

ANGELOLOGY (5)

Problem #3 - We are studying data about something we cannot sense .

We cannot sense exactly where the angels are right now that surround us, and we cannot sense just exactly what they are doing right now.

What this study really does is to force us to ask ourselves this question: “Do I really and truly believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of God on every topic and subject?” If the answer to that question is “Yes,” you are in for an exciting journey.

QUESTION #5 – Why does the study of Angelology always come after the study of Theology Proper?

If you carefully analyze Systematic Theologies that include Angelology, you will notice that the study of angels comes after the study of God.

Dr. Henry Thiessen gives a very accurate explanation for this: “The doctrine of angels follows logically the doctrine of God, for the angels are primarily the ministers of God’s providence” (*Systematic Theology*, p. 190).

It is very logical and appropriate to study Angelology after studying God’s sovereign providence and decrees, because those angels are the agents God uses to carry out much of His sovereign program.

QUESTION #6 - What is the authority for what we believe about angels, demons and Satan?

It is imperative at the beginning of this doctrinal study to answer this question. There are many ideas and opinions about angels, demons and Satan and most of them are wrong. The authority base that we have to form our belief is critical. There are four observations I want to make:

Observation #1 - Our authority for what we believe is not our imagination .

When it comes to any topic, especially the spirit world, we must always keep our imagination within the context of what is true, real, factual and revealed.

Observation #2 - Our authority for what we believe is not our reason .

I read a story of a converted atheist who went to the University of Syracuse who said that one of his professors used to say- “If you can’t prove it with an equation or slide-rule, don’t believe it.” When it comes to angels, we cannot measure them because we cannot see them; but we had better believe them.

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Observation #3 - Our authority for what we believe is not our world.

There are many people who have formed their view of angels by watching a program like “Highway to Heaven,” which presents a heretical view of angels. In that show an angel travels around and becomes a buddy of various people, and leads them to do the right thing so they can work their way to heaven. This is one of the world’s concepts of angels. It is not ours.

Observation #4 - Our authority for what we believe is God’s inspired and written Word.

Dr. Chafer said, “Angelology rests not upon reason or supposition, but upon revelation” (Vol. 2, p. 3).

This is **THE** reason why there is such a gross misunderstanding of the spirit world. There has been, in this area of study, as in all theological areas of study, a vast departure from the Word of God. Most people would rather see and believe some make-believe weird movie than to search the inspired Scriptures to ascertain real truth.

When it comes to this study, we must always keep in our minds this point- **Satan does not want anyone to ever know the truth of God, especially when it comes to the spirit world.** We may know with absolute certainty that whatever Satan does offer as information about the spirit world- whether through movies, books or experiences will be very twisted and distorted. It will be a series of lies to move people away from the real truth.

Satan is a liar and he will do whatever he can to keep people from coming to a true understanding of God’s Word on any subject; including angels, demons and himself.

QUESTION #7 – Why doesn’t God permit us to see angels?

There are at least two possibilities for this:

Possibility #1 - We are not permitted to see angels because some would worship them.

Even in biblical times, this was a threat- Colossians 2:18. Even the Apostle John had a personal moment of lapse in this area- Revelation 22:8-9. If seeing an angel could cause an apostle to do something foolish, it certainly would be the same with us.

Possibility #2 - We are permitted to see angels but we are not permitted to know it.

Hebrews 13:2 does teach that God may permit His people to come in contact with an angel at times. But if He did the believer would not know it.

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QUESTION #8 – What does the word angel actually mean?

We may come to a very accurate understanding of the word by breaking the word down under two categories:

Category #1 - The Hebrew word used in the Old Testament.

In the Old Testament the Hebrew word “angel” is malak. **The basic meaning of this word is sent messenger**. We could literally understand this word “angel” to be a reference to a sent messenger of God (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 475).

When we track the use of the word in the Old Testament, it is a word used several ways:

(Way #1) - It is a word used of a person delivering a message. Job 1:14

(Way #2) - It was used of men sent on a special kingly mission. I Samuel 16:19

(Way #3) - It was used of a prophet sent to deliver God’s message. Haggai 1:13; Malachi 3:1

(Way #4) - It was used of a priest sent to give God’s instruction. Malachi 2:7

(Way #5) - It was used of Spirit beings connected to God’s program. Genesis 19:1; 28:12

Category #2 - The Greek word used in the New Testament.

In the New Testament the Greek word “angel” is aggelos (αγγελος). The two “gg”s form an “ng” sound so the word is pronounced “angelos.” It is very clear that our English word “angel” is very close to the Greek. **The basic meaning of this word is a sent messenger**.

This particular word is used two ways in the New Testament:

(Way #1) - It is used of men sent to do something. Luke 7:24; 9:52; James 2:25

(Way #2) - It is used of Spirit beings sent to do something. Luke 2:13-15; John 20:11-13

Clearly, the primary thought behind the word “angel” in both the Old Testament and the New Testament is “sent messenger.”

Angels are sent messengers who have specific assignments, messages and purposes. This is true for spirit beings that are connected to God and spirit beings that are connected to Satan.

Both groups of spirit beings have specific assignments, messages and purposes given and permitted by God. God sovereignly controls all angelic goals and objectives.

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QUESTION #9 – What is the history of angels that is revealed in God’s Word?

There are two biblical observations we may make concerning the history of angels:

(Observation #1) - Angels were created by God. Psalm 148:1-5; Neh. 9:6; Col. 1:16

Angels are not eternal; they were created by God at a specific moment of time. Every angel was a direct creation of God. The life that we physically see on earth today is an indirect creation of God. God put into motion in Genesis 1 the ability for species propagation; however, this was not true with angels. Angels are an immediate and direct creation of God, whereas all other forms of life are a mediate and indirect creation of God. Charles Baker observed, “...it has been generally assumed that all of the angels were created at one time” (*A Dispensational Theology*, p. 216).

(Observation #2) - Angels were created by God at a time that is unknown.

The specific moment that God created the angels is not known, although we do have some key time related matters in regard to this:

Time Element #1 - The angels were in existence before the seventh day of creation. Gen. 2:1; Ex. 20:11

Time Element #2 - The angels were in existence before most all of creation. Job 38:1-7

There are some theologians who believe that angels were created prior to anything material. Floyd Barackman, for example, writes: “As part of the initial creation of the universe (Gen. 1:1), they were created before the earth, perhaps before any material thing (Job 38:4-7)” (*Practical Christian Theology*, p. 235).

On the other hand, Louis Berkhof writes: “The time of their creation cannot be fixed definitely.” He goes on to say that we are very safe in assuming they were created before the seventh day (*Systematic Theology*, p. 144).

Norman Geisler says, “Thus, angels were probably created when the Scriptures say, ‘God created the heavens and the earth’ (Gen. 1:1). They were definitely created before the earth was, for they sang when its cornerstone was laid (Job 38:6-7)” (*Systematic Theology*, Vol. 2, p. 476).

Although we do not have the specific moment of angelic creation mentioned in Scripture, we may legitimately assume they were created very early in the creative process of God, probably before most of the rest of creation.

QUESTION #10 – Where is the first assumed biblical reference to angels?

The first assumed reference to angels is Genesis 2:1. Many believe the word “host” is an allusion to and inclusion of angels.