

## Transcript 104

Shea Houdmann

Welcome to the Got Question podcast. Today's episode we're going to be starting kind of a mini series, I guess on what does the Bible say about angels, angels, the demonic and everything that goes along with those topics are very popular questions. If you go to gotquestions.org is do a search for angels or demons you'll see a multitude of articles on different topics, so we're going to be covering the top five or six different questions we receive, and then each time we'll kind of connect some of the related questions to that. But today is this more of a general episode of what exactly are angels and why should we care so?

Shea Houdmann

Joining me today again, Jeff, the administrator of Bibleref.com and Kevin, the managing editor for Got Questions Ministries. And before we dive into this, I've even made that mistake a couple times and telling people what episode we're gonna record today, the most frequent misspelling or auto correct fail we get is what does the Bible say about angles? Just one slight misspelling, angles and as much as it's tempting to answer that question like well, there are acute angles. There are actus angles, but now it's it's funny sometimes. Well, though misspell it throughout the entire question and just so many things that we could say. But instead we actually answer the question of angels. But hopefully that's what they're really asking so well. With that in mind, Kevin, what does the Bible say about angels, not angles, angels?

Kevin Stone

Yeah, thanks.

Shea Houdmann

What exactly are they?

Kevin Stone

We'll make that clear. I mean, it's angels, not angles. I used to ask a lot about a lot of questions about angles and geometry class. But yeah, it's the subject is angels today and it's easy to see how people would be fascinated by this subject and why we get so many questions about angels there.

Kevin Stone

The Bible gives us a little bit of information about them. They obviously exist. God created them. And God created them as spiritual beings, and that right there puts them in a class different from ourselves. Because we are we are spirit and body. We have a spiritual component and a physical component as well, and that's what makes you know humanity.

Kevin Stone

We have this Union of of spirit and flesh. It looks like the angels don't have the flesh aspect, they are just spirit. They are created as spirit beings. Hebrews one in verse 14 says that angels are ministering spirits

sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation. And so right there it places angels in a different category from humanity because humans those are the ones who inherit salvation and angels then are serving for the sake of humans. Those who inherit salvation and so their ministering spirits. They are serving spirits. And they do God's bidding. I'm talking about the Holy Angels right now. Not the fallen angels, but the holy Angels do God's bidding. And so they are these spirit beings. They don't have a physical form, but it's very interesting in scripture that we see at certain occasions throughout history that angels have taken on a physical appearance.

Kevin Stone

They have appeared to people in a way that people can relate to. And they always appear as as if they were a human man. They they appear as a as a person, and then they they do God's work. And so we have, you know the Angel Gabriel appearing to Mary and she speaks to him and she fears greatly. And that's that's another thing every time an Angel shows up in scripture and and talks to somebody the the the main reaction is always one of abject terror. I mean we, we're in the presence of something that is supernatural. We understand right away that this is a powerful being and and something very different from us and in every single instance in Scripture it seems like people are scared. And so the first words of an angel to people in scripture is almost always fear not. Calm down. Chill out. Don't be scared. I'm here for delivering this message to you.

Kevin Stone

And that's really the the the basic meaning of the word angel in the Greek is messenger. And so my my wife name is Angela, a feminine form of angel, and so her name means simply, messenger of God. And that's really the job that we see angels doing most of the time in Scripture. They're delivering some type of a special message, doing a special work.

Kevin Stone

And we shouldn't get the idea that they were just showing up all the time. We see in Scripture that they show up to maybe a handful of different people, but we're talking about a span of like 4000 years. And so it's they were not a common. They did not appear commonly to people, but when God had a special work that he wanted done, sometimes he would have them, have an angel appear to a person. Now I do think that angels are always at work doing God's bidding behind the scenes, they aren't there and appearing to people all the time, but they are always at work behind the scenes and they are always the holy angels are always performing God's will and doing it perfectly.

Jeff Laird

Scripture is interesting in that a lot of what we think we know about angels or just what we think about angels doesn't actually come from Scripture, because a lot of the details that we try to fill in on our own aren't actually found in the Bible. The reference that you made to Hebrews 1:14 Kevin is, I think, useful where it says their ministering spirit. That's one of the few explanations that we have of what angels do that's that direct. A lot of the other things that we have in Scripture are very generic. They're just sort of stated without explanation, without fact. Gabriel showed up and did this, or I saw Michael things like that.

Jeff Laird

A lot of the things that we think of are really just popular culture there are things that we've interpreted from artwork that was done in the early Middle Ages, the Middle Ages where angels were represented a certain way. Or angels appear a certain way in books and movies and things like that and we just sort of absorbed those as natural assumptions. One of those is angels with wings that have white feathers. There's references in Scripture that refer to things like wings, which is also a reference to rays like the rays of the sun, not necessarily anything that says that this angel has wings that look exactly like a bird's wings.

