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A fascinating look at...

ANGELS

in Scripture



By Joshua Stucki

“Even angels long to look into these things.” – 1 Peter 1:12b

Restoration Movement Literature

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HOW TO STUDY ANGELS IN SCRIPTURE

- 1) The Bible gives us certain literal facts about angels. These will be taken at face value and treated as true (because they are!).
- 2) The Bible gives us examples of angels in actions. These can give us some further information about angels, but not dogmatically.
- 3) The Bible gives us inferences about angels in various descriptions. Again, these can give us some further information but any opinion derived from them should not be held dogmatically.

Otherwise, this study – like every other study on angels – has some speculation involved. The author does not expect the reader to agree with him on every point as a test of fellowship. What Scripture says explicitly we are obligated to; the rest, it is important to study on your own, develop your own conclusions, and share those with gentleness and respect.

SOME INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT ANGELS TO PRIME OUR STUDY

- 1) Angels were all created by God. Jesus is not an angel because Jesus was not created.
- 2) There are various kinds of angels – “cherub”, “seraphim”, “ministering spirits”, etc. just like we cannot lump “people” under the generic description of any one person and do the subject of humanities justice, so we cannot lump all angels under one blanket description.
- 3) For example, there are angels who have wings and angels who do not.

- 4) Only male angels make appearances in the Bible but there is no denial of female angels. Some Scriptures potentially indicate the existence of female angels but nothing is explicitly said either way.
- 5) Although it is commonly assumed that angels are “sexless”, there is no statement from Scripture to this effect. In fact, many examples and descriptions say the opposite (i.e., Jude 1:6+7).
- 6) Satan is an angel, likely a cherub (Ezekiel 14:28).
- 7) There are fallen angels who have sinned against God and are cast out from heaven forever. Some still roam causing trouble; others are imprisoned until the final judgment (Jude 1:6+7).
- 8) As well, there are demons, who are likely spirits of the wicked dead (more on this below). They are not angels; for example, do angels ever “possess” anyone in Scripture?
- 9) We do not become angels of any kinds when we die. That would actually be a “downgrade” from humanity as it is described in Scripture.
- 10) It is noteworthy that angels possess great power and often speak directly for God.

THE ANGELS’ BEGINNINGS

How did angels come to be? Did they exist before the earth and men? Let’s look at Scripture for the answers:

Psalms 33:6 - “By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth.”

Nehemiah 9:6 – “You alone are the LORD. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is

on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you.”

This verse – and the others below – firmly establishes that God made the angels. This means that angels are not like God, who has always existed. There was a definite point in the angels beginning, by God’s hand.

Psalm 148:2+5 – “²Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his heavenly hosts... Let them praise the name of the LORD, for at his command they were created,”

Colossians 1:6b+7 – “¹⁶For in Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and for him. ¹⁷He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.”

John 1:1-3 – “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was with God in the beginning. ³Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.”

The above verses, among others, tell us that through Jesus was specifically how the angels (along with all the rest of creation) were made.

Job 38:4-7 – ““Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation? Tell me, if you understand. ⁵Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? ⁶On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone—⁷while the morning stars sang together and all the angels^[a] shouted for joy?”

Although we cannot be sure, Job 38:7 strongly suggests that the angels were created shortly before the world, and then celebrated the creation of it while it occurred (what a sight that had to be to witness!).

This verse tells us that “morning stars” are not only angels, but a specific kind of angel. As the Scriptures are studied about angels, it will be discovered that there are in fact many different kinds of angels. This fact will be studied in detail further below.

Isaiah 40:26 – “Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one and calls forth each of them by name? Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.”

The prophet informs us that each angel has a name, and they were created one by one. This act of God is mimicked by Adam when the animals are brought to Adam and he named them one by one (Genesis 2:19+20).

Ephesians 3:9+10 – “and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.¹⁰ His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms”

An oft-ignored fact in Ephesians 3:10 is that one of God’s purposes in Christ’s saving work was to make known the revealed (or, “manifold”) wisdom of God “to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms.” Otherwise, angels were not aware of all of God’s plans for salvation for man until it was actually available through Christ’s work in the church. Therefore, as man learned about how to be saved in Acts 2:38ff, so

angels too learned how man would be saved in the same moment (“through the church”, which was not established until Acts 2).

Revelation 10:5+6 – “Then the angel I had seen standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven. And he swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created the heavens and all that is in them, the earth and all that is in it, and the sea and all that is in it, and said, “There will be no more delay!”

The above angel is described just a few verses before in verse 10 as “another mighty angel.” This mighty angel in these verses, has been informed of God’s plan, and is part of its exclamation and carrying it out. This angel repeats the fact that God made him and every angel and everything else, and therefore God has authority over him and everything else.

From the above verses, it is clear that angels were created by God, and they were likely created right before the creation of the world, to worship God, celebrate His creation, and prepare for the work of being “ministering spirits” for those who receive salvation (Hebrews 1:14).

This is further evidenced by the fact that during creation – God - speaking in the plural (as the Godhead, or Trinity) in Genesis 1:26, says, “Let us...” Who is God speaking to here? God the Father is speaking to Jesus and the Holy Spirit, who were both present and active at creation (Genesis 1:2; John 1:1-3).

