

What The Bible Teaches

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Book 5 - What The Bible Teaches About Angels

1. Angels: Their Nature, Position, Number, and Abode — Their nature and position — the number of the angels — the abode of the angels.
2. The Work of Angels — Their work on behalf of the heirs of salvation — the law given through angels — their presence with the Lord Jesus at His coming — the executioners of God's wrath toward the wicked.

1. ANGELS: THEIR NATURE, POSITION, NUMBER, AND ABODE

I. THEIR NATURE AND POSITION. Colossians 1:16 RV — "For in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him."

First Proposition: *Angels are created beings — created by (Greek: "in"), through, and unto the Son of God.* 2 Peter 2:11 — "Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord."

Second Proposition: *Angels are greater than man in power and might.* (Compare to Psalm 8:4-5.) 2 Thessalonians 1:7 — "And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels."

Third Proposition: *Angels are mighty, having great power.* Acts 5:19 RV — "But an angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them out." Acts 12:7,23 RV — "And behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shined in the cell: and he smote Peter on the side, and awoke him, saying, Rise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands." Matthew 22:30 — "For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven." Luke 20:35-36 — "But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels: and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection."

Fourth Proposition: *Angels neither marry nor die.* Mark 13:31 RV — "But of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father."

Fifth Proposition: *Angels have great knowledge, but are not omniscient.* (Compare to Ephesians 3:10-11 and 1 Peter 1:12.) Revelation 22:8-9 RV — "And I John am he that heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. And he saith unto me, See thou do it not: I am a fellow servant with thee and with thy brethren the prophets, and with them which keep the words of this book: worship God."

Sixth Proposition: *Angels are not proper objects of worship.*

Here lies a clear and broad line of distinction between Jesus and the angels. Jude 1:9 — "Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee." 1 Thessalonians 4:16 — "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 Peter 3:22 — "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him."

Seventh Proposition: *There are ranks or orders of angels, and all ranks of angels have been made subject to Jesus Christ.* Hebrews 1:6 — "And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him."

Eighth Proposition: *All the angels of God are bidden to worship Jesus the Son of God.*

Luke: 9:26 — "For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words, of him shall the son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels."

Ninth Proposition: *The angels are glorious beings.* (Compare to Matthew 28:2-3 RV — "And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it. His appearance was as lightning, and his raiment white as snow." Revelation 10:1 RV — "And I saw another strong angel coming down out of heaven, arrayed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire." Daniel 10:6 — "His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in color to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.") 2 Peter 2:4 RV — "And if God spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down to hell, and committed them to pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment."

Tenth Proposition: *Some of the angels sinned, and God cast them down to hell and committed them to pits of darkness to be reserved for judgment.*

It has been suggested that these angels were the earlier inhabitants of the earth, and that the earth became "without form and void" (Genesis 1:2) as a judgment upon their sins, just as, after the earth was reorganized for man's abode, it was cursed because of man's fall. (Compare to Isaiah 34:10-11 — "It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up forever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever. But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it: and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness.") Here we read the land was made "waste" because of sin, and the line of "confusion" (Hebrew: "without form") and plummet of "emptiness" (Hebrew: "void") stretched over it. Jeremiah 4:23-27: — "I beheld the earth, and lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. And I beheld the mountains, and lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. And I beheld, and lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the LORD, and by his fierce anger. For thus hath the LORD said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end." Isaiah 45:18 RV — "For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; he is God; that formed the earth and made it; he established it, he created it not a waste, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else."

In this last verse we are told that God did not create the earth a "waste" (same Hebrew word as the one translated "without form" in Genesis 1:2). It seems clear, then, that it must have become so by someone's sin before man's creation. Genesis 1:2 should then be translated, "And the

earth became without form, and void" (or "waste and void"). The first verse of the chapter would then describe the creation; the second verse, the desolation visited upon the earth because of the sin of pre-Adamite inhabitants; the latter part of verse 2 and following verses, the rehabilitation of the earth to be a habitation for the new Adamite race. 1 Corinthians 6:3 — "Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?"

Eleventh Proposition: *Angels shall be judged by believers.* This may refer only to the angels who fell. Luke 2:9,13 RV — "And an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory, of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid." John 20:12 — "And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain." Genesis 32:1-2 — "And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim."

Twelfth Proposition: *Angels have sometimes been seen by men.*

II. THE NUMBER OF THE ANGELS. Hebrews 12:22 RV — "But ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to unnumerable hosts of angels."

