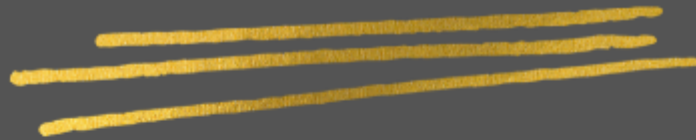


ANGELS IN THE BIBLE



SELF-STUDY
BIBLE LESSONS

LES BRIDGEMAN

Lesson 1: Cherubim, Seraphim & Angels

According to the Bible, God created all things, visible and invisible. While invisible creatures cannot be seen by definition, occasionally they appear to humans. In this lesson, we will highlight the invisible creatures known as cherubim, seraphim, and angels.

Cherubim

The first time one of these creatures is mentioned in the Bible is in Genesis 3:

After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life. (v. 24)

1. What do you learn about cherubim from Genesis 3:24? (The word cherubim is plural and cherub is singular.)

2. How are cherubim described in the following verses?
 - Exodus 37:7-9 –

 - Ezekiel 28:14 –

The longest description of cherubim in the Bible is found in Ezekiel 1. But instead of calling them cherubim, Ezekiel repeatedly calls them “living creatures.” However, we know these are cherubim because in chapter 10 he refers to his vision in chapter 1 with these words:

These were the living creatures I had seen beneath the God of Israel by the Kebar River, and I realized that they were cherubim. (v. 20)

3. List five details about the cherubim in Ezekiel 1.

John describes similar creatures in Revelation 4:6-8, however he only calls them “living creatures,” and they don’t seem to be identical to Ezekiel’s “living creatures.”

In sum, cherubim are creatures with human and animal features, including wings. And they serve as guardians and praise God. While some Bible interpreters think cherubim are a type of angel, the Bible never identifies them as such.

Seraphim

4. Seraphim are only mentioned in one place in the Bible. What do you learn about seraphim from Isaiah 6:1-7?

Angels

5. Now we begin the study of angels or angelology. How are angels generally portrayed?

Contrary to popular culture, here’s my simple biblical argument for wingless angels:

- Angels are not described as having wings.
- Angels are usually described as men and men don’t have wings.
- While cherubim and seraphim are described as having wings, the Bible doesn’t categorize them as angels.
- Therefore, in the Bible angels don’t have wings.

One challenge to my argument is posed by Daniel 9:21 and Revelation 14:6, which both mention angels flying. However, they don’t say whether these angels have wings. Is it possible to fly without wings? These are the only passages that could possibly be used to support the idea that angels have wings. The other verses that describe the appearance of angels never mention wings.

Whether angels have wings or not is a minor issue. You don’t have to start a fight with others about this issue, but you can point out the biblical data. Augustine said, “In essentials unity, non-essentials liberty and in all things charity.” This means that we have to be united around those beliefs that are really important but for the other stuff it’s okay to disagree. Perhaps angels can appear with or without wings. Either way it doesn’t affect our salvation. However, the point is that we should get our view of angels from the Bible and the Bible doesn’t seem to give much support for the idea that angels have wings.

Lesson 2: Angelic Appearances

The word “angel” means messenger. The same Greek word translated as “angels” is also translated as “messengers” referring to human beings in Luke 7:24; 9:52. So the word refers to a “messenger” whether human or heavenly. Usually, the context (surrounding material) helps us decide which type of messenger is being referred to. One place in the Bible where the context does not provide clarity is Revelation 2 & 3. In these two chapters some prefer to translate the word as “angel” and others as “messenger.” Notice the footnote in the NIV Bible.

1. Read the passages below and answer the following questions for each passage.

- Who does the angel speak to?
- What does the angel say (summarize)?
- What does the angel do (highlight any special abilities)?

Judges 13 –

Luke 1:8-25 –

Luke 1:26-38 –

2. Make a list of similarities between the three previous passages.

3. Answer the same three questions for the following passages.

Judges 6:6-24 –

Acts 5:17-20 –

Acts 12:1-11 –

4. What have you learned about angels from these Scriptures?

Lesson 3: Angelic Activity

Good Angels

1. Read the verses below and summarize what good angels do on the blank lines. (Answers are at the end of the lesson.)

In Heaven

- _____
Revelation 5:11-14

Note: Angels are commanded to praise God (Psalm 103:20-21; 148:2-5), and good angels do not accept worship (Revelation 19:9-10; 22:8-9).

On Earth

- Hebrews 1:14 says, angels are “sent to serve _____.”
- _____
“Angel” means messenger. Luke 1 & 2; Matthew 1 & 2; 28:1-7; Acts 10:1-8; Revelation 14:6-7
- _____
Exodus 14:15-20; Psalm 34:7; 91:11; Daniel 6:22; 12:1; Matthew 24:31; Acts 5:17-20; 12:1-11
- _____
Numbers 22:21-34; 2 Samuel 24:15-17; 2 Kings 19:35; Matthew 13:37-42, 47-50; Acts 12:23
2 Thessalonians 1:6-10; Revelation 8:6-9:21; 16; 20:1-3

Bad Angels

2. Some angels disobeyed God. What do you learn about evil angels in the following verses?
 - Matthew 25:41 –
 - Revelation 12:9 –

- 2 Peter 2:4 –

- Jude 6 –

3. Satan means adversary. What do you learn about Satan from the following verses?

- Luke 10:18 –

- 2 Corinthians 11:14-15 –

- Job 1:6-12 –

- Zechariah 3:1-2 –

- Revelation 12:1-9 –

Some interpreters have seen a reference to Satan's "fall" in the following passages:

- Isaiah 14:12-15 –

- Ezekiel 28:12-19 –

However, we must be careful to acknowledge that the prophecies are primarily directed at human kings—the king of Babylon and the king of Tyre.

