THE REALITY AND ACTIVITY OF ANGELS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Before commencing this study on the reality and activity of Angels in the New Testament it needs to be noted that nowhere in Scripture is it taught that Angels have wings. The artistic portrayal of Angels as winged beings is a complete misnomer and totally unscriptural. The only celestial beings recorded in Scripture with wings are the Cherubim and Seraphim of the Old Testament, and the four beasts or living creatures before God's throne in Heaven in the Book of Revelation in the New Testament (CP Gen 3:24; Isa 6:1-3; Eze 1:5-12, 23-26; 10:1-22; Rev 4:6-9).

The word *Angel* literally means messenger. Angels are an integral part of God's creation and had a prominent place in the Old Testament record. Scriptures are silent on when Angels themselves were created by God, but they already existed, and were present when God created the world (CP Psa 148:2, 5 and Col 1:16-17 with Job 38:1, 4, 7). The *Sons of God* in Job 38:7 are Angels (CP also Job 1:6-8; 2:1). Satan was also an Angel, albeit a fallen one. He is one of only four Angels named in Scripture (CP Gen 3:4, 14; Rev 12:4, 7-9). The other three Angels named are the Archangel Michael (CP Dan 10:13, 21; 12:1; Jude 9; Rev 12:7), Gabriel (CP Dan 8:16; 9:21; Lu 1:19-26), and the "Angel of the bottomless pit", *Abaddon* or *Appolyon* – also a fallen Angel – in Rev 9:11 (CP Rev 9:11).

As created beings, Angels are not subject to death and therefore do not need to reproduce themselves – they have no need to marry for procreation purposes, like humans (CP Mt 22:23-30 also Mk 12:18-25 and Lu 20:27-36). This does not mean as many in the Church believe, that Angels are sexless and therefore unable to procreate (see author's comments on Mt 22:23-30; 1Pe 3:18-20(A) and 2Pe 2:4-6 in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**, and his studies *Who are the Spirits in Prison?* in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 1)**, and *Old Testament Giants and How They Originated* in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 3)**).

Considering angels have a pivotal role to play in the predestined purposes of God for the New Testament Church according to Scripture, contemporary Christians know very little about them. The doctrine of Angels is rarely taught in the present day Church. Yet there is a wealth of teaching about them in Scripture (CP Psa 91:9-12; 103:20-21; Mt 13:24-30, 36-43; 13:47-50; 18:10; Lu 15:7-10; 16:22; Ac 5:19-20; 12:5-11; 1Cor 11:10; He 1:14; Rev 5:11). There are many lessons to be learned by Christians about the reality and activity of Angels in the New Testament in those Scriptures. Psa 91:9-12 teaches that no evil will befall truly committed Christians who have made God their dwelling place; who abide in Him and in whom His Word abides. Neither will they be victims of plagues. God has Angels appointed to watch over them and keep them from harm's way (CP Psa 34:7). The Angels will carry them bodily so they do not even stub their toes (CP Psa 91:9-12 also Ac 5:17-20; 12:1-11). See author's study *Psalm 91* in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 1).**

Psa 103:20-21 describes Angels as excelling in strength. In the Old Testament a single Angel is recorded as killing one hundred and eighty-five thousand men of the army of the Assyrian King Sennacherib, who had attacked Israel, in one night (CP 2Ki 19:35-36). In Mt 13:24-30, 36-43, the *Parable of the Tares of the Field* and Mt 13:47-50, the *Parable of the Net*, we learn that the Angels will accompany Christ at his Second Coming and will separate the good from the bad inhabitants of the earth (CP Mt 13:24-30, 36-43; 13:47-50 also 16:27; 24:30-41 and 25:31-43). See also author's comments on Mt 13:24-30, 13:47-50 and 25:31-46 in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**, and his studies, *Coming Judgements of God* in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 1)**, and *Armageddon, Judgement of the Nations, Christ's Millennial Reign and the Eternal Kingdom* in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 2)**.

