

LESSON 16 - BIBLE TEACHING ABOUT THE ANGELS

"If the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord." -- Hebrews 2:2

ANGELS are prominent in both the Old and New Testaments. They are the messengers of God, as the name implies (Hebrew: malak; Greek: angelos -- both words also being translated "messenger", and applied to ordinary men). We must bear in mind that the basic Divine purpose is "God manifestation": the manifestation of God in a glorified multitude of perfected, purified and immortal beings. Man was made in the beginning in the physical image, or form, of God; and it is God's purpose to perfect that image or likeness in every respect -- mental, moral, spiritual, corporeal, in character and in substance -- in the host of the Redeemed, so that each will be a perfect manifestation of God, and will bear God's Name (Revelation 3:12).

The angels -- perfect, holy, immortal beings -- are the medium of Divine manifestation throughout the Old Testament (and also in the New Testament, although there the supreme manifestation of God among men is Jesus Christ). The angels often speak as God, and bear the Name of God. John said,

"No man hath seen God at any time" (John 1:18).

Yet Jacob says,

"I have seen God (Elohim) face to face" (Genesis 32:30).

The explanation of this apparent contradiction introduces the subject of the angels, those glorious beings through whom God has from the beginning manifested Himself and given His messages and commands to man. There are other places where God is said to have been seen. The explanation lies partly in the subject of God manifestation, and partly in being aware of the loose and inaccurate translations of the names of God in the AV. The Divine Creator expresses His name in the Old Testament through the use of three basic Hebrew terms: 1) *El, Eloah and Elohim*; 2) *Shaddai*; and 3) *Yahweh*. There is also the title *Adon* or *Adonai* which appears in the KJV as "Lord." It is important that we understand the meaning of these terms and how they are used in scripture:

1) *El (or Ail), Eloah and Elohim* mean power or Powerful One(s). *El* and *Eloah* are singular, *Elohim* is plural in form

BibleKEY fact:

“ We must bear in mind that the basic Divine purpose is "God manifestation": the manifestation of God in a glorified multitude of perfected, purified and immortal beings. ”

BibleKEY Word Search:

"angel" (O.T.) - from Strong's Hebrew Dictionary #4397 mal'ak, mal-awk'; from an unused root mean. to despatch as a deputy; a messenger; spec. of God, i.e. an angel (also a prophet, priest or teacher): translated in KJV as - ambassador, angel, king, messenger.

"angel" (N.T.) - from Strong's Greek Dictionary #32 aggelos, ang'-el-os; from aggello [prob. der. from 71; comp. 34] (to bring tidings); a messenger; esp. an "angel"; by impl. a pastor: translated in KJV as - angel, messenger.

BibleKEY fact:

“ The angels often speak as God, and bear the Name of God . . . The Divine Creator expresses His name in the Old Testament through the use of three basic Hebrew terms: 1) *El, Eloah and Elohim*; 2) *Shaddai*; and 3) *Yahweh*. ”

BIBLE TEACHING ABOUT THE ANGELS

(though always used with singular adjectives and verbs, except where speaking of 1) false "*elohim*" or gods or 2) the rulers of Israel.)

All 3 words are used occasionally of false "gods", but overwhelmingly of the One True God and His manifestations. "*El*" is a few times translated "power" (as in Nehemiah 5:5). *Elohim* is by far the most common of the 3 (about 2500 times); *El* about 200; *Eloah* about 50. In the O.T., where the word "God" (not "GOD") occurs in the AV, the original Hebrew term is almost invariably *El*, *Eloah*, or *Elohim*.

"*Elohim*" is used in application both of angels, and of mortal men who represent God and stand in relation to Him. In Hebrews (N.T.), Paul quotes a statement from Psalms (O.T.) in which this Hebrew term "*Elohim*" occurs:

*"Worship him, all ye **gods** (elohim)." (Psalm 97:7)*

Paul records the passage thus:

*"Let all the **angels of God** worship him." (Hebrews 1:6)*

Obviously, to Paul's mind, "*elohim*" in this passage represented angels. Here is an excellent example of scripture interpreting itself, and providing us with Divinely inspired illustrations of some of the ways by which this term may be correctly applied.

"*Elohim*" is also used in scripture in application to mankind:

*"God judgeth among the **gods** (elohim) . . . I have said, Ye are gods." (Psalm 82:1,6)*

In the gospel of John, Jesus quotes this passage, and calls the Jews' attention to the fact that the term "gods" (*elohim*) applies to the people of Israel (those "to whom the Word of God came"):

*"Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called **them** gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken . . ." (John 10:34,35)*

Jesus used this passage in justification of his own claim to be the Son of God, and in disproof of their charges of blasphemy -

". . . Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?" (John 10:34,35)

2) *Shaddai* occurs about 50 times (mostly in Job, but also in 8 other books) and is always translated "Almighty". It is applied only to God. It carries the idea "with power", also of overawing, totally controlling, productive of reverence and fear.

