

Angelology - The Study of Angels and Demons

ANGELS ARE MENTIONED in thirty-four of the sixty-six books of the Bible:

1. Angels are mentioned in the oldest books of Scripture (Genesis, Job).
2. Angels were active in the days of Moses (Exodus, Numbers).
3. Angels are recorded in historical accounts of the time of the Judges and David (Judges, First and Second Samuel, First Chronicles).
4. Angels appear during the days of the kings (Second Kings, Second Chronicles, Isaiah).
5. Angels were part of the experience of the prophets Daniel and Ezekiel in Babylon.
6. Angels continued their ministry to the returning exiles in Jerusalem (Zechariah).
7. Angels' activities are described in detail in the gospels, and are included in accounts of Jesus' teaching and activity (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John).
8. Angels became involved with the early church in Acts.
9. Angels are discussed by the writers of the New Testament Epistles (Romans, 1 Corinthians, First Timothy, Hebrews).
10. Angels' present and future assignments, battles and deeds are described in great detail in Revelation.

According to Scripture, there is no time period in history, including ours, that angels are not actively involved in human affairs.

Creation of Angels

Angels were already in existence when the earth was created in Genesis 1:1:

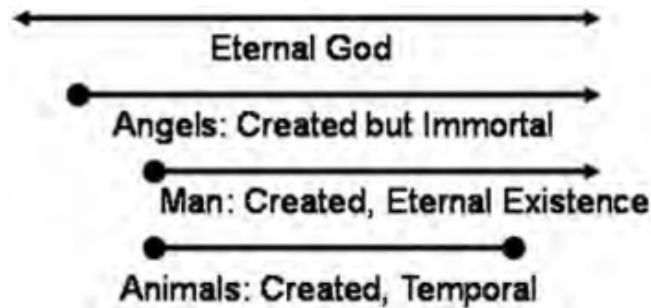
"Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? . . . On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone – while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?" Job 38:4-7

Angels are created beings that came into existence at the Lord's command:

"For by him all things were created; things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers of rulers or authorities." Colossians 1:16

Angels were created holy and sinless by God. Some remained faithful to God and are called holy angels (Mark 8:38), but others entered into a permanent state of rebellion toward God and are referred to as the devil's angels (Matthew 25:41). Mankind and angels are two distinct species (or orders) of beings. People do not become angels when they die. Angels are greater than mankind in that they travel at speeds beyond our understanding, possess knowledge of the spiritual dimension we have never seen, and have gained millenniums of experience – and yet, angels are much lower than God since they are not omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, etc. Angels are not eternal, as God is eternal, since they had a beginning.

The arrows below indicate the difference between eternal God, everlasting angels and men, and temporal animals:



God has no beginning and no end. God existed in eternity past and will exist in eternity future. Angels had a point of creation but do not have a point of ceasing to exist (Luke 20:36). They appear to exist forever. Likewise, men also had a point of beginning but they have no point at which they will cease to exist. Some men will exist forever in the presence of God (Heaven) while some will exist forever away from the presence of God in eternal damnation (Hell). Animals have a point of creation and a point where they cease to exist.

Since angels are lower than God there are things they do not know and things they cannot do. Since angels are not omnipresent they cannot be everywhere at the same time. In the New Testament angels are shown to learn from or look into the Holy Spirit's revelation to the apostles, because it includes information or understanding that they are unfamiliar with:

"It was revealed to them (Old Testament prophets) that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things."

1 Peter 1:12

Since angels have some form of freewill and are responsible for their decisions and behavior, they will face judgment:

"Do you not know that we will judge angels?" 1 Corinthians 6:3

Some angels will suffer eternal damnation along with Satan:

"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.' " Matthew 25:41

The Nature of Angels

1. Angels possess qualities of individual beings with personalities. They have:
 - a. Intelligence – 2 Samuel 14:20; 2 Corinthians 11:3; Revelation 22:9
 - b. Emotions – Luke 2:13; Revelation 12:17
 - c. Will – Luke 8:28-31; 2 Timothy 2:26
 - d. Morality
 - i. Moral and holy – Matthew 25:31; Luke 1:26; Acts 10:22; Revelation 14:10;
 - ii. Immoral and sinful – John 8:44; 1 John 3:8-10; 2 Peter 2:4

