

Angels, a Messenger
by Any Other Name
in the Judeo-Christian
and Islamic Traditions

Angels, a Messenger by Any Other Name in the Judeo-Christian and Islamic Traditions

Edited by

John T. Greene

2016 Proceedings Volume of the
Seminar in Biblical Characters in
Three Traditions and in Literature

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing



Angels, a Messenger by Any Other Name in the Judeo-Christian
and Islamic Traditions

Edited by John T. Greene

This book first published 2018

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2018 by John T. Greene and contributors

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced,
stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means,
electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without
the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-5275-0844-7

ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-0844-6

As Always, in Memory of Misha
And for Kamryn, a Prolific Writer of Books

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abbreviations	ix
Chapter One.....	1
Prolegomena: Angels and Some of their Various Roles in the Literature from Ancient Israel, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and in Literature John T. Greene	
Chapter Two	27
Angels According to the Commentaries of Rabbis Khuli and Kreuzer Alisa Meyuhas-Ginio	
Chapter Three	35
Angels: A Brief, Military History John T. Greene	
Chapter Four.....	55
Angelic Mediators: Gabriel, Uriel and Remiel in Jewish Apocalypses Lydia Gore-Jones	
Chapter Five	77
Angels as The Son of Man in the Three Traditions: Michael, Gabriel, and Melchizedek J. Harold Ellens	
Chapter Six	93
Gabriel Rising: A Post-Colonial-Performance-Criticism Analysis of Gabriel Figure in <i>Daniel</i> Jerome Douglas	
Chapter Seven.....	109
Angels of Death or Angels of Mercy?: The Biblical Angels Gabriel, Michael and Raphael in Literature* Anthony Swindell	
*(At the Seminar in Seoul, the oral version of this essay was read by Dr. Angeline Song of the University of Otago, New Zealand.)	

Chapter Eight..... 127
Who Had Lunch with Abraham in *Genesis* 18: 1-15?
David Z Crookes

Chapter Nine..... 139
And the Angels Sing: *Sanctus* through the Ages (A Musicological
Presentation)
Max Stern

ABBREVIATIONS

A.N.E.	Ancient Near East (ern)
<i>BT</i>	<i>Babylonian Talmud</i>
<i>BHL</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Hagiographa Latina 5948</i>
<i>DSS</i>	<i>Dead Sea Scrolls</i>
<i>DDD</i>	<i>Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible</i>
<i>EBR</i>	<i>Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception</i>
f.n.	footnote
<i>HS/OT</i>	<i>Hebrew Scriptures/Old Testament</i>
<i>HB</i>	<i>Hebrew Bible</i>
jhe, tr.	J. Harold Ellens, Translator
<i>JSJSup</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism Supplement</i>
<i>LXX</i>	The major Greek-language version of the <i>Bible</i> known as <i>Septuagint</i>
<i>ms.</i>	<i>Manuscript</i>
<i>NT</i>	<i>New Testament</i>
<i>OT Apoc.</i>	<i>Old Testament Apocrypha</i>
O.E.	Old English
<i>PL</i>	<i>Milton's Paradise Lost</i>
<i>PsJn</i>	<i>Targum Pseudo-Jonathan</i>
<i>IQMXVII:8</i>	<i>Cave 1, Qumran, The War Scroll, XVII: 8</i>
<i>11Q13 (Mel)</i>	<i>Cave 11, Qumran, Fragment 13-Melchizedek</i>
R	Raphael
<i>SBLSCS</i>	<i>Society of Biblical Studies Septuagint and Cognate Studies</i>
<i>SJ</i>	<i>Studia Judaica</i>
<i>RSV</i>	<i>Revised Standard Version of the Bible</i>
<i>TBab.Berakhot</i>	<i>Babylonian Talmud Tractate Berakhot=Blessings</i>
<i>TSAJ</i>	<i>Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism</i>
U.K.	United Kingdom
<i>YHWH</i>	Traditional rendering of the Name of the Deity of Israel
<i>ZWTh</i>	<i>Zeitschrift fuer Wissenschaftliche Theologie</i>

CHAPTER ONE

PROLEGOMENA: ANGELS AND SOME OF THEIR VARIOUS ROLES IN THE LITERATURE FROM ANCIENT ISRAEL, JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY, ISLAM, AND IN LITERATURE

JOHN T. GREENE
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Preliminary Thoughts: Similarities

The origins of angels belong to the foggy period of human ignorance. For instance, according to Greek mythology, the Olympians (notoriously Zeus, but others, as well) came down to earth and mated with specific earthling women, just as was reported of some ‘sons of God’ in biblical (*Genesis* 6: 1-8; *I Corinthians* 11:10; *Jude* 6-7) and post-biblical accounts. The belief begins that non-earthlings took interest in earthlings and decided, for a plethora of reasons, to co-mingle. Who needed whom is still a question.



Angels atop the Ark of the Covenant

Modern, Extra-terrestrials Inter-breeding with Humans?

The modern versions of extraterrestrials coming down to either mate with or conduct experiments on humans—especially females—are termed Alien Abduction.¹ A man and his wife are returning from dinner one evening when

¹ See the very informative article online at: www.aliens-everything-you-want-to-know.com/AlienAbductions.html, and see the series of reports from the well-known UFOlogist Linda Moulton Howe at: “Truth Hunter” at:

both have an encounter with an entity that was not of this world. During the reported encounter, sexual and reproductive procedures were performed on the humans. Similar encounters reported by legions of people are referred to as abductions by researchers of UFO phenomena.²

Related to *incubi* and *sucubi*?

