

## The Ministry of Angels

Angels are mentioned in the Bible almost three hundred times. Both the Hebrew word '*malak*' and the Greek word '*angelos*' literally means, "messenger, envoy, one that announces." The New Testament implies the meaning "divine messenger." They are and have been very involved in the lives of people. Angels guarded the Tree of Life in the first book of the Bible (Genesis) and are mentioned warring against Satan's forces in the last book of the Bible (Revelation).

According to Scripture, here are some of the important things we know:

- Angels are created beings and were created before the existence of humans and earth (Job 38:7)
- Angels are very superior to humans and are not subject to our weaknesses and limitations (Psalms 8:5)
- Angels have a heavenly countenance. Ezekiel 1:14 describes them as going forth like 'the appearance of a flash of lightning'; and at the empty tomb of Jesus: 'like lightning, and his raiment white as snow.' (Matt 28:3,4)
- Angels can also appear as ordinary, normal humans (Genesis 18:2,16; Ezekiel 9:2)
- Angels are strong and powerful. When the Assyrians threatened to destroy Israel, one angel killed one hundred forty-five thousand soldiers in only one night. (2 Kings 19:35; 2 Chron 32:21)
- Angels have direct access to the Throne of God in Heaven (Revelation 5:11)
- Angels are forbidden to be worshiped by humans (Revelation 22:8,9)
- Angels are the Guardians of children overlooking and protecting them (Matthew 18:10)

Many times, angels are sent by God to minister and help His people here on earth (Hebrews 1:14). Here are some examples of angels assisting us from the Bible:

- To Abraham – two angels with the Lord delivering promises (Gen 18:1-16)
- To the city of Sodom – two angels rescue a Godly family away from evil (Gen 19:1)
- To Elijah – an angel saves him from starvation and death (1 Kings 19:5-8)
- To Elisha and his servant – an army of angels ready to protect them (2 Kings 6:8-23)
- To Daniel – an angel giving him advice and wisdom before seeing a king (Daniel 10)
- To Peter – an angel led him out of Herod Antipas' dungeon (Acts 12:1-17)
- To the Apostles – an angel opened the jail doors (Acts 5:17-19)
- To Philip – ordered by an angel to minister to an Ethiopian official (Acts 8:26-40)
- To Cornelius – an angel sent to open his mind (Acts 10:1-8)
- To Paul – during a dangerous sea storm (Acts 27:23,24)

During Jesus' ministry angels came and ministered to Him. After He had resisted the devil's temptations in the wilderness (Matt 4:11) and when He was in anguish praying in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:40-44).

Angels also have identities and names. The angel Gabriel, for example, visited the priest Zechariah to announce the birth of John the Baptist, and he also appeared to Mary to announce the birth of Jesus. In the Book of Daniel, the angel Michael is mentioned three times and in the Book of Revelation, he leads God's armies against Satan's forces. Jude refers to him as the "archangel Michael."

How many angels are there? There is no definitive answer but here is what Scripture has revealed to us:

Jesus made the claim in the Garden of Gethsemane when He was being arrested that He could easily call more than twelve legions of angels to come to His aid and save Him. That is more than seventy-two thousand angels. When the Apostle

John was looking upon the Throne of God, he mentioned that there were ‘thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand’ of angels encircling Heaven’s Throne (Rev 5:11)

Angels are sent by God to assist and help us. They ministered to Jesus while He was here on earth and they have been interacting with God’s people all throughout human history. Many people probably have been in the presence of an angel(s) and not even know it.

Scripture Nuggets to consider:

“Do you not know that we will judge angels?” 1 Cor 6:3

“If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.” 1 Cor 13:1

“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.” Hebrews 13:2

“the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches.” Revelation 1:20

“He who overcomes will be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.” Revelation 3:5