

Doctrine of Angels

1. Angels are celestial beings.

- *Psalms 8:5 For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.*

2. Angels differ in rank.

- *Jude 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.*
- *Eph 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

3. Angels are messengers sent from heaven

- *Genesis 19:1 And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground;*
- *Genesis 19:15 And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.*

4. Angels reveal the will of God

- *Daniel 9:21-23 Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. 22 And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. 23 At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.*

5. Angels are ministering spirits to those who are the heirs of salvation.

- *Hebrews 1:7 And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.*
- *Hebrews 1:14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?*

6. Angels execute God's purposes.

- *Matthew 13:39-42 The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. 40 As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. 41 The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; 42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.*

7. Angels announced the birth of Christ.

- *Luke 2:13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,*

8. Angels ministered to Christ.

- *Matthew 4:11 Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.*

9. Angles are in charge of God's children.

- *Matthew 18:10 Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.*

10. The saints shall judge the angels.

- *1 Corinthians 6:3 Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?*

11. Some angels are rebellious.

- *2 Peter 2:4 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;*

12. Angles help to seal the servants of the Lord.

- *Revelation 7:1-4 And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. 2 And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, 3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. 4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.*

13. Angels announced the resurrection of the Lord.

- *Mark 16:5-8 And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. 6 And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. 7 But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. 8 And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid.*

14. Angels are not to be worshipped.

- *Revelation 19:10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*

15. Angels preached the gospel.

- *Revelation 14:6-7 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, 7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.*

16. Angels proclaimed the fall of Babylon.

- *Revelation 14:8 And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.*

17. Angels were sent to Jerusalem.

- *Zechariah 3 And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. 2 And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? 3 Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. 4 And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. 5 And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD stood by. 6 And the angel of the LORD protested unto Joshua, saying, 7 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by. 8 Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH. 9 For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. 10 In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbour under the vine and under the fig tree.*

18. Angels were prepared to kill Balaam.

- *Numbers 22:22-36 And God's anger was kindled because he went: and the angel of the LORD stood in the way for an adversary against him. Now he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants were with him. 23 And the ass saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and the ass turned aside out of the way, and went into the field: and Balaam smote the ass, to turn her into the way. 24 But the angel of the LORD stood in a path of the vineyards, a wall being on this side, and a wall on that side. 25 And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she thrust herself unto the wall, and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall: and he smote her again. 26 And the angel of the LORD went further, and stood in a narrow place, where was no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left. 27 And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she fell down under Balaam: and Balaam's anger was kindled, and he smote the ass with a staff. 28 And the LORD opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times? 29 And Balaam said unto the ass, Because thou hast mocked me: I would there were a sword in mine hand, for now would I kill thee. 30 And the ass said unto Balaam, Am not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine unto this day? was I ever wont to do so unto thee? And he said, Nay. 31 Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face. 32 And the angel of the LORD said unto him, Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? behold, I went out to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse before me: 33 And the ass saw me, and turned from me these three times: unless she had turned from me, surely now also I had slain thee, and saved her alive. 34 And Balaam said unto the angel of the LORD, I have sinned; for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me: now therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again. 35 And the angel of the LORD said unto Balaam, Go with the men: but only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak. So Balaam went with the princes of Balak. 36 And when Balak heard that Balaam was come, he went out to meet him unto a city of Moab, which is in the border of Arnon, which is in the utmost coast.*

19. Satan is transformed into angels of light.

- *2 Corinthians 11:14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.*

Doctrine of Angels

Wilmington's Guide to the Bible

1. Throughout his long history, man has often wondered whether he is indeed the only intelligent being in his universe, and whether life as we know it is confined to the earth alone.
2. One of the most recent scientific attempts is the search for extraterrestrial life.
3. Coded messages are now being transmitted into the distant recesses of outer space by means of radio telescopes.
4. The scientist then anxiously awaits the results of his bold probe.
 - Will nonearthly ears pick up his signals?
 - If life is out there, will it prove friend or foe?
5. In light of all this, it seems tragic that man does not turn to the Word of God in his search, for the Bible clearly answers this question, as it does all other questions, which confront humanity.
 - Is there intelligent life in the universe?
 - Are there other living and rational creatures "out there" besides man?