Angels were not part of the creating process, because they themselves were created; instead, they worshipped God and celebrated His work while it was being created (Job 38:7). Therefore, it is likely they were created on or shortly before the third day of creation, since Job 38:7

indicates they specifically celebrated the sun, moon, and stars being created and put into place by God.

HOW MANY ANGELS ARE THERE?

Although Scripture does not give a specific number of how many angels there are, Scripture does tell us that the number is very great:

Daniel 7:10 – “A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened.”

Just to be clear, that would be 100 HUNDRED MILLION angels alone stood before Jesus at His coronation as King after His ascension, while thousands upon thousands of angels actually attended Him at the ceremony.

In comparison, to say, the population of the earth today (about 7 billion people), that may not sound like so much, but keep in mind – this was just the number of angels who “stood before” Jesus and “attended” Him, not even all the angels that were present: since it is likely that every angel was present for this one-time, universally-important ceremony, the actual number is truly beyond counting.

The largest human gathering in history only had as many people present as Jesus had angels standing before him.¹ When all the angels that attended him are included, and all the angels present (likely all the angels in existence), and any and every other celestial creature, as well as God the Father Himself and the Holy Spirit, this gathering was and always will be without comparison.

¹ <http://topyaps.com/top-10-worlds-largest-human-gathering-in-history>

Matthew 26:53 – “Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?”

Hebrews 12:22 – “But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly,”

Psalms 68:17 – “The chariots of God are tens of thousands and thousands of thousands;”

Revelation 5:11 – “Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders.”

Some way that the “ten thousand times ten thousand” angels from Daniel 7:10 are equivalent to Revelation 5:11, and this is possible, since both are speaking by inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

It is also possible that John was writing down what he saw while he witnessed it (like a reporter, possibly just doing his best to estimate – also possibly borrowing Old Testament language he was familiar with), while Daniel was writing down what was directly reported to him. If this view seems irreverent, it is not meant to be; it simply recognizes the circumstantial differences of the two accounts by recognizing the fact that they are two different authors, in two different Bible books, at two different times, in two different places, describing two different events, one writing down what was reported to him while another writing down what he saw while it was happening before him.

Regardless, the sheer number of angels is obviously very great! A few verses later in that same chapter of Revelation, the following is written:

Revelation 5:13 – “Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying:”

Thus – at times – there is more celestial creatures present than can truly be reported, counted, or even described.

ARE ANGELS STILL BEING CREATED BY GOD OR HAVE THEY ALL BEEN CREATED ALREADY?

It is possible the reader has never considered this question. What do the Scriptures say?

Isaiah 40:26 – “Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one and calls forth each of them by name? Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.”

Interestingly, Isaiah 40:26’s verb tense is in the present form – otherwise – at least as of the time of the prophet’s writing, God was still creating and naming angels:

“Heaven” in Isaiah 40:26 is best understood, “sky, star, planets” rather than the Heaven where God dwells, as the prophet is asking his hearers who created all “these”. The word “these” in the verse is obviously something the hearers can see, and the hearers are being asked who created the “heavens” that they can see. This same God “brings out” the “starry host” one by one and calls forth each of them by name (already knowing their name, as He already knows ALL things – 1 John 3:20).

This position is further strengthened from the parallel we have in Genesis 2:19+20 where shortly after the creation of the animals, God had each of them come to Adam to be named. It therefore makes sense that as God creates an angel, He gives them their pre-determined name, before giving them their assigned task.

Are there any Scriptures that lend support to the idea that all the angels were created all at once?

Psalms 33:6 - “By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth.”

At first glance, this verse may suggest that the angels were all created at once along with the rest of the universe. However, this verse is not discussing “when”, but simply the fact that God made them both. Secondly, the Psalmist uses the word “their” in front of the common description for angels, “starry hosts”. Were their angels created specifically to maintain the sun, moon, stars, planets and other interstellar material? The possessive pronoun “their” may suggest that.

As well, it is well understood that angels bear different names, have different tasks, with different assigned purposes. Are these the angels who maintain the operation of the universe? Revelation 7:1+2 hints at this possibility. However, we cannot be certain, but it is inferred, and is consistent with the idea that God has a hand in all things in the universe everywhere at all times (a concept sometimes referred to as “providence”).

Nehemiah 9:6 – “You alone are the LORD. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you.”

Again, this verse emphasizes that indeed God made all these things, but it does not indicate when each thing was made. In fact, we understand from Genesis 1 that these things were made on different days. As well, the language in the verse that reads, “all that is on it” and “all that is in them”: just as God did not make every human being or animal or anything else living all at once, so it makes sense that he did not make all of the angels all at once (this is naturally true of all races of people, or all varieties of animals, as well).

Psalm 148:2+5 – “²Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his heavenly hosts... Let them praise the name of the LORD, for at his command they were created,”

This verse is possibly the strongest evidence that God made all of the angels all at once, contradicting this author’s theory. Psalm 148:2 reads “all His angels” while verse 5 reads, “they were created”. It could be that the verse is simply referring to all of the angels God made at the time the world was created; this would allow harmony between the above verses and Isaiah 40:26, still allowing for more angels being created as God so deemed Himself to do. This same harmony could explain a potential discrepancy with Job 38:7 with Isaiah 40:26 as well.

Finally, “all His angels” is clearly referring to only the angels that were good and not fallen, like Satan.

Colossians 1:6b+7 – “¹⁶For in Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and for him. ¹⁷He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.”

