



Systematic Theology

A study of the major doctrines of Scripture

TOPIC 3 – THE DOCTRINE OF ANGELS

LESSON 66 – INTRODUCTION TO THE DOCTRINE OF ANGELS

BIBLICAL DOCTRINE – JOHN MACARTHUR, PGS. 665-737

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY – WAYNE GRUDEM, PGS. 397-438

UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED, ALL SCRIPTURE TAKEN FROM THE NEW KING JAMES VERSION. COPYRIGHT © 1982 BY THOMAS NELSON, INC.. USED BY PERMISSION. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

The First Created Beings

- ▶ God created the angels during creation, likely at the outset or very near the beginning. Exodus 20:11 tells us, “For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day.”
- ▶ Nehemiah 9:6 You alone are the Lord; You have made heaven, The heaven of heavens, with all their host, The earth and everything on it, The seas and all that is in them, And You preserve them all. The host of heaven worships You.
- ▶ Psalm 148:2 Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts! 3 Praise Him, sun and moon; Praise Him, all you stars of light! 4 Praise Him, you heavens of heavens, And you waters above the heavens! 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 that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

The First Created Beings

- ▶ Angels were created during the creation week, and had not fallen by the end of the week, for Genesis 1:31-2:1 tells us on the sixth day, “Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished.”
- ▶ The angels sang during creation of the earth.
- ▶ Job 38:4 “Where were you when I laid the foundations 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 To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone, 7 When the morning stars sang together, And all the sons of God shouted for joy?”

Why did God create the Angels?

- ▶ The Hebrew and Greek words for angel appear 389 times in 42 books of the Bible, and while not always referring to angelic beings the term can refer to human messengers, holy angels, demons, Satan, or the Angel of the Lord. There are over 65 variations, or names used to describe angels in Scripture.
- ▶ Angels were created as envoys, ambassadors, and messengers. They are also identified as the “host of heaven”, or the armies of heaven, and in some capacity function as warriors.
- ▶ Angels are spirits that do not usually have physical form or bodies, but at times God does allow them to appear to men and be seen by them and even interact with them physically. (Heb. 1:14; Num. 22:31; 2 Kings 6:17; Luke 2:13).
- ▶ Not bound by physical space, angels can travel from heaven to earth (Gen. 28:12; John 1:51; Daniel 9:20-23; 10:1-13, 20)

Why did God create the Angels?

- ▶ As spirit beings, angels are without gender (Matt. 22:30; Mark 12:25; Luke 20:35-36) and cannot reproduce after their own kind. In any appearance in Scripture they do take on the characteristics of being male and never female.
- ▶ Angels are ageless and immortal (Luke 20:36; Rev. 20:10).
- ▶ They were created with the personal attributes of intellect, emotions, and will. They are wise beings who can converse, sing, and worship (2 Sam. 14:20; Matt. 28:5; Job 38:7; Heb. 1:6).
- ▶ Angels are joyful over the repentance of sinners (Luke 15:10), they possess a will with which they initially choose to worship God (Heb. 1:6; Rev. 5:11), and they have a strong desire to understand things related to salvation (1 Peter 1:10-12).

Some Other Names for Angels

- ▶ Scripture refers to angels as the sons of God (Job 1:6; 2:1), holy ones (Psa. 89:5, 7), spirits (Heb. 1:14), watchers (Dan. 4:13, 17, 23), thrones, dominions, principalities, and authorities (Col. 1:16).
- ▶ There are other created beings that are often classified with the angels:
- ▶ The Cherubim – given the task of guarding to entrance to the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:24) after the fall, and God Himself is frequently said to be enthroned on the cherubim or to travel with them as His chariot (Psa. 18:10; Ezek. 10:1-22). Over the Ark of the Covenant were two golden figures of cherubim with their wings stretched over the Ark (Exodus 25:22).

Some Other Names for Angels

- ▶ The Seraphim – mentioned only in Isaiah 6:2-7, they continually worship the Lord and call to one another, “Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory.”
- ▶ The Living Creatures – Ezekiel and Revelation tell us about the living creatures around God’s throne (Ezek. 1:5-14; Rev. 4:6-8). They appear as a lion, ox, man, and eagle, and are the mightiest representatives of various parts of God’s entire creation. They worship God continually.
- ▶ Because angels are spirits we must be careful not to assign every attribute of all of these creatures to all of the angels – wings, faces, eyes, etc.

Angelic Abilities

- ▶ Angels are powerful and mobile, but they are not omnipotent or omnipresent. There are limitations and they may struggle and be challenged (Dan. 10:12-14), and they cannot be in more than one place at a time.
- ▶ Their population (number) was fixed at creation. There is never an exact number given of their count, although we do know that 66% are holy angels and 33% fallen. They are innumerable to us but known individually to God. Terms used to describe their number include “myriads of myriads”, “tens of thousands and thousands of thousands”, and “innumerable” (Rev. 5:11; Psa. 68:17; Heb. 12:22).
- ▶ Angels are sent by God at times to protect humans, especially the elect (Psa. 91:11-12), but there is no evidence that “Guardian Angels” are one of their classifications or that people have a specific angel assigned to their care.

Rank and Order

- ▶ Ranks – there is a rank and order to the angels. Michael is identified as an archangel in Jude 9, a title that indicates authority over other angels. He appears to lead the angelic army (Rev. 12:7-8).
- ▶ Only three angels are named in Scripture – Michael, Gabriel, and Lucifer (Satan).
- ▶ Categories: Holy angels, Satan, demons (fallen angels), and the Angel of the Lord

The Place of Angels in God's Purpose

- ▶ We should be aware of angels – they join with us in worship, are watching us at any given time, rejoice in our obedience, are grieved at our disobedience, and may appear to us (without our being aware that they are there, or that they are angels – Heb. 13:2).
- ▶ We should beware of false versions of angels, or false doctrine received from angels! Even Satan can disguise himself as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14; Gal. 1:8).
- ▶ We should never worship, pray to, or seek angels.
- ▶ Angels remind us that the unseen world is real.
- ▶ Angels are examples for us in obedience and worship.
- ▶ Angels directly carry out parts of God's plan.
- ▶ Angels directly worship and glorify God.