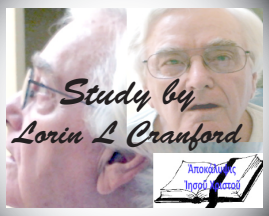
THEME STUDY
History of Angels

What People Have Thought



QUICK LINKS

INTRODUCTION

The above title, "History of Angels," is approaching an oxymoron, because how can one trace the "history" of a supernatural being. History pertains to earth bound topics and not heavenly topics. Thus some amplification of the title is necessary. A clumsier but more precise title would be "The History of Human Understanding of Angels." This is more the focus of the study.

The origin of this study came out of a Sunday School class discussion on Revelation 8:6.[1]

> 6 Καὶ οἱ ἑπτὰ ἄγγελοι οἱ ἔχοντες τὰς ἑπτὰ σάλπιγγας ἡτοίμασαν αὐτοὺς ἵνα σαλπίσωσιν.
>
> 6 Now the seven angels who had the seven trumpets made ready to blow them.

I asked the class what would an angel need to do in order to get ready to blow a trumpet? Take a deep breath? That is, if an angel would need to? Or just what? This led to a lengthy discussion about who and what angels are. Primarily, the discussion centered on how much of our understanding of angels is based on direct biblical statement, and how much of it depends upon accumulated human tradition that actually comes more from non-biblical sources. A lively discussion developed that took up the entire class time and left me with an assignment to look further into this topic and then to report my findings back to the class. Afterwards the humorous side surfaced repeatedly over whether angels have wings or not.

Thus this study grows out of that discussion, and can hopefully trace how human understanding of such heavenly creatures has evolved over the centuries. The primary focus will be on Christian understanding, but the perspectives of other religious traditions will be touched on, particularly where these may have influenced Christian understanding.

Fascination with the topic of angels is substantial in our time, along with massively different understandings of them. Although only two angels are given names in the Bible -- Gabriel (NT) and Michael (OT/NT) -- this did not slow down the extra canonical Jewish and Christian writers from assigning names to a large number of angels.[2] While very little information is given in the biblical texts, writers outside the Bible provide elaborate details about angelic appearances.[3] One of the more curious patterns is the biblical presentation of angels in male imagery, but later post biblical ideas

[1]At the International Baptist Church in Escazú, Costa Rica, on March 30, 2014.

[2]"Gabriel, whose name means 'God is strong' or 'man of God,' is the only angel named in the Gospels (Lk 1:19, 26). He stands in God's presence (Lk 1:19; cf. 1 Enoch 9:1; Jub. 2:18; 1QH 6:13; T. Levi 3:5, 7), which means, in the imagery of a royal court, that he is God's personal servant. It was Gabriel who appeared as a man to Daniel, interpreting a vision and giving insight (Dan 8:15–26; 9:21–27). The only other angel named in the Bible is Michael (Dan 10:13, 21; Jude 9; Rev 12:7), though various non-canonical Jewish writings name many angels. Gabriel features in several lists of leading angels or archangels, the earliest of which include four names (1 Enoch 9:1; 1QM 9:14–16), while others enumerate seven (1 Enoch 20; cf. Tob. 12:15; Rev 8:2). In their angelology the Gospels show marked restraint, not engaging in speculation about angels. Their focus is on Jesus himself." [M. J. Davidson, "Angels," ed. Joel B. Green and Scot McKnight, *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 9.]

[3]"No speculation is entertained about their appearance, although they can present themselves in human form (as in the case of the 'two men' seen at Jesus' tomb, Lk 24:4) and converse with people (Lk 1:13–20; 24:5–7). Since angels never die, they do not need to marry and reproduce (Mt 22:30; Lk 20:36). They are never said in the Gospels to possess wings." [M. J. Davidson, "Angels," ed. Joel B. Green and Scot McKnight, *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 9.]

shift this over dominantly to an angel in a female image, or at minimum in a highly effeminate male image. What caused this shift?

Of course this fascination also includes the dark side of the topic. In modern thinking, Satan is often viewed in terms of a fallen angel, but one is hard pressed to support this from clear scripture statements.[4] Here the ἄγγελοι become δαιμόνιοι, i.e., angels become demons seemingly, although in the Greco-Roman traditions δαιμόνιοι remain the ἄγγελοι of differing deities with a perceived positive role rather than a negative one.

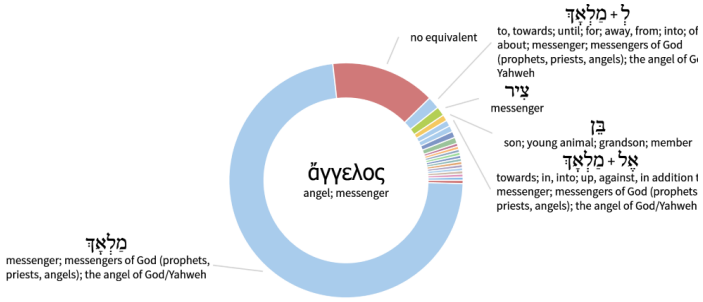
These and many other similar questions will be addressed in this study, to the degree that existing data provides clues to an answer. Hopefully the study will sharpen your understanding of this topic. Most importantly, is that it helps clearly distinguish between biblical teaching and other thinking from a variety of sources outside scripture.

I. Terminology for Angels

When one begins such a study as this, a critical principle of analysis is the primary use of original language terminology. The English word "angel" carries with it centuries of accumulated baggage that provides the contemporary definitional understandings.[5] Most of this dates centuries after the composition of the Bible and represents thinking imported from outside sources and imposed oftentimes down on to the scripture itself as though this was what the Bible itself means.

Since our focus is on Christian concepts of angels, the terminology to be examined centers on both the Old Testament and the New Testament. The linguistic bridge between the Hebrew / Aramaic of the Old Testament and the Koine Greek of the New Testament is the earliest translation of the Hebrew Bible into a very early form of Koine Greek that is called the Septuagint (better known in abbreviation as the LXX).

By bridge is meant the historical reality of how the LXX translators treated a Hebrew word in bringing the idea over into Greek so that it became the foundation for the vocabulary of early Christian writers particularly in the writing of the documents of the New Testament in



LXX handing of Hebrew Text

[4]"Disobedient or sinful spirit messengers are not clearly depicted. These emerge predominately in apocryphal and pseudepigraphal writings. Likewise, Satan as a 'fallen angel' is not well supported:

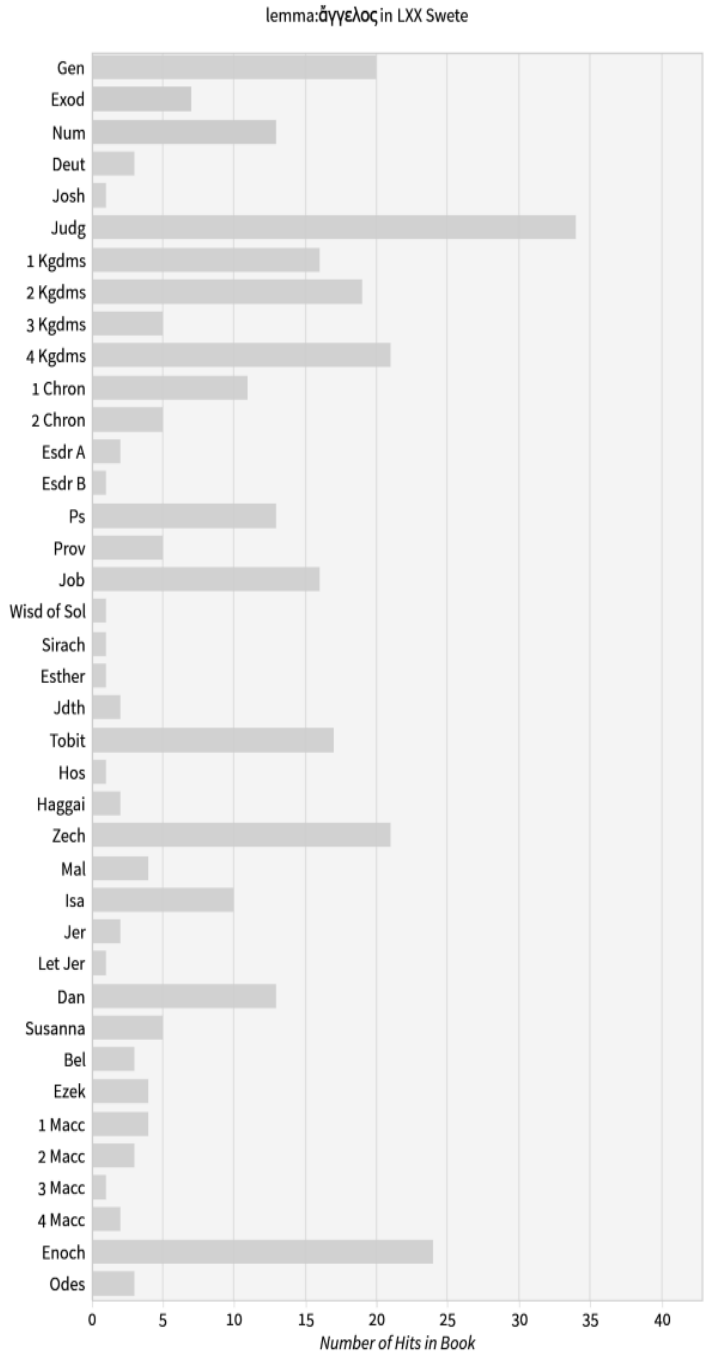
- The tempter in the garden of Eden is a rebellious supernatural being, but is not called an 'angel.'
- Satan appears with other spirit beings in Job 1:6, but they are named 'sons of the gods' or 'sons of God' and not 'angels' (מַלְאָךְ , *mal'akh*).
- Isaiah 14:12 doesn't describe an 'angel' (מַלְאָךְ, *mal'akh*), nor is the being called 'Satan.'
- Ezekiel 28:15–17 also doesn't describe an 'angel' (מַלְאָךְ, *mal'akh*), nor is the being called 'Satan'; it describes a 'cherub' (כְּרוּב, keruv)."

[W. Creighton Marlowe, "Angels," ed. John D. Barry and Lazarus Wentz, *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012).]

[5]As we will also discover the same thing is essentially true for *Engel* in German, *ángel* in Spanish, *ange* in French, *angelo* in Italian, *angelus* in Latin, and *anjo* in Portuguese. This does not begin to cover, for example, the multiple words in *modern* Hebrew for angel

מַלְאָךְ ***angel,*** cherub, messenger, seraph
אֶרְאֵל hero, ***angel***
כְּרוּב cabbage, cherub, ***angel***
סָפַר scribe, general, ***angel***, commander
אָדָם נָתְמָד ***angel***

The Hebrew illustrates one of the challenges of translation when one language has a single word but the other translation language has multiple words for that one word being translated. For individuals who are at least bilingual there is a fundamental principle that is well known: *one can never go from one language to another using a simplistic one-to-one principle of translation*.



the apostolic age. From the above chart one can sense the wide number of Hebrew words where the LXX translators used ἄγγελος in translation. This pattern of dependency on the LXX holds true for about three centuries until another shift fully takes place in Christian writings. The Jewish heritage of apostolic Christianity is largely replaced with Greek and Roman ideas coming out of the contemporary Greco-Roman religious and philosophical traditions. By this point the Jewishness of Jesus and the apostles is re-interpreted in terms of Greek and Roman ideas rather than by the Hebrew-Aramatic text of the Old Testament, which itself is expanded to include numerous other documents never considered as sacred by Jews, i.e., the Old Testament Apocrypha. Some of these documents from non-canonical writers provide the sought after justification for later thinking in some Christian circles. Increasingly the Greek words take on new meanings derived from Greco-Roman culture rather than from the rich heritage of the Hebrew Bible.

Methodologically this study will probe the topic with two basic points in mind: Who were angels and demons? What do they do? The first question includes names and labels along with descriptions of visible appearance. The second question includes what they do both in Heaven and also in the earthly sphere.

A. Hebrew Bible

A wide range of Hebrew terms surface in reference to ***angels*** in the Old Testament.[6] The variety of terms can refer to angels from the viewpoint from a) their status before God; their special sanctity; or their function.[7]

Status. This angle of depiction stresses their rela-

[6]"Although no single term corresponding precisely to the English word 'angels' occurs in the Hebrew Bible, there is a rich vocabulary for such beings. Some of the expressions either denote their divine status (e.g., *bĕnê (hā) ĕlōhîm*, lit., 'sons of God' [such grammatical constructions identify generic categories (divine beings), not genealogical relationships], Gen 6:2, 4; Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7; *bĕnê ʾēlîm*, 'sons of gods, divine beings,' Ps 29:1; 89:7—Eng 89:6; *ʾĕlōhîm*, 'gods,' Ps 82:1) or denote their special sanctity (*qĕdōšîm*, ;'holy ones,' Ps 89:6, 8—Eng 89:5, 7). Other terms refer to their functions (*měšārĕtîm*, 'ministers'" Ps 103:21; *śār*, 'commander,' Josh 5:14; *ṣĕbāʾôt,* 'hosts, army,' Ps 89:9—Eng 89:8; 103:21). The most common of these functional terms if *malʾāk*, 'messenger, envoy.' It is from the translation of *malʾāk* in the LXX (Gk *aggelos*) that the English word 'angel' derives. As terms denoting functions, both *aggelos* and *malʾāk* can refer equally to human or angelic beings. Consequently, there are occasionally passages in which it remains disputed whether the reference is to a heavenly being or a human one (see Judg 2:1; Mal 3:1). It was only with the Vulgate that a systematic distinction was made between angelic emissaries (Lat *angelus*) and human ones (Lat *nuntius*). Nevertheless, there are indications that already in the LXX *aggelos* was beginning to take on the quasi-technical meaning of heavenly being. In several instances *aggelos* is used for terms such as *bĕnê (hā) ʾĕlōhîm* (Gen 6:2; Deut 32:8; Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7), *ʾĕlōhîm* (Ps 8:6; 97:7; 138:1), and *śār* (Dan 10:21; 12:1), and in one case *malʾāk* is translated as *theos* (Qoh 5:5—Eng 5:6). There is even one instance in the Hebrew Bible (Judg 13:6) in which a character implies a distinction between a 'man of God' (*ʾîš ʾĕlōhîm*) and a 'messenger/angel of Yahweh' (*malʾāk yhwh*). "[Carol A. Newsom, "Angels: Old Testament," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 248–249.]

[7]The listing of scripture texts will be in the following order:

NRSV: *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989.

MT : *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia: SESB Version*. Electronic ed. Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 2003.

LXX: Rahlfs, Alfred, and Robert Hanhart, eds. *Septuaginta: SESB Edition*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006.

Vulgate: Weber, Robertus, and R. Gryson. *Biblia Sacra Iuxta Vulgatam Versionem*. 5th revised edition. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bi-

tionship or connection to God Himself.

בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים bĕnê (hā) ĕlōhîm, sons of the gods / sons of God, and also ***בְּנֵי אֱלִים, bĕnê ĕlōhîm,*** a slight variation.[8]

Genesis 6:2, ***the sons of God*** saw that they were fair; and they took wives for themselves of all that they chose.

2 וַיִּרְאוּ **בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים** אֶת־בְּנוֹת הָאָדָם כִּי טֹבֹת הֵנָּה וַיִּקְחוּ לָהֶם נָשִׁים מִכֹּל אֲשֶׁר בָּחָרוּ׃

ἰδόντες δὲ ***οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ*** τὰς θυγατέρας τῶν ἀνθρώπων ὅτι καλαί εἰσιν, ἔλαβον ἑαυτοῖς γυναῖκας ἀπὸ πασῶν, ὧν ἐξελέξαντο.

videntes ***filii Dei*** filias eorum quod essent pulchrae acceperunt uxores sibi ex omnibus quas elegerant.

los hijos de Dios vieron que las hijas de los hombres eran hermosas, y tomaron para sí mujeres de entre todas las que les gustaban.

This text is very complicated and thus a variety of interpretative conclusions about the meaning of the Hebrew phrase בני־האלהים exists.[9] The oldest view is

belgesellschaft, 1969.

BLA: *La Biblia de las Americas*. © 1986, 1995, 1997 by The Lockman Foundation,

[8]Actually three sets of phrases in the Hebrew OT surface in several places: בני [ה]אלהים, בני אלים, בני עליון). The literarily translate as sons of God or sons of the gods. Context must determine the preference. Usually the references are in relationship to a heavenly court with God as the ruling King. Whether or not the idea of 'angel' is appropriate here is highly debatted, with the evidence generally falling against the association.

[9]"'*The sons of the gods' or 'the sons of God.'* בני־האלהים could be translated either way. Job 1:6; 2:1 lend support to the latter, while Pss 29:1; 89:7 make the former possible. However, it is the nature of 'the sons of the gods/God,' that has perplexed commentators. Three main kinds of interpretation are offered by modern exegetes. First, 'the sons of the gods' are nonhuman, godlike beings such as angels, demons, or spirits. Second, 'the sons of the gods' are superior men such as kings or other rulers. Third, 'the sons of the gods' are godly men, the descendants of Seth as opposed to the godless descendants of Cain.

"The 'angel' interpretation is at once the oldest view and that of most modern commentators. It is assumed in the earliest Jewish exegesis (e.g., the books of 1 Enoch 6:2ff; Jubilees 5:1), LXX, Philo *De Gigant* 2:358), Josephus (Ant. 1.31) and the Dead Sea Scrolls (1QapGen 2:1; CD 2:17–19). The NT (2 Pet 2:4, Jude 6, 7) and the earliest Christian writers (e.g., Justin, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen) also take this line.

"Modern scholars who accept this view advance three main reasons for supporting it. ***First***, elsewhere in the OT (e.g., Ps 29:1, Job 1:6) "sons of God" refers to heavenly, godlike creatures. ***Second***, in 6:1–4 the contrast is between 'the sons of the gods' on the one hand and 'the daughters of man' on the other. The alternative interpretations presuppose that what Gen 6 really meant was that 'the sons of some men' married 'the daughters of other men.' The present phrase 'sons of God' is, to say the least, an obscure way of expressing such an idea. It is made the more implausible by 6:1 where 'man' refers to all mankind. It is natural to assume that in v 2 'daughters of man' has an equally broad reference, not a specific section of the human race. Finally, it is pointed out that in Ugaritic literature 'sons of God' refers to members of the divine pantheon, and it is likely that Genesis is using the phrase in a similar sense.

"The royal interpretation was introduced into Jewish exegesis about the middle of the second century A.D., partly, it seems, out of conviction that angels could not indulge in sexual intercourse and partly to suppress speculation about them (P. S. Alexander, JJS 23 [1972] 60–71.) It subsequently became the most usual rabbinic view and has a number of Christian advocates as well (e.g., F. Dexinger, Sturz der Gottersöhne; M. G. Kline, WTJ 24 [1963] 187–204). D. J. A. Clines (JSOT 13 [1979] 35) suggests a combination of the angelic and royal interpretations: the sons of God may be 'both divine beings and antediluvian rulers.'

"In support of this view it is pointed out that judges are apparently identified with gods and the sons of the Most High in Ps 82. Certainly the Davidic king is called God's son in 2 Sam 7:14 and Ps 2:7 and at Ugarit King Keret is described as El's son. On this interpretation the kings were guilty of an abuse by marrying 'whoever they chose,' i.e., compelling women to join their polygamous harems. It is urged that only an interpretation which identifies 'sons of God' with men as opposed to angels can explain why men are judged for the intermarriages that occurred.

"The Sethite interpretation, for a long time the preferred Christian exegesis, again because it avoided the suggestion of carnal intercourse with angels, has few advocates today. In support of this view it was pointed out that the Sethites are the chosen line from whom Noah is descended, and that elsewhere in the Pentateuch the elect nation Israel is called God's son (Exod 4:22; Deut 14:1).

"L. Eslinger (JSOT 13 [1979] 65–73) has reversed the identifications, claiming that the Cainites are the 'sons of God' and that the Sethites are the daughters of men, for in 4:19–24 it is Cain's descendant Lamek who is the polygamist and it is the Sethites of chap. 5 who have sons and daughters. Furthermore he notes that the description of the sin of the sons of God, 'they saw … good … took,' echoes Eve's archetypal sin, so that they must be regarded as the sinful line, i.e., the Cainites. Though Eslinger has observed interesting echoes of the fall in Gen 6:2, he offers no explanation of why the wicked Cainites should be called 'sons of God.' Nor do his other arguments carry conviction.

"Given the variety of ways in which 'sons of the gods' has been understood, it is hard to know which sense is correct — angelic, royal or traditional Sethite. In the light of Canaanite usage and of passages such as Job 1:6, it seems most likely that the 'angelic' interpretation is to be preferred. Much of the objection to this view would be eliminated if the term 'angel' were avoided and a more ambivalent term such as 'spirit' were used instead. In Job 1 and 2, 'the Satan' appears as one of 'the sons of God' and is a highly malevolent member of the heavenly court. This OT picture of the heavenly council, in which the LORD chairs a committee of 'the sons of God' (cf. Ps 82), parallels Canaanite descriptions of the heavenly pantheon, whose gods often enjoy sexual intercourse. It seems likely, then, that Genesis believed the sons of God could have acted similarly. If the modern reader finds this story incredible, that reflects a materialism that tends to doubt the existence of spirits, good or ill. But those who believe that the creator could unite himself to human nature in the Virgin's womb will not find this story intrinsically beyond belief.

"*'Saw that the daughters of man were good and they took wives for themselves from any they chose.'* Some commentators have argued that the very phraseology used to describe these unions condemns them. It is suggested that rape or polygamy is implied by this description. However, this cannot be sustained. Cassuto cor-

that these beings were 'sons of God' as angels and several arguments have been made in support of it. Yet, serious questions arise immediately, especially in light of several other scriptural texts asserting that angels are non-sexual beings.

The three other places where בני־האלהים or similar expressions surfaces -- Psalm 29:1, Job 1:6 and Job 38:7 -- do not clarify the issue to any great extent.

Psalm 29:1 (cf. also 89:7). Ascribe to the LORD, ***O heavenly beings***,[10] ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

1 מִזְמ֥וֹר לְדָוִ֗ד הָ֭בוּ לַיהוָ֣ה ***בְּנֵ֣י אֵלִ֑ים*** הָ֭בוּ לַיהוָ֣ה כָּב֥וֹד וָעֹֽז׃

Ἐνέγκατε τῷ κυρίῳ, ***υἱοὶ θεοῦ***, ἐνέγκατε τῷ κυρίῳ υἱοὺς κριῶν, ἐνέγκατε τῷ κυρίῳ δόξαν καὶ τιμήν, (=28:1)

Adferte Domino ***filii Dei*** adferte Domino filios arietum (=28:1)

oh hijos de los poderosos, tributad al SEÑOR gloria y poder.

Once again the phrase בְּנֵי אֵלִים is unclear in meaning.[11] But the phrase seems to be referring to the 'heavenly court' of God. Whether this means angels or not by the writer is uncertain. But in the context of the Cannanite religious atmosphere the various deities always had a court of spiritual beings around them, whether lessor gods / goddesses or other types of spirit beings. The Israelites appear to have a similar view of their God. Thus in an unanswerable question such OT texts pose serious translation obstacles.[12] Should the word 'angels' be used, or is not the word 'spirits' better? Probably the latter term simply because of the very primitive ideas being expressed, and also due to the definitional baggage attached to 'angels' that assumes a much more developed idea from later sources. Of course, the neutral approach that dodges the issue is simply, "O court of heaven." It is interesting that the LXX uses υἱοὶ θεοῦ which is literally followed by the Vulgate's *filii Dei*. Both of these reflect the 'sons of God' interpretation of the Hebrew text.

Job 1:6 (cf. also 2:1). One day ***the heavenly beings*** came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them.

6 וַיְהִ֣י הַיּ֔וֹם וַיָּבֹ֕אוּ ***בְּנֵ֥י הָאֱלֹהִ֖ים*** לְהִתְיַצֵּ֣ב עַל־יְהוָ֑ה וַיָּבֹ֥א גַם־הַשָּׂטָ֖ן בְּתוֹכָֽם׃

Καὶ ὡς ἐγένετο ἡ ἡμέρα αὕτη, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἦλθον ***οἱ ἄγγελοι τοῦ θεοῦ*** παραστῆναι ἐνώπιον τοῦ κυρίου, καὶ ὁ διάβολος ἦλθεν μετ' αὐτῶν.

quadam autem die cum venissent ***filii Dei*** ut adsisterent coram Domino adfuit inter eos etiam Satan

Hubo un día cuando ***los hijos de Dios*** vinieron a pre-

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rectly insists that these words can apply to perfectly proper marriages: 'The passage contains not a single word … alluding to rape or adultery or any act against the LORD's will' (1:294). Westermann argues that the parallels in 12:10–20 and 2 Sam 11 show that seeing and taking a woman is automatically condemned, and such a condemnation may be inferred here. But again his conclusion is unjustified. The Pharaoh and David were condemned because they committed adultery with other men's wives; there is no hint of that here.

"One must look behind the specific terms used to discover the reason for the condemnation in this case. The sequence of 'saw … good … took' parallels most closely the terminology in 3:6 and suggests the sinfulness of the action of the sons of God. When the woman saw and took, she transgressed a boundary set by the LORD. The essence of Adam's sin was to acquiesce in his wife's transgression by eating the fruit she gave him. Here the fault of the daughters of man lies presumably in their consenting to intercourse with 'the sons of the gods.' It ought also to be borne in mind that the girls' fathers would also have been implicated, since, if there was no rape or seduction, their approval to these matches would have been required. The obvious avoidance of any terms suggesting lack of consent makes the girls and their parents culpable, the more so when the previous chapter has demonstrated that mankind was breeding very successfully on its own.

"This story may also be, as Drewermann (181–83) suggests, a polemic against the fertility cults which often included sacred marriages between the gods and men. Certainly, the OT law strongly condemns all attempts at crossbreeding of species. Mixed crops are prohibited, and mixed clothing (Lev 19:19; Deut 22:9–11). Copulating with animals is a capital offense (Lev 20:16) and marrying non-Israelites is also outlawed (Deut 7:3). It therefore follows that unions between the 'sons of the gods' and human women must be at least as reprehensible, for in this case both parties must know it is against the will of the creator who made the world so that everything should reproduce 'according to its kind' (1:11–12, 21, 24–25)."

[Gordon J. Wenham, Genesis 1–15, vol. 1, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 139–141.]

[10]"Literally, 'sons of gods' (בני אלים), but the expression may be interpreted simply as a plural form of בן אל ('son of God'; cf. GKC § 124 q), analogous to Ugaritic bn ʾilm, 'sons of El' (cf. M. Pope, El in the Ugaritic Texts [VTSup 2. Leiden: Brill, 1955] 9). Some Heb. MSS read אילים ('rams'), and this was apparently the text presupposed by G, υἱοὺς κριῶν ('young rams'), but the context supports MT (see Comment)." [Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, vol. 19, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 242.]

[11]"The psalm begins with a call to praise addressed to the divine council or assembly, who are here referred to as the 'sons of God.' The precise sense of this expression is difficult to determine; it is translated by G, in other contexts, as 'angels' (cf. Deut 32:8 [G] and the comment in Craigie, The Book of Deuteronomy, 378, n. 18). But the same expression is used in the Ugaritic texts, *bn ʾilm* (CTA 4.iii. 14), referring to the deities belonging to the divine council, and it is likely that this background forms part of the context of Ps 29:1. But further background is provided by Exod 15:11, where 'gods' (אלם) provide the context for an expression of the incomparability of the Lord following his mighty victory. Thus, in Ps 29:1–2, the congregation who are singing the psalm call upon the members of the divine council, or heavenly court, to join with them in the praise of God." [Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, vol. 19, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 246.]

[12]A part of the problem here is that most all the names / words referring to God in Hebrew are in the plural form rather than the singular form. This lies behind the issue here with אלם. Should it be taken as a reference to God or to gods. The noun is commonly used for both references in the OT.

sentarse delante del SEÑOR, y Satanás vino también entre ellos.

Here the exact same phrase found in Genesis 6:1 and 2:1 surfaces against the backdrop of introducing the story of Job. Here the sense of בְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים is a heavenly court of God with the phrase specifying members of it.[13] This phrase was fairly commonly used in the various religions of that era in the appropriate language.[14]

אלהים, ʾĕlōhîm, gods, heavenly beings

Psalm 82:1 God has taken his place in ***the divine council***; in the midst of ***the gods*** he holds judgment:

אֱלֹהִים נִצָּב בַּעֲדַת־אֵל בְּקֶרֶב אֱלֹהִים יִשְׁפֹּט׃

Ὁ θεὸς ἔστη ἐν ***συναγωγῇ θεῶν***, ἐν μέσῳ δὲ ***θεοὺς*** διακρίνει (81:1)

Deus stetit in ***synagoga deorum*** in medio ***autem*** Deus deiudicat (81:1)

Dios ocupa su lugar en ***su congregación***; El juzga en medio ***de los jueces***.

Here the issue is less clear with אלהים seemingly referring to gods as a part of the heavenly council or assembly (עֵדָה). But are these 'heavenly beings' in the sense of a primitive understanding of angels?[15] The answer to this depends substantially on the plausibility of a linkage of the terms examined thus far in this set. If so, then the answer is yes. But if no, then we are looking at differing depictions of spiritual beings with only some possibly being depicted in terms of a primitive view of angels.

Sanctity. Here the emphasis falls upon the ethical being of these creatures. And as one might well expect the stress is upon holiness. Since they exist in the presence of a holy God they must themselves have the same character if they are in His presence.

בְּסוֹד־קְדֹשִׁים, qĕdōšîm, council of holy ones.

Psalm 89:6-7. 6 For who in the skies can be

[13]"From a gathering on earth (vv 4–5), the scene moves to a more momentous gathering. It is an assembly of the heavenly council, God being pictured as a king surrounded by his courtiers, other heavenly beings neither human nor divine in the full sense, but 'sons of God,' their being derivative from his, and their rank superhuman. The concept of the royal council in which the king would be surrounded by his courtiers, receiving reports from them, taking counsel with them, and giving directives to them, is familiar especially from Egypt (cf. A. Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt* [Tr. H. M. Tirard; London: Macmillan, 1894] 69–72, 142–44) and may be assumed equally for Israel. The common royal practice was naturally ascribed to God also, to what extent as a fictive device and to what as a matter of serious belief is hard to determine. The clearest OT analogies to this scene are 1 Kgs 22:19–22, where Yahweh is envisaged by Micaiah ben Imlah as 'sitting on a throne' (the royal imagery is explicit) with his courtiers on his right hand and on his left; and Dan 7:9–14, where the 'ancient of days' is seated on a throne, thousands of courtiers attend him, and a court for judgment is constituted. Other allusions to the same complex of ideas appear in Ps 7:8 [7]; 29:9–10; 82:1; 89:7–8 [6–7]; 103:19; Isa 6:1–8; 40:13–14; Job 15:8. The appropriate terms for the council are סוד and עדה. On the divine council, see further: H. W. Robinson, "The Council of Yahweh," JTS 45 (1943) 151–57; F. M. Cross, "The Council of Yahweh in Second Isaiah," JNES 12 (1953) 274–77; R. N. Whybray, The Heavenly Counsellor in Isaiah xl 13–14 (SOTSMS 1; Cambridge: CUP, 1971). On the same concept in ancient Near Eastern religions (e.g., the *pḫr ilm* or *ʿdt ilm* in Ugaritic or the *puḫur ilāni* in Akkadian), see M. H. Pope, El in the Ugaritic Texts (VTSup 2; Leiden: Brill, 1955) 48–49; W. H. Schmidt, Königtum Gottes in Ugarit und Israel (BZAW 80; Berlin: A. Töpelmann, 2nd ed., 1966) 26–28." [David J. A. Clines, *Job* 1–20, vol. 17, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 18.]

[14]"The 'sons of God' who comprise the heavenly court are known in other Near Eastern literature, but especially in Ugaritic, where the corresponding term *bn il* 'son of God' or *dr bn il* 'family of the sons of God' or *dr il* 'family of God' appears (e.g., CTA 32.16–17; 15.3.19; Gibson, 92). In Canaanite religion the sons of God (El) are envisaged as his physical descendants; but the term 'sons of' could also be used in Hebrew for members of a group belonging or adhering to, or in some way participating in the nature of, their 'father' (e.g., 'sons of the prophets'; cf. also BDB, 12lb, § 7a). In the framework of a monotheistic religion, in which a consort of the deity could not be imagined, the latter view naturally prevailed. These heavenly beings (בני [ה]מיהלא, בני אלים, בני עליון) are paralleled in 38:7 with the morning stars, identified with the 'host of heaven' in 1 Kgs 22:19 and called simply 'gods' in Ps 82:1, 6 (cf. also Gen 6:2, 4; Deut 32:8 [emended]; Ps 29:1; 89:7 [6]; Dan 3:25). The same figures are known as 'messengers, angels' or the 'servants' of God (see on 4:18); in later Jewish and in Christian theology such references in the OT were interpreted as signifying angels (the term by which the LXX here translates 'sons of God'). See further W. Herrmann, "Die Göttersöhne," ZRGG 12 (1960) 242–51; G. Cooke, "The Sons of (the) God(s)," ZAW 76 (1964) 22–47; M. Tsevat, "God and the Gods in Assembly," HUCA 40/41 (1969–70) 123–37; C. H. W. Brekelmans, "The Saints of the Most High and Their Kingdom," OTS 14 (1965) 305–29." [David J. A. Clines, *Job 1–20*, vol. 17, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 18–19.]

[15]"Ps 82 opens abruptly, without an introduction, with an immediate focus on God (Yahweh) having taken his stand in the midst of a council, or assembly, of divine beings while he pronounces judgment (v 1). He is clearly in charge, presiding over the meeting. 'God' is not further identified, but he is surely Yahweh, the 'Great God' who is designated as the 'Great King over all the gods' (אלהים־מלך גדול על־כל) in Ps 95:3; cf. 96:4 (Kraus, Psalms 60–150, 155). The 'gods' (אלהים) are the divine beings who function as his counselors and agents. cf. v 6; Pss 8:6; 29:1 ('sons of gods,' בני אלים); 89:6–7; Exod 15:11; Job 1:6; 2:1; Gen 6:2. The scene is pictured as that of a divine assembly in which the great king pronounces sentence on some of the gods who have failed in their duties. Tsevat (HUCA 40 [1969] 127) notes that the psalm's opening suggests that what 'might normally be a routine assembly, where the gods report or participate in deliberations, has unexpectedly turned into a tribunal; God has stood up to judge the assembled.' See also, Mowinckel, PIW, I, 151. In this regard the meeting is similar to that in Job 1:6–12, which seems routine until Yahweh and Satan come into conflict over Job." [Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, vol. 20, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 334–335.]

compared to the Lord? Who among ***the heavenly beings*** is like the Lord, 7 God feared in ***the council of the holy ones***, great and awesome above all that are around him?

6 וְיֹודּוּ שָׁמַיִם פִּלְאֲךָ יְהוָה אַף־אֱמוּנָתְךָ **בִּקְהַל קְדֹשִׁים**׃
7 כִּי מִי בַשַּׁחַק יַעֲרֹךְ לַיהוָה יִדְמֶה לַיהוָה **בִּבְנֵי אֵלִים**׃
8 אֵל נַעֲרָץ **בְּסוֹד־קְדֹשִׁים** רַבָּה וְנוֹרָא עַל־כָּל־סְבִיבָיו׃

7 ὅτι τίς ἐν νεφέλαις ἰσωθήσεται τῷ κυρίῳ, καὶ τίς ὁμοιωθήσεται τῷ κυρίῳ ἐν ***υἱοῖς θεοῦ***; 8 ὁ θεὸς ἐνδοξαζόμενος ἐν ***βουλῇ ἁγίων***, μέγας καὶ φοβερὸς ἐπὶ πάντας τοὺς περικύκλῳ αὐτοῦ. (88:7-8)

7 quoniam quis in nubibus aequabitur Domino similis erit Domino in ***filiis Dei*** 8 Deus qui glorificatur in consilio sanctorum magnus et horrendus super omnes qui in ***circuitu eius*** sunt (88:7-8)

6 Porque, ¿quién en el firmamento se puede comparar al SEÑOR? ¿Quién entre ***los hijos de los poderosos*** es como el SEÑOR, 7 Dios muy temido en el consejo de los santos, e imponente sobre todos los que están en ***su derredor***?

Both בְּנֵי אֵלִים, sons of God, and סוד־קדשׁים, council of the holy ones, along with בִּקְהַל קְדֹשִׁים, assembly of the holy one, surface in this pair of verses. The second phrase is our focus of attention here.[16] Once more the image of a heavenly assembly or court frames the reference. But this time the members of that court are labeled as קדשׁים, the holy ones. That is, their nature and character are consistent with that of God in whose presence they exist.

Thus what is possible to understand from these indirect terms is the beginnings of a picture of heavenly beings primarily existing with God and forming the group of beings around Him in heaven. This imagery is drawn from the earthly middle eastern experience of kings who established a court of advisers and assistants around him. The surrounding Canaanite religious traditions developed their own versions of this earthly kingly model, and much of the terminology in the Canaanite semitic languages has counter parts in Hebrew and the resulting heavenly image developed in the Old Testament. From these terms we learn almost nothing about either their appearance nor their functions.

Function. This final perspective looks at these heavenly creatures in terms of 'job' responsibility. Their existence in heavenly spheres is functional in that they have responsibilities assigned to them by God.

To be sure, obedience to God is unquestioned and always 100% on their part.[17] Do they have the capacity to not obey? From the scripture the answer is an emphatic no! They are not capable of sinning. Only humans have been given the "image of God," in which is the capacity to choose (Gen. 1:26-27; 9:6; 1 Cor. 11:7; Col. 3:10).

What the Bible calls 'demons' in regard to the Old Testament is saturated with all kinds of problems.[18] One major problem is with getting an accurate conceptualization in mind within the ancient Hebrew culture. Comparative analysis to the surrounding cultures has been the major approach here, but is highly problematic at several points.[19] Unquestionably the conceptual-

[16]"'The "assembly of the holy ones' (קהל קדשׁים) is equivalent to the 'council of the holy ones' (סוד־קדשׁים) in v 8. Cf. Ps 82:1; Jer 23:18; 1 Kgs 22:19–21; Isa 6:13; Job 1–2. For the idea of סוד, see n. 55:15.a. For the 'sons of God/divine beings' (בני אלים), see Ps 29:1; cf. Ps 82.

"The metaphorical content of vv 6–9 is drawn from the concept of a heavenly assembly around a great kingly God, who rules as a respected, even dreaded, sovereign. The use of אמונתך ('your faithfulness') stresses the reliability of Yahweh. The word suggests a 'conscientious way of acting' which reflects inner stability and consistency (A.Jepsen, TDOT, I, 317; cf. v 34; 2 Kgs 12:16 [15]; 2 Kgs 22:7 // 2 Chr 34:12; 1 Chr 9:22, 31; Lam 3:22–23; Pss 33:4; 36:6; 40:11; 88:12; 92:3; 96:13; 98:3; 100:5; 143:1). 'Faithfulness' is contrasted with *sheqer* ('falsehood/lie,' שׁקר); see Prov 12:17, 22; 14:5; Jer 5:1, 2; 9:2 [3]; Isa 59:4; Ps 119:29, 30. Jeremiah laments the terrible lack of אמונה in Jer 5:1, 3; 7:28; 9:2 [3]; cf. Isa 59:1–8; Prov 12:2 [1]; 20:6; Deut 32:4, 20. Yahweh's אמונה is important in Ps 89 because it forms a major basis for the lament and petitions later in the psalm. The prayer in the psalm reminds God of the inseparable linkage between his faithfulness and his promises. For him to ignore his promises would violate the reliability which is inherent in his personhood and in his relationship with Israel (cf. Hos. 2:22 [20]). Note that אמונה occurs in Ps 89 in vv 2, 3, 6, 9, 25, 34, 50 — a sevenfold usage which can hardly be accidental. In other psalms the word appears more than once only in Ps 119 (vv 30, 75, 86, 90, 133)." [Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, vol. 20, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 420.]

[17]The RC teaching that before creation God created angels and gave them a one time opportunity to swear eternal obedience to Him is utter fabrication and totally disconnected from anything scriptural.

[18]"Use of the term demon in relation to the OT is problematic for 3 reasons: First, it does not seem that there is a single term in biblical Hebrew which can be consistently and unquestionably translated as "demon" (Caquot 1971: 118). Second, many terms thought to refer to demons are either hapax legomena or appear only in a few instances. Third, the English term demon is used to refer to two very different concepts—evil spirits and neutral "anonymous gods" or spirits (daimons). Both understandings have been applied to the OT." [Joanne K. Kuemmerlin-McLean, "Demons: Old Testament," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 138–139.]

[19]"Discussion of the identity, nature and role of demons in the OT is complicated by other issues as well. (1) Much of the study of demons in the OT uses comparative materials, particularly those from other ANE cultures. Linguistic and archaeological evidence has proven helpful in illuminating some aspects of OT understandings of demons, however, this evidence also raises the issue of the degree of legitimate comparison possible between cultures separated by language, time, geography, and theology. (2) Much of the language about demons in both the ANE and OT appears in poetic materials with reference to natural phenomena. This context raises the issue of how poetic references to natural phenomena should be

izations of 'demons' in the New Testament has virtually no connection to the OT discussion.[20] Additionally no connection between Satan and demons surfaces in the OT.[21]

כָּל־צְבָאָיו *měšārētîm*, hosts
מַלְאָכָיו, malʾāk, angels
Psalm 103:20-21 (LXX 102:20-21)

20 Bless the Lord, O you his ***angels***,
you mighty ones who do his bidding,
obedient to his spoken word.
21 Bless the Lord, all his ***hosts***,
his ministers that do his will.

20 בָּרֲכוּ יְהוָה **מַלְאָכָיו** גִּבֹּרֵי כֹחַ עֹשֵׂי דְבָרוֹ
לִשְׁמֹעַ בְּקוֹל דְּבָרוֹ׃
21 בָּרֲכוּ יְהוָה כָּל־**צְבָאָיו** מְשָׁרְתָיו עֹשֵׂי רְצוֹנוֹ׃

20 εὐλογεῖτε τὸν κύριον, πάντες ***οἱ ἄγγελοι*** αὐτοῦ,
δυνατοὶ ἰσχύι ποιοῦντες τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ
τοῦ ἀκοῦσαι τῆς φωνῆς τῶν λόγων αὐτοῦ·†
21 εὐλογεῖτε τὸν κύριον, πᾶσαι ***αἱ δυνάμεις*** αὐτοῦ,
λειτουργοὶ αὐτοῦ ποιοῦντες τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ·†

20 benedicite Domino ***angeli*** eius
potentes virtute facientes verbum illius
ad audiendam vocem sermonum eius †
21 benedicite Domino ***omnes virtutes*** eius
ministri eius qui facitis voluntatem eius

20 Bendecid al SEÑOR, vosotros sus ***ángeles***,

interpreted — as literal references to the physical phenomena, as poetic symbolizations or personifications, or as references to actual demons or deities. (3) Translation in general of terms dealing with demons is problematic. Translations are influenced by many factors: philological evidence and trends, theology, and previous decisions regarding understandings of the term demon and proper ways to interpret each particular text. (4) Identifications and understandings of demons in the OT are strongly influenced by the wider context within which demons are discussed; past contexts have included magic and witchcraft, 'popular' religion, official apotropaic rituals, poetic symbolism, and religious psychology." [Joanne K. Kuemmerlin-McLean, "Demons: Old Testament," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 139.]

[20]"As a result of these factors, identification of demons in the OT has not been consistent. The most generally accepted understanding is of demons as 'evil spirits' who live in ruins and the desert and are responsible for illness and natural disasters. However, more neutral, anonymous, or positive demons have also been identified.

"1. **šēdîm** and **śĕʿîrîm**. Most interpreters identify two general classes of demons in the OT: *šēdîm* (demons) and *śĕʿîrîm* (hairy demons, satyrs). References to these demons appear in two contexts: the worship of demons equated with new or false gods (Deut 32:17; Ps 106:37 [*šēdîm*] and Lev 17:7; 2 Chr 11:15 [*śĕʿîrîm*]); and two judgment oracles (Isa 13:21; 34:14) where the *śĕʿîrîm* are among several demons left among the ruins after God's judgment.

"2. **Lilith** and **Azazel**. Generally accepted as two specific demons referred to in the OT. Lilith (Heb *lîlît*) is seen as a female demon associated in Isa 34:14 with various unclean animals. Additional clues to her character and activities are derived from references in ANE and Rabbinic literature and archaeological evidence which picture her as a *succubus* and a "child stealing" demon (IDB 1: 819) and as Adam's first, rebellious wife (Barnstone 1984: 31). The name Azazel (Heb *ʿăzāʾzēl*) occurs in Leviticus 16 in relation to the goat sent into the wilderness 'to Azazel' in the Atonement ritual. Although 'Azazel' has been understood to refer to the goat itself or to a place in the wilderness, most interpreters see Azazel as the name of a particular wilderness demon to whom the goat is dedicated (EncJud 5: 1524).