The above verses also simply indicate that God made everything, not “when” everything is made. This is also consistent with the language

of Psalm 139:16 and Jeremiah 1 where it reads, “all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be” and “Before I formed you in the womb I knew^[a] you, before you were born I set you apart”. Otherwise, God certainly “knows” us, even before we are born (alive). This is because God is outside of time, but we are not (Psalm 90:2, 93:2). All the same, God “knew” the angels, before “calling them out” and “giving them their name”, or, before creating and naming them as He has done over what we call “time”.

John 1:1-3 – “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was with God in the beginning. ³Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.”

This verse again indicates that God, through Jesus, has and still creates all things, but not when. It is therefore no stretch Scripturally that God the Father could, through Jesus, be creating and naming more angels.

DISCLAIMER: The above is ultimately immaterial; whether or not God is still creating and naming angels as of the time of Isaiah’s writing or even today is not fundamental to any other understanding of angels that will be had in Scripture or in this study. Nonetheless, it is a fascinating concept, and the reader can certainly disagree with any conclusion this author has drawn here and not cause a problem with understanding angels in Scripture elsewhere.

One final thought is that since angels are “ministering spirits” to those who receive salvation (Hebrews 1:14), it would make sense that God would create angels as needed for every new Christian (or group of Christians, if each “ministering spirit” has more than one person to

assist). If not, it begs the questions why God would create “ministering spirits” all at the beginning if there was nobody yet for many of them to minister to. There is no indication in Scripture that angels were created for one job and then switched to another job later.

But again, the above is ultimately academic and not foundational to the remainder of the study of angels in Scripture.

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT KINDS/NAMES OF ANGELS?

To some degree, this is a truly staggering question, and a full-size book could go into answering this question. Nonetheless, we will attempt to identify and understand who the angels of Scripture are and what they do:

SATAN

The first angel mentioned in Scripture is in Genesis 3:1, Satan. In that passage he is referred to as a “serpent”, although we know he can change form (2 Corinthians 11:14) as one of his angelic abilities (as other angels can – Psalms 104:4; Hebrews 1:7).

We know Satan is angel most directly from Job 1:6, Matthew 25:41, 2 Corinthians 11:14, and Revelation 12:9. Inferences to his angelic nature are also found in Isaiah 14:12, Zechariah 3:1+2, and Luke 10:18. The truth is there are dozens of passages that speak of Satan and his work as a fallen angel (either more directly or by inference), but this is not a point worth exhausting, since Satan’s angelic nature is basically universally accepted.

Some mistakenly think that Satan is also God’s equal and opposite, but Scripture teaches that Satan is inferior in every way. So it is important to point this error out graciously with Scripture:

<u>Comparing God and Satan in Scripture</u> Chart by Josh Stucki				
#	God	Reference	Satan	Reference
1	Creator	Genesis 1:1	Created	Ezekiel 28:15
2	Omnipotent	Job 42:1+2	Limited power	Job 1:12, 2:6
3	Omniscience	1 John 3:20	Limited knowledge	Job 2:4+5
4	Omnipresent	Jeremiah 23:24	Restrained	Job 1:12, 2:6
5	Plans succeed	2 Corinthians 2:14	Plans fail	Revelation 12:9
6	Judge	James 4:12	Judged	Revelation 20:10
7	Moral	Psalms 136:1	Immoral	Luke 4:13
8	Saves	2 Thessalonians 3:3	Deceives	John 8:44
9	Lives in Heaven	1 Kings 8:49; Matthew 6:9	Wanderer for now, hell in judgment	Job 1:6, 2:1; Revelation 20:10
10	Victor	1 Corinthians 15:57	Defeated	Revelation 12:9

In a way, it is unfortunate that the first angel we meet in Scripture is Satan, not giving the best first impression of his kind! Perhaps then it is no wonder that so many times in Scripture that an angel has to announce “Do not be afraid” before he speaks; people have to wonder if it is Satan masquerading again!

This is perhaps why Moses described Satan as a serpent instead of directly as an angel. This also supported by the fact that if we are to use Scripture to understand Scripture (always the best way to go), then what Paul is referring to in 2 Corinthians 11:4 is Satan in Genesis 3:1ff.

For this reason, it is likely that Satan actually appeared as angel of light, not as a physical snake as we might picture it. For one, we do not have any other story in Scripture where could or would have appeared deceptively, and obviously the appearance of a celestial being would have been far more convincing than a talking animal (no animal was inherently frightening to Adam and Eve, but animals still did not talk even before sin).

Another testimony to this point is that when God told Moses to set up the bronze snake in the wilderness (Numbers 21:8), He told him to build a “seraph” but Moses built a “nachash”, with no objection from God (and the nachash served its purpose as God desired it to), letting us know these two terms are interchangeable. “Nachash” in Hebrew means “burning one”, or “lighted one”. Paul refers to the fact that Satan was an angel of light in 2 Corinthians 11:4, matching this description.²

Satan’s origins are that he was created by God (Ezekiel 28:15), apparently with a great deal of power, authority, and even beauty (Ezekiel 28:12-14; Isaiah 14:12). Eventually, things went to his head and he attempted to usurp God (Isaiah 14:13+14; Ezekiel 28:15), so he was cast out of heaven (Isaiah 14:12; Ezekiel 28:16).