Proposition: *There are innumerable hosts of angels — literally, myriads of angels.* (See the RV Margin) (Compare to 2 Kings 6:17 — "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," and to Matthew 26:53 — "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?")

III. THE ABODE OF THE ANGELS. Matthew 22:30 — "For, in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven." Ephesians 3:10 — "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." John 1:51 — "And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." Luke 2:13,15 — "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying."

Proposition: *The present abode of the angels is heaven.*

2. THE WORK OF ANGELS

I. THEIR WORK ON BEHALF OF THE HEIRS OF SALVATION. Hebrews 1:13-14 RV — "But of which of the angels hath he said at any time, Sit thou on my right hand till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?"

Proposition: *Angels are ministering spirits sent forth to do service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation.* 1 Kings 19:5-8 — "And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat. And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baked on the coals and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. And the angel of the Lord came again the second time and touched him, and said, Arise and eat: because the journey is too great for thee. And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God." Matthew 4:11 — "Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him." Luke 22:43 — "And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him."

The angels minister to the physical needs of God's children. Psalm 91:11-12 — "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone."

The angels have charge to keep in all his ways the one who abides in the secret place of the Most High and makes the Most High his habitation. (See context.) They preserve him from accident and harm. 2 Kings 6:15-17 — "And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold a host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! How shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." Matthew 26:53 — "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he will presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?"

The angels protect God's servants from their enemies. (Compare to Genesis 19:11 and to 2 Kings 6:18.)

God works largely through second causes. Much that God does for His children He does through their fellow humans. He does other things through the angels.

It is thought by some, and not altogether without reason, that each child of God has an angel assigned to protect him (see Matthew 18:10): Acts 5:19 RV — "But an angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them out." Acts 12:8-11 — "And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself and bind on thy sandals. And he did so. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. And he went out, and followed: and he wist not that it was true which was done by the angel, but thought he saw a vision. And when they were past the first and second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth into the city; which opened to them of its own accord: and they went out, and passed through one street; and straightway the angel departed from him. And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a truth, that the Lord hath sent forth his angel and delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectations of the people of the Jews." Daniel 6:22 — "My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt."

The angels deliver God's servants from peril and evil. Acts 27:23-24 RV — "For there stood by me this night an angel of the God whose I am, whom also I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must stand before Caesar: and lo, God hath granted thee all them that sail with thee."

The angels cheer God's servants in hardship and seeming danger. Luke 1:11-13,19 — "And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias; for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to show thee these glad tidings."

The angels reveal God's purposes to His servants. Matthew 2:13, 19-20 RV — "Now when they were departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise and take the young child and his mother, and flee unto Egypt, and be thou there until I tell thee: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying." Matthew 1:20 — "But when he thought on these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost." Acts 8:26 — "But an angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise,

and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza: the same is desert." Acts 10:3-6 — "He saw in a vision, as it were about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in unto him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. And he, fastening his eyes upon him, and being affrighted, said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are gone up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and fetch one Simon, who is surnamed Peter: he lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side."

The angels show God's servants what to do. Luke 16:22 — "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died and was buried."

The angels take God's servants at their death to a place of blessedness. Matthew 24:31 — "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

At the coming of the Son of man, He shall send His angels and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

II. THE LAW GIVEN THROUGH ANGELS. Hebrews 2:2 RV — "For if the word spoken through angels proved stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward." Galatians 3:19 RV — "What then is the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise hath been made; and it was ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator." Acts 7:53 — "Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it."

Proposition: *The law was given through the angels.*

III. THEIR PRESENCE WITH THE LORD JESUS AT HIS COMING. Matthew 25:31-32 — "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8 — "And to you who are troubled, rest with us; when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Proposition: *The angels will come with the Son of man when He comes to judge the nations and to execute wrath upon those who don't know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

IV. THE EXECUTIONERS OF GOD'S WRATH TOWARD THE WICKED. Matthew 13:39-42 RV — "And the enemy that sowed them is the devil: and the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are angels. As therefore the tares are gathered up and burned with fire; so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (For context, see verses 24-30.) Matthew 13:47-50 RV — "Again the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which, when it was filled, they drew up on the beach; and they sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but the bad they cast away. So shall it be in the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the righteous, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Proposition: At the end of the age, the angels will gather out of the kingdom of the Son of man all things that cause stumbling and those persons who do iniquity, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. They will sever the wicked out of the midst of the righteous and will cast them into the furnace of fire.

The angels are the executioners of God's wrath toward the wicked as well as His mercy toward the righteous. In this also are they not doing service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?