

On the Angels

(A Topical Study on Angels in the Bible)

I. Background for This Lesson

- a. In a recent study on Colossians, one of the problems Paul was addressing in the church was a particular type of false teaching where some were advocating “the worship of angels”.
 - i. “Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels...” (**Colossians 2:18**, NKJV)
- b. During this time of year (a week before Christmas in the Western world), many think of angels due to all the references of angels in connection with the birth of Christ in Bethlehem, in the nativity accounts of **Matthew** and **Luke**.
 - i. Christmas cards and songs celebrate the announcement of angels.
 - ii. The angel Gabriel appeared to Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, and announced that he would have a son.
 - iii. The angel Gabriel then appeared to Mary and told her she would conceive as a virgin and give birth to a son. He would be the One who would rule over the eternal kingdom promised to her ancestor David.
 - iv. An angel appeared to Joseph in a dream, telling him to accept Mary.
 - v. Angels announced the birth of Jesus to shepherds near Bethlehem.
 - vi. An angel warned Joseph to flee to Egypt with his family and later told him to return to Galilee.
- c. Angels are mentioned in the first chapter of all four gospels.
 - i. In the nativity-related accounts in **Matthew 1** and **Luke 1**.
 - ii. In **Mark 1**, in the account of the 40 days in the Wilderness being tempted by Satan.
 - 1. “And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and *the angels ministered to Him.*” (**Mark 1:13**, NKJV)
 - iii. At the end of **John 1**, Jesus speaks about the angels to Nathaniel.

1. "Nathanael answered and said to Him, 'Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!' Jesus answered and said to him, 'Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these.' And He said to him, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the *angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.*'" (**John 1:49-51**, NKJV)
 2. Here Jesus is equating Himself with the stairway (or ladder) connecting heaven and earth that Jacob saw in a vision when he slept with his head on the stone in **Genesis 28:11-22**.
 3. Since Jesus is 'the Son of Man', He is describing Himself as the ladder connecting heaven and earth, *upon which the angels of God ascend and descend*.
 - a. Considering what Jesus said here, perhaps the angels are more important than many of us have realized!
- d. **Hebrews 1-2** explains important aspects of the nature of the Son of God.
- i. The nature and mission of the Son of God are explained by comparing the Son in relation to:
 1. The Father, and
 2. The angels.
 - ii. Regarding the angels, it says:
 1. All the angels worship Him (the Son).
 2. He is seated at the right hand of God (the Father), whereas that was never said regarding any of the angels.
 3. He was made a little lower than the angels. (He had been higher than them, but in becoming fully human was made lower than them.)
 - iii. My assumption is that the writer of **Hebrews** is here trying to explain to his readers something they did not understand very well (the nature of the Son of God) in terms of something they already understood fairly well (the nature of the angels). They already understood about angels because there is so much discussion about them in the Old Testament.
 - iv. In reading through **Hebrews**, I notice that the author assumes two things of his readers.

1. He assumes that they already know the Old Testament very well.
2. He assumes that they are reading the Septuagint (LXX), the Greek language translation of the Old Testament that was made by Jewish scholars about 200 years before the birth of Jesus.
 - a. The Hebrews writer is generally quoting from the LXX when the Old Testament passages are brought up.
 - b. For two examples (of many that could be given):
 - i. Consider **Hebrews 10:5-7**, where it says, “a body you have prepared for me”. Compare the Masoretic Text (MT) of **Psalms 40** with the LXX text of the same psalm (designated **Psalms 39:7-9** in the LXX).
 - ii. Also, consider **Hebrews 10:37-39** where it says, “but if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him”. Compare the MT and LXX for **Habakkuk 2:3-4**, which the writer is referring to.
- v. The **Hebrews** writer also explains that the angels are ministering spirits sent to help “those who will inherit salvation”. (**Hebrews 1:14**)
 1. From this passage, we learn that angels are assisting us humans, specifically Christians, in the unseen spiritual battle.