Since then, Satan has been out to deceive and destroy mankind (Ephesians 6:11; John 8:44). At first, his plan was to prevent Jesus from coming (basically, the story of the Old Testament), then to kill Jesus when He was here (Matthew 2:16; Luke 4:29; John 8:59), but when Jesus died on a cross to be cursed for us (Galatians 3:13, fulfilling Deuteronomy 21:23) and then rose from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:20+21) and ascended to heaven (Acts 1:9, heading into His

² Faull, George L. *The Eternal Struggle*. Textbook and audio available at www.summit1.org.

coronation as King and to offer His blood on the mercy seat of heaven – Hebrews 9:11+12, fulfilling Daniel 7:13+14), Satan’s only plot now is to keep men from the saving blood of Christ (1 Peter 5:8; Revelation 12:9).

Later in the book of Revelation only, Satan is called a “dragon” (8 times in chapter 12, 4 times in chapter 13, and one time each in chapters 16 and 20). His role in the book of Revelation is primarily one of deceiver and battle-gatherer for the final confrontation with God, only to lose and be cast into hell in judgment for all eternity (Revelation 20:10 – here called “the devil”). At one point, Satan, the dragon, gives his power to the beast so the beast can deceive the nations (Revelation 13:2+4). Satan is also locked up for one thousand years in Revelation 20:3a, where he was restrained from deceiving the nations himself during that time. Later, he was released for “a short season” (Revelation 20:3b) until the final battle that resulted in his destruction (Revelation 20:10).

As Christians, we are told to “resist the devil” (James 4:7), “reject every kind of evil” (1 Thessalonians 5:22), and “flee evil desires” (2 Timothy 2:22).

Otherwise, we are to have nothing to do with the devil, his agents (be they fallen angels, demons, or people working for him), or his plans. They are altogether evil and destructive to not only us, but all of mankind (Revelation 12:9).

It is important to note that Satan, like any angel, has physical power greater than our own (2 Kings 6:15-17; Psalm 103:20; 2 Peter 2:11). He has also been on earth longer than any of us, and knows human weakness therefore better than we do (Revelation 20:2). Therefore, it is important to realize that victory over Satan ONLY comes through Christ (Romans 16:20; Colossians 2:13-15), not any independent efforts on our

own (Ephesians 2:8+9). Any effort to take on Satan alone will fail, but any effort to resist (James 4:7), reject (1 Thessalonians 5:22), and flee (2 Timothy 2:22) Satan will be successful with Christ.

ARCHANGELS

The word “archangel” only occurs twice in the Bible, out of the approximately 807,000 words in the Bible total.³ Therefore, this concept can truly be blown out of proportion, and often, it is. Nonetheless, the concept of archangels is in Scripture, so it is important. The two verses that use the word “archangel” are quoted below:

1 Thessalonians 4:16 – “For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the **archangel** and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.”

Jude 1:9 – “But even the **archangel** Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not himself dare to condemn him for slander but said, “The Lord rebuke you!””

Who is “the archangel” mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 4:16?

Some say Gabriel, who is mentioned in both the Old and New Testaments, and is God’s primary messenger angel (Daniel 8:16, 9:21; Luke 1:19+26).

Some say Michael, because he is the only angel in the Bible directly called an “archangel” (Jude 1:9).

Some say it has to be Michael, because the definite article “the” appears before “archangel” in Jude 1:9, specifying there is only one,

³ <http://www.neverthirsty.org/pp/corner/read2/r00722.html>

specific archangel, and that same definite article “the” appears in various English translations of 1 Thessalonians 4:16

The problem with this approach is that the “the” in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 is not there in the Greek; it is added in the English to fit our language vernacular. By comparison, there is a definite article “the” in front of each item listed in the Greek of Acts 2:42 – “the prayers, the fellowship, the breaking of bread, the Apostles’ teaching”, not commonly reflected in the English (unfortunately).

Therefore, who the archangel is in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 cannot be certain, but this author will make the case that Gabriel is an archangel, and is the archangel shouting in this verse:

1) When God created/creates angels, He does so one by one and names them as He creates them (Isaiah 40:26). When angels are created, they seem to be assigned to a certain task based on their kind (Genesis 3:24; Job 38:7; Daniel 7:10; Isaiah 6:2; Ezekiel 28:14+16; Hebrews 1:14), and there is no indication that they ever switch “kinds”, or therefore ever switch jobs.

2) Gabriel, from his creation, was a messenger angel, and he maintained that role from the Old Testament to the New Testament (Daniel 8:16, 9:21; Luke 1:19+26).

3) Michael, by comparison, is always seen as a warrior (Daniel 10:13, 21, 12:1; Jude 1:9; Revelation 12:7), not a spokesman. These verses also demonstrate that Michael was and is an angel, not Christ, as some teach. All of the above is consistent with the concept that as God created/creates angels, He assigns them their specific kind and therefore job at that time, and those tasks do not change with time.

4) Since there is no definite article “the” in the Greek in 1 Thessalonians 4:16, and the definite article “the” is specifically referring to Michael in Jude 1:9, there can be more than one archangel in existence at a time.

5) As a matter of observation, usually those will speak well are not warriors (despite what Hollywood would have us to believe), and warriors do not tend to be great spokesmen, yet both are necessary for the “fight” (think Winston Churchill in his speeches to England during World War II).