Jeff Laird

The common response that people have when you mention something like a cherub. Sometimes we'll we'll refer to children as an innocent little cherub, and I don't know many little children who have the heads of four different animals on them and, but that's how cherubim are actually described in Scripture. So to what Kevin was saying about when people actually see angels, even though angels are spiritual, they can choose the form that they're going to appear in. They're deeply intimidating beings. They're, they're not inherently comforting creatures in and of themselves, and Scripture doesn't describe them as being primarily concerned with making humanity feel good. They're there to do what God wants them to do, and sometimes what God wants them to do is dangerously powerful.

Jeff Laird

There's an example in Second Kings 19:35. Hezekiah is a King of Israel, and he's experiencing a problem with an invading army, and this army is gigantic. There's no way they can possibly win. He prays for God to assist, and an angel, singular is said to kill 185 thousand of Assyrian troops overnight, so these are not simple, human like, beings.

Jeff Laird

There again is another thing that we see in movies where we often have personalities. There's movie series like the Prophecy, there's the Constantine comic books and movies where angels are portrayed as having this sort of political bent and bickering and infighting, and they're very human. And they're very natural to our perspective that way. Nothing in Scripture really describes angels that way. We don't really know exactly what the angelic personality or experience is like. The only thing we ever see them doing is serving God's will. Now that's the angels who are on God's side. So far as we can tell, a third of the angels that originally were created, decided to follow Satan, and those are creatures that we now call demons. So from a functional perspective, an angel and a demon are exactly the same thing. They're just on two separate teams, doing 2 separate things.

Jeff Laird

Other things, Scripture doesn't tell us that people tend to assume there's references to scripture that mention angels using masculine terminology, but we're never really told that angels are literally male and female. Jesus makes a reference where he says that angels in heaven don't marry and don't give in marriage. So far as we know, that means angels don't reproduce, they don't have children. I'm inclined to think that that means that they are genderless in the literal sense, because if they don't reproduce, then there's no real reason to have those sorts of gender roles. That doesn't mean that they can't have those because, again, scripture is not especially specific about that, but a lot of the things that we see and we think and we interpret about angels don't actually come from Scripture. They come from things

that we've seen in movies, books, comics, cartoons, things like that. And then we adopt those and absorb those and then over time they just become a natural part of what we assume. Scripture itself doesn't really have most of those things to say.

Kevin Stone

Yeah, we get a lot of questions actually about, you know are angels, boys or girls? Are they male or female? And it's scripture doesn't say like Jeff, you were just saying they probably genderless and asking the question, even it it just kind of, is a non sequitur. We have, there's the old, Chris Rice song smell the color 9. So 9 is not a color and even if it were what would it smell like? You know there are no answers to that. There's probably no answer to are angels, boys or girls because of the the genderless nature of their creation.

Shea Houdmann

Exactly, and that's a very, very common question we get. And Jeff you were mentioning the the the Cherubims earlier or cherubs another common we get is like what are the different types of angels? And so typically you'll give the answer OK, there are regular angels, describing an Angel as regular almost sounds like an insult, so, but you know what I mean? But archangels or Archangel Michael is the only angel is ever described specifically as an Archangel, which seems to indicate a Angel of a higher status. There's the cherub or the cherubim. Who seemed to have a special role around the throne of God along with the sarafem or serifs, or some view the cherubimon serifs of same angels or another. Some people objected. We shouldn't be calling these other creatures angels at all. So do you mean angels as a specific messenger of God, or do you mean angelic creatures is in non humans who dwell with God in heaven?

Shea Houdmann

So the term can be used specifically or more generically, so those would be the discounting demons of course, they're the four different types of angelic beings. Would be archangels. Seraphim cherubim and then angels, and also serve different roles, but the Bible doesn't go into a whole lot. Describes them doing certain things, but doesn't say that's their only responsibility, so there's a whole lot of mystery around angels, part of which makes it very interesting. That's why it's so fascinating to study. That's why so much of culture wants to find out more about angels because we believe that these beings exist. So OK, what are they doing and how can I learn more? And I'm so forth.

Shea Houdmann

So let me ask you guys. This is another very common question that we receive is something along the lines of are there angels among us? And a verse that became very popular to me due to a news boys song, probably back in the 90s - early 2000s, called Entertaining Angels. Hebrews 13:2 which says do not forget to entertain strangers or by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels. Saying that sometimes we may run across an angel, completely unaware. We may run to an angel who, for whatever reason is appearing as a human being, or possibly who who knows what else and not even be aware of it. So yes, according to scripture, it is possible to see angels today. That doesn't mean we will always be aware of it. And I think you guys raised a great point earlier that when angels appear in Scripture, it is always a powerful experience, which causes great fear and trepidation, and the person angels appearing to. But angels are also capable of appearing in a normal form, which does not create that.

