

## The Angels

Luke 2:1-14 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. <sup>2</sup> This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup> And all the people were on their way to register for the census, each to his own city. <sup>4</sup> Now Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, <sup>5</sup> in order to register along with Mary, who was betrothed to him, and was pregnant. <sup>6</sup> While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. <sup>7</sup> And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

<sup>8</sup> In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock at night. <sup>9</sup> And an **angel** of the Lord suddenly stood near them, and the **glory** of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly **frightened**. <sup>10</sup> And so the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you **good news of great joy** which will be for all the people; <sup>11</sup> for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup> And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” <sup>13</sup> And suddenly there appeared **with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army of angels praising** God and saying,

<sup>14</sup> “Glory to God in the highest,  
And on earth peace among people with whom He is pleased.”

## Introduction

Angels. Very interesting creatures of God, aren't they? Many a people are fascinated with angels. Some of them even worship and pray to angels.

Out of curiosity, I typed in “angels” on Google Search. In 0.1 second, 3.8 billion results came on. The top one is, of course, LA Angels. It's not easy to find the truth on angels on Google.

If you do the same research on a Bible site, however, you will find the result on ‘angel/angels’: 290 times in the Bible (NASB). You find facts and the truth on angels in the Bible.

Trivia: out of 66 books in the Bible, **which book** has **the most references on angel/angels**? The answer is the Book of Revelation: 77 times— 25% of the time. One thing

is for sure. Angels will be very actively involved in the end times. Furthermore, if you want to study about angels of God, begin with the Book of Revelation, then study the whole Bible using a concordance.

**How many wings** do they have? Here's the official records. Six (Isaiah 6: 2. Seraphim: two wings to cover their faces, two covering their feet, and two flying). Cf. the 'four living creatures' in God's presence also have six wings (Revelation 4:8). Most of the artistic paintings show angels with two wings (no supporting evidence in the Bible). Sometimes, angels take human forms with no wings and appear to us as normal people (Judges 13:6). So much so that some people entertained angels without knowing it. Indeed, the Bible commands us to show hospitality to strangers (Hebrews 13:2). E.g., the Mideastern hospitality: entertaining the strangers is very important.

**Are all the angels good?** No, there are some bad ones that follow the devil (Revelation 12:9). We call them the fallen angels. They are the opposite of 'the heavenly host' in today's text. That's another topic for another time.

**Do they have names?** Yes, they do. Michael--*Who is like God?* (Daniel 1:13, Jude 9), Gabriel--*God is my strength* (Daniel 8:16, Luke 1:19), and so forth.

**Are there ranks?** Yes, there are. Archangels (Jude 9, 1 Thessalonians 4:6, Revelation 12:7), regular angels.

There may be many more questions on angels but let me move on.

## Content

In today's reading, we see an angel announcing the birth of the Savior to the shepherds in the fields. The same angel later was joined by the heavenly host, which also means host of angels (v. 9, 13) ---all of them announced the birth of Christ.

The question is, who are they? They are spirits, heavenly and supernatural beings created by God (Hebrews 1:7) for a purpose. What purpose?

Three purposes I can identify in the Scriptures.

