

**Intro:**

In our study of angels we have covered two points:

- The Existence of Angels: Angels are *real, personal, named, servants of God, sometimes appearances of God, powerful, agents of judgement, interpreters of visions.*
- The Creation of Angels: Angels are more powerful than humans, but we must not make of them more than they are. They are not gods, they are created beings, the lies of demons notwithstanding.

Now we are going to turn to *The Nature of Angels*.

**Proposition:** Angels are individual spirit beings possessing personality, immortality, superiority of class over men, and were originally holy.

**I. They are personalities**

## A. Definitions

1. Personality = personal existence, individuality
2. Personality = an individual who possesses a unique mind, will, and emotions

## B. Both good and evil angels are persons

1. Intelligence
  - a. Mt 8.29
  - b. 2 Cor 11.3
  - c. 1 Pt 1.12
2. Will
  - a. Lk 8.28-31
  - b. 2 Tim 2.26
  - c. Jude 6
3. Emotions
  - a. Lk 2.13
  - b. Jas 2.19
  - c. Rev 12.17

“The fact that they do not have human bodies does not affect their being personalities (any more than it does with God).”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Basic Theology : A Popular Systemic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth* (Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press, 1999). 143.

C. Angels are *finite* persons

1. They do not know all things (Mt 24.36)
2. They do know more than men
  - a. Because they are created a higher order of beings than men
  - b. Because they have gained knowledge of God through ages of observation
  - c. Because they have gained knowledge of men through long observation

“Unlike humans, angels do not have to study the past; they have experienced it. Therefore, they know how others have acted and reacted in situations and can predict with a greater degree of accuracy how we may act in similar circumstances. The experiences of longevity give them greater knowledge.”<sup>2</sup>

3. They are subject to God’s will
  - a. Heb 1.14
  - b. Job 2.6
  - c. Lk 8.28-31

## II. They are spirit beings

- A. They belong to an order or class of creation that is completely spirit – they are not part of the physical universe
  1. Heb 1.14
  2. Lk 8.2
  3. Lk 11.24, 26
  4. Eph 2.2
- B. Spirit beings are immaterial and incorporeal

“As spirit beings they are immaterial and incorporeal. People have long wrestled with the meaning and ramifications of such a concept. Some Jews and early church fathers understood angels as having some kind of airy or fiery bodies, though in the Middle Ages it was concluded they were pure spirit beings. The tendency to ascribe to angels some sort of body grows out of the

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<sup>2</sup> Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, p. 143.

supposed impossibility of conceiving of a true creature without a body. Also it seems clear that angels are not omnipresent but have spatial limitations. Sometimes they were even seen by human beings. All of this seems to press for a conclusion that angels must have bodies. However, the Scriptures explicitly call angels and demons spirits (*pneumata*) in Matthew 8:16; Luke 7:21; 8:2; 11:26; Acts 19:12; Ephesians 6:12; and Hebrews 1:14. Though God is also a spirit Being, this does not mean that angels are infinite in nature as God is; rather they are finite spirit beings. Neither does their spirit nature forbid their appearing to human beings.”<sup>3</sup>

- C. When they appear, they usually appear as males (but see Zech 5.9)
1. Appear in dreams/visions (Mt 1.20, Isa 6.1-3ff.)
  2. In special unveiling of eyes (2 Ki 6.17)
  3. To people in a conscious waking state (Gen 19.1-2ff.; Mk 16.5; Lk 2.13)
- D. Frequently are described by superhuman characteristics in some visions
1. Dan 10.5-7
  2. Rev 10.1-3
  3. Rev 15.6
  4. Rev 18.1
- E. Some angels appear with ‘wings’
1. Isa 6.2
  2. Ezek 1.5-8

### III. They are immortal and do not propagate

- A. Angels do not propagate baby angels (Mt 22.30)
- B. Angels do not die (Lk 20.36)
- C. Wicked angels will be punished eternally apart from God (Mt 25.41; Lk 8.31)

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<sup>3</sup> Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, p. 144.

## IV. They are higher creatures than men

Heb 2.7-9

- A. Christ himself humbled himself to a position lower than the angels for 'a little while'
- B. Angels are in a superior class of creation because
  - 1. Of greater strength than man by nature
  - 2. Not subject to death like men

## V. They were originally holy beings

- A. All creation was pronounced 'good' when creation was complete (Gen 1.31)
- B. Some angels left their original state of holiness (Jude 6)
- C. Some angels were 'chosen' – elect (1 Tim 5.21); others sinned (2 Pt 2.4)

“Presumably all might have remained in that original state of holiness, and those who did not rebel were confirmed forever in their holy state. In other words, those who successfully passed the probationary test will always stay in that original holy state. Those who failed are now confirmed in their evil, rebellious state.”<sup>4</sup>

## Conclusion:

“To sum up: though there are similarities between angels and Deity and between angels and men, angels are a distinct class of beings. Like Deity, but unlike men, they do not die. Like Deity, they are superior in strength to men though they are not omnipotent as God is (2 Peter 2:11). Like both Deity and men, they have personalities. Like Deity they are spirit beings, though not omnipresent as God is. Men, by contrast, are both spirit and material beings (James 2:26). Angels do not procreate as men do (Matt. 22:30). Man was made a little lower than the angels. And yet in his resurrected and glorified body, man will judge angels (1 Cor. 6:3).”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, p. 145.

<sup>5</sup> Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, p. 145.