

Women's Doctrinal Series

First Baptist Church, Paso Robles

Sandra Garman
sandra.j.garman@gmail.com

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"You are the LORD, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host ...Nehemiah 9:6

What is doctrine and why do we care?

- Doctrine is the whole teaching of the Bible on a given subject. It matters because Right **thinking** (*mind*) leads to Right **feeling** (*heart/soul*) which lead to right **living** (*strength*).
- 2 Peter 3:17-18

Assumptions:

- The Bible is:
 - **Authoritative** : *The authority of Scripture means that all the words in Scripture are God's words in such a way that to disbelieve or disobey any word of Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God. (Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, pg. 73)*
 - **Inerrant** : *The inerrancy of Scripture means that the Bible always tells the truth, and...it always tells the truth concerning everything it talks about. This definition does not mean that the Bible tells us every fact there is to know about anyone subject, but it affirms that what it does say about any subject is true. (Grudem 91)*
 - **Sufficient** : *The sufficiency of Scripture means that Scripture...contains all the words of God we need for salvation, for trusting him perfectly, and for obeying him perfectly. (Grudem 127)*

Angels

What are Angels?

We may define angels as follows: Angels are **created, spiritual beings** with moral judgment and high intelligence, but without **physical bodies**. (Grudem, p. 397)

- Westminster Larger Catechism (see note below) Question 16 - How did God create angels?

Answer- God created all the angels (1) spirits, (2) immortal, (3) holy, (4) excelling in knowledge, (5) mighty in power, (6) to execute his commandments, and to praise his name, (7) yet subject to change.

A. What are Angels?

1. ***Created Spiritual Beings***. Angels have not always existed; they are part of the universe that God created. Paul tells us that God created all things “visible and invisible” through Christ and for him, and then specifically includes the angelic world with the phrase “whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities” ([Col. 1:16](#))

- They have no **flesh and bone**. ([Luke 24:39](#)) **
- They can be present in great numbers in a very limited space, ([Luke 8:30](#)) **
- They make their appearance in bodily forms. Since angels are **“spirits”** ([Heb. 1:14](#)) or spiritual creatures, they do not ordinarily have physical bodies ([Luke 24:39](#)). Therefore they cannot usually be seen by us unless God gives us a special ability to see them ([Num. 22:31](#); [2 Kings 6:17](#); [Luke 2:13](#)). **
- They appear in only one place at one time. It is clear, however, that they are creatures and therefore **finite and limited**, though they stand in a freer relation to time and space than man. They cannot be in two or more places simultaneously.
- Angels do not marry ([Matthew 22:30](#)) *

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- ❑ They are **rational**, moral, and immortal beings. (Luke 20:36) That angels exercise moral judgment is seen in the fact that some of them sinned and fell from their positions (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; see chapter 20). Their high intelligence is seen throughout Scripture as they speak to people (Matt. 28:5; Acts 12:6–11; et al.) and sing praise to God (Rev. 4:11; 5:11) **
 - ❑ They are partly **good** and partly **evil**. The Bible furnishes very little information respecting the original state of the angels. We read, however, that at the end of His creative work God saw everything that He had made and, behold, it was very good. Moreover, John 8:44; 2 Peter 2:4; and Jude 6 presupposes an original good condition all angels. The good angels are called elect angels in 1 Timothy 5:21. They are not only called holy angels, but also angels of light, 2 Corinthians 11:14 . **

Note: The Westminster Larger Catechism is a catechism or summary of doctrine used to teach the tenants of the Christian faith to children and adults, written in 1647 and 1648 by the Westminster Assembly, a church council of English and Scottish theologians and laymen intended to bring the Church of England into greater conformity with the Church of Scotland. The Larger Catechism is a distillation of the doctrine of the Westminster Confession of Faith, and an amplification of the Shorter Catechism.

* Grudem, Wayne. Systematic Theology. Pp. 397-400

**Berkhof, Louis. Systematic Theology (Kindle Location 3292). E4 Group. Kindle Edition.

2. *Other Names for Angels*. Scripture sometimes uses other terms for angels, such as

- ❑ “sons of God” (Job 1:6; 2:1)
- ❑ “holy ones” (Ps. 89:5, 7)
- ❑ “spirits” (Heb. 1:14)
- ❑ “watchers” (Dan. 4:13, 17, 23)
- ❑ “ministers” (Ps. 103:21) ***
- ❑ “host”, “mighty ones” (1 Kings 22:19, Ps 148:2, Ps. 103:20)
- ❑ “meditator” (Job 33)
- ❑ “thrones,” “dominions,” “principalities,” and “authorities” (Col. 1:16).