During (especially) the Middle Ages, men and women reported to Church authorities that they had been visited by otherworldly entities, had been overpowered by them, and had either been impregnated by them, or had been caused by them to perform in ways not of their normal natures. They termed the powerful interlopers as either a *succubus(s./sucubi (pl.))* (female), or *incubus(s./incubi (pl.))* (male).

In Which Biblical and Other Books Do Angels Appear?

Angelic activity is reported in a number of biblical books. However, the word “angel” is rarely to never used. What is suggested by the nebulous language employed when referring to them is of a being that morphologically resembles humans, but not exactly. Selected humans, nevertheless, can recognize them; others cannot.³

Antediluvian Angels

It is quite natural that those who rely on the biblical record of *Genesis* accept the veracity of an antediluvian world (*Genesis* 2-7). Within this world, many fascinating developments are supposed to have occurred.

https://www.gaia.com/series/truth-hunter?utm_source=google+paid&utm_term=alien%20abduction&utm_campaign=1.

² “Extraterrestrials and Aliens” online at: www.aliens-extraterrestrials.com/tag/alien-abduction. See, especially, “The Abduction of Barney and Betty Hills”; “Inside Tom DeLonge’s UFO Obsession, Blink 182-Turmoil,” *Rolling Stone* (April, 2016) Online at: <https://www.yahoo.com/music/inside-tom-delonges-music-obsession-blink-182-turmoil-150000810-rolling-stone.html>.

³ See the most thorough, online article “Angels” at: www.bible.ca/su-angels.htm (Accessed 3/30/2016), and see the list of books on angels online at: www.ewtnreligiouscatalogue.com/Home+Page/BOOKS/Angels/. For a strictly Catholic view on angels and demons, see the booklist online at: www.aquinasandmore.com/catholic-books-gifts/catholic-books-about-angels-and-demons/category/66.

Then is when certain angels are supposed to have (for various reasons) come to earth and mated with human females and produced hybrid offspring (*Genesis* 6:1-4). These half angel-half human offspring are termed *nephilim*, or giants, heroes, men (and also women?) of renown (6:1-7). In later literature some of these are referred to as Archons or Watchers.⁴ As a result, antediluvians were reputed to live extremely long lives, as well as father children at advanced ages. The postdiluvian father, Abraham, appears to have inherited this ability from the angels who visited him at Mamre (*Genesis* 18:1ff.). Below, we discuss these Watchers and Archons in several bodies of literature.

Transition Comparisons

The biblical story of Noah, his vicissitudes and triumphs, is reflected in the Greek account concerning Deucalion I⁵ (son of Prometheus and Clymene) and his wife Pyrrha (daughter of Epimetheus and Pandora). They were king and queen of Phthia in Thessaly. Deucalion's father (Prometheus) had married the Melian nymphs and this action had produced the race of Bronze. This race had succeeded both the earlier Gold and Silver races. Having been warned by a dissatisfied-concerning-human-conduct Zeus of a coming flood, king and queen were directed to prepare a vessel that would withstand and survive it. They floated for nine days and nights, and their vessel came to rest on the heights of Phocis. We are told of no offspring. One may ask, then, how was the earth repopulated? Oddly, after Zeus had caused the waters to recede, he instructed Deucalion and his wife to gather stones and throw them over their shoulders: Deucalion's stones became males; Pyrrha's became females; thus, was the world repopulated.⁶ Why Zeus may have been dissatisfied may be explained by accounts found in 1 *Enoch*. We explore this below.

⁴ See the online article "The Names of the Watchers" at: <http://www.echoes.devin.com/watchers/names.html>. The article titled simply "The Watchers" is most informative, and is read at: www.bibliotecapleyades.net/vida_alien/alien_watchers07.htm.

⁵ See the myth of Deucalion and Pyrrha online at: www.theoi.com/Heros/Deukalion.html.

⁶ www.genesis.allenaustin.net.

Postdiluvian Angels: A Survey of Ancient Literature

Allied Greek and Hellenistic Era Mythology

In Greek mythology, the god Zeus was notorious for desiring to have sexual congress with human women, and producing semi/demi-gods with them. Hellenistic literature pullulates with accounts of god-men termed *theios aner*.

Watchers: Negative Angels: The Race of Giants⁷

While Watchers (referred to above) are approached differently by different writers, they share some important characteristics. As far as biblical literature is concerned, *Isaiah* 12:14-16 and *Psalms* 82 are suspected of referring to Watchers. However, more research is necessary to confirm both accounts. The well-known *Genesis* 6:12 account is taken up in 1 *Enoch*, Chapter 6:1-7. We move closer to understanding Watchers when we study the Enochan texts.

1 *Enoch*

According to 1 *Enoch* 15:

The race of giants produced from this union (between earthly women and fallen angels) gave way to a brood of evil spirits . . . These spirits are not material or corporeal beings, but they torment mankind because they proceed from them . . . these spirits will not be punished until the day of judgment, unlike the Watchers, who are punished before and on the day of judgment.

But this does not explain exactly who Watchers are; they appear to be held to a higher standard than other spirits/angels; they committed a greater sin before God by their actions and position that led ultimately to the Great Flood.