"3. **Natural Phenomena as Demons**. Several terms referring to natural phenomena have also been seen as allusions to demons: *deber* (plague, pestilence; Hos 13:14; Hab 3:5; Ps 91:6); *qeṭeb* (destruction; Deut 32:24; Isa 28:2; Hos 13:14); *qeṭeb yāšûd ṣāhărāyim* (destruction that wastes at noonday; Ps 91:6); *rešep* (flame, firebolt; Deut 32:24; Hab 3:5; Pss 76:4 [Eng 76:3] and 78:48); *paḥad lāylāh* (terror in the night; Ps 91:5); and *bārād* (great cold; Ps 78:48; Isa 28:2). Such identifications are based both on ANE parallels (IDB 1: 817–21) and on understandings of poetic texts as referring not simply to the natural phenomena themselves but to the demon/god responsible for, or present in, them.

"4. **Other Proposed Evil Demons**. In addition to the categories above, other demons have been identified.

a. Animal Demons. Some interpreters have taken several texts as allusions to theriomorphic demons and have proposed the following animal demons: *ʿălûqāh* (vampire, leech; Prov 30:15); *śĕrāpîm* (fiery flying demonic serpents; Num 21:6, 8; Isa 14:29; 30:6) (Langton 1949: 37–38); the various creatures in Isa 13:21–22 paralleling *śĕʿîrîm*—*ṣiyyîm* (wild beasts), *ʾōḥîm* (howling creatures), *bĕnōt yaʿănāh* (ostriches), *ʾiyyîm* (hyenas), and *tannîm* (jackals) (Langton 1949: 41–43); *lîlît* pictured as a bird (Isa 34:14); and in some cases Leviathan (*liwyātān*) who on the basis of ANE parallels and opposition to God can be seen as 'demonic' (Isa 27:1; Job 3:8; 40:25 [Eng 41:1]).

b. 'Beings' Associated with the Underworld. *māwet* (death; Isa 28:15, 18; Jer 9:20 [Eng 9:21]; Hos 13:14; Job 18:13; 28:20) (EncJud 5: 1523–24); *dĕbar bĕlîyaʿal* ("a thing of belial/Belial; Ps 41:9 [Eng 41:8]); and *melek ballāhōt* (King of Terrors; Job 18:14) (IDB 1: 820–21). Significantly, most interpreters do not place the *repāʾîm,* the 'shades of the dead,' in the category of evil or haunting demons.

c. Additional Terms. *ḥēṣ* ("[demonic] arrow"; Ps 91:5; Job 6:4; 34:6); 7 evil spirits (Deut 28:22) (IDB 1: 820).

5. **ʾĕlōhîm, rûaḥ ʾĕlōhîm.** Finally, some interpreters (TDNT 2:10–11; IDB 1: 817–18) see in the OT additional, more neutral allusions to demons in the sense of 'anonymous' gods or spirits. In some cases possession by an *ʾĕlōhîm* or a *rûaḥ ʾĕlōhîm* (Exod 31:3; 1 Sam 10:10; 16:15–16) or the raising up of an *ʾĕlōhîm* from the dead (1 Sam 28:13; Isa 8:19) is understood to reflect this more classical idea of a demon."

[Joanne K. Kuemmerlin-McLean, "Demons: Old Testament," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 139.]

[21]"Finally, it should be recognized that there is no connection in the OT between the figure of Satan and the demons referred to above. While one late text (1 Chr 21:1) has Satan as a proper name for an independent being who acts in what could be seen as a demonic manner, 'The Satan' in the OT serves primarily as a judicial 'adversary' acting at God's request (Job 1; Zech 3:1)." [Joanne K. Kuemmerlin-McLean, "Demons: Old Testament," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 140.]

poderosos en fortaleza,
que ejecutáis su mandato,
obedeciendo la voz de su palabra.
21 Bendecid al SEÑOR, vosotros todos sus ***ejércitos***,
que le servís haciendo su voluntad.

In Psalm 103: 20-21, the psalmist calls upon all of God's realm to praise Him for His work of steadfast love to His people. Verse 19 sets the final scene in vv. 19-22 as the throne of God in the heavens. In synonymous parallel, the stiches of vv. 20-21 call upon all those around God to praise Him. They are identified as מַלְאָכָיו which the LXX translates as πάντες οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ with the probable meaning of 'messengers.' The Vulgate renders this as angeli eius potentes with *angeli* meaning either 'messenger' or 'angel.' But both the English NRSV renders it 'his angels' and the BLA also 'sus ángeles.' In both translation patterns, a heavenly creature is called upon to praise God.

Interestingly the further defining of the מַלְאָכָיו, ἄγγελοι, angeli, in the sub-stitch of v. 20 provides characterization of these creatures as you mighty ones who do his bidding, obedient to his spoken word. These creatures as completely obedient to God's commands are then further defined in the second stich of v. 21, as כָּל־מַעֲשָׂיו which is then translated by the LXX as πᾶσαι αἱ δυνάμεις αὐτοῦ. The Vulgate, however, renders it as omnes virtutes eius. Then the NRSV uses all his hosts and the BLA todos sus ejércitos.

In the sub-stitch of v. 21 these כָּל־מַעֲשָׂיו are defined by the participle expression מְשָׁרְתָיו עֹשֵׂי רְצוֹנוֹ literally serving in regard to His pleasure. But the more paraphrased LXX λειτουργοὶ αὐτοῦ ποιοῦντες τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ, interprets the Hebrew as 'priestly servants doing His will.' The Vulgate more closely follows the LXX with *ministri eius qui facitis voluntatem eius*, His ministers who do His desire. Then the NRSV in close adherence to the Vulgate renders this as his ministers that do his will, and the BLA as que le servís haciendo su voluntad.

What these two verses portray is the heavenly court around the throne of God in the heavens. And without specifically identifying them either as angels or something else, they are called upon to join the human chorus of voices on earth that are praising God for His steadfast love, חסד, in providing for His people. The psalm contains an echo of Exodus 19:5 as the launch pad for praise.

For our purposes, this passage again underscores the hesitancy of the Hebrew to identify heavenly beings specifically as angels. The poetic nature of this text cautions us about attributing too much literal meaning into a highly symbolical scripture text that builds off an earthly royal court and projects it onto God's throne in heaven.

שַׂר, *śār*, prince / commander
Joshua 5:14-15

14 He replied, "Neither; but as ***commander of the army of the Lord*** I have now come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and he said to him, "What do you command your servant, my lord?" 15 ***The commander of the army of the Lord*** said to Joshua, "Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you stand is holy." And Joshua did so.

14 וַיֹּאמֶר֙ לֹ֣א כִּ֔י אֲנִ֗י ***שַׂר־צְבָ֥א־יְהוָ֛ה*** עַתָּ֥ה בָ֖אתִי וַיִּפֹּ֨ל יְהוֹשֻׁ֜עַ
אֶל־פָּנָ֤יו אַרְצָה֙ וַיִּשְׁתָּ֔חוּ וַיֹּ֥אמֶר ל֖וֹ מָ֣ה אֲדֹנִ֑י מְדַבֵּ֖ר אֶל־עַבְדּֽוֹ׃
וַיֹּאמֶר֙ ***שַׂר־צְבָ֣א יְהוָ֔ה*** אֶל־יְהוֹשֻׁ֖עַ שַׁל־נַעֲלְךָ֣ מֵעַ֣ל רַגְלֶ֑ךָ כִּ֣י הַמָּק֗וֹם
15
אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּ֥ה עֹמֵ֛ד עָלָ֖יו קֹ֣דֶשׁ הֽוּא׃ וַיַּ֥עַשׂ יְהוֹשֻׁ֖עַ כֵּֽן׃

14 ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτῷ Ἐγὼ ***ἀρχιστράτηγος δυνάμεως κυρίου*** νυνὶ παραγέγονα. καὶ Ἰησοῦς ἔπεσεν ἐπὶ πρόσωπον ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ Δέσποτα, τί προστάσσεις τῷ σῷ οἰκέτῃ;† 15 καὶ λέγει ***ὁ ἀρχιστράτηγος κυρίου*** πρὸς Ἰησοῦν Λῦσαι τὸ ὑπόδημα ἐκ τῶν ποδῶν σου· ὁ γὰρ τόπος, ἐφ' ᾧ σὺ ἕστηκας, ἅγιός ἐστιν.†

14 qui respondit nequaquam sed sum ***princeps exercitus Domini*** et nunc venio 15 cecidit Iosue pronus in terram et adorans ait quid dominus meus loquitur ad servum suum †

14 Y él respondió: No; más bien yo vengo ahora como ***capitán del ejército del SEÑOR.*** Y Josué se postró en tierra, le hizo reverencia, y dijo: ¿Qué dice mi señor a su siervo? 15 Entonces ***el capitán del ejército del SEÑOR*** dijo a Josué: Quítate las sandalias de tus pies, porque el lugar donde estás es santo. Y así lo hizo Josué.

The military background of שַׂר in this usage is quite obvious. This heavenly creature who appeared to Joshua is defined through this term as a prince or captain of God's heavenly army, צָבָא. This term used in the phrase צְבָא הַשָּׁמַיִם is often translated either as 'host of heaven' or the 'heavenly entourage.'[22] Interestingly, sometimes the Hebrew text seems to imply that all the stars visible in the sky were what collectively made up this army.[23]

[22] צְבָא הַשָּׁמַיִם the host of heaven: —**a. heavenly bodies,** esp. the stars Dt 4^{19} 17^{3} 2K 17^{16} 21^{3} 23^{4f} Is 34^{4} Jr 8^{2} 19^{13} 33^{22} Zeph 1^{5} Da 8^{10} Neh 9^{6} 2C 33$^{3.5}$; = הַמָּרוֹם צְבָא Is 24^{21} (Wildberger BK 10:943f); = צְבָאָם Is 40^{26} 45^{12} Ps 33^{6}; —**b. the heavenly entourage of Yahweh** 1K 22^{19} (cf. Ug. *ṣbu šps,* Fisher Parallels 3: p. 441, entry 34aa) 2C 18^{18} = צְבָאָיו Ps 103^{21} 148^{2}; an individual from that group שַׂר־הַצָּבָא Jos 5^{14f}; שַׂר־צְבָא יי Da 8^{11} meaning God.

[Ludwig Koehler et al., *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1999), 995.]

[23] וְכָל־צְבָאָם Gn 2^{1} either the beings surrounding God (von Rad ATD 2-4^{9}:41), or alternatively the stars (W.H. Schmidt WMANT 172 (1967) 155), or the totality of what is denoted in the individual works (Westermann BK 1/1:233; similarly O.H. Steck FRLANT 115 (1975) 182^{72}; cf. KBL); NRSV: the heavens and the earth

The LXX renders שַׂר־צְבָא יְהוָֹה as ἀρχιστράτηγος δυνάμεως κυρίου, chief soldier of the power of the Lord, but the Vulgate has *princeps exercitus Domini*, the prince of the Lord's army. Both the NRSV with The commander of the army of the Lord and the BLA with el capitán del ejército del SEÑOR emphasize the military image following the LXX. Interestingly, שַׂר־צְבָא יְהוָֹה is found only elsewhere in Daniel 8:11 where the reference is to God Himself.[24] Thus the interpreter should be very cautious about drawing a sharp distinction here between the שַׂר, prince, and יְהוָֹה, God Himself.

יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי צְבָאוֹת, ṣĕbāʾôt, Almighty / Hosts[25]

and all their multitude; REB: and everything in them (cf. NEB: with all their mighty throng).

[Ludwig Koehler et al., *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1999), 995.]

[24]"'The prince of the host of Yahweh' appears only here and Dan 8:11, where the reference is to God himself. Our passage is more closely akin to the figure of the messenger of Yahweh who appears fifty-eight times in the OT, with eleven further occurrences of 'messenger of God.' Such a messenger commissions Gideon (Judg 6:11) and even appears briefly in the narrative of Moses' commissioning (Exod 3:2). Another brief appearance comes in the deliverance at the sea (Exod 14:19; cf. Num 20:16). Seeing the messenger can be equated with seeing God (Judg 13:22). As a military figure, the messenger destroys God's enemies (Num 22:23; 2 Sam 24:16–17; 2 Kgs 19:35). O. Keel (Wirkmächtige Siegeszeichen, 85–88) argues on the basis of Near Eastern art that the scene here is one of commissioning in which the messenger hands the javelin in his hand to Joshua, noting the javelin in his hand in 8:18, 26, as well as the 'rod' of Moses in Exod 4:17; 17:9. Whatever the scene imagined here, the present narrative has drastically altered it. The prince is never given opportunity to commission Joshua or hand over anything to him. Joshua continues talking and acting. The scene thus pictures Joshua as the totally obedient servant doing precisely what the divine messenger requires. He needs no further commission. Chapter 1 has given that. What he does need is a) personal confrontation with deity that confirms his commission and b) personal devotion to deity which confirms his readiness for the task ahead. These are provided here." [Trent C. Butler, *Joshua*, vol. 7, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 61.]

[25]"**Old Testament**

"Noun: צָבָא (ṣābāʾ), GK 7372 (S 6635), 479x. *ṣābāʾ* appears to come from a military context and bears both a general and specific meaning in the OT.

"(1) Approximately 200x in the OT, ṣābāʾ refers to those who participate in warfare and/or comprise an army (Gen 21:22; 1 Sam. 17:55; 2 Sam. 2:8). Related to this, at times *ṣābāʾ* designates the wandering tribes of Israel (Exod 6:26; 12:17, 41; Num 10:14), probably because the Israelites are like a war camp, marching to and fro as God leads them. Beyond the usage related to human armies, the created elements in the heavens are at times called the ṣābāʾ (Gen 2:1; Deut 4:19; Ps 33:6; Isa 40:26). These occurrences are frequently translated as 'starry host' or 'host of heaven,' but it is not entirely clear whether these elements are the planets and stars or angels. At times, in light of the close association of angels and stars in the ancient world, both may be meant. Again, this usage of *ṣābāʾ* is related to the military notion in that this heavenly host comprises part of God the King's entourage and at times fights on his behalf (Jdg 5:20; cf. Jos 10:12–14).

"(2) From the latter usage derives the OT's other important function of ṣābāʾ. About 279x, ṣābāʾ occurs as part of a significant and exalted title for God (1 Sam. 1:3; Ps 24:10; Isa 6:5). 'The LORD (Yahweh) of hosts' appears frequently in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Zechariah (but not once in the Pentateuch), and the phrase seems to have taken on a technical usage meaning 'the LORD all-powerful,' hence the expression 'the LORD Almighty.' While this designation has military overtones, it emphasizes especially God's sovereignty over the entire world. The title is important in the later OT period as Israel faces many powerful nations and their gods. God's people are exhorted to entrust themselves to their God, who as the Almighty will deliver them.

"Martin Luther picks up on this powerful title for God in his famous hymn, 'A Mighty Fortress is Our God.' Facing many conflicts and fears himself, Luther encourages his fellow Christians with these lines about the one who is our help: 'Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is he, Lord Sabaoth his name, from age to age the same, and he must win the battle.' See NIDOTTE, 3:733–35.

Noun: שַׁדַּי (šadday), GK 8724 (S 7706), 48x. *šadday* constitutes a name or title for God in the OT. However, both its origin and its original meaning are unknown. The translation 'Almighty' comes to us from the LXX, where oftentimes it is rendered with the Greek word *pantokratōr*, meaning 'Almighty' or 'Omnipotent One.'

"The first occurrences of *šadday* appear in connection with the patriarchs and the patriarchal promises (Gen 17:1; 28:3; 35:11; 43:14; 48:3). In these contexts (as well as Exod 6:3 and Ezek 10:5), the title appears as ʾēl šadday (ʾēl is GK 446) or 'God Almighty.' It was not until the time of Moses that God chose to reveal his covenant name, "Yahweh" (יהוה, GK 3378), to his people, 'I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name Yahweh [the LORD] I did not make myself known to them.' It is a favorite title of God in the book of Job. In fact, of the 48x this word occurs in the Hebrew Bible, it appears 31x (65 percent) in Job.

"In addition to its association with the patriarchal promises, *šadday* is associated with the Day of the Lord in the prophets (Isa 13:6; Joel 1:15). It also suggests power (Ezek 1:24; 10:5; Ps 68:14), protection (Ps 91:1), and the force of life (Job 33:4). Perhaps it was these realities that caused the psalmist to reflect, 'The one who dwells in the protective covering of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty' (Ps 91:1).

New Testament

"Noun: παντοκράτωρ (*pantokratōr*), GK 4120 (S 3841), 10x. pantokratōr is a compound of the two Greek words meaning 'all' and 'power' — thus either 'the Almighty' or 'the all-powerful One.' It is used only of God in the NT. Though a popular title for God in the LXX, *pantokratōr* is used only once outside of Revelation (2 Cor 6:18), where Paul quotes 2 Sam. 7:8, 14 ('says the Lord Almighty'). In Rev 1:8; 4:8; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7, 14; 19:6, 15; 21:22 it is often part of the fuller title 'the Lord God, the Almighty.' This title serves to describe the immense greatness of God, who has power over all creation. It also stands in contrast to the Roman emperor, who saw himself as the most powerful person in the world. See NIDNTT-A, 317."

[William D. Mounce, *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 14–15.]

89.8 O **Lord *God of hosts***, who is as mighty as you, O Lord? Your faithfulness surrounds you.

9.88 יְהוָה֤ אֱלֹהֵי֙ צְבָאֹ֔ות מִי־כָמֹ֖וךָ חָסִ֣ין ׀ יָ֑הּ וֶֽאֱמוּנָתְךָ֖ סְבִיבוֹתֶֽיךָ׃

88.9 ***κύριε ὁ θεὸς τῶν δυνάμεων***, τίς ὅμοιός σοι; δυνατὸς εἶ, κύριε, καὶ ἡ ἀλήθειά σου κύκλῳ σου.†

88.9 ***Domine Deus virtutum*** quis similis tibi potens es Domine et veritas tua in circuitu tuo

89.8. Oh ***SEÑOR, Dios de los ejércitos***, ¿quién como tú, poderoso SEÑOR? Tu fidelidad también te rodea.

In the primary background of צָבָא stands the military image of a large, powerful army. Although sometimes God's army can be the Israelites in exodus from Egypt, most of these references in the Old Testament imply heavenly creatures as His army. But the tendency of the LXX to use παντοκράτωρ, Almighty, for both צְבָאוֹת and שַׁדַּי diminishes the implication of a heavenly army with a centering of power inherently in God Himself. But in the background of the LXX is the more common use of παντοκράτωρ for referencing the complete power of the gods in the Greek pantheon.[26] Thus the understood sense of both צְבָאוֹת and שַׁדַּי is best captured in παντοκράτωρ.

But here the LXX uses ὁ θεὸς τῶν δυνάμεων, the God of the powers, for צְבָאוֹת in a more literal expression. But the LXX expression says nothing about whether these were considered angels or simply spirit beings in a military role. Both the NRSV with its God of hosts and the BLA with its Dios de los ejércitos also avoid signaling whether angels are implied here or not.

Psalm 103:21

Bless the LORD, ***all his hosts***, his ministers that do his will.

103.21 21 בָּרֲכ֣וּ יְהוָ֣ה ׀ **כָּל־צְבָאָ֗יו** מְשָׁרְתָ֥יו עֹשֵׂ֥י רְצוֹנֹֽו׃

102.21 εὐλογεῖτε τὸν κύριον, ***πᾶσαι αἱ δυνάμεις αὐτοῦ***, λειτουργοὶ αὐτοῦ ποιοῦντες τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ·†

102.21. benedicite Domino ***omnes virtutes eius*** ministri eius qui facitis voluntatem eius

103.21 Bendecid al SEÑOR, ***vosotros todos sus ejércitos***, que le servís haciendo su voluntad.

Just as with צְבָאוֹת in Pslam 89, now in Psalm 103 ***צְבָאָיו*** is translated more literally than with παντοκράτωρ.[27] But in the sweeping call for praise, every creature in heaven is called upon to praise God.[28] Also, one should not overlook the poetic nature of the references in Psalms, which urges great caution in how much literalness to assume. Here this is really apparent with the call for 'all God's works' (כָּל־מַעֲשָׂיו) to praise him in the next verse.

מַלְאָךְ, *mal'āk*,[29] messenger.

The root idea of this Hebrew word is 'sent' and it is the most commonly used Hebrew word for a supernatural being sent from God.[30] However, the dominate

[26]"**παντοκράτωρ**, 'the almighty,' 'the ruler of all things' (fem. παντοκράτειρα) is used as an attribute of the gods, though it is not common, e.g., Epigr. Graec., 815, 11 (Hermes); CIG, 2569, 12 (Eriunios Hermes); IG, V, 2,472 (Isis). More common are expressions like Διὶ τῷ πάντων κρατοῦντι καὶ Μητρὶ μεγάλῃ τῇ πάντων κρατούσῃ, Ditt. Syll.3 1138, 2 ff. (2nd cent. B.C.) By contrast, the term is very common in the LXX as an equivalent of צְבָאוֹת as a divine name (cf. Shebu., IV, 13) or of שַׁדַּי, and the preference for it continues in later Jewish writings.[1] In Philo it occurs only in Sacr. AC. 63 and Gig., 64; Philo prefers πανηγεμών. Joseph. does not use it at all.[2] It is found in the magic pap., under Jewish influence, e.g., Preis. Zaub., IV, 968 and 1375.[3] We also find παντοκράτωρ in the inscr. of the σεβόμενοι θεὸν ὕψιστον of Gorgippia, where we read, e.g., θεῷ ὑψίστῳ παντοκράτορι εὐλογητῷ; this is the introductory dedication.[4] The title is also found in Jewish prayers, Const. Ap., VII, 33, 2; 38, 1; also Ep. Ar., 185.5 The latter passage reads: πληρώσαι σε, βασιλεῦ, πάντων τῶν ἀγαθῶν ὧν ἔκτισεν ὁ παντοκράτωρ θεός. This liturgical usage has obviously influenced Rev. Yet the term has also a philosophical character, and in patristic lit. it was used to express the universalist claim of Christianity. With this eschatological orientation, it thus carries with it a strong religious accent.[6] " [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:914.]

[27]"God's very grace, which is so great (v 11), is a pointer to universal greatness. Once more the divine name (שֵׁם), which is the overall focus of the psalm, suggests שָׁמַיִם, 'heaven,' this time in the sense of Yahweh's heavenly kingship. How, we ask again, can God be adequately praised? A further solution is to admit that the divine revelation is too much for merely the individual or even the congregation to respond to. The psalmist calls poetically upon the king's supernatural courtiers and executives to join in the chorus of praise. In passing he takes an opportunity for exhorting God's human subjects to obey by stressing their obedience. They actively comply with Yahweh's will (cf. v 18) and in the light of that name (שֵׁם) they are ready to obey (שָׁמַע). Nothing less than the praises of angelic forces and of all the creatures of God's vast realm can adequately reflect divine greatness." [Leslie C. Allen, *Psalms 101–150* (Revised), vol. 21, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 33.]

[28]One should not be misled by the use of "his ministers" (NRSV) following "ministri eius" (Vlg) which follows λειτουργοὶ αὐτοῦ (LXX). The BLA with "que le servís haciendo" follows the Hebrew בְּכָל־מְקֹמֹות more closely. This expression does not introduce another label; rather is specifies an action orientation of rendering religious service.

[29]"מַלְאָךְ (*mal'āk*). ***Messenger, representative, courtier, angel***. 'Messenger' is an inadequate term for the range of tasks carried out by the OT *mal'āk*. These were 1) to carry a message, 2) to perform some other specific commission, and 3) to represent more or less officially the one sending him. There were both human and supernatural *mĕlā'kîm*, the latter including the Angel of Yahweh (i.e. the Angel of the Lord)." [Andrew Bowling, "1068 לאך," ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 464.

[30]"Supernatural messengers. (This section deals only with the term mal'āk, not with the broader area of angelology.) Supernatural messengers represented the same general range of functions as human messengers. Message-bearing might be central (Zech 1:9;

use of the term is for human messengers rather than supernatural ones in the Hebrew Bible. It is this term that the LXX most often translates as ἄγγελος, since the core idea of 'sent' is common to both and both can be used with either human or supernatural messengers.[31] But it was the Latin Vulgate of the fourth century AD that forced a choice in translation between *angelus* (angelic messengers) and *nuntius* (human messengers). Thus the debatted passages (e.g., Judges 2:1; Mal. 3:1) in the OT where מַלְאָךְ was translated as ἄγγελος but the ambiguity of whether the messenger was human or supernatural were settled for Jerome in his choice of either *nuntius* or *angelus*, and most modern translations follow the pattern of the Vulgate, except for the more recent translations which often disagree with Jerome's interpretation of ἄγγελος.

5:5). More often they performed some particular commission such as guarding a human effort like the search for Isaac's bride (Gen 24:40) or protecting the Hebrews in' the wilderness (Ex 23:20). They executed judgment (II Sam 24:17; Ps 78:49), delivered (Gen 19:12–17), and protected (Ps 91:11).

"A special function of supernatural messengers / angels is that they, by their very presence, present an aspect of God's glory (Gen 28:12–17; cf. angels in Isa 6, Ezk 1, Rev 4:6–8, and the cherubim in the Holy of Holies). In addition they join in active praise to God (Ps 148:2; cf. Isa 6:3).

"***The Messenger/Angel of Yahweh***. This figure has the same general range of functions as other messengers. He brought messages, good (Gen 16:10–13) and threatening (Jud 5:23). He performed specific commissions of judgment (II Kgs 19:35; Ps 35:5–6) and deliverance (Gen 22:11; Ps 34:7 [H 8]). He could also be called the "angel of God" (Jud 13:6, 9, cf. v, 3), though this title is not exclusively his. He alone had the ministry of intercession with God in behalf of men (Zech 1:12; 3:1–5).

"There has been extensive discussion of his identity. He seems to be God, since those who see him marvel that they have seen God (Jud 13:21–22) and he speaks for God in the first person (Gen 16:10; Ex 3:2, 6; Jud 2:1). He is identified with the pre-incarnate Christ on the grounds of similarity in functions, especially the intercessory function noted above."

[Andrew Bowling, "1068 רָאָל," ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 465.]

[31]"(1) malîāk is used to denote angels who are heavenly beings. They are messengers sent from God himself. Their appearance is a revelation of the supernatural world in the earthly realm. As members of the court of God, angels serve and praise him (Job 1:6; cf. Ps 103:20; 148:2; Isa 6:2–3). He is their Creator. They witnessed the creation of the world (Job 38:7), but as created beings they are not without fault (Job 4:18; cf. 15:15). They can be mediators of revelation from God (Zech 1:9, 11–19; 2:2–5; cf. Ezek 40:3). They were instrumental in saving events of the exodus and the conquest of Canaan (e.g., Exod 23:20; Jos 2:1–4). They sometimes rescued the Israelites from invading armies (2 Chr. 32:21) and also individuals from danger (Ps 91:11–12). The OT describes special kinds of angels: cherubim, who exhibit both human and animal characteristics (Gen 3:24; Ezek 1:5–12), and seraphim, who have six wings (Isa 6:2)." [William D. Mounce, *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 20.]

Our focus in this study will center just on the use of מַלְאָךְ[32] to specify an agent who is obviously beyond human and connected to God in some manner. This will include the special sub-category of מַלְאַךְ יְהוָה (ὁ ἄγγελος τοῦ θεοῦ), angel of the Lord,[33] with its special challenges for identification.[34] Some 60 plus occurrenc-

[32]מַלְאָךְ has several shades of meaning as outlined in Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, M. E. J. Richardson, and Johann Jakob Stamm. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. (Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1999), 585ff.

1. Human messenger generally (e.g., Ezek. 23:40);
2. Messengers of God,
   a) prophets (e.g., Isa. 44:26),
   b) priests (e.g., Mal. 2:7),
   c) cosmic (e.g., the wind, Ps. 104:4);

3. Heavenly messengers,
a) angel (e.g., Gen 48:16)
b) in general (e.g., Gen 28:12)
c) in particular (e.g., Mal. 3:1)
d) the angel of God (of Yahweh)
מַלְאַךְ אֱלֹ, Gen. 21:17; 1 Sam. 29:9
מַלְאַךְ אֱל, Gen. 31:11; Exod. 14:19; Jud. 6:20 etc.
מ י, Gen. 6:7, 9-11, 22:11, 15 etc.

[33]"**angel of the Lord** (or angel of Yahweh), a figure appearing frequently in the OT (Gen. 16:7-13; 22:11; Exod. 3:2; Num. 22:22; Judg. 13:3; Zech. 1:11; 3:1, to cite only a few references) and also in the NT (Luke 2:9-15). References to this figure usually occur when something dramatic and meaningful is about to happen, generally with serious consequences, either good or ill, for God's people. The angel of the Lord seems to have been understood as distinct from other angels and, in the earlier OT literature, appears to be almost another designation for God. In most cases, however, the angel of the Lord served primarily as a messenger from God to the people to prepare the way for God's appearance and activity. In some passages, the term probably only designates 'an' angel of God (e.g., 1 Kings 19:4-8)." [Paul J. Achtemeier, Harper & Row and Society of Biblical Literature, *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 30.'

[34]"**ÁNGEL DE JEHOVÁ**. Todo ángel que Dios envía a ejecutar sus órdenes pudiera ser llamado el ángel del Señor (2 S. 24:16; 1 R. 19:5, 7). Pero el misterioso ser llamado el Ángel de Jehová es de un orden totalmente distinto. Es a la vez distinto y uno con Dios, siendo seme jante a Él. Habla como siendo el mismo Dios y su persona parece confundirse con la de Dios (Gn. 16:7, 10; 18:10, 13–14, 33; 22:11–12, 15–16; 31:11, 13; Éx. 3:2, 4; Jos. 5:13–15; 6:2; Jue. 6:12–22; 13:13–22; Zac. 1:10–13; 3:1–2).

"El ángel de Jehová revela la faz de Dios (Gn. 32:30); el nombre de Jehová está en él (Éx. 23:21), y su presencia equivale a la presencia divina (Éx. 32:34; 33:14; Is. 63:9). Su nombre es «admirable» (Jue. 13:18), que se vuelve a encontrar en la profecía de Is. 9:6 aplicada al Mesías: «Y se llamará su nombre: Admirable» (el mismo término también en hebreo).

"De todo ello se puede llegar a la conclusión de que el Ángel de Jehová es una verdadera teofanía (véase), o aparición de Dios. Jehová mismo es invisible, y nadie lo ha podido ver jamás (Éx. 33:20; Jn. 1:18 ; 1 Ti. 6:16). Es el Hijo Unigénito quien lo ha manifestado, y ello no solamente por Su encarnación en el NT, sino ya en el AT por Sus apariciones como el Ángel de Jehová. Así se armonizan los textos en base de los cuales por una parte nadie puede ver ni ha visto jamás a Dios, y por otra parte aquellos textos en base de los cuales creyentes del AT tuvieron un encuentro real

es of just this concept are expressed by a variety of Hebrew terms and surface in the OT, but only two instances surface in the NT (Lk. 1:11; 2:9-15, ἄγγελος κυρίου) in connection to the announcement of the impending birth of John and Jesus. Several nuances of meaning for the Hebrew term will surface for מַלְאָךְ.[35]

The heavenly מַלְאָךְ are not typically described in the OT in terms of outward appearance.[36] The biblical focus is on their activities both in heaven and on earth. They reflect the divine glory or presence of God as Jacob realized from his dream of the ladder going up to heaven and these beings going up and down it (Gen. 28:12-17). Thus to be in the presence of a heavenly מַלְאָךְ is to stand in God's presence. Very typically, however, their duty is to convey some particular message from God either to individuals or to the assembled people of God. Zechariah discovered this through an angellic appearance to him as recorded in Zech. 1:9 and 5:5.

But not only do מַלְאָךְ deliver messages from God to individuals and to the people of God, they also fulfill other roles as well, such as taking care of Elijah (1 Kings 19:4-8); protecting His covenant people from harm (Psalm 91:11-12); striking down the enemies of God's people in behalf of King Hezekiah (2 Kings 19:35) etc.[37]

Angel of the Lord. The phrases מַלְאַךְ אֱלֹ, (Gen. 21:17; 1 Sam. 29:9), מַלְאָךְ אֱלֹ, (Gen. 31:11; Exod. 14:19; Jud. 6:20 etc.), מַ יי, (Gen. 6:7, 9-11, 22:11, 15 etc.) surface in a number of texts and raises the issue of the connection between the spirit being and God Himself. Sometimes the distinction between the angel and God Himself is virtually non-existent, but at other times they seem to be two distinct personalities.

What can be concluded from the Old Testament about angels? Most importantly, no systematic perspective is possible to be derived from the Hebrew Bible. The perspective at best can only be described as a 'miscellaneous' view. They are a part of a 'heavenly council' around God as the royal King, modeled in part from earthly experience with middle eastern mon-

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con Dios (Gn. 32:30; Éx. 24:9; cp. Hch. 7:38; fue el Ángel que se apareció a Moisés, etc.).

"Citemos también al profeta Zacarías (Zac. 3:1–5), donde el Ángel de Jehová interviene como lo hace Cristo nuestro Abogado, para defender a Josué, que estaba siendo acusado por Satanás ante Dios (cp. Ap. 12:10; 1 Jn. 2:1–2). Es indudablemente también el «ángel fuerte» de Apocalipsis (Ap. 10:1–3)."

[Samuel Vila Ventura, *Nuevo Diccionario Biblico Ilustrado* (TERRASSA (Barcelona): Editorial CLIE, 1985), 58–60.]

[35]"**angel** (Gk. angelos, 'messenger'), a spiritual being, subordinate to God, who serves at God's command and pleasure to deliver his messages, help his people, and punish his enemies. In the OT, angels appear in the stories of the patriarchs (e.g., Gen. 16:7-14; 19:1-22; 22:11, 15-18; 28:12; 31:11-13; 32:1-2) and elsewhere (e.g., Exod. 3:2; 23:20-23; 33:2; Judg. 13:3-5; 1 Kings 19:5-7; 2 Kings 19:35; Isa. 37:36; Pss. 34:7; 35:5-6; 91:11). There is some ambiguity, however, about what form these messengers take, exactly what type of beings they are, and just what their relation to God is, especially in the earlier materials. Since God frequently confronts humans directly in the OT texts, the appearance of angels is somewhat sporadic." [Paul J. Achtemeier, Harper & Row and Society of Biblical Literature, *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 30.]

[36]A few instances signal some sort of masculine outward appearance and identity:

Gen. 19:1-16. angels (vv. 1, 15 הַמַּלְאָכִים) = men (vv. 5, 10, 12, הָאֲנָשִׁים)

Num. 22:31 angel of the Lord (אֶת־מַלְאַךְ יְהוָה) with a sword in his hand

Judges 13:6. A 'man of God' with an appearance of 'an angel of God' promised Sampson's mother a son: מַלְאַךְ הָאֱלֹהִים נוֹרָא מְאֹד וּמַרְאֵהוּ כְּמַרְאֵה, and his appearance was like that of an angel of God, most awe-inspiring;

Judges 13:15-22. Manoah, Sampson's father, asked the angel what his name was but the angel refused to give it to him, and the angel ascended up to heaven in the flames of the burnt offering that Manoah offered up.

1 Sam. 29:9. Achish compares David's blamelessness to that of an angel of God.

2 Sam. 14:20. David's wisdom was compared to that of an angel of God.

2 Sam. 24:16-17. the angel possesses a hand.

1 Chron. 21:15. David saw an angel stanging "between earth and heaven" with a sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem to destroy it. In v. 30, David is afraid of the 'sword of the angel of the Lord.'

Hosea 12:4. Jacob wrestled with an angel.

Zech. 1:8: In the night I saw a man riding on a red horse! He was standing among the myrtle trees in the glen; and behind him were red, sorrel, and white horses.

[37]"In addition to the various roles that the angelic beings play as a group, there are many texts which describe the actions of a single angelic figure. Almost always in these instances the term malʾāk ('messenger') or malʾāk yhwh/ (hā) ʾĕlōhîm ('messenger of Yahweh/God') is used. The term 'messenger' should not be construed too narrowly, however, for these divine beings carry out a variety of tasks. They do announce births (of Ishmael, Gen 16:11–12; Isaac, Gen 18:9–15; Samson, Judg 13:3–5), give reassurances (to Jacob, Gen 31:11–13), commission persons to tasks (Moses, Exod 3:2; Gideon, Judg 6:11–24), and communicate God's word to prophets (Elijah, 2 Kgs 1:3, 15; a man of God, 1 Kgs 13:18; cf. 1 Kgs 22:19–22; Isaiah 6; Jer 23:18, 23). But the angel may also intervene at crucial moments to change or guide a person's actions (Hagar, Gen 16:9; Abraham, Gen 22:11–12; Balaam, Num 22:31–35; the people of Israel, Judg 2:1–5) and may communicate divine promises or reveal the future in the course of such intervention. In addition angels may be the agents of protection for individuals or for Israel as a whole (Gen 24:7, 40; 48:16; Exod 14:19–20; 23:20, 23; 32:34; Num 20:16; 1 Kgs 19:5–8; 2 Kgs 19:35 = Isa 37:36; Pss 34:8—Eng 34:7; 91:11). But they may also be Yahweh's agents for punishment (Genesis 19; Num 22:33; 2 Samuel 24 = 1 Chronicles 21; Pss 35:5–6; 78:49)." [Carol A. Newsom, "Angels: Old Testament," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 249–250.]

archs.[38] The heavenly world itself is conceived largely in terms of a royal court with attendants etc. around God. The most detailed expression of this is in 1 Kings 22:19-22. Interestingly, however, human beings are never included in this entourage of beings around God in heaven. The concept of an afterlife for humans will not emerge until the intertestamental era in Judaism.

Another important image is that angels make up a vast heavenly army who do battle in God's behalf, as Deut. 33:2 suggests. On occasion they do battle against human armies[39] who oppose either God's people, or His prophets such as Elisha as in 2 Kings 6:17.[40]

The most prominent role for spirit beings from heaven is to convey messages from God to individuals and to His people. It is in this role that they take on the most well defined function in the OT as the מַלְאָךְ / ἄγγελος of God.

A wide variety of terminology is used in the OT in reference to spirit beings in heaven, but the term 'angel' applies only to some of the terms and then only in a basic manner rather than in a fully developed view. No depiction of their appearance is ever given beyond them always being masculine in their appearance. Sometimes humans mistake them for young men.[41]

It is during the exilic and postexilic eras that Jewish people became interested -- and even fascinated -- with the ideas of angels. Two prophets from this period of time reflect this growing interest in angels: Ezekiel[42]

[38]"In Israel, as in the ANE in general, the underlying conception of the heavenly world was that of a royal court. Yahweh was envisioned as a king, and at his service were divine beings who served as counselors, political subordinates, warriors, and general agents. These divine beings were often referred to as a collective group (Gen 28:12; 33:1–2; Pss 29:1; 89:6–9) and were understood to constitute a council ('the council of El,' ʿădat ʾēl, Ps 82:1; 'the conclave of Yahweh/Eloah,' sôd yhwh, Jer 23:18; sôd ʾĕlôah, Job 15:8), 'the conclave/assembly of the holy ones' (sôd/qāhāl qĕdōšîm, Ps 89:6, 9). Similar expressions occur in ANE sources (Phoen: mpḫrt ʾil gbl qdšm; Ug: pḫr ʾilm, pḫr bn ʾilm, dr ʾil, etc.; Akk: puḫur ilāni; see Mullen 1980). The most extensive description of the council and its tasks in the OT is found in 1 Kgs 22:19–22. There, the prophet Micaiah ben Imlah sees the enthroned Yahweh with 'all the host of heaven standing about him on his right and on his left.' When Yahweh poses a question to the council, there is general discussion ('and one said one thing and another said another'), until a specific proposal emerges ('then a spirit came forth and stood before Yahweh and said …'). Prophets might stand in the council of Yahweh to receive a word (Jer 23:18, 22; Isaiah 6). The council was also a place of accusation and judgment (Psalm 82). Perhaps because of their privileged place in the divine council, angels were considered to be paragons of knowledge and discernment (2 Sam 14:17, 29; 19:28)." [Carol A. Newsom, "Angels: Old Testament," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 249.]

[39]Yet one should note carefully that on none of these occasions do the heavenly soldiers engage directly in physical combat with human soldiers. Their presence symbolizes the enormous power of God.

[40]"In Deut 33:2, Yahweh is said to be accompanied by ten thousand holy ones as he advances from the southland (cf. the reference in Ps 68:18 to the many thousands of chariots with Yahweh at Sinai). These are undoubtedly the angelic armies that are referred to in the common divine title Yahweh of Hosts. In one of the rare instances in which an individual angelic being with a clearly defined office is mentioned, Joshua encounters a mysterious figure with a drawn sword who identifies himself as 'the commander of the army of Yahweh' (śār ṣābaʾ yhwh, Josh 5:14). When the prophet Elisha was besieged, he was given protection by 'horses and chariotry of fire,' invisible to all whose eyes were not opened by Yahweh (2 Kgs 6:17)." [Carol A. Newsom, "Angels: Old Testament," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 249.]

[41]"In contrast to later writings, these texts exhibit almost no interest in the heavenly messengers themselves. They are not individuated in any way. They do not have personal names or definite offices (though see Josh 5:14). It is generally argued that the term *malʾāk yhwh* should not be translated 'the messenger of Yahweh,' as though referring to a particular divine being, but simply 'a messenger of Yahweh' (Hirth 1975: 25–31). Either translation is grammatically possible. The messengers are not described (see Judg 13:6 for a partial exception) and are often not even recognized. When human beings do realize the identity of the one who speaks with them, the reaction varies. In some narratives no reaction at all is described (e.g., Genesis 19), while in others the reaction is reverence (Josh 5:14–15) or fear (Judg 13:21). In short, these texts show no speculative interest in the divine messenger whatever. The messenger is of significance solely for the sake of the message (Westermann 1985: 244)." [Carol A. Newsom, "Angels: Old Testament," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 250.]

[42]"Ezekiel's vision of the coming destruction of Jerusalem (Ezekiel 8–11) begins with the appearance of an angelic being who is described in terms derived from the account of the glory of Yahweh (kābôd yhwh) in 1:27. The destruction of Jerusalem is carried out at Yahweh's command by other angelic figures described only as six armed men (9:2). An angelic scribe ('a man clothed in linen who had a writing case at his side,' 9:3) marks those who are to be spared. Ezekiel's vision of the angelic destroyers provides a graphic reassurance that the destruction, terrible as it is, remains under the direct control of the God of Israel and does not simply represent the triumph of the Babylonians (cf. 2 Baruch 6–8, written after the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans). Corresponding to Ezekiel's vision of the destruction of Jerusalem is his vision of the temple as it is to be rebuilt (Ezekiel 40–48). Ezekiel is guided through the structure by an angel ('a man whose appearance was like that of bronze,' 40:3) who measures the various structures for Ezekiel and explains the purposes of some of them (e.g., 42:13–14).

"The cherubim or living creatures (*kĕrûbîm; ḥayyôt)* described in Ezekiel 1 and 10 are not, properly speaking, angels. The description in Ezekiel and the graphic depictions of similar figures from the ANE indicate that they were winged creatures combining human and animal features. Indeed, they may be described as the animals of the heavenly world. Unlike the 'messengers' or the 'sons of God,' cherubim have only limited functions. They serve as watchdog-like guardians (Gen 3:24; Ezek 28:14), as winged mounts (2 Sam 22:1; Ps 18:11—Eng 18:10), and as bearers of the throne chariot (Pss 80:1; 99:1; Isa 37:16; Ezekiel 1; 10). Perhaps because of their protective role, they were frequently used as decorative motifs in temples and on cultic furnishings (Exod 25:18–20;

and Zechariah.[43] Although later identified as a category of angels, the better label for the *kĕrûbîm* (כְּרוּבִים)[44] and *śārāp* (שְׂרָף)[45] is spirit beings rather than angels. Both their limited role and depiction in the limited OT references portray them with more animal like qualities than human qualities.

26:31; 1 Sam 4:4; 1 Kgs 6:23–36). Similarly, the seraphim of Isaiah 6 are not angels but winged serpentine figures associated with the iconography of the Yahwistic cult (Isa 14:29; 30:6; cf. Num 21:6–9; 2 Kgs 18:4). Isaiah has partially assimilated them to the role of members of the divine council. Later tradition interpreted both seraphim and cherubim as classes of angels." [Carol A. Newsom, "Angels: Old Testament," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 251.]

[43]"Faced with serious issues of social restructuring and institutional restoration, Zechariah, one of the early postexilic prophets, articulated his message largely in terms of angelic visions. According to Petersen (Haggai and Zechariah 1–8 OTL, 115–16), 'rather than proposing, as had Haggai, that the temple needed to be rebuilt, or that Zerubbabel was to be anointed as king, Zechariah experienced Yahweh's angelic agents and discerned how the new religious and social order was to be initiated. What Zechariah reports in these visions is initial restoration within the cosmic order … Yahweh's steeds and angelic host are busy with the work of creating a new social and religious structure that will affect the entire world, not just Judah.' Zechariah's message is made particularly authoritative through his claim that he is not only announcing what should be done on earth but what is already being done in heaven and will soon become evident on earth.

