

What the Bible Really Says About God's Heavenly Host

Student Copy

"Much of what Christians think they know about angels is more informed by Christian tradition than what Scripture. The angelology of Christian tradition is, to say the least, quite incomplete and, in some ways, inaccurate." [Michael S. Heiser]

Questions:

1. *Am I correct in thinking that angels are spiritual beings, can be a spirit and can they also personify themselves as humans?*

Angels appeared to people in the Bible in three ways. First, some angels appeared to people in a recognizable form, even seeming to be human.

Second, other angels appeared to people in dreams.

Third, some angels appeared to people in visions.

One verse alludes to the possibility of angels walking among us today: **Hebrews 13:2** *"Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it".*

Scripture provides many examples of angels doing God's work. They come as God's messengers providing instruction and good news, appear in visions and dreams, help, and protect people, and give worship to God.

2. *Does God have use for angels today?* Yes, I think God uses angels and some may be active in the world today. But it is not that simple to explain or accept. Although there are scriptural examples of angelic encounters, we know that God can and does use angels to accomplish certain things.

With that, it is quite Possible (and I emphasize "possible") that many people today have met or seen an angel without realizing it. There is also a problem that can come with thinking this way, which Paul addresses in **2 Corinthians 11:14–15 (NET 2nd ed.)**

*Also, angels are not to be worshiped. **Colossians 2:18–19 (NET 2nd ed.)***

3. *Are there angels on earth as well as with God today?* Yes, but... when we discuss whether angels appear to people today, we must also be careful to note that both holy angels and fallen angels (called demons) exist. All angel visitation claims fall into one of three categories. First, they can be made up, whether intentionally or sincerely (having a human explanation). Second, an angelic visit could be a deception by an evil spirit. Third, a person may have a true angelic encounter. In addition, angelic encounters are rare or uncommon.

True angelic encounters will involve messages or activities that *"do not contradict"* God's clear revelation in Scripture. (*Titus 1:2*).

Now as a point of clarification, Seraphim and Cherubim are not angels, and are never sent by God to people to deliver messages.

Angels are never described as having inhuman features (wings, multiple faces) like cherubim and seraphim are.

Cherubim and seraphim may share human traits, but angels do not have creaturely attributes.

The conclusion can be drawn, then, that angels—those divine beings sent to earth to interact with people—look like people and do not have wings.

GOD EMPLOYS SUPERNATURAL AGENTS

Some people will use ***Zechariah 5:9 (NET 2nd ed.)*** as a proof text,

While it is clear that wings mark the women as being from heaven (as opposed to earth), the point is not “these are angels.”

Rather, the point is to highlight their contrast with the wicked woman in the basket a few verses earlier (Zech 5:5–8).

One argument that angels have wings is assumed from ***Revelation 10:1 (NET 2nd ed.)***

The point is this, just because supernatural beings descend from heaven, it does not require them to have wings to do so.

Another issue is to assume that angels have gender. They do not! This is because they are spirit beings and gender is a biological attribute.

Based both on their role historically and in the future plans of God we can say that, yes, there are angels among us. Although we cannot be certain how they will appear or if we will know when we meet one, we can be certain that holy angels are here to fulfill God's plan.

Are there guardian angels?

Historically, the idea of guardian angels developed among Jews during the time between the Old and New Testaments.

Guardian angels are angels assigned to help, guide, and care for individual people here on earth.

The key passage is ***Matthew 18:10***

Here, the phrase “***these little ones***” could refer either to children or to all believers in Christ.

An important detail in ***Matthew 18:10*** is that Jesus is speaking in the plural. “Their angels” refers to a group of angels standing ready to help a group of God's children.

Whether or not we have a guardian angel is not clearly revealed in Scripture. The question is not whether we have a personal angel constantly at our side, but whether we have placed our faith in Jesus Christ (John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8-9).

4. *Should we as believers believe in angels?*

Angels (their name means "messengers") are one of the two sorts of personal beings that God created, humankind being the other.

They are intelligent moral agents, not embodied or ordinarily visible, although they are able to show themselves to humans in what appears as a physical form.

The mysterious "*angel of the Lord*" or "*angel of God,*" who appears often in the early Old Testament story and is sometimes identified with the God from whom he is at other times distinguished (Gen. 16:7-13; 18:1-33; 22:11-18; 24:7, 40; 31:11-13; 32:24-30; 48:15-16; Exod. 3:2-6; 14:19; 23:20-23; 32:34-33:5; Num. 22:22-35; Josh. 5:13-15; Judg. 2:1-5; 6:11-23; 9:13-23), is in some sense God acting as His own messenger, and is commonly seen as a preincarnate appearance of God the Son.