II. A Few Introductory Comments About the Term ‘Angel’

- a. The Greek word for “angel” used in the New Testament and the LXX (angelos / ἄγγελος) is the same word for “messenger”.
 - i. Therefore, you need to understand from context whether the word is being used to describe a messenger from the heavenly, spiritual class of beings (angels) versus a ‘regular’ or human messenger.
 - ii. For example: “As it is written in the Prophets: “Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.” (**Mark 1:2**, NKJV)
 1. The reference to “messenger” is presumably from **Malachi 3:1**. In both places, it could be (and in some older translations is) rendered “angel”.

2. This, of course, refers to a human messenger, John the Baptist, who prepared the way for the Christ.
- b. The term “*the Angel* of the Lord” was understood by early Christian writers to be referring to the Son of God.
- i. In the ancient texts, it was generally all lower case or all capital letters.
 - ii. So, where the text says, “angel of the Lord”, the translator has to try to discern whether it is referring to THE Angel of the Lord (referring to the Son of God; in which case the translators generally will capitalize the ‘A’ in ‘Angel’); or if it is referring to one of the ‘regular’ angels (in which case they would use a lower case ‘a’).
 1. Whenever you see ‘the Angel of the Lord’ with a capital ‘A’ in your Bible, it means that the translator assumed (and he/she could be mistaken) that this referred to the Son of God.
 2. If you compare Bible translations, you will notice that the translations can vary regarding which references to “angel/Angel of the Lord” are capitalized.
 - iii. Also, in the ancient Greek language, one could say “*the* angel” or simply “angel”. However, it would not be possible to say “*an* angel”, since there is no indefinite article (corresponding to our ‘a’ or ‘an’) in that language.
 - iv. In some cases, the one being referred to as the Angel of the Lord is seen by a human and also is referred to as ‘God’. Examples of references to the Angel of God that early Christians saw as referring to the Son of God include:
 1. The visitor to Abraham who had lunch, accompanied by two angels who then went on to Sodom, in **Genesis 18**.
 2. The One who wrestled all night with Jacob, in **Genesis 32**.
 3. The One who spoke to Moses from the burning bush, in **Exodus 3**.
 - v. Keep in mind that since ‘angel’ simply means ‘messenger’, referring to the Son of God as the *Messenger* of the Father does not need to impugn His divine nature in any way. Perhaps this is similar to His also being referred to as *the Word of God*.

1. For more on how the early Christians understood the term 'the Angel of the Lord', see *Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs*, ed. David Bercot, article on 'Angel of the Lord'.
- vi. Similarly, 'Spirit' (referring to the Holy Spirit) versus 'spirit' (which could be referring to our own spirit or to some other spirit); 'Law' (Law of Moses) versus 'law'.
- c. Also, the term "sons of God" is sometimes used to refer to angels (or even to humans who are following the Lord). Examples are provided in the discussion on references to the angels in the book of **Job** below.
 - i. However, the term 'THE Son of God' refers to the only begotten Son of the Father.

III. Angels in the Old Testament

- a. In the beginning, before man was created, the angels were there with God.
 - i. Read **Job 38:1-7**.
 - ii. Note that the LXX uses the term "*angels*" here, while in the MT it says, "*sons of God*". Obviously, both terms refer to the same thing. Consider also **Job 1:6** and **2:1** where the "angels/sons of God" (the term depending on whether you are following from the MT or the LXX) appear before the Lord along with the devil.
 - iii. The angels were present with the Lord at the Creation (the stars appeared on the fourth day of Creation, before man was created).
- b. Satan was an angel who fell early, apparently at or before the time of the creation of man.
 - i. Read **Ezekiel 28:11-19**.
 1. **Question:** Could these unusual statements have applied to *any* human king?
 2. **Answer:** No, I don't think so! Consider some of the statements made.
 - a. The one described in this prophecy was "in the paradise of God", "appointed to be with the cherub" (an angel), and "in the midst of the stones of fire".
 - b. Because of his sins, which included extreme pride, this one was cast out from "the holy mountain of God".

ii. Origen, a teacher from the church in Alexandria, Egypt, writing c. 225 AD, commented on the significance of this passage from **Ezekiel 28**.

