11-14**). So, just who was "the Angel of the Lord"? Here are two...]

II. EXPLANATIONS FOR THE ANGEL OF THE LORD

A. AN ANGEL WITH A SPECIAL COMMISSION...

1. Acting as God's representative or ambassador
2. One problem some pose with this explanation: implied is the ability of the Angel of the Lord to forgive sin, something only God can do - cf. **Exo 23:20-23**

B. JESUS CHRIST, THE PRE-INCARNATE SON OF GOD...

1. A kind of temporary pre-incarnation of the second person of the Godhead
2. If the Angel of the Lord were the pre-Incarnate God the Son
 - a. Then the term 'Angel' would be taken in its root sense of 'Messenger'
 - b. Making the pre-incarnate Word of God 'the Messenger of God'
3. Evidence offered for this explanation
 - a. The Messiah to come is described as "the Messenger of the covenant" - **Mal 3:1**
 - 1) So Jesus would be a "messenger" of the New Covenant
 - 2) Could He then have been a "messenger" (angel) during the Old Covenant?
 - b. Paul reveals that Israel in the wilderness:
 - 1) Was nourished by "that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ" - **1 Co 10:1-4**
 - 2) Tempted Christ - **1 Co 10:9**
 - 3) Which some take to be a reference to the Angel of the Lord, the Angel of His Presence - cf. **Isa 63:9; Exo 33:14-15**
4. But if Jesus was "the Angel of the Lord" where so mentioned in the Old Testament...
 - a. He was the One sent to destroy Jerusalem after David's census - **2 Sam 24:15-17; 1 Chr 21:14-18,26-30**
 - b. He was the One who slew 185,000 men of the army of Assyria - **2 Kin 19:35; 2 Chr 32:20-22; Isa 37:36**; cf. **Isa 63:9**
 - c. Then again, Jesus is the One who will exercise judgment on those who know not God nor obey His gospel - cf. **2 Th 1:7-9**

CONCLUSION

1. **Who was "the Angel Of The Lord"?** I like what one wrote about the different explanations...

- a. "Each has its difficulties, but the last (Jesus in pre-incarnate form) is certainly the most tempting to the mind. Yet it must be remembered that at best these are only conjectures that touch on a great mystery." - **J. M. Wilson, ISBE**
 - b. "It is certain that from the beginning God used angels in human form, with human voices, in order to communicate with man; and the appearances of the angel of the Lord, with his special redemptive relation to God's people, show the working of that Divine mode of self-revelation which culminated in the coming of the Savior, and are thus a foreshadowing of, and a preparation for, the full revelation of God in Jesus Christ." - **ibid.**
 - c. "Further than this, it is not safe to go." - **ibid.**
2. We can be thankful that whoever was "**the Angel of the Lord**" ...
 - a. We have the fullness of God revealed in Jesus today - **Co 2:9**; cf. **Jn 14:6-9**
 - b. Jesus is indeed the "brightness of His glory and the express image of His person" - **He 1:1-3**

Unlike those in Old Testament times who often wondered whether they had seen an angel or even God Himself, today we can know that in Jesus we see Deity as completely as humanly possible for us to comprehend!

Have we obeyed Him who "by Himself purged our sins"...? - cf. **He 1:3**

Ministering Spirits

The Cherubim And Seraphim

INTRODUCTION

1. The Old Testament certainly has much to say about angels...
 - a. Their service to God and to His people
 - b. Carrying out God's will as messengers and in other ways
2. Also serving God are two other classes of spiritual beings...
 - a. **Cherubim** (singular, cherub or cherubim) - a word whose etymology is uncertain
 - b. **Seraphim** - a word meaning "fiery ones"
3. What were these spiritual beings...?
 - a. They certainly fall into the category of 'ministering spirits'
 - b. Are they angels, perhaps of a higher order or class?

[We may not know the answer this side of eternity, but let's see what the Bible reveals...]