Book of Jubilees

The *Book of Jubilees*, a work that rewrites much of the early portions of the *HS/OT*, provides the reader more information concerning Watchers. In contrast to the Enochan account, *Jubilees* holds that the Watchers descended

⁷ Consult <https://www.reference.com/art-literature/many-children-did-zeus-2805975a162eeea2> and www.deliriumsrealm.com/watchers/.

to earth as benefactors to assist humankind and to promote their advancement. Yet, something went wrong. They fell in love with human women, lay with them, and fathered offspring. This, essentially, was against the angelic rules, and it created, ultimately, social chaos (*Jubilees* 4:22).

Malalael “named [his son] Jared because during his lifetime the angels of the Lord who were called Watchers descended to earth to teach mankind and to do what is just and upright upon the earth.”(Jubilees 4:15)

These angels were not fallen, they had been sent by God himself to accomplish this mission (*Jubilees* 5:6). *Jubilees* 7:20 chronicles the fallout when God reacted to their having gone beyond their mission. They fathered the *Nephilim*=the Giants (*Jubilees* 7:21-22). In fact, they were charged specifically with uncleanness, injustice, and fornication. *Jubilees* 5:6 shows them having lost all of their authority. By fornicating with women they engaged in uncleanness. Injustice was the overall result.⁸

We come now to the angel Mastema. According to *Jubilees* 10:8-9, he was the chief of the spirits/angels. When God condemned the rebelling spirits, Mastema approached God and asked him to leave a small number of them under his leadership. God granted him leadership over one tenth of the condemned angels/spirits. With this development, we learn that Malalael and Mastema were two leaders of the spirits/Watchers/angels associated with the downfall of humans before the flood.

2 Enoch

A significant variation on this Watchers account is provided by *2 Enoch*. Therein, only three angels descend to the earth, take wives from among earth women, and produce giant offspring. Moreover, these angels are called Grigori, (a Slavic word derived from the Greek *egregoroi*) and their leader is named Satanail. (*2 Enoch* 18:3-4) They will be judged on the Lord’s Day.

⁸ An allied account is contained in the *Book of Tobit*. See online at: “The Wonderful Demon of Lust: Asmodeus.” <https://knightword.wordpress.com/2009/03/05/the-wonderful-demon-asmodeus>.

Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs

The *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs* add(s) another twist to the Watcher theme. The *Testaments of Naphtali and Reuben* specifically come to the fore here. *Reuben* 5 holds:

Thus they allured the Watchers before the flood, for as they continually beheld them, they lusted after them and conceived the act in their minds for they changed themselves into the shape of men and appeared to them as men when they were with their husbands, and the women, lusting in their minds, gave birth to giants for the Watchers appeared to them as reaching up to heaven.

Flavius Josephus on the Watchers/Nephilim

Josephus brings both the Watchers/*Nephilim* and Noah together in his account of *Antiquities of the Jews* (1:72-75):

For many angels of God accompanied with women, and begat sons that proved unjust, and despisers of all that was good, on account of the confidence they had in their own strength; for the tradition is, that these men did what resembled the acts of those whom the Grecians call giants. But Noah was very uneasy at what they did, and being displeased at their conduct, persuaded them to change their dispositions and their acts for the better; but seeing they did not yield to him, but were slaves to their wicked pleasures, he was afraid they would kill him, together with his wife and children, and those they had married, so he departed out of that land.

1 *Enoch* 69:4-12 is valuable in that it provides names of five specific angels who are mentioned nowhere else:

- Yeqon misled the children of the angels of heaven, and brought them to earth, and perverted them with the human females.
- Pinem'e brought education to humans and taught them how to write with ink on paper.
- Kasadya (a really bad apple!) revealed to people various flagellations: of the souls and the demons, and the smashing of the embryo in the womb so that it may be crushed.
- Asb'el counseled the children of the holy angels to mislead them to defile their bodies by associating with human females. And lastly
- Gader'el revealed many methods of warfare and showed humans how to artifice weapons of war thereby promoting death and sorrow.

Other angels mentioned in 1 *Enoch* 69:2 are: Semyaz, Aristaqis, Armen, Kokba'el, Tur'el, Rumyal, Danyul, Neqa'el, Baraq'el, Azaz'el, Armaros, Betryal, Basas'el, Hanan'el, Tur'el, Sipwese'el, Yeter'el, and Tuma'el. 1 *Enoch* thus proves to be a cornucopia of angelic names. Below, we shall encounter even more.

The reader will notice that morphologically the names of these angels take one of two forms: they either end in “el”, or they do not. This suggests that Jewish angelic names have been mixed with Babylonian, Persian, and Hellenistic angelic names.

The Damascus Document

In the *Damascus Document* there is a reference to “the fall of the watchers from heaven” at 2:18 similar to that in 1 *Enoch* 13:10.

Stories of the Archons

Another take on fallen angels (or discredited ones) considers the Archons. Literary research suggests that so-called Archons were (and are now) unpopular. Literature, ancient and contemporary, pullulates with negative conclusions as to their place in existence. Oddly, however, the title archon had a civil meaning. In ancient Greece, the term designated a leader. As Greek society became more complex, archon was applied to at least three leadership offices simultaneously: military, civil, and religious. This is quite understandable.

