

Basic Bible Doctrine

Lesson 8: Angelology

I. Introduction

Without question, our culture is enamored with angels and demons. From Highway to Heaven, to Touched by An Angel, to Angels in the Outfield, to the California Angels of Anaheim, these white winged creatures have been the object of much fascination and speculation.

A. Why do you suppose the American public is so drawn to angels?

B. What are some popular perceptions about angels?

From the mistaken belief that we become angels when we die to every time a bell rings an angel gets its wings our culture is full of bad information about these heavenly messengers. Therefore, this study will seek to set the record straight so that we can appreciate these holy servants as they really are.

II. Angels

A. **Definition:** Angels are created, spiritual beings with moral judgment and high intelligence, but without physical bodies.¹ Angels come in different orders such as the Cherubim who guarded the garden (*Gen. 3:24*), and the Seraphim who worshipped the Lord in the temple (*Isa. 6:2-7*). Michael is described as an archangel (*Jude 9*). However, Scripture is unclear as to whether or not there is a systematic rank and order to these creatures. Even though we do not know how they are ordered, the Bible testifies of myriads and myriads of angels (*Rev. 5:11*).

B. The Attributes of Angels:

1. Angels are Created Beings:

Colossians 1:16 For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.

¹ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan; 1994) p. 397.

2. Angels are Spirit Beings (with a few exceptions):

Hebrews 1:14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?

Genesis 19:1 Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening as Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground.

3. They are masculine in gender: The masculine gender is always used when the Bible speaks of angels. However, their sex is inconsequential as Jesus states:

Matthew 22:30 “For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.

4. They are Eternal Beings:

Luke 20:35-6 but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; for neither can they die anymore, for they are like angels, and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.

5. They are Higher than Men:

Hebrews 2:7 "Thou hast made him for a little while lower than the angels; Thou hast crowned him with glory and honor, And hast appointed him over the works of Thy hands;

Even though the angels have a higher level in God’s order of creation, redeemed mankind will sit in the seat of authority during the new creation.

1 Corinthians 6:3 Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more matters of this life?

6. They are Intelligent:

Mark 13:32 “But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.

This passage implicitly teaches that angels are intelligent beings. In using the term “***not even the angels***” Jesus teaches while angels know a lot of information, they do not know the timing of the second coming.

7. Angels Excel in Physical Strength:

Psalm 103:20 Bless the LORD, you His angels, Mighty in strength, who perform His word, Obeying the voice of His word!

Isaiah 37:36 Then the angel of the LORD went out and struck 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians; and when men arose early in the morning, behold, all of these were dead.

8. Angels Stand in the Presence of God.

Isaiah 6:3 And one called out to another and said, “Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory.”

Matthew 18:10 “See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven continually see the face of My Father who is in heaven.

Revelation 5:11-12 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, ¹² saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.”

- In light of the above why might people be tempted (i.e. **Rev. 22:8**) to worship angels?

C. The Ministry of Angels:

1. Angels Continually Praise and Glorify God:

Job 38:7 When the morning stars sang together And all the sons of God shouted for joy?

Psalm 103:20 Bless the LORD, you His angels, Mighty in strength, who perform His word, Obeying the voice of His word!

Revelation 7:11 And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God,

2. Angels reveal and communicate God’s message to humans:

Acts 8:26 But an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying, “Get up and go south to the road that descends from Jerusalem to Gaza.” (This is a desert road.)

Hebrews 2:2 For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty,

3. Angels minister to believers:

1 Kings 19:7 The angel of the LORD came again a second time and touched him and said, “Arise, eat, because the journey is too great for you.”

Acts 5:19 But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the gates of the prison, and taking them out he said,

4. Angels execute judgment on the enemies of God:

2 Kings 19:35 Then it happened that night that the angel of the LORD went out and struck 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians; and when men rose early in the morning, behold, all of them were dead.

Acts 12:23 And immediately an angel of the Lord struck him because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and died.

5. Angels will be involved in the Second Coming:

Matthew 25:31 “But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne.

- In light of the above, how would the angels want to be regarded by believers? Why?

III. Demons:

A. **Origin of Demons:** Demons are evil angels who were created at the same time as the angels (*Gen. 1:1*), but subsequently rebelled.

