

The Doctrine of Angels Part II

“Do Angels Appear To People Today?”



In the Bible, angels appear to people in unpredictable and various ways. From a casual reading of Scripture, a person might get the idea that angelic appearances were somewhat commonplace, but that is not the case. Likewise, in our society there has been increasing interest in angels, and it would seem that angelic appearances are normal and common today. Angels appear in every religion, and generally seem to have the same role of messenger.

In order to determine whether angels appear today, we must first get a biblical view of their ancient appearances.

The first appearance of angels in the Bible is in [Genesis 3:24](#), when Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden. God placed guardian angels, or cherubim, to block the entrance with a flaming sword.

The next angelic appearance is in [Genesis 16:7](#), about 1900 years later. Hagar, the Egyptian servant who bore Ishmael to Abraham, was instructed by an angel to return and submit to her mistress, Sarai.

Abraham was visited by God and two angels in [Genesis 18:2](#), when God informed him of the impending destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The same two angels visited Lot and instructed him to escape the city with his family before it was destroyed ([Genesis 19:1-11](#)). The angels in this case also displayed supernatural power by blinding the wicked men who were threatening Lot.

When Jacob saw angels ([Genesis 32:1](#)), he immediately recognized them as the army of God. In [Numbers 22:22](#), an angel confronted the disobedient prophet Balaam, but Balaam did not see the angel at first, although his donkey did. Mary received a visit from an angel who told her that she would be the mother of the Messiah, and Joseph was warned by an angel to take Mary and Jesus to Egypt to protect them from Herod's edict ([Matthew 2:13](#)). Often when angels appear, those who see them are struck with fear ([Judges 6:22](#); [1 Chronicles 21:30](#); [Matthew 28:5](#)). Angels deliver messages from God and do His bidding, sometimes by supernatural means. In every case, the angels point people to God and give the glory to Him.

Modern reports of angelic visitations come in a variety of forms. In some cases, a stranger makes a statement or does something which prevents serious injury or death, and then mysteriously disappears. In other cases, a winged or white-clothed being is seen momentarily, then is gone. In both situations, the person is often left with a feeling of peace and assurance of God's presence. This type of visitation seems to agree with the biblical pattern as seen in [Acts 27:23](#).

Another type of visitation which is sometimes reported is the “angel choir” type. In [Luke 2:13](#), the shepherds were visited by a heavenly choir as they were told of the birth of Jesus. Some people have reported similar experiences in places of worship. This experience seems to stretch the model, as it typically serves no purpose other than an emotional high.

A third type of visitation is the physical feeling. Elderly people have often reported feeling as though arms or wings are wrapped around them at points of extreme loneliness. God is certainly the God of all comfort, and Scripture ([Psalm 91:4](#)) speaks of God covering with His wings. This may well be an example of that covering.

God is still just as active in the world as He has always been, and His angels are certainly still on the job. Just as they protected God's people in the past, we can be assured that they are guarding us today. [Hebrews 13:2](#) instructs us, "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." As we obey God's commands, it is quite possible that we may encounter His angels, even if we do not realize it.

In special circumstances, God allowed His people to see His unseen servants, so they would take heart and continue in His service ([2 Kings 6:16-17](#)).

While we can be encouraged by this knowledge, we must also heed the warnings of Scripture: there are fallen angels who work for Satan who will do anything to subvert and destroy us. [Galatians 1:8](#) warns us to beware of any "new" gospel, even if it is delivered by an angel. [Colossians 2:18](#) warns us against the worship of angels.

Several times in the Bible, when men bowed down before angels, those beings firmly refused to be worshiped. Any angel who receives worship, or does not cause glory to be given to God, is an imposter. [Second Corinthians 11:14-15](#) clearly states that Satan and his angels disguise themselves as angels of light in order to deceive and lead astray anyone who will listen to them.

We can certainly be encouraged by the knowledge that God's angels are at work, and in special circumstances, we might even have one of those rare personal visitations. Greater than that knowledge is the knowledge that Jesus Himself has said, "Surely I am with you always, even to the end of the age" ([Matthew 28:20](#)). Jesus, who made the angels and receives their worship, has promised us His own presence in our trials.