Therefore, to arrive at a conclusion, there are only two logical options left: either the archangel mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 is a completely unknown archangel to the rest of Scripture, or it is the archangel we know is a regular spokesman for God – Gabriel. The latter follows the interpretive technique to use the Bible to interpret the Bible, so for this reason this author believes Gabriel is the archangel mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 4:16, whose shout will signal the return of Christ.

Are there more archangels than Michael and Gabriel? Scripture does not say so, so it is simply unknown:

Some will assume Satan was an archangel at his beginning but this fact is never mentioned in Scripture. His creation, power, beauty, and authority were at one time unquestionably great (Isaiah 14:12; Ezekiel 28:13+14), but his position is not specifically spelled out. It is possible that Satan was originally created to be “the” archangel, or “the” head angel, but his fall precipitated creation of multiple archangels instead. Again, however, this is speculation, because Scripture never spells it out for us. Whatever Satan was originally, he has tragically given up infinite bliss in the presence of God for his current sorry, defeated, evil state.

CHERUB/CHERUBIM

The cherub, or cherubim, has sixty-nine references in the Bible, so they are a major kind of angel. They are the first “good” kind of angel in the Bible mentioned (Genesis 3:24), after Satan was the first angel first mentioned in Genesis 3:1 –

“After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden **cherubim** and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.” – Genesis 3:24


The NASB and some other translations read, “the cherubim” and “the flaming sword”. It is often misunderstood that the Cherubim here is holding a flaming sword, but apparently they are two separate items, each of which were set in place to “guard” the Garden of Eden from re-entry by any man.

“And make two **cherubim** out of hammered gold at the ends of the cover.” – Exodus 25:18

Throughout the book of Exodus and the rest of the Law of Moses, the Cherubim are front and center on the most holy object of the Law of Moses – the Ark of the Covenant. Their wings (so cherubs have wings) overstretched above the mercy seat, where once a year the blood of the atonement sacrifice was sprinkled for the sins of the people. Although of course these were cherubim in symbol only – made from gold – they obviously symbolize here how God guards His perfect nature, character, and justice, and it takes blood (i.e. life – Leviticus 17:11+14) itself to be justified with it.

The Ark of the Covenant, with the cherubim specifically mentioned in text, also occurs in 1 Samuel 4:4, 2 Samuel 6:2, and other places

throughout the Old Testament. It is worthwhile for the serious Bible study to understand the nature of the tabernacle and the function of the Ark of the Covenant, in the worship of the people of Israel to better understand why Jesus did what He did, as He is described doing in the Tabernacle that is in heaven (Hebrews 9).

“And He rode on a cherub and flew; and He  appeared on the wings of the wind.” – 2 Samuel 22:11

David is singing the above song according to the first verse of the same chapter in response to God’s delivering him from all who was pursuing him (David’s life was attempted eighteen times in Scripture!). In his song, it is again confirmed that cherubs have wings (as they are depicted on the Ark of Covenant), and it is possible that they are even able to ridden (although this is much more likely lending to the idea that God “swept him away” from his enemies’ reach, and simply using this language poetically to demonstrate that fact).

Jesus is even prophetically spoken of in context of cherubim in the following verses:

“Hear us, Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock. You who sit enthroned between the **cherubim**, shine forth” – Psalm 80:1

“The LORD reigns, let the nations tremble; he sits enthroned between the **cherubim**, let the earth shake.” – Psalm 99:1

Ezekiel chapter 10 is basically about cherubim, and what God was accomplishing with them at that time. Again, wings are mentioned, and the sound of their wings is mentioned as being as loud as the shout of God! As well, their power, beauty, majesty, and purity are all described. The creatures from Revelation chapter 4 share many similar

characteristics with the cherubim in this chapter, and John is likely referring to these same angels therefore.

Satan was a cherub who fell (Ezekiel 28:14-16).

Cherub's symbolism did not just end with the Ark of the Covenant either – their images were carved onto walls and doors (Ezekiel 41:18-25).

Interestingly, for all the rich symbolism and presence of the Cherubim in the Old Testament, of all sixty-nine references, only one is directly spelled out in the New Testament:

“Above the ark were the **cherubim** of the Glory, overshadowing the atonement cover. But we cannot discuss these things in detail now.”
– Hebrews 9:5

The above verse is included in the overall description of the Tabernacle of heaven, where Jesus sprinkled His perfect blood on the mercy seat of heaven, finally making available for all time the forgiveness of sins for men who would follow His terms of pardon (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15+16). So in the very salvation of man, the symbolic presence of the cherubim were there; they kept man out of the Garden (Genesis 3:24), and then symbolically were part of His welcome back in.

SERAPH/SERAPHIM

In comparison to the Cherub, there are few references to seraph/seraphim in the Bible. In fact, the only outright description there is of an angelic seraph is from Isaiah 6:2-6 –

“² Above him [the Lord] were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and

with two they were flying.³ And they were calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.”⁴ At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.⁵ “Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.”⁶ Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar.””

The seraphim were present for the calling of Isaiah, as just following their introduction Isaiah responds to God’s question (verse 7) and says, “Here I am. Send me!” (verse 8).

They are obviously beautiful, powerful (handling of hot coals – verse 6) mysterious angels present with God and part of His work and purposes.

