

UNIT 2: God's Creating Work

Section 7: Intro to Angelology

Systematic Theologies:
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INTRODUCTION:

***Introductory Activity: Provide 10min for people to complete the following *Angelology Quiz*:**

1. Do angels exist? How do you know?
2. How many angels are there?
3. When were angels Created?
4. Are there different types/ranks of Angels?
5. We are provided with names for how many angels? What are the names?
6. What do angels look like? What descriptions are we provided with in the Bible?
7. What brought about the fall of Satan? The Demons?
8. What function do angels play in the world?
9. Who/What are the "Sons of God" in Genesis 6?
10. Are there guardian angels?

*Spend 10min in brief discussion regarding people's answers to these questions...

I. The Existence of Angels

A. *Popular Interest*

1. There have been large swings in interest in angels over the years.
2. There have been times of "preoccupation" with angels and other times of "neglect."
3. **Erickson**, "The topic of angels has probably had a more varied history than most doctrines. At times, there has been a virtual preoccupation with the doctrine of angels and speculation of the wildest sort regarding their nature and activities. At other times, belief in angels has been regarded as a relic of a pre-scientific and uncritical way of thinking."
4. Though we often only think of the physical world around us, we must not forget that there is another world of "unseen spirits" all about us.
5. Already in NT times both Jewish and Gentile readers are warned against the "worship of angels" (**Col 2:18**).
6. **Culver** quotes Henry Alford who provides the wording to the 4th Ecumenical Council, "It is not fitting that Christians should... call on angels, and make celebrations to them in unlawful ways. If therefore anyone be found employed in this covert idolatry, let him be accursed, inasmuch as he is a denier of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and a pervert to idolatry.' The movement was not stifled for worship of angels and 'saints' was a corruption remaining to be corrected by the Reformation of the 16th Century and has not even yet been fully removed from Roman Catholic popular religion. Even the Catechism of 1984 (paragraph 2502) preserves an official form of angel-worship (called 'adoration') in the following and other words about sacred art. The spiritual beauty of God is reflected in the most holy Virgin mother of God, the angels, and saints. Genuine sacred art draws men to adoration."

B. Biblical References

1. The Bible mentions angels well over 250x (~100X in the OT, ~165 in the NT).
2. Biblical Terms:
 - a. מַלְאָכִים - (malak) **Heb.** for “messenger”
 - b. ἄγγελος – (angelos) **Gr.** for “messenger”
3. A few examples:
 - a. **Matthew 26:53** "Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve **legions** of angels?"
 - b. **2 Kings 6:15-17** Now when the attendant of the man of God had risen early and gone out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was circling the city. And his servant said to him, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" ¹⁶ So he answered, "Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." ¹⁷ Then Elisha prayed and said, "O LORD, I pray, **open** his **eyes** that he may see." And the LORD opened the servant's **eyes** and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.
 - c. **Ephesians 6:11-12** Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

II. The Origin of Angels

A. Created Beings...

1. We are not left in the dark as to the origin of angels – they too were created!
2. **Psalms 148:2-5** Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts! ³ Praise Him, sun and moon; Praise Him, all stars of light! ⁴ Praise Him, highest heavens, And the waters that are above the heavens! ⁵ Let them praise the name of the LORD, For He commanded and they were created.
3. **Ezra declares in Nehemiah 9:6** “You alone are the LORD. You have made the heavens, The heaven of heavens with all their host, The earth and all that is on it, The seas and all that is in them. You give life to all of them And the heavenly host bows down before You.”
4. **Colossians 1:16** For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created through Him and for Him. (*also – John 1:1-3*)
5. **It is for this reason that we are studying Angels here in our look at the Creating Work of God – they, just like human beings, were created by God.**

B. Time of Creation...

1. Some have held that Gen 1:1 “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” explains the order of God’s creation – the heavens and all its host and the earth.
2. The heavens were created with all of its structure in place, while the earth was created without form and void, which then God sets about giving structure to and filling in.
3. This is further backed by **Job 38:4-7** “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell *Me*, if you have understanding, ⁵ Who set its measurements? Since you know. Or who stretched the line on it? ⁶ On what were its bases sunk? Or who laid its cornerstone, ⁷ When the morning stars sang together And all the sons of God shouted for joy?”

III. The Nature of Angels

A. They have all essential facets of Personality

1. *Angels are said to have wisdom* – **2 Samuel 14:20** “in order to change the appearance of things your servant Joab has done this thing. But my lord is wise, like the wisdom of the angel of God, to know all that is in the earth.” Which can be used for destructive ends – **2 Corinthians 11:3** But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.
2. *Angels have emotions*: **Luke 15:10** "In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God **over one sinner** who repents." & **James 2:19** You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.
3. *Angels are described as having a moral character*:
 - a. “holy angels” – **Mark 8:38** “For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.” **Rev 14:10** he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.
 - b. “sinful angels” – **2 Peter 2:4** For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment;