There are indeed.

- Are they friend or foe?

They are both.

- Is their "civilisation" older than ours?

It is.

- Will we ever learn to communicate with them?

We not only will, but a number of human beings already have met and talked with them.

- Who are these cosmic creatures?

They are called angels.

6. Belief in angels is found in the history of all nations.
 - The ancient Egyptians, Phoenicians, Greeks, and others all expressed their belief in angels.
 - A. S. Poppie writes: "*The Mohammedans believe in angels. They believe that two angels are assigned to each person. The angel on the right hand records all your good deeds. The angel on your left records all your evil deeds.*"

7. The Hebrews taught there were four great angels:
- Gabriel, who reveals the secrets of God to men.
 - Michael, who fights and avenges God's foes.
 - Raphael, who receives the departing spirits of the dead.
 - Uriel, who will summon everybody to judgement (*All about Angels*, p. 43).
8. In the apocryphal book of Tobit is an account of an angel by the name of Raphael. The young man whom the angel accompanied was in danger of being devoured by a big fish. The angel saved him. Then he told the young man to use the heart and liver of the fish against demon influence, and the gall against eye diseases, etc.
9. According to Moslem legend, when Mohammed was transported to heaven, he saw an angel there with *"70,000 heads, each head had 70,000 faces, each face had 70,000 mouths, each mouth had 70,000 tongues, and each tongue spoke 70,000 languages."*
10. The earliest archaeological evidence of angels to date appears on the stela of Ur-Nammus (2250 BC), and shows angels flying over the head of this king while he is in prayer.
11. But enough of tradition and history. What does the Bible say about angels?

I. The Existence of Angels

A. Angels are mentioned in thirty-four books of the Bible for a total of some 273 times (108 times in the Old Testament and 165 in the New Testament).

B. Various Scriptures

- *"The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels"* (Ps. 68:17).
- *"But ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels"* (Heb. 12:22).
- *"Who maketh his angels spirits, his ministers a flaming fire"* (Ps. 104:4).
- *"Praise ye him, all his angels, praise ye him, all his hosts"* (Ps. 148:2).

II. The Origin of Angels

A. The source of their origin

- Angels, like everything else in this universe, were made by God the Father, through Jesus Christ in the energy of the Holy Spirit. See Genesis 1:1, 2; 2:1; Nehemiah 9:6; John 1:1-3; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:16.

B. The method of their origin

- Angels, like man, were created by a special act of God. They did not evolve into being. *"Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts. Let them praise the name of the Lord: for he commanded, and they were created"* (Ps. 148:2, 5).
- Each angel is therefore a direct creation from God. This is perhaps why they are referred to as sons of God (Gen. 6:2, 4; Job 1:6; 2:1). The word "son" seems to indicate a direct creation of God, as Adam is called the "son of God" (see Lk. 3:38). Believers are also called this, as they are recreated in Christ individually as sons of God *an.* 3:3; Gal. 3:26; Eph. 2:8-10; 4:24; 1 In. 3:1,2).
- Their number, once completed at creation, was forever fixed. This is assumed because we never read of God creating more of them and Jesus said they do not reproduce themselves (Mt. 22:30). Furthermore, since we are told they cannot die (Lk. 20:36) we conclude the original number of angels will never increase or decrease in size. For these reasons they must be considered a *company of beings, and not a race.*

C. The time of their origin

"Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said. ...Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" aob 38:1, 4, 7).

- In these verses God declares that creation of angels took place prior to the creation of the earth.

D. The purpose of their origin

- Angels were created to glorify Jesus Christ.
- *"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him"* (Col. 1:16).
- *" And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him"* (Heb. 1:6). *"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created"* (Rev. 4:11).