2. Angels are spiritual beings
 - a. Hebrews 1:14
 - b. Ephesians 2:2
 - c. Ephesians 6:12
3. Angels can interact with and be seen in the natural world if:
 - a. The angel takes on physical form
 - i. Genesis 18:2, 16, 22
 - ii. Genesis 19:1, 5, 10, 12, 15, 16
 - iii. Judges 13:6
 - iv. Mark 16:5
 - v. Luke 24:4
 - b. Human eyes are opened to the spiritual realm
 - i. Balaam – Numbers 22:31
 - ii. Elisha's servant – 2 Kings 6:17
4. Angelic appearance
 - a. The Glory of the Lord shines from them – Luke 2:9; 9:26.
 - b. They appear in human form as men – Genesis 18:2, 16, 22; 19:1, 5, 10, 12, 16; Judges 13:6; Mark 16:5; Luke 24:4.
 - c. They appear as wearing white clothes – bright white like lightning or white as snow – Matthew 28:3, Ezekiel 1:13; Daniel 10:6; Revelation 1:14; 19:12.
 - d. Angels often appear with horses and chariots (2 Kings 2:11; 6:17; Zechariah 1:7-11; 6:1-8).
5. Angels were created with and maintain some type of spiritual body.
6. There are no references to angels appearing in female form.
7. Angels are described as flying - Daniel 9:21; Revelation 14:6.
8. General descriptions of angels do not include them having wings, although one class of angels called cherubim (and seraphim) always have wings – Exodus 25:20; Isaiah 6:2; Ezekiel 1:6; Revelation 4:8.
9. They gain knowledge by observing individual human behavior and human history:
 - a. Luke 12:8
 - b. Luke 15:10
 - c. 1 Corinthians 4:9
 - d. Ephesians 3:10
 - e. 1 Peter 1:12
10. Angels are present at heavenly councils:
 - a. Job 1:6
 - b. 2 Chronicles 18:18-22
 - c. Psalm 89:5, 7
11. Angels communicated special revelation from God during the Old Testament period:
 - a. Law – Galatians 3:19
 - b. Daniel – Daniel 7:15-27; 8:13-26; 9:20-27
 - c. Zechariah – Zechariah 1:8; 4:1; 5:5
12. Angels communicated messages from God in both the Old and New Testaments:
 - a. Cornelius – Acts 10:3-7
 - b. Paul on ship to Rome – Acts 27:23
13. Angels administer judgment on the enemies of God – Acts 12:23; Revelation 16:1.
14. Angels will be used to separate the unrighteous from the righteous at the end of

time – Matthew 13:39-40.

15. Angels assist believers – Hebrews 1:14.
16. Angels encourage believers – Acts 27:23-24.
17. Angels take believers to heaven at death – Luke 16:22.
18. The angelic population is very large and appears to be impossible to count.

These are numbers used at various times and situations concerning angels:

- a. Deuteronomy 33:2 – “ten thousands” or “myriads of holy ones” (angels according to Gal. 3:19; Acts 7:53; Heb. 2:2)
- b. Psalms 68:17 – “tens of thousands and thousands of thousands”
- c. Matthew 26:53 – “twelve legions” (a Roman legion was 3,000 to 6,000 so when Jesus states 12 legions of angels he is thinking of a number somewhere in the range of 36,000 to 72,000).
- d. Hebrews 12:22 – “innumerable”
- e. Revelation 5:11 – “thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand”

Organization of Angels

Angels, both holy and fallen, are described in Scripture as having organized ranks. When Scriptures concerning these ranks and classes of angels are categorized, we can form a general, but not absolute or specific, list of angelic organization:

