



## **14 Biblical facts about angels**

These facts will help us learn a lot about the angels in the Bible: what they are, why God created them, how their hierarchy works, and much more.





## 1. God created angels

**Angels haven't always existed.** According to Scripture, they're part of the universe God created. In a passage that refers to angels (the "host" or "armies" of heaven), we read, "You are the Lord, you alone; you have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host . . . and the host of heaven worships you" (Nehemiah 9:6). In the New Testament, Paul tells us that God created all things "visible and invisible," and specifically includes the angelic world with the phrase "whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities" (Colossians 1:16).

**While these Bible verses tell us that God created angels, the Bible also suggests that they don't "exist" in the same way we do.** The author of Hebrews suggests that all angels are "spirits" (Hebrews 1:13-14). When Jesus appears to the disciples, he asserts that "**spirits**" **don't have bodies** like he does (Luke 24:39). In the Bible, angels can't usually be seen by humans unless God reveals them (see Numbers 22:31, 2 Kings 6:17, Luke 2:13). However, from time-to-time angels took on a bodily form and appeared to various people in Scripture (Matthew 28:5; Hebrews 13:2).





## **2. There are three types of angels in the Bible**

Scripture names three categories of heavenly beings that appear to be types of angels: cherubim, seraphim, and “living creatures.”

### **Cherubim**

Cherubim are mentioned in several places throughout Scripture:

- They guarded the entrance to the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:24).
- God is enthroned above them (Ezekiel 10:1–22).
- God rides on them (Psalm 18:10)
- Two golden figures of cherubim sit above the Ark of the Covenant, where God promised to dwell among his people (Exodus 25:22, see also verses 18–21).

### **Seraphim**

Another type of angel, the seraphim, are only mentioned once in the Bible. They appear in Isaiah 6:2–7, where they continually worship the Lord and say, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory” (Isaiah 6:3).

### **Living creatures**

Ezekiel and Revelation speak of other kinds of heavenly beings known as “living creatures” around God’s throne (Ezekiel 1:5–14, Revelation 4:6–8). They appeared like a lion, an ox, a man, and an eagle, representing various parts of God’s creation (wild beasts, domesticated animals, human beings, and birds). They, too, worship God continually: “Day and night they never cease to sing, ‘Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!’” (Revelation 4:8)





### **3. Angels have a hierarchy**

Angels in the Bible appear to have a rank and order. The angel hierarchy is supported by Jude 9, when the angel Michael is called an “archangel”—a title that indicates rule or authority over other angels. He’s also called “one of the chief princes” in Daniel 10:13, and appears to lead God’s angelic army in Revelation 12: “Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they were defeated” (Revelation 12:7–8). Paul also tells us that the Lord will return from heaven “with the archangel’s call” (1 Thessalonians 4:16). Scripture doesn’t tell us if this refers to Michael, or if there are other archangels as well.





#### **4. Only two angels have names in the Bible**

Only two angels are specifically named in Scripture. As we said above, the archangel Michael is mentioned in Jude 9, Revelation 12:7–8, and Daniel 10:13 and 21.

**Gabriel is the only other angel named in the Bible.** He's mentioned in Daniel 8:16 and 9:21 as a messenger who comes from God to speak to Daniel. He's also identified as God's messenger in Luke 1. He tells Zechariah, "I am Gabriel, who stand in the presence of God" (Luke 1:19). Then we read, "In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin . . . and the virgin's name was Mary" (Luke 1:26–27).





## 5. Angels are not omnipresent

Angels frequently appear as messengers in the Bible, traveling from one place to another (see the verse above, where Gabriel “was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth”).

The fact that angels are not omnipresent is made explicit when an angel comes to Daniel and says:

*“I have come because of your words. The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, so I left him there with the prince of the kingdom of Persia and came to make you understand what is to befall your people in the latter days.”* —Daniel 10:12–14

If angels were omnipresent, Michael wouldn’t have “came to help” because he would’ve already been there, and this angel wouldn’t need to leave Michael to bring this message. **Unlike God, who is omnipresent, angels are finite creatures, limited to one place at one time.**





## **6. We don't know how many angels exist**

The Bible doesn't tell us how many angels God created. But apparently, there are a lot of them. Here are a few of the ways the Bible tells us how many angels there are:

- On Mount Sinai, God “came from the ten thousands of holy ones, with flaming fire at his right hand” (Deuteronomy 33:2).
- We also learn that, “the chariots of God are tens of thousands and thousands of thousands” (Psalm 68:17 NIV).
- When we come to worship, we come into the presence of “innumerable angels” (Hebrews 12:22).
- John says, “I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands” (Revelation 5:11).

**Every biblical reference to the total number of angels suggests that they're beyond counting.**





## **7. We can't prove that guardian angels exist**

The Bible clearly tells us that God sends angels to protect people: “He will give his angels charge of you to guard you in all your ways. On their hands they will bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone” (Psalm 91:11–12).

But are these what we think of as “guardian angels”? Jesus’ words in Matthew 18:10 seem to support the idea that individual people (or at least children) have guardian angels, “in heaven *their angels* always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven.” But Jesus may only mean that angels are assigned to protect little children in general. (In sports terms, the angels may be playing “zone” rather than “man-on-man” defense.)

When the disciples in Acts 12:15 say that Peter’s “angel” must be knocking at the door, this doesn’t necessarily imply that they believe in individual guardian angels. It’s possible that they believed an angel was simply guarding Peter *at that time*.