*** Michael S. Heiser, *Angels: What the Bible Really Says About God's Heavenly Host* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2018), 18.

3. *Other Kinds of Heavenly Beings.* Awe “cherubim” and “seraphim,” both of which describe **guardianship** of the **divine presence**.

❑ The Cherubim

- a. The cherubim were given the task of guarding the entrance to the Garden of Eden ([Gen. 3:24](#)), and God himself is frequently said to be enthroned on the cherubim or to travel with the cherubim as his chariot ([Ps. 18:10](#); [Ezek. 10:1-22](#))
- b. Over the ark of the covenant in the Old Testament were two golden figures of cherubim with their wings stretched out above the ark, and it was there that God promised to come to dwell among his people. ([Ex. 25:22](#))

❑ The Seraphim

- a. Another group of heavenly beings, the seraphim, are mentioned only in [Isaiah 6:2-7](#), where they continually worship the Lord and call to one another, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory” ([Isa. 6:3](#)). The “cherubim” and “seraphim,” both of which describe guardianship of the divine presence.

❑ **The Living Creatures**

- a. Both Ezekiel and Revelation tell us of yet other kinds of heavenly beings known as “living creatures” around God’s throne ([Ezek. 1:5-14](#); [Rev. 4:6-8](#)). (see note)
- b. With their appearances like a lion, an ox, a man, and an eagle, they are the mightiest representatives of various parts of God’s entire creation (wild beasts, domesticated animals, human beings, and birds), and they worship God continually. ([Rev. 4:8](#))

Note: The descriptions differ somewhat between Ezekiel and Revelation but also have many similarities. It is difficult to tell whether these are different groups of creatures or whether those in Revelation have been transformed from the form they took in Ezekiel’s vision.

4. **Rank and Order Among the Angels.**

- ❑ Scripture indicates that there is rank and order among the angels. One angel, **Michael**, is called an **“archangel”** in [Jude 9](#), a title that indicates rule or authority over other angels. He is called “one of the chief princes” in [Daniel 10:13](#). Michael also appears to be a leader in the angelic army: “Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they were defeated” ([Rev. 12:7–8](#)). And Paul tells us that the Lord will return from heaven “with the archangel’s call” ([1 Thess. 4:16](#)). Whether this refers to Michael as the only archangel, or whether there are other archangels, Scripture does not tell us.

5. *Names of Specific Angels.* Only **two** angels are specifically named in Scripture.

- ❑ **Michael** is mentioned in [Daniel 10:13, 21](#); [Jude 9](#); [Revelation 12:7](#).
- ❑ **Gabriel** appears in [Daniel 8:16](#); [9:21](#). [Luke 1:19, 26](#). He may be one of the seven angels that are said to stand before God in [Revelation 8:2](#). It seems to have been his special task to mediate and interpret divine revelations. **** READ LUKE**

**Berkhof, Louis. Systematic Theology (Kindle 3369-3370).

6. *How Many Angels Are There?*

- ❑ Though Scripture does not give us a figure for the number of angels God created, it is apparently a very great number.
- ❑ We read that God on Mount Sinai “came from the *ten thousands of holy ones* with flaming fire at his right hand” ([Deut. 33:2](#)). We also learn that “the chariots of God are tens of thousands and thousands of thousands” ([Ps. 68:17 NIV](#)).
- ❑ In Gethsemane, Jesus said to the band that came to take him captive, “Do you think I cannot appeal to my Father and He will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?” ([Matthew 26:53](#)). ******

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- ❑ When we come to worship we come into the presence of “innumerable angels” (Heb. 12:22).
 - ❑ Their number is even more strikingly emphasized in Revelation 5:11, where John says, “I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering *myriads of myriads* and thousands of thousands.” This expression indicates an amazingly large number (from a human standpoint)—an innumerable assembly of angelic beings praising God.

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7. Do People Have ***Individual Guardian Angels?***

- ❑ Scripture clearly tells us that God sends angels for our protection: “He will give His angels charge of you to guard you in all your ways. On their hands, they will bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone” (Ps. 91:11–12).
- ❑ When the disciples in Acts 12:15 say that Peter’s “angel” must be knocking at the door, this does not necessarily imply belief in an individual guardian angel. It could be that an angel was guarding or caring for Peter just at that time. There seems to be, therefore, no convincing support for the idea of individual “guardian angels” in the text of Scripture.