1. Archangels – 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Jude 9
 - a. Michael is the only archangel named and may be the only archangel.
 - b. Michael is the top ranking angel.
 - c. Michael is Israel's guardian angel (Daniel 10:21; 12:1).
 - d. Michael leads the angelic army of God against Satan and his forces in Revelation 12:7.
2. Chief Princes – Daniel 10:13, 20, 21
 - a. There are leading angels that appear to have positions, or territorial rights, over nations.
 - b. Consider Deuteronomy 32:8 and its alternate reading in the NIV footnotes.
3. Seraphim – Isaiah 6:2-7
 - a. Only mentioned once
 - b. *Seraphim* means “burning ones”.
 - c. Described as being in God's presence and as worshipping God.
 - d. Brought cleansing to Isaiah in the presence of God
4. Cherubim – Genesis 3:24; Numbers 7:89; Psalms 80:1; 99:1; Ezekiel 1; 10:20
 - a. They are called “living creatures” and described in Ezekiel 1:4-28 and Revelation 4:6-9 – but are identified as Cherubim in Ezekiel 10:1-20.
 - b. Cherubim seem to be the guardians of the throne of God.
 - c. Satan was (or is) a Cherub, according to Ezekiel 28:14, 16.
 - d. Cherubim are in the Tabernacle:
 - i. Cherubim are depicted on the ark of the covenant – Exodus 25:18-22.
 - ii. Images of Cherubim are sewn into the linen curtains – Exodus 26:1, 31.
 - e. Cherubim were in the Temple:
 - i. Two large (fifteen feet tall) olivewood Cherubim, overlaid with gold, spread their wings over the ark of the covenant – 1 Kings 8:6-7.
 - ii. Images of Cherubim were carved into the walls and doors of the temple – 1 Kings 6:29-35.

5. Governing or Ruling Angels
 - a. Rulers – Romans 8:38; Ephesians 1:21; 3:10; 6:12; Colossians 1:16; 2:10, 15
 - b. Authorities – Ephesians 1:21; 2:2; 3:10; 6:12; Colossians 1:16; 2:10, 15; 1 Peter 3:22
 - c. Powers – 2 Peter 2:11; Ephesians 1:21
 - d. Dominions or Thrones – Ephesians 1:21; Colossians 1:16; 2 Peter 2:10; Jude 8
6. Gabriel – Daniel 8:16; 9:21; Luke 1:19; 1:26
 - a. Along with Michael and Satan, Apollyon is the only other angel specifically named in the Bible.
 - b. Gabriel is a high-ranking angel but he is not identified as an archangel.
 - c. He stands at the right hand of God and delivers messages.
7. General Angels have a variety of responsibilities and assigned tasks that fall into these categories:
 - a. Minister Before God – praise, worship, council – Revelation 5:8-13; Job 1:6; 2:1
 - b. Messengers – Revelation 19:9-10
 - c. Guardians – Psalm 91:11; Matthew 18:10
 - d. Bring Answers to Prayer from God – Luke 1:13; Revelation 8:3-5
 - e. Servants – Psalms 103:20; Revelation 9:14; 22:9
 - f. Control history for God – Zechariah 1:7-11; 6:1-8
 - g. Terminators – Ezekiel 9:1-11

The Angel of the Lord

The Angel of YHWH is more than an angel. An appearance of the Angel of the Lord in the Old Testament was a manifestation of the second member of the Trinity, the Son of God. The Angel of the Lord spoke as God to Hagar (Genesis 16:7-14) and to Abraham (Genesis 22:11-12). He called himself God when he identified himself to Jacob as the God of Bethel (Genesis 31:11-13). The Angel of the Lord spoke to Moses from the burning bush calling himself the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and telling Moses he was standing on holy ground (Exodus 3:2-7). He claims to have brought Israel out of Egypt and that he has a covenant with them (Judges 2:15). The Angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon (Judges 6:11-24) and Samson's parents (Judges 13:2-22), and accepts offerings and worship. He appears in other places, including 2 Samuel 24:16 and Zechariah 1:12; 3:1; 12:8.

The Angel of the Lord is an appearance of the second member of the Trinity. Whenever God appeared to man in the Old Testament (walked with Adam, ate with Abraham, etc.) it was the Son and never the Father. John writes:

"No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known." John 1:18

The role of the Son of God is to make the Father known, or to reveal his thoughts. The second member of the Trinity is called the Word because he reveals or communicates God's nature and plan. That is why John begins his gospel saying:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." John 1:1, 14

Once the gospels begin the angel of the Lord never appears again, because he has taken on flesh and become eternally a man, the Lord Jesus Christ.

