

TREK 201

CORE CHRISTIAN BELIEFS

Lesson 11

ANGELOLOGY

(STUDY OF ANGELS AND DEMONS)

“Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.” Philippians 2:12b (NLT)

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Rockpointe Church

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“Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands,¹² saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!” Revelation 5:11–12 (ESV)

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps our thoughts about angels are most prominent as we think about heaven as reflected in the passage above and at Christmas when we sing “Angels from the realms of glory” and wonder how the shepherds must have felt as they saw and heard them proclaim Christ’s birth. Who are angels? Angels are spiritual beings that God created higher than humankind, some of whom have remained obedient to God and carry out his will, and others disobeyed, lost their holy condition, and now oppose and hinder his work.

So there are good angels and evil angels. That adds another mix to understanding angels. Our task in this study is to avoid fascination with good angels and fear of evil angels.

There are many references to angels –almost 300 in the ESV Bible—but these references don’t focus on the angels themselves but gives us more information about God, what He does and how He does it. Let’s explore what some of the verses tell about angels and demons.

I. Good Angels

The existence of angels is presented in Scripture. Thirty-four books of the Bible make reference to angels (seventeen in the Old Testament; seventeen in the New Testament). Christ affirmed the existence of angels by receiving their help following His temptation (Matt. 4:11) and by suggesting that He could appeal to angels for rescue when He was arrested (Matt 26:53).

A. Origin

1. Created. Psalm 148:2, 5; Col 1:16
2. Not created in image of God
 - a. Never mentioned as such in the Bible.
 - b. Since being in the image of God means to be like God, mankind is more like God than the angels are.
 - c. Angels are inferior to the Godhead but in a realm above man, greater than man in many respects.
3. Not Deity
 - a. Hebrews 1:5–2:9, establishes that Christ is superior to the angels
 - b. The Apostle Paul condemns worship of angels (Col 2:18). John was warned by an angel not to bow and worship him (Rev 19:10).

B. Names/types

1. Names

- a. The basic meaning of angel is messenger. The Bible uses other terms to refer to angels: “sons of God” (Job 1:6; 2:1), “holy ones” (Ps. 89:5, 7), “spirits” (Heb. 1:14), “thrones,” “dominions,” “principalities,” and “authorities” (Col. 1:16).
- b. Two specific names are mentioned. Michael is named as an archangel in Jude 9. Gabriel is mentioned by Daniel (8:16) and Luke (1:19,26).

2. Other Types Mentioned

- a. The “Cherubim” guarded the entrance to the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:24), and God himself is frequently said to be enthroned on the cherubim above the ark of the covenant (Ex 25:22).
- b. The “Seraphim” mentioned only in Isaiah 6:2–7, where they continually worship the Lord.
- c. The Living Creatures: Both Ezekiel and Revelation tell us of heavenly beings known as “living creatures” around God’s throne (Ezek. 1:5–14; Rev. 4:6–8).

C. Nature of Angels

1. Spirit beings.

- a. Appear at times in human form (Gen. 18:3) they nonetheless are called “spirits” (Heb. 1:14),
- b. Do not marry (Mark 12:25) nor die (Luke 20:36).

2. Personal beings.

- a. They have intelligence and will (2 Sam. 14:20; Rev. 22:9).
- b. Thus can interact

3. Moral beings

- a. some being characterized as holy (Acts 10:22; Rev. 14:10)
- b. While others, who have fallen away, are described as lying and sinning (John 8:44; 1 John 3:8–10).

4. Powerful, but not omnipotent

- a. They also have great and superhuman power, but not omnipotence. They are restricted to acting within the limits of his permission. This is true especially of Satan.
- b. Examples of their power: able to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, and other guilty cities; rolled away the great stone from the mouth of Jesus’ burial tomb, struck down a hundred and fourscore and five thousand Assyrians (Isa. 37:36).

5. Higher knowledge but omniscience

- a. Matthew 24:36 implies that angels have superhuman knowledge, but at the same time expressly asserts that this knowledge is not unlimited

6. Large Number.

- a. “ten thousands” (Deut. 33:2); “twice ten thousand, thousands upon thousands” (Ps. 68:17); “twelve legions” (36,000 to 72,000—the size of the Roman legion varied between 3,000 and 6,000) (Matt. 26:53); “innumerable angels in festal gathering” (Heb. 12:22); “thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand” (Rev. 5:11 NIV)

7. Higher order than man.

- a. Angels are not subject to the limitations of man: incapable of death (Luke 20:36); greater wisdom than man (2 Sam. 14:20), yet it is limited (Matt. 24:36); greater power than man (Matt. 28:2; Acts 5:19; 2 Pet. 2:11), yet they are limited in power (Dan. 10:13).
- b. However, angels are not created in the image of God, therefore, they do not share man’s glorious destiny of redemption in Christ.
- c. At the consummation of the age, redeemed man will be exalted above angels (1 Cor. 6:3).