"Zechariah concretizes the ancient notion of the army of Yahweh by describing the horses, riders, and chariots which roam the earth, returning to report to the angel of Yahweh and to present themselves before Yahweh (Zech 1:7–17; 6:1–8). The chariots are identified with the four winds (Zech 6:5; cf. Ps 104:4). It appears that in Zechariah's visions the figure identified as the *mal'āk yhwh* has become a distinct and powerful figure in the heavenly world. He has several functions in the visions: guide and interpreter for Zechariah (Zechariah 1–6 passim); intercessor for Israel, who receives words of consolation that he commands Zechariah to proclaim (1:12–17; cf. Isa 40:1–9); presider and judge in the divine council (Zechariah 3); and commander of the angelic patrols (Zech 1:11; 6:7)."

[Carol A. Newsom, "Angels: Old Testament," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 251.]

[44]"**CHERUBIM** [Heb *kĕrûbîm* (כְּרוּבִים)]. The terms 'cherub' (sing.) and 'cherubim' (pl.) occur over 90 times in the Hebrew Bible (and only once in the NT, in Heb 9:5) in reference to fanciful composite beings. Although all of these references are in sacral contexts, there is no uniformity as to the nature of the strange creatures involved except for the fact that they are all winged beings. From a graphic perspective, the biblical description of cherubim can be divided into two major groups: those that were two-dimensional, as they appeared woven into textiles, or in low relief; and those that were free-standing either as modeled, three-dimensional forms or as living, moving creatures.

"The two-dimensional or low-relief images of cherubim were those found in the sacred structure of ancient Israel. In the tabernacle, the inner curtains and the veil that closed off the inner sanctum or holy of holies were adorned with cherubim (Exod 26:1, 31; 36:8, 35). These decorated fabrics, made of a woolen-linen mixture and crafted in special (*ḥšēb*) workmanship, were part of the innermost and holiest part of the tabernacle complex. The Jerusalem temple, which was constructed of walls and not hangings, featured carved cherubim, covered with gold, on the corresponding elements: the sanctuary walls (1 Kgs 6:29; cf. 2 Chr 3:7 and Ezek 41:18–20) and on the doors separating the internal chambers (1 Kgs 7:32, 35; cf. Ezek 41:25). In addition, the temple had cherubim carved into panels that formed the base and part of the top of the stands for the lavers (1 Kgs 7:28, 36).

"Three-dimensional cherubim were also part of the holiest elements of both tabernacle and temple. Two golden cherubim with wings extended were part of the covering of the ark, within the holy of holies of the tabernacle (Exod 25:18–22; 37:7–9). In the Jerusalem temple, two enormous olivewood cherubim, overlaid with gold, virtually filled the innermost chamber (1 Kgs 6:23–28) as a covering for the ark (1 Kgs 8:6–7). In both these instances, the cherubim apparently constituted a resting place, or throne, for God's invisible presence or glory (e.g., 2 Kgs 19:15 = Isa 32:16; 1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam 6:2). As part of the cultic furniture for God in the divine dwelling place on earth (see Haran 1978: 254–59), these cherubim are to be related to figures attested in several biblical texts which envisage God riding upon living composite beasts (e.g., Ps 18:10 = 2 Sam 22:11) or in which God's glory rests upon the creatures (Ezekiel 10). Finally, the close connection between God and cherubim is present in their appearance as guardians of the garden of Eden (Gen 3:24).

"The many variations of cherubim represented in the Bible — examples with one or more faces; with human, leonine, bovine, or aquiline faces; with two or four legs — correspond to various forms of composite beasts depicted in ANE art, particularly the art of Assyria (TWAT 4: 330–34). In ancient Israel and its contemporary world, cherubim were characterized by mobility, since they all had wings. By virtue of their combining features of different creatures or having more of such features than real animals or persons, they were unnatural. These characteristics made them apt symbols for divine presence, since deities moved where humans could not and were something other than either animals or humans. The cherubim of the Bible are hardly the round-faced infant cherubim known in Western art."

[Carol Meyers, "Cherubim," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 899–900.

[45]"**Seraphim** (sair′uh-fim), fiery beings of supernatural origin. Seraphim appear in Isaiah's vision of God where they are attendants or guardians before the divine throne, analogous to the cherubim (Isa. 6:1-7). They praise God, calling 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts,' and one touches Isaiah's lips with a hot coal from the altar, cleansing him from sin. Seraphim have six wings. Two cover their faces, two cover their feet (a euphemism for genitals), and they fly with the remaining two. The etymology of the Hebrew word seraphim (singular: saraph) suggests a translation of 'fiery ones' and probably stems from the fiery imagery often associated with the Presence of God (cf. Ezek. 1:27). 'Flying saraphs' (RSV: 'serpent') appear in Isa. 14:29 and 30:6 together with 'adders' and 'vipers.' These examples call to mind the use of saraph to describe the 'fiery serpents' that afflicted Israel in the wilderness (Num. 21:6-9; Deut. 8:15). This suggests a serpentine form for the seraphim. If this association is correct, seraphim serve not only as guardians of the divine throne, but also as emissaries of divine judgment." [Paul J. Achtemeier, Harper & Row and Society of Biblical Literature, *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 927.]

It is the extracanonical literature particularly of apocalyptic Judaism from the end of the OT era through the first Christian century where the references to angels and other worldly creatures becomes extensive in Jewish writings. This we will consider below under point II.

One important note about the accuser mentioned in Zech. 3:1-2, Job 1-2, 1 Chron. 21:1.[46] In none of these texts is the accuser presented as being in opposition to God, but as an accepted member of the heavenly council of God. The accuser never challenges God; only in Job does he question the sincerity of Job's commitment to God -- a judgment which God does not accept. Most insightful is the parallel passage of 2 Sam. 24:1 to 1 Chron. 21:1:

> 1 Chron. 21:1. Καὶ ἔστη διάβολος ἐν τῷ Ισραηλ καὶ ἐπέσεισεν τὸν Δαυιδ τοῦ ἀριθμῆσαι τὸν Ισραηλ.†
>
> Satan stood up against Israel, and incited David to count the people of Israel.
>
> 2 Sam. 24:1. Καὶ προσέθετο ὀργὴ κυρίου ἐκκαῆναι ἐν Ισραηλ, καὶ ἐπέσεισεν τὸν Δαυιδ ἐν αὐτοῖς λέγων Βάδιζε ἀρίθμησον τὸν Ισραηλ καὶ τὸν Ιουδα.
>
> Again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he incited David against them, saying, "Go, count the people of Israel and Judah."

Thus the chronicler who was using the Samuel text heavily struggled, with the idea of God's anger against David -- a common pattern in 1-2 Chronicles to never present the southern kings in a bad light -- and thus he diminished the intensity of God's displeasure with David by attributing God's anger to an angelic accuser in the heavenly council of God rather than to God Himself as does the deuteronomic historian -- something commonly found in this primary history of Israel inside the OT.[47]

B. Greek New Testament

Inside the New Testament, **the primary word for angels is ἄγγελος,[48] although a few other terms surface.** One should note that the projection of angels inside the NT continues the general patterns found in the OT and doesn't make any significant deviation from the OT. But no particular fascination with angels surfaces inside the NT and they are only mentioned incidentally.[49] They surface in very limited places in the NT: Jesus' birth and resurrection; the beginning of the church in Acts; and the final consummation of history with Christ's return. Between these pivotal moments both in Christ's life and for Christianity itself, mention of angels does not surface hardly at all in the NT.

As will be noted below, much illumination about angels from both the OT and the NT can be gained in comparison of the biblical texts to the curiosity and fascination with angels both in the non-canonical Jewish and later Christian materials which take the ideas far beyond the Bible.

Beyond the core term of ἄγγελος, other depictions surface inside the NT. At the empty tomb, different depictions of the angel greeting the women are given:

> **Mark 16:5. νεανίσκον** καθήμενον ἐν τοῖς δεξιοῖς περιβεβλημένον στολὴν λευκήν, **a young man**, dressed in a white robe on the right side.

[46]"The angelic figure of the *śāṭān* in Zech 3:1–2 is not to be understood as the cosmic enemy of God of later angelology. The word is a common noun ('opponent, accuser') and is related to the verb *śāṭan*, 'to accuse.' Both noun and verb can be used of human beings as well as of angelic ones (Num 22:22; 1 Sam 29:4; Zech 3:1; Ps 109:4). Here one should translate, 'He showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the *malʾāk yhwh*, and the accuser was standing at his right hand to accuse him.' *The accuser is simply a member of the divine council who has brought to judgment a high priest who is cultically impure*. The picture is very close to that of Job 1–2. 'At the time when the sons of God came to present themselves before Yahweh, the śāṭān also came among them' (1:6; see also 2:1). There, too, the *śāṭān* raises questions about a person whom he suspects of self-interested piety. The only other contemporary text which mentions this figure is 1 Chr 21:1. A comparison with the parallel text, 2 Sam 24:1, shows that 'the anger of Yahweh' in 2 Samuel has been concretized by the Chronicler as the action of a member of the divine council. While the *śāṭān* is not depicted as an enemy of God in any of these texts, the fact that in Zechariah and Job his view is repudiated by God and *malʾāk yhwh* indicates the beginning of the development of the *śāṭān* as a sinister figure (see Petersen (Hagai and Zechariah 1–8 OTL, 189–90). The notion of an angel who has particular responsibility for an individual, guiding and interceding on behalf of that person, is developed in Job 33:23–26 (cf. 5:1; 16:19). A close parallel to this conception is the 'personal god' of Mesopotamian religion (Jacobsen 1976: 147–64)." [Carol A. Newsom, "Angels: Old Testament," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 251.]

[47]The most glaring example of this toning down of the faults of David, Solomon, and the kings of the southern kingdom is the complete ignoring of the Bathsheba affair of David by the chronicler while copying virtually word for word the deuteronomic account of David both before and after the Bathsheba section. Bathsheba is never mentioned in Chronicles.

[48]The use of ἄγγελος in the NT for angel is natural and to be expected for two basic reasons. 1) It is the favorite LXX word for the Hebrew מַלְאָךְ as messenger, either human or divine. 2) This LXX tendency had its roots in the secular Greek double use of ἄγγελος for messenger, both human and divine.

[49]"The NT conception of angels (Gk *aggeloi*) is derived from that of the OT and Judaism and does not make any important modifications or innovations of its own (see above). The NT does not provide a systematic discussion of angels. Rather, angels are incidental characters in the story of redemption. Consequently references to them are concentrated in the accounts of Jesus' birth and resurrection in the Synoptic Gospels, the account of the founding of the Church in Acts, and the account of the final consummation in Revelation." [Duane F. Watson, "Angels: New Testament," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 253.]

Matthew 28:2-3. ἄγγελος γὰρ κυρίου καταβὰς ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ προσελθὼν ἀπεκύλισεν τὸν λίθον καὶ ἐκάθητο ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ. 3 ἦν δὲ ἡ εἰδέα αὐτοῦ ὡς ἀστραπὴ καὶ τὸ ἔνδυμα αὐτοῦ λευκὸν ὡς χιών. for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow.

Luke 24:4b. ἰδοὺ ἄνδρες δύο ἐπέστησαν αὐταῖς ἐν ἐσθῆτι ἀστραπτούσῃ. suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them

John 20:12. δύο ἀγγέλους ἐν λευκοῖς καθεζομένους, two angels in white,

What Matthew and John call ἄγγελος, angel, Mark calls νεανίσκον, young man, and Luke calls ἄνδρες, men. All four, however, have them dressed in white robes. This especially seems to be the pattern that when ἄγγελος is replaced by either νεανίσκος or ἀνῆρ that the noun will be qualified by referring to a white robe in some way or another.[50]

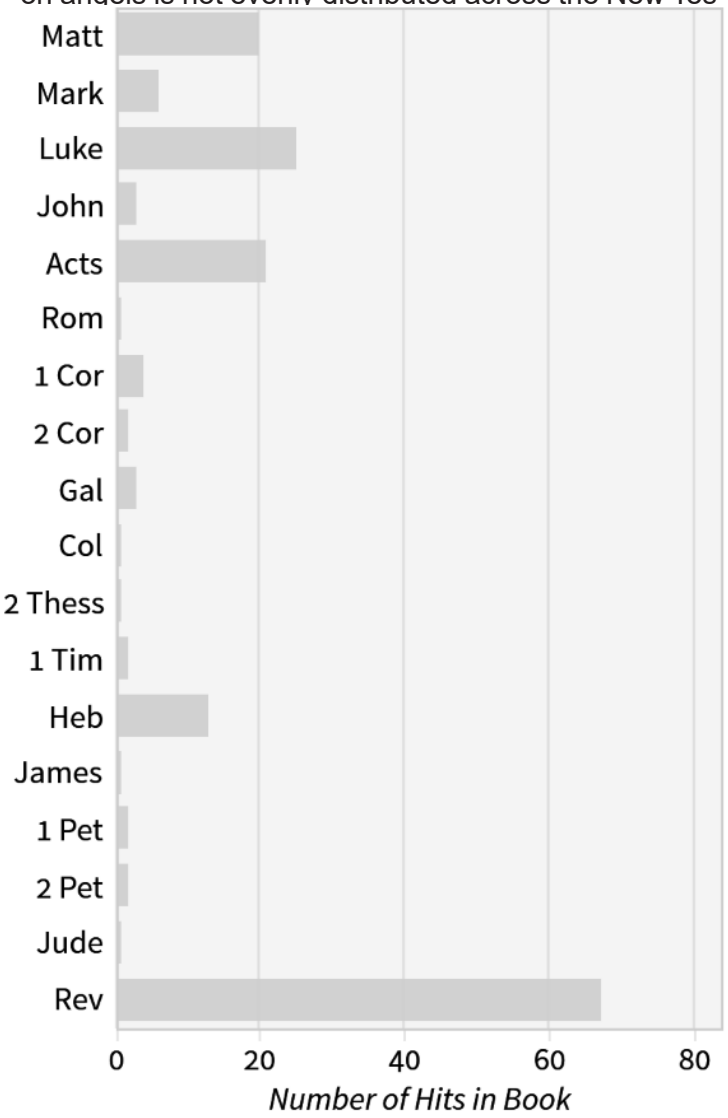
No uniform expression exists in the NT that exclusively refers to the dress of angels. Most of the terms used can also be used in regard to wealthy individuals wearing luxurious clothes over against those that peasants normally wore.[51]

In Acts, Luke continues the pattern of using ἀνήρ to refer to an ἄγγελος in 1:10, **ἄνδρες δύο** παρειστήκεισαν αὐτοῖς ἐν ἐσθήσεσιν λευκαῖς, **two men** in white robes stood by them and in 10:30, **ἀνὴρ** ἔστη ἐνώπιόν μου ἐν ἐσθῆτι λαμπρᾷ, **a man** was standing before me in dazzling clothes. Yet Luke prefers ἄγγελος for referencing angels: Luke 1:11, 13, 18, 19, 26, 34, 35, 38; 2:9, 10, 13, 15, 21; 4:10; 9:26: 12:8, 9; 15:10; 16:22; 22:43; 24:23; Acts 5:19; 6:15; 7:30, 35, 38; 53; 8:26; 10:3, 7, 22; 11:13; 12:7, 8; 10, 11; 15, 23; 23:8, 9; 27:23.

The role of angels as depicted inside the NT. As the dominate word for angels ἄγγελος defines, the primary role of angels in the NT is to carry a message from God to individuals and groups of God's people on earth. Every other role is secondary to this central responsibility. Out of the total 175 uses of ἄγγελος inside

the NT, only six of them refer to human messengers.[52] The remainder allude to 'a transcendent power' who carries a divine message from heaven to earth in behalf of God. Inside the various documents of the Greek New Testament different writers put differing emphasis upon angels as divine messengers.

As the chart below indicates, the emphasis on angels is not evenly distributed across the New Tes-



[50]The white robe made be depicted in different ways:

περιβεβλημένον **στολὴν λευκήν,** clothed in a white robe (Mk. 16:5)

ἐν **λευκοῖς** καθεζομένους, sitting in white (Jhn 20:12)

παρειστήκεισαν αὐτοῖς ἐν **ἐσθήσεσιν λευκαῖς,** stood by them in white robes (Acts 1:10)

ἐν **ἐσθῆτι ἀστραπτούσῃ**, in dazzling clothes, (Lk. 24:4)

ἐν **ἐσθῆτι λαμπρᾷ**, in dazzling clothes (Acts 10:30)

[51]The Greek NT has an amazingly diverse way of referring to clothes as topics ***48.1-8 (Activities Involving Cloth)*** and ***49.1-29 (Activities Involving Clothing and Adorning)*** reflect in the Louw, Johannes P., and Eugene Albert Nida. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*. New York: United Bible Societies, 1996.

[52]"The meaning of human messenger plays only a very small role in the NT. The scouts sent out by Joshua to Jericho in Jm. 2:25, the men sent by John to Jesus in Lk. 7:24 and by Jesus to the Samaritan village in Lk. 9:52, are the only cases in which men sent by other men are called ἄγγελοι in the NT." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:83.]

tament: Mt, 20x; Mk 6x; Lk 25x; Jn 3x; Acts 21x; Rom 1x; 1 Cor 4x; 2 Cor 2x; Gal 3x; Col 1x; 2 Thess 1x; 1 Tim 2x; Heb 13x; Ja 1x; 1 Pet 2x; 2 Pet 2x; Jude 1x; Rev 67x.

In the four gospels the story of Jesus is presented with angels playing a role overwhelmingly in connection to the birth especially (Mt. 1:20, 24; 2:13, 19; Lk. 1:11, 13, 18, 19, 26, 30, 34, 35, 38; 2:9, 10, 13, 15; 21) and resurrection of Jesus. In Jesus' temptation, the devil alludes to the angels of God (Mt. 4:6; Lk. 4:10). Mk. 1:13 indicates that angels assisted Jesus during His temptation, while Mt. 4:11 indicates that they helped Jesus after the devil had departed from tempting Jesus. Luke makes no mention of this role of angels in connection to Jesus' temptation.

In Jesus' teaching, the emphasis falls upon angels being present on judgment day as well as accompanying Christ in His return to earth: Mt. 13:39, 41, 49; 16:27; 24:31, 36; 25:31; Mk. 8:38; 13:27, 32; Lk. 12:8, 9.

Also angels play a role in the resurrection of Jesus: Mt. 28:2, 5; :Lk. 24:23; Jn. 20:12.

Finally, a few isolated references allude to other aspects of angels. Angels stand before God (Mt. 18:10). They do not marry (Mt. 22:30; Mk. 12:25). They stood ready to defend Jesus if called upon (Mt. 26:53). They rejoice over the repentance of a sinner (Lk. 15:10). They carried the dead Lazarus to Abraham's side (Lk. 16:22). They do not die (Lk. 20:36). They assisted Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (Lk. 22:43). A Jewish crowd hearing God answer Jesus' prayer mistook God's voice for angels (Jn. 12:29).

In Acts, Luke portrays angels doing various things with 21 uses of ἄγγελος. An angel opens the prison door for the apostles (5:19). The presence of the Holy Spirit in Stephen caused him to look like an angel to the Sanhedrin (6:15). In his defense speech Stephen alludes to angels in his survey of the history of Israel: 7:30, 35, 38, 53. An angel gives Philip the command to meet the Ethiopian eunuch near Gaza: 8:26. Note that this is the structure of the OT 'angel of the Lord' rather than the usual reference to an angel. Angels played a role in convincing Peter to go to the Gentile Cornelius' home: 10:3, 7, 22; 11:13. An angel opens up the prison for Peter: 12:9, 10, 11, 15. An angel strikes down Herod: 12:23. The Sadducees don't believe in angels: 23:8, 9. An angel reassures Paul on the sea voyage to Rome: 27:23.

In Paul's writings, the role of angels hardly appears with references in only seven of the thirteen letters, and no more than 3 references in any of these seven letters.[53] In Rom. 8:38, angels can't separate believers from God's love. Paul had become a spectacle to angels: 1 Cor. 4:9. Believers are to 'judge' angels in final judgment: 1 Cor. 6:3. A woman while publicly praying or preaching should have her head covers for the sake of angels: 1 Cor. 11:10. Love is more important than being able to speak like angels: 1 Cor. 13:1. Satan disguises himself as an angel of light: 2 Cor. 11:14. Should an angel preach an alternative version of the Gospel he should be cursed of God: Ga. 1:8. The Torah was ordained through angels: Gal. 3:19. The Galatians welcomed Paul initially as an angel: Gal. 4:14. Some in Colossae are condemned because of worshiping angels: Col. 2:18.[54] Angels accompany Jesus on His return to earth: 2 Thess. 1:7. The resurrected Jesus was seen by angels: 1 Tim. 3:16. Paul swears an oath before God, Jesus Christ, and 'elect angels': 1 Tim. 5:21.

[53]"To this there corresponds a tendency, particularly evident in Paul, to emphasize the comparative unimportance of angelology. The positive thought of the angel as the messenger of God, as found in the Gospels and also in Acts, is relatively little used in his Epistles. For him the whole stress falls on the complete overshadowing of angels by the fact of Christ. Thus he comes to attach a lesser significance to what was originally thought to be the significant participation of angels in the giving of the Law (Gl. 3:19; cf. also Hb. 2:2; → 83), the point being that he measures this now by the all-normative action of Christ. Along the same lines, there arises from his union with Christ a consciousness of his own superiority to angels as an apostle. His mission, for example, is superior to any possible mission of an ἄγγελος ἐξ οὐρανοῦ (Gl. 1:8), and his charismatic endowment fulfilled in ἀγάπη is superior to all γλῶσσαι τῶν ἀγγέλων (1 C. 13:1). As the Son is more and other than all categories of angels, so is the believer with and by Him. What is allotted to him, ἐπιθυμοῦσιν ἄγγελοι παρακῦψαι (1 Pt. 1:12); it is to human flesh and blood rather than to angels that the redemptive act of Christ has reference (Hb. 2:16)." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:85.]

[54]"This depreciation of angels in comparison with the fact of Christ is strengthened in Paul by his opposition to Gnostic teaching concerning them. We can hardly take Col. 2:18 to mean anything other than that a cult of angels had to be contested in the early Pauline communities. In the world of syncretism the belief in angels seems to have been partly divorced from the belief in God with which it has been indissolubly bound and to which it had been subordinate in its first beginnings. The ἄγγελοι can be reckoned with the θρόνοι, κυριότητες, ἀρχαί and ἐξουσίαι (Col. 1:16). They can thus be regarded as among the forces which threaten man (R. 8:38). What are in view are the elemental or natural angels which were widely accepted in Judaism[73] and which might in isolation become ungodly and demonic powers. Also in view are the earlier pagan gods, which in part came to be identified with the guardian angels under which God placed the nations.[74]. Paul is not concerned to contest their reality. His only concern is to assert the full and definitive overcoming of their influence in Christ. What is to be consummated eschatologically, ὅταν καταργήσῃ πᾶσαν ἀρχὴν καὶ πᾶσαν ἐξουσίαν καὶ δύναμιν (1 C. 15:24), is, like all eschatology, the present possession of the believer as ἀπαρχή in his πέπεισμαι (R. 8:38)." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:86.]

In the General Letters, only Hebrews gives much emphasis to angels. No mention at all is made in the three letters of John. In the 13 references in Hebrew most surface in the comparison of Jesus to angels: 1:4, 5, 6, 7, 13, 14; 2:2, 5, 7, 9; 16. Angels are linked to heaven: 12:22. Showing hospitality might be entertaining angels: 13:2. In 1 Pet. 1:12, angels did not know fully what God was doing in Christ. Angels sit on God's right side: 1 Pet. 3:22. Sinning angels were cast into Hell: 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6. Angels do not slander God: 2 Pet. 2:11.

In Revelation with 67 uses, angels play a more prominent role than elsewhere inside the NT. This is almost 40% of the entire NT references to angels. Two distinct categories of usage surface in Revelation. But one must ALWAYS remember that the depiction here is through apocalyptic vision, and not as historical depiction.

First, there are the references beginning in 1:20 and continuing through chapters two and three (2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14). It begins with ἄγγελοι τῶν ἑπτὰ ἐκκλησιῶν εἰσιν, angels of the seven churches (1:20) and switches to the singular Τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν ------ ἐκκλησίας, to the angel of the church in ------, with the names of the seven cities inserted at this place in each reference.[55] In John's apocalyptic vision perspective the ἄγγελοι τῶν ἑπτὰ ἐκκλησιῶν, pictured as τῶν ἑπτὰ ἀστέρων οὓς εἶδες ἐπὶ τῆς δεξιᾶς μου, seven stars which you saw in my right hand, function apocalyptically as channels of communication to the churches and thus are so closely linked with the churches as to be practically synonymous with them. It is highly unlikely that John had in mind actual angels in these references.

Second, in the remaining 59 instances of ἄγγελος John does have in mind real angels whose place of origin and dwelling is heaven. The foundational role of an ἄγγελος as a messenger of God is set forth in 1:1 in which ἐσήμανεν ἀποστείλας διὰ τοῦ ἀγγέλου αὐτοῦ τῷ δούλῳ αὐτοῦ Ἰωάννῃ, He made it (Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) known by sending it through His angel to His servant John. Note the same emphasis on this angel in the Epilogue of 22:6-21 with three references in vv. 6, 8, 16. To be certain, this angel fulfills the role of *angelus interpres*, interpreting angel, who not only communicates the divine vision but provides understanding of the meaning of the vision to John. In particular, notice 17:1-18 (vv. 1, 7) and 21:9-22:5 (vv. 9, 15, 17; 1) in which one of the angels says to John, δεῦρο, δείξω σοι..., Come, I will show you..., with the sense of explaining the meaning of what John was seeing in his vision. To be sure this pattern grows out of OT visionary prophecy, e.g., Ezek 40-48; Zech. 1-6; Dan. 7-12. And it is expanded along somewhat similar lines with the dual emphasis on *deus interpres* and *angelus interpres* in both the Jewish apocalyptic writings of this time, as well as in some of the Greco-Roman religious traditions.[56]

[55]For a detailed discussion of this issue, see at cranfordville.com my BIC commentary volume 32, study 5, pages 15-19

[56]"One characteristic feature of apocalyptic literature is the presence of a stock literary figure who functions as a supernatural mediator, an *angelus interpres*, 'interpreting angel,' who begins to appear in late OT prophecy (Ezek 40–48; Zech 1–6; Dan 7–12). This *angelus interpres* may have developed by analogy to revelatory dialogs between God and a human recipient of revelation, i.e., passages in which God himself provides an interpretation of a vision (Jer 1:11–13; Job 38–42:6). In later Jewish apocalyptic the *deus interpres* occurs in the same compositions as an *angelus interpres* (Apoc. Abr. 20–31; 2 Apoc. Bar. 22:1–30:5; 39:1–43:3; 50:1–51:16 [thereafter the *angelus interpres* appears]; 4 Ezra 8:37–9:25; 13:20–56; cf. Reichelt, Angelus, 11). Thereafter, with increasing frequency in early Jewish apocalyptic, that which the seer sees and hears, whether on earth or heaven, is explained by the *angelus interpres* through a question-and-answer dialogue. Examples include Uriel and Enoch in 1 Enoch 21:5–10; Raphael and Enoch in 1 Enoch 22:1–14; 26:1–27:5; Raguel and Enoch in 1 Enoch 23:1–4; Michael and Enoch in 1 Enoch 24:1–25:7; Uriel and Ezra in 4 Ezra 4:1–5:13; 5:31–6:34; 7:1–8:19 (for p 16 further references and discussion, see M. Mach, Engelglaubens, 142–44; H. Reichelt, Angelus, 34–136).

"In Revelation, however, the first appearance of an *angelus interpres* in the narrative is in 17:1–18, while the second appearance of possibly the same angelic guide is described in 21:9–22:5 (in both passages the angel is identified as one of the bowl angels of Rev 16, though it remains unclear whether the author intends the audience to understand that the same bowl angel is involved in both passages). The presence of the definite article with this first occurrence of the term ἄγγελος suggests that John had a very specific angel in mind, one whom he assumed was known to his audience, the angel primarily responsible for mediating divine revelation from God through Christ to John. It is curious that the notion of a single angelic guide responsible for mediating divine revelation to John is mentioned only in the prologue (1:1–8) and epilogue (22:6–21) and is contradicted by the variety of supernatural revealers found throughout the book (the exalted Christ, 1:9–20; 4:1; one of the twenty-four elders, 7:13–17; the bowl angel[s], 17:1–18; 21:9–22:5).

Evidence for a conception of supernatural ἀγγελοι who mediate divine revelation is also found in the Greco-Roman world (Michl, "Engel I (heidnisch)," RAC 5:53–60). The belief in angels began to gain currency in Hellenistic pagan beliefs by the first century A.D. if not somewhat earlier. In the Greek magical papyri, when a god or goddess is summoned, he or she occasionally sends ἄγγελοι in his or her place. In PGM XIII.608–11: εἰσελεύσεται ἄγγελος, καὶ λέγε τῷ ἀγγέλῳ, … "A messenger will enter, and tell that messenger …" In a spell directed to Selene-Hekate, the goddess is asked to "send forth your angel from among those who assist you" (PGM VII.891), and again "Hear my words and send forth your angel" (PGM VII.898). An inscription from Lydia from A.D. 164/5 concludes: "So the god [Men] gave orders through an angel [ὁ θεὸς οὖν ἐκέλευσε δι' ἀγγέλου] that the cloak should be sold and his powers written upon a stele" (Sheppard, Talanta 12–13 [1980–81] 92–93). (2) PGM VII.833–36: "Also you [do I call upon] as many of you angels [ἄγγελοι] who are placed under his power. Hence, I call upon you all that you may come quickly in this night and reveal to me clearly and firmly, concerning those matters I de-

In most of the remaining 55 references the function of messenger dominates but by no means defines completely the roles of angels in John's vision. In 3:5, Jesus promises to confess the obedient believers on the day of judgment before God and His angels. They become the validating witnesses to Jesus' testimony about believers. Overwhelmingly in the remainder of Revelation, angels appear in small groups of 4, 7 etc. and single angels play some role in executing the judgment of God upon the earth against evil people: 5, 2, 11; 7:1, 2; 8:2, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13; 9:1, 13, 14, 15; 10:1, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10; 11:15; 12:7; 14:6, 8, 9, 10, 15, 17, 18, 19; 15:1, 6, 7, 8; 16:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 12, 17; 17:1; 18:1, 21; 20:1. This becomes the case in almost every instance when an angel or a group of angels come to the earth, or work upon the earth. Another role for angels in heaven is to offer chants of praise to God and to Christ: 5:11; 7:11. They can intercede before God in behalf of believers: 8:3, 4. They announce significant events taking place in heaven: 19:9, 17; 21:9. They guard access to heaven: 21:12, 15, 17.

This overview of Revelation highlights how John understood angels to function. They are a permanent part of the creatures whose home is heaven, and thus have certain functions there. When they leave heaven to come to earth, usually it is to bring the judgment of God down upon people on the earth. They will clearly play such a role in the final judgment of God in heaven in the same manner pictured elsewhere inside the New Testament. In his apocalyptic vision, John understood the role of angels and portrays that role clearly in Revelation.

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From this overview of both the Old and New Testaments, what can be concluded about angels for a biblical understanding?

Let me summarize by grouping the insights into the categories listed below.

1) How are they referenced?

In Hebrew Bible, the primary label מַלְאָךְ, *mal'āk*, with the sense of 'messenger' dominates. This is typically translated in the LXX as ἄγγελος. Consequently, the Greek writers of the New Testament use ἄγγελος as their primary label as well. Thus a continuity in the core idea of 'angel' exists between the Old and New Testaments. To be sure, development occurs between the Old and New Testaments, but the same core foundation exists for both.

Both in Hebrew and in Greek some additional labels are used to reference angels. Typically these emphasize a perceived spiritual nature of angels, such as בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים *bĕnê (hā) ĕlōhîm,* sons of the gods / sons of God, which the LXX translates as οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ, but is seldom translated literally into modern translations. They will use expressions such as 'heavenly beings' to express the idea.

One particular term is significant which designates an angel distinct from all the others in the OT, and the parallel LXX Greek term surfaces a couple of times in the NT as well. The מַלְאַךְ יְהוָה, the angel of Yahweh, -- sometimes referenced simply as the מ׳ י׳ -- is perceived in personal terms and generally as an expression of the very presence of God Himself.[57] The LXX translation ἄγγελος κυρίου comes over into the NT primary in connection to the birth narratives in Matthew and Luke: Mt. 1:20ff.; 2:13; Lk. 1:11ff.; 2:9, 13.

sire." (3) PGM VII.839–41: "Hence, I call upon you in this night, and may you reveal all things to me through dreams with accuracy, O angel ZIZAUBIO" (4) In PGM I.73–81, the practitioner is told that he will see a sign consisting of a star falling on his housetop that is actually an angel from whom he will learn the decisions of the gods (θεῶν δὲ βουλὰς). Other references to ἄγγελοι that appear to magicians include PGM I.172, 176; IV.3024–25, 3166; XII.118; XIII.73, 585. In PGM V. 108–14, two phrases are parallel constructions, "I am Moses your prophet [προφήτης]," and "I am the angel [ἄγγελος] of Pharaoh Osoronnophris." Here the terms "prophet" and "angel" are synonyms. There are inscriptions from Anatolia that link "highest Zeus and the divine angel [Διὶ υψίστῳ καὶ θείῳ ἀγγέλῳ]," or "highest Zeus and the good angel," or "highest Zeus and the divine heavenly angel" (see Mitchell, Anatolia 2:45–46). These texts distinguish two divine beings, Zeus and an associated divine being, which should perhaps be interpreted as the heavenly messenger of Zeus.

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 1–5,* vol. 52A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 15–16.]

[57]"The most important angelic form, most frequently mentioned, almost always attested in the OT in distinction from other angelic beings who occur only occasionally and collectively,14 and supremely sent by God with a commission, is the מַלְאַךְ יְהוָה the angel of Yahweh. The מ׳ י׳ is the one figure in the angelic world of the OT which is more personal, and sketched in more precise religious terms. To gain a clearer picture it is best to start with the more popular attestation rather than with passages which betray a theological tendency. In the faith of older Israel this angel is not a terrifying being, but a friendly and helpful messenger of God (2 S. 14:17, 20; 1 S. 29:9) in whom one may confide (2 S. 19:28). He smites the foes of Israel (2 K. 19:35), helps Elijah (1 K. 19:7), resists Balaam (Nu. 22:22), protects Israel at the Red Sea (Ex. 14:19), guides the people (Ex. 23:20), and fulfills many other commissions (Ju. 6:11 ff.; 13:3 ff.; 2 K. 1:3, 15). This older idea, which was certainly very popular, is retained in even the most complex theological passages. In Zechariah the מ׳ י׳ has basically no other task[15] than in the earliest periods. He helpfully represents the interests of Israel (1:12 and esp. 3:2).

"The מ׳ י׳, however, is not a messenger, like other angelic beings in different circumstances. His significance is to be an express instrument of the particular relationship of grace which Yahweh has with Israel. He is the personification of Yahweh's assistance to Israel. Only in exceptional circumstances does he have to turn against Israel (2 S. 24:17),16 the prospering of Israel being otherwise his exclusive office."

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:77.]

Although not exclusively made up of angels, groups of angels mentioned both in the Hebrew Bible and particularly in Revelation inside the New Testament, seem to comprise the official 'royal court' of heaven in a pattern somewhat reflected in the royal courts of the kings of Israel and those of the ancient the middle east. Not much is said about what they do in this setting, but the image of angels making up a heavenly royal court with God as reigning king is common to both testaments.

2) What do they look like?

No where in either testament of the Bible is there a specific description of an angel. Their spiritual nature as divine beings is universally asserted, but no depiction of what they looked like is given. Generally speaking inside the Old Testament their appearance was sufficient distinct that people recognized them as angels when there was interaction between them and people or individuals, although not always at the beginning of contact.

One exception is when Abraham entertained three men (LXX, τρεῖς ἄνδρες) and did not recognize them as angels at first, cf. Gen 18:1-33. The episode is presented in 18:1 as Ὤφθη δὲ αὐτῷ ὁ θεὸς πρὸς τῇ δρυῒ τῇ Μαμβρη καθημένου αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τῆς θύρας τῆς σκηνῆς αὐτοῦ μεσημβρίας, The Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. In verse 33, God goes His way in departing from Abraham's tent but the other two men, now referenced as οἱ δύο ἄγγελοι, the two angels, come to Lot's house in Sodom. Hebrews 13:2 picks up on this with the admonition: τῆς φιλοξενίας μὴ ἐπιλανθάνεσθε, διὰ ταύτης γὰρ ἔλαθόν τινες ξενίσαντες ἀγγέλους. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. Clearly here both the Lord and two angels looked so much like men that Abraham did not recognize them as divine beings in the initial contact with them.

Out of this background comes the different references to the angel / angels connected with Jesus' resurrection in the empty tomb.[58] The signal of angelic being comes in the very white robes they were wearing. Consistently in Revelation white robes are a mark of heavenly existence, both for angels and the redeemed of God in heaven. And socially in the first century this kind of clothing signaled wealth and high status.

Beyond this very limited indirect reference to appearance, no other defining traits of outward appearance are given. No mention of wings etc. surfaces inside the Bible.[59]

Additionally, only two angels are named in the Bible: Gabriel (Dan. 8:16; 9:21; Luke 1:19, 16) and Michael (Dan. 10;13, 21; 12:1; Jude 9; Rev. 12:7). In Jude 9, Michael has the title of ὁ ἀρχάγγελος, archangel, which qualifies him to debate Satan over the body of Moses. This idea is rendered in the LXX Dan. 10:13 and 12:1 in regard to Michael as εἷς τῶν ἀρχόντων or ὁ ἄγγελος (Θ: ἄρχων) ὁ μέγας, one of those ruling or the great angel. Only Jude uses ὁ ἀρχάγγελος in paraphrasing the two references found in Daniel. It is in the Jewish apocalyptic literature outside the Bible where curiosity in names and titles of angels flourish.[60] Both the OT and especially the NT

[58]**Mark 16:5. νεανίσκον** καθήμενον ἐν τοῖς δεξιοῖς περιβεβλημένον στολὴν λευκήν, a young man, dresed in a white robe on the right side.

Matthew 28:2-3. **ἄγγελος** γὰρ **κυρίου** καταβὰς ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ προσελθὼν ἀπεκύλισεν τὸν λίθον καὶ ἐκάθητο ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ. 3 ἦν δὲ ἡ εἰδέα αὐτοῦ ὡς ἀστραπὴ καὶ τὸ ἔνδυμα αὐτοῦ λευκὸν ὡς χιών. for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow.

Luke 24:4b. ἰδοὺ **ἄνδρες δύο** ἐπέστησαν αὐταῖς ἐν ἐσθῆτι ἀστραπτούσῃ. suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them

John 20:12. **δύο ἀγγέλους** ἐν λευκοῖς καθεζομένους, two angels in white,

[59]In a few places the cherubims are winged creatures that are distinct from angels: Exod. 25:20; 37:9; 1 Kings 6:24, 27; 8:6-7; 1 Chron. 28:18; 2 Chron. 3:11-13; 5:7-8; Ezel. 10:5, 8, 16, 19, 21-22.. So do the seraphs: Isa. 6:2. Also the living creatures: Ezek. 1:8-9, 11, 23-25; 3:13; 10:12; Rev. 8:8. Giant locusts granted authority to punish people on the earth: Rev 9:9. Great beasts out of the sea have wings: Dan. 7:4, 6. And the unexplained, mysterious 'two women' in Zech. 5:9 who have wings like a stork. The mother of Christ was given the wings of a large eagle in order to escape Satan: Rev. 12:14. None of these heavenly creatures are considered angels by biblical writers.

[60]The OT has an early reference to the ἀρχιστράτηγος δυνάμεως κυρίου in Jos. 5:14. In Da. 10:13 and 12:1 Michael is the εἷς τῶν ἀρχόντων or ὁ ἄγγελος (Θ: ἄρχων) ὁ μέγας. The first mention of seven special angels is found in Ez. 9:2 f.),[1] then in Tob. 12:15; Test. L. 8; Gr. En., 20; Tg. J. I, Gn. 11:7; Rev. 8:2, 6 (cf. 1:4, 20; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6). Six are also mentioned in Eth. En., 20; Tg. J. I, Dt. 34:6; and four in Eth. En., 9, 1 etc.; Sib., 2, 215; Pesr., 46, Str.-B., III, 806.[2] The term is not found in the LXX, but occurs in Gr. En., 20, 8; 4 Esr. 4:36; Proseuche Joseph (bOr. Joh., II, 25), as also in Philo, who uses it to describe the logos (Conf. Ling., 146; Rer. Div. Her., 205). If both name and thing also play a role in the Gnostic magic literature[3] and Iamblichus the Neo-Platonist (Myst., 2, 3, p. 70, 10, Parthey), there can be no doubt that they derive from Jewish Christian sources. The Milesian theatre inscription CIG, 2895 has an invocation of the ἀρχάγγελοι as a late Christian protective charm.[4]

"The development of the doctrine of archangels has its basis in the tendency to give prominence to certain leading and individualised angels. It is worth noting, however, that there is virtually no interest in this aspect in the NT. The paucity of occurrences is striking. The majority, though without the term ἀρχάγγελοι, occur in the Book of Revelation (→ 84): ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ, i. e., as part of the divine manifestation and in execution of the divine will. Paul mentions only once in 1 Th. 4:16 the φωνὴ ἀρχαγγέλου which will ring out at the parousia, and since this is brought into connection with the coming of the κύριος (the ἐν of accompaniment), it has no

do not dwell on angels much at all in order to not detract from their focus on God and His presence. In the NT, this theme continues but centers on avoiding any distraction of emphasis upon Christ as the divine presence of God. The biblical center is that the God of this universe is also directly present among His people on earth. In the NT, this emphasis flows through Christ as that divine presence of God among His people. Then the role of the Holy Spirit continues that emphasis upon divine presence directly with the believing community.

3) What do they do? On earth? In Heaven?

What do angels do? This becomes the place where most of the biblical information is found regarding angels. Mostly they are anonymous heavenly creatures doing assignments given them by God or Christ. These tasks can be carried out either in heaven or at times on the earth.

In Heaven. From the OT perspective they form a major part of the royal court of heaven with God as reigning king of the universe.[61] This is never spelled out in details apart from some signals of being prosecutors of people before God in passages like Job 1:6.[62] A few of the OT prophets provide some insight but not much.[63]

On earth. The two primary terms for angel -- מַלְאָךְ in Hebrew and ἄγγελος in Greek -- both stress the role of divine messenger with the core sense of 'one sent by God'.[64] And this is the central work of angels on earth. They make the will of God known to people on earth. And outside of the Revelation, this communication is to the people of God either in groups or to individuals.

In regard to the ministry of Jesus in the four gospels angels play a very secondary role and do not surface in the texts apart from a very few strategic moments in Jesus' life.[65] Where angels become active in groups rather than the very few isolated actions of individual angels is eschatological in nature dealing the both the second coming of Christ and the day of judgment. Interestingly, this stands in stark contrast to Jewish writers who

more significance than the σάλπιγξ θεοῦ which will be sounded at the same time. Even the archangel, then, is simply an accompanying manifestation of the eschatologically returning Christ."

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:87.]

[61]"The notion that Yahweh is surrounded by a host of heavenly beings who assist in His world governance and praise Him etc. is quite current even in pre-exilic Israel, though it is only at rare moments of vision that they enter the perception of man. A distinctive feature of this heavenly entourage of Yahweh is its warlike character.[21] Perhaps the יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת refers to these beings." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:78.]

[62]"An insight into the new outlook is afforded by the Book of Job, which speaks of the angelic world with no dogmatic pretensions. The verdict as to their nature is expressed in their description as קְדֹשִׁים[24] Yet their holiness is limited; they are not pure compared with God (Job 4:18; 15:15). They were witnesses of creation, which they greeted with songs of joy (Job 38:7). They could be called upon in times of need (Job 5:1), some of them possibly being intercessors (Job 33:23). The angel of death came to the dying (Job 33:22; Prv. 16:14). Similar references may be found in the Psalter.[25]" [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:79.]

[63]"The prophets, in whose proclamation so many fused mythologoumena have been retained, give full attestation of the change indicated, though one should not generalise from their detailed statements. Ezekiel is the first prophet in whose visions an interpreting mediatorial being (אִישׁ) is introduced (40:3 ff.). A distinctive world opens up in Zechariah, in whom the מַלְאַךְ יְהוָה blossoms out as an *angelus interpres* and who also introduces heavenly riders, smiths and winged creatures, all at the command of Yahweh. Nevertheless these visions bear a strongly individual imprint. Even some of the later Psalms know nothing of such sharply delineated heavenly figures, and the priestly code, in whose theology there is no place for angels, stands as a possible bulwark against the growing incorporation of heavenly beings into the faith of Israel." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:79.]