3) *Yahweh* is the personal Name of God, meaning "*He Who Will Be*". It is the "*Memorial Name*" -- the Name of Purpose: the Purpose of manifestation in a glorious multitude. It occurs about

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BibleKEY Word Search:

"El" - Strong's Hebrew Dictionary #410 'el, ale; short. from 352; strength; as adj. mighty; espec. the Almighty (but used also of any deity): translated in KJV as - God (god), X goodly, X great, idol, mighty (-y one), power, strong.

"Elohim" - Strong's Hebrew Dictionary #430 'elohiym, el-o-heem'; plur. of 433; gods in the ordinary sense; but spec. used (in the plur. thus, esp. with the art.) of the supreme God; occasionally applied by way of deference to magistrates; and sometimes as a superlative: translated in KJV as - angels, X exceeding, God (gods) (-dess, -ly), X (very) great, judges, X mighty.

"Shaddai" - Strong's Hebrew Dictionary #7706 Shadday, shad-dah'-ee; from 7703; the Almighty: translated in KJV as - Almighty.

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BIBLE TEACHING ABOUT THE ANGELS

7000 times. It is translated "LORD" (all capitals) except in translating the expression *Adonai Yahweh*, which is rendered "Lord GOD" (the "GOD" in capitals for *Yahweh*. Thus "LORD" or "GOD" in capitals indicates *Yahweh* in the original. *Yahweh Elohim* (a very frequent combination rendered "LORD God") means "*He Who Will Be Mighty Ones.*"

Exodus 3 records that the "angel of *Yahweh*" appeared to Moses in the burning bush, and said, "I am the God (*Elohim*) of Abraham", etc., and throughout the conversation we frequently find "*Yahweh* said" and "*Elohim* said"-- the angel speaking just as if he were God Himself. This is God manifestation, which finds its supreme fulfillment in Christ, who said the words he spoke were God's words, and the works were God's works, and that God was "in him" (John 14:10). And so we read --

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself" (2 Corinthians 5:19).

"God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3:16).

"He that hath seen me (said Jesus) hath seen the Father" (John 14:9).

So we see how men can "see" God, and yet "No man hath seen God at any time."

Not always do angels appear in brightness and glory. Sometimes they appear outwardly as mere human beings. Thus men have sometimes "seen" God without realizing it at the time.

For example, three angels came to Abraham (Genesis 18), and he at first mistook them for ordinary men. They are called "men" and "angels" interchangeably in the narrative. Two of them went on to Sodom. The 3rd stayed with Abraham for a while, and throughout their conversation he is uniformly called "*Yahweh*" and at the end it says "*Yahweh* went his way." Here again is an angel representing and manifesting God, and speaking directly as God in God's Name. An "angel of *Elohim*" spoke to Jacob, and said,

"I am the God (Elohim) of Bethel" (Genesis 31~ 13).

A "man" wrestled with Jacob (Genesis 32:24), called elsewhere an "angel" (Hosea 12:4). Of him, Jacob said (Genesis 32:30),

"I have seen God (Elohim) face to face."

The angel who appeared to Gideon is spoken of as "*Yahweh*" (Judges 6:14, 16, 23).

An angel appeared to Manoah, father of Samson, and he too, like Abraham and Lot, at first mistook him for a man. Later, when he realized it was an angel, he said,

"We shall surely die, because we have seen God (Elohim)" Judges 13:21.

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“ . . . we find . . . the angel speaking just as if he were God Himself. This is God manifestation, which finds its supreme fulfillment in Christ, who said the words he spoke were God's words, and the works were God's works, and that God was "in him". ”

BibleKEY Word Search:

"YAHWEH" - Strong's Hebrew Dictionary #3068 *Yehovah*, *yeh-ho-vaw'*; **from 1961**; (the) self-existent or eternal; *Jehovah*, Jewish national name of God; translated in KJV as - *Jehovah*, the Lord.

Comp. 1961 "**hayah**", *haw-yaw'*; a prim. root [comp. 1933]; to exist, i.e. be or become, come to pass (always emphatic, and not a mere copula or auxiliary): translated in KJV as - beacon, X altogether, be (-come, accomplished, committed, like), break, cause, come (to pass), continue, do, faint, fall, + follow, happen, X have, last, pertain, quit (one-) self, require, X use.

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BIBLE TEACHING ABOUT THE ANGELS

He knew it was not God Himself, for we are told in the previous verse,

"Manoah knew he was an angel of the Lord (Yahweh)."

But he knew that God was manifested in the angel, so he said he had seen God. In Hebrews 2:2, the Law of Moses is described as "the word spoken by angels," though in the record Moses gives, it appears that God is giving it directly. Paul is making a comparison between the means of manifestation used: the angelic to Israel, and the higher and more intimate manifestation through Christ in New Testament times. The angels are not only messengers, but they are the guiders and protectors of God's people; they control the courses of nations, and generally direct and supervise the events of the world, in the development of God's purpose.

