

Angels and Demons.

(Some Preliminary Considerations on Angels)

Question 1—*Why should we care to think upon the subject of angels?*

Answer—As we prepare to study, we should consider that angels are mentioned in nearly 300 places in the Bible, according to the Puritan pastor and theologian Richard Baxter. Since this is the case, we should remember that no teaching of Scripture is without profit, 2 Tim. 3:16; nor is it spiritually safe to remain ignorant of those things revealed, Deut. 29:29. This is especially the case when we realize that angels do not occupy some lowly or insignificant position in the annals of revelation, *cf.* Luke 1:26-28.

Additionally, because they are so closely and specially occupied with the affairs and concerns of men, they are worthy of our contemplation, *cf.* Phil. 4:8. Moreover, they are not far from us, being ministering spirits that move between heaven and earth on our behalf, *cf.* John 1:51. We may derive great comfort and instruction from them, Ps. 103:20; so, next to Christ, they are the best friends which believers have upon the earth, Zech. 1:10, 11. After all, they long to see the provisions of salvation worked out in the lives of Christians, 1 Pet. 1:12.

Finally, these shall form part of the cadre of innumerable associates who will surround the redeemed for eternity, Heb. 12:22. Thus, while the wicked shall dwell forever in torments with the reprobate angels, Matt. 25:41; the redeemed shall dwell with those who kept their first estate, Rev. 5:11, 12.

If we consider the instructions given to Moses for the building of the tabernacle, we can see that it was a heavenly pattern for our contemplation, *cf.* Ex. 25:8, 9 *with* Heb. 8:5. Amongst its features were two cherubs, or angels, situated so that they faced the mercy seat (תְּכֵינִת; from a root meaning atonement and ransom/ἱλαστήριον; this word refers both to means and place of atonement), which was typical of Jesus Christ, while these angels were cherubim of glory, *cf.* Ex. 25:18-20 *with* Heb. 9:3-5; Rom. 3:24, 25 (propitiation; ἱλαστήριον). Thus, they serve as objects of our contemplation for revealing the glory of salvation in Jesus, *cf.* Ex. 25:22 *with* John 20:11, 12.

Question 2—*What does the name angel mean in Scripture?*

Answer—The name of angel (אַγγέλος/ἄγγελος) signifies a “messenger” and, in Scripture, is attributed to:

First, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the Angel which God sent to bring Israel out of Egypt, *cf.* Num. 20:16 *with* 1 Cor. 10:9. Thus, of Him, it is said, God’s name is in Him, Ex. 23:20, 21. He is, therefore, called the Angel of God’s presence, or face, Isa. 63:9; for He is the Face of God Himself, *cf.* Ex. 33:14 *with* 2 Cor. 4:6. He is the Angel of the Covenant, whom Israel desired, Mal. 3:1; and the Angel who delivered Jacob from all evil, Gen. 48:16. He is the Angel who dwelt in the bush that burned but was not consumed, Deut. 33:16; Ex. 3:2, 6. He is the Angel of the LORD, who emboldened Gideon to battle against the Midianites, Judg. 6:11, 12, 14, 16; and the Angel who gives the sweet savor to the prayers of the saints offered up to God, Rev. 8:3, 4. He is no created Angel but the Creator of all angels, Col. 1:16; before Whom all the angels do worship, Heb. 1:6.

Second, to some certain men who, though on earth, are for their service of God specially called angels, even ministers of God, Luke 9:52. Such, in the time of the law, were the priests called, Mal. 2:7. So, too, was John the Baptist, though merely a man of prophetic character, Matt. 11:10. Thus, all that are Christ’s ordinary ministers of the Gospel are called angels of the churches, Rev. 1:20. So, when Solomon is enforcing the duty of paying vows which have been made, if we remember that vows were part of the Jewish religious worship, we will perceive that the sacrifice for paying the vow had to be made in connection with the temple, by the priest, who he calls an “angel,” Eccl. 5:6. The connection of angels to ministers, in the worship of God, suggest that there is a joining of heaven and earth in divine service, *cf.* 1 Cor. 11:10.

Third, to those blessed spirits which surround the throne of God ministering and standing before Him, Dan. 7:10. These heavenly creatures are sent forth into this world on God's message and are, therefore, properly called by the name of angels, Gen. 28:12. They are said to excel in wisdom, 2 Sam. 14:20; as well as in strength, by which they are ready and swift to perform the will of God, Ps. 103:20. They are thrones, dominions, principalities and powers, Col. 1:16; even the chief princes above all the princes of the earth, Dan. 10:13. So, God gives them the title of gods (מַלְאָכִים), *cf.* Ps. 8:5; 97:7 *with* Heb. 1:6 (ἄγγελοι); 2:6, 7 (ἁγγέλους). Therefore, God gives to them His counsels and uses their ministry in the government of the world, *cf.* 1 Kings 22:19, 20; Zech. 1:10, 11.

Question 3—*What are some of the things which we may premise of the angels?*

Answer—We must note that their names are various in Scripture, each holding forth some different object in view: 1.) There are those names, such as spirit (πνεῦμα), which speak of their essential nature, as pure spirit, *cf.* Heb. 12:9. 2.) There are some names which are nonessential, describing rather accidents, derived from power, virtue and dignity with which they are endowed, such as “seraphim,” “cherubim,” thrones, dominions, and powers, Isa. 6:2; Gen. 3:24; Col. 1:16. 3.) There are other names which are relative, referring to the office and duty which they must perform, such as angel, messenger, or ministering spirit, Heb. 1:14.