8. The Power of Angels.

- ❑ Angels apparently have very great power.
- ❑ They are called “you mighty ones who do his word” (Ps. 103:20) and “powers” (Eph. 1:21) and “dominions” and “authorities” (Col. 1:16).
- ❑ Angels are seemingly “greater in might and power” than rebellious human beings (2 Peter 2:11; Matt. 28:2).
- ❑ At least for the time of their earthly existence, human beings are made “lower than the angels” (Heb. 2:7).

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- ❑ Though the power of angels is great, it is certainly not infinite, but it is used to battle against the evil demonic powers under the control of Satan ([Dan. 10:13](#); [Rev. 12:7-8](#); [20:1-3](#)).
 - ❑ Nonetheless, when the Lord returns, we will be raised to a position higher than that of angels (1 Cor. 6:3; see section C.1, below).

9. The ***pre-incarnate Jesus*** appears as an “angel” or another heavenly figure.

- ❑ Jesus is The Angel of the Lord in the Old Testament. The Angel of the Lord is an appearance of God most likely God the Son or Jesus Christ taking on a human body for a short time in order to appear to human beings.
 - a. The Angel of the Lord appears to Hagar in [Genesis 16](#).
 - b. Speaks to Abraham in [Genesis 22](#).
 - c. Appears to Jacob in a dream in [Genesis 31](#).
 - d. Appears in the burning bush to Moses in [Exodus 3](#).
- ❑ Jesus appears as the “Commander of the Lord’s Army” in [Joshua 5](#).
- ❑ The book of Daniel mentions the “Prince of Hosts” in [Daniel 8](#), and Daniel sees a “man clothed in linen” in [Daniel 10 and 12](#). These are not angels but an appearance of the pre-incarnate Christ. Also mentioned in [Ezekiel 10](#).

B. When Were Angels Created?

1. The creation of the angels is clearly taught in Scripture. It is not certain that those passages which speak of the creation of the host of heaven ([Gen. 2:1](#); [Ps. 33:6](#); [Neh. 9:6](#)) refers to the creation of the angels rather than to the creation of the starry host; but [Ps. 148:2,5](#), and [Col. 1:16](#) clearly speak of the creation of the angels, ([1 Kings 22:19](#); [Ps. 103:20,21](#)). The time of their creation cannot be fixed definitely.
2. The opinion of some, based on [Job 38:7](#), that they were created before all other things, really finds no support in Scripture. As far as we know, no creative work preceded the creation of heaven and earth. The passage in the book of Job (38:7) teaches, indeed, in a poetic vein that

they were present at the founding of the world just as the stars were, but not that they existed before the primary creation of heaven and earth. **

3. **The only safe statement seems to be that they were created before the seventh day.** This at least follows from such passages as [Gen. 2:1](#); [Ex. 20:11](#); [Job 38:7](#); [Neh. 9:6](#).

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C. The Place of Angels in God's Purpose

1. *Angels Show the **Greatness** of God's **Love** and Plan for Us.*

- ❑ Human beings and angels (using the term broadly) are the only moral, highly intelligent creatures that God has made.
- ❑ Angels are never said to be made "in the image of God," while human beings are several times said to be in God's image ([Gen. 1:26-27](#); [9:6](#)). Since being in the image of God means to be like God,¹⁰ it seems fair to conclude that we are more like God than even the angels are.
- ❑ We will one day judge the Angels. ([1 Cor. 6:3](#)). Though we are "for a little lower than the angels" ([Heb. 2:7](#)), when our salvation is complete we will be exalted above angels and rule over them.
- ❑ Angels serve us. ([Heb. 1:14](#)).
- ❑ Angels also demonstrate the greatness of God's love for us in that, though many angels sinned, none were saved. Peter tells us that "*God did not spare the angels when they sinned but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of nether gloom to be kept until the judgment*" ([2 Peter 2:4](#)). Jude says that "*the angels that did not keep their own position but left their proper dwelling have been kept by him in eternal chains in the nether gloom until the judgment of the great day*" ([Jude 6](#)). And we read in Hebrews, "*For surely it is not with angels that he is concerned but with the descendants of Abraham*" ([Heb. 2:16](#)). We see, therefore, that God created two groups of intelligent, moral creatures. Among the angels, many sinned, but God decided to redeem none of them.