I. THE CHERUBIM

A. AS GUARDIANS OF PARADISE...

1. Placed by God after Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden - **Gen 3:24**
2. "In their function as guardians of Paradise the cherubim bear an analogy to the winged bulls and lions of Babylonia and Assyria, colossal figures with human faces standing guard at the entrance of temples (and palaces), just as in Egypt the approaches to the sanctuaries are guarded by sphinxes." - **ISBE**
3. No description is given, but note the mention of "flaming sword"

B. AS BEARERS OF THE THRONE...

1. As attendants of God, they bear the throne upon which He descends from His high abode - **Psa 18:9-10a**
2. Through the use of synonymous parallelism they are described as "the wings of the wind" - **Psa 18:10b**; cf. **Psa 104:3**
3. Thus God is described as "enthroned above the cherubim" - **Psa 80:1; 99:1; 1 Sam 4:4**

C. AS WINGED CREATURES OF FIRE...

1. "...the function of the cherubim as bearers and movers of the Divine throne is brought out most clearly in the vision of Ezekiel" - **ISBE**
 - a. In chapter 1 the prophet designates them as 'living creatures' - **Eze 1:4-5**
 - b. He later perceives that the living creatures were 'cherubim' - **Eze 10:15,20**
 - c. The chariot or throne, from which the glory of God went up, is spoken of as a cherub - **Eze 9:3**
2. The cherubim as seen by Ezekiel were four living creatures, each having...

- a. Four faces: man, lion, ox (replaced in the parallel chapter by cherub) and eagle - **Eze 1:10; 10:14**
- b. The figure and hands of men - **Eze 1:5,8**
- c. Straight legs, with the soles of their feet like that of calves, sparkling like burnished bronze - **Eze 1:7**
- d. Four wings
 - 1) Two stretched upward, meeting above and sustaining the 'firmament', the bottom of the Divine throne- **Eze 1:11,22; 10:1**
 - 2) Two stretched downward, covering their bodies - **Eze 1:11,23**
 - 3) Having the noise of many waters, like the voice of the Almighty, the tumult of an army - **Eze 1:24**
3. The cherubim as seen by Ezekiel in appearance were...
 - a. Surrounded by coals of fire - cf. **Eze 10:2,6**
 - b. Like burning torches, the fire flashing up and down among the creatures, out of which went lightning - **Eze 1:13**
4. The cherubim as seen by Ezekiel...
 - a. Run back and forth in appearance like a flash of lightning - **Eze 1:14**
 - b. Do not turn as they changed direction, but always go straight forward - **Eze 1:9,17; 10:11**
 - e. Each had beside them a wheel - **Eze 1:15-21**
 - 1) Like the color of beryl (sea green or gold colored) - **Eze 1:16**
 - 2) Like a wheel within a wheel - **Eze 1:16**
 - 3) That did not turn aside as they went in the four directions - **Eze 1:17**
 - 4) With rims high and awesome, full of eyes - **Eze 1:18**
 - 5) Which followed the cherubim wherever they went - **Eze 1:19**
 - 6) The spirit of the cherubim provided the direction of the wheels - **Eze 1:19-21; 10:16,17**
5. Above the cherubim (living creatures) was...
 - a. A firmament like the color of an awesome crystal - **Eze 1:22-23**
 - b. A voice from above the firmament - **Eze 1:25**
 - c. A throne like a sapphire stone, on which sat one with a likeness of a man - **Eze 1:26**
 - 1) His waist upward was the color of amber, like fire all around - **Eze 1:27**
 - 2) His waist downward like fire with brightness all around - **Eze 1:27**
 - d. The brightness like the rainbow all around - **Eze 1:28**
 - Which Ezekiel described as the likeness of the glory of the Lord - **Eze 1:28; cf. Re 4:2-6**

D. AS ORNAMENTS IN THE TABERNACLE AND TEMPLE...

1. In the tabernacle

- a. On the mercy-seat covering the ark were two cherubim of solid gold
 - 1) Facing each other, with wings outstretched above - **Exo 25:18-20; 37:7-9**
 - 2) On which the glory of the Lord appeared, and from which He spoke - **Exo 25:22; Num 7:89; cf. 1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam 6:2; He 9:5**
- b. On the curtains were woven artistic designs of cherubim - **Exo 26:1; 36:8**
- c. On the veil of the tabernacle also - **Exo 26:31; 36:35**