Although in the popular hymn, “Holy, Holy, Holy” – in verse 2 – the cherub and seraphim are mentioned together worshipping God, there is in fact no Bible reference where the two appear together, although it is certainly likely that has taken place for the purpose of worshipping God and doing His work.

Sometimes “seraph” is rendered “serpent” in the Bible, because that is the literal translation of the word. For example, God told Moses to build a serpent, or “seraph”, in the wilderness (Numbers 21:8). However, Moses made a “nascash” (verse 9), also translated “serpent”, and that worked out just fine. So “seraph” and “nascash” are interchangeable terms, and interesting, “nascash” is the word used to describe Satan in the Garden of Eden, which literally translates, “burning one” or “lighted one”. Therefore, the Garden of Eden is where Satan likely turned himself into an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14), described as a

“serpent” (in an unfortunate, out-of-context translation) in most English Bibles starting in Genesis 3:1ff.

ANGELS OF JUDGMENT

To understand the concept that God has created certain angels for the purpose of rendering or executing judgment, it is important to understand another aspect about good angels versus ones who have chosen evil:

In the Bible, God and His angels are often interchangeable in their action and dialogue, because they are acting from one accord, with one purpose, to one end. For example, in Exodus 3:2, it says an angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in a bush, but then from Exodus 3:4 following, it is God who speaks to Moses (also notice that “Lord” is interchangeable with God in this same story). There is no difference; when an angel of God speaks for God, He is basically God’s direct spokesman, speaking with His tongue, saying exactly what God wants him to say. When an angel of the Lord acts, He is basically an extension of God’s hands in the world, doing exactly what God would have him do.

Notice also then that fallen angels are not always necessarily following Satan, like the good angels always follow God. No, fallen angels often act of their own accord (Genesis 6:1-3; Jude 1:6+7), which is what gets them into epic trouble.

Humanity can take a lesson from this: when we are in sync with God, we will do what He says, and say what He says, and people will see “Christ in us” (Matthew 5:16; 1 Peter 2:12). However, we do not have to follow Satan to be led astray – our own flesh does that equally well (Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 2:3; Romans 13:14). Therefore, it is

important to realize, that just like the angels, as Christians we must follow God's actions and believe what He says, so we are not led away by the flesh or Satan.

So when Scripture speaks of angels God has sent for the purpose of rendering or executing judgment, it is important to see Him in the very mix of things. God does not send angels to do "His dirty work"; no, His angels are working right alongside Him, accomplishing His purposes with Him, to the glory of God and the edification of all who follow Him.

This brings us to Genesis 19, the first time the Scripture mentions angels in the plural (before this, angels appeared only alone, such as in Genesis 16 with the conversation between Hagar and "the angel of the Lord"). God sent two angels to meet with Lot in Sodom for two purposes: 1) to warn Lot and his family to flee the area (Genesis 19:12+13) and 2) to literally bring about the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah through them by God's hand (Genesis 19:24+25).

It is interesting again to note that the angels said "we are going to destroy this place" in verse 13, and then in verses 24 and 25, it is recorded that the Lord Himself brought judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah, indicating again that God's angels and Himself are interchangeable in their words and actions in these circumstances.

Later in Psalm 78:49, Scripture again mentions God sending angels of judgment:

"He unleashed against them his hot anger, his wrath, indignation and hostility— a band of destroying **angels**."

Jesus speaks of angels of judgment in the following verses:

“and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are **angels**.” – Matthew 13:39

“The Son of Man will send out his **angels**, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil.” – Matthew 13:41 (This verse in particular also reinforces the Biblical concept that there are people in the church masquerading as Christians who are really agents of Satan – also see Jude 1:4)

“This is how it will be at the end of the age. The **angels** will come and separate the wicked from the righteous” – Matthew 13:49

“For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his **angels**, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.” – Matthew 16:27

“And he will send his **angels** with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.” – Matthew 24:31 (also see 1 Thessalonians 4:16 for a parallel passage)

““When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the **angels** with him, he will sit on his glorious throne.” – Matthew 25:31

If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father’s glory with the holy **angels**.” - Mark 8:38

“And he will send his **angels** and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.” – Mark 13:27

“Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy **angels**.” – Luke 9:26

“I tell you, whoever publicly acknowledges me before others, the Son of Man will also acknowledge before the **angels** of God.” – Luke 12:8 (Otherwise, the angels come to know God’s judgments upon men and act accordingly)

“But whoever disowns me before others will be disowned before the **angels** of God.” – Luke 12:9 (The angels will know who are the Lord’s and who is not, and execute God’s sentence accordingly)

““The time came when the beggar died and the **angels** carried him to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried.” – Luke 16:22

The above verse may not be “angels of judgment” in the strict sense. However it does make sense that an angel of judgment could also be carrying out “a good sentence” rendered by God, in this case for the beggar of Jesus’ story.

Then, Paul speaks of angels of judgment in the following Scriptures:

“This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful **angels**.” – 2 Thessalonians 1:7

“I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect **angels**, to keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism.” – 1 Timothy 5:21

The above verse tells us a great deal about the concept of the “elect” in Scripture. Angels were not “chosen” by God to be good or bad, as Calvinists say about man, so it follows therefore that God has not

chosen men to be saved or not. When the concept of election is carried throughout the Scripture consistently from verse to verse, person to person, angel to angel, election means those who have chosen to be faithful to God, unlike the angels (Jude 1:6+7) and men (Romans 3:23) who chose to be unfaithful.