"There is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." 1 Timothy 2:5

Satan

In the Old Testament, Satan is mentioned in Genesis, First Chronicles, Job, Psalms, Isaiah, Ezekiel and Zechariah. Jesus spoke of Satan on several occasions, and each of the New Testament authors writes of Satan. Satan is an angel with all the characteristics and abilities of an angel. Satan is not equal to God, but is instead a creation of God (Ezekiel 28:15) who has rebelled against God, and is still limited by the will of God (Job 2:6). Satan was created and classified as a cherub and was the highest ranking angel (Ezekiel 28:12, 14). We learn in Jude 9 that Michael could not pull rank on Satan since, as an archangel, he has less positional authority and could only rebuke Satan based on the Lord's desire. With his authority in the angelic realm – and after the fall of Adam – Satan is called the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4) and the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2). Satan showed Jesus that he had power over all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor, and had the authority to give that power to whoever he wished (Matthew 4:8-9; Luke 4:5-7).

Satan is called by several names and titles and is identified by several characteristics in Scripture:

1. Satan is a Hebrew word that means "adversary" or "opposer".
2. Devil is the Greek word *diabolos* and means "slanderer".
3. Serpent or ancient serpent describes his form in Genesis 3:1; 2 Corinthians 11:3; Revelation 12:9.
4. Red Dragon – Revelation 12:3, 7, 9
5. Tempter – Matthew 4:3; 1 Thessalonians 3:5; Acts 5:3; 1 Corinthians 7:5
6. Accuser – Revelation 12:10
7. Evil one – John 17:15; 1 John 5:18-19
8. Ruler of this world – John 12:31
9. God of this world – 2 Corinthians 4:4
10. Beelzebub – Luke 11:15 (The name *Beelzebub* comes from two Hebrew words: *Baal* meaning "Lord" and *Zebub* meaning "fly". Beelzebub means "Lord of flying things" or "Lord of the Flies". It is used in 2 Kings 1:2, 3, 6, 16. The connection of the god Baal of the Old Testament is made to Satan through this word in Matthew 12:24, 27; 10:25; Luke 11:15, 18-19.)
11. Belial – 2 Corinthians 6:15 (The name *Belial* comes from two Hebrew words "without" and "profit" and means "worthlessness". The name Belial began to refer to the person who had thrown off the restraints of heaven, become wicked and morally corrupt.)
12. Prince of the power of the air – Ephesians 2:2
13. The spirit that is now working in those who are disobedient – Ephesians 2:2
14. He leads the whole world astray – Revelation 12:9
15. He deceives the nations – Revelation 20:3
16. The "heavenly places" (or, air) are his control center and current place of occupation – Ephesians 6:12.
17. He controls the cosmos – *Kosmos* is the world or age we live in, and includes everything in our earthly existence (thoughts, desires, power, methods) and everything that we come into contact with which the system of this world has affected. Satan controls this system.)

The Underworld

The diagram below is an attempt to clarify some of the abstract spiritual concepts involving angels, demons, and the underworld. This diagram shows:

1. The general locations and the distinctions of Heaven, Paradise, Sheol, Hades, Abyss, Tartarus, Gehenna, and Hell
2. The possible movement of paradise from the Garden of Eden on Earth to the underworld and then into Heaven – just like Hades itself will be thrown into the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:14)
3. The assigned places of:
 - a. The demons that are in the Abyss and will be released back onto Earth. (Revelation 9:1-11)
 - b. The angels or spirits who are locked up in everlasting chains in Tartarus waiting for judgment. (these will not be released at the time described in Revelation 9:1-11)
4. An explanation of 1 Peter 3:19 (when Jesus went to prison and preached to spirits). This verse refers to the time during the three days and three nights in the grave (body) and Paradise (spiritual) before Jesus was resurrected that he went to Tartarus in the Abyss (prison) and proclaimed (Greek meaning of preached) victory (Col. 2:15; Rev. 1:18) over the rebellious angels (spirits) of Satan who had rebelled a second time (Jude 6) during the days of Noah.
5. Shows the sequence of events between Jesus' death on the cross and his ascension to the right hand of God
6. The righteous dead from the Old Testament who waited in Paradise for Jesus' death, burial and resurrection before entering into heaven. Today believers do not go to Hades or Sheol like David and Job in the Old Testament, but instead go immediately into the presence of the Lord. Paradise in Sheol or Hades was emptied at Jesus resurrection and ascension, and Paradise itself appears to have moved into the presence of God in Heaven.
7. A possible explanation of Abraham's conversation with the rich man from Luke 16:26