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- ❑ God has chosen to redeem out of sinful mankind a great multitude, whom no man can number, “from every tribe and tongue and people and nation” (Rev. 5:9). **This is incalculable mercy and love, far beyond our comprehension. It is all undeserved favor: it is all of grace. *The striking contrast with the fate of angels brings this truth home to us.***
 - ❑ ➤ **The fact that we have been saved from a life of rebellion against God means that we are able to sing songs that angels will never be able to sing for all eternity.**

2. *Angels Remind Us That the Unseen World Is **Real**.*

- ❑ The biblical teaching on the existence of angels is a constant reminder to us that there is an unseen world that is very real. (2 Kings 6:17)
- ❑ The author of Hebrews reminds us that when we worship we come into the heavenly Jerusalem to gather with “innumerable angels in festal gathering” (Heb. 12:22)

3. *Angels Are **Examples** for Us.*

- ❑ In both their obedience and their worship angels provide helpful examples for us to imitate. Jesus teaches us to pray, “**Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven**” (Matt. 6:10). In heaven, God’s will is done by angels, immediately, joyfully, and without question. Their delight is to be God’s humble servants, each faithfully and joyfully performing their assigned tasks, whether great or small.
- ❑ Angels also serve as examples in their worship of God. As angels find it their highest joy to praise God continuously, should we not also delight each day to sing God’s praise, counting this as the highest and most worthy use of our time and our greatest joy?

4. *Angels Carry Out Some of God’s Plans.* Scripture sees angels as God’s servants who carry out some of his plans in the earth.

- ❑ They bring God’s messages to people (Luke 1:11–19; Acts 8:26; 10:3–8, 22; 27:23–24).

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- ❑ They carry out some of God's judgments, bringing a plague upon Israel (2 Sam. 24:16–17)
 - ❑ They execute divine judgment and serve as warrior agents in service of Yahweh. (1 Kings 22: 19-23) (mic-a-iah)
 - ❑ Deliver God's decrees. (Zech 1:9, 19; 2:3, Daniel 4)
 - ❑ Smite the leaders of the Assyrian army (2 Chron. 32:21)
 - ❑ Strike King Herod dead because he did not give God glory (Acts 12:23)
 - ❑ They pour out bowls of God's wrath on the earth (Rev. 16:1).
 - ❑ When Christ returns, angels will come with him as a great army accompanying their King and Lord (Matt. 16:27; Luke 9:26; 2 Thess. 1:7).
 - ❑ Angels also patrol the earth as God's representatives (Zech. 1:10–11) and carry out a war against demonic forces (Dan. 10:13; Rev. 12:7–8).

5. Angels Directly **Glorify** God

- ❑ Angels minister directly to God by glorifying Him.
- ❑ The seraphim continually praise God for his holiness (Isa. 6:2–3) as do the four living creatures (Rev. 4:8).
- ❑ Angels also glorify God for his great plan of salvation as they see it unfold. (Luke 2:14; cf. Heb. 1:6).
- ❑ Peter tells us that “angels long to look” (1 Peter 1:12) into the glories of the plan of salvation as it works out in the lives of individual believers each day. (see note below)
- ❑ Angels rejoice every time someone turns from his or her sins and trusts in Christ as Savior. (Luke 15:10)

Note: The present tense verb “long,” gives the sense “are continually longing, even at the present time” to look into these things. This longing includes a holy curiosity to watch and delight in the glories of Christ's kingdom as they find ever fuller realization in the lives of individual Christians throughout the history of the church. (See discussion in Wayne Grudem, 1 Peter p. 73.)

D. Our Relationship to Angels

1. We Should Be **Aware of** Angels in Our **Daily** Lives.

- ❑ Angels join us in our worship God. When we come before God in worship, we are joining not only with the great company of believers who have died and come into God's presence in heaven, "the spirits of just men made perfect," but also with a great throng of angels, "innumerable angels in festal gathering" (Heb. 12:22-23).
- ❑ Angels can sometimes take human form, apparently to make "inspection visits,". "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Heb. 13:2; Gen. 18:2-5; 19:1-3, Judges 6:11-18, Judges 13:3-22). This should make us eager to minister to the needs of others whom we do not know, all the while wondering if someday we will reach heaven and meet the angel whom we helped when he appeared temporarily as a human being in distress here on earth. **This is an allusion to people described in scripture and extra-biblical literature and may include Abraham and Sarah (Gen 18:2-15), Lot (Gen 19:1-14), Gideon (Judg 6:11-18), Manoah (Judg 13:3-22),**
- ❑ Angels can be sent by God to deliver us from danger or distress. An angel shut the mouths of the lions so they would not hurt Daniel (Dan. 6:22)
- ❑ Delivered the apostles from prison (Acts 5:19-20)
- ❑ Delivered Peter from prison (Acts 12:7-11)
- ❑ Ministered to Jesus in the wilderness at a time of great weakness, (Matt. 4:11).
- ❑ Does not Scripture promise, "For he will give his angels charge of you to guard you in all your ways. On their hands they will bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone" (Ps. 91:11-12)? Should we not therefore thank God for sending angels to protect us at such times?

