

A DEEPER LOOK...

ANGELOLOGY — THE DOCTRINE OF ANGELS

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HOLY ANGELS

We believe God created an innumerable host of sinless angels to serve and worship Him (Neh. 9:6; Psa. 103:20; Luke 15:10; Eph. 1:21; Heb. 1:14; Rev. 7:12); that because they are merely created beings and not God, they are not to be worshiped (Col. 2:18; Rev. 22:9); that they are spiritual beings possessing great power (Psa. 103:20; 2 Pet. 2:11; 2 Kgs. 19:35; Job 1:6); that they possess moral judgment and intelligence; and that they are a higher order of creation than mankind (Heb. 2:6-10; cf. Phil. 2:5-8).

We believe holy angels primarily functioned as divinely sent messengers (within the biblical narrative, i.e. Matt. 1:21);¹ but that they also are sent by God as “ministering spirits” to serve believers in Christ (Heb. 1:14; see also Dan. 6:22; 10:13; cf. Matt. 4:11; Matt. 18:10).

FALLEN ANGELS

We believe that of the host of angels created by God, one named Lucifer – an “anointed cherub” – lifted himself up in pride, thereby sinning and becoming Satan, the accuser of the brethren, that serpent of old, the great Deceiver (Isa. 14:12-17; Ezek. 28:11-19; 1 Tim. 3:6); that a large number of angels rebelled against God with Satan and together fell from their holy estate (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6; Rev. 12:9), some of these fallen angels assumed demonic roles subservient to the evil will of Satan² and other fallen angels have since been “kept [by God] in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day” (Jude 6; cf. 2 Pet. 2:4).³

We believe in the reality and actual spiritual personality of Satan (Ezek. 28:13-15; Matt. 4:1-11; Eph. 2:2; that he is the author of sin (Ezek. 28:15-16; 1 John 3:8); that he – under the permission of God – subtly and deliberately tempted Eve and thereby introduced sin into the human race

¹ The two primary terms translated “angel” in Scripture (*malak* in Hebrew and *aggelos* in Greek) both have the same root meaning: “messenger.” Although the two scriptural classes of angels: (1) Cherubim – Most likely the highest order of angelic beings and (2) Seraphim – “the burning ones” occasionally served in other roles (guarding Eden, confronting Balaam, etc...)

² Regarding the reality of demons, *Shedhim* and *Seirim* are two Old Testament terms that testify to their existence.

³ Special Issue: “The sons of God” in Genesis 6 – Two views are most predominant in the discussion of Genesis 6:1-4. The first is that a particular race, perhaps the “Nephilim,” was born out of coitus between the men of Seth and the women of Cain. The other view is that fallen angels (demons) chose to descend to earth and propagate with humans. The first option is preferred for several reasons. (1.) Angels (fallen and unfallen) appear to be non-sexual beings, as witnessed in Scripture (Jesus’ account in Matthew 22:30). (2.) Angels appear to be only immaterial beings not material. This points further toward their inability to procreate with humans. (3.) The terms “sons of God” and “daughters of men” can be convincingly interpreted as those who were from the righteous line of Seth, intermarrying with the sinful line of Cain (“daughters of men”). However, we should be careful not to dogmatize either position.

when Adam and Eve fell to his deception by choosing to disbelieve God and act in disobedience (Genesis 3:1-6; 2 Cor. 11:3).

We believe that Satan has thus subjected mankind to his limited yet deceptive power; that he is the clear enemy of God and the people of God (Isa. 14:12-14; Matt. 4:1-11; Eph. 6:11-12; Rev. 12:9-10);⁴ that He is the ruler of the world system that is running in complete opposition to God (the *cosmos diabolicus*; John 15:18-24; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2);⁵ but that he was preemptively defeated by the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (John 12:30-33; Heb. 2:14-16; 1 John 3:8); and that at the second coming of Christ, he will be bound and cast into the abyss for one thousand years, after which he will be briefly released and then sentenced, with his minions, to eternal punishment in the lake of fire where “they will be tormented day and night forever and ever” (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10).

⁴ Special Issue: Demonic Influence and Spiritual Warfare – Can a Christian be “demon possessed”? Some counselors and pastors use the phrase “demon possession” to describe intense demonic control over a person’s life. However, the term *possession* implies ownership and, frankly, is not an accurate biblical term. A more biblical word for intense demonic oppression or a similar phenomenon is *demonization*, which connotes severe influence or oppression. So, no, a genuine believer indwelt by the Spirit cannot be “owned” or “possessed” by demon(s). However, they may, by Satan’s deception and power, come under intense oppression or influence (cf. 1 Cor. 5:5).

⁵ The *Cosmos Diabolicus*: “The World System governed by Satan running in opposition to God” (cf. John 15; 2 Cor. 4:4) “including the objective of Satan to use mankind to prove his superiority over God. The cosmic system is the devil’s multifaceted policy for achieving his goal by way of human viewpoint projected through the world system. Satan is king of the world and his cosmic system” – Lewis S. Chafer.