III. The Nature of Angels

A. They are spirit beings

- *Psalms 104:4 Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire:*
- *Hebrews 1:7 And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.*

- *Hebrews 1:14 Are they not all-ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?*
- While we are informed by Christ himself that spiritual beings do not possess flesh and bone (Luke 24:39), does this prove angels do not have any kind of body? It apparently does not, for de-out and able theologians have taken both sides of this issue in centuries past. One therefore can- not be dogmatic concerning this. Some have pointed to 1 Corinthians 15:40 as an indication that they *do* possess bodies:
- *"There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another."* At any rate, on two specific occasions angels are described as partaking of physical food (Gen. 18:1-8; 19:1-3), and on one occasion as applying physical force (Acts 12:7).

B. They are invisible beings

- While on occasion they do manifest themselves, their normal practice is to remain invisible. Certainly one basic reason for this is to prevent both unsaved and saved men from worshipping them. (See Rom. 1:18-32; Col. 2:18; Rev. 19:10; 22:9.)

C. They are innumerable

- God, of course, knows their number, but they are presented to men as uncountable. There may be as many angels as there are stars in the heavens, for angels are associated with the stars *Gob* 38:7; Ps. 148:1-3; Rev. 9:1, 2; 12:3, 4, 7-9). If this be so, there would exist untold *trillions* of these heavenly beings. A hint of their huge number can be seen in Mark 5:9 where Satan could afford to give over 6,000 of his fallen angels to torment one poor lunatic. See also: *"The Lord came from Sinai. ..with ten thousand of saints"* (Deut. 33:2). The *"saints"* here are doubtless angels.

"I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgement was set, and the books were opened" (Dan. 7:9, 10).

- *"The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels"* (Psa 68:17).
- *"Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?"* (Mt. 26:53).
- *"But ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels"* (Heb. 12:22).
- *" And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne. ..and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands"* (Rev. 5:11).

- One of the reasons (perhaps the main reason) for the dispensation of the grace of God to all repenting sinners is stated by Paul in the book of Ephesians: *"that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus"* (Eph. 2:7).
- There is little doubt that much of this display of grace will be for the benefit of angels. Thus, if their number is indeed as large as it appears, then each redeemed sinner will have a vast congregation of *billions* of angels to preach and testify to.

D. Angels possess separate and individual personalities, probably no two are alike.

They have the three necessary features required of personality:

1. Intelligence (Dan. 9:21, 22; 10:14; Rev. 19:10; 22:8, 9).
2. Will (Isa. 14:12-15; Jude 1:6).
3. Emotion. They display *joy* Psa 38:7; Luke. 2:13) and *desire* (1 Pet. 1:12).

E. Angels are (because of Adam's fall) superior to men. (See Ps. 8:4, 5; Heb. 2:6-11.)

1. They are stronger than men.

- *"Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments hearkening unto the voice of his word"* (Ps. 103:20).
- *"...the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels"* (2 Thess. 1:7).
- *"Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might..."* (2 Pet. 2:11).

2. They are smarter than men (Dan. 9:21, 22; 10:14).

3. They are swifter than men.

- *"Yea, while I was speaking in prayer... Gabriel. ..Being caused to fly swiftly, touched me"* (Dan. 9:21).
- *" And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven. .."* (Rev. 14:6).

F. Their superiority in these areas seems to stem from two things

- a. Being unhindered by a fallen nature
- b. Being unbounded by the laws of gravity and time

G. They are, however, inferior to God

1. They are not omnipresent (Dan. 10:12). The angel here in Daniel 10 was in heaven at the time of Daniel's prayer and was sent by God to aid him.

2. They are not omnipotent (Dan. 10:13; Jude 9). This same angel was experiencing satanic pressure, which hindered him for a full three weeks.
3. They are not omniscient. "*But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only*" (Mt. 24:36).

H. Angel, like man, may have been made in the image of God. How was man made in God's image? It has been suggested that this image consisted of two things, personality and holiness.