Question 4—*How do we know that angels exist and who they are?*

Answer—*First*, if we consider the gradations of beings and the perfection of the universe, *cf.* Gen. 1:31. God has made in it creatures merely corporeal, of varying degrees (*e.g.*, rocks, plants, *etc.*), which only impose themselves on the senses without themselves being sensate (being only insensate bodies), *cf.* Luke 19:40. There are other creatures which are corporeal but are animated, yet lack either the rationality or spirituality through which senses perceive things with understanding (as animals), Eccl. 3:21; Jude 10. Yet, there are others that are rational, which are partly corporeal and visible, partly spiritual and invisible (as men), Gen. 2:7. So, it is fitting to such perfection that there are others which are merely spiritual and invisible (as angels), Col. 1:16.

Second, there have been throughout history many proofs of effects which surpass human strength or knowledge: oracles amongst the Gentiles, *cf.* Acts 16:16; from the apparitions of specters, or ghosts, *cf.* Job 4:14-16; Mark 6:49; from those possessed speaking in foreign tongues, *cf.* Matt. 6:7; Mark 16:17. Since these could not proceed from God, as manifestations of lying, *cf.* Tit. 1:2; nor do they agree with those men, *cf.* Mark 5:3, 4; they betray the evil intelligences as their authors, *cf.* Acts 16:16-18. Now, it must be confessed that such must have been good in the beginning, *cf.* 2 Pet. 2:4.

Third, the voice of Scripture, which teaches this everywhere, gives an argument which only those most resistant to its truth could deny by falling into such error of denying the existences of angels, Acts 23:8. Though the materializing tendency of this age is such that many “scientific” men confine themselves to what they understand to be physical phenomena, they fail to grasp that the corporeal world is dependent upon the incorporeal, *cf.* Heb. 11:3. Things which they can see, hear, smell, taste and touch, they receive, Col. 2:20-22; whereas, what is beyond that, they dismiss with skepticism saying in their hearts there is no God, Ps. 14:1. Thus, the forces of the corporeal, or material, nature are their gods, and their minds are shut to the world of the invisible, much like heathen idolaters of old, Isa. 44:13-20.

These angels do not consist in the disembodied spirits of men, for there is a distinct line sharply drawn between the race of angels and men, Heb. 2:16. Though created a little lower than the angels, man is, through Jesus Christ, advanced to a higher position, *cf.* Ps. 8:5 *with* Heb. 2:5-10. When the redeemed die, they do go to the place where the angels are, but they do not become angels, Heb. 12:22, 23.

Angels were created by God and, in their nature, intellectual and moral characteristics, they exhibit the likeness of God, as may be gathered from them being called sons of God, Job 38:7. In this, they are like Adam, who was called the son of God, Luke 3:38; because God created him after His own image and

in knowledge, righteousness and holiness, Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10. Angels, whatever distinctions there may be among them, originally agreed in this, Job 1:6. Yet, at some point, before man was created, there was a rebellion against the authority of God amongst the heavenly host, Job 4:18; in consequence of which a large number of these angels were cast out, 2 Pet. 2:4.

Question 5—*How do we know that the angels were created?*

Answer—That the angels are not coeternal with God, but created, is not only reasonable, understanding that all entities are created by God, but is confirmed throughout Scripture: 1.) Generally, when it states that heaven and earth (and, thus, everything in them) were created by God, Gen. 1:1. 2.) Particularly, when it states that the heavens were finished with all its host, Gen. 2:1. Scripture commonly refers to the angels as the heavenly host, or the host of heaven, Ps. 103:20, 21; 148:2; Luke 2:13. Hence God is called “the Lord of hosts,” (a term used over 250 times) *e.g.*, 1 Sam. 1:3; principally because of the angels who stand around Him, Dan. 7:10. Unless they were created by God, David could not have said God made them His angels and His ministers of fire, Ps. 104:4; Heb. 1:7; nor could the apostle affirm this and assert they are ministering spirits, Heb. 1:14.

Elsewhere, Paul clearly establishes this when he speaks of the creation of things visible and invisible, Col. 1:16; for by “visible,” he wishes to embrace all corporeal creatures, whether heavenly or sublunary, 1 Cor. 15:40, 41; whereas by “invisible,” he most certainly intended to embrace spiritual and intelligent creatures, *i.e.*, angels, *e.g.*, Num. 22:23, 31.

Question 6—*When were the angels created?*

Answer—The angels were not created prior to the time of the creation mentioned by Moses, for several reason: 1.) Because Moses speaks of the beginning of time and of every creature, Gen. 1:1; before which nothing could be conceived except the abyss of eternity, Job 38:4-6. 2.) Whatever was before the world is God, because this prerogative is claimed for Him alone in Scripture, Ps. 90:2; Prov. 8:22; John 1:1. 3.) Not only did Moses expressly declare that the heavens and the earth, and all things therein contained, were created in the beginning of time, Gen. 2:1; in another place he limits the time of the creation to these six days, stating that everything created was accomplished in that time, which must include the angels, Ex. 20:11.

Nevertheless, it is commonly understood that they were created prior to all other creatures, for they are mentioned as praising God as the creation is unfolding, Job 38:6, 7.