

Dear Dave,

Thank you for once again writing us at Christian Questions Radio. You asked several interesting questions. You wanted to know why Jacob used a stone for a pillow when he stopped for the night on his way to Haran. You also wanted to know why the angels in Jacob's dream needed a ladder if they had wings. Finally, you wanted a yes or no answer to the question, "Do angels have wings?"

Question 1: Why does Jacob use a stone for a pillow? The scriptures tell us "Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Haran. When he reached a certain place he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep." (Genesis 28:11) In ancient times headrests, especially in Egypt, were quite hard, sometimes being made out of metal, so a stone would appear to be an appropriate place to rest one's head. The Hebrews as well as other nomadic tribes were used to sleeping on the ground with a stone as a pillow. It was not an uncommon practice.

Question 2: Why did the angels in Jacob's dream need a ladder if they had wings? The account of Jacob's dream does not say that the angels had wings. Genesis 28:12 says, "He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it." Artists' conceptions of this dream usually show angels with wings. The Bible in this account does not say the angels had wings. Angels are spirit beings. They can appear and disappear in an instant. They have the ability to materialize and appear to be actual human beings, as they did to Abraham in Genesis 18 and Lot in Genesis 19. Obviously, angels do not need wings.

All of the above having been said, there are biblical accounts describing angels with wings. Are these accounts meant to be taken literally or figuratively? In Ezekiel, chapter one, we read of Cherubim as having wings. However, they are also described as having four faces; a man, a lion, an ox and an eagle as well as wheels and feet the color of burnished brass. Their general appearance is like "burning coals of fire" (Ezekiel 1:7 & 13). We believe these beings are used in a symbolic way just as they were in the Ark of the Covenant in the Most Holy place in the Tabernacle (Exodus 25:18-20). In this case they represent the attributes of Love and Power, waiting until Justice is satisfied (the blood applied on the mercy seat between the Cherubim) in order to wing their flight to uplift and restore the world. So also in Ezekiel's Temple, the Cherubim are shown with wings outstretched, active on their errand of mercy, with faces of a man (Love) and a lion (Power). We read of Seraphim in Isaiah 6. In this chapter the Seraphim take coals from the altar of the temple and place them in Isaiah's mouth. This incident is obviously a vision and is not literal because Isaiah speaks soon afterwards (verse 8). Just as the coals are not literal, the Seraphim are not either.

Can we take these symbolic creatures and apply their symbolic characteristics as literal elements of an angel? No we cannot. Angels are spirit beings and do NOT have wings.

We hope we have answered your questions. Be sure to sign up for CQ Rewind at [www.christianquestions.net](http://www.christianquestions.net). The service is free without obligation and will provide you with scriptural perspective on many questions and topics.

Sincerely,

**Christian Questions Radio**