1. *Personality* gives the basic *capacity* to have fellowship with the person of God, for only real persons, of course, can have fellowship.
2. *Holiness* provides the basic *requirement* to enjoy that fellowship, for two cannot experience fellowship unless they are morally agreed (Heb. 12:14).

If the above definition is correct, then angels can be said to have been made in the image of God also.

IV. The Moral Classification of Angels.

A. It is believed that all angels were originally created without fault and, like Adam in the Garden, placed on a probation of some sort.

They were theologically, during this time, *posse non peccare* (able not to sin). But the probation period ended when heaven's chief angel, Lucifer by name, instigated a great revolt against Jehovah God himself. (See Isa. 14:12-15; Ezek. 28:11-19.)

- B. It is suggested by Revelation 12:3, 4 that he was able to persuade one third of heaven's angels to side with him in this terrible rebellion. The ones who did so thus became *non posse non peccare* (not able not to sin), while the remaining two thirds were pronounced *non posse peccare* (not able to sin).
- C. From that point on the *faithful* angels are referred to as holy and elect angels (Mk. 8:38; 1 Tim. 5:21), while the *fallen* angels are known as the devil's angels (Mt. 25:41; Rev. 12:9).

V. The Characteristics of the Faithful Angels

A. Their rank.

1. The archangels

- a. **Michael.** His name means "*Who is like God.*" This should be contrasted to Satan's evil desire to "be like the most High" (Isa. 14:14). Michael is mentioned by name on four separate occasions in the Bible.

- (1) He helps a lesser-ranked angel get through to answer Daniel's prayer (Dan. 10:13, 21).

- (2) He will stand up for Israel during their tribulation (Dan. 12:1).
- (3) He disputes with Satan concerning the dead body of Moses (Jude 1:9).
- (4) He fights against Satan in the heavenlies (Rev. 12:7).

b. Gabriel. His name means "*The mighty one of God.*"

- (1) He explains the vision of the Ram and Goat battle to Daniel (Dan. 8:16).
- (2) He explains the seventy weeks to Daniel (Dan. 9:21).
- (3) He predicts the birth of John the Baptist to Zacharias (Lk. 1:19).
- (4) He predicts the birth of Jesus to Mary (Lk. 1:26).
- (5) He assures Joseph concerning the purity of Mary (Mt. 1:20).
- (6) He warns Joseph about the plot of Herod (Mt. 2:13).
- (7) He tells Joseph about the death of Herod (Mt. 2:19).

Note: Some Bible students have identified Gabriel with the various appearances of the Angel of the Lord in the remaining pages of the New Testament. If this is true, then Gabriel can be seen in the following ten occasions.

- (8) He announces the birth of Christ to the shepherds (Lk. 2:9).
- (9) He strengthens Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane (Lk. 22:43).
- (10) He rolls the stone back at Christ's resurrection (Mt. 28:2).
- (11) He frees the apostles from prison (Acts 5:19).
- (12) He sends Philip to the desert of Gaza to meet the eunuch (Acts 8:26).
- (13) He instructs Cornelius to send for Peter (Acts 10:3).
- (14) He frees Peter from prison (Acts 12:7).
- (15) He executes wicked Herod for blasphemy (Acts 12:23).
- (16) He assures Paul on the deck of a sinking ship (Acts 27:23).
- (17) He will sound the trumpet at the rapture (1 Thess. 4:16).

2. The cherubim (Gen. 3:24; Ex. 25:18-20; Ezek. 1:4-28; 10:1-22)

a. The description of the cherubim

- (1) Each has four faces.
 - (a) The face in front is as a man.
 - (b) The face on the right is as a lion.
 - (c) The face on the left is as an ox.
 - (d) The face in back is as an eagle.

- (2) Each has two pairs of wings.
 - (a) One pair spreads out from the middle of the back.

 - (b) The other pair is used to cover the body. These wings make a noise like waves crashing upon the seashore.