Mt 18:10 and Lu 16:22 both teach that even the humblest of God's followers have Angels to minister to their every need (CP Mt 18:10; Lu 16:22). Many Christians believe that these Scriptures also teach that every Christian has a Guardian Angel, but whether that is true or not is not clear from Scripture. Lu 15:7-10 teaches that the Angels and other Heavenly Beings express great joy when even one sinner repents and receives Christ as Saviour. (The joy over one sinner repenting more than over ninety-nine who have already repented may seen unfair to some, but not so, as each of the ninety-nine had much rejoicing over them in Heaven too, as and when they repented (CP also Lu 12:8-9)). There are literally multi millions of angels before God's Throne in Heaven, which is what Rev 5:11 above teaches (CP Rev 5:11). *Ten Thousand Times Ten Thousand and Thousands of Thousands* denotes countless numbers – literally *Myriads of Myriads* (CP also Dan 7:10; Lu 12:1; He 12:22).

The phrase *"because of the Angels"* in 1Cor 11:10 refers to Angels being present in the assembly wherever Christians gather together for a Church service. Paul admonishes Christian wives to defer to their husband's headship over them, having regard to the fact that Angels are witnesses to the proceedings (CP V 3-16). The Angels are spectators viewing God's Redemptive Plan from the sidelines (CP Eph 3:9-12; 1Ti 5:21). Angels are not participants in God's Redemptive Plan, but they have a passionate desire to know all about it. They see in the Church once depraved sinners now living lives that glorify God, and they see that God has seated them with Christ in Heavenly places (CP Col 1:12-22; 1Pe 1:3-12). The Angels are learning the nature of God's Redemptive Plan from the Church, so it is important the Divine order in the Church be observed. He 1:14 teaches that Angels are ministering spirits appointed by God to minister to the needs of New Testament Christians (CP Ac 5:19-20; 12:1-11). See also author's comments on Mt 18:10; 1Cor 11:3-16; Eph 3:9-12 and He 1:13 in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament.**

One reason advanced for the lack of present-day teaching about the reality and activity of Angels in the

New Testament is because of the shameless, idolatrous worship of them for centuries by certain professing Christians, which is strictly forbidden in Scripture (CP Col 2:18). Paul is warning Christians here not to allow themselves to be cheated out of their eternal reward by worshipping Angels. Only God is to be worshipped by Christians (CP also Mt 4:9-11; Rev 19:10; 22:8-9). See also author's comments on Col 2:16-23 in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**.

Some Christians believe that the activity of Angels in the New Testament has ceased because in this Age of Grace God deals directly with man through Christ and by the Holy Spirit. That of course is incorrect as the Scriptures subject of this study clearly teach. Angels will be active until God's purposes for the Church in the earth have been fulfilled. Until then, *"are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"* – exactly as He 1:14 teaches. They will fulfil God's purposes for the whole human race – the Godly and the ungodly alike – in the end times (CP 1Th 4:16). This refers to the First Resurrection when Christ comes again to take all the Saints of God – Old Testament and New Testament alike – both living and dead – back to Heaven with Him. The Archangel accompanying Christ is doubtless Michael, the only Archangel named in Scripture (CP also 1Cor 15:51-58). Angels will be especially active at the end of this present age prior to Christ's Second Coming, executing God's judgement on the earth and its inhabitants during the seven years reign of Antichrist, and the Great Tribulation (CP Rev 8:1 – 10:11; 12:7; 14:6 – 16:21; 20:1-3). Angels will accompany Christ to earth at His Second Coming also, for the Battle of Armageddon, where He defeats Antichrist and his armies and ends the Great Tribulation (CP 2Th 1:7-10; Rev 14:14-20; 19:11-21).

The Scriptures subject of this study are not exhaustive but merely representative of the many concerning the reality and activity of Angels in the New Testament. Readers desiring to know more about them are encouraged to search out the Scriptures for themselves. They will be richly rewarded. Scriptures used herein will suffice for the purpose of this study.