

CBC Sunday School
Angels and Demons: Specific Angels in the Bible
March 19, 2023

I. Discussion

Some people assume or believe that we become angels when we die. Is this a Scriptural belief?

How are we distinct from angels?

What other beliefs about angels does Scripture correct or clarify?

II. Who Is the Angel of the Lord?

A. Appearances

1. Genesis 16:7-14; 21:17; 22:9-18; 31:11-16; 48:15-16
2. Exodus 3:1ff; 13:21-22; 14:19; 23:20-23; 32:34; 33:2
3. Numbers 20:16; 22:24-35; 25:27
4. Judges 2:1-4; 5:23; 6:19-24; 13:3-23
5. 1 Samuel 29:9; 2 Samuel 14:17-20; 19:28; 24:16
6. 1 Kings 19:5ff; 2 Kings 1:3, 15; 19:35-36; 1 Chronicles 21:15
7. Psalm 34:7; 35:5-6
8. Isaiah 21:12-30; Zechariah 1:9-13; 3:1-6; 12:8
9. Matthew 1:20-24; 2:13-19; 28:2
10. Luke 1:11; 2:9
11. Acts 5:19; 8:26; 12:23

B. Identification with YHWH

1. He speaks as only God can speak, and is identified as YHWH.
 - a. See the promise to Hagar in Genesis 16, where he is identified as YHWH.
 - b. See the burning bush of Exodus 3, where the angel of the Lord (verse 2) is identified as YHWH (verse 4), and the name YHWH is revealed (verse 14).
 - c. See the angel's appearance to Gideon (Judges 6:12, 14), Manoah (Judges 13:21-22), and Zechariah (Zechariah 3:1-2).
2. The use of YHWH is unique to God and the angel of the Lord.
 - a. Angels are called sons of God, but never sons of YHWH.
 - b. No one else is ever identified as YHWH.
3. He sometime speaks of YHWH as "I."

C. Differentiation from YHWH

1. He prays to YHWH and calls upon YHWH for help.
 - a. See Zechariah 1:9-13 and 3:1-2.
2. He sometimes speaks of YHWH as "He."

D. Aspects of His Ministry (from Fred Dickason)

1. Revelation
 - a. He disclosed God's name. See Exodus 3:2-14.
 - b. Jesus is the revelation of God, and disclosed God's name. See John 1:14, 18; 17:6; Colossians 2:9.
2. Commissioning
 - a. He commissioned Moses and Gideon. See Exodus 3:7-8; Judges 6:11-23).
 - b. Jesus commissioned the disciples. See Matthew 28:19; John 20:21.
3. Deliverance
 - a. In the above cases, the angel acted to deliver God's people from bondage.
 - b. Jesus delivers God's people from fear and death and sin. See Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 2:14-15; Romans 11:25-26.
4. Protection
 - a. He protected kings David and Hezekiah. See Psalm 34:7; 2 Kings 19:35.
 - b. Jesus is our protector. See Hebrews 13:5.
5. Intercession
 - a. He interceded for Israel when they were oppressed. See Zechariah 1:12-13.
 - b. Jesus is our High Priest who intercedes for us. See Hebrews 7:25.
6. Advocacy
 - a. He is the advocate of God's people before the accusations of Satan. See Zechariah 3:1-7.
 - b. Jesus Christ is our advocate through His work on the cross. See 1 John 2:1-2.
7. Confirmation of the Covenant
 - a. The angel confirmed the covenant with Abraham. See Genesis 22:11-18; Judges 2:1.
 - b. Christ was sent to confirm the promises of God for forgiveness to Israel and for all. See Matthew 26:28; Romans 15:8-9; Hebrews 9:15.
8. Comfort
 - a. The angel comforted Hagar and promised her blessing. See Genesis 16:7-13.
 - b. Christ came with comfort and blessing, especially for the outcast. See Luke 4:16-19; John 9:35-38; 16:1-4.
9. Judgment
 - a. God sent the angel in judgment, even on Israel. See 1 Chronicles 21:1, 14-15.
 - b. The Lord Jesus will judge His people along with all non-believers. He will return as Lord and Judge. See Matthew 24:44-52; 25:32-42; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10; Revelation 5:5; 6:1-17.

