

IF YOU'VE WONDERED...

“Do the dead become angels?”

After people die, it's common to hear things like, “Heaven needed some more angels” or “At least they have wings now.” The idea of someone being free to fly is comforting, but it can lead to questions about how those who died can talk to those who are alive or why God would be so greedy in wanting more angels. There is comfort in the idea of being a part of God's army and becoming more powerful than humans are and being able to guard the living in some way. This leads to curious thoughts about those who died and how angels interact with humans. We might even like the idea of a person becoming a higher being or having superhero-like qualities.

.....> What the Bible says:

Angels are messengers. The word angel comes from Greek and means to bring news. Leaders sent out angels to deliver messages. Frequently the Bible describes human messengers as angels, whether they were sent by human leaders or by God. As the ultimate leader, God has heavenly messengers who can be sent to specific people at specific times. It is comforting that God cares about us so much that God sends angels to communicate and to help us.

The Bible does not say that humans become angels after death. In fact God usually does not have a dead human communicate with those who are alive. God has enough angels and does not need humans to die to take that role. Sometimes God will comfort us with visions or dreams about those we care about who have died, but that does not mean that those who have died have super-powers or grow wings. God is the only one who is super-powerful. Instead of making dead humans into angels, God wants to give humans resurrected bodies like Jesus.

One last thing about angels is that while it may be incredible to hear messages from an angel or even speak messages like an angel, we should not worship angels. We worship God because we know that all truth and everything good comes from God. So we do not need to worry about those who have died because we can trust that God cares about them and will make sure they have what they need too!

.....> What you could explore:

How angels are similar and different than people: It can be confusing since we have different pictures of angels in our minds. Some might envision beings who sit on clouds or play a harp or fly. The Bible tells us that angels are God's messengers, and they tell people what God wants them to know. This could be compared to someone passing on a note from someone else, or a teacher giving a message from the principal. Sometimes humans give those messages, but God does have angels

who are a different kind of being than people. People don't need to turn into angels when they die because God has made each of us who God has wanted us to be already. God tells us that after death we will get new, resurrected bodies that are different from the bodies we have on earth. Like Jesus' body after he resurrected, our new bodies won't be able to die, which is also true for angels who do not die. Still people and angels are different, and God has unique purposes for each.

.....➤ What you could do:

Look in Scripture. Scripture tells us that God created human beings in a specific and unique way, in His own image and likeness (Genesis 1:27). Because humans can sin and die, humans are currently lower than the angels; however God can crown humans with glory and honor and desires humans to be elevated by becoming part of God's family (Psalm 8:5 and Hebrews 2:7). Jesus compares resurrected humans and heavenly angels. Resurrected humans will be like heavenly angels in two main ways – having no need for marriages and no longer dying (Matthew 22:29-30 and Luke 20:34-36). After death, humans can become immortal like the angels through the gift of resurrected bodies, which will be like Jesus' body after His resurrection (Philippians 3:21).

Contrast your beliefs from other religious views. Some religions, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and others, believe in reincarnation or hierarchies where after death people are rewarded or punished for what they have done. Some believe that those who have died become different kinds of beings or move closer to or further from God or an ultimate state of being. The Bible does not give any indication that this occurs, but rather mentions the goal of becoming like Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18) and dwelling with Christ forever (Revelation 21:3).

.....➤ **Where you could look for more information:**

- ✧ **Human messengers called angels:** • 2 Samuel 11:19-25 • 2 Kings 5:10 • Isaiah 37 • Malachi 1 • Nehemiah 6:3 • Mark 1:1-8 • Luke 7:24 • Acts 6:15 • James 2:25 • Revelation 2-3
- ✧ **Heavenly messengers sent by God:** • Genesis 21-22 • Judges 13:20 • Job 1 • 1 Chronicles 21:16 • Mark 13:32 • Luke 2:13; 22:43 • 2 Thessalonians 1:7 • Revelation 14:6
- ✧ **Demonic beings called angels:** • Psalm 78:49 • Matthew 25:41 • Revelation 12:7
- ✧ **Satan as an angel:** • 2 Corinthians 11:14
- ✧ **Angels should not be worshiped:** • Daniel 10 • Colossians 2:18 • Revelation 19:10; 22:9 • Worship belongs to God alone: • Deuteronomy 6:13 • Luke 4:8
- ✧ **Caring for angels (sometimes unknowingly):** • Genesis 18 • Hebrews 13:2
- ✧ **Angels judged by Jesus' followers:** • 1 Corinthians 6:3