D. Ministry of angels

1. To God

- a. Continually praise and glorify God (Pss. 103:20; 148:2; Rev. 5:11–12; 7:11; 8:1–4)

2. To Christ

- a. Predicted His birth (Luke 1:26–38). Gabriel came to Mary.
- b. Angels protected Him in infancy by warning Joseph to flee to Egypt until the death of Herod (Matt. 2:13)
- c. Ministered to Him after the temptation (Matt. 4:11).
- d. Strengthened Him at Gethsemane (Luke 22:43).
- e. Announced His resurrection (Matt. 28:5–7)
- f. Attended His ascension (Acts 1:10).
- g. Will be present at His Second Coming (Matt. 25:31)

3. To Believers

- a. Protect from harm. In the early church an angel delivered the apostles (Acts 5:19) and later Peter (Acts 12:6–11) from prison and shut the mouths of the lions so they would not hurt Daniel (Dan. 6:22)
- b. Physical protection. The psalmist experienced the angels’ care (Ps 91:11-13).
- c. Minister to spiritual needs.
 - 1) rejoice at conversion (Luke 15:10)
 - 2) Serve in their needs (Heb. 1:14).
 - 3) Spectators of our lives (1 Tim. 5:21),
- d. Physical provision. An angel brought physical nourishment for Elijah when he was weakened from a lengthy journey (1 Kings 19:5–7).
- e. Assist in answers to prayer. There seems to be a relationship between the prayer for Peter’s release from prison and the angel’s releasing him (Acts 12:1–11).

4. To unbelievers

- a. Angels execute judgment upon the enemies of God.
- b. The angel of the Lord brought death to 185,000 Assyrians (2 Kings 19:35). An angel of the Lord that killed Herod (Acts 12:23). The Book of Revelation is full of prophecies regarding the judgment to be administered by angels (Rev 8:6–9:21; 16:1–17; 19:11–14).

E. Does each believer have a guardian angel?

1. This is the idea that all persons or at least all believers have a specific angel assigned to care for them and to accompany them in this life.
2. Support of the idea: (Heb. 1:14; Ps. 34:7)
 - a. Jesus' words about little children, "in heaven *their angels* always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 18:10).
 - b. However, our Lord may simply be saying that angels who are assigned the task of protecting little children have ready access to God's presence.
 - c. "To use a football analogy, the angels may be playing "zone" rather than "man-on-man" defense." Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, p 399.
3. Opposition to the idea:
 - a. In other places in the Bible we read that not just one, but many angels accompanied, protected, and provided for believers (Ps. 91:11; Zech. 1:10)
 - b. Elisha was surrounded by many horses and chariots of fire (2 Kings 6:17); Jesus could have called twelve legions of angels; several angels carried Lazarus's soul to Abraham's bosom (Luke 16:22)
4. There seems to be insufficient evidence for the idea of individual "guardian angels" in the Scripture. Yet, we do see that Angels are assigned to specific people by God for specific tasks at specific moments (Dan. 6:22). So, perhaps you have been touched by an angel or protected unaware throughout your life. Angels exists!! (Heb. 13:2)

F. Axioms about Angels

1. We should be comforted and encouraged to realize that there are powerful and numerous unseen agents available to help us in our need (Ps. 91:11)
2. The angels' 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 sombers us to realize that even angels who were close to God yielded to temptation and fell. This is a reminder to us to "take heed lest [we] fall" (1 Cor. 10:12).

II. EVIL ANGELS/DEMONS

A. ORIGIN

Demons are angels created by God and thus were originally good; but they sinned and thus became evil and now continually work evil in the world.

1. When God created the world, he “saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good” (Gen. 1:31). This means that even the angelic world that God had created did not have evil angels or demons in it at that time.
2. In Genesis 3, we find that Satan, in the form of a serpent, was tempting Eve to sin (Gen. 3:1–5). Therefore, sometime between the events of Genesis 1:31 and Genesis 3:1, there must have been a rebellion in the angelic world with many angels turning against God and becoming evil.