E. Preincarnate Christ?

1. "The Angel of YHWH has been shown to be equal in essence with YHWH and yet distinct from YHWH. The only answer to this seeming contradiction is that he is a preincarnate appearance of our Lord Jesus, the eternal Son. Indeed, he is the most frequent Christophany in the Old Testament. His ministries are varied and extensive and well known in Old Testament times from the days of Abraham to Zechariah. Some of his ministries are those that only God Himself can do and are so extensively parallel with Christ's ministries that they may argue further for his identity as the preincarnate Christ." Todd Miles, THS 502 – Angelology, Western Seminary

III. Who Are the Angels Named in Scripture?

A. Michael – The Warrior

1. Daniel 10:13-14, 20-21 – Michael is described as “one of the chief princes,” who assists the “man” who appears to Daniel (who may be Gabriel – see below). Michael wars with the “prince of Persia” who withstood the one talking to Daniel, and Michael will contend by his side against the princes of Persian and Greece. Michael is said to be “your” prince.
 - a. This passage suggests God sets various angels over countries or peoples. It appears Michael is assigned to the Jews and to God’s people.
 - b. The passage also suggests that demons have similar hierarchies and territories.
 - c. Michael is said to be a higher-ranking angel, and maybe the chief angel, only under the angel of the Lord. It implies some kind of ranking among angels.
2. Daniel 12:1-2 – Michael is seen as the great prince who has charge over the people of God, and who will help deliver them in time of trouble.
3. Jude 9 – In a mysterious passage (taken from an account recorded in intertestamental literature), Michael the archangel disputed with Satan over the body of Moses. The point in this passage is that even Michael did not assume to take the place of the Lord in having authority to judge.
 - a. Michael does not have the authority of God.
 - b. Michael does have power to dispute and contend with Satan.
4. 1 Thessalonians 4:16 – He is not named here, but it could be that he is the archangel who accompanies the appearance of the Lord Jesus.
5. Revelation 12:7 – Michael and his forces war with Satan and demons, defeating them and casting them out of heaven.
 - a. Under the Lord, Michael has power to carry out His will, even over Satan.

B. Gabriel – The Messenger

1. Daniel 8:15-27; 9:20-21 – He appears to Daniel as a “man” and is tasked by God to help Daniel understand the vision. He comes in flight to Daniel, though we are not told he has wings. Daniel is sick for several days after Gabriel’s visit and the vision.
2. Luke 1:8-23 – He appears to Zechariah and announces the birth of John the Baptist.
3. Luke 1:26-38 – He appears to Mary and announces the birth of Jesus Christ.
4. Matthew 1:20 – It is possible Gabriel is the angel who appears to Joseph, but we are not sure.
5. In these appearances, Gabriel is met with fear, gives words of comfort, and brings good news, as one who stands in the presence of the Lord.

IV. Are There Different Classes or Kinds of Angels?

A. Cherubim

1. Genesis 3:24 – Guarding the entrance to Eden.
2. Exodus 25:22 – Statues of cherubim with wings over ark of the covenant.
3. Psalm 18:10; Ezekiel 10:1-22 – God is said to be enthroned on cherubim or travel with them as his chariot.

B. Seraphim

1. Isaiah 6:2-7 – Continually worship the Lord, with six wings. Names may mean something like a winged and/or fiery serpent. This is their only appearance.

C. Living Creatures

1. Ezekiel 1:5-14 – Appearances like a lion, ox, man, and eagle. Move in all directions and represent the power and glory of God.
2. Revelation 4:6-8 – Appearances like a lion, ox, man, and eagle. Worship God continually before His throne, seeming to lead the angelic procession of worship.

D. Other Names for Angels

1. Sons of God – See below.
2. Holy Ones – Psalm 89:5, 7
3. Spirits – Hebrews 1:14
4. Watchers – Daniel 4:13, 17, 23
5. Thrones, Dominions, Principalities, Authorities – Colossians 1:16

V. Do We Have Guardian Angels?

A. Arguments for Guardian Angels

1. Angels Exist for Our Protection
 - a. Psalm 91:11-12 – He will give his angels... to guard you in all your ways.
2. Jesus Says Little Children Have Angels
 - a. Matthew 18:10 – Don't despise little ones, for *their* angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven.
3. Some Thought Peter Had an Angel
 - a. Acts 12:15 – The church did not believe Peter could have escaped, and when he knocked at the door, some reasoned that it must have been "his angel."
4. Angels Seem to Have Peoples and Territories Assigned to Them
 - a. Daniel 10:13-14; 20-21 – There are "princes" of Persia, Greece, and the Jews.

B. Arguments against Guardian Angels

1. Scripture Never Explicitly Teaches the Concept of Guardian Angels
 - a. While angels personally protect and care, there is never explicit teaching that angels are continuously associated with individuals.
2. Individual Angel Ministry May Be Temporary
 - a. Angels may minister to certain people only for a time, without being permanently associated or assigned to individuals.
3. Angels May Minister to Groups and Not Individuals
 - a. In athletic terms, angels may play "zone" defense rather than "man-to-man."
 - b. This would maintain the Scriptural idea of angels as protecting and ministering to specific people, with real association to them, without going so far as to say that every person has their own designated angel.