1. **Messengers of God:** The Hebrew word for angel is ‘*mal'āk* (מַלְאָךְ).’ Literal translation would be the ‘sent one,’ or ‘messenger.’ The Greek word ‘*ἄγγελος*’ shares the same root as ‘*ἀγγελομαι*’ which means ‘to announce.’ God sends His ‘angel,’ His ‘messenger,’ to announce His message to His people (E.g., God sent an angel to Hagar with His message on Ishmael--Genesis 16:9-11). Here, in today’s story, to the shepherds in the fields, God sent the angel to announce His will and plan for humanity’s salvation (v. 10). To save them from their sins through Jesus the Son. The Savior’s birth was indeed the ‘great joy to the world’ (v. 10).
2. **Worship/ Praise the Lord** (v. 14): The second function of angels is to worship and praise God (Hebrews 1:6). In the Book of Revelation, in heavenly worship, we see angels join the four living creatures, 24 elders, saints in Christ, and the multitudes of nations and races in worship of the LORD God (Revelation 7:11). Together, they honor, worship, and praise the name of the LORD forever and ever. That’s why I remind you that in our own worship here at Manahawkin **your angels and mine** join us in worship of our heavenly Father every Sunday. Amen?
3. **Minister to God’s children:** angels are ministering spirits. Listen to the Scripture: *Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?* (Hebrews 1:14). They are assigned to each child of God as a ministering spirit. They protect and guide you and me, the children of God. Even Jesus was ministered by the angels in the wilderness during His 40 days of fasting: *And He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; and Jesus was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to Him* (Mark 1:13).

The good news is this: God has assigned angels to each one of us. Some people call them ‘guardian’ angels. Others claim that they have more than one angel. Each church also has its own angel (Revelation 3:7). Each town, city, and country have angels assigned too (Daniel 10:20). Angels are in charge of many places and things. E.g., Angel in charge of the abyss (Revelation 9:11)—Abaddon, Apollyon. Angels in charge of fire, waters (Revelation 16:5) and so forth.

But, as far as the angels assigned for us, their job is to protect and help us in our Heaven-bound journey (e.g., The angel delivered Peter from jail. Acts 12:7-10). Although they are invisible to our physical eyes, they are at work all the time. I often heard people’s testimonies about their angels protecting them. I, too, experienced such a

protection several years ago. E.g., My car accident. Car damaged, but I came out unscathed. Thank God for that. My immediate thought after the accident was that God indeed protected me through my angel.

**No worship of angels:** Please note here. When the angels appear to people, they are accompanied with the glory of God (v. 9) (Revelation 18:1). The glory of God illuminates the place they appear so strong that it creates holy and awesome fear in our hearts. That's why, in today's story, the shepherds got 'terribly frightened' (v. 9). The typical angelic greeting to such people is "Do not fear" (v. 10) (Matthew 28:5).

When encountered with the angel, some people fall down to their faces and worship the angel. But angel worship is forbidden by God: *I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things. <sup>9</sup> But he \*said to me, "Do not do that. I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book. **Worship God.**"* (Revelation 22:8-9).

The right kind of angels always point our attention to God not to themselves. The right angels remind us not to worship them but God. Therefore, we should never worship or pray to angels. No offerings/sacrifices to them, either (E.g., Manoah wanted to offer a goat sacrifice to angel. The angel said to offer the burnt offering to the LORD instead--Judges 13:16).

A lot of people in America believe in angels. That's good. But don't treat angels as a god to worship or some special beings to pray to. Remember, angels may have supernatural power beyond human understanding, but we never bow down to them. They are ministering spirits for God's children. Worship the LORD only. Same goes with today's story: the focus is not angels but Christ and His birth.

**Has Christ come in flesh?** One more point: I have never personally encountered with angels either in a vision, dream, or in prayer. But if you ever encounter with them, be sure to check their identity with a question from God's Word. Sometimes, the angels of the devil, not of God, come in disguise to deceive the chosen ones. Some respected Christian prophets advise us to use this method to tell the good ones from the fallen angels: always ask them if Jesus Christ has come in the flesh: *By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come **in the flesh** is from God* (1

John 4:2). If the angels say yes, then you can trust them. If the angels deny or cannot say it, then, you should reject them right away because they are not of God.

## **Conclusion**

In Christ's birth story, angels were active participants. In fact, God sent his messengers to Mary, Joseph, and shepherds. Besides the fact that they encountered with angels, they all shared one common trait: obedience to God's will. None of them said to God, "No." Everyone said "Yes" once they knew what God wanted them to do. God sends His angels still today only to those who embrace His will in their lives.

Let us pray.