

MORE ABOUT ANGELS

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The word “angel” comes from the Greek word *angelos* which means “a messenger (from *angelo*, to deliver a message)” (Vine). The “angels” spoken of in the Bible are spiritual beings created by God for His purpose. The Bible says that God created all things “that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers” (Colossians 1:16). We do not know when angels were created. These secret things belong to God (Deuteronomy 29:29). Consider some important facts we can know about angels:

ANGELS ARE NOT OMNISCIENT – Omniscient means “all-knowing.” This is a characteristic of deity, and angels are not divine. They are created beings and are limited. Consider an example of their limitations: “To them [the prophets] it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven – things which angels desire to look into” (1 Peter 1:12). Why do the angels desire to “look into” God’s eternal plan? Because they do not know it! They must learn what is revealed from the mind of God. They cannot search the deep things of God like the Holy Spirit can (1 Corinthians 2:10-11; see also Matthew 24:36).

ANGELS RANK JUST ABOVE MAN – The Bible says that man was made by God “a little lower than the angels” (Psalm 8:4-5). Angels are of a higher created order and rank than man. Some believe that we become angels when we die. The Bible does not teach this. Jesus did say that “in the resurrection” we are “like angels” (Matthew 22:30), but He did not say that we “become angels.” We become “like angels” in that we will not marry nor be given in marriage. We must not make Jesus say more than He said.

ANGELS CAN SIN AND BE PUNISHED – “For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment” (2 Peter 2:4); “And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own habitation, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day” (Jude 6). We learn from this that angels are free moral agents that can choose to obey God or choose to disobey Him and be punished. We know that the Devil has “his angels” (Matthew 25:41), which are angels in rebellion against God. We are told not to believe an angel who would teach a perverted gospel (Galatians 1:8). Evil can deceive even an angel. If we avoid error and hold fast to the truth, we will welcome Jesus when he “is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels” (1 Thessalonians 1:7) and join the angels praising God around His throne (Revelation 7:9-12).