

Angelmania

Angels, Demons and Other Flying Creatures – Part I

Selected Scripture

Introduction

I am calling the series we are beginning today, “Angels, Demons and Other Flying Creatures”. Now, you may wonder who the other flying creatures are. So I will start with a brief discussion of these.

There are cherubim and seraphim that fly about doing the bidding of sovereign God. They may be simply hovering around His throne, even at this very moment, chanting, “Holy, holy, holy.”

There are also the spirits of deceased believers who have, so to speak, flown to heaven, and are capable, even now, of transcending space.

There will also be the future glorified bodies of believers who, like Christ, will be able to materialize and dematerialize at will. Jesus Christ walked through a closed door, and yet, ate fish. Believers will also be able to be in one place and then “fly” to another point in the blink of an eye. Those of us who believe in Christ will be able to travel without needing to walk between the new heaven and the new earth, while enjoying the eternal service and worship of God, as the book of Revelation reveals.

So, introduce yourself to others by saying, “Hello, I’m one of God’s future flying creatures!”

The Current Prominence of Angels

There is no doubt that the subject of the spirit world has produced unbelievable fascination and an entire industry of speculation. People everywhere, including myself, are fascinated with the existence and role of angels and demons. More people are talking about heaven, angels, and the spirit world than ever before.

Outside the church

Well over a hundred books are currently in print on the subject of angels and the afterlife. Recently, five of the top ten books on a list of religious best-sellers were books dealing with the subject of angels.

One book that has topped the charts for many months, is a how-to guide instructing people on

methods of contacting angels, communicating with them, and even receiving guidance from them.

A well known publisher lists these titles in its catalogue:

- *Angel Letters,*
- *Angel Power,*
- *Angel’s Bidding,*
- *Angels and Aliens,*
- *The Angels Weep,*
- *Angels Over Their Shoulder,*
- *The Angels Within Us,*
- *Ask Your Angel,*
- *An Angel to Watch Over Me.*

This list only includes the listings under the letter “A”.

Television specials like, *Touched by an Angel,* *Angels: the Mysterious Messengers,* and *Angels: Beyond the Light* have communicated fiction about angels that has become, more or less, gospel truth.

According to a survey report in *Time* magazine, sixty-nine percent believed in the existence of angels and forty-six percent believed they had a guardian angel. My wife believes I have a guardian angel that rides around on the front bumper of my pickup truck!

There is an angel-watch network in New Jersey that exists to monitor angelic comings and goings. They have a bi-monthly journal with thousands of subscribers.

In addition, there is the Angel Collector’s Club of America in which the members exchange everything from angel cookie jars to angel food recipes. They hold a national convention every two years.

Seminars on angels are packing rooms in cities and filling rural retreats.

“Angelmania” is in full swing. If you had talked about the existence of angels to the average person on the street thirty years ago, they would have thought you a little offbeat. Today, however, if you suggest that spirit beings do not exist or that they have no

interplay with human beings, you would be considered out of touch and closed minded.

Books, seminars, cassette tapes, and pamphlets, which are now considered mainstream, promise the following:

- Through the easy techniques presented in this book, you can learn to access and attune to beings such as guardian angels, nature spirits, and archangels.
- Everyone has a Spirit Guide or guardian angel who assists him in keeping on a chosen path. This cassette tape helps you get in touch with yours.
- This book enables us to begin to open our hearts to these joyful and comforting protectors, so we can raise our consciousness to a new dimension.
- You can learn, through the use of a combination of your birth sign and a specific colored candle, how to obtain the magic and wisdom you want in life by calling upon the angels. This book contains many spiritual secrets that will guide the reader to success and power.
- This book will teach nine specific ways your personal angel protects you, how to call out to your guardian angel, and how to get your angel to answer your cry for help and assistance in matters big and small. You will also find out about the angelic hierarchy and learn the actual language of the angelic kingdom.

Much of this, as one author commented, is little more than occult divination, sorcery, and New Age mysticism.

Inside the church

The trouble is, there is confusion and fog within the church as well as in society.

