

Angels

And the angel answered him, "I am Gabriel, who stand in the presence of God; and I was sent to speak to you, and to bring you this good news." ~ Luke 1:19

ANGELS fascinate us. From television shows and Hollywood movies to books and web sites packed full of information, it is clear that people are searching for answers about them. How they are portrayed, however, does not always give us an accurate picture of who angels really are or what they are like.

Angels are intelligent and free beings whose glory surpasses that of human beings until we achieve Heaven (see Lk 20:35-36). They are spiritual beings with no physical body who have been part of creation since its beginning. As spiritual creatures, they are not bound by space and time, enabling them to appear at any moment in history as messengers of God sent into the world. Throughout history, God has sent his angels to the world as agents of his power to bring about his plan of salvation, watching over the People of God and manifesting God's power and his Word at key moments in salvation history (see Gn 31:11-13; Ex 3:2; Ex 14:19; Jgs 6:11-22; 1 Kgs 19:5-8; Dn 6:20-22). An angel was sent to announce the coming of the Christ (see Lk 1:26-38), and angels sang at his birth (see Lk 2:13-14). When Christ came, on several occasions they ministered to his needs (see Mt 4:11; Lk 22:43). Their mission in this world continues after Christ's Ascension in the life and work of the Church (see Acts 5:19-20; Acts 8:26; Acts 12:6-11; Acts 27:23-25). They come with God's help and make intercession before God for the whole Church (see Rv 8:3-4). Each of us is given a guardian angel who is assigned to watch over



St. Michael the Archangel captains the host of Heaven against Satan

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Unfortunately, some decided to reject God and fell from his presence, destined for the place of "eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (Mt 25:41).

The devil who is "the serpent" (Gn 3:1) and called "the father of lies" (Jn 8:44) and "the deceiver of the whole world" (Rv 12:9), in company with all his demons, was created good but embraced evil by an act of the will. Because their choice for or against God was made outside time, they cannot change their decision and hence, unlike humans, cannot be offered God's salvation or mercy. They seek to deceive us and convince us to disobey God and to destroy his plan for our lives. Yet their power is limited to this world and their time is short. Ultimately, God's plan of salvation has already come to pass in Christ, in whose death salvation is made available to all. The battle with the evil one has already been won, and we who are united in Christ are guaranteed the assistance of the angels in Heaven in our struggle to conform our lives to Christ and to cooperate with the abundance of God's grace to make us holy.

(CCC 328-336, 391-395)

Angels trumpet the return of the Savior at the end of time as King of Kings and Lord of Lords