

"You and Your Beliefs"--Angelology, part 1

Tonight we want to explore a doctrine we seldom discuss. That's unfortunate, for there at least 255 verses in the Bible that refer to this topic.

I'm talking about *angels*.

Discuss: Why do we seldom talk about angels?

C. S. Lewis wrote in *The Screwtape Letters*, "There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors, and hail a materialist or magician with the same delight." (3)

We want to spend 2 weeks on the Doctrine of Angels.

--Tonight: Angels

--Next Week: Satan and the demons

Tonight: What do you believe about Angels?

The Bible answers several key questions for us...

I. Who are Angels?

The name means "messengers." Let's answer this question from two perspectives...

A. Categories of Angelic Beings (Heb 12:22; I Pt 3:22; Rom 8:38)

Heb 12:22 "But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly..."

1 Pet 3:22 "...who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him."

Apparently, not all angels are the same. We find the following designations...

1. Archangel (Dan 12:1--Michael)

Dan 12:1 "At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise."

2. Seraphim (Isa 6:2)

Q: What is their function?

3. Cherubim (Gen 3:24)

Gen 3:23-24 “So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. ²⁴ After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.”

4. Principalities, Powers, Thrones, Dominions, Authorities (Rom 8:38)

Rom 8:38-39 “For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Eph 6:11-12 “Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”

B. Characteristics of Angels (see Bancroft, 317)

Packer states, “They are intelligent moral agents, not embodied or ordinarily visible, although they are able to show themselves to humans in what appears as a physical form (Gen. 18:2–19:22; John 20:10-14; Acts 12:7-10). They do not marry, and they are not subject to death (Matt. 22:30; Luke 20:35-36). They can move from one point in space to another, and many of them can congregate in a tiny area (Luke 8:30, where the reference is to fallen angels).”[\[1\]](#)

Let’s note some specific characteristics. Angels are...

1. Created Beings (Ps 148:2, 5)

Q: Why is it vital to affirm angels were created?

2. Personal Beings (II Sam 14:20)--intelligent, voluntary, active

3. Unmarriageable Beings (Mt 22:30)

4. Deathless Beings (Lk 20:35-36)

Q: What does it mean to “die?” It means to cease to exist. A created dog will cease to exist once it dies. But not angels. A created angel will always exist. What about humans? Though we die physically, we will always exist somewhere.

5. Swift Beings (Mt 26:53)

6. Powerful Beings (Ps 103:20)

7. Glorious Beings (Is 6:2; Lk 9:26)

Discuss: What effect should this knowledge of the angels have on us?

Warning: Some worship angels. See Col 2:18-19—"Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions. ¹⁹ He has lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow."

II. Why do Angels exist?

We find two reasons mentioned in the Scriptures (there may be more).

A. Messengers of God (Heb 1:14)

Heb 1:14 "Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?"

Discuss: How do angels serve God's people? Think of biblical examples...

B. Perpetual worshipers of God (Rev 4)

We see two different kinds of angelic beings in the heavenly scene of Revelation 4. Note what they are doing...

--Four living creatures (6-8)

--24 elders (9-11)—these may be angels or humans

Note: They refuse to be worshiped. (Rev 22:9)

Discuss: What do these texts teach us about God?

III. What do Angels do?

A. In the Old Testament

1. "The Angel of the Lord" revealed God's Word (to Abraham, Gen 17; to Moses, Ex 3:2, and see Acts 7:30, 35, 38, 53)
2. Carried out God's Judgment (Isa 37:36)
3. Spiritual Warfare (Zech 1:12-14; 3:1ff; Dan 9:21; 10:13)

B. In the New Testament

1. Ministered in Jesus' Life

- a. In His Miraculous Conception (Matt 1:20)
- b. In His Temptation in the Wilderness (Matt 4:11)
- c. In Gethsemene (Lk 22:43)
- d. Rolled the Stone away (Matt 28:2)

2. Minister to Christians (Heb 1:14)

- a. Rejoice when sinners repent (Lk 15:10)
- b. Directing (Philip, Acts 8:26)
- c. Protecting (Peter, Acts 12:7ff; Paul, Acts 27:23)

Discuss: Why is it important to remember this is narrative literature?

3. Other activities

- a. Watch Christians (I Cor 4:9; I Pt 1:12; I Cor 11:10)
 - b. Carry out God's Judgment (on Herod, Acts 12:23; Christ could have called to deliver Him, Mt 26:53)
- c. Shall be Judged by Christians (I Cor 6:3)

Discuss: Key questions...

--Do we have a guardian angel? Is there biblical support for this?

Perhaps Matt 18:10 ““See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.”

--Should we talk to the angels? No.

--What part do angels have in our lives?