If you ask the average Protestant about angels, you will get a mixture of reviews. Major denominational leaders are currently debating the eternality of hell and the future existence of spirits. Many actually deny the literal personality of Satan and are saying instead that he is simply a metaphor for all that is evil; he really does not exist.

Others, within the more evangelical world, have been caught up in a form of animism. This is the belief that spirits and spirit power are attached to physical things.

Neil Anderson, a popular evangelical author, has gone so far as to say that the evil spirits can be unknowingly passed through generations. He encouraged people not to adopt children unless they could be present at the time of birth and bind the evil spirit with a special prayer.

Believers are focusing on binding spirit beings that hold territories under their sway. It is not unusual anymore to hear that the strategies of classic evangelism and intentional missions are being set aside in favor of simply praying down the demons that bind a particular neighborhood, city, state, or country.

On the other side of the Reformation line, Roman Catholicism has a confusing history regarding angels and demons.

Several of the more recent popes have encouraged prayer to guardian angels. Pope John addressed one group and said, "We particularly ask our guardian angel to help us in our daily ministry."

Former monks and scholars such as Francis Borgia and Bernard of Clairvaux encouraged devotion and prayer to angels.

The new Catechism of the Catholic Church includes the words, "From infancy to death, human life is surrounded by their watchful care and intercession. Beside each believer stands an angel as protector and shepherd leading him to life."

I suppose, if this is true, then David got it wrong and should have written in verse 1 of the twenty-third Psalm, "The guardian angel is my shepherd, I shall not want."

Now understand, my purpose is not to offend some Catholics and mainline Protestants and New Agers; my purpose is to offend everyone. To word this in a better way, I want to trouble and provoke everyone into critical thinking that takes the Bible alone as the authority for what we believe and how we behave.

I happen to believe it is a spiritual jungle out there. If all we do is listen to the latest stories and get caught up in the latest fads, we will get lost in that jungle and become disoriented about our Christian walk and our spiritual heritage.

It is interesting to me that scripture gives two very strong warnings to believers that are specifically related to angels and demons. Paul writes these warnings:

- First, in Galatians, chapter 1, verses 6 through 8,

I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!

- Secondly, in II Corinthians, chapter 11, verse 14.

. . . even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

Of course Satan does. He is darkness, not light, so he disguises himself as spiritual enlightenment. He is not truth, he is the father of lies, so he disguises his lies with kernels of truth.

How many people would be fooled or tempted to follow Satan if he showed up wearing a red suit, carrying a pitchfork, and had a long, pointed tail? Yet, how many people have been fooled by those who claim to have seen some figure or form or vision of light and assumed it must be from God?

Paul warned Pastor Timothy in I Timothy, chapter 4, verse 1,

But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons,

If there was ever a need for biblical investigation, it is today. The believer needs to know the truth about the spirit world, as well as have a biblical perspective about that unseen world.

In our study through this series, some of the questions I want to answer include:

- What do angels do?
- Do demons have unrestrained authority?
- How does the believer engage in spiritual warfare?
- Do angels intervene or interact with human beings?

The Alluring Promises of Angels

The first question that I want to answer is, “What is it about angels and the spirit world that is so alluring and fascinating to society at large?”

A new source of additional wisdom

1. First, there is the promise that angels provide a new source of additional wisdom.

This is not really new, it is just continually repackaged deception. It may come in the form of the angel Moroni appearing to Joseph Smith with supposedly new revelation about God or it may come from first century mystics, called Gnostics, believing they had special “gnosis,” or knowledge from God.

The Gnostics even produced secret books that gave initiates the names of demons and the names of angels who could combat those demons. Rituals, magic, and taboo were the keys to the door of enlightenment and angels appeared to be the guides, teachers, and friends.

The apostle Paul would call this myths and doctrines of demons.

There is a woman near Calgary, Alberta, who claims to have a remarkable gift. She says if you tell her your full name, she can go into meditation, focus on a candle, and have a vision of your guardian angel. She will get a message for you from the angel, which is usually a few pages long, and she will also sketch a picture of the angel, which is yours to keep. You thus get to find out what your guardian angel looks like and have a direct word of wisdom from him as well. The woman charges two hundred dollars per vision.

