

## **ANGELS**

(Part 2)

### **How many angels are there?**

The Bible does not give us an exact number, but does clearly teach that there are incredibly large numbers of angels who serve God. Scripture speaks of “ten thousand times ten thousand angels” (Dan. 7:10). Elsewhere Scripture speaks of “a great company of the heavenly host” (Luke 2:13). From every indication in the Bible, there are an unimaginably large number of angels, of whom we are totally unaware most of the time. There is a fixed and limited number of angels, never increasing or decreasing. Unlike human beings, angels do not marry and have children (Mark 12:25). They are immortal.

### **Are all angels the same?**

Within the large numbers of angels there are apparently certain orders or classes of angels. Scripture speaks of “cherubim” (Gen. 3:24; Ps. 80:1), “seraphim” (Is. 6:2), “thrones or powers or rulers or authorities” (Col. 1:16), “archangel” (1 Thess. 4:16). Also among the evil angels there are ranks and classes of angels (Matt. 25:41). Satan is described as the “prince of the devils” (Luke 11:15). It is pointless, however, to try to invent complicated divisions and ranks of angels, since Scripture itself does not provide us with this information.

### **What are evil angels, and what do they do?**

Originally, all angels God created were good and did His will perfectly. At some point after God created them, some angels chose to rebel against Him. They fell away from God and into great sin and evil. At that point, they were confirmed in their evil condition. There is no hope for them. In Matt. 8:29, they recognize that there will be a time when they must suffer eternal torment and punishment for their rebellion against God. Satan is the chief evil angel, the “prince of demons” (Luke 11:15). Here is how our Lord Jesus Christ describes Satan: “He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44). When precisely the evil angels rebelled and fell away from God we cannot say for sure, but we do know it was some time at the very beginning of the world. Most Christian church fathers believe that the evil angels’ original sin was pride, based on the fact that Sa-tan’s temptation of Adam and Eve was an appeal to their pride. Also, 1 Tim. 3:6 indicates that pride was the cause of the devil’s condemnation. The devil is our great enemy, who “prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour” (1 Pet. 5:8). The Bible tells us that the devil is the cause of unbelief in the world (Eph. 2:1-2). Every person who does not believe the good news of Christ Jesus is thinking and doing what the devil wants. Unbelievers are described in the Bible as being in the devil’s kingdom and under his power (Acts 26:18; Col. 1:13). The very fact that people do not realize this, and even deny it, is the devil’s greatest deception. The devil is so deceptive, at times he will even disguise himself as an “angel of light” (2 Cor. 11:14). In fact, the Old Testament once refers to Satan as “Lucifer,” which means, “light bearer” (Isa. 14:12; KJV). We need to keep in mind that all the Bible says about evil angels, and their eternal punishment, is for the purpose of making us recognize the need to repent and to believe in God’s Son, Jesus Christ, who has ransomed mankind by His death, and saved us for eternal life, not in hell, but in heaven.

### **What do good angels do?**

Good angels enjoy the blessing of being able to see God. They are in the immediate presence of God, always beholding His great glory, majesty and power (Matt. 18:10). This is called the “beatific vision,” which all Christians will enjoy one day when they are in heaven. God’s Word reveals the following things about the activity of good angels: They praise God (Is. 6:3; Luke 2:13), and they are the Lord’s servants in the world and in the Church (Ps. 103:20-21; Heb. 1:14). God sends angels to serve and to protect Christian believers in their work and their callings in life (Ps. 91:11-12). They attend to the dying (Luke 16:22). They care for children (Matt. 18:10). Angels are deeply interested in all that occurs in the Church. They adore and take great joy in the work of Jesus Christ for the salvation of the world (Luke 2:13; Eph. 3:10). They rejoice over every sinner who repents (Luke 15:10). Scripture mentions the presence of angels at every great event in the Kingdom of God. Angels

were present when God gave His law on Mount Sinai (Deut. 33:2; Gal. 3:19). Angels were present at the conception, birth, resurrection and ascension of our Lord (Luke 1:26; 2:11; Mark 1:13; 24:5ff; Acts 1:10ff). Angels will come with Jesus when He returns on the last day (Matt. 13:41ff.; 24:31). The Bible tells us that angels are present in the public worship of Christians (1 Cor. 11:10). God also uses angels to help the family and to preserve law and order (Gen. 24:7; Matt. 18:10; Dan. 10:13).

### **How are we to treat angels?**

We need to praise and thank God for good angels. We are told that we are to take care not to offend them through sin and unbelief (1 Cor. 11:10; 1 Tim. 5:21). But the Scriptures are also clear that we must not pray to angels, nor offer them our worship. The angels themselves protest any worship given to them (Rev. 22:8-9). As believers, we have the privilege of having angels surrounding us and protecting us and working to do God's good and perfect will in our lives. Our hope and trust is always in God, whom we know sends His angels to watch over us and to see us through whatever difficulty in life may come our way. Because of our Lord Jesus Christ's perfect life and sacrificial death for the sins of the world, we have the assurance of the complete and total forgiveness of all our sins. We know that God loves and cares for us as His own dear children. Furthermore, we know that the Lord sends His angels to care for us in order that some day we may join them, and all the company of heaven, in seeing God and singing His praises for all eternity.