[64]"The OT Jewish view of angels as representatives of the heavenly world and messengers of God is taken over quite naturally by the men of the NT. The angels represent the other world[60] (Hb. 12:22; 1 Tm. 5:21). To be like them is to reflect this world (Ac. 6:15). To be compared with them is to be compared with what is divine (Gl. 4:14). To be a spectacle to them is to offer such to all who dwell in heaven (1 C. 4:9).[61]" [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:83.]

[65]"Jesus is for early Christianity the presence of God and His lordship. This view finds expression in the fact that the early Christian narratives see an angelic accompaniment of the story of Jesus. Angels appear particularly in the birth and resurrection stories. Otherwise their ministry is mentioned only at special points such as the temptation (Mt. 4:11 and par.) and Gethsemane (Lk. 22:43), though it was always regarded as possible (Mt. 26:53). For the Evangelists it confirms and expresses the nature of Jesus. This is shown in Jn. 1:51 by the comparison with Jacob's ladder;[66] the Son of Man is surrounded by angels signifying His union with God. The restraint of the accounts is equally striking. Only in the later strata (Mt. 28:2f.) do we find any tendency to speak of the independent activity of angels or to describe their figures.[67] There is no permeation of the Gospel narrative as a whole with angelic appearances of different kinds. In so far as they do not serve Jesus directly, the angels are simply heralds the divine action. The infancy stories, in which angelic appearances play the strongest role, are content to introduce only Gabriel (Lk. 1:26 ff.) or the angel of the Lord known to the OT (Mt. 1:20 ff.; 2:13; Lk. 1:11 ff.; 2:9), who in Lk. 2:13 is simply accompanied by the πλῆθος στρατιᾶς οὐρανίου. In these accounts we find no trace of individual angels, nor is there any interest in angelology in abstraction from God." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:84.]

make virtually no links of angels to divine judgments of God at the end of time.[66] The NT writers do not emphasize angels and the relative small number of references to angels are exclusively linked to serving Christ.[67] This stands in contrast to most of the later Christian writings that place much greater emphasis upon the activities of angels. Such growing emphasis reflects the cultural influence of the Greco-Roman curiosity with supernatural creatures in the various pagan religious traditions. And thus it signals a departure from the biblical parameters of teaching.

One issue needing to be addressed biblically is the idea of 'guardian angels.' This stands as the center piece of most modern systems of angelology. But what about the teaching of the Bible? Only three NT texts even hint at the idea, and then their role is largely undefined. Thus using the label 'guardian angel' is highly questionable.[68]

[66]"The active participation of angels seems to be most strongly assumed in relation to events of the last time. Here Jesus Himself ascribes to them the role of accompanying hosts who come with the Judge, who act with Him and for Him,[68] and who are present at the judgment (Lk. 12:8 f.). Paul presupposes the same view (2 Th. 1:7; cf. 1 Th. 4:16). The Revelation of John thus paints on a broad canvas that which is common to all early Christianity when in the description of events of the last days it introduces angels at many points and in many ways, describing in a most varied manner both their appearance and function.

> In Rabbinic literature there is an almost complete absence of any thought of the co-operation of angels in the judgment.69 It seems to be crowded out by the rather different thought of the participation of Israel.70 In the Apocalypse, however, it is not merely emphasised that God will be accompanied by angels at the judgment, but that they will also assist in it., Yet in the Apocalypse there is no mention of the angels accompanying the Messiah71 as emphatically presupposed elsewhere in the NT, where the angels can be called the angels of Christ the Son of Man as well as the angels of God (Mt. 16:27 etc. → n. 68; also 2 Th. 1:7: ἐν τῇ ἀποκαλύψει τοῦ κύριου Ἰησοῦ ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ μετ' ἀγγέλων τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ).

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:84–85.]

[67]"Thus to early Christianity the action of the angels is essentially action for Christ and in the service of His history. They are λειτουργικὰ πνεύματα εἰς διακονίαν ἀποστελλόμενοι διὰ τοὺς μέλλοντας κληρονομεῖν σωτηρίαν (Hb. 1:14),72 σύνδουλοι τῶν ἀδελφῶν τῶν ἐχόντων τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ (Rev. 19:10). They thus take a dynamic part in the processes of this salvation history, which is described not merely in the nativity anthem (Lk. 2:14) or the eschatological anthems (Rev. 5:11 ff.; 19:1 ff.) corresponding to Is. 6:2 f.), but also as χαρά at the development of the individual within this history (Lk. 15:10)." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:85]

[68]"The idea of the guardian, or better the directing and ministering angel, is taken over from Judaism,[75] which had long since forgotten the animistic roots of the notion.[76] Ac. 12:15 assumes a likeness in appearance and voice between the ἄγγελος and the man concerned.[77] In Mt. 18:10 recollection of the angels τῶν μικρῶν τούτων who constantly behold the face of God serves to describe the all-embracing love of God to which these μικροί are important, and thus to drive home our human responsibility to regard them as important too.[78] In the verse concerning the → ἐξουσία on the head of the woman demanded διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους (1 C. 11:10), we perhaps have a warning against the erotic desires of angels based on Gn. 6:1 ff.79 More probably, however, it implies that regard should be had to the propriety required by accompanying angels.[80] Similar regard is had to accompanying angels in Judaism (b. Ber., 60b), which portrays the angels as guardians of good manners (b. Shab., 119b)." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 86.]

Acts 12:15. οἱ δὲ πρὸς αὐτὴν εἶπαν· μαίνῃ. ἡ δὲ διϊσχυρίζετο οὕτως ἔχειν. οἱ δὲ ἔλεγον· ὁ ἄγγελός ἐστιν αὐτοῦ. They said to her, "You are out of your mind!" But she insisted that it was so. They said, "It is his angel."

The larger context begins in v. 6 where during the night in Peter's imprisonment by Herod in Jerusalem, an angel suddenly appears in the cell where Peter is along with the shining of a bright light: καὶ ἰδοὺ ἄγγελος κυρίου ἐπέστη καὶ φῶς ἔλαμψεν ἐν τῷ οἰκήματι, Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. The angel had to wake Peter up since he was sleeping and didn't realize anyone else was present with him. The angel led him out of the jail after telling him to get dressed (vv. 7b-8). It was not until the angel left him as they were walking along the road leading into Jerusalem that he realized that God had indeed delivered him from imprisonment by sending His angel (vv. 9-11). Up to this point he thought he was dreaming all this.

When he arrived at the place, the house of Mary, where the disciples were gathered in praying for Peter inside Jerusalem, he had trouble gaining entrance (vv. 12-14). The young girl who opened the outer door was so shocked when she saw Peter that she didn't let him in and instead announced to the group that Peter was at the front door. But the group didn't believe her and instead concluded οἱ δὲ ἔλεγον· ὁ ἄγγελός ἐστιν αὐτοῦ, but they were saying, "It is his angel" (v. 15b).[69] The NRSV translation is highly questionable. The literal translation is the angel is for him. The thought flow contextually here reminds one of Lk. 24:37, πτοηθέντες δὲ καὶ ἔμφοβοι γενόμενοι ἐδόκουν πνεῦμα θεωρεῖν, They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. In one of Jesus' resurrection appearances, this was the initial reaction when Jesus suddenly appeared before them. In Acts the disciples assumed that Rhoda had seen an apparition of Peter at the door, rather than Peter himself.

The context of Acts 12:15 makes it very clear that this angel was sent by God on this one specific occa-

[69]Interestingly the Western text of Acts, mainly Codex D, puts the statement much more tentatively with ἔλεγον πρὸς αὐτήν, τυχὸν ὁ ἄγγελος, they were saying that it might have been his angel.

sion to bring Peter out of the prison. It wasn't an angel 'assigned to Peter' at all. Instead it was an angel assigned to do one task that happened to be in connection to Peter.[70] The idea of a 'guardian angel' is not present in this passage in the least.[71]

One critically important point in Luke's strategy is the parallelism on Peter's miraculous release from prison here and Paul's later miraculous release from prison in Philippi via an earthquake (16:25-34). Plus Luke's terminology resembles the announcement of the women of Jesus' resurrection (cf. Lk. 24:11). Luke's focus on the work of the angel in securing Peter's release was to stress that it really happened as divine intervention, rather than Peter figuring out how to break out of jail on his own.[72]

Matt. 18:10. Ὁρᾶτε μὴ καταφρονήσητε ἑνὸς τῶν μικρῶν τούτων· λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτῶν ἐν οὐρανοῖς διὰ παντὸς βλέπουσιν τὸ πρόσωπον τοῦ πατρός μου τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς. Take care that you do not despise one of these little ones; for, I tell you, in heaven their angels continually see the face of my Father in heaven.

Several points of interpretation are critical here. First who are the τῶν μικρῶν τούτων? 18:6 identifies them as ἕνα τῶν μικρῶν τούτων τῶν πιστευόντων εἰς ἐμέ, one of these little ones who believe in me. The prior background of 18:1-5 underscores children as models of faith at the point of 'child like' trust and dependence on a parent. The one who grasps how a child is fully dependent on a parent is the one who can become 'great' (μείζων, v. 1) in the kingdom of heaven. The more child like dependence one exercises, the more mature in faith one becomes. Thus ἑνὸς τῶν μικρῶν τούτων, one of these little ones, in this context refers to the masses of people who had placed their faith in Christ. It is not referencing small children! The admonition, directed to the disciples, sternly warns them to not lead astray those who have come to faith in Christ. Instead, as vv. 12-14 amplify, they are to function as caring shepherds of God's people, now referenced as sheep.

Second, what is it that the Twelve are not to do? Ὁρᾶτε μὴ καταφρονήσητε, see to it that you do not treat with contempt.... The verb καταφρονέω has a range of meanings built off this central core idea.[73] Thus the dis-

[70]"Again, in Ac. 12:15 we are told that when the Christians assembled in the house of Mary heard the imprisoned Peter knocking at the door, but did not realise that it was he in person, they expressed the view: ὁ ἄγγελός ἐστιν αὐτοῦ. But in this case it is an open question, as Calvin rightly observed (Instit. I, 14, 7), whether they are not merely toying with a popular notion. At all events the expression does not force us to conclude that 'his' angel is his guardian angel. On the other hand, the angel who in this passage actually frees Peter and might therefore be described as his guardian angel is not described as 'his angel' but simply as 'the angel of the Lord." [Karl Barth, Geoffrey William Bromiley, and Thomas F. Torrance, *Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of Creation,* Part 3, vol. 3 (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 518.]

[71]The tendency of some commentators to attribute this statement, assumed to be of a guardian angel, to Jewish folklore is itself highly questionable as Strack-Billerbeck (1:781-783, 2:707) contend. Only Tobit 5:4-6, 21 point this direction but not in a well defined manner of an angel being assigned to each of God's children.

It is not until after the apostolic age that one can detect movements in this direction beginning with the Shepherd of Hermas, Vision 5:7. But as the quote below illustrates this idea is far from that of a 'guardian angel,' especially in a modern conceptualization.

> 5[25]:1 As I prayed in the house, and sat on the couch, there entered a man glorious in his visage, in the garb of a shepherd, with a white skin wrapped about him, and with a wallet on his shoulders and a staff in his hand. And he saluted me, and I saluted him in return. 5[25]:2 And he immediately sat down by my side, and he saith unto me, "I was sent by the most holy angel, that I might dwell with thee the remaining days of thy life." 5[25]:3 I thought he came to tempt me, and I say unto him, "Why, who art thou? For I know," say I, "unto whom I was delivered." He saith to me, "Dost thou not recognize me?" "No," I say. "I," saith he, "am the shepherd, unto whom thou wast delivered." 5[25]:4 While he was still speaking, his form was changed, and I recognized him as being the same, to whom I was delivered; and straightway I was confounded, and fear seized me, and I was altogether overwhelmed with distress that I had answered him so wickedly and senselessly. 5[25]:5 But he answered and said unto me, "Be not confounded, but strengthen thyself in my commandments which I am about to command thee. For I was sent," saith he, "that I might show thee again all the things which thou didst see before, merely the heads which are convenient for you. First of all, write down my commandments and my parables; and the other matters thou shalt write down as I shall show them to thee. The reason why," saith he, "I command thee to write down first the commandments and parables is, that thou mayest read them off-hand, and mayest be able to keep them." 5[25]:6 So I wrote down the commandments and parables, as he commanded me. ***5[25]:7 If then, when ye hear them, ye keep them and walk in them, and do them with a pure heart, ye shall receive from the Lord all things that He promised you; but if, when ye hear them, ye do not repent, but still add to your sins, ye shall receive from the Lord the opposite. All these the shepherd, the angel of repentance. commanded me to write***.
>
> [Shepherd of Hermas, *Visions*, 5:7 (EarlyChristianWritings.org) J.B. Lightfoot translation]

[72]"It is often observed that the two parts of Acts contain parallel accounts of Peter and Paul; similar experiences befall each. For example, each is unexpectedly delivered from prison, Peter by an angel, Paul by an earthquake (16:25–34). This is true, but within the parallel Dibelius (132) points to a difference. In the story about Peter, all the emphasis falls upon the release of Peter; in that about Paul, the result is the conversion of the gaoler and his household. Roloff (187) considers that one motivation for the story was the desire to clear Peter of the suspicion of having run away: what happened was not of Peter's choice but the work of the angel of the Lord. Weiser (284) gives a remarkable list of stories of the supernatural release of prisoners. Some of these will be referred to below (pp. 580–2); they show beyond doubt that the theme was a very popular one in folk and in higher literature." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles,* International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark., 2004), 571.]

[73]**καταφρονέω** fut. καταφρονήσω; 1 aor. κατεφρόνησα. Pass.: 1 aor. subj. 1 pl. καταφρονηθῶμεν 4 Macc 6:21 (s. next entry and

ciples are to treat all these as children of God, loved and valued by God. They may be 'little ones' in the sense of not considered important to most people, but not so by God and thus not to be so by these disciples. In the larger context of Matthew's gospel these little ones are the masses of Jewish peasants who became Jesus' followers, whom the Pharisees treated with utter disdain and contempt.

Who then are οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτῶν ἐν οὐρανοῖς? Although opinions vary among commentators,[74] given the Jewish background of limited direct access to God by angels, Jesus' warning against treating these believers with contempt has the sense of their having immediate, direct access to God in heaven. As such they are of great importance to God and enjoy status with God, and thus must be treated accordingly by the disciples (the significance of the causal γὰρ conjunction introducing this clause and also the very solemn λέγω ὑμῖν). Thus it's impossible to deduce the idea of 'guardian angels' out of this text.

1 Cor. 11:10. διὰ τοῦτο ὀφείλει ἡ γυνὴ ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους. For this reason a woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels.

This odd statement of Paul comes in the larger context of appropriate appearance for both a man and a woman when preaching or praying before a congregation in 11:2-16. Numerous interpretive questions arise out of this statement?[75]

φρονέω; Eur., Hdt.+).

1. to look down on someone or someth. with contempt or aversion, with implication that one considers the object of little value, ***look down on, despise, scorn, treat with contempt*** τινός (X., Mem. 3, 4, 12; Menand., Fgm. 301, 10 Kö. τῶν πτωχῶν; Diod S 1, 67, 7; PMagd 8, 11; 23, 4 [221 B.C.]; Jos., Bell. 1, 633; Iren. 1, 25, 1 [Harv. I 205, 2]; Did., Gen. 45, 24) *someone or someth.* (opp. ἀντέχεσθαι) **Mt 6:24; Lk 16:13**.—Dg 2:7. ἑνὸς τῶν μικρῶν τούτων **Mt 18:10** (difft. κ. τῶν μικρῶν [neut.]: Socrat., Ep. 29, 3); τῆς ἐκκλησίας τοῦ θεοῦ *God's congregation* (in contrast to isolationism, the partaking of τὸ ἴδιον δεῖπνον) **1 Cor 11:22**; doubt Hm 9:10; grief 10, 3, 1. κυριότητος **2 Pt 2:10**. μηδείς σου τῆς νεότητος καταφρονείτω let no one look down on you because you are young **1 Ti 4:12** (καταφρονήσας τῆς Ἀλεξάνδρου νεότητος Diod S 17, 7, 1 [Field, Notes 209]; Herodian 1, 3, 5; cp. PGen 6, 13 [146 A.D.]); cp. **Tit 2:15** v.l. (for περιφρονείτω). Pass. Hm 7:2.—τοῦ πλούτου τῆς χρηστότητος *have little regard for God's goodness* **Ro 2:4** (s. Ltzm. ad loc.—Phylarchus [III B.C.]: 81 Fgm. 24 Jac. οἱ πολλοὶ κ. τοῦ θείου). Abs. (sc. αὐτῶν) **1 Ti 6:2.**

2. to consider something not important enough to be an object of concern when evaluated against someth. else, *care nothing for, disregard, be unafraid of* (Diod S 3, 50, 5; Epict. 4, 1, 70 τοῦ ἀποθανεῖν; 71; Arrian, Anab. 7, 4, 3; SIG 705, 36 [112 B.C.] καταφρονήσαντες τοῦ τῆς συγκλήτου δόγματος; EpArist 225; Joseph.) αἰσχύνης **Hb 12:2** (cp. Jos., Ant. 7, 313 τ. ὀλιγότητος=their small number); death (Just., A II, 10, 8; Tat. 11, 1; Diod S 5, 29, 2 τοῦ θανάτου κ.; on the topic cp. M. Ant. 11, 3) Dg 1:1; 10:7 (opp. φοβεῖσθαι); ISm 3:2; torture MPol 2:3; cp. 11:2.—DELG s.v. φρήν. M-M. TW. Spicq.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 529.

[74]"All disciples, all members of the community, are of inestimable worth and significance. To make this remarkable point more evident, reference is made to the angels of each of these 'little ones,' οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτῶν ἐν οὐρανοῖς, 'their angels in heaven,' who themselves 'always behold' (διὰ παντὸς βλέπουσι) the face of the Father in heaven. (Carson's interpretation, following B. B. Warfield, of the 'angels' as the spirits of the little ones after death, while not impossible, is not convincing. If this view were correct, a different vocabulary might have been expected, as well as a future tense, 'will behold.') These supernatural creatures are thus able to do what no human being can do and live (Exod 33:20). Since in Jewish tradition only some angels are able to see the face of God (cf. Isa 6:2; 1 Enoch 14:21; contrast 'angels of the Presence' in Jub. 2:2, 18; cf. 1 Enoch 40), these angels are therefore to be regarded as especially significant. The idea of key angels who have access to the very presence of God is reflected also in Luke 1:19 (Gabriel), Tob 12:15 (Raphael), and Rev 8:2; more generally the author of Hebrews can describe angels as 'ministering spirits sent forth to serve for the sake of those who are to obtain salvation' (Heb 1:14; for OT background, cf. Gen 48:16 and esp. Ps 91:11; see too 1QH 5:20–22; & 3ApocBar 12:3; Str-B 1:781–83; 3:437–40 for rabbinic references). So important are the disciples of Jesus, these 'little ones,' that they have 'their' (αὐτῶν) angels, who presumably look after their welfare primarily through intercession, but perhaps also in other ways. This passage falls short of describing 'guardian' angels (despite the 'guardian angels' of NEB; corrected in REB to 'angels') assigned to each individual Christian, who attempt to keep her or him out of danger. A more general idea is in view, namely, that angels represent the 'little ones' before the throne of God. The point here is not to speculate on the ad hoc role of angels in aiding disciples of Jesus but rather simply to emphasize the importance of the latter to God. If the very angels of God's presence are concerned with the 'little ones,' how much more then should also fellow Christians be for one another! They are to be received and esteemed; special care must furthermore be taken not to cause them to stumble." [Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, vol. 33B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 526–527.]

[75]"Our bibliography for this section alone identifies some eighty publications that invite attention in addition to commentaries and other standard works regularly cited. Yet with a few notable exceptions (see Murphy-O'Connor and others cited below), most writers insist that this passage concerns the clothing (or hair-style) of women rather than (as 11:4 makes clear) of men and women. As Roland Barthes among others points out, clothes and hair or beards play a role in a semiotic system which speak volumes about self-perceptions of gender identity, class identity, a sense of occasion, and respect or indifference toward the perception of others. Further, there are multilayered metaphorical and cultural nuances which exclude any understanding of language in these verses in terms of lexicography alone. As Gregory Dawes well argues, it is beside the point to count up how many instances of κεφαλή (11:3–7, 10) mean head, in the sense of chief; many denote source; and how many denote head in contrast to body, if Paul and his readers presuppose metaphorical extension or interactive application of the term.[1]

"A further complication arises from the existence of multiple

What is ἐξουσίαν? Paul literally says that the woman ὀφείλει ἡ γυνὴ ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς, ought to have authority upon her head.[76] Physically this was a

reconstructions of the situation at Corinth. Throughout this commentary we have stressed the importance of looking primarily to Roman cultural and social norms for mid-first-century Corinth, rather than those of Greece which precede 44 BC and steadily return to regain a new peak, after Paul's lifetime, in the age of Hadrian. We refer in the *Introduction* to the huge preponderance of Latin inscriptions over Greek at Corinth in Paul's day, and even if many flooded into the Roman colony as business people, traders, artisans, or slaves, the main social norms to which Corinthian culture aspired were those of Rome rather than Greece.

"Nevertheless, research by classicists demonstrates an unevenness and fluidity in the expectations and status of women in mid-century Roman culture, depending on a variety of factors. Aline Rousselle's essay "Body Politics in Ancient Rome" (1992) assumes great importance for the issue of head coverings, veils, or "hoods" (cf. κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων, v. 4; ἀκατακαλύπτῳ, v. 5; κατακαλύπτεται, v. 6; cf. Latin [Jerome] by contrast, *nudo capite*).2 Augustus reformed family law in ways which affected the status of women some three times between 18 BC and AD 9 (*lex Julia de adulteriis; lex Julia de fundo dotali*, et al.). Horace (d. 8 BC) tells us, on one side, that certain male attire or hair-styles were deemed effeminate and overtly sexual, while appropriate head coverings for respectable Roman women served as a protection of their dignity and status as women not to be 'propositioned.' A. Rousselle and Dale Martin both urge that in the case of respected and respectable women 'one sees only the face': 'respectable women did nothing to draw attention to themselves.… A veil or hood constituted a warning: it signified that the wearer was a respectable woman and that no man dare approach without risking … penalties. A woman who went out … unveiled forfeited the protection of Roman law against possible attackers who were entitled to plead extenuating circumstances.'[3] Rousselle and Martin urge that the point behind Paul's instruction is 'to signify that, regardless of their status under other laws, they were untouchable for Christian men.'[4]

"Public worship was neither the occasion for women to become 'objects' of attraction to be 'sized up' by men; nor an occasion for women to offer cryptic 'suggestions' to men. As Roland Barthes has convincingly demonstrated, clothes have usually operated in human cultures as a powerful semiotic system, i.e., t*hey generate ready signs or signals of class, style, modesty, self-promotion, attitude, or whatever.*[5] Similarly, Umberto Eco observes, '*I am speaking through my clothes*. If I were wearing a Mao suit, if I were without a tie the ideological connotation of my speech would be changed" (my italics).[6] Rousselle, still more significantly for our contextual exegesis, concludes that the veil constitutes 'also a badge of honour, of sexual reserve, and *hence of mastery of the self*" (my italics).[7] Our point is that this theme of self-discipline which foregoes 'rights' dominates 8:1–11:1, including especially 9:23–27, even with additional resonances in ch. 7. We discussed Pfitzner on the agon motif above."

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: a Commentary on the Greek Text,* New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 800–802.]

[76]"It is noteworthy that NJB and NIV have *sign of [the] authority:* NAB has *a sign of submission*; while NRSV has *symbol of authority*; all in contrast to AV/KJV's omission of sign; for this cause ought the woman *to have power* on her head (by 1881 RV inserted a sign of in italics).[202] K. N. Taylor's Living Letters renders the Greek *a sign that she is under man's authority*; while J. B. Phillips paraphrases, *an outward sign of man's authority.* However, while it retains the intrusive sign of, REB clearly follows Hooker by translating, a woman must have *the sign of her [the woman's own] authority on her head*, in contrast to NJB's *a sign of the authority over her*; while NIV remains neutral and can be interpreted either way.

"We should note in passing that most patristic commentators saw no problem in understanding ἐξουσία in an active sense as metonymy for a sign of power over. Chrysostom observes: "Being covered is a mark of subjection and authority," and Theophylact explicitly understands the metonymic sign of power.[203] Irenaeus understands κάλυμμα here.[204] However, Edwards (1885), Ramsay (1907), Robertson and Plummer (1911), and Allo (1956) all anticipate the view for which credit is given to Morna Hooker by comparing 'symbol of one's own authority and that of another's' as being linguistically symmetrical and equally possible.[205] Conzelmann follows Kittel and Foerster in seeing an intertextual resonance between the dual meaning of Heb. שׁלט (*shalat*), which denotes both to have power over and to conceal, and Aram. שׁלטוניה(*shaltonayia*) (sh-l-t-w-nyh) to denote "something like 'headband', 'veil.' "[206] Foerster argues that such a resonance cannot be denied, although he concedes that it remains only conjecture.[207] Kümmel, Barrett, and Schrage, however, offer more penetrating criticisms, including the point that such a resonance would lie entirely beyond the awareness of the Corinthian readers.[208] The fullest discussion of the hypothesis can be found in Allo's extended Note on this difficult verse.[209] Allo traces the complexities of the rabbinic texts but also asks whether Corinthian readers could be expected to appreciate the Semitic background.[210] He concludes that because of the context on account of the angels ἐξουσία may signify a woman's power against attack by evil angels (along the lines of Tertullian, Against Marcion, 5:8) and On the Veiling of Virgins, 7); but in the end he follows the argument advocated by Edwards and Ramsay and later developed by Hooker that a veiled or hooded woman has her own power of protection in public because of what she wears.[211]

"When this view is placed within its proper historical context in Roman society (described above with reference to Dale Martin and Aline Rousselle), this demonstrates how seriously the traditional controversy about 'authority' was misconceived and misleading. As A. C. Wire and many others have urged, many women prophets suffered peer-group pressure to throw aside their hoods (or just possibly but less probably the binding of their hair) in the name of gospel freedom and gender equality.[212] Paul insists, however, that they keep control of (how people perceive) their heads, because the issue here (as throughout 8:1–11:1 or even 8:1–14:40) remains that of assertive autonomy (ἔξεστιν, 6:12, 10:23; cf. ἐξουσία, I have the right to …) versus self-control or an ethic of moderation and restraint (ἐξουσία … ἔξεστιν).[213] Although ἔχειν often means to have, abundant examples of its use to denote to keep, to hold, to retain, also occur in the NT.[214] Moreover, ἐπί with the genitive (here ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς) does not always have the force of power over; it often denotes control of something as well as (in Hooker's argument) on something.[215] If a woman exercises the control that exemplifies respectability in Roman society, and retains the semiotic code of gender differentiation in public, 'with the veil on her head she can go anywhere in security and profound respect.'[216] This extends to the act of using prophetic speech in public worship, but (against M. D. Hooker) is not restricted to being specifically a sign of 'authority' to use prophetic speech as such. The form of the semiotic code

veil as κατακαλυπτέσθω etc. in verse six makes very clear. In first century culture generally, as in modern Islamic culture, the veil is a protection of the rights and dignity of the woman out in public.[77] To be unveiled in Paul's world as a woman was to signal a woman with questionable moral values.[78] Clearly it was an important advertising mark for a prostitute. For Christian women to adopt such a stance inside the worship gatherings would have contributed further to the already extensive rumors that Christians did highly questionable activities in their meetings. In such a context, the veil for a woman was an empowerment of her dignity and privileges before God. Interestingly, Paul had a clear perspective on this issue, while the Roman emperors struggled and vacillated back and forth with varying and often contradicting decrees.[79]

Then what does διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους mean?[80] Literally it translates either 'for the sake of angels' or 'because of the angels.' Clearly the church father Tertullian in his *Against Marcion* (5:8) understood this to mean against the attack of evil angels.[81] But whether this is accurate or not is subject to substantial debate. Given current Roman practices and laws in the mid-first century, the unveiled woman in public worship reflected a disregard for rules of propriety and decorum for public appearance by a Christian woman seeking respect and dignity. Her disregard of this, perhaps in the false sense of frenzied 'freedom' as a charismatic, was offensive to the angels of God not because of any sexual attraction.

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may be culturally variable, but the need to express some kind of semiotic of gender differentiation belongs to the created order. As Gundry-Volf urges, the two principles overlap here.[217]"

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: a Commentary on the Greek Text,* New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 838–839.]

[77]"Throughout Greece, and certain of its barbaric provinces, the majority of Churches keep their virgins covered. There are places, too, beneath this (African) sky, where this practice obtains; lest any ascribe the custom to Greek or barbarian Gentilehood. But I have proposed (as models) those Churches which were founded by apostles or apostolic men; and antecedently, I think, to certain (founders, who shall be nameless). Those Churches therefore, as well (as others), have the self-same authority of custom (to appeal to); in opposing phalanx they range 'times' and 'teachers,' more than these later (Churches do). What shall we observe? What shall we choose? We cannot contemptuously reject a custom which we cannot condemn, inasmuch as it is not 'strange,' since it is not among 'strangers' that we find it, but among those, to wit, with whom we share the law of peace and the name of brotherhood. They and we have one faith, one God, the same Christ, the same hope, the same baptismal sacraments; let me say it once for all, we are one Church.[4] Thus, whatever belongs to our brethren is ours: only, the body divides us."

[Tertullian, "On the Veiling of Virgins," in *Fathers of the Third Century: Tertullian,* Part Fourth; Minucius Felix; Commodian; Origen, Parts First and Second, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, trans. S. Thelwall, vol. 4, The Ante-Nicene Fathers (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1885), 28.]

[78]The modern delimma for an Islamic woman, especially when living in western culture, is that being unveiled is considered traditionally the same way in her strict Islamic heritage as in the ancient world. But in the culture she lives in now, being veiled signals enslavement and lack of dignity, as well as lack of freedom to be oneself. But these are modern western based cultural values that did not exist in the ancient world. Thus the veiled Christian woman in first century Corinth faced very different issues about veiling herself than does the modern Islamic woman.

[79]"How does this relate to language about head (κεφαλή)? (i) The laws of Augustus to which we have alluded also modified the system of guardianship (*tutela*) of women inherited from the closing years of the Republic. A guardian could authorize (cf. ἐξουσιάζω) a woman's actions, but after the laws approved under Augustus a woman had the right (ἐξουσία) to take legal action against a guardian whose refusal to give authorization was deemed to be unreasonable. Under Claudius guardianship of freeborn women was abolished, although not for freedwomen.[8] This context raises nuances of meaning about head in the sense of chief, in relation to mutuality and reciprocity. (ii) Juvenal (c. AD 58–138) shows that by the late first century and early second century women sought quasi-male status by going to public baths (Juvenal 6.419–21), by training to fight (1.23), or by hunting (1.247). However, this is the post-Pauline era, and Cantarella notes Juvenal's antifemale bias.[9] On the other hand, there is evidence of earlier debate and practice about gender distinctiveness. In this context Dawes's work on head as differentiated from body assumes a necessary prominence. (iii) Sarah Pomeroy further shows that women's clothing has an impact on the status of men. She argues that in the early Roman imperial period it was men, rather than women, on whom a woman's clothing most reflected. Regulation was required when 'men participated in status-seeking by means of the clothing of their women.… The usual purpose of honouring women was to exalt the men to whom they were mothers, wives or sisters.'[10] In this context language about glory, source, and reciprocity becomes important."

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: a Commentary on the Greek Text,* New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 802.]

[80]"Allo traces the complexities of the rabbinic texts but also asks whether Corinthian readers could be expected to appreciate the Semitic background.[210] He concludes that because of the context on account of the angels ἐξουσία may signify a woman's power against attack by evil angels (along the lines of Tertullian, Against Marcion, 5:8) and On the Veiling of Virgins, 7); but in the end he follows the argument advocated by Edwards and Ramsay and later developed by Hooker that a veiled or hooded woman has her own power of protection in public because of what she wears.[211]" [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: a Commentary on the Greek Text,* New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 838.

[81]"He adds: Because of the angels."[5534] What angels? In other words, whose angels? If he means the fallen angels of the Creator,[5535] there is great propriety in his meaning. It is right that that face which was a snare to them should wear some mark of a humble guise and obscured beauty. If, however, the angels of the rival god are referred to, what fear is there for them? for not even Marcion's disciples, (to say nothing of his angels,) have any desire for women." [Tertutllian, *Against Marcion*, 5.8 at CCEL.org]

Instead, it represented inappropriate disrespect for God and an surrender of her public dignity which was integral to a positive witness for Christ in that society.[82]

Thus what we see inferred from Paul's statement to the Corinthians is that angels observe what goes on in Christian worship services. When something takes place that is offensive to God, not surprisingly it is also offensive to them as well. Sincere Christians, and especially Christian leaders, should always be mindful of this and seek to do only what is pleasing to God in worship, i.e., in its content, its structure, and its implementation. Otherwise, the displeasure of God is incurred and thus the withholding of the blessing of God on such inappropriate worship.

Thus in apostolic Christianity absolutely no doctrine of angelology emerges or is possible to deduce from the text of the New Testament.[83] The systems of angelology surfacing in some of the church fathers, and especially in the fringe heretical groups, in the subsequent centuries reflects the power of contemporary culture over clearly defined biblical principles.[84] And

[82]"Here its first reference is clearly to the woman's anatomical or physiological head, but (as in v. 4) it is extended in reference to Christ or to God and perhaps arguably (in view of its use as synecdoche) to a guardian, husband, or family since the cultural issue of the dress code rebounds onto the shame or honour (i.e., respected status) of her family. The key connection between the need for a head covering (Gk. ἀκατακαλύπτῳ, feminine privative adjective uncovered) and shames (καταισχύνει) finds precise expression in the comments of Aline Rousselle and Dale Martin.[144] The wearing of appropriate head covering (such as a hood) denoted respect and respectability. Within the semiotic clothing code of first-century Roman society (see above on Roland Barthes) '*a veil or hood constituted a warning: it signified that the wearer was a respectable woman and that no man dare approach her,*' i.e., as one potentially or actually sexually 'available' (my italics).[145] We postpone for the present whether ἀκατακαλύπτῳ may conceivably denote long hair that is "loosed" down the back, since this would generate the very same signal. If Roland Barthes showed that the semiotics of dress is far from trivial, enormous weight is provided by the context of public worship. We recall again, with Murphy-O'Connor and Richard Oster, that an issue about the semiotic signals generated by men at public worship introduces the principle. In vv. 4 (men) and 5 (women) the principle remains the same: self-advertisement, especially if it relates to perceptions of the worship leader as an object of sexual attraction, diverts attention from God who should be the center of undivided attention. To employ a dress code which hints at sexual availability while leading worship is unthinkable.

"That is not to say, however, that this was the conscious intention of women who attended prophetic speech or prayer at Corinth. It is likely that for them the issue was one of freedom and equality on the basis of the gospel axiom which finds expression in such a passage as Gal 3:28. Sociology of religion confirms that 'order' and 'tradition' often become overwhelmed where there is a flood of 'spiritual' or 'charismatic' vitality and dynamism. Hence J. Gundry-Volf may plausibly allude to 'the Corinthian pneumatics' praying and prophesying with unfeminine or unmasculine headdress … in the worship assembly where outsiders might be present and … thus … a loss of social acceptability.… The pneumatic head-covering practices ignored the social boundaries between male and female and thus brought shame upon themselves and their 'heads.'[146] In other words, they confused equality with sameness or lack of gender difference. Collins writes: 'It is probable that the situation was one that resulted from the attitude 'anything goes' (see 6:12; 10:23).… [But] because God has created the human genders in different ways a distinction is to be maintained when the community assembles for worship.'[147]"

[Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 828–829.]

[83]"It is thus self-evident that throughout the NT there can be no question of any equality of the angels with Christ. The Messiah is not an angelic being. As the Son He has a radically different origin and position (Mk. 13:32 and par.; Hb. 1:4 ff.). This fact, as shown by the spatial proximity in Hebrews, is not overthrown by the further fact of the βραχύ τι παρ' ἀγγέλους ἐλαττοῦσθαι which is accomplished in the death of Jesus (Hb. 2:5 ff.). On the contrary, this declaration only serves to emphasise the absolute otherness and superiority of commission. It is indeed possible that the peculiarly strong emphasis in Hebrews on the essential distinction between Christ and the angels is given added point by the antithesis between the NT Gospel of Christ and the many ideas of messengers and messages current in the surrounding world of religion (→ 57).

"To this there corresponds a tendency, particularly evident in Paul, to emphasise the comparative unimportance of angelology. The positive thought of the angel as the messenger of God, as found in the Gospels and also in Acts, is relatively little used in his Epistles. For him the whole stress falls on the complete overshadowing of angels by the fact of Christ. Thus he comes to attach a lesser significance to what was originally thought to be the significant participation of angels in the giving of the Law (Gl. 3:19; cf. also Hb. 2:2; → 83), the point being that he measures this now by the all-normative action of Christ. Along the same lines, there arises from his union with Christ a consciousness of his own superiority to angels as an apostle. His mission, for example, is superior to any possible mission of an ἄγγελος ἐξ οὐρανοῦ (Gl. 1:8), and his charismatic endowment fulfilled in ἀγάπη is superior to all γλῶσσαι τῶν ἀγγέλων (1 C. 13:1). As the Son is more and other than all categories of angels, so is the believer with and by Him. What is allotted to him, ἐπιθυμοῦσιν ἄγγελοι παρακῦψαι (1 Pt. 1:12); it is to human flesh and blood rather than to angels that the redemptive act of Christ has reference (Hb. 2:16)."

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:85.]

[84]One of the first Christian teachers to recognize this danger was the Apostle Paul and he soundly condemned such practices in Colossians.

> This depreciation of angels in comparison with the fact of Christ is strengthened in Paul by his opposition to Gnostic teaching concerning them. We can hardly take Col. 2:18 to mean anything other than that a cult of angels had to be contested in the early Pauline communities. In the world of syncretism the belief in angels seems to have been partly divorced from the belief in God with which it has been indissolubly bound and to which it had been subordinate in its first beginnings. The ἄγγελοι can be reckoned with the θρόνοι, κυριότητες, ἀρχαί and ἐξουσίαι (Col. 1:16). They can thus be regarded as among the forces which threaten man (R. 8:38).

this remains the pattern from the church fathers down into the present time. Thus, most of these systems of teaching about angels represents pure fantasy with virtually no biblical roots or grounding. This theological category therefore becomes an easy source of heresy that gives false hope and understanding to people. Ultimately, it stands as one of the very sinister tricks of Satan to drive a wedge between God and people.

This provides us with the parameters of biblical teaching about angels.

The second part -- and perhaps the hardest part -- is to trace how the thinking moves from the limits of biblical teaching to modern day notions regarding angels. The reality is that most modern day views have little or nothing to do with the teachings of the Bible and fall outside the limits of biblical understanding. Where do such ideas originate? And why? This will be the goal of our study from this point forward, along with identifying these different ideas.

The dark side of demons needs to receive some attention.[85]

> What are in view are the elemental or natural angels which were widely accepted in Judaism[73] and which might in isolation become ungodly and demonic powers. Also in view are the earlier pagan gods, which in part came to be identified with the guardian angels under which God placed the nations.[74]. Paul is not concerned to contest their reality. His only concern is to assert the full and definitive overcoming of their influence in Christ. What is to be consummated eschatologically, ὅταν καταργήσῃ πᾶσαν ἀρχὴν καὶ πᾶσαν ἐξουσίαν καὶ δύναμιν (1 C. 15:24), is, like all eschatology, the present possession of the believer as ἀπαρχή in his πέπεισμαι (R. 8:38).
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> [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:86.]

[85]"**demon**, the English transliteration of a Greek term (*daimōn*) originally referring to any one of numerous, vaguely defined spirit beings, either good or bad. In the NT they are understood as evil spirits, opposed to God and God's people. In the KJV, the term is regularly translated 'devil,' a word that appears in the RSV only as the translation of a different Greek term meaning 'accuser' or 'slanderer' (diabolos). It is used as a virtual synonym for 'Satan.'

"In the ancient world, there was widespread belief in spiritual powers or beings that existed in addition to the well-known gods and goddesses. These beings were not understood as necessarily evil, though some might be. The idea that many or even all such beings were allied with the forces of darkness and wickedness only came into focus, probably under the influence of Persian thought, during the intertestamental period of Judaism.

"There are traces of the belief in harmful spirits in the OT writings (e.g., Gen. 6:1-4; Lev. 16:6-10, 26; Isa. 34:14; Job 6:4; Ps. 91:5), but little was made of this idea in Hebrew thought until the late postexilic period. Then, the belief developed that there existed not only numerous evil spirits or demons but also a leader for these evil forces. This leader came to be known in Jewish thought by several titles, though the most common designation was Satan (the Greek title 'the devil' was then used as a virtual synonym for Satan, as, e.g., in John 8:44). As a result of this type of thinking, the idea developed that there were armies of demons, under the leadership of Satan or the devil, doing battle with God and God's allies.

"The idea then developed that demons could invade human bodies and personalities and cause mental illness, physical disease, or other specific problems such as deafness or blindness. Some even believed that demons could take control of nature and cause natural calamities and disasters. Such ideology is clearly reflected in the synoptic Gospels of the NT, where Jesus is known as one who characteristically exorcises demons (e.g., Matt. 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-39; Matt. 12:22-32; Mark 3:22-27; Luke 11:14-23).

"The apostle Paul understood the 'principalities' and 'powers' to be evil forces in this world (Rom. 8:38; cf. Col. 1:16; 2:15; Eph. 3:10; also 1 Cor. 10:20). In some of the later NT writings, however, the place of the demons began to give way to the centrality of the leader of the demonic forces, namely, Satan or the devil (who is sometimes referred to as 'the evil one'). Thus, in the Fourth Gospel, there are no references to demon possession or exorcism. The devil has become the instigator of evil (e.g., John 13:2), though the charges fly back and forth between the religious authorities and Jesus as to who 'has a demon' (John 7:20; 8:48-49; 10:20-21), probably meaning, in the Fourth Gospel, who was thoroughly evil and opposed to God.

"The idea that there are evil forces in the world that manifest themselves in various ways is still valid. How one articulates this idea may change from one culture to another, however. Demonology was a part of the culture of the NT world and should be interpreted and understood against that background."

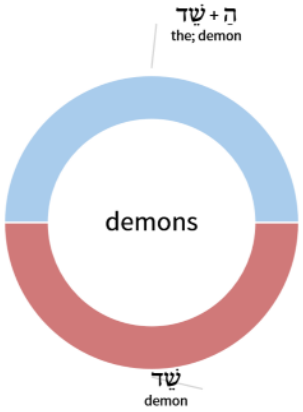
[Paul J. Achtemeier, Harper & Row and Society of Biblical Literature, *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 217–218.]

[86]"The OT itself lacks a simple or coherent presentation of demons. Most interpreters agree that views of demons in ancient Israel became increasingly complex and negative, however, they disagree as to how this occurred. Several possibilities have been suggested: (a) A general belief in demons as independent evil spirits was always a part of Israel's theology (particularly on the popular level) which was simply expanded in later periods. (b) A general belief in demons as ambivalent spirits or aspects of God was an original part of Israel's theology which in later periods became separated into 'good' spirits (angels) and 'evil' spirits (demons). (c) A general belief in demons as independent evil figures was a late development arising as it became theologically unacceptable to present evil events and elements as aspects of God. (d) A general belief in the demons reflected in the poetic texts (*deber, qeṭeb*) gradually decreased while belief in other types of demons increased (the various forms of the Satan figure and the hosts of demons and evil angels represented in the intertestamental period)."

[Joanne K. Kuemmerlin-McLean, "Demons: Old Testament," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 139.]

er fully developed system of demons exists in most of the Jewish traditions, although in some traditions such as the Sadducees a complete denial of their existence dominates (cf. Acts 23:8).[87]

Analyzing these isolated references to spirits in the Hebrew text is complicated.[88] Many of the references to 'evil spirits' surface in poetic literature referring to natural phenomena such as plagues, famines etc. Very few clear allusions to evil spirits actually surface inside the Old Testament. Does this mean little belief among the people at a popular level? Or little interest in them by the writers of the Old Testament? The correct translation of the small number of Hebrew words alluding to evil spirits is enormously difficult without bringing into the translation assumptions from centuries of religious teachings about such spirits, which obviously is not present in the original Hebrew terms.



In light of these limitations, let us venture very cautiously into the 'murky waters' of the Old Testament text.

Hebrew Words: Both הַ שֵׁד (šēḏ) and שֵׁד (šēḏ) are translated as evil spirit or demon, but only in two texts inside the Old Testament: Deut. 32:17 and Psalm 106:37.

Deut. 32:17.

17 They sacrificed to *demons*, not God,
to deities they had never known,
to new ones recently arrived,
whom your ancestors had not feared.