An author writes, “What could be more comforting in an age of broken families, economic uncertainty, rising crime, and loss of personal worth? ‘Love yourself unconditionally, because we love you and we are always with you,’ our angels tell us. Angels make no demands except that we accept ourselves, take us nowhere but to the path of greater strength and self-fulfillment, and predict nothing for our planet except the dawn of a new age of understanding and spirituality. What is there not to like? How could it possibly hurt to have a picture of your angel as a reminder of your spiritual friend?”

In the mean time, do not worry about doctrinal issues; do not fret over inconsistencies with the messages they deliver and the gospel of Christ.

If you read the materials as they relate to angels, you will discover that whether you are Jewish, Muslim, Mormon, Christian, Hindu, or into Native American nature worship, the angels do not care. In fact they will quote from the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Koran, and the Kabbalah.

The angels are here to help us manage life and planet earth.

In the best seller, *Ask Your Angels*, earth itself is considered empowered by an angel named Gaia. She is referred to as “Earth Angel,” which is not to be confused with that golden oldie, “Earth Angel”. This version of Earth Angel teaches us about nature spirits and the noble intelligence of trees. The angels will give wisdom to mankind in order to put the earth in order.

The truth is, none of this is new wisdom, it is old mythology.

You can, for example, go back centuries to the time when “The Books of Enoch” were bestsellers. Mystics, over the course of the third and fourth centuries compiled their belief that Enoch, of the Old Testament, had a special relationship with the angels. When Enoch was taken up to heaven, he passed through ten heavens. He saw various angels going about their duties. He saw the two hundred angels who govern the stars, as well those who kept the treasuries of snow and ice. He also saw the 150,000 who accompany the sun in its trek across the sky and the weird flying spirits that dwell in the path of the sun. Eventually Enoch reached the tenth heaven where he was taken into the presence of God. Then the angel Vrevoil came and taught Enoch in all things and did not stop teaching for thirty days and thirty nights. Enoch was capable of not only listening, but writing it all down to produce 366 books. These books are sources of new wisdom in addition to scripture.

One book on angels claims to be a “primer for learning how to talk to celestials” and says it will become a “textbook for your life.”

So the new wisdom of the twenty-first century is not new, it is old fantasy dressed in different clothes. The unsuspecting person who is intrigued by angels is often pulled into a web of fantasy, occultism, and speculation, in which the Bible is set aside in favor of new wisdom; a new gospel; a new path.

A new promise of additional assistance

2. The second reason angels are fascinating to the human mind and heart is found in the belief that angels provide a new promise of additional assistance.

This is, again, not new. Praying to angels for assistance became so rampant within the church during the fourth century that the Council of Laodicea passed a resolution forbidding anyone to pray to angels.

Today, angels are credited with all sorts of miraculous interventions and even emotions.

One author gushes, “If you are feeling joy, you are feeling the angels.”

There are angels for every occasion, including, “healers, worry extinguishers, and prosperity brokers. And if you cannot find the kind of angel you want on the list – no need to worry – there are designer angels who can help with almost any task you assign. Some angels specialize in education. When you suddenly have a good idea, I hope you are not so vain as to suppose that you actually thought of it yourself. Not at all? An angel gave it to you.”

This is paganism with a pretty face on it. Pagan religions believed that everything had a god associated with it. There were gods of famine, luck, war, disease, good crops, protection, conception, child birth, death, and so on!

The angel mania of today has merely changed it from gods to angels and demons.

As paganism infiltrates the church, there is the corresponding belief that while everything good has an angel to thank, everything bad or sinful is the work of demons. So we have everything from the demon of cancer to the demon of obesity to the demon of cigarettes to the demon of unbelief to the demon of sickness. Exorcise the demon and the believer experiences special freedom from bondage.

Books in evangelical bookstores contain special prayers for the believer to pray that serve as little more than religious incantations to bind these troubling demons and provide special freedom. And if you need assistance along the way, do not forget the angels are there to help.

One author described an angel that had one hundred nineteen clients, each of whom lived in a different galaxy. “The stubborn humans tend to ignore their angel guardians,” he complains, “but this is not true for people on other planets. In fact, the dolphins and whales on earth stay in close contact with their angel friends.”