1. “We find in the prophet Ezekiel two prophecies written to the king of Tyre.... The second is clearly of such a kind that it cannot be at all understood about a man. It must refer to some superior power who had fallen away from a higher position and had been reduced to a lower and worse condition. I will take from it an illustration by which it may be demonstrated with the utmost clearness that those opposing and malignant spiritual powers were not formed or created so by nature. Rather, they fell from a better to a worse position and were converted into wicked beings....
2. “‘From the day when you were created with the cherubim, I placed you in the holy mountain of God.’ (**Ezekiel 28:14**) Who could so water down the meaning of this passage so as to suppose that this language was referring to some man or saint—not to mention the prince of Tyre? Who could imagine that any man could live in the midst of fiery stones? Who could be supposed to be stainless from the very day of his creation, wickedness only being discovered in him at a later time? No, this must be said of someone who was cast down to the earth....
3. “I have shown, then, that what I have quoted concerning the prince of Tyre from the prophet Ezekiel refers to an adverse power. And it clearly shows that this power was once holy and happy. Yet, he fell from this state of happiness from the time that evil was found in him. So, he was hurled to the earth. Yet, [this evil] was not in him by nature or by creation. I am of the opinion that these words are spoken of a certain angel who had received the office of governing the nation of Tyre.
4. “... [Further in the discussion, referring to the discussion regarding ‘Lucifer’; in **Isaiah 14:12-22**] ...He compares [Satan] to lightning and says that he fell from heaven. He shows by this that Satan had at one time been in heaven and had enjoyed a place among the saints. He had enjoyed a portion of that light in which all the saints participate, by which they are made angels of light.”
 - a. (Source: *A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs*, edited by David Bercot, article on ‘Satan’, pp. 593–594. Excerpted and adapted from Origen, *First Principles*, book 1,

chapter 5; found in *Ante-Nicene Fathers* vol. 4, pp. 258-259.)

- iii. Origen commented on the prevailing view of the church of his time regarding Satan and the wicked angels with him.
 - 1. “Regarding the devil, his angels, and the opposing forces, the teaching of the church is that these beings do indeed exist. However, the church has not explained with sufficient clarity what they are, or how they exist. Most Christians, however, hold this opinion: that the devil was an angel and that, having become an apostate, he induced as many of the angels as possible to fall away with him.”
 - a. (Source: *A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs*, edited by David Bercot, article on ‘Satan’, p. 593. Adapted from Origen, *First Principles*, preface; found in *Ante-Nicene Fathers* vol. 4, p 240)
- c. Jesus said He saw the time when Satan was cast down.
 - i. “Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, ‘Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.’ And He said to them, ‘*I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven*. Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.’” (**Luke 10:17–20**, NKJV)
- d. This fallen angel appears and tempts Eve into sin, lying brazenly and appealing to her flesh and pride, in **Genesis 3**.
- e. Angels are discussed in connection with the Flood of Noah.
 - i. Read **Genesis 6:1-7**.
 - ii. Most early Christian writers who comment on this story understood this reference to “sons of God” (who had relations with the “daughters of men”) as referring to *angels* who abandoned their spiritual station and became inflamed with lust for human women.
 - 1. “And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day;” (**Jude 6**, NKJV)
 - 2. “For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell [*Greek: Tartarus*] and delivered them into

chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly;" (**2 Peter 2:4-5**, NKJV)

- iii. For more information on this topic, see Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs, edited by David Bercot, article on 'Angels / Fallen Angels'.
- f. Angels are in the story of Job.
 - i. The angels appear before the Lord, and the devil with them (**Job 1-2**).
- g. Angels play a prominent role in the account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.
 - i. 'The Lord' and two others (who turn out to be angels) have lunch with Abraham and Sarah in **Genesis 18**.
 - ii. Read **Genesis 19:1-29**.
 - iii. From this story, we learn several things about the nature of angels. For example:
 - 1. Angels can take on bodily form, appear as humans, eat food, etc.
 - 2. They are able to inflict blindness, issue warnings, protect the righteous.
 - 3. They are agents of God's judgment and have the ability to annihilate entire cities.
 - 4. They are God's agents, under God's authority, sent to assess, protect, warn and bring judgment upon people.
- h. Jacob has a vision of angels when sleeping with his head upon a stone.
 - i. Read **Genesis 28:10-17**.
 - ii. Jacob sees the angels of God ascending and descending upon a stairway (or ladder) that connects heaven and earth.
 - 1. Jesus alluded to this in his discussion with Nathanael in **John 1:51**.
- i. David, after sinning against the Lord by conducting a census and numbering the people, has a fearful encounter with an angel.
 - i. Read **1 Chronicles 21:7-20** and **21:27-30**.