Later, during the period of Gnosticism, the term archon became co-opted to designate certain individuals/powers more connected with human fates and how their lives were controlled by celestial bodies. In this sense, archon became associated with dismissed, rebelling, or fallen angels. While the number became static at seven (as with the seven archangels of Judaism and Christianity) only five of the rebels were identified as heavenly bodies (whose duty it was to guard and secure several levels of approach to the highest heaven).

Depending on which version of Gnosticism one researches, the archons are identified—in some cases—even by name. Some of these names recall names of angels named in Christianity. (Cf. section below on Archangels and Angels in Various Church Traditions.)

Biblical documents speak of an archon also. The issue shows up more in the Greek language versions than in the Hebrew versions. For instance, where archon appears in the *LXX* as angel of a country, the Hebrew simply means prince (ruler) with no supernatural meaning at all (*Daniel* 10:13-21). Archon here appears to designate an administrator who is responsible for a particular state or political unit understood as under the particular purview of an overseer, but from a cosmic perspective, i.e., an angel.

This same Greek language influence appears in the *New Testament* where archon means prince—as of the devils, of the air, or of the power of the air, but never as an angel.⁹

Biblical Characters and Literature

The Presence of Proactive Angels

Not all extra-human with human encounters deal directly with sexual issues; some happened in a less direct manner. The case of Abraham and his nephew Lot is such a case. Angels visit Abraham at the Oaks of Mamre where he was encamped and told him that they were on their way to destroy the plain cities of Sodom and Gomorrah because of their wickedness (*Genesis* 18-19). The reader intuits only through innuendo during the encounter of Lot with these angels that there may be a sexual issue driving these destructive/militant angels. This remains, however, speculative. Nevertheless, the cities were obliterated. Here, there is a twist: these avenging angels are (supposedly) opposed to whatever unusual/different sex is being practiced rather than impregnating human females themselves.

⁹ An Archon, an inorganic creature located between the Demiurgos or creator deity and the human race, is a product of the mind and belief system known as Gnosticism. Existing as one of several mystery systems prior to early Christianity, an adversarial relationship resulted between the two when the latter came into existence. Gnostics focused on a female deity known as Sophia.

Among the documents discovered at Nag Hammadi, Egypt (now enshrined in literature known as *The Nag Hammadi Library*), are stories concerning the Archons. Consult the well-written, on-line article concerning Archons at: <https://www.metahistory.org/gnostique/archonfiles/AlienIntrusion.php>, and see Marvin Meyer, ed., *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures: The Revised and Updated Translation of Sacred Gnostic Texts Complete in One Volume*, (New York: HarperCollins, 2007).

We learn, then, that all encounters between humans and angels/messengers need not revolve around sexual/reproductive matters. Let us look at a few more reported encounters. Not only did humans see or intuit angels of the Lord, one of the two animals in the *Bible* that speaks, namely Balaam's ass (the other is the serpent in *Genesis*), also sees an angel. This angel blocks the route Balaam seeks to direct his animal without success. In this case, it is not the angel who speaks, but Balaam's ass (*Numbers 22: 21-38*).

Angels are mentioned some 300 times in the *Bible* alone. The images that are present in the *Prologue* of the *Book of Job* present one of two major sides of the view of the deity of the *Hebrew Scriptures/Old Testament*. One view holds that he is alone: the only deity. The other is that he has sons (and maybe daughters: these would be deities also!), and that they serve him in various capacities: a monolotry/ (cat) henotheism. This latter explains the view expressed in *Job*: in the godly realm are numerous, functioning beings. The Satan therein receives the focus of the numerous beings (sons) who have been assembled in this text. When a Roman conqueror was entering his capital city after some military victory, standing slightly behind him in his chariot was a servant whose duty it was to whisper into the victor's ear and remind him that he was but a human being who was fallible. A similar service was performed by the Satan. Often rendered into English as "adversary", his legitimate function was to remind the deity that there were other ways of viewing a given situation or decision that the deity had made, or was about to make. He was not a rebel, but a legitimate counselor: he was merely doing his job. Stated more clearly, the Satan and *satan* are not the same figures.

Rebelling and Fallen Angels

The *Job Prologue* presents no rebellion/revolution of the sons of God=his heavenly council led by the Satan (*Job 1:6 & 2:1* (Sons of God)). However, there are other places in the *Scriptures* where the theme of rebelling angels=sons of God is mentioned. The rebelling faction lost and was ejected from the godly realm: they became known as the fallen angels; according to some accounts, the Satan was chief among those who were expelled. By this time, however, *satan* had lost its definite article and original identity. According to 1 *Enoch 6:1-7*, the leader of some 200-300 fallen angels is named Semjaza (which may reflect Persian influence). This is obviously a radical departure from the almost standardized angelic names that end with "el," as we shall see below. These fallen angels had as a *locus* Mt. Hermon (during the days of Jared) according to *Enoch 7: 1-5*.

Due to continued interaction between the giant offspring and regular humans, social conditions between them deteriorated to the point that both humans and giants became corrupted, and could no longer live with one another. Some humans appealed to heaven. Their supplications were heard by the four, major archangels: Michael, Gabriel, Uriel, and Raphael. They, in turn, passed the message on to God. God considered the situation—that both groups were corrupt. Accordingly, God sent Uriel to make his plan of destroying the earth known to Noah. He sent Raphael to bind Azazel, one of the fallen leaders, and throw him into a hole God had dug in the desert. Michael was commanded to detain Semyaza—another leader—bind him and his associates, and detain them in the valleys of the earth.

