

The Biblical SPIRIT WORLD

Angels - God's Messengers

The word “angel” comes from the Greek word *angelos*, which is a translation from the Hebrew (*malakh*), and means “*messenger*”. As we studied earlier, all angels have certain characteristics: they are spirit beings; have intelligence; are powerful; they do not marry or reproduce; and they do not die. These characteristics are true of both the holy angels and the fallen angels (demons). For our purposes, when we refer to angels from this point on, we are referring to the *holy, unfallen angels* who have remained loyal to God. In the next lesson we will look at the *fallen angels* and refer to them as demons.

III. Types and Orders of Angels

According to the Scriptures, there are different types and orders of angels with different functions and purposes. *Medieval angelology* went so far as to rank the angels as follows (from highest to lowest): *Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominions, Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Archangels and Angels*.

The Bible, however, mentions these types of angels:

Archangel - Only one archangel is actually mentioned by name - Michael. *Jude 1:9*.

He is also referred to as one of the *chief princes* (Daniel 10:13) and has the special responsibility of watching over the affairs of Israel (Daniel 12:1) and will announce the coming of the Lord (I Thessalonians 4:16). He also defeats Satan in a great celestial war (Revelation 12:7-9).

Ruling or ranking angels, principalities and powers - *Ephesians 1:20-21, 3:10, 6:12*

Guardian angels - *Hebrews 1:14, Psalm 91:9-13* For children - *Matthew 18:10*.

Seraphim (seraph) - *Isaiah 6:1-4*. Angels charged with the worship of God or cleansing in preparation for worship. Could be a special kind of cherubim due to similar characteristics to the angels in Ezekiel 10.

Cherubim (cherub) - *Genesis 3:22-24*. Guards the entrance to the Garden of Eden and the Tree of Life.

- Surround God's throne - *I Samuel 4:4, Psalm 80:1, Psalm 99:1, Isaiah 37:16* (also referencing God's location on the Mercy Seat on the Ark of the Covenant)
- Creatures in Ezekiel's vision - *Ezekiel 1:4-25, Ezekiel 10:1-22*.
 - Repeated in John's vision - *Revelation 4:6-9*.

These are apparently a select group of angels with intimate contact with God and His throne. They are either quite unique in appearance or possess the power to change their appearance to a representative form when required.

Elect angels - *I Timothy 5:21* - Mentioned here in the same sentence with God and Jesus, these might be another form of cherub or seraph; a group of angels designated to watch over the Church; or just a general reference to all *unfallen, holy* angels.