Shea Houdmann

If so, how many times have you hear stories of people being rescued, or someone coming with just the right message at the right time. How many of those could be angles? This passage talks about you're unaware of it. You don't know, so the do angels appear to us. Yes, they do. According to Scripture, does it happen very often? I'd have to say no also according to scripture. But is there any way to ever know for sure, whether the person who helped you or whatever was an angel I, I wouldn't go that far and claiming that but angels are amazing creatures according to scripture and according to Hebrews 13:2 they are a part of our existence and sometimes we meet them without even knowing.

Shea Houdmann

So how do you guys react to when someone tells you that they think an angel appeared to them or an angel rescued them? And I don't know if you guys have heard, but Beth, one of our employees was in a if you can call any plane crash minor, a minor plane crash and someone came and helped them get out of the plane and so forth and then basically vanished. So Beth is fairly convinced this was an angel who came to help them. Was it? I don't know, but generally speaking, how do you guys respond when you hear stories like that and what's the best way we can point people to what the Bible says about the possibility of that being an angel?

Jeff Laird

I think it's entirely possible that people can have encounters with angels because just like you said, angels are ministering spirits. They're capable of doing those things. I think we have to be careful not to try to, so to speak, put words in God's mouth so you know, just because we have a positive encounter with somebody doesn't automatically prove that that was an angel. And to your point, angels can appear if they choose in ways that don't surprise people.

Jeff Laird

Lot encountered a pair of angels in his life that he didn't respond to with the kind of fear that people typically do now. Usually when people realize they're angels, that's when the fear kicks in. But they can look just like normal people. So I think it's possible that people can interact with angels. I think angels probably fall into the same category as miracles, in other words, these are, this is something that is entirely possible. It's part of God's toolkit, if he chooses to use them. He is capable of doing that, but that doesn't mean that this is something that God is going to do on a regular basis. We don't necessarily expect that God is going to routinely consistently constantly do this.

Jeff Laird

We also have to remember that angels don't act as freelancers. This again is part of the popular culture thing where we see movies where angels are just sort of milling around, wandering around and deciding what they're going to do. Curious about human beings and trying to learn about them or trying to become human beings. That there's nothing in scripture that indicates that angels are just wandering around doing nothing. So I think that we can put credence in people believing that they've seen angels, and that's not impossible. We just need to be careful that we don't put more stock in that than is reasonable.

Kevin Stone

Yeah, we know that every time a bell rings, an Angel gets its wings right? I heard that. Right? That kind of stuff, that kind of the pop culture stuff sneaks into our thinking and we do need to always go back to the Bible. You know, I like to. I would like to think that I have run across an angel sometime in my life and that I was unaware. As is mentioned in the Book of Hebrews is, you know, entertaining strangers. And entertaining angels unawares. I'd like to think that that was possible. I like to think that maybe I have actually run across an angel and just didn't know it. I know that it's entirely possible for God to send an Angel, and for that angel to appear and to do whatever work that God wanted that angel to do on that particular day. And so if somebody comes and says, you know, I saw an angel, you know they they fixed my flat tire and I turned around and they had vanished. You know, I say well, it's possible it's very possible and praise the Lord. You know you got your flat tire fixed. And all of that. So I mean, who knows? It's very possible and we know that Abraham entertained angels, unaware of who they were at first. So it's very possible that that's still happening today. God can use any means that he wants to to accomplish his purposes.

Jeff Laird

God's ability to use those means. I think we have to remember again is that angels are a means that God uses. From my perspective, one of the biggest mistakes that we make when it comes to angels is we constantly humanize them. Now obviously the Bible refers to things using terms that we can understand as human beings, and if angels can speak and they can talk and they can relate and they can interact, then that's a good thing. But I think a lot of times we take on this attitude of just assuming that angels are sort of like superheroes. That they're human beings who have the same kind of personality. The same kind of attitude. They just have all these advanced powers and that gets into questions like, do people become angels when they pass away? Because we have this sort of default assumption for no particularly good reason that angels are just like us.

Jeff Laird

Now we do the same thing with God sometimes. Some of our misconceptions about God, we recognize that he's a person. We recognize that he has thought and personality and communication, but we we tend to just assume that God is exactly like us, just really smart and really powerful.

Jeff Laird

We do the same thing with angels, and I think that's where we start to run into some of these, these troubles, especially when it comes to that relationship. What happens when we pass away? What's the connection between people and angels? In that sense, I think, gets confused when we forget that angels are completely entirely different as a type of life than people are.

