

Hebrews 1:13-14**Craig Crawshaw**

Angels are mentioned over 100 times in the Old Testament and over 150 times in the New Testament. Yet what do we know about these angels? And specifically, what do they mean for me? Have you ever heard a sermon on angels? Well, this morning you will hear one, because our passage in Hebrews is very much about angels, and gives us a great starting point to investigate further.

Hebrews 1:13-14 *But to which of the angels has He ever said, “Sit at my right hand, until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet”? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?*

THE “PLACE” OF THE TRINITY AND OF ANGELS, AS RELATES TO ME

God, the Heavenly Father, is on His throne, superintending His universe and particularly, His creation of mankind, including myself

God, the Son – Jesus, my personal Savior and Lord, is at the right hand of the Father in heaven, as the one mediator between the Father and man, advocating for my access to God.

God the Holy Spirit lives inside of me, and every other believer, as divine Comforter-Encourager. He is my source of spiritual life, godly character (fruit), supernatural giftedness and conviction.

Angels are a created company of spirit-beings tasked by God to carry out His providential plan to and through each Christian, present and future. They serve God’s purposes for me by protecting, guarding and directing.

1. ANGELS ARE MANY (a “host”)

Psalm 68:17 (Duet. 33:2) *The chariots of God are myriads, thousands upon thousands; the Lord is among them as at Sinai, in holiness. [Angelic hosts were present Sinai]*

Daniel 7:10 *A river of fire was flowing and coming out from before Him [the Ancient of Days]; thousands upon thousands were attending Him, and myriads upon myriads were standing before Him. [Millions upon millions surround God’s throne]*

Revelation 5:11 *Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands*

2. ANGELS ARE A FIXED NUMBER AND EVERLASTING

Luke 20:34-36 [Jesus:] *The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; for they cannot even die anymore, because they are like angels, and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.*

Matthew 22:30 *In the resurrection they [humans] neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.*

3. ANGELS ARE MIGHTY

Psalm 103:20-21 *Bless the Lord, all you His angels, mighty in strength, who perform His word, obeying the voice of His word! Bless the Lord, all you His hosts, you who serve Him, doing His will.*

2 Thessalonians 1:7 *...the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire*

2 Peter 2:11 *[speaking of those who are unrighteous] Whereas angels who are greater in might and power do not bring a reviling judgment against them before the Lord.*

4. ANGELS HAVE GREAT WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE

2 Samuel 14:20b *But my lord is wise, like the wisdom of the angel of God, to know all that is in the earth.*

Mark 13:32 *But of that day or hour [of Jesus' return] no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.*

5. ANGELS ARE CREATED – AND WERE CREATED GOOD

Colossians 1:16 For by Him all things were created.

Genesis 1:31 *God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good.*

Job 38:7 *[God to Job - Where were you at creation...]* When the morning stars sang together And all the sons of God shouted for joy?

The rebellion of Lucifer and subsequent fall of 1/3 of the angels [**Rev. 12:4**, stars=angels] must have happened shortly after creation (perhaps in the “without form and void” of **Genesis 1:2**) for Satan appears in the garden of Eden as a fallen angel. This also teaches us that angels were created with a free will. There is much to learn about the angelic fall and demons, but this is not the focus of this message.

6. ANGELS ARE PERSONAL (with intellect, emotion & will)

Intellect: Angels long to look into matters of salvation and Jesus' sacrifice (1 Peter 1:12)

Emotion: Angels rejoice over one soul who is saved (Luke 15:10)

Will: Some angels chose to rebel, others chose to serve God

7. ANGELS ARE SPIRITUAL, BUT OCCASIONALLY APPEAR IN HUMAN FORM

*In **Genesis 16**, an angel met Hagar and encouraged her to return to her master Sarah*

*In **Genesis 18**, Abraham welcomed three angelic travelers for a meal.*

*In **Genesis 19**, two angels went to Sodom as human visitors*

*In **Genesis 28**, Jacob saw many angels climbing a heavenly ladder*

*In **Numbers 22**, a visible angel stood in the way of Balaam's donkey*

*In **Joshua 5**, Joshua sees an angel with a drawn sword outside of Jericho*

*In **Judges 6**, Gideon talks with an angel, who encourages him*

*In **Luke 1**, an angel (Gabriel) appears to Zacharias in the temple and to Mary*

*In **Matthew 1**, an angel appears to Joseph in a dream*

*In **Luke 2**, many angels join “the angel of the Lord” in appearing to the shepherds*

*In **Luke 22**, an angel appears to Jesus in Gethsemane to strengthen Him*

*In **Matthew 28 and Luke 24**, an angel rolled back the stone from the tomb and sat on it*

*In **Mark 16**, women see an angel in Jesus' empty tomb*

*In **Acts 5:19** an angel opened the prison doors and led Peter and the apostles out*

*In **Jude 9**, Michael the archangel disputes with the devil over the body of Moses, as if Michael were like a man*

Billy Graham, in his book on “Angels” tells this story.