1 *Enoch* 15 paints a terrible picture of the origins of evil spirits and their fate. Because they result when giants die, they can influence heavily the earth and all in it. Their destiny is death, but not before a great day of judgment.¹⁰

Sexual Angels Plus

One also reads of biblical texts that mirror accounts in Greek/Hellenistic mythology of deities such as Zeus in terms of their contact with the earthly community. These involve either active or passive contacts by sons of God=angels sexually with human (especially, but not exclusively) females. The main example is *Genesis* 6: 1-8.

Angels Who Have No Physical (Sexual) Contact with Humans

The Annunciator and the Idea of Parthenogenesis

A less extreme form of such encounters is termed an “annunciation” during which a woman would be approached by an angel and told that she was pregnant and would deliver a child who would perform significant, God-planned acts on behalf of Israel and humankind. Two famous examples contained in the *New Testament* are: *Luke* 1:26-56 (Gabriel to Mary); and *Luke* 1: 13-15 (Gabriel to Zacharias, not to his wife who was to become pregnant). The *New Testament* figures Elizabeth and Mary, who

¹⁰ A bewildering number of fallen angels and their functions in traditions are available online at: “Fallen Angel Names” www.angelsghosts.com/fallen_angel_names. (Accessed 3/20/2016)

have no physical contact with their messengers, produce male offspring. There is also an angel who informs Sarah that she will conceive Isaac; she laughs due to her advanced years of here-to-fore barrenness. According to *BT Baba Metzia* 86b, it is the Angel Michael who informs Sarah that she would conceive and bear a son (*Genesis* 17:15-21). Here, we should add the mothers of Samson and Samuel.

A Man of God (*Judges* 13:3-6, 9)

While the word “angel” appears nowhere in the text, here, an angel appears to the mother of Samson. Thus, we see the “annunciator” theme once again.

Linguists hold that the name Gabriel derives from the Hebrew words *geber* (sword) and *el* (God) =the sword (=enforcer/warrior) of *El/YHWH*.¹¹ These glimpses challenge us to raise the question of whether angels are without sex. This is certainly implied by *Matthew* 22:30: words placed in the mouth of Jesus. It would therefore suggest that there are two varieties of angels, for sons of God were reported as descending from heaven and engaging in sexual congress with human females.

Angels as Communication Agents

When reported as in touch with the earth and its inhabitants, early angels functioned as messengers as suggested by the Hebrew expression *mal'ach yhw/adorai*. Early on in the *Genesis* account, for example, the creator deity, in dealing with the human creatures of his created order, communicated directly with them. However, there is a clear scheme of *YHWH* withdrawing more and more from directly addressing humans in that order. Even by the accounts of Abram/Abraham, there is a telling bifurcation in *YHWH*'s communication praxis: the deity's voice calls Abram and instructs him to leave his country, home, and kin (if necessary) and to journey to the land he would be shown. Later, in a portion of that land, he is approached by three messengers of *YHWH* and informed of *YHWH*'s plans for the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (*Genesis* 18:2). However, even one of those visitors is the Lord!

¹¹ The militant aspect of Gabriel's name and function is preserved in Roman Catholic tradition where he is the commander of the heavenly choir that battles against the forces of Luciel, his choir, and additional angels who fight with him.

Angels Who are Warriors

All of Israel's neighbors subscribed to the view that specific deities functioned in specific roles: weather, warfare, fertility (of family, crops, and herds), agriculture, and death and dying, to name but a few. The angels sent to Abraham were, by their very mission, warrior angels (as well as one being an annunciator concerning Sarah). We may also assume that "angels of death" were involved in the major plague in Egypt resulting in the death of all Egyptian firstborn prior to the exodus (and intimate that they were led by Gabriel). Yet, Michael must be considered here, also. To that end, much Christian art depicts him with a sword.¹² While my essay below herein focuses on angels militant, we here mention the following.

Daniel 10:20 discusses the angel Michael as a warrior, a "prince" who is in charge of the people Israel. (10:20; 12:1) In this sense, he is one of the "generals" in the army of Field Marshal *YHWH tzebaoth*: *YHWH* of armies. As Lydia Gore-Jones writes herein, and is quoted several times in my essay below, "As war is raging in this world between Israel and her enemies, a parallel war takes place on the cosmic plane. Against Michael, the Prince of Israel, as well as the revealing angel who fights beside him, there are also otherworldly chief angels engaged in the spiritual warfare on behalf of Persia (10:13) and Greece (10:20)." [p. 8

¹² My colleague Lydia Gore-Jones addresses herein in her essay the issue of warrior angels. In *Daniel* 7-12, especially starting in Chapter 10, she writes of the episode: "This episode provides more information on the ranks, division, and structure of heavenly beings. Firstly, four, chief angels are mentioned, although only Michael is named. Apart from Michael who is away fighting, ... Michael is depicted as a warrior, ... as war is raging in this world between Israel and her enemies, a parallel war takes place on the cosmic plane. Against Michael, the Prince of Israel, as well as the revealing angel who fights beside him, there are also otherworldly chief angels engaged in the spiritual warfare on behalf of Persia (10:13) and Greece (10:20)." (Page 10 of her 20-page work)