“In speaking of the **angels** he says, “He makes his **angels** spirits, and his servants flames of fire.”” – Hebrews 1:7

This verse specifically speaks of the fact that angels are spirits (also see Hebrews 1:14), and that some of them are “servants flames of fire”. Fire, in context of spiritual terms in the New Testament, always speaks of judgment. Therefore, it is not wise to wish for a flame of fire for an angel anymore than you should wish for the baptism of fire! Both are judgment!

“For since the message spoken through **angels** was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment,” – Hebrews 2:2 (again, when angels of God speak, He speaks)

Peter specifically identifies angels of judgment in his second letter:

“yet even **angels**, although they are stronger and more powerful, do not heap abuse on such beings when bringing judgment on them from the Lord.” – 2 Peter 2:11 (this verse also teaches us that God’s judgment is not abuse, but perfect justice)

Finally, the Apostle John speaks of angels of judgment extensively in his letter to the seven churches in the book of Revelation, eight separate times:

“The one who is victorious will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out the name of that person from the book of life, but

will acknowledge that name before my Father and his **angels**.” –
Revelation 3:5

“As I watched, I heard an eagle that was flying in midair call out in a loud voice: “Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other three **angels!**!”” –
Revelation 8:13

“It said to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four **angels** who are bound at the great river Euphrates.” And the four **angels** who had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind.” – Revelation 9:14+15

“I saw in heaven another great and marvelous sign: seven **angels** with the seven last plagues—last, because with them God’s wrath is completed.” – Revelation 15:1

“Out of the temple came the seven **angels** with the seven plagues. They were dressed in clean, shining linen and wore golden sashes around their chests. Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven **angels** seven golden bowls filled with the wrath of God, who lives forever and ever. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one could enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven **angels** were completed.” – Revelation 15:6-8

“And the four **angels** who had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind.” –
Revelation 9:15

As horrible as Sodom and Gomorrah were, they were very small in comparison to who some angels of judgment will be forced to execute in the righteous judgment of God.

“Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven **angels**, “Go, pour out the seven bowls of God’s wrath on the earth.”” – Revelation 16:1

“One of the seven **angels** who had the seven bowls came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the punishment of the great prostitute, who sits by many waters.” – Revelation 17:1

“One of the seven **angels** who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.”” – Revelation 21:9

It is clear that many angels of God are involved in judgment. They serve as renderers of God’s judgment, reapers and separators, as well as messengers and executioners.

MINISTERING SPIRITS

Hebrews 1:14 makes it clear that all angels actually fall under this category:

“Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?”

This seems to be the only “kind” or category of angel that all angels fit under. In this sense, even Gabriel and Michael serve those who have received salvation in Jesus Christ. Otherwise, the primary purpose of angels is to assist God in His primary business – the redemption of His creation (Genesis 3:15; Romans 8:19-23).

Nonetheless, there are angels specific to the purpose of attending those in need throughout Scripture:

“⁷The angel of the LORD found Hagar near a spring in the desert; it was the spring that is beside the road to Shur. ⁸ And he said, “Hagar, slave of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?”” – Genesis 16:7+8a

“God heard the boy crying, and the **angel** of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, “What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid; God has heard the boy crying as he lies there.” – Genesis 21:17

“Jacob also went on his way, and the **angels** of God met him.” – Genesis 32:1

“⁵Then he [Elijah] lay down under the bush and fell asleep. All at once an angel touched him and said, “Get up and eat.” ⁶He looked around, and there by his head was some bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again. ⁷The angel of the LORD came back a second time and touched him and said, “Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.” ⁸So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God.” – 1 Kings 19:5-8

“For he will command his **angels** concerning you to guard you in all your ways;” – Psalm 91:11 (interestingly, Satan quotes this Scripture in an effort to tempt Jesus in the wilderness – see Matthew 4:6 and Luke 4:10+11)

“Then the devil left him, and **angels** came and attended him.” – Matthew 4:11 (see parallel passage in Mark 1:13 as well)

“See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that their **angels** in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.” – Matthew 18:10 (this verse, along with Hebrews 1:14 and Luke 4:10, is where the concept of **“guardian angels”** comes from. This is a true concept, but one abused by the world; again, angels are only ministering spirits to those who have received Christ – Hebrews 1:14).

““The time came when the beggar died and the **angels** carried him to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried.” – Luke 16:22 (these may be “angels of judgment” simply executing a favorable judgment of God)

“An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him.” – Luke 22:43

So, Old Testament or New, every day person or child or prophet or Jesus Himself, God sends His angels to help those who would have salvation through Jesus Christ.

MESSENGER ANGELS

The word “angel” itself in the Hebrew or Greek means “messenger”, so this may be the most common kind of angel, since all angels share at least part of their title with the messenger angels.

Gabriel is obviously a messenger angel, and likely an archangel (see above subsection on “Archangels” for more information). Although no other angels are given names in Scripture, there are dozens of examples of messenger angels in the Bible, but the basic concept is had with the following Scriptures:

“With the coming of dawn, the **angels** urged Lot, saying, “Hurry! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away when the city is punished.” – Genesis 19:5

The above are messenger angels who are also “angels of judgment” (see section above). These angels are bringing messages of dire warning and pending doom.