- ii. An angel of the Lord (or perhaps *the* Angel of the Lord) brings judgment upon God's people, as a result of David's sin.
- j. Elijah and Elisha were encouraged by angels during times when they faced great challenges.
 - i. See **1 Kings 19:4-8** (designated **3 Kingdoms 19:4-8** in the LXX) regarding when Elijah was being hunted by Jezebel and wanted to die.
 - ii. See **2 Kings 6:13-17** (designated **4 Kingdoms 6:13-17** in the LXX) when Elisha and his servant were in Dothan, with the city surrounded by the army of Syria.
 - 1. Elisha was aware of the spiritual forces that were allied with him.
 - 2. He said to his servant, "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them."
 - 3. He prayed, the Lord opened the eyes of the servant, and he saw the hills surrounding them filled with "chariots of fire".
- k. When Hezekiah in trouble, with Jerusalem surrounded by the Assyrian army, the Lord provides an angel.
 - i. Read **2 Chronicles 32:20-23**.
 - ii. After righteous men prayed, the Lord provided an angel to deliver the people.
- l. Throughout the time of Daniel's captivity in Babylon, angels played key roles.
 - i. Arrogant King Nebuchadnezzar was struck down by "a watcher, holy one from heaven", in fulfillment of a vision. Read **Daniel 4:10-14** and **4:23**.
 - ii. When Daniel spent a night in the lion's den, the Lord sent an angel to shut the mouths of the lions. Read **Daniel 6:20-24**.
 - iii. The angel Gabriel explained a vision to the prophet Daniel in **Daniel 8**.
 - iv. The angel Gabriel explained the '70 Weeks Prophecy' to Daniel. Read **Daniel 9:20-23**. Here we learn:
 - 1. Angels can have names and are assigned responsibilities.
 - 2. Angels are associated with the prayers of men, and God can use them in the process of answering those prayer.

- v. Read **Daniel 10:10-14** and **10:21**. Angels can be engaged in protracted spiritual battles.
 - 1. The angel Michael, who is referred to as an *archangel* in **Jude v. 9**, is mentioned here as well.
 - 2. In **Daniel 12:1**, the angel Michael is described as “the great prince” who stands watch over the sons of the Jewish people.
 - 3. This suggests that there is some hierarchy among the angels, with certain angels like Michael having responsibility for others.
- m. There is a great deal of discussion involving angels throughout the book **Zechariah**.
- n. The book of **Tobit** features an extended interaction with an angel named Raphael, who helps Tobit (a righteous blind man) along with his son Tobias.
 - i. **Tobit** is included among a collection of books sometimes referred to as ‘the Apocrypha’ or ‘the Deutero-Canonical books’.
 - ii. The book of **Tobit** was included in LXX. It is found in modern Orthodox and Catholic Bibles. Also, **Tobit** was in the original (1611) King James Version of the Bible (KJV).
 - 1. **Tobit** remained in the KJV for approximately the first $\frac{3}{4}$ of its 400+ year history. It was not removed from the KJV until the late 1800s or early 1900s.
 - iii. Read **Tobit 12:14-15** (regarding the role of the angel Raphael). Then read some interesting advice that he gives, in **Tobit 12:6-10**.
 - iv. According to this passage, the angel giving advice (Raphael) was one of the angels responsible for conveying prayers to the Lord. If this story is inspired Scripture, then we should take that angel’s advice regarding how to have effective prayer! He says here:
 - 1. Prayer is good with fasting, almsgiving, and righteousness.
 - 2. It is better to issue *a few prayers with righteousness, than many prayers with wrongdoing!*
 - 3. **Question:** Are these insights attributed to the angel Raphael, consistent with *other teachings* we find in Scripture regarding effective prayer?
 - a. Compare that with the following:

- i. "Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." (**James 5:16**, NKJV)
- ii. "And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, 'Why could we not cast it out?' So He said to them, 'This kind can come out by nothing but *prayer and fasting*.'" (**Mark 9:28-29**, NKJV)
- iii. Consider what it says in **Isaiah 58** regarding the kind of fasting and prayer that God is seeking. It says that prayer and fasting should be accompanied by acts of righteousness, including helping the poor.
- iv. Similarly, in the account of the Day of Judgment in **Matthew 25:31-46**, *both* the 'sheep' and 'goats' refer to Jesus as Lord. However, the sheep were the ones who also had fed the hungry, clothed the naked, visited the sick, etc.
- v. Read **Acts 10:1-4** regarding what the angel says regarding the prayers of Cornelius being heard.
- b. It seems to me that whether you consider **Tobit** to be inspired Scripture or just an interesting book, the advice given by the angel regarding effective prayer rings true with other statements in Scripture.

IV. Angels in the New Testament

- a. Angels are associated with the birth of Jesus (as previously discussed).
- b. Angels are involved at key points throughout the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus.
 - i. One of the temptations of Jesus posed by Satan was based on an Old Testament passage about angels, in **Psalms 91:11-12** (designated **Psalms 90:11-12** in the LXX). Satan challenged Jesus to cast Himself down from the temple pinnacle to prove that He was the Son of God, in which case angels would support Him. (**Matthew 5:5-6, Luke 4:8-10**)
 - ii. Angels attend to Jesus after His temptation by Satan in the Wilderness. (**Matthew 4:11, Mark 1:13**)

- iii. An angel came to comfort Him in the Garden of Gethsemane as He prayed in agony. (**Luke 22:43**)
- iv. Angels appear at the empty tomb. (**Matthew 28:2-5, Luke 24:23, John 20:12**)
- v. Two angels are present at His ascension and speak of His return. (**Acts 1:9-11**)
- c. In some of the most prominent teachings of Jesus, His explanation of spiritual truths involves angels.
 - i. In the parables of the Wheat and Tares, and the Dragnet. (**Matthew 13:36-43, Matthew 13:47-50**)
 - 1. Jesus explains that the angels will be involved in sorting the righteous from the wicked out of the kingdom at the Final Judgment.
 - ii. In the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus. (**Luke 16:19-31**)
 - 1. After the poor man died, the angels carried his soul off to “Abraham’s bosom”, a region of Hades.
 - iii. In the teaching about Final Judgment, in the story of the Sheep and the Goats. (**Matthew 25:31-46**)
 - 1. Jesus says that when the Son of Man comes, the angels will be with Him.
 - 2. The unrighteous will be cast into “the fire prepared for the devil and his angels”. (**Matthew 25:41**)
 - 3. Paul wrote regarding the Second Coming:
 - a. “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with *the voice of an archangel*, and with the trumpet of God...” (**1 Thessalonians 4:16**, NKJV)
 - iv. In many other references, Jesus makes to the Day of Judgment, He emphasizes that the angels will be there too.
 - 1. The angels will be with Him when He returns on the Last Day. (**Matthew 16:27 & 24:30-31; Mark 8:38-9:1 & 13:26-27; Luke 9:26-27**)
 - 2. Jesus said that He did not know when that day was, and *the angels did not know either*; only the Father knew when that would be. (**Matthew 24:36, Mark 13:32**)