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- ❑ Paul reminds Timothy that our actions are carried out in the presence of angelic witnesses: (1 Tim. 5:21; cf. 1 Cor. 4:9). If Timothy follows Paul's instructions, angels will witness his obedience and glorify God; if he neglects to obey, angels will also see and be grieved.

2. Cautions Regarding Our Relationship to Angels

- ❑ Beware of Receiving False Doctrine From Angels.
- ❑ Do Not Worship Angels, Pray to Them, or Seek Them. "Worship of angels" (Col. 2:18) was one of the false doctrines being taught at Colossae. Nor should we pray to angels.
- ❑ We should not seek the appearance of Angels. They manifest themselves unsought. However, it would not seem wrong to ask God to fulfill his promise in Psalm 91:11 to send angels to protect us in times of need.

3. Do Angels **Appear** to People Today?

- ❑ **In the earliest period of the church's history angels were active.** An angel told Philip to travel south on a road that goes from Jerusalem to Gaza (Acts 8:26), instructed Cornelius to send a messenger to get Peter to come from Joppa (Acts 10:3-6), urged Peter to get up and walk out of the prison (Acts 12:6-11), and promised Paul that no one on his ship would be lost and that he himself would stand before Caesar (Acts 27:23-24). Moreover, the author of Hebrews encourages his readers, none of whom are apostles or even first-generation believers associated with the apostles (see Heb. 2:3), that *they* should continue to show hospitality to strangers, apparently with the expectation that they too might sometime entertain angels without realizing it (Heb. 13:2).
- ❑ There seems, therefore, no compelling reason to rule out the possibility of angelic appearances today. **Though angels would not add to the doctrinal and moral content of Scripture,** God *could* communicate information to us through angels as he

also does through ordinary communication from other persons, or through our observation of the world.

- ❑ However, we should use *extreme caution* in receiving guidance from an angel should such an unusual event happen. The fact that demons can appear as angels of light (see 2 Cor. 11:14) should warn us that the appearance of any angel-like creature does not guarantee that this being speaks truthfully: **Scripture is our guide**, and no angelic creature can give authoritative teaching that is contrary to Scripture (see Gal. 1:8). (Grudem p 407-408)

Angels have wings.

True

False

FALSE: Angels do not have wings. This myth probably came to be because of the description of Cherubim in Ezekiel 10. But Cherubim are a different spiritual being than angels.

Angels can only appear in one place at a time.

True

False

TRUE: They appear in only one place at one time. It is clear, however, that they are creatures and therefore finite and limited, though they stand in a freer relation to time and space than man. They cannot be in two or more places simultaneously.

We all have an individual guardian angel.

True

False

FALSE: Scripture clearly tells us that God sends angels for our protection: “He will give His angels charge of you to guard you in all your ways. On their hands, they will bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone” (Ps. 91:11–12). There seems to be, therefore, no convincing support for the idea of individual “guardian angels” in the text of Scripture.

Angels can read minds and manipulate the material world.

True

False

FALSE: Though there is no scriptural evidence that members of the heavenly host know a person’s mind or thoughts the way God does. They can assume the material form and act upon material objects. The two angels that visited Lot, for instance, were able to strike the men of Sodom with blindness (Gen 19:10–11). An angel moved the stone from the tomb of Jesus (Matt 28:2). The ability of spirit beings to assume human form becomes even more interesting when considering 2 Corinthians 11:14, where Paul wrote that “Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.”

Believers do not have the authority to command angels.

True

False

TRUE: Only God can command angels. Hebrews 1:14 has at times been used to justify the notion that believers have authority over angels. there isn’t a single instance in Scripture where a human being commands an angel. Human beings converse with angels. They ask questions. They do not give angels orders.

Angels take people to heaven.

True

False

POSSIBLY: JOB 52:1-12, Job 47:10–11

Christians become angels when they die

True

False

People do not become angels when they die. If you interact with people who lose children—especially infants or unborn children, there is lots of talk of them becoming angels. Of course, the deceased of every age are often spoken of as having become angels. But people do not become angels when they die. Angels are a created order just as humans are a created order. The writer of Hebrews tells us that angels are “ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation” (Heb. 1:14). No doubt God sends angels to serve and protect us, as Scripture indicates. But these angels were not, at one time, humans. (Nancy Guthrie, “What Grieving People Wish You Knew”p 140)