 - (c) They have the legs of men, but their feet are cloven like calves' feet, which shine like burnished brass.

- (3) They have four human hands, with one located under each wing.

- (4) They apparently travel in groups of four. The outstretched wings of each cherubim touch those of the remaining three companions, so that they form a square. When they move, they move as a group without turning their bodies.

- b. The duties of the cherubim: (1) They kept Adam from the Tree of Life after the fall, lest he eat of it and live forever in his sin (Gen.3: 24).

Note: There is an interesting analogy between the cherubim as guarding the entrance to paradise and the winged bulls and lions of Babylon and Assyria, colossal figures with human faces standing guard at the entrances of temples and palaces. Inasmuch as both these nations occupied the very spot where the original Garden of Eden may have been located, it is not unreasonable to suggest that these idols were perverted statue copies of the real cherubim.

- (1) Two golden cherubim were constructed at God's command and placed at either end on top of the ark lid in the tabernacle Holy of Holies (Ex. 25:18-20; Heb. 9:5).

 - (2) They appeared to Ezekiel (Ezek. 1, 10).

 - (3) Prior to his fall, Satan (then known as Lucifer) was the chief cherub angel (Isa. 14:12; Ezek. 28:14).
3. **The seraphim** (Isa. 6:1-7). The Hebrew word for *seraphim* means "burning ones:" and probably speaks of the burning devotion to God on the part of these angelic beings. These beings are mentioned only once in the Bible. Their description and duties areas follows:
- a. They have six wings. Two are used to cover their face, two to cover their feet, and two are used to fly.

- b. They proclaim in a great chorus the majesty of God, crying out: "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isa. 6:3).
 - c. The awesome sound of their mighty praises shakes the foundation of the heavenly temple.
 - d. Isaiah, the great prophet, views all this in a vision. He is immediately convicted concerning both his sin and the sin of the nation Israel.
 - e. He is ministered to by one of the seraphim, who flew over to the heavenly altar and, with a pair of tongs, picked out a burning coal. He then touched Isaiah's lips with it and said: "*Lo, this hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged*" (Isa. 6:7).
4. **Living creatures** (Rev. 4:6-9; 5:8; 6:1, 3, 5, 7). These special heavenly beings are in some ways similar to both the cherubim and the seraphim, but seem to be in a separate class by themselves. Their number appears to be limited to four. It has been suggested that they now hold those privileges and responsibilities once assigned to Lucifer, before he became the devil.
- a. John the apostle sees these four standing before the shining crystal sea in heaven surrounding God's throne.
 - b. They are covered with eyes, both in front and behind.
 - c. They are covered with eyes, both in front and behind.
 - d. Each of the four has a different face.
 - (1) One has the face of a lion.
 - (2) One has the face of an ox.
 - (3) One has the face of a man.
 - (4) One has the face of an eagle.
 - e. Each creature has six wings.

Note: As it has been observed, there are similarities here between the cherubim and the living creatures. But differences may also be seen. The cherubim each have four faces, while the living creatures have but one. The cherubim possess four wings, whereas the living creatures have six.

- f. Without ceasing day or night, they proclaim God's praise, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come" (Rev. 4:8).
- g. Each of the four living creatures will announce one of the first four great tribulational judgements of the seven-sealed book (Rev. 6:1, 3, 5, 7).
- h. It has been suggested that the faces of both the cherubim and the living creatures are to remind the elect throughout all eternity of the earthly ministry performed by our blessed Lord. These faces correspond directly to the fourfold gospel presentation of Christ.
 - (1) Matthew presents him as the lion of the tribe of Judah.
 - (2) Mark presents him as the lowly ox.
 - (3) Luke presents him as the perfect man.

(4) John presents him as the mighty Godlike eagle.

5. **Ruling angels** {Eph. 1:21; 3:10; Col. 1:16; 2:10; 1 Pet. 3:22}.

In the above passages the following organisational features are mentioned.