B. Nature of demons

1. Spirit beings without fleshly bodies (Matt. 8:16; Luke 10:17, 20).
2. Localized but not omnipresent.
 - a. They can be in only one place at one time.
 - b. The demons indwelt the two men of the Gadarenes, and when they were expelled they indwelt the swine. In each case they were localized (Matt. 8:28–34).
3. Intelligent but not omniscient.
 - a. Aware of the identity of Jesus (Mark 1:24);
 - b. They were also aware of their ultimate destiny (Matt. 8:29).
 - c. Not omniscient or they would be like God; only God is omniscient.
4. Powerful but not omnipotent.
 - a. Because of the indwelling demons the man of the Gerasenes could break shackles and chains; no one was able to bind him because of his unusual strength (Mark 5:3–4).
 - b. The demon in the boy sought to have the boy commit suicide by throwing him into fire and water (Mark 9:22).
 - c. Limited in their power; they cannot do the work of God (John 10:21).
5. **Demons Are Limited by God’s Control**
 - a. Job’s story makes it clear that Satan could only do what God gave him permission to do and nothing more (Job 1:12; 2:6). James reminds us that the Devil is successfully resisted by Christians through the authority that Christ gives them (James 4:7).
 - b. Demons do not know the future nor can read our minds or know our thoughts. Only God knows the future. (Isa. 46:9–10; Dan. 2:27–28).

C. SATAN: HEAD OF DEMONS

1. Existence/Origin

- a. How he came to be is not as clear as the fact that he exists.
 - 1) Some scholars point to Ezekiel 28:12–19 and Isa. 14:12–14 as how he came to rebel and sin

- 2) Whether or not these passages speak to Satan's origin, Satan is not a figment of the imagination but a real being.

b. Satan is a personal being

- 1) Has intellect in that he schemes and is crafty in his work (Eph. 6:11). His work of deception indicates his ability to think and plan a course of action that will be successful in deceiving people (Rev. 12:9).
- 2) Has emotion. Vents wrath (Rev. 12:12).
- 3) Has a will. Evidenced in his attempt to entice Christ to sin (Matt. 4:3).
- 4) Speaks to Eve and to Jesus during His temptation.

2. Names illustrates his nature

- a. Satan means "adversary". 1 Pet. 5:8—"Your adversary the devil." An adversary is one who takes a stand against another. Satan is the adversary of both God and man.
- b. Devil mean slanderer. He slanders God to man (Gen. 3:1–7), and man to God (Job 1:9; 2:4).
- c. The Tempter. Gen. 3:1–6. None escape his temptations. He is continually soliciting men to sin.
- d. The Evil One. Jesus described him as that in the parable of the sower. Matt 13:19
- e. Father of lies and a murderer. John 8:44
- f. Chart below from Moody Handbook of Theology gives additional names:

Name	Meaning	Citation
Satan	Adversary	Matthew 4:10
Devil	Slanderer	Matthew 4:1
Evil One	Intrinsically evil	John 17:15
Great red dragon	Destructive creature	Revelation 12:3, 7,
Serpent of old	Deceiver in Eden	Revelation 12:9
Abaddon	Destruction	Revelation 9:11
Apollyon	Destroyer	Revelation 9:11
Adversary	Opponent	1 Peter 5:8
Beelzebul	Lord of the fly (Baalzebub)	Matthew 12:24
Belial	Worthless (Beliar)	2 Corinthians 6:15
God of this world	Controls philosophy of world	2 Corinthians 4:4
Ruler of this world	Rules in world system	John 12:31
Prince of the power of the air	Control of unbelievers	Ephesians 2:2
Enemy	Opponent	Matthew 13:28
Tempter	Solicits people to sin	Matthew 4:3
Murderer	Leads people to eternal	John 8:44
Liar	Perverts the truth	John 8:44
Accuser	Opposes believers before God	Revelation 12:10

3. Methodology

- a. Deceives. Primary method. Disguises himself as an angel of light, and that his servants disguise themselves as servants of righteousness (2 Cor. 11:14–15).
- b. Opposes and hinders Christians in their service (1 Thess. 2:18), even using physical ailments to that end (so, probably, 2 Cor. 12:7)
- c. Tempts. This is shown in the temptation of Jesus and Adam and Eve.
- d. Destroys, at least attempts to, God's work (Job).

4. Satan's Judgment and destiny

- a. Satan fell from his original exalted position.
- b. Satan's ultimate defeat was pronounced in Eden. (Gen. 3:15).
- c. Satan was rendered powerless through the cross. Christ defeated Satan, rendering him impotent in the believer's life. Satan had the power of death over people but that power was broken through Christ (Heb. 2:14).
- d. Satan will be bound in the pit for 1,000 years. He cannot deceive anyone on earth during this (Rev. 20:2–3).
- e. Satan will finally be cast into the lake of fire. Satan is released whereupon he deceives many people, leads a rebellion against God, is defeated and finally cast into the lake of fire for eternity (Rev. 20:7–10).

