

ANGELS— GOD'S SUPERNATURAL AGENTS

Biblical Insights and True Stories
of Angelic Encounters

ED ROCHA



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To my wife, Dani—thank you for being
my best friend. I love you.

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Foreword

Any book on the subject of angels stimulates curiosity and, in some cases, warnings. There are good reasons for both responses, which depend largely on a person's background and experience. But angels are real. Very real. Author Ed Rocha does a great job bringing us up to date on the purpose and function of these servants of God.

Not that what is happening in the stories in this book is new. It is not. Stories like these have been happening throughout Church history. It is just that oftentimes supernatural stories get swept under the carpet for fear of confusing people or distracting them from God Himself.

Yet I know of no encounter with the angelic realm that did not result in the increased worship of God. This truth is clearly illustrated by Mary, who bore the Christ child. She responded to her angelic encounter with a profound song of worship. And the shepherds whom the angels visited to announce the birth of Jesus also worshiped.

But some of the old books of revival have had these kinds of reports and experiences edited out of the reprinted versions.

Thankfully Ed does not water down reports of angelic encounters and experiences. In fact, the stories alone are reason enough to buy the book. The insights are brilliant. The biblical basis is enlightening. And the stories—*wow!*

To worship angels is foolish. Equally foolish is to ignore them. God sends them for a purpose, which is to assist us as we “inherit salvation” (Hebrews 1:14). The role of this book is to show us it is legal—and should I say *necessary*—for us to hunger for God’s interventions through angels. An unhealthy lack of appetite makes us think we can do life quite well without the assistance of God’s assistants. This great paragraph from the book helps us see the need for us to hunger for more:

There is one factor, however, that does distinguish those who have an encounter with God versus those who do not: *hunger*. God said that those who seek shall find. I believe the opposite is also true. If you are not seeking God’s supernatural signs, they will not manifest in your life and ministry. Further, you probably will not recognize signs as coming from God when you see them happening in other people’s lives and ministries.

I am convinced that hunger for more of God is the sorting factor between those who experience supernatural encounters and manifestations and those who do not.

Ed also comments that our Western rationalism can keep us out of the realm of the supernatural because we often discount what we cannot see or explain. Our logic and the way we reason, he notes, change once we experience the supernatural.

I have heard people say they do not need angels because they have the Holy Spirit. That sounds so spiritual. But it is foolish. Jesus also had the Holy Spirit—without measure. But the Father sent angels on several occasions to assist and minister to Him. They came in His darkest and most troubling moments. It is not that the Holy Spirit could not do what the angels were

sent to do. Jesus limited Himself to live as a man dependent on the Father. As such, He became the model of what we were to become—people living on the edge of two distinct realities, the natural and the supernatural. The Father makes everything for a purpose. And He created and designed angels to assist us in our connection with the unseen world. In fact, every supernatural experience or encounter is to help us anchor our affections in a world we cannot see—a position of balance for the believer who is a citizen of both heaven and earth.

As you read this book, prepare to journey through the Bible to see some of the most significant angelic encounters recorded in Scripture. On top of that, you will read the author's own stories, as well as the credible testimonies of others who have had real encounters with angels. Ed then joins these stories with spiritual principles and Scripture to help us see the biblical basis for this study.

God will use this book, I believe, to increase our faith for more in our own lives and to increase our understanding of what angels are like, what they do, and how they serve God and humans. Read it with anticipation, as I believe it will ignite your heart to hunger for more.

God never turns away those who are truly hungry for more of Him.

Bill Johnson, senior leader, Bethel Church,
Redding, California; author, *God Is Good*
and *The Essential Guide to Healing*
(with Randy Clark)

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1



Angelic Encounters

Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?

Hebrews 1:14

What are angels? Why were they created? As we see in the Scripture above, angels are ministering spirits. God brought the angels into being before He created the earth, our sun and the firmament. After Creation, He entrusted them with the lives of His children. The angels' primary assignment is to keep us, guard us and minister to us. That is what God created them to do.

The Greek word used for *ministering* in the original text of Hebrews 1:14 is *leitourgikos*, and it comes from the root word *leitourgeō*, which means “to render public service to the state.”¹ In the case of the angels, their state is the Kingdom, so the angels are meant to render public service to the Kingdom of God.

Think about this: If the state is the Kingdom, then who are its citizens? Who makes up the Kingdom of God? It is made up of God's people, or in other words, you and me. That's right—the angels are meant to serve us, and I am convinced that they do so to a much greater extent than we are aware of.

Who Angels Are Not

Before we go any further on the subject of who the angels are and what they do, let me tell you who the angels are not and what they were not created to do. God did not create the angels as His companions whose primary tasks are to serve and worship Him. Certainly, angels come before the presence of the Lord, and they do serve and worship Him, but I don't believe He created them primarily with those things in mind.