2. In the temple of Solomon

- a. In the inner sanctuary, the Most Holy Place - **1 Kin 6:23-29; 2 Chr 3:10-13**
 - 1) Placed over the ark of the covenant - **1 Kin 8:6-7; 2 Chr 5:7-8**
 - 2) Where God's presence was manifested - **2 Kin 19:15; Psa 80:1; 99:1**
- b. On the veil - **2 Chr 3:14**
- c. On the walls and door - **1 Kin 6:29-35; 2 Chr 3:7**
- d. On the ten carts and ten lavers - **1 Kin 7:29,36**
3. **In the temple of Ezekiel**
 - a. That is, the temple seen by Ezekiel in a vision - **Ezek 41-43**
 - b. The inner walls of the temple were carved with alternating palm trees and cherubim, each with two faces, a lion on one side, a man on the other - **Eze 41:18-20**
 - c. The doors of the sanctuary were carved with cherubim - **Eze 41:23-25**
4. **In the temple of Herod**
 - a. "There were no cherubim in the temple of Herod, but the walls were painted with figures of them (see Talmud)." - **ISBE**
 - b. "In the times of Josephus no one knew what the Scriptural cherubim looked like (Ant., VIII, iii, 3)." - **ISBE**

[Unlike the cherubim, there is only one specific mention of the seraphim in the Bible...]

II. THE SERAPHIM

A. AS SEEN IN ISAIAH'S VISION...

1. The Lord is on a throne in the temple, high and lifted up - **Isa 6:1**
2. The seraphim are above the throne - **Isa 6:2a**
3. They had six wings - **Isa 6:2**
 - a. Two covered the face
 - b. Two covered the feet
 - c. With two they flew
4. One cried to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory!" - **Isa 6:3**
5. One flew to Isaiah - **Isa 6:6-7**
 - a. With a live coal in his hand taken with tongs from the altar
 - b. Touching Isaiah's mouth with it, saying: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your iniquity is taken away, and your sins purged."

B. AS DESCRIBED IN VARIOUS SOURCES...

1. "This word means fiery ones, in allusion, as is supposed, to their burning love. They are represented as 'standing' above the King as he sat upon his throne, ready at once to minister unto him. Their form appears to have been human, with the addition of wings." - **Easton's Dictionary**
2. "Nowhere else applied to God's attendant angels; but to the fiery flying (not winged, but rapidly moving) serpents, which bit the Israelites (**Num 21:6**), called so from the poisonous inflammation caused by their bites. **Seraph** is to burn; implying the burning zeal, dazzling brightness (**2 Kin 2:11; 2 Kin 6:17; Eze 1:13; Mt 28:3**) and serpent-like rapidity of the seraphim in God's service. Perhaps Satan's form as a serpent (nachash) in his appearance to man has some connection with his original form as a seraph of light. The head of the

- serpent was the symbol of wisdom in Egypt (compare **Num 21:8; 2 Kin 18:4**). The seraphim, with six wings and one face, can hardly be identified with the cherubim, which had four wings (in the temple only two) and four faces (**Eze 1:5-12**). (But compare **Rev 4:8**). The ‘face’ and ‘feet’ imply a human form; something of a serpentine form (perhaps a basilisk’s head, as in the temples of Thebes) may have been mixed with it: so the cherub was compounded of various animal forms. However, **seraph** may come from a root meaning ‘princely,’ applied in **Dan 10:13** to Michael [MAURER]; just as cherub comes from a root (changing m into b), meaning ‘noble.’” - **JFB**
3. “The most that can be said with certainty about the seraphim is that they were a separate group of attendants who praised God at His throne.” - **ISBE (revised)**

CONCLUSION

1. Whether seraphim or cherubim can rightly be called angels may be uncertain...
 - a. Perhaps they are a higher class or order of angels - cf. **He 1:7**
 - b. If they are akin to the ‘living creatures’ in the book of Revelation, they seem to be distinguished from angels - cf. **Re 4:6-8; 5:11**
2. In either case, they were certainly ‘ministering spirits’ whose service reminds us...
 - a. Of the glory and majesty of Him who sits on the throne
 - b. Of the mercy and forgiveness of the God Whom they praise

Do we like the **cherubim** over the mercy-seat long to behold the mercy God extends to His people?
Do we like **seraphim** find the holiness of God worthy to be praised? We should...