"The angel of the Lord encampeth around them that fear Him" (Psalm 43:7).

"He shall give His angels charge concerning thee: they shall bear thee up" (Psalm 91:11 12).

"They are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation" (Hebrews 1:14).

Abraham naturally and clearly recognized and depended upon angelic care and supervision of his affairs, and the record proves him to be correct --

"The Lord (Yahweh) shall send His angel before thee" (Genesis 24: 7).

Likewise Jacob, at his life's end:

"The angel which redeemed me from all evil" (Genesis 48:16).

Angels cared for Elijah; destroyed the army of Assyria; ministered unto Christ; released Peter from prison; smote Herod with a fatal disease; appeared at times to Paul; invisibly led the armies of Israel (I Kings 19:5; 2 Kings 19; Luke 22; Acts 12, 27; Joshua 5) Angels excel in strength. They are holy, pure, perfectly doing the will of God, in perfect, eternal harmony with the mind of God. The theory of traditional Christianity (in connection with the "personal devil" theory) that the holy angels of God could sin and fall from grace and become evil demons is a travesty inherited from the dark mythologies of paganism. It fits the pagan gods of Greece and Rome perfectly, from which it is derived, but not the immortal angels of God.

Immortality and sin are utterly incompatible. The orthodox theory gives us no assurance of eternal safety and joy. If holy, immortal angels can sin and fall, there is no assurance of God's eternal promise contained in Luke 20:35 --

"But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the

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BIBLE TEACHING ABOUT THE ANGELS

resurrection."

What a debased conception of God's dwelling place, that it could be at any time the scene of rebellion and civil war! No, the angels are totally, eternally, immutably in perfect harmony with God. They are presented in scripture as being deeply interested spectators of God's works. They shouted and sang with joy at the creation (Job 38:7), and they "desire to look into" the glories that God has in store for the future of mankind (I Peter 1:12). Angels rejoice over every repentant sinner (Luke 15:10).

The angelic population is spoken of as "ten thousand times ten thousand" (Daniel 7:10), which would be 100 million, and the actual number could hardly with appropriateness be less than the typical figure used for them. There is distinction of rank, for we read of the "archangel" We are given the names of 2 angels: Michael (Daniel 10:13, 21; Judges 9), and Gabriel (Daniel 8:16; Luke 1:19, 21). It was the latter who appeared to Daniel, Zacharias and Mary.

The traditional orthodox picture of angels as baby cherubs with wings is another dark relic of benighted paganism, utterly devoid of scriptural support. As we have seen, the angels uniformly appear as strong, mature, intelligent creatures, in form exactly like men, as naturally they would be, for all in God's family are created in His likeness. The promise is that the Redeemed will be equal to them (Luke 20:36).

The traditional representation of angels with wings is due to confusing angels with the cherubim and seraphim. These are purely symbolic figures, representative of the glorious host of the Redeemed -- those taken from among men who in the Age to Come will manifest and glorify God in the perfection of immortal splendor. This identity is clear when the whole representation of them throughout Scripture is studied, and from the fact that in Revelation 5:9 the Four Living Creatures (elsewhere called Cherubim) sing to the Lamb (Christ) --

"Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred."

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“ the cherubim and seraphim . . . are purely symbolic figures, representative of the glorious host of the Redeemed ”

BIBLE TEACHING ABOUT THE ANGELS

Name Mr/Mrs/Miss

Address Postal Code

* You may need an additional sheet for your answers if there is not enough space below. Your answers to the following questions will help you - and us - to determine how much you have discovered about your Bible. Please return this form in the envelope provided even if you are unable to answer all the questions. On receipt of it we will forward a further study, as well as some comments on your

1. In what way did God speak to people in Old Testament times?
2. Did God speak directly to men?
3. How can we understand John saying "No man hath seen God", yet others said they had "seen God face to face"?
4. What are the 3 Hebrew names given for God, and what do they mean?
5. What is the meaning of "Yahweh Elohim" and what does it signify?
6. What is "angel" in Hebrew and Greek, and what is the meaning?
7. Give an example of the term "elohim" being applied to men.
8. What description does the Bible provide of angels?
9. Is there any scriptural justification for showing them as babies, and with wings?
10. Is it possible to mistake angels for men? Give 3 instances.
11. Have angels always appeared as glorious and bright in appearance?
12. What similarity will the righteous in the Age to Come have to the angels?
13. a) Is it possible for angels to sin?
 - b) What would this mean as to the security and assurance of the permanence of our salvation?
 - c) From where do the orthodox churches get these debased ideas?
14. a) Which 2 angels are named?
 - b) What was the name of the angel that appeared to Daniel and Mary?
15. On what principle can angels speak just as if they were God Himself?
16. Who was the supreme manifestation of God, through whom God spoke?