- a. principalities
- b. powers
- c. thrones
- d. authorities
- e. dominions
- f. might

While it is impossible to distinguish clearly among these six, it is nevertheless evident that they describe various levels of ruling positions assigned to angels, ranging perhaps (to use an earthly analogy) from generals to privates.

6. **Guardian angels.**

"Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven" (Mt. 18:10).

"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. 1:14).

- The Bible does not state whether each believer has a specific guardian angel, or whether various angels on occasion simply protect and aid the heirs of salvation. Both are logical possibilities.
- Angels associated with horses and chariots

"And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and separated them, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven" (2 Ki. 2:11).

"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" (2 Ki. 6:17).

"The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels" (Ps. 68:17).

"I saw at night, and behold, a man was riding on a red horse, and he was standing among the myrtle trees which were in the ravine, with red, sorrel, and white horses behind him. Then I said, 'My lord, what are these?' And the angel who was speaking with me said to me, 'I will show you what these are: And the man who was standing among the myrtle trees answered and said, 'These are those whom the Lord has sent to patrol the earth: So they answered the angel of the Lord who was standing among the myrtle trees, and said, 'We have patrolled the earth, and behold, all the earth is peaceful and quiet' " (Zech. 1:8-11, NASV).

"And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean" (Rev. 19:14).

If these verses are to be taken in a literal sense, then one must conclude (whatever problems may be involved) that certain angels work closely with creatures of the animal kingdom in performing their ministry.

B. Their appearance.

1. A detailed description of the cherubim and seraphim has already been considered in our study. But what about the general appearance of angels? The Scriptures offer the following description.

" And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were amazed" (Mk. 16:5).

"His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow" (Mt.28:3).

"And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them, in shining garments" (Lk. 24:4).

" And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud; and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as though it were the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire" (Rev. 10:1).

" And the seven angels came out of the temple' having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles" (Rev. 15:6).

" And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power, and the earth was made bright with his glory" (Rev. 18:1).

In view of their dazzling splendour and great glory it is not difficult to understand why both unsaved (Col. 2:18) and saved men (Rev. 19:10; 22:8, 9) have attempted to worship angels.

C. Their names and titles.

1. Ministers (Ps. 103:20, 21; 104:4). This signifies their religious duties and spiritual service.
2. Host (Gen. 32:1, 2; Josh. 5:14; 1 Sam. 17:45; Ps. 89:8). This name speaks of their military service.
3. Chariots (2 Ki. 6:16, 17; Ps. 68:17; Zech. 6:5). This may refer to their swiftness.
4. Watchers (Dan. 4:13, 17). This speaks of their duties as supervisors and agents.
5. Sons of the mighty (ps. 29:1; 89:6). This title may refer to their awesome strength and power.

6. Sons of God (Gen. 6:2, 4; Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7). Dr. L. S. Chafer writes: *"In Old Testament terminology, some- times angels are called sons of God while men are called servants of God. In the New Testament this is reversed. Angels are servants and Christians are the sons of God. This particular order may be due to the fact that, in the Old Testament men are seen as related to this sphere over which angels are superior; while in the New Testament, saints are seen as related to their final exaltation into the likeness of Christ, compared to which the angels are inferior."* (*Systematic Theology*, Vol. II, p. 23)
7. Holy Ones, saints (Ps. 89:7; Dan. 8:13; Zech. J4:5). This refers to their total separation to the will of God.
8. Stars (Psa 38:7; Ps. 148:2, 3; Rev. 12:3, 4). This may indicate both their number and their brightness.