Gore-Jones goes on to write: "... it is worth pointing out that the role of Michael and Gabriel in *Daniel* is mainly a military one. Although Gabriel is also the messenger and revealer of eschatological mysteries to a human being, he fights side by side with Michael, portrayed through Gabriel's words as the commander of the heavenly hosts, and Israel's protector and advocate. These two roles of Gabriel and Michael as messenger and as military commander respectively are adopted later in *Luke*'s annunciation account (*Luke* 1:19, 26) and John's vision of Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon (*Rev.* 12:7)." (Page 11 of her 20-page work)

of her work] She writes further on the issue of angels as warriors “Although Gabriel is also the messenger and revealer of eschatological mysteries to a human being, he fights side by side with Michael portrayed through Gabriel’s words as the angelic commander of the heavenly hosts, and Israel’s protector and advocate. These two roles of Gabriel and Michael as messenger and military commander respectively are later adopted in Luke’s annunciation account (*Luke* 1:19, 26) and John’s vision of Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon.” (*Revelation* 12:7)

According to 2 *Baruch* (63:6-7), commenting on 2 *Kings* (19:35), *Isaiah* (37:36), and 2 *Chronicles* (32:21), the angel Remiel, who is depicted as appearing at the siege of Jerusalem during the reign of (the popular) King Hezekiah, declares himself the angel of the Lord who destroyed the Assyrian army. More of this as stated below.

Angels Who are Healers

The Hebrew word for “physician”, “healer” is *rofeh*. Thus, *Raphael* means the healer/physician of God. Those who were formerly afflicted with diseases, from which they were expected not to recover, were assumed as having been healed by this angel. In the *Book of Tobit*, this angel is sent to heal (*Tobit* 3:17a) the cataracts of Tobit’s eyes in order to give Sarah, daughter of Raguel, in marriage to his son Tobiah, and to take Asmodeus-the-demon into custody and to detain him.¹³

An Angel who is Like God (Michael)

In Hebrew the name Michael (*mi-cha-el*) means who-is-like-God; it is not a question, but a description. Michael is referred to as the Taxiarch Archangel or Archangel. Since arch means highest or chief, Michael is understood as the chief or highest of the heavenly angels. Depending on who’s counting, Michael appears in the *Hebrew Scriptures/Old Testament* rarely; therein he makes three cameo appearances, i.e., he is referenced in the biblical *Book of Daniel* (10:13; 10:21; 12:1); these are the only references to the angel Michael in the *HS/OT*. Several references are about Gabriel (*Daniel* 8:16; 9:21) instead.

¹³ See *The Torah Sefer Tuvia: The Book of Tobit: An Ancient Jewish Novel for Shavuot* at: www.thetorah.com/book-of-tobit/.

New Testament specific references to him (and other angels) are more numerous: some 69 times. *Jude* 1:9, 14-15 (quoting 1 *Enoch*'s "holy myriads") are prime examples. The *Book of Revelation* (12:7-9) is interested in Michael as the leader of the heavenly forces loyal to God who defeat the forces of Satan, resulting in his being expelled. To be sure, some of the enumerated passages cited within the following online references do not mention Michael directly, (1 *Thessalonians* 4:16, for example) yet, sufficient passages remain to give a view of how important was Michael for (especially) various *NT* writers.¹⁴

Judaism

Angels are referred to by name only during and after the period of the Babylonian captivity.¹⁵ Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish (230-270 C.E.) of Tiberias maintained this.¹⁶ Within Judaism, Michael is believed to be the protector/defender of Israel. Yet, Jews are not to pray to him for help against her enemies; they need, and should pray only to the God of Israel. Nevertheless, two prayers beseeching Michael to intercede on her behalf were crafted by Judah ben Samuel he-Hasid and Eliezer ha-Kalir. While this may have been a limited and discouraged practice in early rabbinic times, its use is limited today.¹⁷

Angels and the Rabbis

Rabbis opposed appealing to angels as intermediaries between man and God. Nevertheless, they have a place in Jewish liturgies and lore. In *Numbers Rabbah* 2:10, for instance, one reads:

As the Holy One, blessed be He created four winds (directions) and four banners (for Israel's army), so also did He make four angels to surround His Throne—Michael, Gabriel, Uriel, and Raphael. Michael is on its right, corresponding to the tribe of Reuben; Uriel on its left, corresponding to the tribe of Dan, which was located in the north; Gabriel in the front, corresponding to the tribe of Judah as well as Moses and Aaron who were in the east; and Raphael in the rear, corresponding to the tribe of Ephraim which was in the west.

¹⁴ Cf. https://www.openbible.info/topics/archangel_angel_michael and [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_\(archangel\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_(archangel)).

¹⁵ We have already demonstrated this with the *Book of Daniel*.

¹⁶ Consult "Angels in the Talmud," *Jewish Heritage Online Magazine*.

¹⁷ *Ethiopic Apocalypse of Baruch* ix. 5.

This rabbinic explication is based on the contents of the biblical *Book of Numbers*, Chapter 2.¹⁸ Since the early, rabbinic tendency was to eschew angels, realizing that belief in them was so strong among contemporaneous Jews, they saw it prudent to adopt/co-opt them and make them relevant in their system. Whereas the angels Michael and Gabriel had been the only angels mentioned by names in the *HS/OT* (*Daniel*), post-exilic conditions required that all angels be specifically designated. While this process developed fairly reasonably in Judaism (pre-rabbinic and rabbinic), angelology suggests that it reached an almost lunatic level during the Greco-Roman and Byzantine periods. The plethora of *mal'ache adonai* referenced in the *HS/OT* were “identified” by the scholars and rabbis, and identified by name.