17 יִזְבְּחוּ *לַשֵּׁדִים* לֹא אֱלֹהַּ אֱלֹהִים לֹא יְדָעוּם חֲדָשִׁים מִקָּרֹב בָּאוּ
לֹא שְׂעָרוּם אֲבֹתֵיכֶם׃

17 ἔθυσαν *δαιμονίοις* καὶ οὐ θεῷ,
θεοῖς, οἷς οὐκ ᾔδεισαν·
καινοὶ πρόσφατοι ἥκασιν,
οὓς οὐκ ᾔδεισαν οἱ πατέρες αὐτῶν.†

17 immolaverunt *daemonibus* et non Deo diis quos ignorabant novi recentesque venerunt quos non coluerunt patres eorum

Quite clearly here the reference to demons is then defined as idols and then as brand new idols not previously known among the Israelites. Whether the ***לַשֵּׁדִים*** are intended to specify evil spirits behind the idols or simply to label the idols as an evil influence upon the Israelites is debatable. The text is not clear at this point, although the latter seems more likely.[89]

Psalm 106:37-38.

37 They sacrificed their sons
and their daughters ***to the demons***;
38 they poured out innocent blood,
the blood of their sons and daughters,
whom they sacrificed to *the idols of Canaan*;

[87]**Acts 23:8** 8 Σαδδουκαῖοι μὲν γὰρ λέγουσιν μὴ εἶναι ἀνάστασιν μήτε ἄγγελον μήτε πνεῦμα, Φαρισαῖοι δὲ ὁμολογοῦσιν τὰ ἀμφότερα.

8 (The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, or angel, or spirit; but the Pharisees acknowledge all three.)

[88]"Discussion of the identity, nature and role of demons in the OT is complicated by other issues as well. (1) Much of the study of demons in the OT uses comparative materials, particularly those from other ANE cultures. Linguistic and archaeological evidence has proven helpful in illuminating some aspects of OT understandings of demons, however, this evidence also raises the issue of the degree of legitimate comparison possible between cultures separated by language, time, geography, and theology. (2) Much of the language about demons in both the ANE and OT appears in poetic materials with reference to natural phenomena. This context raises the issue of how poetic references to natural phenomena should be interpreted — as literal references to the physical phenomena, as poetic symbolizations or personifications, or as references to actual demons or deities. (3) Translation in general of terms dealing with demons is problematic. Translations are influenced by many factors: philological evidence and trends, theology, and previous decisions regarding understandings of the term demon and proper ways to interpret each particular text. (4) Identifications and understandings of demons in the OT are strongly influenced by the wider context within which demons are discussed; past contexts have included magic and witchcraft, 'popular' religion, official apotropaic rituals, poetic symbolism, and religious psychology." [Joanne K. Kuemmerlin-McLean, "Demons: Old Testament," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 139.]

[89]"The word שׁדים, 'demons,' is an Akkadian loanword that appears also in Ps 106:37 and possibly in Amos 2:1 (see Dahood, Psalms III, 74; W. F. Albright, Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan [1968] 240; cf. 1 Cor 10:20: 'I do not want you to be partners with demons'). Some scholars read the text here as referring to a cult of 'Shadday gods,' which included child sacrifice (see J. Hackett, "Religious Traditions in Israelite Transjordan," in FS F. M. Cross [1987] 133–34). Neither the Israelites nor their ancestral fathers knew the 'demons,' these false gods, in the way that they knew by experience the living YHWH. The reference to 'new ones from nearby came,' is another way of saying 'deities-come-lately' (so Tigay [1996] 306). In sharp contrast, YHWH is described as 'the ancient God' (33:27). The 'olden gods,' as Frank Cross puts it, are the ones who carry the hallmark of authority in the world of antiquity. The meaning of the verb שׂערום, translated here as 'they were not cognizant,' is not certain. Though שׂער in Jer 2:12; Ezek 27:35; and 32:10 means 'bristle with horror,' LXX renders the text here as 'whom your fathers did not know.' According to Tigay, this reading is supported by Arabic *ša'ara*, 'know, be cognizant'([1996] 306). The Numeruswechsel appears twice in vv 17–18 to mark the boundary between the two literary subunits in this section of the Song of Moses."

[Duane L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 21:10–34:12*, vol. 6B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 806.]

and the land was polluted with blood.

37 וַיִּזְבְּחוּ אֶת־בְּנֵיהֶם וְאֶת־בְּנוֹתֵיהֶם ***לַשֵּׁדִים***׃
38 וַיִּשְׁפְּכוּ דָם נָקִי דַּם־בְּנֵיהֶם וּבְנוֹתֵיהֶם אֲשֶׁר
זִבְּחוּ לַעֲצַבֵּי כְנָעַן וַתֶּחֱנַף הָאָרֶץ בַּדָּמִים׃

37 καὶ ἔθυσαν τοὺς υἱοὺς αὐτῶν
καὶ τὰς θυγατέρας αὐτῶν ***τοῖς δαιμονίοις***†
38 καὶ ἐξέχεαν αἷμα ἀθῷον,
αἷμα υἱῶν αὐτῶν καὶ θυγατέρων,
ὧν ἔθυσαν τοῖς γλυπτοῖς Χαναάν,
καὶ ἐφονοκτονήθη ἡ γῆ ἐν τοῖς αἵμασιν†

37 et immolaverunt filios suos et filias suas ***daemoniis***
38 et effuderunt sanguinem innocentem sanguinem filiorum suorum et filiarum *suarum:[90] quas sacrificaverunt sculptilibus Chanaan et interfecta est terra in sanguinibus

In this reference, clearly the "demons" mentioned in verse 37 are the idols of Canaan in verse 38. But what is not clear again is whether the idols are perceived to have evil spirits operating behind them. The English language translation of 'demons' seems to adopt the view that evil spirits were perceived to be behind the pagan idols.

But given the tendencies of Hebrew synonymous parallelism, as is the case here, the use of לַשֵּׁדִים is very expected as another reference to pagan idols as gods since both the Hebrew word and the LXX translation of τοῖς δαιμονίοις would very naturally be the idea of to gods.

Very likely שֵׁדִים here functions as a collective name for the Cannanite gods such as Baalam etc., which functioned Its original meaning of 'lords,' made the extension of the idea as a collective reference to the pagan gods rather easy.[91] The idols of the Canaanites included child sacrifice which was detested by God.

Thus any attributing of the idea of demons to the writers in the OT rests on exceedingly questionable grounds at best. These single two references more naturally go a different direction than that of evil spirits operating through the pagan idols.[92]

Intertestamental Judaism is where the concepts of evil spirits begin taking root in Jewish religious thinking, rather than in the OT.[93] Most likely Tobit 6:8 is the beginning signal of the adoption of surrounding cultural beliefs about evil spirits inhabiting individuals in the second century BCE.[94] It is also in this era when πνεύματα and ἄγγελοι and δαιμοναί become a part of the Jewish religious vocabulary.[95] This comes largely

[90]Ab asterisco usque ad duo puncta de hebraeis voluminibus additum iuxta Theodotionis editionem.

Text enclosed between an asterisk (*) and a colon (:) is added from the Hebrew following the edition of Theodotion.

[*Biblia Sacra Vulgata: Iuxta Vulgatem Versionem*, electronic edition of the 3rd edition. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1969).]

[91]"**37.** *And they sacrificed their sons to Shedim*]. The Shedim were the ancient gods of Canaan, called 'Shedim,' originally meaning 'lords,' and no more objectionable as a divine title than 'Baalim' or 'Adonay'; but it became so associated with the worship of Baal at a very early date that it won a bad repute, and so in the mind of later Israel it amounted to about the same as demons. Human sacrifice was common in ancient times among all the inhabitants of Palestine, and probably among the Hebrews also before it was prohibited by law. But for a long time it prevailed notwithstanding the prohibition, even down to the Exile. It was not common, however, to sacrifice daughters. This word makes the line too long, and was doubtless an insertion, due to the gloss v. 38. A late glossator, long distant in time from the period when such sacrifices were made, filled with horror at the thought and not knowing much about them, adds: 38–39. And shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and their daughters, which they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan; and the land was polluted with their blood. And they became unclean by their works, and went a-whoring by their doings]. This glossator is evidently more disturbed by ceremonial desecration of the land and people than by moral or religious considerations." [Charles A. Briggs and Emilie Grace Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms,* International Critical Commentary (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1906–1907), 353.]

[92]The two mythical figures of Lilith (Isa. 34:14) and Azazel (Lev. 16) are sometimes assumed to be demons by a few interpreters, but the associations actually made in the Hebrew text are with unclean wild animals living in the desserts. Any association of either with evil spirits of some kind depends upon interpretive associations with other literature in the ANE outside the Bible that typically is intertestamental in origin.

[93]From a survey of several Bible dictionaries across the theological spectrum, it seems to be quite popular to automatically assume an Israelite belief in evil spirits of some sort in spite of the absence of biblical texts clearly indicating such. Not only is printing such assumptions reflective of sloppy scholarship, it is quite misleading to readers until they track down specific texts and discover that these texts are not saying what was claimed. Way too much of the Hegelian dialectic remains in biblical scholarship which wants to find a smooth transition from a simple core idea to a later detailed concept.

[94]**Tobit 6:8**. καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ Ἡ καρδία καὶ τὸ ἧπαρ, ἐάν τινα ὀχλῇ ***δαιμόνιον ἢ πνεῦμα πονηρόν***, ταῦτα δεῖ καπνίσαι ἐνώπιον ἀνθρώπου ἢ γυναικός, καὶ οὐκέτι οὐ μὴ ὀχληθῇ·

He replied, "As for the fish's heart and liver, you must burn them to make a smoke in the presence of a man or woman afflicted by ***a demon or evil spirit,*** and every affliction will flee away and never remain with that person any longer.

[95]"In Hellenistic Greek *daimones* (masculine) and *daimonia* (neuter) signified semidivine beings with powers of various sorts who could be either good or evil, similar to our popular use of the word spirit. The LXX used demons (*daimonia*) to designate heathen gods as an epithet of contempt. Judaism in the Hellenistic era took up the term and used it to designate evil supernatural beings who caused physical harm in all sorts of ways. They also tempted people to idolatry, witchcraft (see Magic), war and other things which would keep them far from God. Philo and Josephus, however, were able to follow the older Greek usage (*daimōn* = god/angel/spirit). Later Hellenistic Jewish literature viewed the demons generally as fallen angels (see Principalities and Powers); they could be called 'angels' or 'spirits' (*pneumata*), and were associated

as a byproduct of the exile and the Jewish encounter with Greek culture through the conquest of Alexander the Great of Palestine and Egypt in the 330s BCE. The Jewish Diaspora played a critical role in this expanding religious perspective as Jews scattered out across the Mediterranean world and encountered a wide range of religious beliefs. Hellenistic Judaism emerges which is much more open and tolerant of diverse religious viewpoints.

One very clear point that emerges from the OT is that any idea of evil spirits that might have come into Israelite thinking late in their tradition had no connection at all to the idea of Satan, which itself is very limited and largely disconnected from the ideas in the NT.[96] The NT idea of Satan as the leader of demons did not originate in the OT.

Greek Words. At least three distinct concepts emerge inside the NT terminology: demons[97]; evil spirits[98]; evil angels. One should not automatically assume that these terms are interchangeable! Additionally, the connection of these terms to those found in the NT for Satan are important.

δαίμων, δαιμόνιον,[99] δαιμονίζομαι. The origin of the Greek nouns δαίμων and δαιμόνιον is untraceable, but in Greek circles the terms had multiple meanings and one should note also the different view points at the popular level over against the educated, philosophical level.[100] The full range of definitions associating a demon with a god etc. surfaces in the Greek literature.[101] But against this 'philosophical' perspective,

more frequently with the work of Satan." [Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 210.]

[96]"Finally, it should be recognized that there is no connection in the OT between the figure of Satan and the demons referred to above. While one late text (1 Chr 21:1) has Satan as a proper name for an independent being who acts in what could be seen as a demonic manner, 'The Satan' in the OT serves primarily as a judicial 'adversary' acting at God's request (Job 1; Zech 3:1)." [Joanne K. Kuemmerlin-McLean, "Demons: Old Testament," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 140.]

[97]"**DEMON** [δαιμόνιον **daimonion**, δαίμων **daimōn**]. The Greek **daimonion** ('demon') comes from the adjective **daimonios** (δαιμόνιος, 'divine'). Related terms include **daimōn** (divinity, a god, goddess) or **pneuma** (πνεῦμα, spirit). Generally, a demon is a preturnatural semi-divine entity, from the ambiguous root **daiō** (δαίω, 'tear apart, divide,' or, perhaps, 'apportion or burn'). Although indeterminate in the OT, demons in the NT are seen as evil or unclean spiritual beings with the capacity to harm life or allure people to heresy or immorality." [Graham H. Twelftree, "Demon," ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006–2009), 91.]

[98]"With a view to NT usage our primary concern here is with the difference between δαίμων and δαιμόνιον. The former is the usual term for the whole field; the latter is more limited in time and content. Δαιμόνιον is originally the neuter of the adj. δαιμόνιος. The meaning of the adj. brings out most clearly the distinctive features of the Gk. conception of demons, for it denotes that which lies outside human capacity and is thus to be attributed to the intervention of higher powers, whether for good or evil.[62] Τὸ δαιμόνιον in pre-Christian writers can be used in the sense of the 'divine.' The context sometimes makes it plain that it is not thought of as a true substantive.[63]" [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 2:8.]

[99]The larger word group includes δαίμων, δαιμόνιον, δαιμονίζομαι, δαιμονιώδης, δεισιδαίμων, δεισιδαιμονία. [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 2:1.

[100]"A basic animism underlies the Greek δαίμων concept. This persisted amongst the Greeks. In the historical period especially it was obviously combatted by educated and especially philosophical circles from which we draw almost all our knowledge of all levels of Gk. thought. Yet even these circles had to orientate themselves by popular ideas and thus give evidence of the common view to varying degrees. Hence we can fully understand the δαίμων concept only against the background of popular animistic beliefs. We may begin with the solid fact that the term δαίμων is used both for deity or minor deity and also in a philosophical sense, and that animistic views underlie the latter usage and thus demand our attention.[1]" [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 2:1.]

[101]" It is first used a. to denote 'gods,' and may still be used in this sense in Hellenism.[6] More specifically, it is used b. for 'lesser deities.' This is Plato's allusion when he defines δαίμονες as θεοί or θεῶν παῖδες νόθοι ἢ ἐκ νυμφῶν ἢ ἔκ τινων ἄλλων (Ap., 27cd), appealing to the popular view: ὧν δὴ καὶ λέγονται.[7] Thus we also read of δαίμονες πρόπολοι in the train of the gods,[8] of a Ἀδρεὺς δαίμων which has his name from the ingathering of fruits,[9] or of a δαίμων ἐπιμύλιος, ἔφορος τῶν ἀλετῶν.[10] These figures may have been gods originally, but the decisive point is that their character had changed at the time of writing.

"Since δαίμων is more general than θεός, it is used c. when an 'unknown superhuman factor' is at work: Philostr. Vit. Ap., IV, 44: ἐς ἔννοιαν ἀπηνέχθη δαίμονος … ἔδοξε τῷ Τιγελλίνῳ ταῦτα δαιμόνιά τε εἶναι καὶ πρόσω ἀνθρώπου, καὶ ὥσπερ θεομαχεῖν φυλαττόμενος …[11] Again, especially in the tragic dramatists, it denotes d. 'anything which overtakes man,' such as destiny, or death, or any good or evil fortune, Eur. Alc.: τὸν παρόντα δαίμονα,[12] cf. also Epict. Diss., I, 19, 19: κατά τινα δαίμονα == "by chance," and Jos. → 10. It can also be used generally for 'fate,' as in Soph. Oed. Tyr., 828 f.: ἆρ' οὐκ ἀπ' ὠμοῦ ταῦτα δαίμονός τις ἂν κρίνων ἐπ' ἀνδρὶ τῷδ' ἂν ὀρθοίη λόγον;

"From this sense it is only a step to e. that of a 'protective deity' watching over a man's life, or certain portions of it. Thus Pindar Olymp., 13, 105 speaks of the δαίμων γενέθλιος, and an unknown writer speaks of a new δαίμων beginning on the wedding night.[13] Menander Fr., 18 is particularly clear: ἅπαντι δαίμων ἀνδρὶ συμπαρίσταται εὐθὺς γενομένῳ μυσταγωγὸς τοῦ βίου ἀγαθός.[14] By the time of the Orphics this had led to the coining of the words εὐδαίμων and κακοδαίμων.[15, 16] The thought was then applied in different ways. Heracl. Fr., 119 (I, p. 100, 11, Diels) coined the phrase ἦθος ἀνθρώπῳ δαίμων. Plato worked it out as follows (Resp., X, 617e, cf. 620d): οὐχ ὑμᾶς δαίμων, λήξεται, ἀλλ' ὑμεῖς δαίμονα αἱρήσεσθε. In Stoicism δαίμων then became f. a term for

Greek popular belief in demons moved in the direction of them being 'intermediaries' between the gods and humans. This linked up demons with magic and incantations. Also demons gradually were assumed to take control over the daily life of regular people and were especially connected to misforturne and distress. And demons were thought increasingly to be able to possess a person and totally control their life, mostly with disastrous consequences.[102] The demons in popular

the 'divinely related element in man': τὸ μὴ κατὰ πᾶν ἔπεσθαι τῷ ἐν αὐτῷ δαίμονι συγγενεῖ τε ὄντι καὶ τὴν ὁμοίαν φύσιν ἔχοντι τῷ τὸν ὅλον κόσμον διοικοῦντι.[17] The reference was to the νοῦς, the divine part in man, as explicitly in M. Ant., V, 27: ὁ δαίμων, ὃν ἑκάστῳ προστάτην καὶ ἡγεμόνα ὁ Ζεὺς ἔδωκεν ἀπόσπασμα ἑαυτοῦ. οὗτος δέ ἐστιν ὁ ἑκάστου νοῦς καὶ λόγος. In Epictetus the term amounts to much the same thing as conscience,[18] Diss., III, 22, 53: βούλευσαι ἐπιμελέστερον, γνῶθι σαυτόν, ἀνάκρινον τὸ δαιμόνιον, δίχα θεοῦ μὴ ἐπιχειρήσῃς. It is along these lines that we have reference to a τιμωρὸς δαίμων or to τιμωροί (Corp. Herm., I, 23; XIII, 7b). In the same context we may mention the use of the word for the interpretation of natural occurrence. It cannot be said with certainty whether the statement of Thales: νοῦν τοῦ κόσμου τὸν θεόν, τὸ δὲ πᾶν ἔμψυχον ἅμα καὶ δαιμόνων πλῆρες,[19] belongs to this category, but there are echoes of the thought in Epict. Diss., III, 13, 15: οὐδεὶς Ἅιδης οὐδ' Ἀχέρων … ἀλλὰ πάντα θεῶν μεστὰ καὶ δαιμόνων. Similarly the stars are called δαίμονες.[20]"

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 2–3.]

[102]"A first instance of the influence of popular belief is to be seen in the fact that philosophy, too, sets heroes alongside demons. In popular belief it is hard to separate the two. Perhaps they are one and the same, as some philosophers assume. More specifically, however, the development led to a separate class of ἥρωες. The idea of intermediary beings was more systematically worked out in the course of time, and in the Neo-Platonists we thus find several classes of intermediaries. In philosophy the main task of these beings is to be messengers between the gods and men, i.e., to exercise supervision over men. Thus Hesiod Op., 122 f. already calls them φύλακες θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων. Plato lays down the lines of future development in Symp., 202e: πᾶν τὸ δαιμόνιον μεταξύ ἐστι θεοῦ τε καὶ θνητοῦ … Ἑρμηνεῦον καὶ διαπορθμεῦον θεοῖς τὰ παρ' ἀνθρώπων καὶ ἀνθρώποις τὰ παρὰ θεῶν, τῶν μὲν τὰς δεήσεις καὶ θυσίας, τῶν δὲ τὰς ἐπιτάξεις τε καὶ ἀμοιβὰς τῶν θυσιῶν, ἐν μέσῳ δὲ ὂν ἀμφοτέρων συμπληροῖ, ὥστε τὸ πᾶν αὐτὸ αὑτῷ ξυνδεδέσθαι. διὰ τούτου καὶ ἡ μαντικὴ πᾶσα χωρεῖ καὶ ἡ τῶν ἱερέων τέχνη τῶν τε περὶ τὰς θυσίας καὶ τὰς τελετὰς καὶ τὰς ἐπῳδὰς καὶ τὴν μαγγανείαν πᾶσαν καὶ γοητείαν. The Stoics adopt this view, and Posidonius integrates the demons into the great σύνδεσμος of nature.[22] For Plutarch the demons are mediators (e.g., Def. Orac., 13, II, 416e), and Max. Tyr. gives the following definition in VIII, 8: εἰσὶ δ' αὐτῷ (sc. θεῷ) φύσεις, ἀθάνατοι δεύτεροι, οἱ καλούμενοι δεύτεροι ἐν μεθορίᾳ γῆς καὶ οὐρανοῦ τεταγμένοι· θεοῦ μὲν ἀσθενέστεροι, ἀνθρώπου δὲ ἰσχυρότεροι· θεῶν μὲν ὑπηρέται, ἀνθρώπων δὲ ἐπιστάται· θεῶν μὲν πλησιώτατοι, ἀνθρώπων δὲ ἐπιμελέστατοι.[23] This leads Porphyrius to the view that everything in nature is controlled by demons.[24]

"In the more detailed development of the doctrine that demons are intermediary beings, regard is had to popular belief at three specific points. First, it is noteworthy that demons are brought into special connexion with those parts of the cultus and religion which are closest to animism, i.e., with magic and incantations. We can see this even before Plato in Empedocles,[25] and Xenocrates in particular traces back the apotropaic cult to evil demons,[26] while Stoicism attributes Manticism to demons.[27] This is true of Plutarch, and in *Apuleius De Deo Socratis*, 6 we read: *cuncta denuntiata et magorum varia miracula omnesque praesagiorum species reguntur* (i.e., by demons). In Xenocrates there emerges already a distinction between the higher forms of religion and the lower and more popular forms with which demons or evil demons are connected. In the developed form of this conception demons are forces which seek to divert from true worship, as in Porphyr. Abst., II, 40: ἓν γὰρ δὴ καὶ τοῦτο τῆς μεγίστης βλάβης τῆς ἀπὸ τῶν κακοεργῶν δαιμόνων θετέον, ὅτι αὐτοὶ αἴτιοι τῶν περὶ τὴν γῆν παθημάτων, οἷον λοιμῶν, ἀφοριῶν, σεισμῶν, αὐχμῶν καὶ τῶν ὁμοίων, ἀναπείθουσιν ἡμᾶς, ὡς ἄρα τούτων αἴτιοί εἰσιν οἵπερ καὶ τῶν ἐναντιωτάτων, ἑαυτοὺς ἐξαίροντες τῆς αἰτίας … τρέπουσίν τε μετὰ τοῦτο ἐπὶ λιτανείας ἡμᾶς καὶ θυσίας τῶν ἀγαθοεργῶν θεῶν ὡς ὠργισμένων. ταῦτα δὲ καὶ τὰ ὅμοια ποιοῦσιν, μεταστῆσαι ἡμᾶς ἐθέλοντες ἀπὸ τῆς ὀρθῆς ἐννοίας τῶν θεῶν καὶ ἐφ' ἑαυτοὺς ἐπιτρέψαι. At an earlier stage already *Apuleius De Deo Socr*., 14 had traced back the cults of individual peoples to demons,[28] also ascribing unworthy myths to them (cf. Plutarch).

"Secondly, it is to be noted that the demons as rulers of human destiny are specifically connected with misfortune and distress. This hurtful sway of demons is made to serve a positive goal in Corp. Herm., XVI, 10 f.: τὰ δὲ ὑπὸ τῶν θεῶν ἐπιταττόμενα ἐνεργοῦσι θυέλλαις καὶ καταιγίσι καὶ πρηστῆρσι καὶ μεταβολαῖς πυρὸς καὶ σεισμοῖς, ἔτι δὲ λιμοῖς καὶ πολέμοις ἀμυνόμενοι τὴν ἀσέβειαν … θεῶν μὲν γὰρ τὸ εὖ ποιεῖν, ἀνθρώπων δὲ τὸ εὐσεβεῖν, δαιμόνων δὲ τὸ ἐπαμύνειν.[29] Similarly Plutarch, appealing to the disciples of Chrysippus, can say in Quaest. Rom., 51 (II, 276f/277a): οἱ περὶ Χρύσιππον οἴονται φιλόσοφοι φαῦλα δαιμόνια περινοστεῖν, οἷς οἱ θεοὶ δημίοις χρῶνται κολασταῖς ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀνοσίους καὶ ἀδίκους ἀνθρώπους.

"Thirdly, many philosophical systems have assimilated the doctrine of demons possessing men. Extraordinary conditions are popularly ascribed to indwelling deities, especially in the tragic dramatists and e.g. Hippocrates.[30] This was called δαιμονᾶν or δαιμονίζεσθαι, a view which is developed in Porphyrius Abst., II, 36 ff.[31] to the effect that evil demons clothe themselves with flesh and blood in the human body to kindle evil desires. But Plutarch already speaks plainly of demons which undermine virtue in Dio, 2, 3 (I, 958e): οὐκ οἶδα μὴ τῶν πάνυ παλαιῶν ἀτοπώτατον ἀναγκασθῶμεν προσδέχεσθαι λόγον, ὡς τὰ φαῦλα δαιμόνια καὶ βάσκανα προσφθονοῦντα τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς ἀνδράσι καὶ ταῖς πράξεσιν ἐνιστάμενα ταραχὰς καὶ φόβους ἐπάγει σείοντα καὶ σφάλλοντα τὴν ἀρετήν, ὡς μὴ διαμείναντες ἐν τῷ καλῷ καὶ ἀκέραιοι βελτίονος ἐκείνων μοίρας μετὰ τὴν τελευτὴν τύχωσιν. In Corp. Herm., XVI, 15 this view is then linked with astrology. In an ethical spiritualisation of the doctrine there can then be reference to a δαίμων τιμωρός, ὅστις τὴν ὀξύτητα τοῦ πυρὸς προσβάλλων τοῦτον (sc. τὸν ἀσεβῆ) βασανίζει καὶ ἐπ' αὐτὸν πῦρ ἐπὶ τὸ πλέον αὐξάνει καὶ θρώσκει αὐτὸν αἰσθητῶς καὶ μᾶλλον ἐπὶ τὰς ἀνομίας αὐτὸν ὁπλίζει, ἵνα τύχῃ μείζονος τιμωρίας,[32] and on the other hand it can be argued that falsehood belongs to the very essence of demons.[33] This development is, however, comparatively late.[34]

"Philosophy incorporated these intermediaries into its system and world view by ascribing πάθη to demons[35] and by giving at least to evil demons a location close to the earth. The doctrine that demons are ἐμπαθεῖς is old, going back at least as far as Empedo-

Greek belief were thought to have come from the spirits of those who had died. Interestingly, many Pythagoreans avoided eating beans due to the belief that they contained *mortuorum animae*, spirits of the dead, and thus they could become demon possessed thereby. Demons were often assumed to be lurching around in dark places, they were present in mysterious happenings; demons and magic were closely linked together; at the popular level but not so much at the philosophical level. Demons were responsible for most illnesses. The two primary 'bridges' from Hellenism to Judaism in the two centuries before and after the birth of Christ, Philo and Josephus, pretty much adopt the philosophical Greek perspectives with some modifications. It is out of this religious atmosphere that we encounter the ideas found in the NT.

πνεύματα. Mostly used in the plural inside the NT to reference the presence of supernatural beings called spirits of some kind. The singular πνεῦμα can be used but requires an adjective such as ἀκάθαρτον, unclean, (22x) or πονηρόν, evil, (8x) in order to distinguish it from God's Spirit. Texts such as Mt. 8:16[103] suggest that for most NT writers πνεύματα and δαιμόνιαι are closely related if not interchangeable terms. Thus the definitional background of these evil spirits parallels that of demons.

ἄγγελος.[104] The term is used for those under Satan's control and context must determine whether or not this is the reference point. Clear specification of these is found in the following:

Mt. 25:41. τότε ἐρεῖ καὶ τοῖς ἐξ εὐωνύμων· πορεύεσθε ἀπ' ἐμοῦ [οἱ] κατηραμένοι εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον τὸ ἡτοιμασμένον **τῷ διαβόλῳ** καὶ **τοῖς ἀγγέλοις αὐτοῦ**.

Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for **the devil** and **his angels**;

Clearly here, angels are linked to the Devil and eternal Hell is their destiny. In this usage, angel would be interchangeable with either evil spirit or demon. And a close connection of them to Satan is affirmed.

Rev. 12:9. καὶ ἐβλήθη **ὁ δράκων** ὁ μέγας, ὁ ὄφις ὁ ἀρχαῖος, ὁ καλούμενος Διάβολος καὶ ὁ Σατανᾶς, ὁ πλανῶν τὴν οἰκουμένην ὅλην, ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν γῆν, καὶ **οἱ ἄγγελοι**

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cles.[36] According to Plato[37] it was worked out by Xenocrates,[38] and was shared by Chrysippus as well as Posidonius, and by Plutarch as well as Apuleius and the Neo-Platonists.[39] Similarly, we already find the idea of their location in the air in the Epinomis.[40] This is greatly expanded in connexion with the πάθη doctrine,[41] and is then incorporated by the Neo-Platonists into a great system of intermediaries which become the more imperfect and wicked the closer they approximate to earth.[42] Thus the demons become spatial, and their place in the great ladder from God to man and spirit to matter is that of beings which are superior to man but still imperfect. Their imperfection does not affect their relative divinity. Their wickedness is not simply that of an implacably and causelessly evil will; it is due to their link with matter, and may thus be regarded as an impulsion by cravings which are only too familiar to man, whether in the form of envy, or a self-seeking desire for honour, or the thirst for blood and the odour of sacrifice.[43] Although this view of the πάθη and location of demons corresponds to the impulse of Greek thinking, it is simply a reflection of the popular view of spirits. In animistic belief spirits are radically incalculable, and their operations are conceived after the analogy of men and their passions; they are easily provoked to wrath and envy."

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 2:3–6.]

[103]**Mt. 8:16**. Ὀψίας δὲ γενομένης προσήνεγκαν αὐτῷ ***δαιμονιζομένους*** πολλούς· καὶ ἐξέβαλεν ***τὰ πνεύματα*** λόγῳ καὶ πάντας τοὺς κακῶς ἔχοντας ἐθεράπευσεν,

That evening they brought to him many who ***were possessed with demons***; and he cast out ***the spirits*** with a word, and cured all who were sick.

[104]***Evil spirits*** (Lactant., Inst. 2, 15, 8 daemonas Trismegistus ἀγγέλους πονηρούς appellat. Cp. also Job 1:6; 2:1; Philo, Gig. 16; TestAsh 6:4; PGM 4, 2701; αἱ πονηραὶ δυνάμεις, διάβολος καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ Did., Gen. 45, 5; ADieterich, Nekyia 1893, 60f) τῷ διαβόλῳ καὶ τοῖς ἀγγέλοις αὐτοῦ **Mt 25:41**; cp. **Rv 12:9**. ὁ δράκων καὶ οἱ ἄ. αὐτοῦ vs. **7**; ἄ. τῆς ἀβύσσου **9:11** (s. Ἀβαδδών); ἄ. πονηρός B 9:4; ἄ. τῆς πονηρίας in contrast to guardian angels Hm 6, 2, 1; ἄ. Σατανᾶ, which causes physical pain **2 Cor 12:7**; esp. called ἄ. τρυφῆς καὶ ἀπάτης Hs 6, 2, 1f; leading men into evil B 18:1. Of the angels' fall and their punishment (cp., in the opinion of many, Gen 6:2; En 6ff; 54; Book of Jubilees 5; SyrBar 56:13; LJung, Fallen Angels in Jewish, Christian, and Mohammedan Lit. 1926; ALods, Congr. d'Hist. du Christ. I 29–54) ὁ θεὸς ἀγγέλων ἁμαρτησάντων οὐκ ἐφείσατο **2 Pt 2:4**; ἀ. τοὺς μὴ τηρήσαντας τὴν ἑαυτῶν ἀρχήν *who did not keep to their proper domain* (s. ἀρχή 7) Jd 6. From the pass. already quoted above w. Gen. 6:2 (cp. also TestReub 5:3; Jos., Ant. 1, 73 ἄγγελοι θεοῦ γυναιξὶ συνιόντες; and polytheists' concept of erotic desires of transcendent beings: HUsener, Weihnachtsfest2 1911, 74f; Rtzst., Poim. 228ff. Herr der Grösse 14f; and GJs 14:1) some conclude that the angels were subject to erotic desires; this is held to explain the regulation that women are to wear a veil in church services, since angels are present (cp. Origen, Orat. 31 and Ps 137:1 ἐναντίον ἀγγέλων ψαλῶ σοι) **1 Cor 11:10** (for another view and for the lit. s. ἐξουσία 7; s. also JFitzmyer, [Qumran angelology] NTS 4, '57/58, 48–58; LJervis, JBL 112, '93, 243–45: angels mediate God's presence). In **6:3** οὐκ οἴδατε, ὅτι ἀγγέλους κρινοῦμεν; it is not certain whether only fallen angels are meant; θρησκείᾳ τῶν ἀ. worship of angels **Col 2:18** polemicizes against what appears to be a type of gnostic reverence for angels. (On Qumran angelology s. Fitzmyer, cited above.)—OEverling, D. paulinische Angelologie u. Dämonologie 1888; Dibelius, Geisterwelt 1909; GKurze, D. Engels-u. Teufelsglaube d. Ap. Pls 1915; MJones, St Paul and the Angels: Exp. 8th ser., 16, 1921, 356–70; 412–25; EPeterson, D. Buch von den Engeln '35; JMichl, D. Engelvorstellungen in Apk I '37; ELangton, The Angel Teaching of the NT '37; JBernardin, JBL 57, '38, 273–79; ESchick, D. Botschaft der Engel im NT '40; WMichaelis, Z. Engelchristol. im Urchristent. '42; GHatzidakis, Ἄγγελος u. Verwandtes: SBWienAk 173, 1914.—B. 1486. DELG. DDD 81–96 (lit.). M-M. New Docs 5, 72f. TW. Sv.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 9.]

αὐτοῦ μετ' αὐτοῦ ἐβλήθησαν.

The great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called **the Devil** and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world — he was thrown down to the earth, and **his angels** were thrown down with him.

In John's apocalyptic drama, the image of Satan along with his angels are sentenced to the earth after loosing their battle with Michael and his angels in the sky above the earth. Although the devil's traditional role as an accuser (v. 10) is carried out on earth against God's people, John is confident of their victory over him through the blood of the Lamb (v. 11).

Rev. 9:11. ἔχουσιν ἐπ' αὐτῶν βασιλέα **τὸν ἄγγελον τῆς ἀβύσσου,** ὄνομα αὐτῷ Ἑβραϊστὶ Ἀβαδδών, καὶ ἐν τῇ Ἑλληνικῇ ὄνομα ἔχει Ἀπολλύων.

They have as king over them **the angel of the bottomless pit**; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek he is called Apollyon.

Here Satan as the ruler over the bottomless pit, the home of the evil angels, is identified as an angel also. In this larger passage of vv. 1-11, the evil angels are portrayed as giant, terrifying locusts. This is the heart of the fifth trumpet that is blown in the second series of sevens,

2 Peter 2:4. Εἰ γὰρ ὁ θεὸς ***ἀγγέλων ἁμαρτησάντων*** οὐκ ἐφείσατο ἀλλὰ σειραῖς ζόφου ταρταρώσας παρέδωκεν εἰς κρίσιν τηρουμένους,

For if God did not spare ***the angels when they sinned***, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of deepest darkness to be kept until the judgment;

Here the writer references angels who sinned against God and were banished to Tartaros in total darkness as they await final judgment day. Interestingly, Satan is not linked to them in this text. The text presents this as something that happened earlier, not in the future, and perhaps parallels the reference to Noah in the following statement of verse five. In the sequential listing of several events the writer seemingly begins with these angels as the event prior to creation, which is then followed by several subsequent events presented in chronologically order.

Jude 6. ἀγγέλους τε τοὺς μὴ τηρήσαντας τὴν ἑαυτῶν ἀρχὴν ἀλλ' ἀπολιπόντας τὸ ἴδιον οἰκητήριον εἰς κρίσιν μεγάλης ἡμέρας δεσμοῖς ἀϊδίοις ὑπὸ ζόφον τετήρηκεν,

And the angels who did not keep their own position, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains in deepest darkness for the judgment of the great day.

This text which is copied and then modified from 2 Pet. 2:4 asserts the same essential point. The modifications come at two important points. Peter's ἀγγέλων ἁμαρτησάντων, angels who sinned, are Jude's ἀγγέλους τε τοὺς μὴ τηρήσαντας τὴν ἑαυτῶν ἀρχὴν ἀλλ' ἀπολιπόντας τὸ ἴδιον οἰκητήριον, angels who did not keep their first condition but left their proper dwelling. In Peter, these angels are οὐκ ἐφείσατο ἀλλὰ σειραῖς ζόφου ταρταρώσας παρέδωκεν, not spared but in chains of deepest darkness are handed over to Tartaros. In Jude, δεσμοῖς ἀϊδίοις ὑπὸ ζόφον τετήρηκεν, He has kept them in chains of Hades under the deepest darkness. In both the confinement image signals their being under God's continual control until their eternal state of torments is implemented in final judgment.

Some other references may well be referring to evil angels, although the context is not so clear usually:

2 Cor. 12:7. διὸ ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι, ἐδόθη μοι σκόλοψ τῇ σαρκί, ***ἄγγελος Σατανᾶ***, ἵνα με κολαφίζῃ, ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι. Therefore, to keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given me in the flesh, ***a messenger of Satan*** to torment me, to keep me from being too elated. Interestingly, the apostle equates σκόλοψ τῇ σαρκί, a thorn in the flesh, with ἄγγελος Σατανᾶ, a messenger of Satan, via the nominative of apposition use of ἄγγελος. The condition is then defined in v. 9 as ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ, in weakness, and as ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις μου, in my weaknesses, which become a part of a listing of difficulties faced by Paul in ministry (v. 10). Of course, precise identification of the σκόλοψ remains elusive and unanswerable.[105] Clearly it was given, ἐδόθη, by God[106] in order to prevent the

[105]"Discussion of this verse will not lead the exegete to certainty regarding the identity of Paul's 'thorn in the flesh.' As P. E. Hughes aptly writes, the thorn 'is another one of those questions which, on the evidence available, must remain unanswered.'[853] This is not to say that a study of past theories concerning the present topic will be of no benefit. Quite the contrary, for if we are to understand the basis for God's strength in Paul—namely, through weakness—then it is imperative that we consider the options and at least form general conclusions regarding Paul's situation. But this is to say that our present discussion offers no certain conclusion that has up to now eluded scholars." [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 605.]

[106]"As for the agent behind the 'giving,' there are obviously two possibilities—either Satan (or his ἄγγελος) or God (or Christ). If Satan was seen by Paul as sometimes a source of human illness (cf. 1 Cor. 5:5) and the σκόλοψ was some physical malady, it is conceivable that the passive voice of ἐδόθη conceals a reference to Satan. However, because a positive spiritual purpose of the δοῦναι — to prevent over-elation or conceitedness — is stated in advance of the verb ἐδόθη, it is unlikely that Paul's readers would assume Satanic agency in the giving of the 'thorn.'[149] Also, as Plummer observes (348), if Paul had intended to imply that Satan was the agent, δίδωμι, a word often used of the bestowal of divine favors,[150] would probably have been replaced by a more apposite term such as ἐπιτίθημι (Luke 10:30; 23:26; Acts 16:23), or βάλλω (Rev. 2:24), or ἐπιβάλλω (1 Cor. 7:35). Far more probably, ἐδόθη is a 'theological passive,' with God as the implied agent, as is the case with the earlier passives, ἁρπαγέντα (v. 2) and ἡρπάγη (v. 4). Moreover, the giving of the 'thorn' was designed to achieve a beneficial and therefore a divine purpose (ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι, twice in v. 7)." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text,* New International Greek Testa-

apostle from μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι, not becoming conceited, due to the exceptional revelations, τῇ ὑπερβολῇ τῶν ἀποκαλύψεων, granted to him by God also.

The literal meaning of σκόλοψ provides some foundational meaning pointing to the way this item worked.[107] The idea of a thorn that causes physical pain stands behind what Paul experienced. Most likely τῇ σαρκί here references the physical body as the location of this σκόλοψ. What it did to Paul is defined as ἵνα με κολαφίζῃ, to torment me.[108] Murray Harris summarizes well the qualities of σκόλοψ in vv. 7-10.[109] Some kind of physical ailment best fits these traits, although we do not know with certainty what that might have been. For our purposes here, this malady served to give the ἄγγελος Σατανᾶ the opportunity to tempt Paul into wrong attitudes and behavior. Whether ἄγγελος is translated either as 'angel' or 'messenger' is of little significance in that he functioned in behalf of Σατανᾶ in carrying out his tormenting of Paul through the σκόλοψ. But in typical fashion, what was intended to hinder the apostle in ministry became a source of rejoicing by him as v. 9b declares: ἥδιστα οὖν μᾶλλον καυχήσομαι ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις μου, ἵνα ἐπισκηνώσῃ ἐπ' ἐμὲ ἡ δύναμις τοῦ Χριστοῦ. So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

1 Cor. 11:10. διὰ τοῦτο ὀφείλει ἡ γυνὴ ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους. For this reason a woman ought to have a symbol ofi authority on her head, because of the angels. Here τοὺς ἀγγέλους contextually refers to the angels of God in heaven. The need of the woman preaching and praying in the gathered assembly to have a veil on as a symbol of divine authority is based on showing proper repect to the angels who exhibit the ideals of respect for God. Failure by her to show proper respect for God by not using this symbol of divine authorization to preach and pray in leading the group would be offensive also to the angels in Heaven as well as to God. Note the hugely cultural oriented patterns here.

1 Cor. 6:3. οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι ἀγγέλους κρινοῦμεν, μήτι γε βιωτικά; Do you not know that we are to judge angels—to say nothing of ordinary matters? This rather obscure allusion of Paul presents more challenges for understanding. The unusual reference here led to textual variations in the early centuries of copying the text of First

ment Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 855–856.]

[107]"The noun σκόλοψ is cognate with the verb σκάλλω, 'hoe,' 'hack,' 'stir up,' and signifies 'something pointed,' whether *a sharp stake* (σκόλοπες refers to a defensive 'palisade'), *a javelin, the point of a fishing hook, a splinter, or a thorn*.[137] Classical Greek usage might suggest 'stake' as Paul's meaning, but Septuagintal usage should here be regarded as regulative. In its four LXX uses σκόλοψ never means 'stake.' In Num. 33:55 a warning is given to the Israelites that if they fail to destroy all the inhabitants of Canaan, those who are left will be 'thorns in your eyes (σκόλοπες ἐν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ὑμῶν) and arrows in your sides (βολίδες ἐν ταῖς πλευραῖς ὑμῶν).' Similarly, in Ezek. 28:24 opponents of the Israelites who dishonored them are compared to 'a bitter thorn (σκόλοψ πικρίας) and a painful briar (ἄκανθα ὀδύνης).' Then in Hos. 2:8 God warns his unfaithful wife Israel that he will hedge up her chosen path with thorns (ἐγὼ φράσσω τὴν ὁδὸν αὐτῆς ἐν σκόλοψιν).' Finally, in Sir. 43:19 wintry icicles are compared to 'pointed thorns (σκολόπων ἄκρα).' The meaning 'thorn' is appropriate in all four of these LXX uses of σκόλοψ. Two further illustrations of the meaning 'thorn' or 'splinter' may be given. Field (187) cites a passage from a second-century-A.D. writer of fables, Valerius Babrius (Fab. 122). A donkey stepped on a σκόλοψ and became lame. Meeting a wolf, he appealed to him to pull out the thorn (τὴν ἄκανθαν) from his foot. MM refers (578) to a third-century-A.D. papyrus in which a mother speaks of her son's sore foot 'because of a splinter (ἀπὸ σκολάπου [= σκόλοπος])' (BGU 2.3809). We concur with Bernard's judgment that 'St. Paul's trial is compared to the vexatious irritation of a thorn rather than to the agonizing and fatal torture of impalement on a stake' (111).[138]"]Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 853–854.]

[108]"The verb κολαφίζω, in the first telic clause, means 'strike with the fist' (a κόλαφος is a 'blow with the fist' or 'a box on the ear'), or, more generally, 'maltreat violently,' 'batter,' 'knock about.'[154] Because the sense is metaphorical, the subject of κολαφίζῃ could be either ἄγγελος or (possibly) a personified σκόλοψ. The present tense points to continual or recurrent buffeting, just as ὑπεραίρωμαι indicates the constant danger of conceitedness or improper elation that Paul faced." [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text,* New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 856.]

[109]"From vv. 7–10 we may deduce that this σκόλοψ had certain characteristics.158

(1) It was given to Paul as a direct consequence of the revelations he received in paradise (καὶ τῇ ὑπερβολῇ τῶν ἀποκαλύψεων … ἐδόθη μοι σκόλοψ, v. 7).