The Reverend John G. Paton, A missionary in the New Hebrides Islands, tells a thrilling story involving the protective care of angels. Hostile natives surrounded his mission headquarters one night, intent on burning the Patons out and killing them. John Paton and his wife

prayed all during that terror-filled night that God would deliver them. When daylight came they were amazed to see the attackers unaccountably leave. They thanked God for delivering them.

A year later, the chief of the tribe was converted to Jesus Christ, and MR. Paton, remembering what had happened, asked the chief what had kept him and his men from burning down the house and killing them. The chief replied in surprise, Who were all those men you had with you there?" The missionary answered, "There were no men there; just my wife and I." The chief argued that they had seen many men standing guard – hundreds of big men in shining garments with drawn swords in their hands. They seemed to circle the mission station so that the natives were afraid to attack. Only then did MR. Paton realize that God had sent His angels to protect them. The chief agreed that there was no other explanation. Could it be that God had sent a legion of angels to protect His servants, whose lives were being endangered?

This is one of hundreds of such stories that believers through the ages have related. Perhaps you have your own story of how you were supernaturally protected by one or more who might well have been God's angels. How many times have you been divinely directed by someone unknown, or mysteriously protected by unknown agents of good?

One of our grandchildren at age 5 or so, fell from eight feet, hitting his head on a cement slab. He was taken unconscious to the hospital, my daughter fearful that she might never see him return whole or alive. Yet the doctors amazingly found no damage to the head but a surface bruise, and he did indeed come home again with no problems then or recurring. Did an angel protect that head from serious injury or death? We believe that well might be the answer, as there is no other rational explanation. And we believe in the guarding and protection of angels.

THE MINISTRY OF ANGELS

*As I examine these Scriptures about angels – over 250 all together, and hear many accounts such as those related by Billy Graham, I conclude that the angels mission of service to believers, including you and me, is basically two-fold: **GUARDING** and **GUIDING**, all for the purpose of drawing attention to and bringing glory to God.*

8. ANGELS HAVE SPECIFIC FUNCTION

Yes, they surround the throne of God in praise - WORSHIP

Yes, they carry out the will of God in the universe – ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

In relating to us, they are GUARDS and GUIDES OF BELIEVERS

Hebrews 1:14 *Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?*

Psalms 91:11-12 *For He will give His angels charge concerning you, to guard you in all your ways. They will bear you up in their hands, that you do not strike your foot against a stone.*

Matthew 18:10 [Jesus:] *See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven continually see the face of My Father who is in heaven. (Guardian angels!)*

Luke 15:10 [Jesus:] *In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.*

To GUARD is to protect from harm. God knows that there is an enemy, Satan, with his legion of demon angels who is bent on harming God's children.

1 Peter 5:8 *Be of sober spirit; be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.*

I believe this “devouring” desire of the enemy is to bring both physical and spiritual harm. We know from the story of Job that Satan desires to bring physical harm to all believers, and is restrained from doing his worst only by the restraining hand of God. Of our need of spiritual protection from the enemy we need only to be reminded of Ephesians 6:11 and following,

Ephesians 6:11 *Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.*

Here we are reminded that it is a spiritual battle that seeks to devour us. And it is the angels of God who help guard and protect us from the enemy’s attacks on heart, mind and spirit.

To GUIDE *is to point us toward the safe and righteous path. We see repeatedly in Scripture that an angel or angels appeared to point saints in the right direction – both in thinking correctly and proceeding correctly. Now surely the internal Holy Spirit does this “from the inside.” But God uses His angels to do this “from the outside” apparently. Most of the time we won’t see them, but we must believe and know that they are there – appointed to help us persevere and proceed in the correct direction. **Warning Disclosure:** we have a free will, and can go through even angelic stop signs and markers, just as we can grieve and ignore the promptings of the Spirit of God within. Pay close attention, and heed spiritual guidance This will be our lesson for next week.*

There is so much more that can be learned and said about angels, such as distinctions between cherubim and seraphim, or their ministry in heaven, or their ministry to Jesus while on earth, or their role in the future coming of Jesus, or about good vs. evil angels. But the focus in this message has been about the ministry of the “good angels” to believers, as this is the focus of our present passage in Hebrews. I commend you to a more detailed personal study of angels if you are so inclined. In doing such, you would be richly rewarded.

PRAISE GOD FOR HIS PROVISION OF ANGELS ON OUR BEHALF! *Yes, they praise God continually around His throne. But they also MINISTER to all believers. And I need them – and so do you!*