It seems as though angels have captured the imagination of people everywhere. Unfortunately, there is a lot of misinformation about angels, along with superstitions and unscriptural understandings. This pamphlet will provide a biblical perspective on angels.

Do angels exist?

The Word of God—not popular television shows or magazine articles—is our only reliable source for knowing what angels are, and what they do. The Bible teaches us that angels were made by God during the six days of creation. Before creation there was only God (John 1:1-3), and after creation, we are told that on the seventh day God “rested from all the work of creating he had done” (Gen. 2:3b). The Bible does not indicate on which day of creation God made angels. But angels are very real.

What does the word “angel” mean?

The word “angel” comes from a Greek word that means “messenger.” Angels are God’s messengers. Elsewhere in the Bible, angels are described as spirits (cf. Acts 23:9; Heb. 1:14). The word “angel” is actually a description of what they do.

What are angels?

Angels are spirits. They are beings who do not have a physical body. Jesus Himself said, “a spirit does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have” (Luke 24:39). Evil angels too are described as not having “flesh and blood” (Eph. 6:12). In the Scriptures, when angels do appear in human form, this is only a momentary appearance for those who need to see them. Angels are not gods. They are God’s creation and serve His holy and perfect will. The good angels are said to be “ministering spirits” (Heb. 1:14), sent by God to serve us, His people.

Are angels human?

Human beings are the crown of God’s creation. Only of human beings, and no other creature, did God say, “Let us make man in our own image” (Gen. 1:26). Furthermore, the Scriptures reveal that only into human beings did God breathe the breath of life (Gen. 2:7). Also, God did not give angels rule over His creation. This privilege He gave only to mankind (Gen. 1:26-28). Angels are not human beings. They exist as spirits who serve God and His people.

Do human beings become angels when they die?

No, human beings do not become angels when they die. The Scriptures are clear on this point. Until the last day, the souls of the dead are before the Lord, enjoying peace and rest in His presence, awaiting the final day when they will receive glorified bodies for all eternity (see 1 Cor. 15; 1 Thess. 5:17; Rev. 7).

Are angels intelligent beings?

The Bible describes angels as having both intelligence and a will. The good angels know and follow the wisdom of God, which He has revealed through Christ to His church (Eph. 3:10). They gladly serve us, who are the heirs of the salvation Christ has won for us (Heb. 1:14). However, angels do not know all things. For instance, they do not know the thoughts of our hearts (1 Kings 8:39).

How powerful are angels?

Angels are extremely powerful beings. They are described as “mighty ones” (Ps. 103:20; 2 Thess. 1:7). The good angels guard and protect God’s children (Ps. 91:11-13). The power of the angels is never unlimited, but is always subject to the will and authority of God.

Evil angels too are powerful beings. The Bible tells us that they hold captive all unbelievers (Luke 11:21-22; Eph. 2:2). Believers in Christ are able to withstand the temptation of evil angels through the power of God (Eph. 6:10-17).

Where are angels?

Angels, like God, do not inhabit the same physical dimension that human beings inhabit. From time to time, they are ordered by God to appear in our physical dimension. Thus, while there are times when angels will make an appearance at a distinct place (cf. Acts 12:7), they remain beings that inhabit no physical space.

How many angels are there?

The Bible does not give us an exact number, but does clearly teach that there are incredibly large numbers of angels who serve God. Scripture speaks of “ten thousand times ten thousand angels” (Dan. 7:10). Elsewhere Scripture speaks of “a great company of the heavenly host” (Luke 2:13).

From every indication in the Bible, there are an unimaginably large number of angels, of whom we are totally unaware most of the time. There is a fixed and limited number of angels, never increasing or decreasing. Unlike human beings, angels do not marry and have children (Mark 12:25). They are immortal.

Are all angels the same?

Within the large numbers of angels there are apparently cer-
What About Angels?

Good angels enjoy the blessing of being able to see God. They are in the immediate presence of God, always beholding His great glory, majesty and power (Matt. 18:10). This is called the "beatific vision," which all Christians will enjoy one day when they are in heaven.

God's Word reveals the following things about the activity of good angels: They praise God (Is. 6:3; Luke 2:13), and they are the Lord's servants in the world and in the Church (Ps. 103:20-21; Heb. 1:14).

God sends angels to serve and to protect Christian believers in their work and their callings in life (Ps. 91:11-12). They attend to the dying (Luke 16:22). They care for children (Matt. 18:10). Angels are deeply interested in all that occurs in the Church. They adore and take great joy in the work of Jesus Christ for the salvation of the world (Luke 2:13; Eph. 3:10). They rejoice over every sinner who repents (Luke 15:10).

Scripture mentions the presence of angels at every great event in the Kingdom of God. Angels were present when God gave His law on Mount Sinai (Deut. 33:2; Gal. 3:19). Angels were present at the conception, birth, resurrection and ascension of our Lord (Luke 1:26; 2:11; Mark 1:13; 24:5ff; Acts 1:10ff). Angels will come with Jesus when He returns on the last day (Matt. 13:41ff; 24:31).

The Bible tells us that angels are present in the public worship of Christians (1 Cor. 11:10). God also uses angels to help the family and to preserve law and order (Gen. 24:7; Matt. 18:10; Dan. 10:13).

How are we to treat angels?

We need to praise and thank God for good angels. We are told that we are to take care not to offend them through sin and unbelief (1 Cor. 11:10; 1 Tim. 5:21). But the Scriptures are also clear that we must not pray to angels, nor offer them our worship. The angels themselves protest any worship given to them (Rev. 22:8-9).

As believers, we have the privilege of having angels surrounding us and protecting us and working to do God's good and perfect will in our lives. Our hope and trust is always in God, whom we know sends His angels to watch over us and to see us through whatever difficulty in life may come our way.

Because of our Lord Jesus Christ's perfect life and sacrificial death for the sins of the world, we have the assurance of the complete and total forgiveness of all our sins. We know that God loves and cares for us as His own dear children. Furthermore, we know that the Lord sends His angels to care for us in order that some day we may join them, and all the company of heaven, in seeing God and singing His praises for all eternity.

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