(2) It caused him acute pain (σκόλοψ), either physically or psychologically (τῇ σαρκί), which prompted him to seek its removal (vv. 7–8).

(3) He regarded it as simultaneously a gift from God and an instrument of Satan (v. 7).

(4) It was a permanent condition (implied by the two presents, ὑπεραίρωμαι and κολαφίζῃ [v. 7], and by the negative divine response to his three requests for its removal [vv. 8–9]), yet its exacerbations were intermittent (implied by τρίς, v. 8).

(5) It was humbling, for it was designed to curb or prevent spiritual arrogance (ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι) over the extraordinary nature of the revelations received (v. 7).

(6) It was humiliating, comparable to receiving vicious blows about the face (ἵνα με κολαφίζῃ, v. 7).

(7) It caused Paul to feel weak (vv. 9–10), yet the weakness it caused was an object of boasting (v. 9; cf. v. 5) and a source of pleasure (v. 10)."

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text,* New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 857.]

Corinthians.[110] The simplest view of ἀγγέλους is to take them as evil angels guiding the pagan human leaders, especially the magistrates in the court system of Corinth. Most of the church fathers so understood the reference, as well as a majority of modern interpreters. But one should remember the larger context beginning especially with verse two: ἢ οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι οἱ ἅγιοι τὸν κόσμον κρινοῦσιν; καὶ εἰ ἐν ὑμῖν κρίνεται ὁ κόσμος, ἀνάξιοί ἐστε κριτηρίων ἐλαχίστων; Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? The sense of κρινοῦσιν here is not to render an eschatological judgment, but rather to share in and give affirmation to the divine judgment of evil at the final judgment as described in Rev. 20:4-15. Only God renders the sentence of eternal damnation.

Paul's argument here against going to local magistrates over trivial issues with other believers is no appeal to a supposed power to be given to believers. Instead, it is an appeal to them to use the common sense and the understanding of principles of Christian morality that they have been given in Christ and that will enable them to see the wisdom of God's eternal damnation of all evil in final judgment. That superior way of thinking to the pagan world around them should enable them to settle their internal disputes.

Col. 2:18. μηδεὶς ὑμᾶς καταβραβευέτω θέλων ἐν ταπεινοφροσύνῃ καὶ ***θρησκείᾳ τῶν ἀγγέλων***, ἃ ἑόρακεν ἐμβατεύων, εἰκῇ φυσιούμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ νοὸς τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ, Do not let anyone disqualify you, insisting on self-abasement and ***worship of angels***, dwelling on visions, puffed up without cause by a human way of thinking, Here the issue in our study is θρησκείᾳ τῶν ἀγγέλων. It is usually translated as worship of angels. But the use here of θρησκεία rather than the basic NT word for worship, προσκυνέω, raises questions about the accuracy of the English word 'worship.' The noun θρησκεία stresses outward devotion to something or someone, not basically adoration of either as is true of worship. One should also note that the participle θέλων, desiring, governs the prepositional phrase ἐν ταπεινοφροσύνῃ καὶ θρησκείᾳ τῶν ἀγγέλων. Such devotion to angels was not be imposed on the church, nor was it being required by apostolic teaching. Instead, some within the church were desiring to express such devotion to angels. The background of this most like was paganism which incorporated such devotion to angels both from the underworld and from above.[111] Some try to see a Jewish background, but the Jewish literature of the first century continues strongly the OT condemnation of worship of all heaven beings apart from God alone.[112] Against

[110]"Although the UBS Greek New Testament, 4th ed., has a question mark at the end of this sentence without further comment, the 3d ed. notes helpfully that the *Textus Receptus*, Westcott-Hort, and Nestlé (1898) placed a first question mark after angels. This permits the smoother NEB translation: *Are you not aware that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, mere matters of business.* The REB, however, changes the NEB: *Are you not aware that we are to judge angels, not to mention day-to-day affairs?* The force of μήτιγε is to join a question expecting an emphatic negative answer (μήτι) with the particle γε, at any rate, or equivalent to some idiom in English which gives sharper point to the rhetorical question. Conzelmann renders, *to say nothing of* …; we propose: **need I add, then …?**[42] On **do you not know**, see above on 3:16 (cf. also 5:6; 6:2). The question is repeated in 6:9, 15, 16 and 19. Thus six of Paul's ten uses of the phrases occur in this chapter, or seven if you count 5:1–6:20 as a single unit. (Hurd, we noted, identifies all the occurrences as part of Paul's response to the oral report, and believes that they strike "a jarring note" in Paul's remonstration.)[43]" [Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text,* New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 430.]

[111]"It is true that there is no close parallel to the phrase, but popular religion in the Greco-Roman world did reckon with ἄγγελοι, 'messengers' both from heaven and from the underworld (W. Grundmann, TDNT 1.75). And there is some evidence for worship of angels in western Asia Minor, first adduced by W. Ramsay (BAGD s.v. θρησκεία; Sheppard; Trebilco 132–33; DeMaris 62), though it may equally suggest pagan borrowing of only half-understood Jewish concepts (NDIEC 5.72–73, 136; Sheppard 86–87; Trebilco 137; Mitchell 2.45–46; see also pp. 29ff. above).[18] A plausible picture can thus emerge, one which envisages the Colossian 'philosophy' as a syncretistic religious mix involving ascetic practices and worship of angels. Linked with the talk of rulers and authorities (1:16; 2:15), these angels could be seen within the 'philosophy' as either benevolent, and therefore to be worshiped to attain their blessing, or malevolent, and therefore to be appeased.[19]" [James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon: A Commentary on the Greek Text,* New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: William B. Eerdmans Publishing; Paternoster Press, 1996), 179.]

[112]"How does this fit with the strongly Jewish character which has been evident in earlier allusions to the Colossian 'philosophy'? 'Humility' as fasting is certainly Jewish enough. But worship of angels is something one would not expect in any of the forms of Judaism known to us for this period. It is true that various second-century sources describe (or accuse) Jews of worshiping angels: *Kerygma Petri* (in Clement of Alexandria, Stromata 6.5.41.2); Apology of Aristides 14:4; and Celsus, in Origen's *Contra Celsum* 1:26 and 5:6 (also Origen himself in Comm. in Joann. 13:17); but none of these can be described as a friendly witness.[20] Pseudo-Philo 13.6 also speaks of 'an offering for your watchers (= guardian angels?)'; 1 Enoch 48:5 and 62:6, 9 envisage worship given to the Son of Man; and later Tosefta Hullin 2:18 alludes to angel worship within popular Judaism (GLAJJ 2.295).[21]

"More characteristic of Judaism, however, was warning against worship of the host of heaven (Deut. 4:19; 17:3; Jer. 8:2; 19:13; Zeph. 1:5), including the repeated warnings in first-century Judaism against the worship of angels (Apocalypse of Zephaniah 6:15; Apocalypse of Abraham 17:2; Philo, De fuga et inventione 212; De somnis 1.232, 238; similarly Rev. 19:10 and 22:9; Ascension of Isaiah 7:21);22 in Adam and Eve 13–15 angels are commanded by Michael to worship Adam as the image of God; in pseudo-Philo 34:2 sacrifice to angels is linked with magic and

this background, Paul's reference here to τῶν ἀγγέλων plays off the pagan tradition rather than to anything in divine revelation. It is a broad reference including both good and bad angels. What is strictly forbidden to God's people is a devotion of oneself to any of them.

The use of the term ἄγγελος, thus shows up some 175 times inside the New Testament. Most of these, especially outside of Revelation, are referencing supernatural messengers sent by God to earth on some mission. Only five of these clearly reference evil angels and only two of them expressly link Satan to these evil angels. Just these statistics alone are enough to produce great caution about just what the Bible says about evil angels. The Peter and Jude references present them as having been 'locked up' before the creation of the world and thus unable to function massively on earth. This stands in contrast to Revelation 12 where upon their defeat with Satan by Michael, they are banished to the earth and become active on earth. The NT picture is in not crystal clear about these creatures!

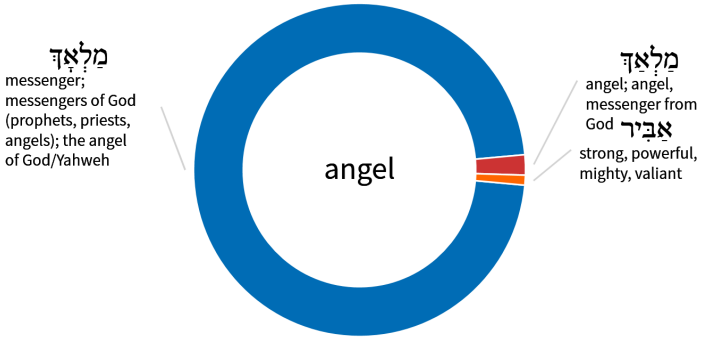
Concept expressions.

One needs also to give some attention to conceptualizations of evil supernatural beings in both the Old and New Testaments which do not use the standard terms but none the less are referencing the reality behind the standard terms.

In the Old Testament. In the Hebrew Bible three words are translated as 'angel' and uniformly refer to God's messengers when referring to supernatural beings. No Hebrew word exactly corresponds to demon either. But approximations seem to surface in a few places, although virtually all have disputed meanings assigned to them.[113] The early Christian concept of de-

condemned; and when in the early second century Elisha ben Abuyah hailed a second divine power in heaven, he was completely disowned as apostate by his fellow rabbis (for details see, e.g., Rowland, Open Heaven 331–39). Were the Colossian 'philosophy' Jewish in character, on this hypothesis, we would have to envisage a very syncretistic form of Judaism, unlike anything else we know of. This, however, hardly squares well with the evidence of a Jewish character for the 'philosophy' which relished not simply odd bits and pieces abstracted from Judaism but the identity markers which marked out ethnic Jews anxious to maintain their ancestral traditions (circumcision, food laws, and sabbath in particular; see on 2:11 and 2:16).[23]"

[James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon: A Commentary on the Greek Text,* New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: William B. Eerdmans Publishing; Paternoster Press, 1996), 179–180.]



[113]"No single Hebrew word exists that corresponds to demon, and the terms thought to represent the idea are often insufficiently represented to determine their meaning. Early traditions portray God as sending God's spirit (1 Sam 16:13) or a divine spirit (*ruakh ʾelohim* [רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים]; Exod 31:3) or, on the other hand, an evil spirit (*ruakh raʿah* רוּחַ רָעָה) causing personal torment (1 Sam 16:14–16, 23; 18:10; 19:9), or harm in a relationship (Judg 9:23).

"A number of terms are used to designate 'demons.' The general noun *seʿirim* (שְׂעִירִים, "goat-demons") occurs only 4 times. In Isa 13:21 they are (along with the wild animals, howling creatures, and ostriches), part of an apocalyptic scene of God's destruction and, similarly, in 34:14 are depicted with Lilith (see below). The *seʿirim* are also depicted as prohibited objects of worship (Lev 17:7) to which Jeroboam had built high places (2 Chr 11:15; 2 Kgs 23:8). The two occurrences of the noun *shedhim* (שֵׁדִים; plural, 'demons'), which became the common term for demons (11Q11 II, 4), refer not to 'no-gods' but to new or unknown gods to whom the people of God had sacrificed (Deut 32:17), including their children (Ps 106:37; see also Judg 2:11–19) when taking up the ways of the Cannanites, rendering the people polluted or unclean because of this prostitution (Ps 106:38–39 see also 1 Cor 10:20). Similarly, when God did not answer, Saul illicitly (Isa 8:19) sought the woman necromancer of Endor. In being asked to call up Samuel from the dead she is said to bring up a 'god from the ground' who had the appearance of an old man (1 Sam 28:13–14).

"Despite later demonization of the term AZAZEL (e.g., 1 En. 8:1; 9:6; 10:4–8; 13:1–2; Apoc. Ab. 13.6–14) there is no agreement on its meaning within Leviticus, where the word *ʿazaʾzel* (עֲזָאזֵל) occurs only in the directions for the ritual for the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:8, 10, 26). While it has been proposed that azazel refers to a combination of *ʿez* (עֵז, 'goat') and *ʿazav* (עָזַב; 'go away'), giving the meaning 'scapegoat' or 'for sending away,' this interpretation is unlikely, because the goat is said to be for Azazel (Lev 16:8). The goat is sent (16:10) or goes to Azazel (16:26). Moreover, the phrase 'for Yahweh' and 'for Azazel' are in parallel (16:8), so it is unlikely that azazel is an abstract term for 'entire removal.' Azazel is also unlikely to mean 'rocky precipice (or mountain)' (e.g., Tg. Ps.-J on Lev 16:10), for in Lev 16:22 the goat goes to the wilderness or 'a separate place'; the parallel between Yahweh and Azazel suggests that Azazel refers to a being, perhaps a deity, rather than a location. Preternatural forces are represented by a goatlike figure in Isa 13:21. That God punishes Azazel by commanding that he be covered with rocks in the desert until the day of judgment (1 En. 10:4–8) contributed to the development of the idea of Azazel being demonic, even the chief demon (see the people's complaints to God against Azazel in 1 En. 7–8). (e.g., 1 En. 54.5; 55.4). The word *lilith* (לִילִית) occurring only in Isa 34:14 (and, perhaps, Job 18:15) exemplifies the uncertainty as to how far the ANE parallels are useful in determining the meaning of terms. In later texts 'Lilith' was a female demon (b. ʿErub. 100b; b. Nid. 24b; B. Bat. 73a; b. shabb. 151b; also 4Q510 1 5; 4Q511 10 1), in a list with wildcat, HYENA, and goat-demon, which suggests that the lilith was a desert dwelling animal. In Mesopotamian demonology, popular imagination located the demonic not only in mythical creatures but also in animals such as dogs, snakes, and scorpions. Further, *lilith* is the Hebrew form of the name of an Akkadian female demon from

mons certainly does not exist in the OT. Instead, it is a product of intertestamental influences. But the reality of evil in the world of the ancient Israelites was readily acknowledged. Often they resorted to the pagan religious explanations around them as the basis of their understanding. Little thought was given to integrating this with the central revelation of the total supremacy of God affirmed all through the OT.

One aspect to not be overlooked is that thinking in a polygamous cultural setting is going to be very different than that in a monotheistic setting. In the polygamy of the surrounding cultures to the Israelites, the malevolent spiritual forces would be perceived as hostile gods and goddesses rather than just as spirits or demons. Although fundamentally monotheistic in belief, the Israelites did not begin fully grasping this until late in their history during the OT era. The existence of other deities was taken for granted early on in their experiences in the Land of Promise. Their God was simply the most powerful one of all others, and demanded their exclusive loyalty as the first commandment of the Decalogue declares.

Also important is the Greek background. It was also polygamous and the words δαιμόνιον and δαίμων[114] usually specified deities rather than just supernatural servants of deities.[115] But the concept of these underwent change and modification with the association of demons increasing with the negative aspects of life. Thus the LXX can use the Greek words for demons to translate Hebrew references to pagan deity, especially malevolent gods.[116]

which protection was sought (CAD 9:190; RlA 7:24–25).

"Some other figures or terms in the OT have been understood to have demonic characteristics. Babylonian texts refer to demons that spill blood and suck veins; the *ʿaluqah* (עֲלוּקָה) mentioned in Prov 30:15 is probably a leech (HALOT 2.831) rather than a demonic figure. The *saraf* (שָׂרָף; plural *serafim* שְׂרָפִים, [Num 21:6, 8; Deut 8:15; Isa 6:2, 6; 14:29; 30:6]) has been understood as a demon or demonic serpent because of the association between serpents and demons among the Arabs and Egyptians, and the demonic connotations assumed inherent to the serpent in Gen 3:1–14. However, the context of all but the Isa 6 references requires that they be understood as serpents or, in Isa 14:29; 30:6, as flying or, more likely because of the context of judgment in 14:29, piercing serpents. In Isa 6:2, 6 the *serafim* attending the Lord on his throne would not have been considered demons but, perhaps winged figures with a human body (ANEP, 655). Even though the 'terror of the night' and the 'arrow that flies by day' as well as the paralleled 'pestilence that stalks in darkness' and 'the destruction that wastes at noonday' (Ps 91:5–6) are sometimes taken to refer to the feared assaults of the demonic, the meanings of the terms are, perhaps deliberately, ambiguous and metaphorical so as to embrace both the preternatural (compare Deut 28:22; Job 6:4) as well as the natural sources of threat to human existence. While earlier texts portray God as responsible for all spiritual forces (see above), only in the postexilic Ps 91 does the OT allude to protection against malevolent forces: living under the shelter of the Most High (91:1–4, 9, 14)."

[Graham H. Twelftree, "Demon," ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006–2009), 2:91.]

[114]"**DEMON** [δαιμόνιον **daimonion**, δαίμων **daimōn**]. The Greek **daimonion** ('demon') comes from the adjective **daimonios** (δαιμόνιος, 'divine'). Related terms include **daimōn** (divinity, a god, goddess) or **pneuma** (πνεῦμα, spirit). Generally, a demon is a preturnatural semi-divine entity, from the ambiguous root **daiō** (δαίω, *tear apart, divide*, or, perhaps, '*apportion or burn*'). Although indeterminate in the OT, demons in the NT are seen as evil or unclean spiritual beings with the capacity to harm life or allure people to heresy or immorality." [Graham H. Twelftree, "Demon," ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006–2009), 2:91.]

[115]"Homer, in the Illiad, uses **atē** (ἄτη, 'delusion,' 'bewilderment') to denote a deceptive supernatural entity (Il. 9.21). He also gives such an explanation to a person's temporarily heightened menos (μένος, 'might,' Il. 13.61, 75), as in the case of Hector, who became manic, foaming at the mouth with his eyes glowing (15.605–610) in a way that would later came to be described as demon possession. Philostratus used *daimōn* to denote such superhuman overpowering of a person (Philostratus, Vit. Apoll. 4.44). In Homer *daimonen* is used of the gods assembled on Mount Olympus (Il. 1.222; 3.420). Further, Homer uses the term *daimōn* when a god acts with hostility toward a person. From the time of Hesiod the demons were the souls of the dead that kept watch over human affairs (Op. 120–29; Aeschylus, Pers. 601; Plato, Resp. 540c).

"Aeschylus suggested that the activity of the evil demons is the omnipotent activity of Zeus (Ag. 160–66; 1486; 1563–66). Pindar said that Zeus directs the demons (Pyth. 5.12–23). Perhaps because of deteriorating social and political conditions in the 6th cent. BCE, there seems to have been an increase in anxiety and dread in relation to the demons.

"For Plato demons were lesser deities (Apol. 27c–d; Phaedr. 246e), intermediaries between gods and humans (Symp. 202d–203a; Tim. 40d; Leg. 717a–f). This view was followed by others (Plutarch, Def. orac. 13.II.416e; Xenocrates, frag. 23; 225). These demons were creators (Tim. 42d), ruling over parts of the cosmos and protecting nations and individuals (Phaedr. 107d; 113d; Resp. 617d; 620d; Leg. 877a); Socrates thought that they were guiding his actions (Theaet. 151a; Euthyd. 3b). Xenocrates, a disciple of Plato, systematized demonology, distinguishing between greater and lesser (Xenocrates, frag. 225; compare Plato, Symp. 202d) and between good and bad demons (Xenocrates, 25), holding that the demons communicated to mortals (see Plato, Symp. 202e) through oracles and dreams and could be seen as a person's conscience. Because the ancients believed that the murdered could avenge themselves (Plato, Leg. 865d–e), and as demons were considered lower order deities and intermediaries, they became firmly associated with human suffering (Corp. herm. 16.10–19; Plutarch, Quaest. rom. 276f–277a) and possession (Porphyry, Abst. II.36). Eventually, demons were associated with evil, so that apotropaic activities were required (Apuleius, De deo Socr. 6)."

[Graham H. Twelftree, "Demon," ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006–2009), 2:92.]

[116]"The LXX identifies pagan gods, including the spirits of popular belief, as demons (Bar 4:7) translating *shedhim* (שֵׁדִים; Deut 32:17; Ps 105:37 [Heb. 106:37]) and *ʾelilim* (אֱלִילִים, 'worthless ones,' Ps 95:5 [96:5]) as *daimoniois* ('demons,' Isa 65:3). Con-

In the New Testament. In the NT usage the term *daimonion* (δαιμόνιον) for demon is used except for Mt. 8:31 where *daimōn* (δαίμων) is used. The other reference is *evil spirit* (πονηρὸν πνεῦμα) as found in Mt. 12:45 and Lk. 11:26. But overwhelmingly δαιμόνιον is the NT word used in regard to these evil beings in 70 uses.[117]

II. Developing Ideas about Angels

In a study of the ideas about creatures who are supra human by nature, and are connected to the Bible, one must understand that a developing concept emerges, along with a diverse set of perspectives.[118] comitantly, the *seʿirim* (שְׂעִירִים) are 'worthless' (*mataios* [μάταιος], Lev 17:7) and 'worthless idols' (2 Chr 11:15). The elusive terms of threat in Ps 90:6 [91:6] are identified as demonic, and the *seʿirim* of Isa 13:21; 34:14 are also demons. Thus, while in the monotheistic environment of the Hebrew text, it is God who is responsible for God's own Spirit as well as an evil spirit (1 Sam 16:14), in Tobit it is an evil demon (*ponēron* [πονηρόν]; 3:8, 17) or spirit (6:8) that kills a woman's husbands out of envy and is sent away by the smoke of burning fish (6:8, 18; 8:3). These entities are not called *daimōn*, probably because of the word's positive use in popular belief." [Graham H. Twelftree, "Demon," ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006–2009), 2:93.]

[117]This is part of a larger word group in ancient Greek: δαίμων, δαιμόνιον, δαιμονίζομαι, δαιμονιώδης, δεισιδαίμων, δεισιδαιμονία. [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 2:1.]

This compares to the Louw-Nida listing of terms for both the devil and demons:

12.34 διάβολος[a], ου m (a title for the Devil, literally 'slanderer'); **Σατανᾶς[a], ᾶ** m (a borrowing from Aramaic; a title for the Devil, literally 'adversary'): the principal supernatural evil being—'Devil, Satan.'[4]

12.35 ὁ πονηρός: (a title for the Devil, literally 'the evil one') the one who is essentially evil or in a sense personifies evil—'the Evil One, He who is evil.'

12.36 ὁ πειράζων: (a title for the Devil, literally 'one who tempts') one who tempts or tries people with the intent of making them sin—'Tempter.'

12.37 πνεῦμας, τος n; **δαιμόνιονα, ου** n; **δαίμων, ονος** m; **διάβολος[b], ου** m: an evil supernatural being or spirit—'demon, evil spirit.'

12.38 πνεῦμα πονηρόν: (a fixed phrase equivalent in reference to πνεῦμα[c] 'demon,' 12.37, but with specific emphasis upon evil) a supernatural evil being—'demon, evil spirit.'

12.39 πνεῦμα ἀκάθαρτον: an evil supernatural spirit which is ritually unclean and which causes persons to be ritually unclean—'unclean spirit.'

12.40 δαιμονιώδης, ες: (derivative of δαιμόνιονα 'demon,' 12.37) pertaining to a demon—'demonic, devilish.'

12.41 δαιμονίζομαι: (derivative of δαιμόνιονα 'demon,' 12.37) to be possessed by a demon—'to be demon possessed.'

[Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 144-146.]

[118]Although often neglected even by Bible commentary writers, and Bible dictionary writers, the multi-dimensional perspective of religious reality contained inside the Old and New Testaments is a critically important factor in such a study as this. One cannot ever correctly read the Bible from a one dimensional perspective! Central to this, although not synonymous with it, is the view of progressive revelation. God increasingly revealed more profound religious truth to His people through His spokesmen as time passes. Thus the level of profundity of spiritual disclosure in Revelation is much greater than Genesis. This is not equal to differing levels of divine inspiration whatsoever, since inspiration permeates all of sacred scripture. But it is to assert that Paul knew more about the will of God for His people than did Moses, for example.

For more details on this topic of divine revelation, see my article "Revelation," in the *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*. A digital copy of it is contained in the lecture notes for *New Testament 492* under topic 1.2.1 Divine Revelation at cranfordville.com.

The developing concept is clearly present in the Old Testament, and is related to the growing idea of the transcendence of God as a deity who is difficult to make contact with. Whether or not the idea of transcendence is connected to outside influences from both middle eastern religions and especially in the intertestamental period to Greek cultural and religions influences is subject to debate. But one should note that the developing ideas about angels inside Judaism was not uniform.[119]

Clearly the Greco-Roman culture and religious traditions will play a significantly shaping role in the post-apostolic era of the church fathers.[120] This will be

[119]"The development within Judaism is not uniform. To be sure, the tradition concerning the angel of Yahweh is present, and hardly anywhere is it completely set aside. But while the OT tradition on the one side was being broadened and refashioned into a full-scale angelology, under the influence of Greek rationalism influences were asserting themselves which so fully suppressed the idea of angels as almost completely to destroy it."

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:80.]

[120]"As messengers sent to men by the gods, birds play a great part, cf. Hom. Il., 24, 292: αἴτει δ' οἰωνόν, ταχὺν ἄγγελον, Theogn., 549 f.: Ἄγγελος ἄφθογγος πόλεμον πολύδακρυν ἐγείρει, Κύρν', ἀπὸ τηλαυγέος φαινόμενος σκοπιῆς, Plut. Pyth. Or., 22 (II, 405d): θεῶν ἄγγελοι καὶ κήρυκες (sc. ἐρωδιοὶ καὶ τρόχιλοι καὶ κόρακες), and cf. also Xenoph. Symp., 4, 48: (θεοὶ) πέμποντες ἀγγέλους φήμας, καὶ ἐνύπνια καὶ οἰωνούς. In Epictetus the philosopher himself appears finally as the ἄγγελος καὶ κατάσκοπος καὶ κῆρυξ τῶν θεῶν (Diss., III, 22, 69, p. 306, 19 f., Sch.).

"2. 'The earthly sacral ἄγγελος is the prototype of the heavenly ἄγγελοι.'[2] The heavenly ἄγγελος in the strict sense is Hermes. Plato attempts to bring his name into relation with his function: … ἔοικε περὶ λόγον τι εἶναι ὁ 'Ερμῆς,' καὶ τὸ ἑρμηνέα εἶναι καὶ τὸ ἄγγελον … (Crat., 407e). In Homer he is addressed by Zeus as follows: σὺ γὰρ αὖτε τά τ' ἄλλα περ ἄγγελός ἐσσι·, Od. 5, 29,3 cf. Hom. Hymn. Cer., 407: ἐριούνιος ἄγγελος ὠκύς, Hymn. Merc.[3] : ἄγγελος ἀθανάτων ἐριούνιος cf. Kern Orph., 297a, 1: Ἑρμῆς δ' ἑρμηνεὺς τῶν πάντων ἄγγελός ἐστι. Alongside Hermes other divine messengers are occasionally mentioned.[4]

"There are chthonic as well as heavenly ἄγγελοι. Plato mentions the messenger from the underworld (ὁ ἐκεῖθεν ἄγγελος, Resp., X, 619b). As psychopomp Hermes is given the title ἄγγελος, cf. Ἄγγελε Φερσεφονῆς, Ἑρμῆ …[5] Nemesis is called by Plato Δίκης … ἄγγελος, Leg., IV, 717d. Similarly, Hecate herself, who is linked

centered in expanding the core structures of angelology that surface in the Jewish Deutocanonical literature of the intertestamental era.[121] Although the details go distinctive directions between western and eastern Christianity in the era of the Church Fathers, both are highly influenced by the thinking in the contemporary culture around the church fathers at different periods all the way through and especially into the middle ages. James Efird and Mark Powell provide a helpful summation as an introduction to our survey here:

> In the Bible, angels appear in the stories of the ancestors (e.g., Gen. 16:7–14; 19:1–22; 22:11, 15–18; 28:12; 31:11–13; 32:1–2) and elsewhere (e.g., Exod. 3:2; 23:20–23; 33:2; Judg. 13:3–5; 1 Kings 19:5–7; 2 Kings 19:35; Isa. 37:36; Pss. 34:7; 35:5–6; 91:11). There is some ambiguity, however, about what form these messengers take, exactly what type of beings they are, and just what their relation to God is, especially in the earlier materials, in which God is often said to confront people directly (making the appearance of angels sporadic).
>
> Over time, possibly because God came to be understood as increasingly transcendent, reflection on the identity and role of angels increased. Ideas developed about good and bad angels, a hierarchy of angels before God, and specific duties assigned to each angel or group of angels. Many of these ideas can be found in deuterocanonical (e.g., Tobit, 2 Esdras) and pseudepigraphical (1 Enoch, Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs) writings.
>
> By the time of the NT, angels were understood as supra human or spiritual beings allied with God in opposition to "the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 12:9). In the Bible generally, angels have many functions. They praise God (Ps. 103:20), serve as messengers to the world (Luke 1:11–20, 26–38; 2:9–14), watch over God's people (Ps. 91:11–12), and are sometimes instruments of God's judgment (Matt. 13:49–50).[122]

A. During Second Temple Judaism[123]

This era begins with the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple under Ezra and Nehemiah around 500 BCE and ends with the destruction of Herod's temple in Jerusalem in 70 AD. From around 325 BCE on, the influence of Greek culture upon the middle east was profound after the conquest of Alexander the Great. The Romans come into the picture of the middle east

with Artemis, is described as ἄγγελος.[6] Together with these, there are the ἄγγελοι of the underworld. They are found on the Attic curse-tables, e.g., καταγράφω καὶ κατατίθω ἀνγέλοις καταχθονίοις Ἑρμῇ καταχθονίῳ καὶ Ἑκάτῃ καταχθονίᾳ Πλούτωνι καὶ Κόρῃ (another has δαίμοσι for ἀνγέλοις).[7] Frequent mention is also found on the gravestones of Theta, where ἄγγελος is everywhere present.[8] These final examples brings us into the time of post-Christian Hellenism, with its syncretistic character, and there is always the possibility here of Christian Jewish influence. Schniewind remarks on the whole evidence: 'The basic view of divine messengers must be very old. It spread over the whole of the Greek world with no spatial restrictions.'[9] Greek and Hellenistic religion thus felt itself to be in connexion with divinity through the divine messengers.

"The magic papyri belong to the syncretistic field, which was strongly permeated by Christian Jewish influences. On magic incantations we find ὃν ἐκάλεσας ἄγγελον πεμφθέντα σοι, θεῶν δὲ βουλὰς συντόμως γνώσῃ, it being even said of the ἄγγελος: λέγε ταῦτα πρὸς τὸν ἄγγελον· λαλήσει γάρ σοι συντόμως, πρὸς ὃ ἐὰν βούλῃ Preis. Zaub., I, 76 ff. Some ἄγγελος is conjured up: ὁρκίζω σε, τὸν ἐν τῷ τόπῳ τούτῳ μὲν ἄγγελον κραταιὸν καὶ ἰσχυρὸν τοῦ ζώου τούτου, (III, 71 f.). This ἄγγελος, too, is to accomplish his task. In the Mithras liturgy there is reference to θεοὶ ἢ ἄγγελοι (IV, 570) and ἀρχάγγελος (IV, 483). Clear Jewish influence may be discerned in I, 206, III, 339 and especially IV, 2357."

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 74–75.]

[121]"Extrabiblical literature from the late Second Temple period (3d century B.C.E.–1st century C.E.) reflects many additional terms for angels. These include 'watchers' (Aram *ʿîrîn*, Dan 4:10, 14, 20; Jub. 4:15, 22; 1 En. 1:5); 'spirits' (Heb *rûḥôt*, 1QH 1:11; 1QM 12:9; Jub. 15:31; 1 En. 15:4; cf. 1 Kgs 22:21); 'glorious ones' (Heb *nikbĕdîm*, 1QH 10:8; 2 En. 21:1, 3; 'thrones' (Gk *thronoi,* T. Levi 3:8; 2 En. 20:1); 'authorities' (Gk *exousiai*, 1 En. 61:10; T. Levi 3:8); 'powers' (Gk *dynameis*, En. 20:1); and many other descriptive and functional terms." [Carol A. Newsom, "Angels: Old Testament," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 249.]

[122]James M. Efird and Mark Allan Powell, "Angel," ed. Mark Allan Powell, *The HarperCollins Bible Dictionary* (Revised and Updated) (New York: HarperCollins, 2011), 31.

[123]"Till the time of the Captivity the Jewish angelology shows little development. During the dark period they came into close contact with a polytheistic people, only to be more deeply confirmed in their monotheism thereby. They also became acquainted with the purer faith of the Persians, and in all probability viewed the tenets of Zoroastrianism with a more favorable eye, because of the great kindness of Cyrus to their nation. There are few direct traces of Zoroastrianism in the later angelology of the OT. It is not even certain that the number seven as applied to the highest group of angels is Persian in origin; the number seven was not wholly disregarded by the Jews. One result of the contact was that the idea of a hierarchy of the angels was more fully developed. The conception in Daniel of angels as "watchers," and the idea of patron-princes or angel-guardians of nations may be ascribed to Persian influence. It is probable that contact with the Persians helped the Jews to develop ideas already latent in their minds. According to Jewish tradition, the names of the angels came from Babylon. By this time the consciousness of sin had grown more intense in the Jewish mind, and God had receded to an immeasurable distance; the angels helped to fill the gap between God and man.

"The more elaborate conceptions of Daniel and Zechariah are further developed in the Apocrypha, especially in 2 Esdras, Tobit, and 2 Maccabees."

[J. M. Wilson, "Angel," ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia,* Revised (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1979–1988), 126.]

in the second half of the first century BCE. Thus the territory of Palestine was under Babylonian, then Persian, then Greek, and finally Roman influences during this time.[124] The Babylonian era hardly counts since from the destruction of Jerusalem and Solomon's temple around 582 BCE (Babylonian periodic attacks on Judea began around 603 BCE[125]) until the rise of the Persians in taking control of the old Babylonian empire by Cyrus the Great in 550 BC. It was under Cyrus' kingship that Ezra was allowed to lead the first group of Jewish exiles back to Judea in 539 BCE to begin the rebuilding of the temple.

As already noted, the religious traditions of the Persians included a reasonably well developed system of angelology.[126] Jewish interaction with it during the exile in Babylonia generated more precise expressions of angels in the extra-biblical Jewish writings of this period. This came at a crucial time for the Jewish people with their homeland in ruins, their temple destroyed, and most of them living as captives in a foreign land.[127] The idea of angels standing between God and His covenant people found increasing favor among many of the Jews, although not all.[128] Influences from the Persian and Hellenistic cultures play a role in helping shape this new perspective.[129] Particularly import-

[124]"During this period, Second Temple Judaism can be seen as shaped by three major crises and their results, as various groups of Jews reacted to them differently. First came the destruction of the Kingdom of Judah in 587/6 BC, when the Judeans lost their independence, monarchy, holy city and First Temple and were mostly exiled to Babylon. They consequently faced a theological crisis involving the nature, power, and goodness of God and were also threatened culturally, racially, and ceremonially as they were thrown into proximity with other peoples and religious groups. The absence of recognized prophets later in the period left them without their version of divine guidance at a time when they felt most in need of support and direction.[2] The second crisis was the growing influence of Hellenism in Judaism, which culminated in the Maccabean Revolt of 167 BC. The third crisis was the Roman occupation of the region, beginning with Pompey and his sack of Jerusalem in 63 BC.[2] This included the appointment of Herod the Great as King of the Jews by the Roman Senate, the Herodian Kingdom of Judea comprising parts of what today are Israel, Palestinian Authority, Gaza Strip, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria." ["Second Temple Period," wikipedia.org]

[125]"The dates, numbers of deportations, and numbers of deportees given in the biblical accounts vary[2] These deportations are dated to 597 BCE for the first, with others dated at 587/586 BCE, and 582/581 BCE respectively.[3]" ["Babylonian captivity, wikipedia.org]

[126]For a helpful detailed analysis see "Yazata," wikipedia.org on the teachings of Zoroastrian teachings on angels.

[127]"It is probably not accidental that the 6th century saw a considerable increase in speculation about the heavenly world and its angelic inhabitants, especially in the prophetic literature. The problem of the destruction and the reconstitution of Judah's national institutions required a mode of thinking that could encompass the disaster in some coherent and meaningful structure and provide confidence in the possibility of reconstruction." [Carol A. Newsom, "Angels: Old Testament," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1:250–251.]

[128]"Typically, the canonical prophets received communication directly from Yahweh, rather than by angelic mediation. This contrasts with many writings from the exile through the late Second Temple period. For example, in the pre-exilic Amos and exilic Jeremiah, angels are absent, while 'Thus says the Lord,' 'says the Lord,' and (in Jeremiah) 'the word of the Lord came to me' are common. Parts of Ezekiel are similar, and outside of Zechariah's visions, all three expressions occur frequently. In the other prophets, angels feature only when events from Israel's past are recalled (Isa 37:6; 63:9; Hos 12:4 [Heb. 12:5]), and with the seraphim in Isaiah's vision (Isa 6:1–7). Ezekiel and Zechariah are examples of transition between earlier angelology and developments in late Second Temple Judaism, combining the tradition of Yahweh's direct word with revelation mediated by angels.

"The Babylonian exile precipitated unprecedented national crisis for Yahweh's covenant people, with loss of the land, Jerusalem, and the Temple. Writings from the exile and beyond draw upon a variety of genres to respond to this crisis, including the apocalypse, which offered reassurance for a devastated nation, using the heavenly journey and its messages from Yahweh's presence through a heavenly guide. Apocalypses such as 1-2 Enoch, and 4 Ezra became increasingly important, offering certainty in the midst of despair by conveying a cosmic perspective from the throne room of Yahweh. References to angels occur unevenly in the centuries before and after the start of the Christian era literature, with few or none in Sirach, Wisdom of Solomon, 2 Baruch, Epistle of Jeremiah, Susanna, 1-4 Maccabees, 1 Esdras, and Psalms of Solomon. By contrast, angels are prominent in Tobit, Jubilees, 4 Ezra, 1 Enoch, 2 Enoch, Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, and much Qumran sectarian literature. Diverse theological and sociological concerns were involved." [Maxwell J. Davidson, "Angel," ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006–2009), 1:151.

[129]"From the third century BCE onward the appearances of angels increase, their manifestations are described more extensively and their functions diverge more and more (see for instance 1 Enoch, Tob, Dan, Jub., 2 Macc). This development should not be explained by the coming into being of apocalyptic literature only (cf. MICHL 1962: 64: 'Dabei ist es die mit dem Buche Daniel aufkommende Apokalyptik, die den fruchtbarsten Boden für diese Entwicklung bietet'; also MACH 1992:115), but also by the assimilation of popular ideas (see e.g. Tob) and the absorption of pagan conceptions (e.g. Jos. and As. and 2 Macc, MACH 1992: 242–249 and 265–278). In LXX ἄγγελος/-οι can be an interpretative translation of Hebrew or Aramaic expressions concerning sons of God or members of the divine council (e.g. LXX Job 2:1 for *Bĕnê ʾĕlōhîm*; LXX Dan 3:92 ὁμοίωμα ἀγγέλου θεοῦ for 3:25 MT אלהין דמה־לבר; Theodotion differently); LXX Dan 4:13, 23 for עיר וקדישׁ Dan 4:10, 20 MT (→Watcher). According to MACH (1992:65–113) the translators tried to avoid references to a (polytheistic) conception of several figures acting as gods/sons of God and to relate certain actions which were ascribed to God in MT rather to angels, because it was not appropriate for God to do these things (esp. LXX Job)." [J. W. van Henten, "Angel II," ed. Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst, *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* (Leiden; Boston; Köln; Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge: Brill; Eerdmans, 1999), 51.]

ant during this period is the emerging perspective on evil angels in opposition to God.[130] On the positive side, angels tend to surface in the writings where the past history of Israel is recounted as being commissioned by God to remind the people of their past.[131] Yet in the emerging Jewish religion of the post-exilic era, the idea of angels was still a 'mixed bag' with some emphasis in certain circles but with no interest at all in other parts of religious teachings.[132]

B. During the Apostolic Age

The Apostolic Christianity of the first Christian century will reflect much of the diverse perspectives found in the Jewish religion of this period. In Hellenistic Judaism more interest in angels emerges than does in Hebraistic Judaism of Palestine, particularly in the Jewish apocalyptic stream of writings. But the NT writers, both to Jewish Christian audiences and to dominantly Gentile audiences, show considerable restraint and do not engage in the speculation of angel's names, organizations etc. that one finds in the Jewish literature. The topic of angels never becomes a major point of interest and reference to them is always in a secondary manner as a part of a historical narrative. The closest to any pointed treatment is Heb. 1:5-14 where the inferiority of angels to Christ is the point. But Christ's superiority is the central emphasis and the status of angels is secondary in this text that draws upon a series of OT passages for its point.

For apostolic Christianity, angels existed but stood well in the background. The writers do not move much beyond the very general conceptualizations found in the OT. Slight emphasis upon angels as evil spirits, that reflects some of the intertestamental views, does surface in a few isolated passages. The intertestamental Jewish role as intermediators picks up some adoption in Acts 7:38, 53; Heb. 2:2, and Gal. 3:19. The tendency of the NT writers is toward the term δαιμόνιον, demon, since by this point the Greek term was largely associated with an evil deity or else a hostile acting deity or agent of deity. But the Persian terms σατάν and σατανᾶς for διάβολος are commonplace in the first century as designating the leader of all demons.[133] None of these are perceived by the NT writers as deities as existed in the Greek tradition, although they are supernatural beings on a par with the angels of Heaven. None of the

[130]"Jewish texts outside of the OT testify to an expanded understanding of the nature and role of angels in some sectors of Second Temple Judaism. Much of this was simply an extension and development of what was to be found in the OT. Angels protect individuals (1 Enoch 100:5), execute judgment (1 Enoch 56:1–8), act as heavenly scribes (Jub 1:27–29), populate the heavenly court (1 Enoch 14:18–24), take part in the heavenly liturgy (1 Enoch 61:9–13; 4Q400–407), come to the aid of Israel in warfare (3 Macc 6:18–21), are differentiated by rank and name (1 Enoch 61:10; 2 Enoch 20; T. Levi 3), and guide heavenly visions and interpret mysteries (1 Enoch 17–36). One notable new development is the notion of two opposing forces of angelic powers: a force of good angels led by God or an archangel, and a force of evil angels led by an evil angelic power known as Satan, Mastema or Belial." [Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 21.]

[131]"The general function of the angel as the agent of God's will is widely attested. Retellings of OT narratives (especially Jubilees and Pseudo-Philo) tend to introduce angels where they did not occur in the OT, oftentimes as performing some act which the OT attributes directly to God (e.g., Jub. 38:10; 10:22–23; 14:20; 19:3; 32:21; 41:24; 48:2; Ps-Philo 11:5; 15:5; 19:12, 16; 61:5). In the book of Tobit the belief in a protecting angel (cf. Gen 24:7) is dramatized with all the ironic and humorous potential of the situation richly realized (HBD, 791–803). Angels help and protect the pious and bring their prayers before God (Dan 3:25, 28; 1 En. 100:5; 1QM 13:10; T. Jud. 3:10; T. Dan. 6:5; T. Naph. 8:4; T. Jos. 6:7; T. Benj. 6:1; Ps-Philo 38:3; 59:4; 3 Macc. 6:18–19; Vita 21). Angels also decree and execute punishment in accordance with God's will (Dan 4:13–26; T. Naph. 8:6; 1 Enoch 56). An angelic scribe keeps records which are opened at the time of judgment (Dan 7:10; 1 En. 89:61–77; 90:14–20; 2 En. 19:5; Ap. Zeph. 3; 7).

"The angel as teacher and mediator of revelation is a well-attested motif, even in nonapocalyptic texts (Joseph and Asenath 14–15; Jub. 1:27–29; 10:10–14 [cf. 1 Enoch 8]; T. Reu. 5:3; T. Levi 9:6; T. Iss. 2:1; T. Jos. 6:6). In apocalyptic writings, the angelic revealer, heavenly guide, and interpreter of mysteries and visions becomes a standard feature (e.g., Daniel 7–12; 1 Enoch 17–36; Apocalypse of Abraham 10–18; 4 Ezra 3–14). The appearance of the angel often evokes an acute emotional reaction from the person who sees it (Dan 10:7–9; 2 En. 1:3–8; Ap. Ab. 11:2–6)."

[Carol A. Newsom, "Angels: Old Testament," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1:252.]

[132]"It is in the late Second Temple period that speculation about the heavenly world and its inhabitants becomes fully developed. There are some new developments in angelology, the most significant being the dualistic notion of evil angels opposed to God, but most of the beliefs about angels are essentially expansions and concretizings of older notions. Numerous references to angels can be found in many genres of literature produced in different social settings, suggesting that a general body of lore concerning angels was common to the popular religion of the era. But the concentration of extensive angelological speculation in certain genres of literature (esp. apocalypses) and in the literature of certain communities (e.g., Qumran) reminds one that the religious and intellectual significance of angelology differed among various Jewish groups." [Carol A. Newsom, "Angels: Old Testament," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1:251–252.]

