

Angels

(Information from *The Faith Once for All* by Jack Cottrell)

I. The Nature of Angels

A. Angels are Created Beings

- i. Being created, angels (including fallen ones) can be called “sons of God” (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7) and “sons of the mighty” (Ps. 29:1; 89:6). They are also finite, limited in space, time, knowledge, and power.
- ii. Since angels do not reproduce, each angel was probably created *ex nihilo*, from nothing.
- iii. We do not know when the angels were created, but the Bible indicates they may have been created before the events of Genesis 1. Job 38:7 states that “all the sons of God shouted for joy” when the foundation of the earth was laid.
- iv. Angels are not on the same level as God (Rev. 19:10; 22:8-9). Satan, too, is a created being, and not the evil equivalent of God.

B. Angels are Spiritual Beings

- i. Angels are not composed of physical stuff, and are invisible to human eyes. However, sometimes they take on human form (Mark 16:5; Luke 1:11, 26; 2:8-15; Heb. 13:2), and human eyes can be given the ability to see them (Num. 22:31; 2 Kings 6:14-17).
- ii. Angels are personal beings, able to have relationships with both man and God. They have minds, and can make free-will moral judgments. Some sinned in following Satan, while others remained holy. They now seem to be locked in to their state of holiness or fallenness.
- iii. Are angels created in God’s image? They are moral creatures, knowing good and evil, and have been given a certain freedom. Having some of the same characteristics as human beings, it is reasonable to assume they were created in God’s image.

C. Angels are Powerful Beings

- i. Though not omnipotent, angels have great power when acting in the physical world (Matt. 28:2; Acts 5:19; 12:7).
- ii. Their descriptions include dominions, rulers, authorities, and powers (Eph. 1:21). They are “mighty in power” (Ps. 103:20) and “greater in might and power” than

human beings (2 Pet. 2:11). Fallen angels, too, are able to perform miracles (2 Thess. 2:9; Rev. 13:13-14).

- D. Angels are Immortal Beings
 - i. They do not possess aseity (self-existence) because they were created.
 - ii. God has granted them the gift of immortality.
 - iii. Even Satan and his angels will exist forever in eternal fire (Matt. 25:41, 46).

- II. The Number of Angels
 - A. The exact number of angels is not known, but their number is beyond comprehension.
 - B. The OT refers to them as God's "hosts", a word carrying a military sense of "armies".
 - C. Another OT term meaning "a great multitude, legion, ten thousand" is used to describe the angels (Deut. 33:2; Ps. 68:17).
 - D. Jesus declared that, if needed, God would send him "twelve legions of angels" (Matt. 26:53). A "legion" was about 6,000 foot soldiers plus horsemen.
 - E. Angels are also described in terms of "myriads" (Heb. 12:22; Rev. 5:11).
 - F. Only two angels are specifically named in Scripture: Gabriel, a messenger sent to Daniel (Dan. 8:16; 9:21), Zacharias (Luke 1:19), and Mary (Luke 1:26). Michael the archangel is a leader of God's hosts (Dan. 10:13, 21; 12:1; Jude 9; Rev. 12:7).

- III. Kinds of Angels
 - A. Cherubim
 - i. Most commonly represented as babies with wings and harps.
 - ii. Actually, they appear in Scripture as powerful, majestic beings. They guarded the gate of the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:24). They were used as the model figures placed at each end of the mercy seat atop the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 25:17-22). God is often described as enthroned above or between the cherubim (1 Sam. 4:4; 2 Kings 19:15; Ps. 80:1; 99:1).
 - B. Seraphim
 - i. Name literally means "burning ones."
 - ii. They are mentioned only in Isaiah 6:1-7.
 - iii. They are seen as proclaiming God as "holy, holy, holy."
 - C. Archangel
 - i. This is simply a chief angel, or general in God's angelic armies.

- ii. We know that Michael is described as an archangel (Jude 9; Rev. 12:7).
Although Michael is the only archangel named, there could be others according to Daniel 10:13.
- iii. Satan may have been an archangel before his fall; he is seen on equal ground with Michael (Jude 9; Rev. 12:7).

D. Angel of the Lord (Yahweh)

- i. Referred to in the OT.
- ii. May not be a regular angel, but could be a manifestation of God Himself (possibly the preexistent Logos [Jesus]), since this angel is identified with God.

IV. Purpose of Angels

- A. A good answer to why God created angels is found in Psalm 103:20-21.
- B. First, they offer praise and worship to God (1 Kings 22:19; Neh. 9:6; Matt. 18:10; Isa. 6:1-3; Luke 2:14; Rev. 4:8-11, 5:8-14, 7:11-12).
- C. Second, they carry God's messages to people (Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19; Heb. 2:2; Rev. 1:1; Luke 1:11-20, 26-35; Acts 8:26; Acts 10:3-7; Acts 27:23-24; 1 Thess. 4:16).
- D. Third, they minister to believers (Heb. 1:14).
- E. Fourth, they sometimes carry out God's providential judgments on earth (2 Sam. 24:15-17; 2 Chr. 32:21; 2 Kings 19:35; Acts 12:23).
- F. Fifth, they battle Satan and his demons in the spiritual realm (Rev. 12:7-9; Daniel 10:13).
- G. Sixth, they will accompany Christ at his second coming (Matt. 16:27; 25:31; Luke 9:26).