There is the belief that angels are there when you need assistance!

A new style of religion

3. Thirdly, there is the attraction that angels can provide a new style of religion.

Listen to this important statement by one author.

Those who focus on the spirit world naturally begin to associate every event with a spirit.

From this arises the desire to know how to invoke the proper spirit for every need and also to learn the ritual that will thwart hurtful spirits. This is not just a phenomenon of the ancient world, but is the dark underside of centering one's life on the spirit world. I believe that this kind of religion is emerging from the present fascination with angels.

What does the religion of "touched by an angel" theology produce? It produces a theology about spirituality and not about Jesus Christ; a religion that supposedly reveres God, but never mentions the name of His Son.

Time magazine reports,

For those who choke too easily on God and His rules; angels are the handy compromise. All fluff and meringue, kind, nonjudgmental. Like aspirin, they are available to everyone.

Joan Webster Anderson said, "The search is on for spirituality, but without God."

So, angels provide all the wisdom, assistance, and religious connection you will ever need.

The Spiritual Profit from Studying Angels

When we begin to study what the scriptures say about angels, demons, and other flying creatures in the spirit world, we find there are a number of benefits that come from a proper, biblical understanding. Let me give several.

It will increase our appreciation of a sovereign God

1. Our study will increase our appreciation of a sovereign God.

We will discover that angels do His bidding and demons are puppets on His string.

It will provide true comfort for the believer

2. Our series of studies will provide true comfort for the believer.

Comfort for the Christian is not found in the availability of an angel, but in the power of the Spirit of God who indwells the believer.

It will magnify the patience of God in the world

3. Our study will magnify the patience of God in the world.

God could easily judge the world all at once. Yet, He waits – allowing evil men and demons alike to spite Him, hate Him, and seek to undermine Him and those who belong to Him.

It will remind the believer of spiritual warfare

4. Our study will remind the believer of true spiritual warfare.

What is true spiritual warfare? How, especially, is the church distorting true spiritual warfare as taught in the scriptures?

What are the dangers of taking fictional accounts, like author Frank Peretti's, and treating them like theology? I have read his works and they are very interesting fiction. There is a problem, however, that a large portion of the church has bought into them as if they were subjects of theology. As a result, they now practice prayer missions for more angels and against territorial spirits, and so on.

It will reveal an example of genuine worship

5. Finally, our study will reveal an example of genuine worship.

Imagine being created to do nothing more than hover about the throne of God, singing at all times, "Holy, holy, holy."

What submission and utter reverence for our magnificent God that is!

So often we go to God to get more from Him, rather than to get more of Him. We are more interested in what is in His hand than we are interested in His hand.

Challenges To Our Thoughts on Angels

As we begin our study, be prepared to have your thinking challenged, if it is not already, concerning angels, demons, and other flying creatures. Let me give several areas in which you may be challenged.

Angels probably are not who you think they are

1. Angels probably are not who you think they are.

The biblical accounts of angels find them terrifying to people. In fact, their first words are usually something like, "Do not be afraid . . ." or "Fear not . . .!"

Furthermore, angels always seem to be in a hurry. Several times their conversation begins with words such as, "Hurry and get up."

In Acts, chapter 8, verse 26,

. . . an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying, "Get up . . ."

To Peter, in Acts, chapter 12, verse 7,

. . . an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared . . . saying, "Get up quickly." . . .

C. S. Lewis laments of how insipid our concept of angels has become over the years. He writes,

Fra Angelico's angels carry in their face and gesture the peace and authority of Heaven. Later came the chubby and infantile nudes of Raphael; finally the soft, slim, girlish, and consolatory angels of nineteenth century art. . . . In Scripture the visitation of an angel is always alarming; it has to begin by saying, "Fear not". The [current] angel looks as if it were going to say, "There, there."

Yet, in the Bible, as recorded in Revelation, chapters 19 and 22, twice, when John the apostle was touring heaven, he encounters an angel and immediately falls flat on his face. The angel has to tell him to get up and stand on his feet.