[133]"The terms διάβολος and Σατανᾶς appear to function both as titles and as proper names. This results from the fact that the referent in each instance is unique. In the text of the Greek NT Σατανᾶς was traditionally written with an initial capital letter, while διάβολος was normally written with a lower case initial letter, except for the occurrences of Διάβολος in Re 12:9 and Re 20:2." [Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), cf. 12.34.] .

speculation about names, organizational structures[134] etc. found in the Jewish apocalyptic literature surfaces inside the NT.[135]

C. Among the Church Fathers

The picture changes dramatically after the first Christian century when church leaders turn away from Christianity's Jewish roots in favor of the surrounding Greek and Roman cultures as the defining framework for belief and practice. Very rapidly Greek thinking about both ἄγγελοι and δαιμόνιοι with a mixture of apocalyptic Judaism takes control, although interest in the topic of angels took a back seat to the christological controversies of the first three centuries (2nd - 4th) of the patristic era.[136]

The false twisting of Eph. 1:21 and Col. 1:16 was turned into a phony system of ranking for God's angels,[137] first set forth supposedly by Dionysius, the Are-

[134]"As far as *names of angels* are concerned in biblical literature only, the names of Gabriel (Dan 8:16; 9:21; Luke 1:26), Michael (Dan 10:13, 21; 12:1; Rev 12:7), Abaddōn/ Apollyōn and Beliar (2 Cor 6:15; →Belial) occur. In Tob 5–12 Raphael/ Azarias already appears. Several Jewish and Christian extra-canonical writings contain numerous names of angels (e.g. 1 Enoch and Jub.; see further →Enoch for Metatron, →Melchizedek and the overview by MICHL 1962:200–254; OLYAN 1993). *Several categories of angels* are (later) connected with the heavenly court; some of them guard the heavenly throne of God: →Seraphim, →Cherubim, Ophannim, Zebaoth, Benê ʾelōhîm, →Saints and →Watchers. Further groups of four, six or seven higher angels (→Archangel) occur. The angels of the nations appear e.g. in 4QDeut 32:8–9 and LXX Deut 32:8–9, Jub. 15:31–32, 1 Enoch 89:59; 90:22, 25 and Dan 10:20–21; 12:1 (Michael). Other groups of angels performing the same duty are the angels of death and those who accompany the Son of Man at his second coming (e.g. Matt 13:41; 16:27; 24:31 and 25:31 (cf. 2 Thess 1:7; →Son of Man). →Satan has his own angels (cf. 2 Cor 12:7) waging war with Michael and his angels (Rev 12:7). The fall from heaven of Satan (→Dragon) and his angels in Rev 12:7–9 (cf. John 12:31), which causes the suffering of the people of God in the final period of history might be an adaptation of the idea of the fall of certain angels (→Giants) in primaeval time (Gen 6; 1 Enoch 6–11)." [J. W. van Henten, "Angel II," ed. Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst, *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* (Leiden; Boston; Köln; Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge: Brill; Eerdmans, 1999), 52.]

[135]"Certain angels are identified by personal names, the most frequently named being Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, and Uriel (Dan 9:21; 10:13; Tob 12:15; 1 En. 9:1; 21:10; 4 Ezra 4:1; Sib. Or. 2:215; 1QM 9:15–16). For various lists of other angels, see 1 En. 8; 20; 82:13–20. Frequently, the angel's appearance is described in terms of light, fire, shining metals, or precious stones, a tradition based on Ezekiel's description of the glory of God (Dan 10:5–6; 2 Macc 3:25–26; Jos. As. 14:9; 2 En. 1:3–5; Ap. Ab. 11:1–3; Ap. Zeph. 6:11–15). Their garments are white linen or white with golden sashes (Dan 10:5; 12:6; 2 Macc 3:26; 11:8; T. Levi 8:2; but see Ap. Ab. 11:2). Angels are assumed to be spiritual creatures whose physical manifestations and apparent eating and drinking are shams (Tob 12:19; Ap. Ab. 13:4; T. Ab. 4:9–10; Philo, Quest. Gen. 4:9; Jos. Ant. 1.11.2 §197). There was even speculation on special angelic food and its qualities (Jos. As. 16:12–16; Wis 16:20; Vita 4:2; cf. Ps 78:23–25). Although angels are spirits and may be called 'gods' (*ʾēlîm*, *ʾĕlōhîm*), they are created beings (Jub. 2:2). There is some evidence that certain Jewish groups believed the angels to have assisted God in the creation of the world (Fossum 1985: 192–213). Rabbinic Judaism found the notion theologically dangerous and vigorously rebutted it (Segal 1977). In Jubilees, even though angels are created on the first day, they have no role in the creation of the world except to praise the work of God (Jub. 2:3; cf. 11QPsa Creat 26:13; Job 38:7)." [Carol A. Newsom, "Angels: Old Testament," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1:252.]

[136]"In the first cents., while the great Trinitarian and Christological doctrines were being worked out, interest in angels was largely confined to Jewish-Christian circles, where Christ was sometimes seen as a kind of angel. Otherwise, their existence was accepted by the Fathers as a truth of faith; their immaterial and spiritual nature, however, was not fully recognized until Dionysius the Ps.-Areopagite and St Gregory the Great. Origen attributed to them an ethereal body, an opinion which seems to have been shared by St Augustine. There was similar uncertainty on the subject of their present state. St Ignatius of Antioch had affirmed that they must believe in the Blood of Christ in order to be saved (Smyrn. 6. 1), and Origen held the good angels to be no less capable of falling than the demons were of being saved. This teaching was rejected by most of the orthodox Fathers, though traces of it are to be found in Didymus, Cyril of Jerusalem, and others. Perhaps the greatest interest was taken in the question of the angelic orders, raised by the two enumerations in Eph. 1:21 and Col 1:16 respectively. By amalgamating both passages five different ranks were arrived at, to which were sometimes added 'Angels' (here understood as a separate species of beings) and 'Archangels' (so Irenaeus), and also the Seraphim of Is. 6:2 and the Cherubim of Ez. 1:5; but their number and order were only fixed by Dionysius in his 'Celestial Hierarchies', where they are arranged in three hierarchies containing three choirs each, in the order of Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones; Dominations, Virtues, and Powers; Principalities, Archangels, and Angels. Of these only the last two choirs have an immediate mission to men." [F. L. Cross and Elizabeth A. Livingstone, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 62.]

[137]"Mention has already been made of the mystic seven who stand before God, and we seem to have in them an indication of an inner cordon that surrounds the throne. The term archangel occurs only in St. Jude and 1 Thessalonians 4:15; but St. Paul has furnished us with two other lists of names of the heavenly cohorts. He tells us (Ephesians 1:21) that Christ is raised up 'above all principality, and power, and virtue, and dominion'; and, writing to the Colossians (1:16), he says: 'In Him were all things created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominations, or principalities or powers.' It is to be noted that he uses two of these names of the powers of darkness when (2:15) he talks of Christ as 'despoiling the principalities and powers . . . triumphing over them in Himself'. And it is not a little remarkable that only two verses later he warns his readers not to be seduced into any 'religion of angels'. He seems to put his seal upon a certain lawful angelology, and at the same time to warn them against indulging superstition on the subject. We have a hint of such excesses in the Book of Enoch, wherein, as already stated, the angels play a quite disproportionate part. Similarly Josephus tells us (Bel. Jud., II, viii, 7) that the Essenes had to take a vow to preserve the names of the

opagite, in his *Celestial Hierarchy*, when they appeared in the sixth century AD. Most commonly now the author is labeled Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite. This wild speculation gradually gained traction and by the middle ages became the foundation for a systematic doctrine of angelology in Roman Catholic circles, although eastern Christianity did not follow the lead of western Christianity. Eastern Orthodoxy developed a system of angelology but much simpler and less structured than what emerges in Roman Catholicism.[138]

From the available literature, it appears that the worship of angels, i.e., *angelolatry*, surfaced in some circles. In 364 AD, the Council of Laodicea forbids such practices.[139] The Roman province of Asia tended to be the center of such activities. Perhaps Col. 2:18 signals the beginnings of such activities in that region in the late 50s of the first century.

D. During the Middle Ages[140]

The speculative tendencies of religious mysticism opened the door for the so-called "Schoolmen" of Roman Catholicism -- Thomas Aquinas, Albert the Great, and Bonaventure -- to develop out of rationalistic thinking a highly complex system of 'choirs' of angels well organized and headed by specifically named angels, along with having different assignments.[141] Neither in

angels." ["Angels: Hierarchical Organization," New Advent Encyclopedia]

[138]For a helpful 'insider' presentation of this see Vincent Rossi, "The Ecology of Angels: Angelic Hierognosis in the Eastern Orthodox Tradition," angelfire.com, Aug. 3, 1998.

[139]"The tendency to pass from the feeling of reverence and love to that of adoration, is at once recognised, and rebuked in the well-known passages of Rev. 19:10., 22:9. In Col. 2:18, the θρησκεία τῶν ἀγγέλων appears as fully developed, and as connected with wild dreams and visions. And it is noticeable that when that worship became prominent enough to call for distinct condemnation, it is in the same region, and accompanied by the same remnants of a Jewish thaumaturgic theosophy. The Council of Laodicea, A.D. 364, forbids Christians (c. 35), to 'leave the Church of God and go away and ἀγγέλους ὀνομάζειν,a and hold secret communions (συνάξεις).' It stigmatises the practice as a 'secret idolatry,' passes on in its next canon to condemn priests who are 'magicians, or enchanters, or mathematici, or astrologers,' or who make 'phylacteries,' and then, in c. 37–38, warns men against taking part in Jewish feasts, or receiving from Jews or heretics the paschal ἄζυμα. So, too, Theodoret (Comm. in Col. ii.) states that the heretics thus referred to, were Judaizers, who maintained that angels should be worshipped, as having been agents in revealing the law on Sinai. These practices, he says, had infested Phrygia and Pisidia for a long time, and throughout the whole district were to be seen Oratories dedicated to St. Michael, to which, apparently, people gave a preference over the usual places of assembly. The language of the earlier Fathers as to such a practice is uniformly that of deprecation. An ambiguous passage in Justin (Apol. i. 6) seems indeed to allow 'worship and adoration,' but whatever degree of reverence is sanctioned, is always distinguished from that which is to be paid to God. Irenaeus (ii. 57) speaks of the Church as 'doing nothing by the invocation of Angels.' Origen (c. Cels. viii. 57–58) protests against worshiping them 'instead of God.' Augustine (de Ver. Relig. c. 55) defines the limits of reverence, 'Honoramus eos caritate, non de virtute, nec eis templa construimus,' and in his Confessions (x. 42) condemns the practice as leading to 'visions and illusions.' The second Council of Nicaea, dealing with the larger question of the cultus that might be paid to images, included those of angels as worthy of προσκύνησις, but not of the λατρεία, which was due to God alone." [Edward Hayes Plumptre, "Angelolatry," ed. William Smith and Henry Wace, *A Dictionary of Christian Biography, Literature, Sects and Doctrines* (London: John Murray, 1877–1887), 1:113.]

[140]"Medieval Christianity engaged in extensive discussion about angels. The major impetus was provided by the work of a pseudonymous fifth- or sixth-century writer claiming to be Dionysius the Areopagite, who had been converted by Paul in Athens (Acts 17:34). He classified angels into three groups: (1) thrones, cherubim, seraphim; (2) mights, dominions, powers; (3) principalities, archangels, angels. The first group, closest to God, enlighten the second group, who in turn enlighten the third group. Dionysius made a great deal of the concept of hierarchy, which he believes to be inherent in all of reality. Basing his argument on Paul's statement that the law was given by angels (Gal. 3:19), Dionysius maintained that humans, as a lower order, have no direct access to or manifestation of God, but only through the angels. Human orders, and particularly the church, should reflect a similar hierarchical structure.[4]

"Later medieval thought had great interest in angels. In *Summa contra Gentiles* Thomas Aquinas seeks to demonstrate by reason the existence of angels.[5] In the *Summa theologica* he attempts to demonstrate various points about them: their number is greater than all material beings combined; each has his own individual nature; they are always at a particular point, but not limited to it.[6] Each person has a guardian angel assigned to him or her at birth (prior to birth each child falls under the care of the mother's guardian angel). While the angels rejoice at the good fortune and responsiveness of the persons placed in their care, they do not grieve in the face of negative occurrences, since sorrow and pain are alien to them.[7] Thomas devoted no fewer than 118 individual questions to consideration of the nature and condition of angels. This interest in angels may have been what earned him the title Angelic Doctor. Many of his ideas about angels were based on what we would now term natural theology, a series of rational arguments and inferences.

"The effect of Thomas' arguments was a heavy emphasis on the supersensible realm of angels. After all, if their number exceeds the total number of beings bound to matter, the material or earthly realm must be secondary in importance. Thus much succeeding theology tended to attribute everything that occurred to angelic (or demonic) activity.

[Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*., 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1998), 459–460.]

[141]"In the Middle Ages Dionysius' speculative doctrine was taken over and developed by the Schoolmen, and a treatise on angels became a part of the Commentaries on the 'Sentences' of Peter Lombard from the 13th cent. onwards. The doctrines of St Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus were foreshadowed by St Albert the Great and St Bonaventure respectively. St Thomas and all the Schoolmen after him are at one on the point that angels are intelligences not destined to be united to a body, and thereby differ from the human soul. Acc. to St Thomas they are not composed of

eastern or western Christian traditions has there been much tendency toward worshiping angels. The official dogma of the RC church has been more focused on cataloging and describing angels than anything else. Out of this has come the primary contact of angels with humans as guardian angels.

The angels in the life of the church

334 In the meantime, the whole life of the Church benefits from the mysterious and powerful help of angels.[201] (1939)

335 In her liturgy, the Church joins with the angels to adore the thrice-holy God. She invokes their assistance (in the funeral liturgy's In *Paradisum deducant te angeli* … ["May the angels lead you into Paradise …"]). Moreover, in the "Cherubic Hymn" of the Byzantine Liturgy, she celebrates the memory of certain angels more particularly (St. Michael, St. Gabriel, St. Raphael, and the guardian angels). (1138)

336 From its beginning until death, human life is surrounded by their watchful care and intercession.[202] "Beside each believer stands an angel as protector and shepherd leading him to life."[203] Already here on earth the Christian life shares by faith in the blessed company of angels and men united in God. (1020)[142]

Cited as scripture for this role is Mt 18:10; Lk 16:22; Ps 34:7; 91:10–13; Job 33:23–24; Zech 1:12; Tob 12:12., none of which asserts or even hints at a universal guardian role. Instead specific angels on limited occasions were sent to select individuals to guide and / or protect them from an enemy. The move from scripture to tradition involves a huge stretch of imagination and twisting of the contextual meaning of the biblical passages.

Interestingly, nothing is mentioned in the official dogma of the RC church about appearance, wings etc. The scholastic speculation of the middle ages never gave attention to visual appearance, apart from their reflecting a divine glory.[143]

Who are they?

329 St. Augustine says: " 'Angel' is the name of their office, not of their nature. If you seek the name of their nature, it is 'spirit'; if you seek the name of their office, it is 'angel': from what they are, 'spirit,' from what they do, 'angel.' "[188] With their whole beings the angels are servants and messengers of God. Because they "always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven" they are the "mighty ones who do his word, hearkening to the voice of his word."[189]

330 As purely spiritual creatures angels have intelligence and will: they are personal and immortal creatures, surpassing in perfection all visible creatures, as the splendor of their glory bears witness.[190]

E. During the Protestant Reformation[144]

Naturally, the reaction of the Protestant reformers in the sixteenth century should be probed. First, in order to understand the heart of Protestantism, one should study the so-called "Five Solas:" *Sola scriptura; Sola fide; Sola gratia; Solus Christus; Soli Deo gloria*.[145] Of these the last one, *Soli Deo gloria*, pertains to

'form' and 'matter', but are subsistent forms, each differing from the other and forming a species in himself. From their immateriality follows that they are by nature immortal and incorruptible; having neither extension nor dimensions they cannot be in a place, but can move and act on material beings by applying their power to the place in which they want to be. Duns Scotus, on the other hand, regards angels as composite beings consisting of form and matter, though the latter is not corporeal. There may be several angels in the same species, and several angels may occupy the same place. The angelic mode of knowledge had already been discussed by St Augustine (Civ. Dei, 11. 29), from whom St Thomas took over the distinction between *scientia matutina* and *scientia vespertina*, the former being supernatural knowledge which sees its objects in the Divine Word, and the latter natural, which knows individual things not, indeed, as man, through the senses, but through the intelligible species infused into the angelic intelligence at its creation. St Thomas held that its proper object was the immaterial, and its mode not discursive reasoning, but the intuitive perception of conclusions in their principles, a view contested by Duns Scotus, and later by F. Suárez, who held that angels can reason. On the question of the Fall, St Thomas taught that the angelic will is such that one good or bad act fixes him irrevocably in good or evil, whereas Duns Scotus regarded a succession of acts as necessary. On several other points both schools of thought were in agreement. Thus most Scholastics taught that the angels were created at the same time as the material universe, that they were elevated to a state of grace in order to undergo a test followed either by supernatural beatitude or eternal damnation, and that the chief Divine mysteries, esp. the Incarnation, were then revealed to them. In the question of the hierarchy they all followed Dionysius more or less closely."

[F. L. Cross and Elizabeth A. Livingstone, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 62–63.]

[142]Catholic Church, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd Ed. (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 2000), 87.

[143]Catholic Church, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd Ed. (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 2000), 85–86.

[144]"The attempt to prove on rational grounds the existence of angels is not limited to the work of Thomas, however. We also find it in later theologians. Johannes Quenstedt, one of the seventeenth-century Lutheran scholastics, argued that the existence of angels, or of something similar to them, is probable, because there are no gaps in nature.[8] Just as there are beings purely corporeal, such as stones, and beings partly corporeal and partly spiritual, namely humans, so we should expect in creation beings wholly spiritual, that is, angels. Even Charles Hodge argued that the idea that the human should be the only rational being is as improbable as that insects should be the only irrational animals: 'There is every reason to presume that the scale of being among rational creatures is as extensive as that in the animal world.'[9]" [Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*., 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1998), 460–461.]

[145]"The **solas** (occasionally, *solae*) of the Protestant Reforma-

Print of the destruction in the Church of Our Lady in Antwerp, the "signature event" of the Beeldenstorm, August 20, 1566, by Frans Hogenberg

our study. This Latin phrase means "glory to God alone," and defines the opposition of Protestants to the Catholic veneration of saints, angels, and the virgin Mary.[146] In this stance Luther and Calvin radically criticized and condemned any devotion given to angels as a heretical departure from scripture and a perversion of the apostolic Gospel.[147] Devotions to angels was equated with witchcraft and magic.[148] The iconoclasm of the middle 1500s reasserted itself in the middle 1600s, especially in the British Isles.[149] The RC teaching on angels was not so much the target as was the placing of angelic icons[150] in the

tion are a set of principles held by theologians and churchmen to be central to that period of change in the western Christian church.[1][2][3][4] Each sola -- from the Latin meaning 'alone' or 'only' -- represents a key belief in Christian faith held by the Protestant reformers in contradistinction to the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church of the day. The Reformers claimed that the Roman Catholic Church, especially its head, the Pope, had usurped divine attributes or qualities for the Church and its hierarchy. The precise number of solas varies among commentators, but lists specifying three and five are common." ["Five solae," wikipedia.org]

[146]"*Soli Deo gloria* means 'glory to God alone' and it stands in opposition to the veneration or 'cult', perceived by many to be present in the Roman Catholic Church, of Mary the mother of Jesus, the saints, or angels. *Soli Deo gloria* is the teaching that all glory is to be due to God alone, since salvation is accomplished solely through His will and action — not only the gift of the all-sufficient atonement of Jesus on the cross but also the gift of faith in that atonement, created in the heart of the believer by the Holy Spirit. The reformers believed that human beings — even saints canonized by the Roman Catholic Church, the popes, and the ecclesiastical hierarchy — are not worthy of the glory that was accorded them; that is, one should not exalt such humans for their good works, but rather praise and give glory to God who is the author and sanctifier of these people and their good works. It is not clear the extent to which such inappropriate veneration is actually approved by the Roman Catholic Church and so the extent to which this Sola is one of justified opposition is unclear. The Roman Catholic's official position, for example as described in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, make it clear that God alone is deserving of glory." ["Five solae," wikipedia.org]

[147]"In the post-medieval period, angels were very nearly erased, both literally and figuratively, from the spiritual landscape of Europe in the wake of the purges of Catholic devotional practices and iconography by Protestant reformers. And yet devotion to angels persisted in the popular imagination through the Enlightenment and well into the modern era; indeed, to this day angels remain immensely popular." [Richard F. Johnson, "Angels in the Early Modern World (review)," *The Catholic Historical Review* 93, no. 4 (October 2007), 937.]

[148]"The veneration of saints had been rejected by Protestant reformers as being an unacceptable remnant of Catholic superstition. Met with vehement skepticism, devotions to angels were often associated with witchcraft and magic. Indeed, the cult and intercession of saints and angels were among the first casualties of the Reformation. Accounts of angelic apparitions were prohibited. The Book of Tobit, which recounts the interaction of the archangel Raphael and Tobit's son, Tobias, was excluded from the Protestant Bible. Artistic representations of angelic beings were equated with idolatry. By the end of English civil war, a new wave of iconoclasm swept across the British Isles and Europe, and the defacement and destruction of images of angels in churches was widespread." [Richard F. Johnson, "Angels in the Early Modern World (review)," *The Catholic Historical Review* 93, no. 4 (October 2007), 937.]

[149]"Some of the Protestant reformers, in particular Andreas Karlstadt, Huldrych Zwingli and John Calvin, encouraged the removal of religious images by invoking the Decalogue's prohibition of idolatry and the manufacture of graven (sculpted) images of God. As a result, individuals attacked statues and images, and others were lost during unauthorised iconoclastic riots. However, in most cases, civil authorities removed images in an orderly manner in the newly reformed Protestant cities and territories of Europe.

"Significant iconoclastic riots took place in Zurich (in 1523), Copenhagen (1530), Münster (1534), Geneva (1535), Augsburg (1537), Scotland (1559), Rouen (1560) and Saintes and La Rochelle (1562).[9] The Seventeen Provinces (now the Netherlands, Belgium and parts of Northern France) were disrupted by widespread Protestant iconoclasm in the summer of 1566. This is called the 'Beeldenstorm' and began with the destruction of the statuary of the Monastery of Saint Lawrence in Steenvoorde after a 'Hagenpreek', or field sermon, by Sebastiaan Matte.

"Hundreds of other attacks included the sacking of the Monastery of Saint Anthony after a sermon by Jacob de Buysere. The Beeldenstorm marked the start of the revolution against the Spanish forces and the Catholic Church.

"The Iconoclast belief was causing havoc throughout Europe, and in 1523, specifically due to the Swiss reformer Huldrych Zwingli, a vast number of his followers viewed themselves as being involved in a spiritual community that in matters of faith should obey neither the visible Church nor lay authorities."

["Iconoclasm: Protestant Reformation," wikipedia.org]

[150]A confusing maize of terms exists here in the English language:

icon /ˈʌɪkɒn, -k(ə)n/

■ noun

1 (also ikon) a devotional painting of Christ or another holy

churches and around the city. It especially proved to be objectionable for them to be placed in the cemeteries as a part of the head stones for graves. The functional practice of giving devotion to angels was at the heart of the attack and labeling of such as witchcraft. But ridding Protestant Europe of these practices proved to be exceedingly difficult since the Catholic sentiment was deeply embedded in the laity, especially among the poor and working classes of people. But other dynamics ultimately toned down the efforts to rid the country side of these images of saints and angels. Political violence came to dominate and this created not only political instability but economic chaos in parts of Europe. This served to force Protestants into alternative postures of opposition to the adoration of angels via statues of them in the churches.[151] The foolishness of the medieval Catholic scholastic discussion has been summed up in the highly debatted question of *How many angels can dance on a pinhead?* This served as a significant weapon for Protestant opposition to RC teaching on angels.[152] One of the major dynamics of

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figure, typically on wood, venerated in the Byzantine and other Eastern Churches.

2 a person or thing regarded as a representative symbol or as worthy of veneration.

3 Computing a symbol or graphic representation on a VDU screen of a program, option, or window.

4 Linguistics a sign which has a characteristic in common with the thing it signifies, for example the word snarl pronounced in a snarling way.

—ORIGIN 16th century (in the sense 'simile'): via Latin from Greek eikōn 'image'.

iconic

■ adjective

1 relating to or of the nature of an icon.

2 (of a classical Greek statue) depicting a victorious athlete in a conventional style.

—DERIVATIVES iconically adverb iconicity noun (chiefly Linguistics).

iconify

■ verb (iconifies, iconifying, iconified) Computing reduce (a window on a VDU screen) to an icon.

iconize /ˈʌɪkənʌɪz/

■ verb

1 Computing another term for ICONIFY.

2 treat as an icon.

icono-

■ combining form

1 of an image or likeness: iconology.

2 relating to icons.

—ORIGIN from Greek eikōn 'likeness'.

iconoclast /ʌɪˈkɒnəklast/

■ noun

1 a person who attacks cherished beliefs or institutions.

2 a person who destroys images used in religious worship, especially one belonging to a movement opposing such images in the Byzantine Church during the 8th and 9th centuries.

—DERIVATIVES iconoclasm noun iconoclastic adjective iconoclastically adverb

—ORIGIN 17th century: via medieval Latin from ecclesiastical Greek eikonoklastēs, from eikōn 'likeness' + klan 'to break'.

iconography /ˌʌɪkəˈnɒgrəfi/

■ noun (plural iconographies)

1 the use or study of images or symbols in visual arts.

the visual images, symbols, or modes of representation collectively associated with a person or movement.

2 a collection of illustrations or portraits.

—DERIVATIVES iconographer noun iconographic adjective iconographical adjective iconographically adverb

iconolatry /ˌʌɪkəˈnɒlətri/

■ noun chiefly derogatory the worship of icons.

—ORIGIN 17th century: from ecclesiastical Greek eikonolatreia, from eikōn 'likeness' + -latria 'worship'.

iconology /ˌʌɪkəˈnɒlədʒi/

■ noun the study of visual imagery and its symbolism.

symbolism.

—DERIVATIVES iconological adjective

iconostasis /ˌʌɪkəˈnɒstəsɪs/

■ noun (plural iconostases /-siːz/) a screen bearing icons, separating the sanctuary of many Eastern churches from the nave.

—ORIGIN 19th century: from modern Greek eikonostasis, from eikōn 'likeness' + stasis 'standing'.

[Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson, eds., *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).]

[151]"Angels continued to appeal at a popular level. Although the Reformation thinkers had a fundamentally different understanding of salvation from that of their Catholic antagonists, one which precluded the intercession of both saints and angelic beings, there was a split between theological elites and local populaces on the issue of the efficacy of angelic devotion. In general, Protestant theologians accepted the existence of angels and that they had manifested themselves visibly and actively in the Old Testament era, but they were far more reluctant to accept the active agency of angels in their own day. As a whole, they insisted that angels were not to be adored or worshiped as idols.

"Nonetheless, after the iconoclasm of mid-sixteenth century in England, angelic iconography was reintroduced in the mid-seventeenth century. As one might imagine, images of angels were particularly prevalent on funerary monuments. Indeed, it is at the moment of death, or in the contemplation of it, that the Protestant reformers found popular belief in angelic intervention the most tenacious. And although this general acceptance of angels and their ministrations at the moment of death ran the risk of diminishing divine omnipotence, Protestant writers in fact found it useful in their efforts to recast death and salvation from an occasion susceptible to human intervention to one dependent entirely on divine prerogatives."

[Richard F. Johnson, "Angels in the Early Modern World (review)," *The Catholic Historical Review* 93, no. 4 (October 2007), 937-938.]

[152]"How many angels can dance on a pinhead? Even today the question is immediately recognisable – it is emblematic of the unworldliness of medieval discussions of angels and of the foolishness of scholastic theology. It was, however, a Protestant slur on Roman Catholicism coined by 17th-century Englishmen. Its earliest use is by the Protestant clergyman William Chillingworth in 1638. The question then assumed its modern form in 1659 when Henry More mocked those who 'dispute how many of them booted and spur'd may dance on a needle's point at once'." [See more at:http://www.historytoday.com/joad-raymond/protestant-cul-

the Catholic Counter Reformation was the restoring of icons and emphasis upon angels. This movement began with the Council of Trent (1545-1563) and ended at the close of the Thirty Years' War in 1648 with the treaties of Osnabrück and Münster as part of the wider Peace of Westphalia.

One should understand that attention to angels was not at the heart of the iconoclastic controversies[153] in the sixteen and seventeenth centuries. Other theological and political dynamics drove these controversies. But the images of saints, angels, and the virgin Mary provided a visible point of controversy and attack.

Interestingly across Europe through the 1600s, the role of angels is not discussed much and the discussion usually centers on the 'guardian angel' function by one of the supposed 'choirs' of angels. This left the door open for one's guardian angel to function as a spiritual 'butler' whose duty was to protect and provide. This view was more at the popular lay level than in the official dogma of the RC church. The guardian angel played a highly significant role at death in making sure the individual was taken to heaven safely and without delay. Thus the Protestant condemnation of angelic activity in the contemporary experience of individuals found substantial resistance. People didn't want to give up this 'perk' of their religious life. Besides, God and Christ seemed mostly connected to the clergy of the church and thus rather distant power figures to them as were the clergy. Angels were close by and accessible. A guardian angel was always attentive whereas the parish priest typically wasn't. But among the more educated segments of European Protestantism strong support for getting rid of all these idolatrous images existed and remained firmly in place.

The settlement of the 'new world' in North America was done by Protestants with vivid opposition to images in churches and any sort of devotion to angels etc., which to them signaled Romanism as a gigantic heresy. Of those, the most opposition came from the Puritans. This does not imply a denial of the existence of angels. Rather, it signals an understanding that limits their activities to the heavenly world and on earth to the biblical era. Certainly no contemporary angelic appearances were deemed possible. Only demons continued to be active on earth, and thus the infamous witch hunts of colonial New England where demons supposedly took control over individuals. Such evil people had to be purged from the 'Christian' settlements that were being established as the Kingdom of God on earth.

III. Modern Ideas about Angels[154]

One of the severe challenges to grasping the idea of angels in the modern world is sorting through an almost impossible maize of different and often contradictory ideas found in western societies.

ture-miltons-angels#sthash.ntv2OLQe.dpuf]

[153]Also important to the larger topic of iconoclasm in Christianity is the beginning controversy over the producing of images -- either painted or statues -- in eastern Christianity in the sixth through ninth centuries. The work of John of Damascus (676-749) in his *On the Divine Images: Three Apologies against Those Who Attack the Divine Images* played a significant role in the adoption of both painted and statue images being placed in the eastern churches.

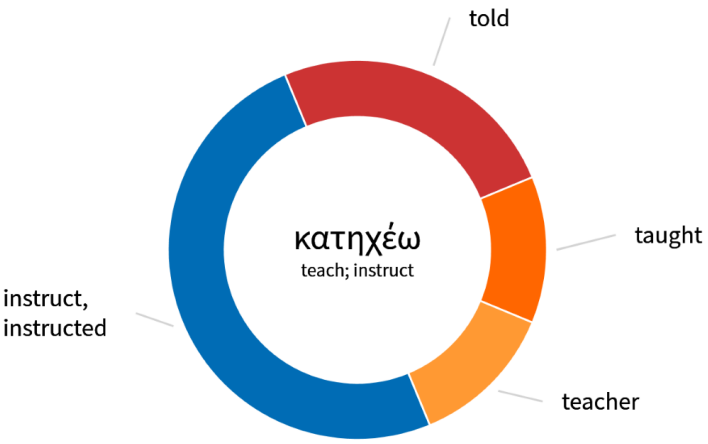
> "Strong opposition to the use of images arose at key times in the life of the church. In this chapter, we will examine the iconoclastic controversies that occurred in the Eastern church in the eighth and ninth centuries and in the Reformed Reformation churches in Europe in the sixteenth century."

[Richard A. Jensen, *Envisioning the Word: The Use of Visual Images in Preaching* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005), 30.]

[154]"While some earlier theologies had given angels too large a place in the total scheme, some more recent thought has minimized the doctrine or even eliminated angels from theological consideration. This has been especially true in Rudolf Bultmann's demythologization program. He notes that angels play a large part in the New Testament. They occupy heaven (in the case of the good angels) and hell (in the case of demons). They are not limited to heaven and hell, however. Both angels and demons are actively at work on the middle layer, earth, as well. Angels, on behalf of God, may intervene miraculously in the created order. And demons enter into humans, bringing them under their control through such means as causing sickness. Today, however, we no longer believe in such spiritual beings, says Bultmann. We now understand, through our increased knowledge of nature, that disease is caused not by demons, but by viruses and bacteria. We similarly understand what brings about recovery from illness. Bultmann asserts: 'It is impossible to use electric lights and the wireless and to avail ourselves of modern medical and surgical discoveries, and at the same time to believe in the New Testament world of spirits and miracles.'[10] He maintains that there is nothing unique or distinct about the New Testament writers' belief in spirits. It is merely a reflection of the popularly held ideas of their day. In other words, it is a myth. Even many moderns who know nothing about Bultmann's highly technical and finely tuned theory of hermeneutics discard belief in angels as obsolete. Among the first areas of Christian doctrine to be popularly demythologized are the beliefs in angels and hell.

"In the last part of the twentieth century, a real resurgence of angelology has taken place. In society in general there has been a considerable growth of interest in the supernatural, including a fascination with the occult. Perhaps as a reaction against naturalistic scientific rationalism, explanations falling outside the realm of natural law have flourished in some circles. Christians have shown renewed interest in demonology, particularly demon possession and demonically induced illnesses. Related to that, although lagging somewhat in time, has been a popular interest in good angels.[11] In the 1990s, this emerged in several movies related to the reality and activity of angels. Yet, for all of this, there has not been a balanced inquiry into the nature and activity of angels, both the good and the evil."

[Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*., 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1998), 461.]



The starting point for a religious oriented study of angels should be the official views of various Christian groups in the modern world. These statements will spell out official stances, although the actual beliefs and practices of members can and often do differ significantly from the official views.

My starting point here will be the catechisms of different Christian groups, since these by design are attempting to explain official views to laity in simple, nontechnical language. Where important and helpful, attention will be given to the more technical doctrinal statements that serve as a foundation for the catechisms. Also I will give some attention to the evolution of viewpoint over time since many of these catechisms have been in existence for several centuries and have been periodically revised. The discussion will begin with current views and attempt to work backward in time to the beginning of the catechism for each group.

A. Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy.

First a word about a catechism.[155] The source verb κατηχέω is used some seven times inside the NT with the general sense of to instruct orally.[156] As such, it is a part of a wide range of verbal and nominal expressions related to teaching the Gospel.[157] In the emerging patristic Christianity beginning in the third century, this general idea took on more formal meaning as manuals of instruction were developed for teaching the basics of the church to new or prospective converts.[158]

A distinct Latin vocabulary then develops from the Greek verb κατηχέω. Catechesis, "oral instruction of catechumens." Catechetical, adjective, "of or relating to teaching by question and answer, cate'chetically adv" Catechetics, "that part of theological training that deals with the imparting of religious knowledge through catechesis and printed catechisms." Catechism, "a collection of questions and answers that are used to teach people about the Christian religion." Catechumen, "a convert to Christianity receiving training in doctrine and discipline before baptism."

Over the centuries in Roman Catholic tradition, these instruction manuals, i.e., catechisms, have undergone periodic revisions and updating. The Council of Trent in the sixteenth century was the last really significant updating of the catechism for the Roman Catholic Church.[159] But the work of the Second Vatican Council completed in the 1960s laid the foundations for numer-

[155]"A catechism (pronunciation: /ˈkætəˌkizəm/; from Greek: κατηχέω, to teach orally), is a summary or exposition of doctrine and served as a learning introduction to the Sacraments traditionally used in catechesis, or Christian religious teaching of children and adult converts.[1] Catechisms are doctrinal manuals often in the form of questions followed by answers to be memorised, a format that has been used in non-religious or secular contexts as well. A Catechumen refers to the designated recipient of the catechetical work or instruction. In the Catholic Church, they were usually placed separately during Holy Mass from those who received the Sacrament of Baptism." ["Catechism," wikipedia.org]

[156]"**33.225 κατηχέωa:** to teach in a systematic or detailed manner—'to instruct, to teach.' οὗτος ἦν κατηχημένος τὴν ὁδὸν τοῦ κυρίου 'this man was instructed in the Way of the Lord' Ac 18:25; περὶ ὧν κατηχήθης λόγων 'concerning the things that you have been taught' Lk 1:4. It is also possible to understand κατηχέω in Lk 1:4 as denoting merely what has been told rather than what has been taught (see κατηχέωb, 33.190). This distinction is an important one since it implies a quite different relationship of Theophilus to the text of the Gospel of Luke. If Lk 1:4 pertains merely to Theophilus 'being told' something, then one might assume that Theophilus was not a Christian, in which case he may have been a government official to whom the joint publications (the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles) would have been directed as a defense of Christianity. On the other hand, if one understands κατηχέω in the sense of 'to be taught' or 'to be instructed,' then one would assume that Theophilus was a Christian who had been instructed in the faith. The relationship of Theophilus to the message would then determine in a number of contexts the difference between 'we' inclusive and 'we' exclusive." [Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 413.]

[157]See topics **33.224-33.250 Teach,** in Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996),

[158]"In the great era of the Fathers of the Church, saintly bishops devoted an important part of their ministry to catechesis. St. Cyril of Jerusalem and St. John Chrysostom, St. Ambrose and St. Augustine, and many other Fathers wrote catechetical works that remain models for us." ["Catechism of the Catholic Church," vatican.va]

[159]"The ministry of catechesis draws ever fresh energy from the councils. the Council of Trent is a noteworthy example of this. It gave catechesis priority in its constitutions and decrees. It lies at the origin of the Roman Catechism, which is also known by the name of that council and which is a work of the first rank as a summary of Christian teaching. ."[12] The Council of Trent initiated a remarkable organization of the Church's catechesis. Thanks to the work of holy bishops and theologians such as St. Peter Canisius, St. Charles Borromeo, St. Turibius of Mongrovejo or St. Robert Bellarmine, it occasioned the publication of numerous catechisms." ["Catechesis," Vatican.va]

ous updates beginning in the 1970s. The publishing of the General Catechetical Directory beginning in 1971 provides extensive reference to background materials for updating the catechisms.[160] Thus the much more detailed documents referenced in this directory provide the background for each topic covered in a catechism. Thus this 'double tier' set of documents becomes crucial for understanding different points of official Catholic doctrine in today's world.

Now regarding the topic of angels, the current stance in the Catechism of the Catholic Church is:

> ANGEL: A spiritual, personal, and immortal creature, with intelligence and free will, who glorifies God without ceasing and who serves God as a messenger of his saving plan (329–331).[161]

In the structure of this document, a broader reference is given as points 329-331. But actually statements in paragraph 5 subunit *I. The Angels* goes into a much broader discussion under the categories of The Existence of Angels; Who Are They?; Christ "With all His Angels"; and The Angels in the Life of the Church. This covers declarations 328 through 336.[162] Guardian Angels are defined as "Angels assigned to protect and intercede

[160]"The Second Vatican Council did not devote a document especially to the subject of *catechesis*. However, if one were to assemble all the texts from the various conciliar documents which either explicitly or implicitly refer to catechesis and arrange them in a logical sequence, one would be surprised to discover a veritable summa of catechesis, a sort of conciliar catechetical directory, so great is the volume of texts of doctrinal abundance that reveal a fundamental homogeneity.

"In a well-known and truly programmatic paragraph for a renewal of catechesis in the Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church, the nature, object and tasks of catechesis are defined (Christus Dominus, 14). Nothing has been left out of that text: catechesis of adults and the catechumenate, sources of catechesis and the necessity of the human sciences for an adequate preparation of the catechist.

"The council understood that a true renewal in the area of catechesis would have to be the fruit of a special study conducted at an international level by experts and pastors, and thus the end of the Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church prescribed that a 'directory for the catechetical instruction of the Christian people' be drawn up.

"The Congregation for the Clergy, in execution of this conciliar mandate, availed itself of a special commission of experts and consulted the various episcopal conferences throughout the world, which made numerous suggestions and observations on the subject. The text prepared was revised by an ad hoc theological commission and by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The General Catechetical Directory was definitively approved by Pope Paul VI on March 18, 1971, and promulgated on April 11, 1971."

["General Catechetical Directory," CatholicCulture.org]

[161]Catholic Church, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd Ed. (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 2000), 866.

[162]I. THE ANGELS

The existence of angels—a truth of faith

328 The existence of the spiritual, non-corporeal beings that Sacred Scripture usually calls "angels" is a truth of faith. The witness of Scripture is as clear as the unanimity of Tradition. (150)

Who are they?

329 St. Augustine says: " 'Angel' is the name of their office, not of their nature. If you seek the name of their nature, it is 'spirit'; if you seek the name of their office, it is 'angel': from what they are, 'spirit,' from what they do, 'angel.' "[188] With their whole beings the angels are servants and messengers of God. Because they "always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven" they are the "mighty ones who do his word, hearkening to the voice of his word."[189]

330 As purely spiritual creatures angels have intelligence and will: they are personal and immortal creatures, surpassing in perfection all visible creatures, as the splendor of their glory bears witness.[190]

Christ "with all his angels"

331 Christ is the center of the angelic world. They are his angels: "When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him.…"[191] They belong to him because they were created through and for him: "for in him all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities—all things were created through him and for him."[192] They belong to him still more because he has made them messengers of his saving plan: "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to serve, for the sake of those who are to obtain salvation?"[193] (291)

332 Angels have been present since creation and throughout the history of salvation, announcing this salvation from afar or near and serving the accomplishment of the divine plan: they closed the earthly paradise; protected Lot; saved Hagar and her child; stayed Abraham's hand; communicated the law by their ministry; led the People of God; announced births and callings; and assisted the prophets, just to cite a few examples.[194] Finally, the angel Gabriel announced the birth of the Precursor and that of Jesus himself.[195]

333 From the Incarnation to the Ascension, the life of the Word incarnate is surrounded by the adoration and service of angels. When God "brings the firstborn into the world, he says: 'Let all God's angels worship him.' "[196] Their song of praise at the birth of Christ has not ceased resounding in the Church's praise: "Glory to God in the highest!"[197] They protect Jesus in his infancy, serve him in the desert, strengthen him in his agony in the garden, when he could have been saved by them from the hands of his enemies as Israel had been.[198] Again, it is the angels who "evangelize" by proclaiming the Good News of Christ's Incarnation and Resurrection.[199] They will be present at Christ's return, which they will announce, to serve at his judgment.[200] (559)

The angels in the life of the Church

334 In the meantime, the whole life of the Church benefits from the mysterious and powerful help of angels.[201] (1939)

[335] In her liturgy, the Church joins with the angels to adore the thrice-holy God. She invokes their assistance (in the funeral liturgy's In Paradisum deducant te angeli … ["May the angels lead you into Paradise …"]). Moreover, in the "Cherubic Hymn" of the Byzantine Liturgy, she celebrates the memory of certain angels more particularly (St. Michael, St. Gabriel, St. Raphael, and the guardian angels). (1138)

336 From its beginning until death, human life is surrounded by their watchful care and intercession.[202] "Beside each believer stands an angel as protector and shepherd leading him to life."[203] Already here on earth the Christian life shares by faith in the bless-

for each person (336)."[163] Occasionally scripture texts are listed but mostly citations from the church fathers and church councils stand as the authoritative source for the declarations, true to the functional reality of RC teaching. Although not a part of the official doctrine of the RC church, the medieval nine fold hierarchy is widely accepted as a part of the church's teaching. The influence of Thomas Aquinas, who is known in Catholic circles as "the angelic doctor," remains very strong.[164]

One should note that in other assertions of angels being 'spiritual beings' nothing is stated about appearance etc. Perhaps because the Bible is largely silent at this point, their appearance did not merit any doctrinal statement.[165] To grasp this aspect in the RC tradition one must turn to art, both painting and sculpture, for some understanding. And again the design of appearance artistically only represents 'official' understanding to the degree of church acceptance of paintings and statues to be placed inside the churches.

When an examination of the history of artistic depiction is made, one point becomes especially clear: different angels look very different from other angels.

How an angel is presented visually depends greatly upon which of the nine categories of angels are being drawn or sculpted.[166] Also potentially confusing is that the supposed ninth order of angels is also labeled angels and stresses those which interact with humanity. But a wildly complex system of 'job responsibilities' is proposed and thus another factor in the visual depiction depends upon what job the angel is to do. A further dynamic comes into play when the 'named' angels are depicted. A sense of individuality became necessary in order to distinguish among the scheme of dozens of angels with a name. Finally, in both the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic traditions, angels through the middle ages are universally male. Only in the modern era does one find occasionally a 'female' angel, and even less in these religious traditions an angelic child

ed company of angels and men united in God. (1020)

[Catholic Church, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd Ed. (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 2000), 85–87.]