“But you [are] a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once [were] not a people but [are] now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.”
(1 Pe 2:9-10)

Have you accepted the gospel call that qualifies you to live a life of praise and service to such a wonderful God...? - cf. **2 Th 2:14; Co 1:12-13**

Ministering Spirits

The Ministry Of Angels To Christ

INTRODUCTION

1. We've seen that angels and other spiritual beings rendered service to God...
 - a. Angels as messengers and executors of God's will
 - b. Cherubim as guardians and bearers of His throne
 - c. Seraphim as proclaimers of His holiness
2. Angels also provided significant service to Jesus Christ...
 - a. Their ministry to Christ emphasizes His deity - **He 1:4-14**
 - b. A ministry that is part of the "mystery of godliness" - **1 Ti 3:16**

[What service did angels render to Christ? What service will they yet render on His behalf...?]

I. THEIR PAST MINISTRY TO CHRIST

A. FORETOLD HIS BIRTH...

1. Gabriel appeared to Mary - **Lk 1:26-38**
2. An angel appeared to Joseph in a dream - **Mt 1:18-21**

B. ANNOUNCED HIS BIRTH...

1. First, a single angel to the shepherds in the field - **Lk 2:8-12**
2. Then, a multitude of the heavenly host praising God - **Lk 2:13-15**

C. PROTECTED HIM IN INFANCY...

1. By warning Joseph in a dream to flee to Egypt - **Mt 2:13**
2. By telling Joseph in a dream to return to Israel - **Mt 2:19-20**

D. MINISTERED TO HIM AFTER THE TEMPTATION...

1. After the devil had left Him - **Mt 4:11; Mk 1:13**
2. May have included encouragement, perhaps even food - e.g., **1 Kin 19:5-7**

E. STRENGTHENED HIM AT GETHSEMANE...

1. As He struggled in prayer and agony - **Lk 22:41-44**
2. Perhaps similar to the way in which Daniel was strengthened - cf. **Dan 10:18-19**

F. ROLLED AWAY THE STONE AT THE TOMB...

1. Sitting on the stone after doing so - **Mt 28:2**
2. Terrifying the guards at the tomb by his appearance - **Mt 28:3-4**

G. APPEARED FOLLOWING HIS RESURRECTION...

1. To the women sans Mary Magdalene (who had gone to tell Peter and John upon seeing the

- stone removed from the tomb) - **Mt 28:5-7; Mk 16:5-7; Lk 24:4-7,22,23; Jn 20:1-2**
2. To Mary Magdalene who went into the tomb after Peter and John left - **Jn 20:11-13**

H. ATTENDED HIS ASCENSION...

1. As two men in white apparel - **Ac 1:9-10**
2. Announcing the promise of His return - **Ac 1:11**

[With angels so prominent in the first coming of Christ, we should not be surprised with their role in His second coming...]

II. THEIR PRESENT AND FUTURE MINISTRY TO CHRIST

A. THEY WORSHIP AND SERVE HIM...

1. They worship Him around the throne - **Rev 5:11-14**
2. They revealed things to take place - **Re 1:1; 22:16** (note also the many references to angels throughout the book of Revelation)

B. THEY WILL ACCOMPANY HIS SECOND COMING...

1. When He comes in His glory - **Mt 16:27; 25:31; Mk 8:38**
2. When He comes to raise the dead - **1 Th 4:16**
3. When He comes to bring judgment and condemnation upon the wicked - **2 Th 1:7-10**