**While arguments can be made, there seems to be no definitive biblical proof for the existence of “guardian angels.”**





### **8. Angels do not marry**

Jesus taught that in the resurrection people “neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like angels in heaven” (Matthew 22:30, see also Luke 20:34–36). **This clearly suggests that angels don’t marry.**

No other passages address relationships between angels, so anything beyond this is simply speculation





### **9. Angels are very powerful**

Angels are called “mighty ones who do his word” (Psalm 103:20), “powers” (see Ephesians 1:21), and “dominions” and “authorities” (Colossians 1:16). They are certainly “greater in might and power” than humans (2 Peter 2:11, see also Matthew 28:2). Angels use their power to battle against Satan’s demonic forces (Daniel 10:13, Revelation 12:7–8, 20:1–3).

During our earthly lives, we’re “lower than the angels” (Hebrews 2:7). **But as powerful as angels are, when Jesus returns, followers of Christ will be raised higher than them (1 Corinthians 6:3).**





## 10. We don't know when angels were created

Genesis 2:1 tells us that the angels were made at some point before the seventh day of creation: “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them” (“host” here refers to the heavenly beings).

Exodus 20:11 is even more explicit: “In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, *and all that is in them*, and rested the seventh day.” **We can at least confirm that all the angels were created by the sixth day of creation.**

But can we be any more specific? There may be a hint at the creation of angelic beings on the first day of creation, when we read that “in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1), immediately followed by, “the earth was without form and void” (Genesis 1:2). There's no mention of the heavens in this second verse. This may be intended to contrast the emptiness of the earth with the heavens, where God already created angelic beings. This idea could be supported by Job, where we read that “the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy” when God laid the “cornerstone” of the earth and sunk its “bases” (Job 38:6–7). If the angels (“the sons of God”) shouted for joy when God was forming the earth, **this could imply that God created the angelic beings early on the first day.** However, this is only speculation.





## 11. Angels are examples for us

Angels show us what perfect obedience looks like. Jesus teaches us to pray, “Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10), **and in heaven God’s will is done by angels, immediately, joyfully, and without question.** Their delight is to be God’s humble servants, faithfully performing their assigned tasks, great or small. Our desire and prayer should be that we will do the same.

Angels also model worship. John sees around God’s throne a great angelic army, “numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, ‘Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!’”

(Revelation 5:11–12). If the angels find it their highest joy to praise God continuously, shouldn’t we, too?





## 12. Angels carry out some of God's plans

There are numerous ways in which angels carry out God's plans on earth:

- They frequently bring God's messages to people (Luke 1:11–19, Acts 8:26, 10:3–8, 22, 27:23–24).
- They carry out some of God's judgments, bringing a plague upon Israel (2 Samuel 24:16–17), smiting the leaders of the Assyrian army (2 Chronicles 32:21), striking King Herod dead because he did not give God glory (Acts 12:23), or pouring out bowls of God's wrath on the earth (Revelation 16:1).
- When Christ returns, angels will come with him as a great army accompanying their King and Lord (Matthew 16:27, Luke 9:26, 2 Thessalonians 1:7).
- They patrol the earth as God's representatives (Zechariah 1:10–11).
- They carry out war against demonic forces (Daniel 10:13; Revelation 12:7–8).
- John records that an angel "seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the pit . . ." (Revelation 20:1–3).
- When Christ returns, an archangel will proclaim his coming (1 Thessalonians 4:16, see also Revelation 18:1–2, 21, 19:17–18, and other passages).





### 13. Angels directly glorify God

Humans aren't the only intelligent, moral creatures who glorify God. The Psalmist declares:

*“Angels glorify God for who he is in himself, for his excellence.*

*Bless the Lord, O you his angels,  
you mighty ones who do his word,*

*hearkening to the voice of his word!”* (Psalm 103:20, see also 148:2)

The seraphim continually praise God for his holiness (Isaiah 6:2–3), and so do the four living creatures (Revelation 4:8).

Angels also glorify God as they witness his plan unfold. When Christ was born in Bethlehem, a multitude of angels praised God and said, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!” (Luke 2:14, see also Hebrews 1:6). Jesus tells us, “There is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents” (Luke 15:10), indicating that angels rejoice when someone turns from sin and trusts in Christ.

Peter tells us that “angels long to look” (1 Peter 1:12) into the glories of the plan of salvation as it works out in the lives of believers each day. To emphasize the seriousness of particular commands, Paul reminds us that our actions are carried out in the presence of angelic witnesses: “In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus *and of the elect angels* I charge you to keep these rules without favor, doing nothing from partiality” (1 Timothy 5:21, see also 1 Corinthians 4:9). If Timothy follows Paul's instructions, angels will witness his obedience and glorify God. If he neglects to obey, angels will also see and be grieved.





#### **14. Angels are not to be worshipped**

“Worship of angels” was one of the false doctrines being taught at Colossae (Colossians 2:18). In the book of Revelation, an angel warns John not to worship him: “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus. Worship God” (Revelation 19:10).

**We shouldn’t pray to angels, either.** God is able to answer prayer. Paul warns us against thinking that any other “mediator” can come between us and God, “for there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5). If we were to pray to angels, it would implicitly give them a status equal to God. There are no examples in Scripture of anyone praying to an angel or asking angels for help.

Moreover, Scripture gives us no warrant to seek appearances of angels. They manifest themselves unsought. To seek such appearances would seem to indicate an unhealthy curiosity or a desire for some kind of spectacular event rather than a love for God and devotion to him and his work. Though angels did appear to people at various times in Scripture, the people apparently never sought those appearances. Our role is rather to talk to the Lord, who is himself the commander of all angelic forces.

However, it would not seem wrong to ask God to fulfill his promise in Psalm 91:11 to send angels to protect us in times of need.