D. Their work and ministry

1. Their activities in heaven
 - a. They worship the Person of God (1 Ki. 22:19; Ps. 29:1, 2; Isa. 6:3; Rev. 4:8; 19:4)
 - b. They observe the people of God (Lk. 12:8, 9; 15:10; 1 Cor. 4:9; 11:10; Eph. 3:10; 1 Tim. 5:21; 1 Pet. 1:12)
 - *"For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men"* (1 Cor. 4:9).
 - *"For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels"* (1 Cor. 11:10).
 - *"The gospel. ..sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look unto"* (1 Pet. 1:12).
 - c. They inquire into the prophetic plan of God (Dan. 12:5, 6).
 - d. They rejoice in the works of God.
 1. His work of creation *Gob* 38:7; Rev. 4:11).
 2. His work of redemption (1 Tim. 3:16; Rev. 5:11, 12).
 - e. They perform the will of God (Gen. 28:12; Ps. 103:29; 104:4; Dan. 7:10).
 - f. They witness the wrath of God (Rev. 14:10).

2. Their activities on earth

a. Concerning the saved (see especially Heb. 1:14; Rev. 22:16)

- (1) They inform, instruct, and interpret concerning both the will and Word of God.

Note the following individuals who received that kind of ministry from angels.

- (a) Daniel (Dan. 7:16; 10:5, 11)
- (b) Zechariah (Zech. 1:9, 13, 14, 19; 2:3; 5:5-10; 6:4, 5)
- (c) Zacharias (Lk. 1:11-17)
- (d) Mary (Lk. 1:26-33)
- (e) Joseph (Mt. 1:20; 2:13, 19)
- (f) The shepherds (Lk. 2:9-12)
- (g) The women at the tomb (Lk. 24:4-7)
- (h) The apostles (Acts 1:10, 11)
- (i) Philip (Acts 8:26)
- (j) Cornelius (Acts 10:3-6) (k) John (Rev. 17:1; 21:9)

(2) They protect

- *"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them" (Ps. 34:7).*
- *"For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways" (Ps. 91:11).*

(a) Angels protected Lot from the sodomites (Gen. 19:10, 11)

(b) Angels protected Elisha from the Syrians (2 Ki. 6:15-17)

(c) They comfort.

(1) *"And as he [Elijah] lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat" (1 Ki. 19:5)*

(2) *"For there stood by me [Paul] this night an angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul" (Acts 27:24).*

(3) They deliver. *"But an angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them [the apostles] forth" (Acts 5:19).*

(4) *"And, behold, an angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shone in the prison; and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands" (Acts 12:7).*

(d) They minister to the believer at the moment of death.

" And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom" (Lk. 16:22).

b. Concerning the unsaved.

- (1) They judged the Egyptians (Ex. 12:13, 23).
- (2) They judged the sodomites (Gen. 19:13).
- (3) They judged the Assyrians (2 Ki. 19:35).
- (5) They judged Herod (Acts 12:23).
- (6) They will judge the earth during the tribulation.
 - (a) They hold back the four winds of heaven (Rev. 7:1).
 - (b) They pronounce the seven trumpet judgements (Rev. 8:2).
 - (c) They cast Satan and his angels out of heaven (Rev. 12:7,8).
 - (d) They announce the eternal hell awaiting all unbelievers (Rev. 14:10).
 - (e) They predict the fall of Babylon (Rev.14: 8).
 - (f) They announce the fall of Babylon (Rev. 18:1, 2).
 - (g) They pour out the seven vial judgements (Rev. 15:1).
 - (h) They announce Armageddon (Rev. 19:17).
 - (i) They accompany Christ at his Second Coming (2 Thess. 1:7, 8).
 - (j) They gather the unsaved for eternal hell (Mt. 13:39-43).
 - (k) They bind Satan in the bottom- less pit (Rev. 20:1).

c. Concerning Israel.

- (1) Angels fought for Israel Judges 5:20).

They gave the law to Israel (Deut. 33:2; Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19; Heb. 2:2).

They seal the 144,000 Israelites (Rev. 7:1-3).

