

# BETWEEN THE LINES

## *A Deeper Look...*

### #967- ANGELS: Heaven's Messengers

To us angels seem so very mythical, so alien. Even though there are so many things about them that we can't explain there are many references to them in the Bible accounts. Let's review a listing of a good many of them...

- Genesis 3- The first reference... guardians at the gate of Eden.
- Genesis 16- Hagar the Egyptian servant is reassured.
- Genesis 19- A visit to Sodom and Gomorrah.
- Genesis 21- Hagar is rescued.
- Genesis 24- An angel is promised to guide Abraham's servant.
- Genesis 28- A ladder from Heaven to earth.
- Genesis 31- An angel appears to bless Jacob.
- Exodus 23/32/33- Angels protect a new nation from their enemies.
- Numbers 22- Ask the donkey what he saw!
- Judges 2- Was this an angel or the Lord Himself?
- Judges 6- Gideon is challenged by an angel who sat under the oak tree.
- Judges 13- Manoah and his wife entertain an angel who wants to talk about babies.
- II Samuel 2/II Chronicles 21- An angel brings judgment to David's land.
- I Kings 13- An angel interacts with a prophet.
- I Kings 19/II Kings 1- Elijah is reassured. (See *Deeper Look Study Guide* for BTL 5146)
- II Kings 19/II Chronicles 32- An angel crushes the Assyrian host.
- Daniel 6- Angels neutralize lions.
- Zechariah 1/2/3/4/5/6/12- Zechariah knew the angel well!
- Matthew 1/2- Joseph is straightened out by an angel.
- Matthew 28- An angel flips away a "pebble" from the mouth of a tomb.
- Mark 1- Angels minister to Jesus at the end of a wilderness struggle.
- Luke 1- Zechariah is surprised by an angel and his message.
- Luke 2- Shepherds are stunned at the appearance of the angelic choir.
- Luke 22- The Lord is revived and encouraged in Gethsemane.
- John 5- Was the Bethesda legend a myth?
- Acts 5- Apostles are delivered from prison.
- Acts 8- Philip is assigned to a desert ministry.
- Acts 10- Faithful gentiles receive angelic visits.
- Acts 12- Peter is delivered by an angel.
- Acts 27- Paul and his traveling companions are assured of angelic protection.

**In Conclusion:** Beyond this listing there are 73 specific references to angels in the book of Revelation alone! It appears that angels have been an active part of the ministry of Heaven from the very beginning and will continue until the end of the age.

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**Angels, Or More?** As we have discussed, there are some references to "angels" in the Bible that we really wonder about. Because of the nature of the experience we seem to be dealing with more than your average angel.

Because of the interaction of Revelation 22 we know that angels of the Lord very clearly will not abide any confusion as to their role and place in the order of Heaven. Still, looking between the lines of just a few "angelic" appearances we get the idea that, at times, this is something more...

- Genesis 22- Would the Lord send an angel for such a momentous interaction as this?

- Genesis 32- Jacob had already seen an angel and he knew this was something more.  
(Compare this reference to Genesis 31 and Genesis 48.)
- Exodus 3- The first sense is that it's an angel in the bush that refuses to burn.
- Exodus 14- Was the flaming pillar an angel or the Presence of the Divine?
- Joshua 5- Was it an angel? A warrior? The Lord Himself?
- Daniel 3- Even the pagan king was impressed that this was a divine entity.

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**The Privilege of the Messenger:** One of the stated predominant ministries of angels in the Scripture is that of being the "Messenger". It is awesome and challenging to note that this term is used, at times, interchangeably with the calling given to ordinary men and women of God too...

- Haggai 1- The prophet is given the privilege of an angel's ministry.
- Malachi 2- Those ordained as priests carry a role like that of angels.
- Malachi 3- The New Testament finds fulfillment in a man named John.
- Revelation 1- Are these heavenly beings or mortal leaders of the flocks?

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**Angels In Jewish Lore:** Christianity doesn't have a corner on the market of emphasis on angels. I, personally, have enjoyed looking for these interjections within the Midrashic commentaries, legends of the Talmud, and various tales of the Hasidim. It appears that most of the focus relates to one, "Samael, the angel of death". Let me paraphrase a few of my favorites...

- It is said that the angels disputed with the Lord over the blessing of Ishmael (Genesis 21) as they foresaw the "evil" his children would do to Israel. In response God simply asked them, "Is he now evil or righteous?" The angels answered, "righteous". To which God replied, "I only judge a man by his deeds at the moment of judgment" and the angels were silenced.
- It has been told that the angels argued amongst themselves as to whether man should be created because of the rebellion he would live after the garden of Eden. The Lord finally tired of all of their arguments and finally smiled and spoke, "Why are you all arguing? While you were disputing between yourselves man is already created!"
- The Rabbi of Kobryn once looked at the Heavens and cried: "Angel, it is no trick to be an angel! You don't have to eat and drink and earn a living for your family. Just come down here and try to live this life for a while and we'll see if you can keep being an angel! If you can then you can boast- but not now!"
- A man was carrying a heavy load of wood on his shoulders and finally threw the bundle down and cried in desperation, "O Death, come and take me!" Samael appeared and said, "Why did you bid me?" and the man answered, "Because I needed your help to put the load back on my shoulders!"
- It is said that when the Lord determined that Moses should die neither Michael nor Gabriel was willing to take the life of such a faithful servant. Samael, of course, volunteered readily but Moses rebuked him in the name of the Holy One... until the voice of Heaven thundered, "It is time- but, be comforted for I will not leave you to Samael. I'll bury you myself!"

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