C. THEY WILL SEPARATE THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED...

1. Gathering out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, casting them into the furnace of fire - **Mt 13:40-42**
2. Separating the wicked from the just - **Mt 13:49-50**

CONCLUSION

1. As previously mentioned, the ministry of angels emphasize the deity of Christ...
 - a. As we see them serving Him
 - b. As we see them praising Him
2. Hopefully, our study of angels will encourage us in the same direction...
 - a. To serve Christ, who was, is and will be served by angels
 - b. To praise Christ, who certainly deserves our praise both now and forever

Will we join with the angels by adding our service and praise to Jesus who has “obtained a more excellent name than they (angels)...”, both now and in the world to come? - **He 1:4**

Ministering Spirits

The Ministry Of Angels To Christians

INTRODUCTION

1. Our study of angels as “**Ministering Spirits**” has shown how they ministered to...
 - a. The people of God in the Old Testament
 - b. Jesus in the flesh, and continue to serve Him in heaven
2. It is understandable that Christians often wonder...
 - a. Do angels minister in our behalf today?
 - b. If so, in what way?
3. Christians have good reason to wonder about such things...
 - a. By God’s grace we have “become heirs according to the hope of eternal life” - **Ti 3:7**
 - b. Angels are said to be “sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation” - **He 1:14**

[As we seek to determine what angelic ministry might entail, let’s first review what we know about...]

I. ANGELS AND THE EARLY CHURCH

A. PROVIDED DELIVERANCE FROM PRISON...

1. In the case of the twelve apostles - **Ac 5:17-20**
2. In the case of Peter - **Ac 12:7-11**

B. INVOLVED IN CONVERSION...

1. Sending Philip to meet the Ethiopian Eunuch - **Ac 8:26-28**
2. Appearing to Cornelius to send for Peter - **Ac 10:1-8,21-22; 11:12-13**

C. AN INSTRUMENT OF JUDGMENT...

1. In the case of Herod, who delivered a great oration - **Ac 12:21-22**
2. He failed to give God glory, so an angel struck him with a terrible disease - **Ac 12:23**

D. BROUGHT REASSURANCE...

1. Appearing to Paul, while on his journey to Rome - **Ac 27:21-23**
2. Assuring him that he and his fellow travelers would eventually arrive - **Ac 27:24**

E. REVEALED THE LORD’S WILL...

1. In the book of Revelation - **Re 1:1; 22:16**
2. Depicted throughout the Revelation as serving Christ
 - a. Praising Him around the throne - **Re 5:2,11**
 - b. Carrying out the Lord’s warnings and judgments
 - 1) E.g., sounding the seven trumpets - cf. **Re 8:2,6**
 - 2) E.g., pouring out the seven bowls of wrath - cf. **Re 16:1**

[There are many references to angels in Revelation, but their ministry takes place “behind the scenes”. The visible activity of angels in the early church was very limited, as we have seen. Yet from the teachings of Christ and His apostles, what might we glean about the activity of angels today...?]