Let me tell you why. When it comes to companionship, some people believe God created the angels because He was lonely and wanted company. We know that cannot be the case. God is a triune being—the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. These three have always preexisted as God and have never been lonely.

As far as service, some people believe God created the angels to serve Him. I don't think that can be true either. God is omnipotent. He does not require service, nor does He need any creature to do anything for Him. If He wants something done, it is as good as done already.

When it comes to worship, many people believe God created the angels to worship Him. Even though this is a popular belief, it cannot be true either. God does not suffer from narcissism; He does not need to be worshiped. Worship is not a requirement for Him, and it can never be the primary job description of a created being. The moment worship becomes a duty—the moment it is no longer voluntary—it is no longer true worship. Having to worship as part of your job description makes your act of worship empty of value and void. The angels were not created primarily to worship God, although they do worship Him because their hearts are filled with love and gratitude for who He is.

If God did not create the angels because He was lonely or because He needed servants or because He wanted to be worshiped, then why did He create them? The Bible is very clear

when it says that God created them to minister to us, as we saw in Hebrews 1:14 at the start. To understand the truth of that more fully, first we need to understand the timing of their creation. When did He create the angels? Let's have a look at what the Bible says, starting with Exodus 20:11: "For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, *and all that is in them*, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy" (emphasis added). In this verse Moses makes it clear that all God's work on the heavens and earth was done within the six days of Creation. It is important to notice that by "all that is in them" Moses meant all that is in the heavens, so it makes sense to conclude that God created *all that lives* in the heavens within those six days. Keep that idea in mind for a moment.

The word Moses used for *heavens* in this text is the Hebrew word that is transliterated *shamayim*.² To know for sure that Moses is not only talking about a physical heaven (the skies), but about even more than that, it is important to know that *shamayim* is also used by the psalmist in Psalm 115:3 in this way: "Our God is in heaven [*shamayim*]." If God lives in *shamayim*, then it cannot only mean skies; it is also the supernatural realm where God chooses to live. I say "chooses to live" because we know that God is not contained by heaven or by any other place. Being omnipresent, He merely chooses to manifest His holy presence in heaven, as well as on earth, as He pleases. Space and time cannot contain Him: "The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you" (1 Kings 8:27).

A great many Scriptures show us that the angels also dwell in heaven, but we will use only two to establish this point. Genesis 28:12 says that Jacob "had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven [*shamayim*], and *the angels of God* were ascending and descending on it" (emphasis added). Matthew 24:36 says, "But about that day or hour

no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.” Clearly, the angels reside in *shamayim*, or heaven.

Now look at what the book of Job says:

Then the LORD spoke to Job out of the storm. He said . . .

“Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation? Tell me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone—while the morning stars sang together *and all the angels shouted for joy?*”

Job 38:1, 4–7, emphasis added

Remember that I told you to keep something in mind? It was the idea that, based on Exodus 20:11, God created *all that lives in the heavens* within the six days of Creation. Let’s recap what we have concluded so far:

1. God created the heavens and the earth on the first day of Creation (see Genesis 1:1).
2. The angels live in the heavens (see Genesis 28:12; Matthew 24:36).
3. All that lives in the heavens was created within the six days of Creation, including the angels (see Exodus 20:11).
4. The angels were already present when God created the earth (see Job 38:1–7).

We put 2 and 2 together and what do we get? That’s right—the angels were created on the first day of Creation. Let me break it down for you: If the angels were created within the six days of Creation, and if they were present when God created the earth on the first day, then the angels were created on the first day, when God created the heavens (*shamayim*).

If we agree—as I hope I have established—that God created the angels on the first day of Creation, it helps us understand

the answers to our original questions: Who are the angels? What were they created for? As we saw in Hebrews 1:14, *angels are ministering spirits who were created primarily to minister to God's children*. Their primary tasks are to keep us, to guard us and to serve us. I can only conclude that God created the angels on the first day of Creation, before He made His children, so that the angels could serve and minister to them. That makes sense to me. As a good Father, before the arrival of the babies, God made sure He had some nannies in the house, ready to take care of and tend to His beloved children.

Heavenly Messengers

As part of their service to us, God sends His angels as messengers to mankind to fulfill His purposes. The Bible proves this concept all over. We see angels showing people where to go or what to say, guiding them to find water or bringing them food. After Jesus was tempted in the desert, the angels came and served Him. God's angels will always come to serve those who are serving Him. Seek the Lord with all your heart, knowing that He will provide all the resources you need to fulfill His will in your life, whether human or angelical resources.

Angels come from the heavenly realm, where God resides. Of course, we know that God is omnipresent. He is everywhere and anywhere, all the time, and no one can hide from Him (see Psalm 139:7–12). And we know that God can manifest His presence in both a physical and a spiritual manner (see Genesis 1:2; 12:7; 18:1–2; Exodus 3:1–5; 1 Kings 19:1–13). But the Bible also says that He has established His throne in the heavens (see Isaiah 66:1; Matthew 5:34).