- v. In the teaching about God's mercy and the importance of sinners repenting, in the parables of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin and the Prodigal Son. **(Luke 15)**
 - 1. In explaining the parable of the Lost Coin, Jesus concluded, "...there is joy *in the presence of angels* over one sinner who repents." **(Luke 15:10)**
 - 2. Likewise, in explaining the meaning of the parable of the Lost Sheep, Jesus said, "I say to you that likewise there will be *more joy in heaven* over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance." **(Luke 15:7, NKJV)**
 - a. Based on what Jesus said in the parallel parable (of the Lost Coin), it appears that the "*joy in heaven*" remark is a similar comment about the angels rejoicing when one sinner repents.
 - 3. In the third parable in this set, the Prodigal Son, the Father throws a celebratory feast *along with His servants*, upon the return of his lost son.
 - a. Based on what it says in the other two parables, I assume that *the servants of the Father* in this parable represent *the angels* here, as well.
- vi. In the teaching about unrighteous anger, in the Sermon on the Mount. **(Matthew 5:21-26)**
 - 1. Jesus said, "Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny." **(Matthew 5:23-26, NKJV)**
 - a. *The judge* in the story represents Jesus.
 - b. *The person who is handed over to the officer* by the judge, to be cast into prison, corresponds to one of us (if we do not get reconciled with our brother).
 - 2. **Question:** In this story, who does "*the officer*" represent?

3. **Answer to Consider:** In an ancient anonymous Christian commentary on **Matthew**, later given the title 'Opus Imperfectum', it says that the 'officer' in **Matthew 5:25** referred to *an angel responsible for punishment*. Augustine made the same connection.
 - a. The *Opus Imperfectum* and Augustine were quoted on the above point in the *Catena Aurea*, compiled centuries later by Thomas Aquinas. The *Catena Aurea*, which is Latin for 'golden chain' is a collection of comments from earlier Christians on the four gospels, compiled by Thomas Aquinas.
 - b. From *Catena Aurea vol. 1*, regarding **Matthew 5:25-26**, consider the following two entries:
 - i. "AUGUSTINE: By the Judge I understand Christ, for, the Father hath *committed* all judgment to the Son; (John 5:22.) and by the officer, or minister, an angel, for, angels came and ministered unto Him; and we believe that He will come with his angels to judge.
 - ii. "PSEUDO-CHRYSOSTOM [*originally but incorrectly attributed to Chrysostom; this is from the 'Opus Imperfectum', a commentary on Matthew's gospel by an ancient unknown author*]: The officer, that is, the ministering angel of punishment, and he shall cast you into the prison of hell."
 - c. This reference also is discussed in: Bercot, David, *Historic Faith Commentary Series, volume 1 (Matthew Chapters 1-13)*, p. 132.
- vii. In His exchange with the Sadducees regarding the bodily resurrection of the dead, Jesus said that after the *resurrection we will be like the angels*, in terms of not having marital spouses. (**Matthew 22:30, Mark 12:25, Luke 20:36**)
- viii. In explaining the spiritual importance and condition of children in the eyes of God.
 1. Jesus said not to look down on them, for "in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven." (**Matthew 18:10**)

- ix. When Judas and an armed band came to arrest Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus told his disciples to put down their swords. He assured them that *He had the power of a vast army of angels at His disposal* if he needed help.

- 1. “Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with *more than twelve legions of angels*?”
(**Matthew 26:53**, NKJV)

- d. Angels are involved in the ministry of the first Christians, as recorded in the **Book of Acts**.

- i. Two angels appear to the apostles and reassure them that Jesus will return. (**Acts 1:10-11**)
 - ii. An angel frees the apostles from prison and tells them to continue sharing the Gospel. (**Acts 5:19**)
 - iii. An angel instructs Philip to intercept the Ethiopian eunuch on his journey. The Ethiopian welcomes the gospel message and is baptized. (**Acts 8:26**)
 - iv. An angel appears to Cornelius, a Roman centurion, and tells him to find Peter. This pivotal conversion opens the door for the gospel to be spread directly to the Gentiles. (**Acts 10:1-8**)
 - v. God sends an angel to free Peter from his chains and a well-guarded prison. (**Acts 12:7-11**)
 - vi. An angel kills King Herod Agrippa, who is persecuting the Christians. (**Acts 12:23**)
 - vii. God sends an angel to Paul traveling by ship caught in a terrible storm to reassure him he would make it safely in Rome, and that his ship would have no lives lost at sea. (**Acts 27:21-26**)

V. Take-Aways from a Better Understanding of Angels

- a. This helps us see more clearly the *unseen spiritual battle* we are in.
- b. We can appreciate that the *kingdom of God* consists of more than just humans, and extends beyond the church.
 - i. “But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels...”
(**Hebrews 12:22**, NKJV)
- c. This can give us insights regarding how to engage in *more effective prayer* (giving to the poor, righteousness, fasting).

