

Marigold Hunt

A Book of Angels

Stories of Angels in the Bible

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Chapter One

About Angels and Devils and Us

The one thing everybody knows about angels is that we can't see them. Of course it's true that we can't, but it isn't the most interesting thing about angels. You can't see the wind either, but there is plenty you can know about it besides that.

The reason you can't see angels is interesting to start with. What can you see of your own self? You can see your hands and feet and quite a lot of your body, and if you look into a mirror, you can see your face. But there is more to you than that. You have a mind to know with and a will to choose and love with. Have you ever seen them? No, of course not, nor has anyone else. And the reason you can't see an angel is that he is *all* mind and will. He has no body, so he doesn't show at all. God is all mind and will, too, which is why you can't see Him either.

That is what people mean when they say God is a spirit and the angels are spirits and our souls are spirits. Only spirits have minds for knowing with and wills for loving with.

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God, just as it says in the catechism, is the Supreme Spirit. His mind is so great that no one else will ever altogether understand it. And His will is so strong that He can do anything at all and love more than we can ever understand. The first people He made were angels. They are more like Him than anything else He made: very strong and wonderful mind-and-will people. He made them to know Him and love Him and be happy with Him forever.

Of course, God made this world we live in, too. He made all the things we *can* see: the sun and the sea and the mountains, flowers and animals and birds. But He didn't make them to last forever.

Some of them last quite a long time. The sun has been shining for millions of years and will probably shine for a million more. Mountains go on looking much the same for hundreds of years, and so does the sea. Some things last only a very little while; butterflies and flowers are of this sort. But nothing of all the things we can see is made to last forever. That is the really tremendous difference between angels and this world. Each angel was made to last forever, and this world is not. Only spirits are made to last forever.

What about us? We are mind-and-will people, just as the angels are. Our souls are spirits made to last forever. But we have bodies, too, and they belong to this world and come to an end. We are the only things God made that belong half to the world of the angels and half to this world we can see. Our bodies are just as much part of us as

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our souls, and God has made a special arrangement about them. No matter when we die, at the end of the world we shall have our own bodies back again. They will be so wonderfully made over for us that they will last as long as our souls do. And that will be forever and ever and ever.

In the meantime, here we are among all the wonderful and interesting things that God made and that we can see. It's rather easy for us to forget all about the things we can't see, but it's a great pity if we do. We shall never get to Heaven if we are not even interested in it! And God has given each of us an angel especially to look after us and to help us get there.



This is a book of stories about angels from the Bible. And the first thing someone will say is, "You said we couldn't see angels, but all these stories are about angels people *did* see!"

And that's quite true. When God sends an angel with a message for us, and wants us to see him, of course he must appear somehow. Even then what we see isn't really the angel himself. It's just a body God gives him for the occasion, so that he can let us know he's there. It isn't the angel's body; it is more as if he brought along a picture and held it up for us to see, so that we would know he had come.

All the same, we can learn a good deal about angels by finding out what has been said about them by the people

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they have appeared to. They do not usually try to describe what they saw. When they do try, you can see how difficult they find it to explain how the angel looked. Ezekiel and Isaiah, whose stories are in this book, both describe visions of angels, and you'll see how difficult they found it, and how hard it is to make a picture in your mind of just what they saw. Sometimes, if it suits God's plan, an angel appears who looks just like a man, so that no one knows the difference. But artists usually draw them with wings, so that we can tell which of the people in a picture are angels.

Suppose God sent an angel to see you and wanted you to know he was an angel. What would he look like? He would probably look enough like pictures of angels you have seen for you to guess that that was what he was. But he would look a great deal grander and more wonderful than any picture you ever saw, because angels are so much more wonderful than any picture an artist can make.

Sometimes you see pictures and stories of angels that show them as babies or small children with tiny wings, sitting on little clouds. These stories and pictures are not really meant to show what angels are like; stories of baby angels are fairy tales. There is no such thing as a baby angel. From the first moment that God made them, the angels have been just as they are now and just as they always will be.

Because all the stories in this book come from the Bible, you may be sure that all of them are very well worth

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reading. God would never have let them get into the Bible if they were not.



The very first angel in the Bible is the Devil! The Devil is a wicked angel, of course. Wonderful as the good angels are, God did not allow them to begin being happy with Him forever in Heaven until they had been given some kind of trial. God wanted them to choose whether or not they would love Him and serve Him.

We don't know what sort of trial would suit an angel, but we do know that some of them failed in the one God gave them. One great angel refused to love and serve God; he wanted to be served and worshiped himself, as if *he* were God!

"I will not serve!" he said, and some of the other angels said the same. Then there was a great battle between the good angels and the bad angels.

The good angels were led by Michael, whose name means "Who is like God?" That was the very first battle in a war that has gone on ever since between the good angels and the bad angels. That first battle ended in the bad angels' being cast out of Heaven forever. That's why we say, "Holy Michael the Archangel, defend us on the day of battle."

The bad angels were given no chance to be sorry. Do you know why God gives us so many chances to be sorry and gave the bad angels no second chance at all? It is

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because a second chance wouldn't be of any use to an angel. Once angels make up their minds, they never change them. That is because whatever an angel wants to understand, he does understand, straight off, as well as he ever can. If an angel wanted to study arithmetic, he would only have to turn his mind toward it, and he would understand the whole thing. He wouldn't have to bother about remembering how many sevens make eighty-four or even working out one sum.

We learn things slowly, bit by bit, and forget many things, too. We are always changing our minds and being sorry, because every time we learn something new or remember something, we see things differently. But when the bad angels chose to refuse to love and obey God, they knew exactly what they were doing. They will never understand it more clearly than they did at the first moment; they will never see anything new to make them think differently. There was nothing to do but send them away forever.

The devils are still spirits, and they must continue to be spirits forever because spirit is made to last forever. They are great spirits who hate God instead of loving Him, and oh, how they hate us, too! We have the chance of going to Heaven and being happy there with God and with the good angels forever — the chance the bad angels threw away. So they will do anything to keep us from getting there.