VI. Who Are the Sons of God?

A. Bible Passages

1. Genesis 6:1-4 – Identification is difficult. See below.
2. Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7 – These are clear references to spiritual beings in the heavens, who even were present at creation, before the creation of humanity.
3. Matthew 5:9; Luke 20:36; Romans 8:14, 19; Galatians 3:26 – All these refer to Christians as “sons of God,” especially as they are led by the Spirit into sanctification and glorification, fully belonging to God.
4. Deuteronomy 32:8 – Sons of God or sons of Israel? Manuscripts are divided on whether this should read sons of God (possibly referencing spiritual beings), or sons of Israel (referencing the people and descendants of Israel).

B. Identity of the Sons of God in Genesis 6:1-4

1. Fallen Angels

- a. Position: The sons of God are fallen angels, who intermingled with the daughters of men, and thereby corrupted humanity.
- b. Arguments For:
 - i. This position was held by early church and ancient Judaism.
 - ii. Other OT use of “sons of God” refers to angels. See Job 1:6; 2:8; 38:7.
 - iii. Angels have taken corporeal, human form elsewhere in Scripture.
 - iv. NT allusions to the “fall” of angels seem to align with this context.
 1. 1 Peter 3:19-20
 2. 2 Peter 2:4-5, 9
 3. Jude 6-7
- c. Nephilim:
 - i. Offspring of fallen angels and women. A product of wickedness and corruption of humanity with evil spirits.

2. Sons of Seth

- a. Position: The sons of God are the descendants of Seth, who intermarried with the corrupt line of Cain – the daughters of men, and became corrupted.
- b. Arguments For:
 - i. This is the popular view of the church since the 2nd century, including Luther and Calvin.
 - ii. Jesus says angels can’t reproduce sexually. See Luke 20:34-36.
 - iii. This fits with the context of Genesis 4-5, and leading into the flood narrative. It would explain what happened to the line of Seth, how it got corrupted, and why the judgment of the flood was needed.
 - iv. In the flood context, mankind is punished, not angels. Why would mankind be punished for the transgression of angels, and why are angels not mentioned as punished, if they were involved in this sin?
 - v. Israel/Israelites were often referred to as children of God.
- c. Nephilim:
 - i. Normal men, though they seem to be especially powerful and impressive, maybe even “giant.”
 - ii. May or may not be offspring of union of lines of Cain and Seth.

3. Kingly Rulers, Who May Be Possessed or Influenced by Evil/Demons
 - a. Position: This is a combination of two positions. The original position is that the sons of God are ancient kings and princes, who are evil and see themselves as gods, and tyrannically take women for themselves. Some have added on to this position that these kingly rulers may have been possessed or influenced by demons in their corruption and sexual immorality.
 - b. Arguments For:
 - i. This has been the position of Judaism since about the third century, and is most common amongst modern Christian scholarship.
 - ii. Davidic/Israeli kings were seen to be in a father/son relationship with God. There is precedent for calling powerful men and kings “sons of God.”
 - iii. The forceful taking of women is consistent with the corrupt practices of kings, and may even be a reference to the forming of harems.
 - iv. This fits with the biblical/theological pattern of demons being associated with rule over territories, principalities, and kingdoms.
 - v. It avoids the problem of angels directly interacting sexually with women, while also retaining the supernatural/angelic element.
 - vi. Would add an explanatory element to the flood and a polemic for Israel against the power of nations and kings. It would teach Israel not to worry about powerful nations and kings, for God will judge them.
 - c. Nephilim:
 - i. Normal men, though they seem to be especially powerful and impressive, maybe even “giant.”
 - ii. They may even be the mighty men, or warriors, in the kings’ armies.
 - iii. May or may not be offspring of the union of possessed and/or evil rulers.
4. Just Normal Men
 - a. Position: The sons of God are just normal dudes. Their marriage with the daughters of men is not seen as a bad thing. Verses 1-2 simply describe the normal state of affairs – human population was growing before the sudden judgment of the flood.
 - b. Arguments For:
 - i. Aligns with what Jesus says in Luke 17:26-27 and Matthew 24:37-39, that before judgment comes, people are marrying and being given in marriage. It is a description of “normal life” and the unexpected suddenness with which judgment can come upon sinful people who do not turn to God.
 - ii. Presents few exegetical or theological obstacles, as compared to other positions (though it is difficult to then explain the negative assessments of verses 3 and 5).
 - c. Nephilim:
 - i. Normal men, though they seem to be especially powerful and impressive, maybe even “giant.”
 - ii. Not necessarily an indication that things have gone wrong with humanity. The Nephilim are simply a detail of the text and its setting.