

Angelology *(Part One)*

Introduction:

Angelology is the study of angels. (Greek: ἄγγελοι)

Why is it necessary to study and know about angels?

- a) Because they too were created by God and their existence and activities have an impact on humanity (either positively or negatively) and one day humanity will have an impact on the judgment of those angels who were opposed to God and His rule through Christ (1 Corinthians 6:3)
- b) There is a general disregard towards the teaching of angels as some hold it to be a form of worship and indulge in it hoping that it will bring them closer to God (Colossians 2:18) however Jesus discounts this and any other avenue of access to God by claiming Himself as the only way, truth and life (John 14:6)
- c) Others lay so much emphasis on the subject that it results in their belief in witchcraft and spiritualism, things from which God expressly commanded Israel to avoid because it provokes God to anger (2 Kings 17:17)

However regardless of the general ignorance concerning angels there is much the Scriptures reveal on the subject. Especially so because the New Testament clearly points out the influence of demons associated with idolatry (1 Corinthians 10:20–21) Hence the strong admonition to flee idolatry (1 Corinthians 10:14) Other passages clearly identify idolatry as a work of the flesh (Galatians 5:20; Colossians 3:5; 1 Peter 4:3)

In addition, knowing about the evil forces with which we have to wrestle in the spiritual realm, gives us the tools to gain the victory over them rather than be ignorant about them (Ephesians 6:12)

Besides which, since our study of The End Times of necessity includes the part angels will play at the end of the world, it behooves us to know as much about them as is revealed to us in the Scriptures (Matthew 25:31)

Discussion:

WHERE DO ANGELS COME FROM?

It is evident from the fact that only God has immortality (1 Timothy 6:16) that angels have not existed from eternity. The Father, through the agency of the Word brought forth angels as part of His creative process (Colossians 1:16)

Consequently the Psalmist could write through the Holy Spirit's inspiration: "Praise ye him, all his angels:Praise ye him, all his host...Let them praise the name of Jehovah; For he commanded, and they were created" (Psalm 148:2, 5)

The only conclusion we can draw from a text such as Job 38:4–7 is that angels ("the sons of God") existed before the creation of the earth. Hence God must have started His creative processes by first bringing forth the spiritual beings according to His will and to carry out His will.

WHAT ARE THEY LIKE?

- According to Matthew 22:30 after the resurrection human beings will be like the angels in regards to then being asexual. This does not imply that we will be angels but only that we will have certain qualities which they now possess, (Luke 20:34–36) but humans will continue to be a separate species to that of angels (Hebrews 12:22–23)
- Though angels took on human form when they appeared to certain individuals in the Scriptures (Acts 1:10) they are by nature spirit beings (Hebrews 1:7, 14) and just took on human form to interact with man, otherwise the only other way for man to see spirit beings would be for God to give man a special vision of them (2 Kings 6:15–17)
- Since angels do not have an ancestral head (like Adam is to the rest of humanity) they therefore are considered a company of individuals rather than a race. As such Christ did not make atonement for their sins (Hebrews 2:16) as He did for humans by taking on Him the common form of humanity (Philippians 2:7–8)
- Because of their close proximity to the abode of God, they are privy to certain things to which man is not, hence their knowledge exceeds that of man's (2 Samuel 14:20; Luke 1:19–20) but they are not omniscient (Matthew 24:36) and there are certain things which, try as they may, could not know (1 Peter 1:12)
- Their power also exceeds that of man and their appearance a cause for grave concern, since their sudden and unexpected appearance and disappearance is so alarming to us mere mortals. (Matthew 28:2–4; 2 Peter 2:11) They are also able to overcome things by which man is naturally restricted (Acts 5:19; 12:7, 23)

THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF ANGELS?

Since their group name simply means “messenger”, and there are various messengers mentioned in the Scriptures, we have to let the context of the narrative lead us in determining what type of messenger it is talking about: natural (men) or supernatural (angels).

This lesson will focus on supernatural messengers (angels) who remained faithful to God rather than the angels who followed Satan in his revolt against the Almighty (Jude 1:6)

- *THE CHERUBIM: (The ones grasped)*

The first mention of these beings is in Genesis 3:24 when God stationed them at the entrance to the garden of Eden to prevent man from reentering the garden.

Psalms 99:1 says that God sits upon the cherubim and in view of the fact that there were cherubim woven into the curtain of the tabernacle and engraved into the floor of the Most Holy Place as well as replicas of them made as a covering for the Ark of the Covenant (Hebrews 9:5) indicates their work and proximity to God.

According to Ezekiel 28:1–19 it would appear that God was lambasting Satan who stood behind all the evil doings of the king of Tyre and consequently addressed Satan as having been one of, if not the main guardian cherub of God, until he was cast out because of his iniquity.

- *THE SERAPHIM: (The burning or noble ones)*

The only mention of Seraphim in the holy text is in Isaiah 6:1–6 where they are described as beings that specialize in singing the praises of God Almighty.

From the passage one can glimpse their profound reverence for God whilst doing their service to Him who is the Lord of hosts. Even their eyes they cover with one pair of their wings (indicating how holy God is that even those who are constantly in His presence are forced to show humility) and their feet with another pair and fly with the third pair of wings.

- *THE ARCHANGELS: (The chief messengers)*

The designation “Archangel” occurs in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 and in Jude 1:9. The latter reference is regarding a particular angel named Michael to whom there is mention made in other parts of the holy Scriptures (Daniel 10:13, 21; 12:1) Michael is described as: “one of the chief princes” allowing us to conclude that there are more of them.

If the designation “Prince” is equivalent to “angel” in the above passages, then the mention of the Prince of Persia and the Prince of Greece, (likely evil angels since the good angel prepared himself to fight against them) allows for more than one Archangel.

Whether it will be Michael who will announce the presence of Jesus on that fateful final day when He returns to resurrect mankind and destroy this world (1 Thessalonians 4:16) is not made clear to us. However when Scripture mentions “The Angel of the Lord” it does not refer to any ordinary angel or archangel, but the Word of God before He came in the flesh (Exodus 23:20–22, Joshua 5:13–15)

Conclusion:

God created all angels as perfect beings (they had to have been endowed with free will just like man) and since some sinned (Jude 6) there came to be a separation between the holy angels and those who are evil. Those who are holy remained in the presence of God and the others were evicted and later bound in pits of darkness, awaiting the judgment day (2 Peter 2:4)

God's prime purpose in creating angels is for them to serve God in whatever capacity He wills and a great deal of that is in God's interaction with man, especially those who would inherit eternal life (Hebrews 1:14; Acts 10:1–6) Jesus specifically mentioned the privileged relationship that exists between little children and angels (Matthew 18:10)

The ultimate Man whom the angels welcomed into this world as a babe, strengthened in His time of temptation, supported in His hour of anguish and announced His resurrection from the dead, is Jesus Christ the Son of God (Luke 2:8–14; Matthew 4:11; Luke 22:43; Matthew 28:5–7)

Questions:

List two reasons why we should study and know about angels:

Name three things you know about the nature of angels:

What important role do angels play in the life of believers?

Did God create evil angels? Give reasons

Logically, when can we conclude God created angels? Text?

What are the different types of angels we know about?

How are the Cherubim different from the Seraphim and under which group would Satan fall?

Which angel was the prince for the people of Israel?

If God created perfect angels, how could they turn away from God and sin?

Who was likely “the Angel of the Lord” under the Old Covenant?