Christianity

A fair question is “Where do angels appear in the *New Testament*”? Moreover, what are they doing in each appearance? is an equally important question. The tentative answer is seventeen (17) times. Let us explore where and why?

In the *Gospels*, angels are referenced at:

- *Luke* 1:11-13 wherein an **angel** (messenger) visits the priest Zacharias to inform him that he and his wife, Elizabeth, will have a son. The son was to be named John—and readership knows him as John the Baptist.
- *Luke* 1:26-28, 30-31: The Virgin Mary is informed by an **angel** that she will give birth to a savior.
- *Luke* 2:8-11, 13-14(15). Near Bethlehem, **angels** appear to shepherds announcing the birth of Jesus.
- *Luke* 4:10-11 has the tempter quote a tempting passage to Jesus saying: “He will give his **angels** charge of you, to guard you,” (Quoting *Psalms* 91:11-12).
- *Luke* 22:43 describes part of Jesus’ preparation for being handed over to the authorities who would eventually kill him: “And there appeared to him an **angel** from heaven, strengthening him.”

¹⁸ See the well-written and informative article “Angels in the Talmud: Michael, Gabriel, Uriel and Raphael: Four Angels of the Presence,” online at: www.jhom.com/topics/angels/talmud_fourangels.htm#26.

- At *Matthew* 1:18-20; 2:12-13 and 19-21 show three **angelic** visits to Joseph concerning marriage to Mary and protection of his family from those who would do them harm.
- *Matthew* 4:11, continuing the theme of tempting, holds that after the tempter had departed from Jesus: “and behold, **angels** came and ministered to him.”
- *Matthew* 28:1-2, 5-6 (and *Mark* 16:5-6) show an **angel** descending from heaven, rolling back the stone from Jesus’ tomb, and sitting upon it. He also is the first to announce to the women who come to anoint Jesus’ body further that he has risen.
- In *John* 5:1-4, several *New Testament* versions omit verse 4 (such as the *RSV*). However, the *RSV* provides a critical note that verse 4 refers to “an **angel** of the Lord (who) went down at certain seasons into the pool, and troubled the water: whoever stepped in first after the troubling of the water was healed of whatever disease he had.” Would this refer to Raphael?

Angels are also referenced in the *New Testament*, non-*Gospel* material at:

- *Acts* 1:10-11 has **two angels** inform the disciples that the risen Christ will return in the same manner in which he ascended to heaven.
- *Acts* 5:17-20 shows an **angel** releasing the apostles from prison.
- *Acts* 10:3, 7, 22 tell of a vision of one Cornelius of an **angel** who tells him to send soldiers to Joppa to bring Peter to him.
- *Acts* 12:1-17 tell of Herod waging war on the young church. He also had Peter arrested and jailed (1-6). An **angel** appeared before Peter, and rescued him from his jailors (7-11). It is even thought by disbelieving people that it could not be Peter at the door of a residence; they mistook him for an **angel** (15).
- *Acts* 27:23 shows Paul on a sea voyage to Rome. Amid tempests and storms at sea, his vessel is severely threatened, but he tells his fellow passengers that an **angel** has assured him the men and cargo will be safe even though the ship will be lost.
- *1 Timothy* 5:21: “In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of **the elect angels**, I charge you to keep these rules without favor.” Timothy was counseling various officers of the Church on their responsibilities.

Seven + Archangels¹⁹

Apocalypse/Revelation 8:2 mentions 7 archangels, while 1 *Enoch*, Chapter 21 mentions 7 angels by name, and refers to all of them as archangels: Gabriel, Michael, Raphael, Uriel, Raguel, Ramiel (Jerahmeel [one of the leaders of the 200 fallen angels]), and Sariel. A later writer renders the names as Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel, and three different names: Chamuel, Jophiel, and Zadkiel. These changes were reflected in the writings of one *Pseudo-Dionysius* (late 5th through early 6th centuries C.E.). Still later, Pope Gregory I rendered the names as Gabriel, Michael, Raphael, Uriel/Anael, Simiel, Orphiel, and Raguel. An 8th or 9th century C.E. talisman attributed to one Auriolus names the seven as Michael, Gabriel, Cecitiel, Oriel, Raphael, Ananiel, and Marmoniel. Additionally, an Eastern Orthodox icon²⁰ lists the 7 + 1 archangels as Jegudiel, Gabriel, Selaphiel, Michael, Raphael, Uriel, Barachiel, and Castiel. Along with Cherubim and Seraphim, all surround the image of Emmanuel/Christ. A similar scene, but this one involving Mary, is viewed in a fresco by Michelangelo in St. Maria in Degli Angeli in Rome.²¹

Archangels and Angels in Various Church Traditions

Within the Church in general, and the Roman Church in particular, a separate trajectory has been developed dealing with the existence of the 7 archangels. Not all church traditions accept all seven + of the archangels mentioned above, nor do all seven have the same names. In the canon of *Scripture* of the Roman Catholic Church, for instance, only Gabriel and Michael of the *New Testament* are accepted by name; Raphael, mentioned in the *Book of Tobit* (12:15), is also accepted by name. Yet, Catholic tradition acknowledges that angels consist of 9 choirs: Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominions, Powers, Virtues, Principalities, Archangels, and Angels. It is told that one of the most powerful of the angels was named *Luciel*. When he rebelled against God and was banned from Heaven to become *Lucifer* (obviously, a play on words here²²), an entire choir went with him, and was lost. However, many other angels from other choirs also followed

¹⁹ Cf. www.7archangels.info.