[163]Catholic Church, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd Ed. (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 2000), 881.

[164]Cf. the *Prima Pars* of the *Summa Theologica*, questions 50-64 for details.

[165]"While the Bible does not usually provide descriptions of angels, they are depicted widely in iconography. The biblical text associates angels with several images, including:

- fire (Exod 3:2; Judg 6:21; 13:20; Psa 104:4; see also Smith, "Remembering God," 637)
- war and weaponry (Num 22:22–35; Josh 5:13–15; 2 Kgs 6:17; 1 Chr 21:16–30; 2 Chr 32:21)
- the stars (Judg 5:20; Job 38:7; Isa 14:13; Dan 8:10).

"Revelation 14:6 depicts angels as flying, but there are no descriptions of angels with wings. Other supernatural figures are portrayed as having wings, such as the cherubim, the seraphim, and the winged women of Zechariah (Zech 5:9; see also Rev 12:14). Landsberger argues that the figure of the winged angel originated in the Hellenistic period, when the wings of the cherubim and seraphim were appropriated for angels (Landsberger, "Origin of the Winged Angel," 227–54). Keel points out that much earlier images of winged sphinx discovered in the Levant have been connected with biblical cherubim (Keel, Symbolism, 166–71).

"Images of winged serpents, probably of Egyptian origin, have sparked a debate about whether seraphim are serpent-like creatures. Of note is their linguistic tie to the fiery serpents of Num 21, Deut 8, and Isa 14, and the existence of serpent imagery (Joines, "Winged Serpents," 410–15; compare Mettinger, "Seraphim," 742–44; Hendel, "Serpent," 744–47)."

[J. A. McGuire-Moushon, "Angel, Critical Issues," ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015).]

[166]In contrast to Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox, no formal hierarchy for angels is set forth in Islam. But a variety of structures are informally presented both in the Quran and other related writings:

> There is no standard hierarchical organization in Islam that parallels the division into different "choirs" or spheres, as hypothesized and drafted by early medieval Christian theologians. Most Islamic scholars agree that this is an unimportant topic in Islam, simply because angels have a simple existence in obeying God already, especially since such a topic has never been directly addressed in the Quran. However, it is clear that there is a set order or hierarchy that exists between angels, defined by the assigned jobs and various tasks to which angels are commanded by God. Some scholars suggest that Islamic angels can be grouped into fourteen categories as follows, of which numbers two-five are considered archangels. Not all angels are known by Muslims however, the Quran and hadith only mentions a few by name. Due to varied methods of translation from Arabic and the fact that these angels also exist in Christian contexts and the Bible, several of their Christian and phonetic transliteral names are listed.

["Islamic view of angels," wikipedia.org]

depiction. Now the secular, non-religious tradition of angels in the western world gravitates dominantly toward female angels and angels as children.

Seemingly the original image of winded creatures described in the Bible as the cherubim and the seraphim was the starting point for adopting wings for angels beginning in the patristic era. This was connected to the developing belief that these heavenly creatures were angels -- a view in direct contradiction to scripture (= ζῷα, not ἄγγελοι) but nonetheless an increasingly popular view beginning in the patristic era. Wings became the one distinguishing factor in artistic presentation that the being was an angel rather than a human. Of course, the Bible never mentions angels with wings, but they became essential for visual depiction later on in the different schemes adopted by different Christian groups.

The teaching about angels in the **Eastern Orthodox traditions** is very similar to that of Roman Catholic tradition. Both depend largely upon the same patristic sources for their core understanding.[167] Two aspects, however, distinguish Orthodox perspectives. First, they are less rational and more mystical. Detailed structures and doctrinal depictions are not found in the eastern church, as is true in RC teaching. Second, greater focus on celebrating angels in the liturgy of the churches surfaces. Hence most of the artistic depictions of angels reflect early Byzantinian perspective and are more extensive than in the RC tradition, as well as distinct from RC depictions from the middle ages on.

B. Protestant Belief

In **Protestantism**, a wide diversity of perspectives exists.[168] As already noted above, the vigorous rejection of icons characterized the reformers of the 1500s uniformly. But this did not mean a denial of the existence of angels on their part. The existence and work of angels on earth is, however, largely restricted to the biblical era. Also, their heavenly role is seen exclusively to glorify God, and not in any way as intercessors to God in behalf of Christians on earth. The thinking on guardian angels varies, but does not trace its origins back to Honorius of Autun (1080-1154 AD), who first developed a scheme of guardian angels inside the RC church.[169]

Martin Luther in his Large Catechism (comments on the First Commandment) gets close to reflecting on angels with his condemnation of RC practice of praying to saints:

> Besides, consider what in our blindness, we have hitherto been practising and doing under the Papacy.

[167]"The Orthodox Church's angelology is more or less similar to the traditional Western Christian doctrine of angels. This is not surprising since they share the same Patristic sources on angels: the Bible, preeminently, then Origen, the Cappadocian Fathers--Sts. Basil, Gregory Nazianzen, Gregory of Nyssa, St. Augustine, St. Gregory the Diologist (the Great), St. John of Damascus and, above all, St. Dionysius the Areopagite. The main difference between East and West in angelology is, as is true in many other areas, that the Eastern Church was less systematic, more inclined to practice a kind of creative imprecision. Unlike the West, which tended to dot every 'i' and cross every 't' in theological matters, especially after Aquinas, whose treatise on angels in the Summa Theologiae is probably the most thorough and systematic ever written, the Eastern Orthodox Fathers tended to make whatever basic distinctions were necessary and then leave the rest open. For example. the Orthodox were disinclined to define angelic nature as "pure spirit", which if you really look at it is so abstract a concept as to be almost meaningless, just as meaningless as its counterpart, 'pure matter'. Rather than the oversimplified dichotomy of spirit versus matter, the Orthodox tradition tended to see a more complex relationship between spirit and matter, one closer to actual human experience than to the needs of a formal logic." ["The Ecology of Angels: Angelic Hierognosis in the Eastern Orthodox Tradition," angelfire.com]

[168]"The Evangelical [=Protestant] Confessions of faith date mostly from the sixteenth century (1530 to 1577), the productive period of Protestantism, and are nearly contemporaneous with the Tridentine standards of the Church of Rome. They are the work of an intensely theological and polemical age, when religious controversy absorbed the attention of all classes of society. They embody the results of the great conflict with the Papacy. A smaller class of Confessions (as the Articles of Dort and the Westminster Standards) belongs to the seventeenth century, and grew out of internal controversies among Protestants themselves. The eighteenth century witnessed a powerful revival of practical religion and missionary zeal through the labors of the Pietists and Moravians in Germany, and the Methodists in England and North America, but, in its ruling genius, it was irreligious and revolutionary, and undermined the authority of all creeds. In the nineteenth century a new interest in the old creeds was awakened, and several attempts were made to reduce the lengthy confessions to brief popular summaries, or to formularize the doctrinal consensus of the different evangelical denominations. The present tendency among Protestants is to diminish rather than to increase the number of articles of faith, and to follow in any new formula the simplicity of the Apostles' Creed; while Romanism pursues the opposite course." [Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical Notes: The History of Creeds,* vol. 1 (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1878), 209–210.]

[169]"According to Saint Jerome, the concept of guardian angels is in the "mind of the Church". He stated: 'how great the dignity of the soul, since each one has from his birth an angel commissioned to guard it'.[2]

"The first Christian theologian to outline a specific scheme for guardian angels was Honorius of Autun in the 12th century. He said that every soul was assigned a guardian angel the moment it was put into a body. Scholastic theologians augmented and ordered the taxonomy of angelic guardians. Thomas Aquinas agreed with Honorius and believed that it was the lowest order of angels who served as guardians, and his view was most successful in popular thought, but Duns Scotus said that any angel is bound by duty and obedience to the Divine Authority to accept the mission to which that angel is assigned. In the 15th century, the Feast of the Guardian Angels was added to the official calendar of Catholic holidays."

["Guardian angel," wikipedia.org]

> If any one had toothache, he fasted and honored St. Apollonia [[acerated his flesh by voluntary fasting to the honor of St. Apollonia]; if he was afraid of fire, he chose St. Lawrence as his helper in need; if he dreaded pestilence, he made a vow to St. Sebastian or Rochio, and a countless number of such abominations, where every one selected his own saint, worshiped him, and called for help to him in distress. Here belong those also, as, e.g., sorcerers and magicians, whose idolatry is most gross, and who make a covenant with the devil, in order that he may give them plenty of money or help them in love-affairs, preserve their cattle, restore to them lost possessions, etc. For all these place their heart and trust elsewhere than in the true God, look for nothing good to Him nor seek it from Him.

Critical to this was Luther's interpretation of comunio sanctorum, communion of the saints, in the Apostles' Creed. For him, it defines the meaning of the phrase 'the holy Christian church,' as a community of holy people on earth in rejection of the RC teaching that *comunio sanctorum* alludes to the possibility of Christians on earth communicating with the select group of heavenly saints.[170] Thus prayer for Luther is directly to God and not mediated through appeal to saints, the Virgin Mary, or angels.[171] Luther did not comment much about angels, and thus his views are difficult to determine with certainty.[172] He discussed the 'evil angels' of Satan, i.e., demons more than the heavenly angels, since his ongoing spiritual battle was perceived with Satan's temptations of him through demons working around him and in the lives of people in opposition to the reformer.

But John Calvin was more vocal in his views.[173] He reflects most of the views of Luther, but touched on the issue more often than did Luther, in part due to his intensive work with the scripture text. Thus his views tend to be anchored in the scripture text and his understanding of it in regard to angels.

A rather clear expression of Calvin's views surfaces in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion,* volume 1, sections 3 through 19. First comes a discussion of 'holy angels' (#s 3-12) and followed by an assessment of 'evil angels' (#s 13-19). He strongly warns against placing a lot of emphasis upon them, as did the RC tradition from medieval times. As divinely created beings, angels remain somewhat mysterious since divine revelation does not engage in much detail about them. Calvin is quite skeptical of guardian angels for all believers. He recognized the hermeneutical failure of moving from specific instances of angelic ministry to a universalizing of this into a guardian role. Also, he is skeptical of an angelic head of every human nation that RC fathers assumed from Daniel 10-12. He vigorously rejects the RC scheme of a hierarchy of angels. Heb. 1:14 becomes an important scriptural anchor point for Calvin that angels are ministering spirits doing God's bidding whatever that may be. Note Heb. 1:14,

> οὐχὶ πάντες εἰσὶν λειτουργικὰ πνεύματα εἰς διακονίαν ἀποστελλόμενα διὰ τοὺς μέλλοντας κληρονομεῖν

[170]Item docent, quod una Sancta Ecclesia pepetuo mansura sit. Est autem Ecclesia congregatio Sanctorum [Versammlung aller Gläubigen],[11] in qua Evangelium recte [rein] docetur, et recte [laut des Evangelii] administrantur Sacramenta.

Also they teach that one holy Church is to continue forever. But the Church is the congregation of saints [the assembly of all believers], in which the Gospel is Rightly taught [purely preached] and the Sacraments rightly administered [according to the Gospel].

Article 7a "On the church," in the *Confessio Augustana*, i.e., the *Augsburg Confession* (1530 AD).

[171]It should be noted that the Swedish writer Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) impacted many on the European continent with his cultic views of angels as former human beings now in heaven. Most who came under his influence were dissenters who were outside established Christianity, either Catholic or Protestant. Some of his thinking shaped Joseph Smith's views of angels in the Mormon church.

[172]In contrast to this is the rather unusual statement drawn from his analysis of Revelation 6-7:

> Chaps. 6 and 7 in the Apocalypse Luther interpreted as a picture of unfolding world history and then church history in particular. In this panorama angels play a rather important role: *The evil angels are heretics, and good angels are the 'holy fathers, like Spirido, Athanasius, Hilary, and the Council of Nicea.'* [37] [from WA-DB 7]

[Winfried V ogel, "The Eschatological Theology of Martin Luther: Part II: Luther's Exposition of Daniel and Revelation," *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, (25, No. 2, 1987), 192.]

[173]"Many medieval theologians, including Thomas Aquinas, wrote at length about the nature of angels and about features of the angelic hierarchy. But John Calvin, along with other Reformation thinkers, rejected such teachings as so much speculation. Calvin admonished readers not to concern themselves with details about the creation, nature, and functioning of angels that Scripture has not given us to know.

"Calvin did, however, insist on the reality of angels, whom he described as "celestial spirits whose ministry and service God uses to carry out all things he has decreed" and as ones in whom 'the brightness of the divine glory' shines forth richly. He fully accepted Scriptural testimony that God uses angels to protect those God has undertaken to guard. But Calvin doubted the existence of individual guardian angels (finding little Biblical evidence for them), and doubted also the usefulness of such a doctrine: 'For if the fact that all the heavenly host are keeping watch for his safety will not satisfy a man, I do not see what benefit he could derive from knowing that one angel has been given to him as his especial guardian.'

"Calvin also expressed concern that humans too easily drift toward belief 'that angels are the'ministers and dispensers of all good things to us.' Such a view leads to our regarding angels too'highly, even worshiping them. 'Thus it happens that what belongs to God and Christ alone istransferred to them.' Calvin's warning, which is paralleled in several of the brief references to'angels found in the confessions, is appropriate in today's era of widespread angel-adoration."

[Susan R. Garrett, "What do Presbyterians believe about angels? Messengers of God," Presbyterians Today, April 2000]

σωτηρίαν;

Are not all angels spirits in the divine service, sent to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?

Conclusions drawn beyond this basic declaration become useless speculation that leads one into heresy.[174]

The impact of Calvin upon the reformed church movement has been enormous from the middle 1500s to the present time.[175] The very influential Heidelberg Catechism only mentions angels in Q/A 124 in passing in regard to the model prayer in Mt. 6:10b, γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου, ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς, May Your will be done as it is in Heaven also on earth. The obedience of angels in Heaven to God is the standard for believers on earth. Also the earlier Belgic Confession (1561) does not go much deeper than the Heidelberg Confession (1563); cf. Article 12b:

> God has also created the angels good, that they might be messengers of God and serve the elect. Some of them have fallen from the excellence in which God created them into eternal perdition; and the others have persisted and remained in their original state, by the grace of God. The devils and evil spirits are so corrupt that they are enemies of God and of everything good. They lie in wait for the church and every member of it like thieves, with all their power, to destroy and spoil everything by their deceptions.
>
> So then, by their own wickedness they are condemned to everlasting damnation, daily awaiting their torments. For that reason we detest the error of the Sadducees, who deny that there are spirits and angels, and also the error of the Manicheans, who say that the devils originated by themselves, being evil by nature, without having been corrupted.

Thus in the doctrinal statements within the Reformed and Presbyterian churches not much is said about angels. Calvin's cautions have produced a neglect in exploring this subject with much depth, even in the influential systematic theology publications. Occasionally in this tradition, a voice is raised calling for more attention to be given to angels. For example that of Johan D. Tangelder in "Angels in Reformed Spirituality." But careful reading of his article reflects a tendency to resort to rationalistic speculation that goes well beyond the scriptural depiction, and makes similar errors that Calvin so cautioned against in his time.

Although products of sixteenth century central Europe, both Luther and Calvin rightfully cautioned against adopting man made speculations about angels that move well beyond the scriptural depiction. The official creedal declarations of the reformed movement have wisely limited themselves to just the scriptural declarations, and nothing beyond.

C. Popular Religious Thinking

It is at the pop level of religious life where curiosity about angels has resurfaced since the late 1900s. And one should not overlook that this is a cultural phenomena far more than a religious issue. The Beatles' fascination with eastern religious mysticism in the 1960s signals a huge western cultural shift back toward angels both inside and outside Christianity. In Protestant life, the idea of angels mostly seemed antiquated and irrelevant through the 1800s and 1900s. Even among Catholics, the interest in angels centered mainly in the non European aspects of RC church life, and for the US especially the Hispanic side.

This curiosity, largely with no restraints such as scriptural norms or church dogma, has gone almost every conceivable direction imaginable.[176] Billy Graham's

[174]"It remains to give warning against the superstition which usually begins to creep in, when it is said that all blessings are ministered and dispensed to us by angels. For the human mind is apt immediately to think that there is no honour which they ought not to receive, and hence the peculiar offices of Christ and God are bestowed upon them. In this ways the glory of Christ was for several former ages greatly obscured, extravagant eulogiums being pronounced on angels without any authority from Scripture. Among the corruptions which we now oppose, there is scarcely any one of greater antiquity. Even Paul appears to have had a severe contest with some who so exalted angels as to make them almost the superiors of Christ. Hence he so anxiously urges in his Epistle to the Colossians, (Col 1: 16, 20) that Christ is not only superior to all angels, but that all the endowments which they possess are derived from him; thus warning us against forsaking him, by turning to those who are not sufficient for themselves, but must draw with us at a common fountain. As the refulgence of the Divine glory is manifested in them, there is nothing to which we are more prone than to prostrate ourselves before them in stupid adoration, and then ascribe to them the blessings which we owe to God alone. Even John confesses in the Apocalypse, (Rev 19: 10; 22: 8, 9) that this was his own case, but he immediately adds the answer which was given to him, 'See thou do it not; I am thy fellow servant: worship God'." [John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion,* 1.10]

[175]"Most Reformed dogmatics offer nothing more than modest summaries of Biblical data on angels. For example, in his *Systematic Theology* Dr. Louis Berkhof devoted only nine pages to good and fallen angels. Even the historic Reformed confessions have few references to angels. The *Belgic Confession* affirms 'the creation of all things, especially of angels' (Art. 12). The Heidelberg Catechism speaks of angels as willingly and faithfully carrying out the will of the heavenly Father (Q&A 124)." [Johan D. Tangelder, "Angels in Reformed Spirituality," reformedreflections.ca]

[176]In the free churches of Protestantism on both side of the Atlantic, the topic of angels hardly ever arises in formal statements of belief. For example, the current version of the Baptist Faith and Message by the SBC does not mention angels. Partially this tendency to omit or limit references is due to the wide influence of the Reformed Heidelberg Catechism over groups well outside the reformed tradition. In the systematic theologies, mention of angels occasionally surfaces but mostly as an attempt to re-state scripture assertions without detailed interpretation. Only in Bible dictionaries written within the free church traditions does one find much

very shallow, and often unscriptural publication, Angels: God's Secret Agents, first released in 1975, was an immediate best seller and helped heighten the curiosity in many circles in the US. Unfortunately it mainly served to spread and legitimize the medieval Catholic speculations infecting today's Protestants with similar teachings that the reformers of the 1500s had stoutly condemned. But a flood gate of nonsense was opened and wild speculation continues still among pop writers both religious and secular. Serious, critical study of scripture does not gain much hearing outside of very limited circles of careful scholars. Careful scholarship encounters the same kinds of barriers that Luther, Calvin and other early reformers came up against in their time with the masses of people. The core Protestant tenants of both *Sola scriptura* and *Soli Deo Gloria* pretty much stand on the sideline with scripture being manipulated as a launchpad for wild speculation in the same way as happened in medieval western teaching about angels.

What drives this current fascination? To be sure, it has qualities of being a fad that will gradually die off. But for the last few decades a sharp curiosity about angels has given book publishers millions of dollars in profits.

Let me offer my opinion from observations in Christian ministry since the early 1960s. Two central urges mostly stand behind this trend. First, the modern world with its interests centered on fact based information has limited itself too much to the sensual, i.e., what it can touch, taste, smell, see, hear etc. Down inside the human heart is an intuition that life is much more that these things. And that 'deeper' reality is mysterious and largely unknown. Angels belong to that dimension of life and reflect these mysterious qualities, at least in popular thinking.

Second is a sense that God or a god or gods stands at the heart of this mysterious world. Angels come to stand between the individual and deity in some manner. Thus deity becomes more manageable if I can appeal to an angel for help with deity. Modern advertising has made angels friendlier and more approachable. Often they are young girls or children, rather than the warrior male figures that dominate the picture in the Christian Bible. Angels being associated with holidays such as Valentine's Day have had a huge impact on promoting curiosity in them. The angel Cupid has achieved prominent status via this way in modern society, in spite of its origins in Greek and Roman paganism as the son of Venus, with the Latin name of Amor and the Greek name Eros.[177]

Both of these dynamics stand contrary to core Christian values. God becomes known through Jesus Christ, not via angels. The mystery that most people feel is due to their lack of deep commitment to God through Christ. *The Gospel is mystery exposed* and made clear to those who come to Christ sincerely. For the believer, the issue is not 'managing God' but God controlling us. And as is quite clear in the New Testament, it is the direct leadership of God's Spirit who resides inside the life of the believer that matters. Prayer is made directly to God, not through some heavenly mediator such as an angel or a saint. Our relationship is with the Heaven Father whom we are privileged to address as Abba.

Dependence upon, and worse, adoration of angels reflects a false sense of spiritual existence that does not want to deal with God directly. It has many of the same dynamics that drove ancient paganism which sought hard to manipulate the gods in order to avoid their anger and to get desired personal stuff from them such as wealth, victory in battle etc. The existence of angels as semi-deities in ancient paganism served to keep the gods / goddesses at bay and not too close at hand to the individual worshipers. This same kind of false thinking has found its way back into some circles of Christianity in the early post-modern world.

Conclusions

What then can be concluded legitimately about angels? The following presents what I consider to be the proper framework for understanding the topic of angels.

1. Divine revelation in scripture is the exclusive source for legitimate understanding. When tracing the history of interpretation just inside Christianity on the topic of angels, one notices the quick departure from the framework of scriptural depiction. The relatively few broad statements about angels in the Bible becomes a supposed launchpad for massive enlargement into a relatively coherent picture, especially a twisted interpretation of Eph. 1:21 and Col. 1:16, that was increasingly based not on divine revelation but in-

discussion, and these articles are almost always limited to scripture references.

Now in the fringe groups like the Mormons the subject of angels typically looms large and usually with its own set of teachings drawn from a mixture of Christian heretical writers of earlier centuries combined with philosophical elements and pagan religion aspects.

[177]"Cupid is winged, allegedly, because lovers are flighty and likely to change their minds, and boyish because love is irrational. His symbols are the arrow and torch, 'because love wounds and inflames the heart.' These attributes and their interpretation were established by late antiquity, as summarized by Isidore of Seville (d. 636 AD) in his *Etymologies*.[15] Cupid is also sometimes depicted blindfolded and described as blind, not so much in the sense of sightless—since the sight of the beloved can be a spur to love—as blinkered and arbitrary." ["Cupid," wikipedia.org]

stead drawn from both Jewish apocalyptic and pagan religion traditions. The insatiable urge was that no one was going to 'out Christian the Christians' in teaching about angels.[178] By the fourth to fifth centuries the bulk of 'orthodox' teaching about angels inside Christian depended on these non revelatory pagan sources for its content. This content continued to expand until the early middle ages. Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite in the 4th to 5th century is a major source for this expansion with his popular *De Coelesti Hierarchia*. But it was the mystical speculation of medieval Roman Catholicism where the growth reached its zenith inside Christianity. Both Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox still largely bases their teachings about angels on the medieval traditions. The church father Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) in his *Summa Theologiae* (1265-1274) develops the most cohesive and massive set of teachings ever developed about angels.

This history reveals the huge dangers of ignoring the scriptural limits of presentation on a topic. Inevitably other sources replace the authority of divine revelation in scripture as the foundation of teaching. Then the issue becomes one of meaningless human speculation rather than of clear revelation from God.

2. Our view of the topic of angels must not move beyond the established limits of scriptural disclosure. For Protestant Christians the anchor principle of *sola scriptura* stands enormously important. No religious belief has authenticity apart from being grounded in divine revelation in the Bible. And this means especially that such divine revelation not only defines the content of that belief but equally so it sets the limits of that belief for application to subsequent generations. Exegesis, not dogmatics, is the key here. Dogmatics has value only so long as it stays within the established boundaries of belief set by divine revelation. The moment conclusions are drawn, that go beyond these boundaries, divine authority for those conclusions disappears and worthless human speculation takes over!

Solid, broad based principles of exegesis are essential to determining both content and boundaries for belief. Creeds that state belief with a rather meaningless listing of scripture texts are not only worthless but potentially dangerous to the spiritual life of individuals. Systematic theologies stressing coherence and clear reasoning are the death kneel to a vibrant spiritual life and relationship with God. No human relationship can be defined and explained with static reasoning. Relationship of a person with Almighty God who is infinitely more complex and mysterious than another human being has even less possibility of reasoned explanation. The apostolic writers recognized this and thus never attempted to provide any such explanation. Instead glimpses into this relationship from something of a collage like presentation surface in the pages of scripture. One should never forget the principle of 'hiddness' of divine truth as asserted by Jesus in the teaching the Kingdom of God through parables (cf. Mt. 13:10-17 // Mk. 4:10-12 // Lk. 8:9-10).

One can detect the critical importance of this when studying the topic of angels. Quickly the limited depictions of angels in the Christian Bible are replaced by a maize of wild, contradictory speculation that is far more confusing than enlightening. Aquinas in his systematizing of religious belief in the middle ages could have brought Christianity back to the solid foundation of scripture. But he opted instead to give systematic coherence to the wild speculations of Catholic teachers of his and previous times. The impact was to legitimize paganism inside the Catholic Church and its teachings. What a tragedy! No wonder the Protestant reformers had little to do with teaching about angels and focused instead on cleansing Christianity of pagan idolatry in its worship and devotion to icons.

3. Awareness of the history of the subject and the various traditions has importance mostly as a warning of what happens when the understanding goes beyond divine revelation. In various religious traditions, especially in the three Abrahamic traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, curiosity about angels has loomed large at different times across the centuries. In Christianity at large, interest has surged in the fourth-fifth centuries, the middle ages, the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries, and the end of the twentieth century. In the gaps between these peaks of curiosity angels have not been of particular interest in most Christian circles. Often the peaking of interest inside Christianity has been largely driven by external cultural factors where Christianity was located. For example, the latest interest was driven in large part by the Beatles and a renewed interest in mystical eastern religion.

It is especially in such times of heightened interest that wild speculation blossoms and extends itself way beyond the boundaries of divine revelation in the Bible. A given culture begins raising questions about the supernatural and Christians feel compelled to respond even where the scriptures are silent. Confusion and controversy inevitably follow. Somehow a silent faith in God seems unacceptable to many Christians, when speaking means denying what God has revealed. To speak only when God speaks and to keep one's mouth

[178]By this point in time, differing systems of angels can be traced in the primary documents of Judaism, Zoroastrianism, and surviving documents of the Greek, Roman, and Egyptian religions.

shut when God doesn't speak is a hard lesson to learn. In reality, this betrays a lack of confidence in the wisdom of divine revelation.

Calvin's advice remains applicable on the topic of curiosity about angels:

> Calvin teaches that we are to look away from the angels to the Lord of the angels so that we ascribe all glory to him. He says they "lead us away unless they lead us by the hand straight to him." In addition, he says they lead us away "unless they keep us in the one Mediator, Christ, that we may wholly depend upon him, lean upon him, be brought to him, and rest in him".[179]

What motivates such curiosity about angels? Historically the dominate motivation is apologetic. That is, the urge to supply a 'superior' answer to some non Christian contention. Deeper, however, stands the desire to 'personalize' and 'individualize' God. Sometimes Christians feel the desire for God to be centered exclusively, if not dominantly, in their needs and desires. Projecting angels as divine agents somehow satisfies this urge. The sad reality, however, is that just the opposite is achieved by projecting some system of angels, and especially one of so-called guardian angels.

The fatal flaw in such projections is that it reduces "God" down to a more manageable size in the satisfaction of an essentially egocentric religious orientation. As Calvin warns, such speculation drives us away from both Christ and God by placing barriers, i.e., angels, between us and the Trinity. Paul's key declaration, κύριον Ἰησοῦν, in Rom. 10:9 is all we need. That brings us into direct relationship with God Himself through Jesus Christ. It is the immediacy and unhindered nature of this relationship that God establishes with every believer that is to be nourished and developed, As John 1: 3 signals, the objective of Christianity is ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς κοινωνίαν ἔχητε μεθ' ἡμῶν. καὶ ἡ κοινωνία δὲ ἡ ἡμετέρα μετὰ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ μετὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. so that you might also enjoy fellowship with us and our fellowship is exclusively with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. ἡ κοινωνία is such a profound concept that the entire tractate of First John is devoted to explaining and amplifying its meaning. Speculation about angels diminishes concern for this immediate relationship with our God.

Should we then ignore the huge body of literature written on the topic of angels? Not really. But we must not approach it with the thought that we will learn something new that is not contained in scripture. More than anything, acquainting ourselves with this literature should warn us against speculation and intense curiosity about a religious topic that usually goes beyond where God goes in revelation. The colossal mistakes made by human writers stands as huge cautions.

4. The biblical depiction of angels has several important aspects that must always be maintained. When turning to sacred scripture for an authoritative depiction of angels, one must recognize the substantial diversity of viewpoint reflected in the Bible. No systematic picture is given. Instead, quick glimpses here and there are provided in order to help us understand what God deemed appropriate for us to know.

Almost every glimpse is situational in nature. That is, we catch a glance of an angel or angels carrying out a specific mission to select individuals at a point of time in their lives where angelic appearances were deemed appropriate by God. Generalizing timeless principles from these localized events has been the fatal flaw for the majority of interpreters over the centuries. Hermeneutics 101 tells us to exercise extreme caution in deriving timeless truths out of individual, local situations described in scripture. Especially is this true of one-to-one equations in applications. The literary aspects, along with the historical aspects, of every text MUST NOT be ignored! Heresy follows when they are.

What therefore do we find in examining the scriptures? The following represents a limited summary evaluation of this coming out of the above in-depth study of scripture.[180] First, some foundational observations generally (#s a-c), and then a summary overview of biblical depictions (# d).

a. The picture of angels is a developing story from the beginning in Genesis to the ending in Revelation.

Not much is said about angels in the Hebrew Bible. And these statements tend to show up in writings coming at the very end of the Old Testament era. The picture is hazy and very generalized.

First of all, one must define terms since no Hebrew word with the precise meaning of angel existed in the OT. A large number of Hebrew terms are used, although the dominate term מַלְאָךְ, *malʾāk,* is found most often with the idea of messenger, usually divine, although sometimes human. Thus substantial challenges to Bible translators exist in knowing the proper way to translate these terms. Much interpretative assumption is inevitably built into all the translations in modern languages. This then produces variations of translations across the modern spectrum that can be confusing to the reader today.

The variety of terms clearly reflects the later Babylonian influence on the OT conceptualizations.[181] Thus

[179]Colin Burcombe, "Calvin, Angelology and Christology in the Visions of Zechariah 1 and 2," academia.org. The quotes are taken from Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*: 3.14.12.

[180]For the more detailed summation of the biblical materials, see the earlier Concluding Observations: Biblical materials

[181]"Any survey of the concept of angels has to take account

the exilic and post-exilic editors on the text of the Hebrew Bible play an important role in shaping the variety of perspectives with language and ideas contemporary to the fifth and fourth centuries BCE.

It is especially during the intertestamental era that speculation about supernatural beings associated with God in Heaven explodes.[182] Yet no uniform view point emerges as the Jewish writings reflect much of the confusing diversity of surrounding middle eastern perspectives of that time.

During the first Christian century, i.e., the apostolic era, a lot of Jewish speculation can be found but mostly in the apocalyptic Jewish writings of the century before and after the birth of Christ. Rabbinic Judaism does not pick up this theme until the third century AD. Developing Roman Catholic views emerge in part as reaction to this emphasis in Rabbinic Judaism.

The writers of the NT reflect some awareness of this Jewish material but refuse to engage in the speculative nature of most of it. The central role of Christ as the exclusive Mediator between sinful humanity and a holy God limits severely the mentioning of angels in the NT. These center mainly in the birth and resurrection of Christ in the synoptic gospels and in the heavenly council in the book of Revelation.

b. The picture of angels in the Bible is a widely diverse presentation by different writers at different times.

The limited OT picture is very diverse but revolves mainly around three perspectives. Angels are a part of ***the heavenly council of God*** that is the divine counterpoint to the royal court of earthly kings.[183] Other beings are a part of this royal court but not human beings. Isolated prophets might momentarily stand in the heavenly court in order to receive their commission from God. But this came through visionary experience only. It is not until well into the intertestamental era that the idea of people, namely, covenant Israel, might also be included in this royal court. Second, angels make up ***a heavenly army***.[184] Yet in no circumstance do these

of the growth and development of the idea over the centuries, the different literary genres in which references occur, and the different social contexts from which the ideas emerge. Although references to angels occur in the oldest strata of the OT (in pentateuchal narratives and in early poetry), there is a clear increase in speculation about the heavenly world in prophetic writings from the exilic and early postexilic periods. It is in the late Second Temple period, however, that the most developed speculations occur. Why there should have been such a development in lore about heavenly beings is not fully understood. Increasing contact with Babylonian and Persian religious traditions may be one element (Russell 1964: 257–62), though most of the features of the developed angelology have clear antecedents in preexilic Israelite tradition. Perhaps much of the speculation on the heavenly world was not really new but represents old Israelite popular religion which only finds its way into literary sources in the postexilic writings (Collins 1977: 101–4). Be that as it may, the increase in discourse about angels in the later sources indicates that those authors found the speculation on the heavenly world a useful way to explore serious religious and theological issues—the weakness of Israel in a world of empires, the difficulty of understanding cosmos and history, the existence of evil, the failure of human religious institutions, the hope and experience of transformation, and so on." [Carol A. Newsom, "Angels: Old Testament," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 249.]

[182]"It is in the late Second Temple period that speculation about the heavenly world and its inhabitants becomes fully developed. There are some new developments in angelology, the most significant being the dualistic notion of evil angels opposed to God, but most of the beliefs about angels are essentially expansions and concretizings of older notions. Numerous references to angels can be found in many genres of literature produced in different social settings, suggesting that a general body of lore concerning angels was common to the popular religion of the era. But the concentration of extensive angelological speculation in certain genres of literature (esp. apocalypses) and in the literature of certain communities (e.g., Qumran) reminds one that the religious and intellectual significance of angelology differed among various Jewish groups." [Carol A. Newsom, "Angels: Old Testament," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1:251–252.]

[183]"**1. The Divine Council.** In Israel, as in the ANE in general, the underlying conception of the heavenly world was that of a royal court. Yahweh was envisioned as a king, and at his service were divine beings who served as counselors, political subordinates, warriors, and general agents. These divine beings were often referred to as a collective group (Gen 28:12; 33:1–2; Pss 29:1; 89:6–9) and were understood to constitute a council ('the council of El,' *ʿădat ʾēl*, Ps 82:1; 'the conclave of Yahweh/Eloah,' *sôd yhwh*, Jer 23:18; *sôd ʾĕlôah*, Job 15:8), 'the conclave/assembly of the holy ones' (*sôd/qāhāl qĕdōšîm*, Ps 89:6, 9). Similar expressions occur in ANE sources (Phoen: *mpḫrt ʾil gbl qdšm*; Ug: *pḫr ʾilm, pḫr bn ʾilm, dr ʾil*, etc.; Akk: *puḫur ilāni*; see Mullen 1980). The most extensive description of the council and its tasks in the OT is found in 1 Kgs 22:19–22. There, the prophet Micaiah ben Imlah sees the enthroned Yahweh with 'all the host of heaven standing about him on his right and on his left.' When Yahweh poses a question to the council, there is general discussion ('and one said one thing and another said another'), until a specific proposal emerges ('then a spirit came forth and stood before Yahweh and said …'). Prophets might stand in the council of Yahweh to receive a word (Jer 23:18, 22; Isaiah 6). The council was also a place of accusation and judgment (Psalm 82). Perhaps because of their privileged place in the divine council, angels were considered to be paragons of knowledge and discernment (2 Sam 14:17, 29; 19:28).

"According to Deut 32:8 (LXX and 4QDeut), when God organized the political structure of the world, each of the nations was assigned to one of the angels/minor deities, with Israel reserved for Yahweh's own possession. Psalm 82 assumes a similar setup but describes the revocation of the arrangement. In that text God brings accusation before the divine council concerning the failure of these minor deities to ensure justice, for which they are to be ousted and killed."

[Carol A. Newsom, "Angels: Old Testament," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1:249.]

[184]"**2. The Heavenly Army**. In Deut 33:2, Yahweh is said to be accompanied by ten thousand holy ones as he advances from the

angels literally engage in physical combat with human armies. They represent the awesome power of God that is implemented directly by God Himself. Third, angels mostly function as ***messengers*** carrying a word from God to individuals on earth. But the role of מַלְאָךְ, *malʾāk,* should be defined broadly rather than tightly.[185]

The NT referencing of angels focuses around the above emphases found in the OT.[186] The role of an ἄγγελος as a divine messenger centers in the cluster of limited references regarding Jesus' birth and resurrection/ascension: birth, Mt. 1:20-21; 2:13, 19-20; Lk. 1:11-20, 2:8-14; resurrection, Mt. 28:5-7; Mk. 16:6-7; Lk. 24:4-7; Acts 1:10. Luke in Acts also portrays angels in the messenger role: 8:26 (to Philip); 10:3-11:13 (to Cornelius); 12:7-15 (to Peter). Also Revelation in numerous references sees angels as delivering a divine message apocalyptically to people on earth.

Mostly in Revelation, the OT idea of a royal court in Heaven that includes angels among the different beings is prominent.[187] The heavenly army as angels from the OT is mentioned especially in Revelation and a few times in connection with Jesus' return and final judgment: Mt. 13:39, 41, 49; 16:27; 24:31; 25:31. Yet as Rev. 19:15, 21 and 20:9 clearly assert, what defeats the enemies of Christ are the simple words spoken by Christ Himself and the gush of fire coming out of the sky as a consequence. The angelic army does not participate directly in a battle, for everything is over with in a moment of time.

Just as the OT shows little regard for the appearance of angels, similar is that which is found in the NT. Nowhere is it mentioned that they have wings. Outside of Revelation which portrays angels in apocalyptic vision, not literal description, the closest idea to appearance is that found in the resurrection narratives where the angel(s) are described as Jewish young men in their twenties dressed in very fine clothes: Mk. 16:5; John 20:12. But in other references they were striking different in appearance and caused severe shock on that same occasion: Lk. 24:4-5. The one consistent image through both the OT and NT is that angels appear as grown Hebrew males, not females or children.

c. No systematic depiction of angels from the Bible is legitimately possible because of the way they are characterized.

To attempt to systematize the idea of angels inside the Bible is to attempt certain failure. The diversity of perspectives, of functions etc. prohibits such analysis. What is crystal clear is that the biblical writers used only bits and pieces of information in occasion references. No logical, systematic picture stands behind any of these references.

It is not until much later that a few church fathers attempt to systematize the idea of angels. And in order to do this, most of their material comes from outside scripture in a combination of Jewish and pagan sourc-

southland (cf. the reference in Ps 68:18 to the many thousands of chariots with Yahweh at Sinai). These are undoubtedly the angelic armies that are referred to in the common divine title Yahweh of Hosts. In one of the rare instances in which an individual angelic being with a clearly defined office is mentioned, Joshua encounters a mysterious figure with a drawn sword who identifies himself as 'the commander of the army of Yahweh' (*śār ṣābaʾ yhwh*, Josh 5:14). When the prophet Elisha was besieged, he was given protection by 'horses and chariotry of fire,' invisible to all whose eyes were not opened by Yahweh (2 Kgs 6:17)." [Carol A. Newsom, "Angels: Old Testament," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1:249.]

[185]"**3. Agents and Messengers. a. Role and Significance**. In addition to the various roles that the angelic beings play as a group, there are many texts which describe the actions of a single angelic figure. Almost always in these instances the term *malʾāk* ('messenger') or *malʾāk yhwh/ (hā) ʾĕlōhîm* ('messenger of Yahweh/ God') is used. The term 'messenger' should not be construed too narrowly, however, for these divine beings carry out a variety of tasks. They do announce births (of Ishmael, Gen 16:11–12; Isaac, Gen 18:9–15; Samson, Judg 13:3–5), give reassurances (to Jacob, Gen 31:11–13), commission persons to tasks (Moses, Exod 3:2; Gideon, Judg 6:11–24), and communicate God's word to prophets (Elijah, 2 Kgs 1:3, 15; a man of God, 1 Kgs 13:18; cf. 1 Kgs 22:19–22; Isaiah 6; Jer 23:18, 23). But the angel may also intervene at crucial moments to change or guide a person's actions (Hagar, Gen 16:9; Abraham, Gen 22:11–12; Balaam, Num 22:31–35; the people of Israel, Judg 2:1–5) and may communicate divine promises or reveal the future in the course of such intervention. In addition angels may be the agents of protection for individuals or for Israel as a whole (Gen 24:7, 40; 48:16; Exod 14:19–20; 23:20, 23; 32:34; Num 20:16; 1 Kgs 19:5–8; 2 Kgs 19:35 = Isa 37:36; Pss 34:8—Eng 34:7; 91:11). But they may also be Yahweh's agents for punishment (Genesis 19; Num 22:33; 2 Samuel 24 = 1 Chronicles 21; Pss 35:5–6; 78:49)." [Carol A. Newsom, "Angels: Old Testament," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1:249–250.]

[186]The issue of terminology for the Greek NT is much less complex than for the Hebrew Bible.

> The Greek **angelos** is now a term specific for angels, referring to human messengers only in Matt 11:10, and Jas 2:25. Angels are called holy ones (Jude 14), and stars (Rev 1:16, 20; 2:1; 3:1; the fallen watchers, 1 En. 86–88), and the heavenly host (*stratia*, army; Luke 2:13; Acts 7:42). Spirits commonly refers to evil spirits (e.g., Matt 10:1; Luke 7:21; Gal 4:3; 1 Tim 4:1; Rev 16:14), but occasionally is used of humans (1 Cor 14:32; Heb 12:23; Rev 22:6) or good angels. Angels are spirits who serve God (Heb 1:14). God is the Father of spirits (Heb 12:9), and has seven spirits, corresponding to the seven Angels of the Presence (Rev 1:4; 3:1; 4:5). The tradition of four archangels may be recalled in Rev 7:1–2.
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> [Maxwell J. Davidson, "Angel," ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006–2009), 1:153.]

[187]As typical of apocalyptic writings both Jewish and early Christians, angels play a prominent role. Thus 67 out of the 175 references to ἄγγελος in the NT are found in Revelation.

es. Even the scripture texts themselves tend to be twisted into false interpretations in order give the teaching a deceptive appearance of being 'biblical.' Thus comes the wise warning of the reformer John Calvin that we should not concern ourselves very much about angels. This comes off of Paul's stern warning against any kind of worshiping of them in Col. 2:18,

> μηδεὶς ὑμᾶς καταβραβευέτω θέλων ἐν ταπεινοφροσύνῃ καὶ ***θρησκείᾳ τῶν ἀγγέλων,*** ἃ ἑόρακεν ἐμβατεύων, εἰκῇ φυσιούμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ νοὸς τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ,
>
> Do not let anyone disqualify you, insisting on self-abasement and ***worship of angels,*** dwelling on visions, puffed up without cause by a human way of thinking,

And we must not overlook that θρησκείᾳ used here stresses primarily outward expressions of devotions to them. It is not merely an inner attitude of adoration that is strictly forbidden.

d. But instead a collage of depictions can be drawn in broad rather than detailed strokes.[188] This is both helpful for understanding scriptural teaching and for establishing boundaries of belief about angels that have scriptural authority behind them.

Hopefully by this point in the study, the realization has begun to dawn that angels in the Bible play a very secondary role. Their total obedience to God puts some of them at God's disposal for use on limited occasions for specific missions to earth, normally in behalf of His people in some manner or another. Most of their activity is confined to Heaven. Particularly for Christians, their role is to exalt Christ along side the people of God. In Heaven, they join all the others around the throne of God in unending praise and adoration of Him who sets on the throne and of the slaughtered Lamb. Eventually all the people of God will share that privilege with everyone else in Heaven, including the angels.

Bibliography

The list of writings on the subject of angels is massive and almost endless. Very little of it represents serious, in depth treatment of biblical depictions. Instead, most represents a summation of the history of belief in angels centered in the Roman Catholic tradition of Christianity, and/or cultural sources outside Christianity. A good part of this is simply a reflection of which groups have thought about and produced writings dealing with the topic over the centuries.

Most Protestant groups have not produced many, if any, serious studies on the topic of angels. Some pop studies, e.g., Billy Graham's book on angels, exist but are of little value to the serious student of the Bible. Much deception is what I have discovered to dominate most of the publications that cater to the contemporary cultural curiosities rather than divine revelation. Not since the initial reformers in the 1500s have Protestants heard the message of limited insight coming out of the scriptures on this topic.

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[188]Side note: I considered creating a graphics collage in order to visually illustrate this point. But of the thousands of images available through internet searches, no depictions of angels without wings exists. In the artistic history of angels, adding wings to human like figures has been the exclusive way of signaling angelic depiction. Without wings, the viewer of the statue or painting would not recognize the individuals as angels. Yet, the idea of needing wings is contrary to the idea of angels as supernatural beings. They, just as the resurrected Jesus did, moved through space at will via supernatural power rather than by flapping some wings.

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