5. Relation to Unbelievers

- a. He blinds them to the truth. (2 Cor. 4:3-4, Matt 13: 1-23). The devil, the god of this world, has blinded their minds to the truth, and does not allow them to see that he is hiding it from them.
- b. Satan controls by being the father of lust and desire and evil in every form in the life of the ungodly. (Eph. 2:1-2)

6. Relation to the Believer

As the believer's adversary'—one who is always opposed to us in every way. He is also our accuser; he is essentially the accuser of the brethren. What does he do in particular?

- a. He resists our works and our activities. See Zechariah 3:1, 'Daniel 10:13, 1 Thessalonians 2:18
- b. Satan also discourages us. He is always waiting to devour us (1 Pet. 5:8), to try us and to deceive us (Luke 22:31).
- c. He tempts us with his wiles, his snares, his fiery darts, his deceits and his suggestions; he excites our passions; he affects our minds. (Eph. 6: 10-18).

7. Can Believers be "Demon Possessed"?

"Satan is thought of as the originator of lies, murder, deception, false teaching, and sin generally, then it seems reasonable to conclude that the New Testament wants us to understand that there is some degree of demonic influence in nearly all wrongdoing and sin that occurs today. Not all sin is caused by Satan or demons, nor is the major influence or cause of sin demonic activity, but demonic activity is probably a factor in almost all sin and almost all destructive activity that opposes the work of God in the world today. In the lives of Christians, the emphasis of the New Testament is not on the influence of demons but on the sin that remains in the believer's life. Nevertheless, we should recognize that sinning (even by Christians) does give a foothold for some kind of demonic influence in our lives. Thus Paul could say, "Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and *give no opportunity to the devil*" (Eph. 4:26). Wrongful anger apparently can give opportunity for the devil (or demons) to exert some kind of negative influence in our lives—

perhaps by attacking us through our emotions and perhaps by increasing the wrongful anger that we already feel against others. Where there is a pattern of persistent sin in the life of a Christian in one area or another, the primary responsibility for that sin rests with the individual Christian and his or her choices to continue that wrongful pattern (see Rom. 6, esp. vv. 12–16; also Gal. 5:16–26). Nevertheless, there could possibly be some demonic influence contributing to and intensifying that sinful tendency.” W. A. Grudem, Systematic Theology.

- a. Meaning of the term “demon possessed” varies
 - 1) The Greek New Testament can speak of people who “have a demon” (Matt. 11:18; Luke 7:33; 8:27; John 7:20; 8:48, 49, 52; 10:20), or it can speak of people who are suffering from demonic influence, but it never uses language that suggests that a demon actually “possesses” someone.
 - 2) Demon possession implies that the person who is under demonic attack has no choice but to surrender to it and no longer able any longer to exercise his or her will. Ordinarily this is not true but is under extreme cases (Gerasene demoniac - Mark 5:1–20).
 - 3) If this definition is used, then the answer is “no”, for Scripture guarantees that sin shall have no dominion over us since we have been raised with Christ (Rom. 6:14, see also vv. 4, 11).
 - 4) If we ask “Can a Christian come under strong influence or attack by demons?” then the answer would have to be “yes”.

8. Christian Response to Demons

- a. We are in spiritual warfare (Eph. 6:10-18) and have the promise of victory.
 - 1) We recognize that the work of Christ on the cross is the ultimate basis for our authority over demons.
 - 2) At the Cross, Christ “disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in him” (Col. 2:15).
- b. We are told to “*resist the devil* and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). Peter says “Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. *Resist him firm in your faith*” (1 Peter 5:8–9).
- c. Our response then is faith not fear. Paul reminds us in our spiritual warfare we are to use the “shield of faith” with which they can “quench all the flaming darts of the evil one” (Eph. 6:16).
- d. Jesus reminded us when He was tempted our greatest weapon is Scripture. Some helpful Scripture include: 2 Cor. 10:3–4; Col. 2:15; Heb. 2:14; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8–9; 1 John 3:8; 4:4; 5:18)
- e. Our greatest triumph over the power of the Devil is the proclamation of the Gospel. Jesus commissioned Paul to preach among the Gentiles “that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me” (Acts 26:18).

D. Axioms about Satan and Evil angels:

1. Knowledge about evil angels alert us to the danger and the subtleness of temptation which can be expected to come from satanic forces, and gives insight into some of the devil's ways of working.
 - a. We should not take him too lightly, lest we disregard the dangers.
 - b. We should not have too strong an interest in him in which we sense Satan is behind everything that happens to us that we consider "bad".

2. While Satan and demons are powerful, there are definite limits upon what they can do.
 - a. We can, therefore, by the grace of God, resist him successfully.
 - b. We can know that his ultimate defeat is certain, for Satan and his angels will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone forever (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10).