

STUDY ONE – INTRODUCING ANGELS

Introduction

The study of angels is referred to as “angelology”. The term comes from two Greek terms, *aggelos* meaning “messenger” or “angel” and *logos* meaning “word, matter, or thing.” In Christian theology the term “angelology” refers to the study of the Biblical doctrine of angels.

This study is the study of the righteous angels of God. It explains their origin, organization, and attributes. It summarizes the ministry of angels in the past, present, and future as recorded in the Bible. It also dispels common misconceptions about angels.

Traditionally, “angelology” includes the study of evil angels who are under the control of Satan. Their devices are an important subject of which we should be knowledgeable, “*Lest Satan should get an advantage of us*” (2 Corinthians 2:11) but we will not focus on that in this “STUDY ON ANGELS”.

There is great interest in angels today and there are many accounts of “angelic experiences” because people are fascinated by the supernatural. As Believers, we cannot allow experience or the world to define this subject for us. While we do not want to get caught up in “angel-mania”, neither do we want to ignore the vital ministry of God’s angels.

We cannot look to science, secular education, or artistic renditions to dispense truth on this subject. The Bible will be our source for analysis, as it is the Word of God inspired by the Holy Spirit. The Bible proves the existence of angels, describes them, and defines their ministries.

Why study angels? We are not seeking the accumulation of information, but divine revelation. As Believers, we must be able to separate truth from error. The false religions such as Islam and Mormonism were both founded when an “angel of light” appeared with a message that they claimed was from God. It is also important to understand the ministries of these supernatural spirits which are dispatched by God in your behalf. You should know their purposes and how they are activated in your life and ministry. In this year when we focus on the Holy Spirit and Power, the study of angels will enable us maximize all supernatural provisions from God.

You are not alone in the battles of life. You are surrounded by a great host of angels. Don’t you think it is time to get to know them?

KEY VERSE:

“By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.”
(Psalm 33:6)

THE DEFINITION OF ANGEL

The title “angel” means messenger. So, by definition, an angel is a messenger. The Bible has over three hundred references to angels and defines two groups of angelic messengers. The good angels carry out the commands of God, while evil angels carry out Satan’s deceitful and evil commands.

THE ORIGIN OF ANGELS

Angels did not evolve, nor were they formerly men. Angels were created by God at His command:

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“Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts! Praise Him, sun and moon; Praise Him, all you stars of light! Praise Him, you heavens of heavens, and you waters above the heavens! Let them praise the name of the LORD, for He commanded and they were created.” (Psalms 148:2-5)

The “invisible things” in heaven and the “hosts” referred to in the following Scriptures include angels.

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. (Colossians 1:16)

We also are told by Scripture that angels were present when God laid the foundations of the earth and they rejoiced to witness His creative work:

Where were you when I created the earth? Tell me, since you know so much! Who decided on its size? Certainly, you'll know that! Who came up with the blueprints and measurements? How was its foundation poured, and who set the cornerstone, While the morning stars sang in chorus and all the angels shouted praise? (Job 38:4-7 MSG)

The Bible is not clear on the exact time when God created angels, but we do know that the angels rejoiced as He created the earth and that by the sixth day of creation, *“the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them” (Genesis 2:1).*

THE PURPOSES OF ANGELS

Angels have many purposes, as you will learn in this study, but all of their ministries fall under two major categories: Their worship of God and their work for God.

Angels were originally created to worship the Trinity of God and were also created to carry out God's assignments. Their Biblical mandate is to...

“Bless the LORD, you His angels, who excel in strength, who do His word, heeding the voice of His word.” (Psalm 103:20)

The Lord “makes his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire” (Psalm 104:4).

The angels are “all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation” (Hebrews 1:14). Angels are dispatched from the throne room of God to minister to Believers who are the heirs of salvation. If you are a true Believer, then that includes you!

It is through Jesus Christ that angels ascend and descend to and from Heaven to do God's bidding. Jacob first saw this in a vision (Genesis 28:12) which was later explained by Jesus:

“And He said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.” (John 1:51)

In summary, angels were created for the purposes of worshipping God and working for Him by fulfilling specific assignments. You will learn more about their specific ministries as you progress in this study.

THE HOME OF ANGELS

Heaven is the home of the good angels of God. We see them present there continuously in the scenes described in the book of Revelation. Isaiah and Ezekiel also describe them as being present in God's throne room. Jesus said that the angels... *“do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 18:10).* Although they live in Heaven, angels are continuously active and present on earth.

THE NUMBER OF ANGELS

Angels can appear in any number: One (Luke 1:26-29); two (John 20:12; Acts 1:210); a few (Genesis 32:1); and as a multitude (Luke 2:13).

The Bible gives no definite figures, but we know that there is a fixed number of angels created by God, as angels do not reproduce and they do not die (Matthew 22:28-30). According to the Bible, the angels are:

- **Thousands of thousands.**

“A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, and the books were opened. (Daniel 7:10)

The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place. (Psalm 68:17)

And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands. (Revelation 5:11)

- **Legions.**

Jesus said that He could call twelve legions of angels to His assistance if He desired to do so (Matthew 26:53). A legion was a military term in the Roman army for a group of at least 6,000 soldiers. When Jesus said 12 legions would be sent at His request, that is 72,000 angels!

- **Multitudes.**

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. (Luke 2:13-14)

This was a multitude of the heavenly host, not the whole host.

- **Hosts.**

Psalm 46:7 indicates that God has hosts of angels. In the Old Testament Jesus is repeatedly called the Lord of Hosts.

“You alone are the LORD; You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and everything on it, the seas and all that is in them, and You preserve them all. The host of heaven worships You.” (Nehemiah 9:6)

The Word of God declares:

“As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured: so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me.” (Jeremiah 33:22)

- **Innumerable.**

“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels...” (Hebrews 12:22)

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God named the stars (Psalm 147:4). He knows each of His angels by name. He also knows your name and the number of hairs on your head (Matthew 10:30). If each person on earth has a guardian angel, then that increases the innumerable host even more.

One thing for sure: When confronting spiritual enemies, we can be assured that “They that be with us are more than they that be with them” (2 Kings 6:16). And as Job questions: “Who is able to number his hosts of angels?” (Job 25:3).

THE SPHERES OF ACTIVITY OF ANGELS

The spheres of activity of angels refers to the territories in which they function. The book of Revelation confirms that angels are active in their dwelling place in Heaven (Matthew 22:30). Angels are also active on earth, but there is no Biblical record of them taking up permanent residence on earth. They apparently travel between Heaven and earth (Genesis 28:12 and John 1:51).

THE SPIRITUAL DIVISION OF ANGELS

Angels fall into two spiritual categories: Holy and elect (Mark 8:38; 1 Timothy 5:21) or evil and unclean spirits (Luke 8:2; 11:24,26). They are either the angels of God (John 1:51) or Satan’s angels (Matthew 25:41). So how did this spiritual chasm occur?

God does not create evil. Satan, the enemy of our souls, was a perfect angel when he was originally created by God, but he was given a free will to choose good or evil:

“You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you.” (Ezekiel 28:15)

The Bible describes Satan’s rebellion against God in Isaiah 14:12-15. When Satan sinned, he did not sin alone. He took with him a portion of the angelic host of Heaven who participated in his rebellion against God. Satan and the rebellious angels were cast out of Heaven. They were no longer good spiritual beings (angels), but became evil beings referred to as demons:

“And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So, the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.” (Revelation 12:7-9)

Satan and the fallen angels are responsible for many of the myths and deceptions regarding angels. More about that in the next study.