Although the Bible never says, "Satan is a fallen angel" it does show a definite connection between Satan and angels. For example, consider the following data. First, according to Paul, "Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14). Second, when tempting Jesus, Satan quoted from Psalm 91:11-12, which refers to angels. Third, in the book of Job, Satan presented himself before the LORD with the angels (Job 1:6, 2:1). Fourth, Jude 9 says that the devil had a dispute with the archangel Michael. Fifth, in Revelation 12:7-9, the devil and his angels fight against Michael and his angels. Sixth,

Satan will be thrown into the Abyss by an angel from heaven (Rev. 20:1-3). Finally, God has prepared an eternal fire for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41).

Answers

In Heaven

- Worship God

On Earth

- Deliver messages to God's people.
- Protect and deliver God's people from trouble.
- Execute judgment on God's enemies.

Lesson 4: Jesus and Angels

While angels appear in many places in the Bible, the most angelic activity centers on the life of Jesus (see Jn. 1:51).

1. Read the passages below and answer the following questions for each passage.

- What did the angel say (summarize)?
- What did the angel do?
- How did the angel help Jesus' mission?

Before Jesus' birth

- Luke 1:8-25 –

- Luke 1:26-38 –

- Matthew 1:18-25 –

After Jesus' birth

- Luke 2:8-15 –

- Matthew 2:13-23 –

During Jesus' earthly ministry

- Mark 1:12-13 –

- Luke 22:39-44 –

After Jesus' resurrection

- Matthew 28:1-7 –

- Acts 1:9-11 (Lk. 24:4) –

2. According to Jesus, what role will angels have in the future?

- Matthew 13:47-50 –

- Mark 13:26-27 –

3. What else did Jesus teach about angels?

- Mark 12:25 –

- Mark 13:32 –

- Matthew 18:10 –

- Luke 15:10 –

Lesson 5: The Angel of the LORD

In the Old Testament, there is an intriguing figure called the angel of the LORD. This special angel is mysterious because it is so closely connected to God that at times it appears to be God. Here are the three main views on the identity of this angel:

- a special angel
- God in humanlike form
- Jesus

1. Read the passages below then give your opinion on the identity of this angel by placing a 1 (special angel), 2 (God) or 3 (Jesus) beside each passage along with your reasons for doing so.

- Genesis 16 –

- Genesis 22:1-19 –

- Genesis 31:1-13 –

- Genesis 48:15-16 –

- Exodus 3:1-6 –

- Exodus 23:20-23 –

- Judges 2:1-4 –

- Judges 6:11-24 –

- 2 Kings 19:35 –

- 1 Chronicles 21:14-16 –

- Zechariah 3 –

Lesson 6: Summary and Reflection

The Nature of Angels

- **Created beings** (Psalm 148:2-5; Colossians 1:15-17; Revelation 4:11)
- **Created before the rest of God's creation?** (Job 38:7)
- **Called "mighty ones"** (Psalm 103:20)
- **Spirits** (Hebrews 1:14)
- **Do not marry** (genderless?) (Matthew 22:30; Hebrews 1:14)
- **Able to rejoice** (Luke 15:10; Hebrews 12:22)
- **Able to sin** (2 Peter 2:4)
- **Some angels did sin** (2 Peter 2:4). There does not seem to be any hope of redemption for the angels who sinned.
- **Able to eat** (Genesis 19)
- **Have desires**; they are not robots (1 Peter 1:12)
- **Some are good and some are evil—good angels fight against evil angels** (Revelation 12:7-9)
- **There are destroying angels** (Psalm 78:49)
- **Have an authority structure** (1 Peter 3:22; Matthew 26:53; 1 Thessalonians 4:16, Jude 9, Revelation 12:7. Archangel means chief angel. Satan is in charge of his own angels – Mt. 25:41)
- **Only Michael is called an archangel** (Jude 9)
- **Only two angels are named – Michael** (Jude 9) and **Gabriel** (Lk. 1:19, 26)

Angels and Humans

- **Protect God's people from trouble** (Acts 12:1-11)
- **Little ones have angels in heaven, (i.e., guardian angels)?** (Matthew 18:10)
- **Bring messages to God's people** (Lk.1-2. Angel means messenger. Announced three births – Samson, John, Jesus)
- **Execute judgment on God's enemies** (Acts 12:23; 2 Thess. 1:6-10)
- **Of a higher order and more powerful than human beings** (Hebrews 2:7; 2 Peter 2:10-11)
- **God's people will judge angels** (1 Corinthians 6:3)
- **To the human eye they usually appear to be men** (Luke 24:4,22-23; Genesis 19:1-29; names are male – Gabriel and Michael)
- **May look like a special human** (Judges 13:6)
- **May not look a special human** (Hebrews 13:2)
- **Have access to our dream world** (Matthew 1:20)
- **Humans may be tempted to worship angels, but good angels do not accept worship from humans** (Revelation 19:9-10; 22:8-9).

1. What is the point of learning about angels?

The Point of Angelology

- It reminds us that there's more to life than what we can see. There's an invisible world full of creatures that affect the visible world.
- It gives us more reason to praise God.
- It helps us understand how God works in our lives. God uses his creatures, the angels, to accommodate himself to our level.
- It gives us a proper perspective of ourselves. We are not angels nor are we animals.
- It gives us a proper perspective of God's invisible creatures. They should not be worshipped.



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