They will gather the faithful Israel (Mt. 24:31).

d. Concerning the Savior

1. Angels worship Christ (Heb. 1:6)
2. They were made by him and for him (Col. 1:17)
3. They predicted his birth (Mt. 1:20, 21; Lk. 1:31)
4. They announced his birth (Lk. 2:9-13)
5. They helped protect him (Ps. 91:11; Mt. 2:13)
6. They ministered to him in the wilderness (Mt. 4:11)
7. They ministered to him in the garden (Lk. 22:43)

(1) They rolled away the tombstone (Mt. 28:2)

(2) They announced his resurrection (Mt. 28:6)

(3) They predicted his Second Coming (Acts 1:10, 11)

(4) They will accompany him at the Second Coming (2 Thess. 1:7, 8)

- (5) They are in total subjection to him (1 Pet. 3:22). Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer quotes Dr. Cooke: "Row constant their attendance on the Incarnate Saviour during his mysterious life amongst men! At his birth they are his heralds, and with songs exultant announce the glad tidings to mankind.

In his temptation they minister to him; in his agonies they succour him; on his resurrection they are the first to proclaim his triumph; on his ascension they come to escort him to the mediatorial throne; in his glorified state they render him supreme homage as their Lord; and when he returns to judge the world they will form his retinue! What sublime thoughts would be suggested, what emotions of wonder and joy would be excited, by the scenes they witnessed on earth and still witness in heaven, in reference to Christ, his twofold nature, and his great redeeming work.

God incarnate! This was new to them. They had seen the Son in his deity; but never till now enshrined in humanity. What amazing condescension! Obeying his own law as if he were a mere creature, and in the attitude of a servant! This was new. They had seen him as the governor of the universe; but never till now as a subject! En- countering Satan in conflict and prolonged temptation!

This was new. They had seen him frown the arch- rebel from his presence and hurl him to perdition; but never till now submitting to be tempted by him whose subtlety and power had seduced myriads to eternal ruin. Suffering the scorn and reproach of sinful men! This was new. They had seen myriads of happy spirits worship, adore, and love him, but never till now had they seen him personally insulted, reproached, and maltreated by his creatures.

Groaning in Gethsemane, and crucified between two thieves, and dying as a sacrificial victim! This was new. They had seen him supremely happy and glorious; but to see him agonize, to hear that dying wail, and to behold him a bloody corpse, and all this to save the world which had revolted from him!

What mysterious love! To see him, after all this, enthroned and glorified in human nature. This was a new fact in the moral history of the universe. The whole scenes were full of interest, wonder, and mystery; a gradation of wonders rising in succession, until they culminated in the permanent presence of the God-man, resplendent with a glory that fills the heaven of heavens.

Here were chapters of instruction for angelic minds to ponder; here were developments of hidden truths; here were discoveries of the Divine perfections, never known before, and still unfolding in brighter effulgence as ages roll on!" (*Systematic Theology*, Vol. II, p. 22)

E. Their destiny.

1. To spend eternity in the New Jerusalem along with the elect (Heb. 12:22, 23; Rev. 22:10-12).
2. To learn throughout eternity of God's grace as exhibited by the elect (Eph. 2:4-7; 3:10, 11).

The Story of an Angel

Dr. Billy Graham relates the following account: *"The Reverend John G. Paton, a missionary in the New Hebrides Islands, tells a thrilling story involving the protective care of angels. Hostile natives surrounded his mission headquarters one night, intent on burning the Patons out and killing them. John Paton and his wife prayed all during that terror-filled night that God would deliver them. When daylight came they were amazed to see the attackers unaccountably leave. They thanked God for delivering them.*

A year later, the chief of the tribe was converted to Jesus Christ, and Mr. Paton, remembering what had happened, asked the chief what had kept him and his men from burning down the house and killing them. The chief replied in surprise, 'Who were all those men you had with you there?' The missionary answered, 'There were no men there; just my wife and I: The chief argued that they had seen many men standing guard-hundreds of big men in shining garments with drawn swords in their hands.

They seemed to circle the mission station so that the natives were afraid to attack. Only then did Mr. Paton realise that God had sent His angels to protect them. The chief agreed that there was no other explanation. Could it be that God had sent a legion of angels to protect His servants, whose lives were being endangered?" (Angels: God's Special Agents, p. 3)