2 Peter 2:4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment;

B. **The King of Demons:**

Satan is literally translated adversary or accuser. When used as a proper name, the Hebrew word so rendered has the article “the adversary” (*Job 1:6–12; 2:1–7*). In the New Testament it is used as interchangeable with Diabolos, or the devil, and is so used more than thirty times. He is also called “the dragon,” “the old serpent” (*Rev. 12:9; 20:2*); “the prince of this world” (*John 12:31; 14:30*); “the prince of the power of the air” (*Eph. 2:2*); “the god of this world” (*2 Cor. 4:4*); “the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (*Eph. 2:2*). The distinct personality of Satan and his activity among men are thus obviously recognized. He tempted our Lord in the wilderness (*Matt. 4:1–11*). He is “Beelzebub, the prince of the devils” (*12:24*). He is “the constant enemy of God, of Christ, of the divine kingdom, of the followers of Christ, and of all truth; full of falsehood and all malice, and exciting and seducing to evil in every possible way.” His power is very great in the world. He is a “roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (*1 Pet. 5:8*). Men are said to be “taken captive by him” (*2 Tim. 2:26*). Christians are warned against his “devices” (*2 Cor. 2:11*), and called on to “resist” him (*James 4:7*). Christ redeems his people from “him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (*Heb. 2:14*). Satan has the “power of death,” not as lord, but simply as executioner.²

C. The Work of Demons:

1. **Satan Was the originator of sin:** His fall was evident when he solicited Eve to sin. Thus, Jesus aptly names him, “the father of lies” (*John 8:44*).
2. **Demons Oppose and Try to Destroy Every Work of God.**

- a. He Tempted Jesus:

Matthew 4:1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

- b. Disseminates Lies:

John 8:44 “You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

- c. Deceives the Whole World:

²Easton, M.G.: *Easton's Bible Dictionary*. Oak Harbor, WA : Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1996, c1897

Revelation 12:9 *And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.*

- d. Facilitates Murder

Psalm 106:37 *They even sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons,*

- e. Blinds the Unbelieving:

2 Corinthians 4:4 *in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

- How do the activities of Satan and demons help to explain why so much misinformation exists about the angelic realm?

3. They Can Only Operate Within Certain Parameters:

- a. Satan is accountable to God.

Job 1:6; 2:1 *Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them. . . 2:1 Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the Lord.*

- b. Satan is restricted by God.

Luke 22:31-32 *“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; 32 but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.”*

- c. Satan is used by God.

2 Cor. 12:7 *And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me—to keep me from exalting myself!*

- Can you think of other examples where God used Satan to accomplish His purposes?

D. Demon Possession:

1. What is Demon Possession:

The compound structure of the Greek word itself, *daimonizomai*, provides remarkable insight into the word’s meaning. The word can be broken down into three parts, *daimon* (demon), *iz* (a causative verb stem), and *omai* (a passive ending). In light of the semantic breakdown, one can conclude that *daimonizomai* simply means that a *demon controls a passive host*. Essentially, when one is demon possessed his will has been completely dominated by that of a demon. It is this facet of irresistible influence that differentiates demonization with demonic influence and affliction.

- What is the difference between demon possession and demon affliction?

2. Symptoms of Demon Possession:

a. Super Human Strength

Acts 19:13-16 But also some of the Jewish exorcists, who went from place to place, attempted to name over those who had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, “I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches.”¹⁴ Seven sons of one Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this.¹⁵ And the evil spirit answered and said to them, “I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?”¹⁶ And the man, in whom was the evil spirit, leaped on them and subdued all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

b. Physical torment

Luke 8:27-29 And when He came out onto the land, He was met by a man from the city who was possessed with demons; and who had not put on any clothing for a long time, and was not living in a house, but in the tombs.²⁸ Seeing Jesus, he cried out and fell before Him, and said in a loud voice, “What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me.”²⁹ For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had seized him many times;

and he was bound with chains and shackles and kept under guard, and yet he would break his bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert.

Matthew 17:16 “I brought him to Your disciples, and they could not cure him.”

c. Outward Violence

Matthew 8:28 When He came to the other side into the country of the Gadarenes, two men who were demon-possessed met Him as they were coming out of the tombs. They were so extremely violent that no one could pass by that way.

d. Loud cries

Mark 1:23 Just then there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit; and he cried out,

Mark 5:5 Constantly, night and day, he was screaming among the tombs and in the mountains, and gashing himself with stones.

e. They possess supernatural knowledge

Mark 1:24 saying, “What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!”