II. ANGELS AND CHRISTIANS TODAY

A. CONCERNED FOR OUR WELL-BEING...

1. They rejoice when sinners repent - **Lk 15:10**
 2. Little ones who believe are said to have “their” angels, who behold the face of God in heaven - cf. **Mt 18:10**
 3. Here is a sampling of opinions regarding “guardian angels”...
 - a. “Disclosing the fact that the ministration of angels is not only general but special, certain angels being entrusted with the care of certain individuals, and all of them supplementing their own wisdom and power by direct access to the presence of God.” - **McGarvey**
 - b. “The doctrine of guardian angels is emphatically taught in the Scriptures. See **1 Kin 19: 5-8; Psa 91:11; He 1:13; Ac 27:23**. Who can afford to despise the children who have representatives right at the throne of God?” - **B. W. Johnson**
 - c. “Our Lord here not only alludes to, but, in my opinion, establishes the notion received by almost all nations, viz. That every person has a guardian angel; and that these have always access to God, to receive orders relative to the management of their charge.” - **Clarke**
 - d. “He does not mean, I suppose, to state that every good man has his guardian angel, as many of the Jews believed; but that the angels were, in general, the guards of his followers, and aided them and watched over them.” - **Barnes**
 - e. “Does Jesus mean to teach here that each little child or child of faith had a special angel who appears in God’s presence (‘see the face of my Father’) in special intimacy? Or does he simply mean that the angels do take an interest in the welfare of God’s people (**He 1:14**)? There is comfort to us in that thought. Certainly Jesus means that the Father takes special care of his ‘little ones’ who believe in Him.” - **Robertson’s Word Pictures**
 - f. “A difficult verse; but perhaps the following may be more than an illustration: Among men, those who nurse and rear the royal children, however humble in themselves, are allowed free entrance with their charge, and a degree of familiarity which even the highest state ministers dare not assume. Probably our Lord means that, in virtue of their charge over His disciples (**He 1:13; Jn 1:51**), the angels have errands to the throne, a welcome there, and a dear familiarity in dealing with ‘His Father which is in heaven,’ which on their own matters they could not assume.” - **JFB**
- **I doubt the issue can be resolved with the little evidence that we have**

B. AGENTS OF GOD'S PROVIDENCE...

1. All Christians believe in the providence of God
 - a. God’s working in answer to prayer - e.g., Paul’s prayer to visit Rome, **Ro 1:9-10**
 - b. In ways non-miraculous, but working nonetheless - e.g., Paul’s journey to Rome
2. How God carries out His providence likely involves angels
 - a. As it did in the affairs of nations according to the book of **Daniel**

- b. As it will in the affairs of nations according to the book of **Revelation**

C. COMPANIONS FOR THE JOURNEY HOME...

1. As Jesus illustrated in the story of the rich man and Lazarus - **Lk 16:22**
2. “The Jews held the opinion that the spirits of the righteous were conveyed by angels to heaven at their death. Our Savior speaks in accordance with this opinion; and as he expressly affirms the fact, it seems as proper that it should be taken literally, as when it is said the rich man died and was buried. Angels are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to those who are heirs of salvation (**He 1:14**), and there is no more improbability in the supposition that they attend departing spirits to heaven, than that they attend them while on earth.” - **Barnes**

D. GUARDIANS OF THE GATES OF THE ETERNAL CITY...

1. As depicted in John’s vision of the New Jerusalem - **Re 21:12**
2. “Stationed there as guards to the New Jerusalem. Their business seems to have been to watch the gates that nothing improper should enter; that the great enemy should not make an insidious approach to this city as he did to the earthly paradise.” - **Barnes**
3. “...an additional emblem of perfect security, while the gates being never shut (**Re 21:25**) imply perfect liberty and peace.” - **JFB**
4. “Still waiting upon the heirs of salvation.” - **Wesley**

CONCLUSION

1. Angels continue to minister for those who will inherit salvation - cf. **He 1:14**
2. Their visible activity for Christians was limited even in the first century, perhaps for this reason:

“The visible activity of angels has come to an end, because their mediating work is done; Christ has founded the kingdom of the Spirit, and God’s Spirit speaks directly to the spirit of man (**via the Word of God, MAC**). This new and living way has been opened up to us by Jesus Christ, upon whom faith can yet behold the angels of God ascending and descending. Still they watch the lot of man, and rejoice in his salvation; still they join in the praise and adoration of God, the Lord of hosts, still can they be regarded as ‘ministering spirits sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation.’” - **ISBE**
3. Due to the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit, the need for angels’ visible activity has diminished, and we do well to heed the warnings about angels...
 - a. **Do not worship them**
 - 1) As the angels themselves warned John - **Re 19:10; 22:8-9**
 - 2) As Paul warned the Colossians - **Co 2:18-19**
 - b. **Do not heed new doctrines from them**
 - 1) As Paul warned the Galatians - **Ga 1:8**
 - 2) Remember what Satan is capable of! - cf. **2 Co 11:14**

With these warnings in mind, we can still praise God that among our many spiritual blessings in Christ in the heavenly places are His “**Ministering Spirits**” who serve us! - cf. **Ep 1:3**