²⁰ See the previous note.

²¹ Online at: <http://www.santamariadegliangeliroma.it>.

²² Lucifer and Semjaza are two angels whose names do not end in “el.” Also, see Note 4 above.

Lucifer (*Apoc. /Rev. 12:7-9*); all were banished to the earth. As a result of the rebellions and wars in Heaven, seven angels from the second lowest choir placed themselves between the remaining choirs and the throne of God as a sort of praetorian, angelic guard. These were the major archangels, and their names described their major duties.²³

The Eastern Orthodox tradition accepts only Gabriel, Michael, Raphael, and Uriel (because of 2 *Esdras*). Three different names appear in other apocryphal sources as Izidkiel, Hanael, and Kepharel. The Copts name Gabriel, Michael, Raphael, Suriel, Zadakiel, Sarathiel, and Ananiel. Gabriel, Michael, Raphael, and Uriel enjoy veneration in the Anglican and Episcopal traditions. It would appear, then, that Gabriel, Michael, Raphael, and Uriel have staying power in these above-discussed traditions.

But these are not all: Selaphiel, Jegudiel, and Raguel (from 1 *Enoch*) and many others are referenced in the pseudepigraphical writings.

Angels as Tour Guides (1 *Enoch* & *Sura 17*): Uriel and Gabriel

It is not until the period of the apocryphal literature (and beyond) that we encounter some angels as tour guides in the heavenly realms. In 1 *Enoch*, the seer, Enoch, is guided on an upper heavenly tour by the Angel Uriel (1 *Enoch* 19). Uriel means God's Light/Light of God. He is the means by and through which the knowledge of God is imparted to humankind. He is the embodiment of enlightenment as the most perfect light. Moreover, he governs the army of angels and Sheol: the watery abode of the dead according to 1*Enoch* 20:1. We remind that the Prophet Muhammad was also the recipient of a tour of Heaven/Paradise. The Angel Gabriel/Jibril led the Prophet Muhammad on his heavenly night journey (*Sura 17, Al-Isra & Al-Mi'raj* and from *Hadith*).²⁴

²³ Etymological analysis tells a fascinating tale and reveals much about how these named angels were understood to function among those who believed in their existence as either spirits or "persons." (1050 C.E. St. Celas)

²⁴ In the inspired words (legends) of the Prophet Muhammad known as (the) *Hadith* there is an account of the Prophet's trip to and tour of Heaven. It is recorded in *Sahih Buhari*, Volume 4, Book 54, Number 429. It is supposedly narrated by Malik bin Sasaa. The Prophet was carried in a night trip to Jerusalem (*al Quds*=The Holy Place) then translated to Heaven by the Angel Jibril (Gabriel). According to the Hadith, he visited seven levels of Heaven and had experiences in each place. See the article at: www.balaams-ass.com/alhaj/paradis2.htm. and "Four

Missing and Returned Angels

Psalms 104: 2-6 mentions the creation of angels. However, in the creation account(s) in *Genesis*, there is no mention of angels having been created. The Targumists appear to have been sensitive to this gap in story-telling in *Genesis* and attempted to stop up some of these gaps. Thus, *Genesis* 2:1 appeared to angel hunters as referring to them as part of the heavenly host.²⁵ This may simply refer to the stars. But 1 *Kings* 22:19, concerning the vision of the Prophet Michaiah ben Imlah, also employs the term *host*; this *host* is *standing* beside the throne of God. This, too, lends credence for angels being present. *Sirach* 16:26-30 maintains that angels were created before human beings.

Targum Pseudo Jonathan 1:26 maintains that angels were created on the second day of creation. Also, the author of *Jubilees* 2:2 and Augustine (*City of God* 11:9) thought long and hard about where angels had to have been created in the *Genesis* account. *Genesis Rabbah* holds that angels were created on day five when God also created all of the winged creatures with two wings. And it is in *Isaiah* 6:2 that one reads of angels flying about with two wings.

One sees, then, that the issue of when angels came on the creation scene was not ignored, and later scholars sought to suggest solutions to this omission in the Hebrew account of Creation.

What Do the Targums Onkelos, Pseudo-Jonathan, and the Jerusalem Targum Say About Angels?

A *Targum* is an Aramaic translation or paraphrase of the Hebrew-written *Torah*. The best-known are *Targum Onkelos*²⁶ of Babylonia; *Targum*

Angels of the Talmud.” (Tour Guides) *Jewish Heritage Online Magazine* at: www.jhom.com/topics/aangels/talmud_intro.htm.

One of the most vivid accounts of tours of Heaven, however, is contained in 1 *Enoch* at LXXI. The full text is located at:

www.sacred-texts.com/bib/boe/boe074.htm.

²⁵ Pete Enns, BioLogos, “Genesis, Creation, and Ancient Interpreters: What about Angels?” (2010) Online at: www.biologos.org/blogs/archive/genesis-creation-and-ancient-interpreters-what.

²⁶ A *Targum* is a translation/interpretation of the *Torah* in the Aramaic language. Since *Targumim* (pl.) were produced both in Babylonia and in Palestine,