A throne is a special seat reserved for a monarch. When the Bible uses the term *throne*, it does so to emphasize God's glory and dignity, and the royal nature of His sovereign rule

and existence. I am more and more convinced that the Bible is talking about a real throne of God—a physical throne in the heavenly sphere of reality, of course, but a real throne nonetheless. He does not need such a throne for His sake, because He is transcendent and omnipresent; it is for our sake and for that of the angels. We are not transcendent or omnipresent, and neither are the angels, so it makes sense that God would make Himself available in one spot at a certain time—in this case on His throne in heaven—so that all of us can come before Him in worship and adoration.

Angels come from God. As we have established before, He created them to tend to God’s children. One of the primary ways the angels do that is by being messengers of God to mankind.

Angels are spirits whom God created to fulfill His divine purposes and minister in the lives of His children. This is how God intended it to be and how it still is today. There would have been terrible implications throughout human history if God had not sent angels to intervene in key moments and situations. God has chosen to use His angels to interact with us, speak to us, minister to us and help us accomplish the fullness of our calling and destiny.

A number of Scriptures talk about the origin of the angels. Psalm 33:6 (NASB) says, “By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host.” Psalm 148 says, “Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts! . . . Let them praise the name of the LORD, for He commanded and they were created” (verses 2, 5 NASB).³

The English word *angel* comes from the Greek word *ángelos*, which means “messenger.”⁴ In Hebrew the word for *angel* is *māl’ák*, meaning “to despatch as a deputy; a messenger; specifically, of God.”⁵ These words are mostly used to describe the angels, the array of spiritual beings God created before He created humans. Angels are essentially God’s messengers. They come to communicate God’s will to men. They delivered the law to Moses

(see Acts 7:52–53) and communicated most of the revelations contained in the books of Daniel, Zechariah and Revelation.

One source says that there are 273 references to angelic visitations in the Bible, 108 times in the Old Testament and 165 times in the New Testament.⁶ The exact number of passages that refer to angels can vary, however, depending on what Bible version you use. For example, in the King James Version the word *angel* occurs 201 times in the singular and *angels* occurs 94 times in the plural, for a total of 295 occurrences. In the New International Version those numbers change to 207 times in the singular and 97 times in the plural, for a total of 304 occurrences.⁷

Even though many disregard the subject of angels today, the truth is that they are and always have been very present in our lives throughout the ages. There is no need for us to remain ignorant about the angelic, especially with all the information available in Scripture about these special spirits.

Angels All Over

Angels are all over the Bible. Angels visited Mary and the shepherds to announce the birth of Jesus. An angel visited Zechariah and announced the birth of John the Baptist. An angel appeared to Joseph in a dream to warn him about Herod's plot to kill baby Jesus. Angels served Jesus after the devil tempted Him in the desert. Angels are everywhere in Scripture. Nevertheless, despite all the evidence of angelic manifestations and interactions with people throughout Scripture, we still encounter a lot of resistance when we share stories about angelic encounters today. I wonder why. With so much biblical evidence of angelic interactions, Christians should have no trouble believing stories about angelic visitations and encounters. It is time for us to stop being surprised, shocked or uncertain about stories of present-day angelic encounters.

All over Scripture we see God using angels to minister to His chosen people. They bring healing to the sick, set the captives free and reveal His divine will. God is the same yesterday, today and forever, and if God sent angels in the past, then why would He not send them today? Why is it that we believe in the angels appearing and speaking to people in the Bible, yet it is so hard for us to believe it now when someone says, “An angel came to me and said . . .”?

I think it is about time that the Church opens its eyes to see and its arms to embrace the reality of angels. All over the world angelic manifestations have increased, even among unbelievers. Sometimes these encounters lead them to Christ. Sometimes such an encounter delivers someone from certain death, which is also, in the case of an unbeliever, a deliverance from hell.

Yes, God still sends His angels to interact with us and intervene in our history, and that is what this book is all about. If you are still with me at this point, chances are that you really like the subject of the angelic and you want to learn more about it. If that is the case, then you have the right book. In the pages that follow, I will take you on an awesome journey through the Bible and show you some of the most significant angelic encounters recorded in Scripture. I will also share with you some exciting and edifying testimonies from the lives of people in our day who have had personal encounters with angels. I will share with you the spiritual principles behind these scriptural passages and present-day encounters and talk about how you can apply those principles to your life today.

Life with God is supposed to be a breathtaking and adventurous ride packed with supernatural encounters. Amazing testimonies of encounters with angels are waiting for you on the next pages, along with a look at some other supernatural manifestations people encounter that are a blessing. I want to invite you to get in on this adventurous journey into the supernatural realms of God. So buckle up, raise your hands up high and enjoy the ride!