One Old Testament account has one angel responsible for eliminating nearly 200,000 enemy soldiers, single-handedly (II Kings 19:35).

In the New Testament, you may remember when the Roman soldiers came to arrest Christ in the garden. Peter pulled out his sword and cut off the ear of the high priest's servant. After Jesus healed the servant by reconnecting the ear, He said,

. . . do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels? (Matthew 26:53)

There were six thousand Roman soldiers in a legion. Therefore, the Lord was referring to having at His disposal at the snap of His finger, 72,000 angels! If each of those angels could do what one angel in the Old Testament did, they could eliminate over thirteen billion people in an instant.

I hear many Christians wondering if Christianity is going to make it. We are so outnumbered. Who is counting the angels?!

Angels probably could not be counted

2. Secondly, that leads me to say, you probably could not count the angles if you tried.

The sheer number of angels speaks of God's immensity and glory.

When John saw the throne of God with angels around it singing praise to the Lamb, he wrote,

. . . the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands (Revelation 5:11b KJV)

One author wrote,

To put that into perspective, the average football stadium in America holds about fifty thousand people. It would take two thousand stadiums of that size to hold the angels John saw. For in his tour of heaven, he saw more than one hundred million angels.

Angels are intensely curious about the gospel

3. Thirdly, and note this, angels are intensely curious about the gospel.

The Bible says in I Peter, chapter 1, verse 12,

. . . in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven – things into which angels long to look.

The Greek words in this verse could be rendered, "The angels stretch out their necks; they bend downward to look into these things."

The angels are fascinated with biblical truth!

Angel are incredibly excited about redemption

4. Angels, fourthly, are incredibly excited about redemption.

Jesus Christ said, in Luke, chapter 15, verse 10,

. . . I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

There is an incredible celebration and joy among the angels over one person who experiences redemption.

Why? Perhaps because they understand by sight, the glory of God and the implications of eternity. They know that one sinner has been redeemed from banishment from God's glory into an eternity of worship in heaven.

Angels will never have a personal testimony of redemption

5. In spite of their joy over the redeemed, the angels will never have a personal testimony of redemption.

Christ did not die for the angels. Angels do not trust Christ as Savior; they will not reign as joint heirs of Christ. We will talk more about this later in the series.

Angels should never replace our dependence on God

6. Angels should never replace our dependence on God.

Has the Lord used angels as ministering agents in the lives of believers? Yes. We will explore this further in future sessions.

However, we are never told in scripture to pray, “Lord send an angel.” We are told to pray, “Lord, reveal Your power and Your presence on our behalf.”

Sometimes, I believe, our Lord does use His angel servants to do His bidding on behalf of His sons and daughters. Let me give a couple of examples.

John G. Paton and his wife and young child were missionaries a century ago. They were encamped on the beach of an island that was populated by cannibals who had already killed visitors to their island. They prayed and went to sleep. In their amazing story, the Paton’s were not bothered by the cannibals that night. Some time later, as many of the tribesmen came to faith in Christ, the Paton’s found out that on that first night, the cannibals had indeed come to the beach to kill and eat them. But, when they advanced upon the tiny camp, suddenly many large warriors appeared and surrounded the tent of the missionaries, each of them holding a drawn sword.

There is also the story of some missionaries who did die. However, an amazing testimony came to light concerning this story in just the last few years. The missionaries were Jim Elliott, Nate Saint, and three other men who attempted to reach the Auca Indians of Ecuador with the gospel. They had decided not to use their weapons, even if it meant they would die at the Indian’s hands, and indeed, they were speared to death by the Indians along a river bank. Many years later, as these Indians came to faith in Christ, some of the older ones who had taken part in the killings, began to open up to Steve Saint, the now grown son of Nate Saint. They talked about

the fact that after all of the men were speared to death, the Indians began to hear music. They looked above the tree line to see a multitude of “cowodi,” their word for “missionary”. They did not recognize the music until some time later when missionaries played recordings of gospel choirs singing hymns of the faith. Without a doubt, there at that river bank, the angels had come with singing, to welcome the martyrs to their eternal home.