- d. This helps us to be better prepared for the Day of Judgment.
 - i. We must urgently strive to *resolve our conflicts* with others now, so that we won't face "the officer".
- e. This reinforces the idea that *no one will 'get away' with anything* in the end; *not even the angels*. (**2 Peter 2:4-9**)
 - i. "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**, NKJV)
 - ii. "...then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment," (**2 Peter 2:9**, NKJV)
- f. It is connected to Paul's teaching on *head covering* in **1 Corinthians 11**, when women pray or prophesy.
 - i. One of Paul's reasons for requiring women to cover their heads was "*because of the angels*". (**1 Corinthians 11:10**)
 - ii. Regardless of what modern commentators say, it should be obvious that this has *nothing* to do with alleged local customs in ancient Corinth!
- g. It highlights the importance of *practicing hospitality*.
 - i. "Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels." (**Hebrews 13:2**, NKJV)
- h. It reminds us that in the church we should find men competent to *mediate conflicts* that arise between Christians.
 - i. "Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?" (**1 Corinthians 6:3**, NKJV)
 - ii. Paul says that when Christians are in conflict, they should *not* call upon the police or courts of this world for resolution.
 - iii. Perhaps we will be involved in judging the wicked angels, who sinned?
- i. It emphasizes the importance of reject *false teaching from any source*.
 - i. "But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed." (**Galatians 1:8**, NKJV)

- ii. Paul's admonition here reminds me of the man of God in **1 Kings 13** (designated **3 Kingdoms 13** in the LXX).
 - 1. The Lord had told the man *not to eat anything* while on his mission.
 - 2. An old prophet from Bethel tells the man of God *that an angel had spoken with him*. He said the angel told him to invite the man of God to the old prophet's home for a meal.
 - 3. The man of God accepts the invitation and eats at the old prophet's home.
 - a. It did not end well for the man of God. After eating the meal, he was killed by a lion on the road.
 - 4. **Lesson to Learn:** *Never go against what the Lord instructs you to do. Not even if an angel (or someone claiming they heard from an angel) says so!*
- j. It helps us appreciate the supreme importance of *love*.
 - i. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of *angels*, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal." (**1 Corinthians 13:1**, NKJV)
- k. Studying this subject has opened my mind and changed my perspective.
 - i. I have been struck by the abundance of references to angels throughout the Scriptures, particularly in the New Testament.
 - ii. References to angels were naturally woven into teaching on an incredibly wide range of subjects throughout the New Testament.
 - iii. I am left with the strong impression that in the beginning of the church, Christians had a much greater awareness of the presence and importance of angels than we do today.
 - 1. Perhaps this is an indictment of the lack of deep spirituality and awareness of the true spiritual battle we are engaged in (as Paul pointed out in **Ephesians 6**).
- l. One final thought that encourages me, regarding angels.
 - i. "This poor man cried, and the Lord listened to him, and from all his afflictions he saved him. *An angel of the Lord will encamp around those who fear him and will rescue them.*" (**Psalms 33:7-8**, LXX, New English Translation of the Septuagint [NETS])

1. This corresponds to **Psalm 34:6-7** in most modern Bibles based on the Masoretic Text.
 2. While many translations say “the angel of the Lord” here, the word “the” is not in the text of the LXX. Therefore, the NETS rendering “an angel of the Lord” appears to be a more accurate translation here.
- ii. What an encouraging promise: that the Lord will provide an angel to protect those who fear Him!
1. Peter warns us that Satan is stalking us like a lion, seeking to devour us spiritually (**1 Peter 5:8**).
 2. I need the protection of an angel encamped around me, in the face of spiritual dangers and assaults.
 3. Let us fear God and avail ourselves of the protection of these great spiritual warriors: *the angels*!