

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Angelology – Study of Angels – Angels, Satan, & Demons

Introduction

- Some theologians break it up into three doctrines: Angelology, Satanology, and Demonology. They are all the same type of being.
- They are hard to biblically talk about.
 - They are never the subject of any verse they appear in, but are incidental to some other topic.
 - Thus, the Bible omits details about them.
- In the Old Testament, the word for angel is *Mal'ak* and in the New Testament it is *Angelos*.

Millard Erickson's Summary Statement

- "There are superhuman, but not divine beings who work within human history. Some of these, who remained faithful to God, carry out his work. Others, who fell from their created state of holiness, live to oppose God and his children. God's care and concern for his creation is evident in the ministrations of good angels. By contrast, Satan and his minions seek to thwart the purposes of God. But God has limited their powers. (Erickson, p. 457)"



How Important is This Doctrine?

- The Bible mentions angels quite frequently, thus it is important and it is tied to inerrancy.
- They are mentioned in 34 of the 66 books of the Bible.
 - They are mentioned 186 times in the OT and 100 times in the NT.
- Jesus taught of their existence and importance.
- They are prominent in history and eschatology.



Problems with Angelology

- The academic world denies their existence.
 - Anti-Supernatural Bias.
 - They see angels as pre-scientific superstition, and they see the Bible in the same way.
- Incorrect Christian response.
 - In the 20th Century, the Neo-Orthodox viewed angels as another category of demythologization.
 - They supposedly said they were symbols for things such as societal evil. So they denied their existence.
- Incorrect Societal response.
 - Folk theology took it to a whole other extreme.
 - Common popular culture becomes obsessed with Angels.
 - Many television programs, movies, books, and gift shops being focused on them. Their views match ancient Gnosticism and Eastern Dualism.
- Christians who believe their Bibles to contain absolute and inerrant truth must find the balance between these two extremes.
 - This is accomplished by accepting what the Bible says.

History of the Doctrine

- In the early church, angels were recognized by the Church Fathers, and given their proper place of study.
 - Soon after, the Gnostics gave angels undue prominence and divine status. The church fought hard to defeat such heresies, and in response the study of angels diminished.
- In the Medieval Church, through Thomas Aquinas, the doctrine received full systemization (he was called the Angelic Doctor).
 - They even debated how many angels could fit on the point of a needle. The doctrine maintained prominence until the Enlightenment.
- Enlightenment Rationalism scoffed at the idea of angels, leading to foolish Christian responses of demythologization.
- The current popular culture's fascination with the supernatural has led to the reassertion of the doctrine.
 - It was Billy Graham's book "Angels" in the 1970s that alerted the church to the immense popularity of angels in the surrounding culture.
 - A corrective dose of biblical and systematic theology is in order.

Creation of Angels

- God is the only eternal being with an independent existence.
 - Everything else came from Him, meaning angels had to be created.
- Psalm 148:2 – Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his hosts!
- Psalm 148:5 – Let them praise the name of the LORD! For he commanded and they were created.
- Colossians 1:16 – For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.



When Were Angels Created?

- Christians advance different theories.
- Some say they were created in Genesis 1:1.
- Some say they preexisted the creation of the universe.
 - This implies spiritual heaven was created prior to the rest of creation and the angels were created then.
 - They also say this is when the Angelic Fall happened – prior to creation.
- Others argue that God created the angels somewhere in the six days of creation.



When Were the Angels Created?

- This view has some support.
 - Exodus 20:11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.
 - It is argued that the angels fall happened after the creation of man since God called everything good on the sixth day.
 - Adam had enough time to name all of the animals, which implies an extended time (perhaps of weeks) prior to the Fall of Man. The Fall of Angels could have happened then.
- This view works with some data, but there are passages that contradict it.



When Were the Angels Created?

- The Gap Theory is used to explain this too.
 - Scofield Reference Bible held this position.
 - Indefinite gap between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, and the Angelic Fall happened in between, causing the universe to fall into disrepair. 1:1 uses word "create," the other verses use the word "made."
 - This gives its proponents a universe that is billions of years old, with a recent recreation 6,000 years ago.
 - They often say the casting of Satan to earth is what destroyed the earth and made the dinosaurs extinct, causing their fossils to turn into oil.



When Were the Angels Created?

- The most biblical position is as follows:
 - Angels were created in Genesis 1:1, on the first day, but prior to His creation of anything else.
 - Their Fall happened either during (or right before God started creating the earth), or it happened immediately after the sixth day.
 - The angels had to exist prior to the earth because of Job 38:4-7.
 - Job 38:4-7 "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding, 5) Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon 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?"
- This agrees with all of the biblical data.



Nature of Angels

- Much of what is said about Angels can also be said of demons.
- They are spiritual or incorporeal.
 - Hebrews 1:13-14 – And 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 serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?
 - Matthew 8:16 – That evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick.
 - Ephesians 6:12 – For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers—against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.



Nature of Angels

- Another indication of their spiritual nature is that they do not die and they do not reproduce.
 - Mark 12:25 – For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.
 - Luke 20:36 – for they cannot die anymore, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.
- Angels can manifest themselves physically.
 - This does not mean they possess a physical nature like ours, but they can apparently take physical form. In Genesis 18, they appeared as men and they ate. The people of Sodom wrongly desired them.
- Angels are also holy. They are set apart for God and cry out His holiness (Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 4:8).

Nature of Angels

- They are personal, which means they have intellect, emotion, will, and self-perception.
 - They can talk, remember, and have feelings.
 - They are also deathless.
- They are invisible, unless they appear to people. Sometimes, some may see them while others do not.
 - 2Kings 6:17 – Then Elisha prayed and said, "O LORD, please open his eyes that he may see." So the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.



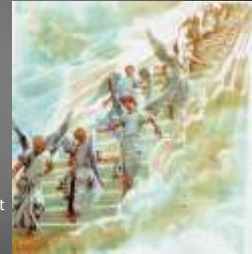
Do Angels Appear to Men Today?

- Many theologians do not believe they appear today.
 - In the Bible, they appear while new special revelation is being created.
 - After the Apostles, no new special revelation is coming.
 - From a dispensational standpoint, in the dispensation of grace, we expect no more revelation. However, in the last seven years before Christ's return, the dispensation ends, and it seems like there is a lot of angelic activity in Revelation.
- History corroborates the idea that angels have not been appearing since the Apostolic era.
 - Those who claimed to talk to angels all had beliefs that contradicted the Bible – Joan of Arc, Joseph Smith.
- Angels typically proclaimed God's divine message, and it agreed with previous revelation.



Entertaining Angels?

- Hebrews 13:2 Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.
 - This was in reference to Abraham and Lot, and it is meant to encourage our own hospitality. It is not saying that you might have an angel show up to your house.
 - And if it did, it says you wouldn't realize it was an angel anyway, so you'd never know.



Nature of Angels

- They are orderly.
 - Matthew 26:53 – 12 Legions? This was a metaphor to make a point.
 - They are organized along hierarchical lines.
- They are innumerable.
 - Hebrews 12:22 – But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering,