Acts 16:16-17 It happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, a slave-girl having a spirit of divination met us, who was bringing her masters much profit by fortune-telling. ¹⁷ Following after Paul and us, she kept crying out, saying, “These men are bond-servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation.”

f. Physical maladies such as muteness, deafness, and seizures

Mark 9:17-18 And one of the crowd answered Him, “Teacher, I brought You my son, possessed with a spirit which makes him mute; ¹⁸ and whenever it seizes him, it slams him to the ground and he foams at the mouth, and

grinds his teeth and stiffens out. I told Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not do it.”

Mark 9:25 When Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “You deaf and mute spirit, I command you, come out of him and do not enter him again.”

It should be noted that seizures do not indicate demon possession in every case.

Matthew 4:24 The news about Him spread throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, those suffering with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them.

3. Can A Christian Be Demon Possessed?

A growing movement in America spearheaded by Neil Anderson and Timothy Warner seeks to awaken the evangelical Christian consciousness to the reality of demonic possession in the lives of the Christian and the Non-Christian alike. In a day and age when a materialistic, ultra rational mental paradigm dominates our worldview, appealing to the reality of the spirit realm is a noble pursuit. The Bible presents no reason to believe in the cessation of demon possession. Yet, men such as Warner and Anderson expand the definition of demon possession to include mild depression, anxiety, and insomnia. Demonization – as they like to call it – is often imperceptible to the untrained eye.

The obvious nature of this phenomenon – as discussed above – diminishes any notion of a kinder, gentler, and subtler form of this activity. In addition, the following passage challenges the notion that Christians can indeed be possessed by a demon.

Matthew 12:43-45 “Now when the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and does not find it. ⁴⁴ “Then it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came’; and when it comes, it finds it unoccupied, swept, and put in order. ⁴⁵ “Then it goes and takes along with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. That is the way it will also be with this evil generation.”

Context: In this passage Jesus reviles the Jews for their hypocrisy. In waiting for a sign they express their reluctance to believe. Unlike the repentant Ninevites and the Queen of Sheba, the Jews stand condemned for their wasted opportunities. While they cleansed themselves from external idolatry since the exile, their repentance has not reached full term. In *Matthew 12:42-43* Jesus takes his audience back to the incident which began the discussion, the exorcism of a demon possessed man. The Lord teaches that freedom from the demon is not enough, ownership

by the devil must be replaced by ownership by Jesus Christ. Otherwise, the expulsion is temporary. Moral reform without the empowering and indwelling of the Holy Spirit will never hold.

- a. According to this passage, what would prevent a demon from re-entering its host?
- b. When does the Holy Spirit take up residence in the believer?
- c. In light of this, what is the best way of exorcising a demon?
- d. Other passages to consider:

2 Thessalonians 3:3 But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.

1 John 4:4 You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

James 4:7 Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

1 Peter 5:6-10 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, ⁷ casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. ⁸ Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹ But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. ¹⁰ After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.

- e. What is the danger of attributing all sort of maladies – insomnia, depression, fear, etc. – to demon possession?

IV. Conclusion:

Though the doctrine of angels and demons has been convoluted by contemporary culture, there remains some choice lessons which will bring us blessing and comfort.

1. It is a comfort and an encouragement to us to realize that there are powerful and numerous unseen agents available to help us in our need. The eye of faith will do for the believer what the vision of the angels did for Elisha’s servant (**2 Kings 6:17**).
2. The angel’s praise and service of God give us an example of how we are to conduct ourselves now and what our activity will be in the life beyond in God’s presence.
3. It sobers us to realize that even the angels who were close to God succumbed to temptation and fell. This is a reminder to us to **“be careful that you don’t fall!”** (**1 Cor. 10:12**).
4. Knowledge about evil angels serves to alert us to the danger and the subtlety of temptation that can be expected to come from satanic forces, and gives us insight into some of the devil’s ways of working. We need to be on guard against two extremes. We should not take him too lightly lest we disregard the dangers. Nor, on the other hand, should we have too strong an interest in him.
5. We receive confidence from the realization that powerful though Satan and his accomplices are, there are definite limits on what they can do. We can, therefore, by the grace of God, resist him successfully. And we can know that his ultimate defeat is certain.³

³ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, Baker Books, 1998) p. 475.