B. Distinct from Humanity

1. They are not merely a superior order of human beings... They are not glorified humans
 - a. **Hebrews 12:22-24** But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels,²³ to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of *the* righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than *the blood* of Abel. – Distinction between angels and humanity...
 - b. **While they might come to earth as humans** (several examples of this in the scriptures) but they themselves are not “flesh and blood” (Eph 6:12), but spirits.
 - (1) **They belong in a realm** where body and form exist (like Christ’s resurrected body) but not in the same mode as our bodies exist.
 - (2) **Just as Jesus had** “flesh and bone” (**Luke 24:39**) and could eat (**Luke 24:41-42**), so too angels can eat food and interact with humans (Gen 18, Acts 5:19, 12:5-11, 8:26, 10:1-7, 27:23-25)...
2. Not given in marriage... Cannot Die
 - a. **Luke 20:34-36** Jesus said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage,³⁵ but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage;³⁶ for they cannot even die anymore, because they are like angels, and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.
 - b. **Matthew 22:30** "For in the resurrection they **neither** marry nor are **given** in **marriage**, but are like angels in heaven.
 - c. **Whenever a name is mentioned it is always Masculine...**
 - (1) Gabriel – Dan 8:16, 9:21, Luke 1:19, 26
 - (2) Michael – Dan 10:13, 21, 12:1; Jude 9, Rev 12:7

- (3) *Apollyon – Rev 9:11
 - (4) Satan – *many references...* Job 1-2, I Chron 21:1, Zech 3:1-2, Matt 4:10, Rev 20, etc
 - (5) Note: especially in the case of Gabriel, Michael many of these passages are “apocalyptic” in genre (truth is conveyed through symbols), so we just need to take care in not extracting strict doctrinal theology from these names and distinctions.
3. Angels can be withstood and be in need of help (Dan 10:13). They only exist in one place at a time (not omnipresent, omniscient, or omnipotent – only God is!)

IV. The Relative Position of Angels

A. Position in reference to Man

1. In a sense angels are inferior to mankind in since they have been designated by God for the service of the heirs of salvation...
 - a. **Hebrews 1:13** But to which of the angels has He ever said, "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET"? ¹⁴ Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?
 - b. **Also, one day the elect will judge angels: 1 Cor 6:3** Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more matters of this life?
2. On the other hand, they are in some respects superior to mankind by the implication of the following verses (superior in might and knowledge):
 - a. **2 Peter 2:10-11** and especially those who indulge the flesh in *its* corrupt desires and despise authority. Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties, ¹¹ whereas angels who are greater in might and power do not bring a reviling judgment against them before the Lord.
 - b. **Jude 1:8-9** Yet in the same way these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties. ⁹ But **Michael** the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"
 - c. **Matthew 24:36** "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.
 - d. **Also remember** Angels are of a higher order of creation and therefore innately possess greater knowledge and have gained information from observation over long periods of time (while we must study the past, they have observed it).
 - e. **Also, Heb 2:7-9** describes Christ as having become for a little while lower than the angels – reference to the Incarnation (His taking on flesh)...

B. Position in Reference to God

1. While having great power and knowledge, it is still limited! They are not divine beings!
 - a. *See above passages...*
 - b. *See also: 1 Peter 1:12* It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven-- things into which angels long to look.
2. It is from these concurrent truths that people have been tempted to worship angels, and have been wrong in doing so!

- a. **Colossians 2:18-19** Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on *visions* he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind,¹⁹ and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God.
- b. **1 Cor 6:3** Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more matters of this life?
- c. **Rev 22:8-9** I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things.⁹ But he said to me, "Do not do that. I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book. **Worship God.**"

V. The Ranks & Organization of Angels

A. How many angels are there?

1. **Matthew 26:53** "Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?"
2. **Hebrews 12:22** But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels,
3. **Revelation 5:11** Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads (10,000s) of myriads, and thousands of thousands,

B. Are there ranks between the angels?

1. The Reformers stood adamantly against elaborate hierarchies of angels (Calvin writes against this in his Institutes). He warned against constructing organizational charts of things that really go beyond the scope of revelation within scripture. He even cited the apostle Paul's "3rd heaven experience" in which he wrote nothing about it (2 Cor 12:2-4) as an example that we ought to stick to what has been provided in the Bible.
2. We read of "archangels" – I Thess 4:16, Jude 9
3. We read of "thrones, dominions, principalities, powers, etc – Eph 1:21, Col 2:15
4. We also see from Jude 9 that these positions are afforded respect by other angels

C. Are there different types of angels?

1. Seraphim (**lit.** burning one) – only mentioned in **Isaiah 6** (provided a description there)
2. Cherubim mentioned in several places
 - a. Most often referenced in relationship to the ark of the Covenant – **Ex 25:18-22**
 - b. Cherubim guarded the way into the Garden after the Fall – **Gen 3:24**
 - c. **Ezekiel** speaks of them (**Ez 10**) & If **Ez 28:14-16** speaks of Satan's Fall: "You were the anointed cherub who covers, And I placed you *there*. You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked in the midst of the stones of fire.¹⁵ "You were blameless in your ways From the day you were created Until unrighteousness was found in you.¹⁶ "By the abundance of your trade You were internally filled with violence, And you sinned; Therefore I have cast you as profane From the mountain of God. And I have destroyed you, O covering cherub, From the midst of the stones of fire.

***We'll be studying Descriptions of Elect Angels (section 8) and then of Fallen Angels (section 9).**