Kevin Stone

Yeah, and so yeah, we'll never become angels and angels even though they may appear as a human when they're in this world, they will never become human, and I think that's important to understand. On the Mount of Transfiguration when Moses and Elijah appeared there with Jesus. And they were seen by Peter, James, and John. They were identifiable as Moses and Elijah. They were still Moses and Elijah. They were who God created them to be just in a glorified form. They were not angels and we we don't become angels when we get to heaven. You know talking about all of this and entertaining angels unawares and all of that makes me want to ask both of you Shea and Jeff, you guys, neither one of you

is an angel, right? You're not, you're not like talking to me as an angel and I just don't, I don't quite get it right? You're human?

Shea Houdmann

I think everyone's, pretty, I think everyone pretty sure Jeffs, not an angel. That's been determined beyond the shadow of any doubt and if anybody is. Anyone who knows me?

Jeff Laird

Paying attention to the color of the shirt I'm wearing, that probably helped a little bit, so I don't know that anybody who's known me for longer than 10 minutes would make that accusation. Now, if you want to be fair, Kevin, you do have to remember that there's only one kind of angel, they're just either fallen or good. So if somebody wanted to accuse me of being a demon, I don't know if that counts like it's been a while since I've had that kind of problem.

Kevin Stone

I wasn't going to go there.

Shea Houdmann

And they guarantee you I'm I'm not an angel because angels are either sinless or or fallen. Definitely sinful. So that eliminates the sinless angel holy angel possibility, and I've done some pretty terrible things in my life. But by the grace of God, I'm saved in a new creation. So I don't think I'm a demon either, but thank you for throwing that out there. Just give me a good laugh.

Kevin Stone

And I just want to make sure.

Shea Houdmann

So just real briefly. So I wanted to touch a little bit more on the do we become angels? Because it's a pretty big misconception that a lot of people have that, uh, a loved one dies, goes to heaven, they are now an angel watching over them. And I'm just so you know, we'll be covering the issue of guardian angels a little bit later in this series, 'cause that's another big one too.

Shea Houdmann

But I mean, really, Kevin, you jokingly mentioned the movie it's a wonderful life and every time a bell rings, the angel gets his wings. Well, the main gist of that story is a angel called Clarence who comes down to help George. I believe his name is through a very difficult time in his life, and if he successfully helps him, he gets his wings so. But Clarence was a human being who had died and gone to heaven. And so that's not the only place that it comes from, but it's played a major role in at least American culture. And people thinking that after I die I become an angel.

Shea Houdmann

Well no, angels and human beings are entirely separate lines of God creation. We're both created by God, but only humanity is described as being created in the image and likeness of God. That is not said

of angels. So there's absolutely nothing in Scripture that even hints that there's any sort of crossover between the two, or the humans ever become angels, or the angels ever were humans. No we're entirely separate creations of God for different purposes with different natures, and that's important knowing will our existence in heaven and glorified bodies maybe be somewhat similar to what angels are like? We are probably more similar than we are now, but that does not mean we become angels. That is a concept that is completely foreign to scripture.

Jeff Laird

Not only do we not become angels, we have to recognize that angels are completely different, not just in the sense that they're different types of beings. But they have a different relationship with God than human beings do. As far as we can tell, God doesn't offer anything like salvation or redemption to angels. When we speak about fallen angels, if that whole system works the way we think that it does, angels don't have an opportunity to be forgiven. They don't have any opportunity for redemption. They have zero extended grace in that sense, and that's likely one of the reasons why Scripture talks about angels looking into these things that God is doing with a sense of interest or wonder because he doesn't provide that. I think that helps us a little bit on the understanding of the Gospel and grace to to be glad that he did extend us that ability.

Jeff Laird

But the question of whether or not we become angels has a lot to do with that confusion of whether or not we're the same kind of being, or whether we're something different and we are different. We are entirely different. Not just in what kind of being we are, but in the way we interact with God.

Kevin Stone

And I'll just throw in here real quick that that passage you're referring to, Jeff is first Peter one verse 12 that says that the angels earnestly desire to look into matters of our salvation. So they're in a separate category. Salvation is not applied to them, but they are very curious about it, about their Lord, their creator coming into this world, and dying. That he became one of us, he became a human and died on the cross to forgive sinful humanity and the angels we're very curious about this according to first Peter 1:12.

Shea Houdmann

Absolutely so, Kevin Jeff, thank you for joining me today on this conversation. Obviously there's way more than we could cover and that's why this is going to be an entire series where we're going to discuss the most common questions we get about angels and some other related topics. So stay tuned, then next episode after this one should be what does the Bible say about demons? So that'll be an interesting conversation as well.

Shea Houdmann

Please look in the show notes at [podcast.gotquestions.org](http://podcast.gotquestions.org) or the description field on YouTube where we'll include some links to some really good resources so you can study angels and demons a little more fully because there's a lot of books out there. Some of them really good, some not so good. So we want to steer you towards some of the better resources.



Shea Houdmann

So again, Jeff and Kevin, thanks for joining me. This has been the Got Questions podcast on what does the Bible say about angels? Got questions? The Bible has answers. We'll help you find them.