In Luke 1:11-20, Gabriel appears to announce the birth of Christ’s predicted forerunner, John the Baptist, to John’s father, Zacharias.

Then, in Luke 1:26-37, Gabriel also appeared to Mary and announced the birth of the promised Messiah – the Christ - would be to her and her husband Joseph.

Then, when Jesus was born, the following appeared to the shepherds watching their fields (Boaz’s field, from the book of Ruth, by the way⁴):

“Suddenly a great company of the heavenly **host** appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,” – Luke 2:13

Here a messenger angel along with a great number of worship/celebratory angels (see category below) announce and celebrate the birth of Christ together, as well as worship God in song (Luke 2:14).

“In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning ²³ but didn’t find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive.” – Luke 24:22+23

⁴ Faull, George L. *The Eternal Struggle*. Only available through Summit Theological Seminary (www.summit1.org)

“Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb ¹²and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus’ body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. ¹³They asked her, “Woman, why are you crying?” “They have taken my Lord away,” she said, “and I don’t know where they have put him.” ¹⁴At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.” – John 20:11+12

Along with the other passages regarding the resurrection, angels played a part in announcing Jesus’ victory over the grave. The above story has always had this author laugh a little bit; Jesus could have just come out and told Mary, “Here I am” but instead he brought along two angels with the assignment of setting up the surprise. I have always pictured Jesus smiling really big when Mary realizes who He is. I bet the angels were smiling too!

“you who have received the law that was given through **angels** but have not obeyed it.” – Acts 7:53 (also see Galatians 3:19)

The Law of Moses was delivered with the help of angels. This is a fact not recorded in the Old Testament. Interestingly, Stephen also records facts about Moses (verses 23-38) that are not present in the Old Testament. Peter does the same about Lot in 2 Peter 2:7, so this is not out of the ordinary. Instead, God revealed more truth in time on His time through His chosen instruments.

“For since the message spoken through **angels** was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment,” – Hebrews 2:2

So when God chose to speak through an angel, it was just as binding as if He was speaking the message itself.

ANGELS WHO ARE UNIVERSE OPERATORS

“After this I saw four **angels** standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree. Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four **angels** who had been given power to harm the land and the sea:” – Revelation 7:1+2

“Psalms 33:6 - “By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth.”

“You alone are the LORD. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry **host**, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you.” – Nehemiah 9:6

“It is I who made the earth and created mankind on it. My own hands stretched out the heavens; I marshaled their starry hosts.” – Isaiah 45:12

When God made the planets, their moons, stars, and the rest of interstellar space, he assigned angels (Psalm 33:6) to their operation. In this way, God has His hand and words in the work of humanity, but also in the actual, everyday operation of the cosmos.

WARRIOR ANGELS

There are angels, and an archangel (Michael), whose primary purpose is to wage war for God:

“Praise the LORD, you his **angels**, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word.” – Psalm 103:20

“Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of **angels**?” – Matthew 26:53 (this verse tells us that angels have the potential to fight a physical battle on earth when God calls them to – also see Revelation 19:14)

“But even the **archangel** Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not himself dare to condemn him for slander but said, “The Lord rebuke you!”” – Jude 1:9

“Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back.” – Revelation 12:7 (Therefore, angels also fight battles in the celestial realms)

“The armies of heaven were following him [Faithful and True – Jesus - Revelation 19:11], riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean.” – Revelation 19:14

“And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. ²He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. ³He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.” – Revelation 20:1-3

The above verses teach one thing above all about the warrior angels – they never lose. They have the very power of the Almighty God behind them!

FALLEN ANGELS AND DEMONS

Some angels have chosen to do wrong and have therefore “fell” from heaven:

“When human beings began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, ² the sons of God saw that the daughters of humans were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose.” – Genesis 6:1+2 (“the sons of God” are always referring angels in the Old Testament)

“And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them.” – Daniel 8:10

“If God places no trust in his servants, if he charges his **angels** with error,” – Job 4:18

“⁶ And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their proper dwelling—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.” – Jude 1:6

The above teaches us not only about the fact that they are fallen angels, but why some of them fell. In the above case, they fell because they were attracted to “strange flesh”, as the King James Version of the Bible reads. In Jude 1:7, the fallen angels’ sin of going after human women is the same as the “sexual immorality” that Sodom and Gomorrah practiced and they were condemned for (Genesis 19).

This tells us that angels are actually sexual creatures, but human women were not to be theirs. As Jude 1:7 again teaches us, in the same way, even if a man inflames with lust for another man, or a women for another women (also see Romans 1:24-32), it is still not theirs to have.

Instead, God has established what is right for a sexual relationship in His sight – one man, one woman, married – Matthew 19:4+5 (Jesus quoting Genesis 2:24).

Also, the above passages tell us again that some angels look just like people, although their offspring are obviously much larger than normal people:

“The Nephilim were on the earth in those days—and also afterward—when the sons of God went to the daughters of humans and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown.” – Genesis 6:4

“Nephilim” translates to “fallen ones”; these were soulless, violent, giant creatures that were neither human nor angelic so God called for their annihilation, both right then in the flood (notice how the flood story immediately follows the introduction of the Nephilim) and later in Canaan (Deuteronomy 2:34, 3:6, 20:16-18; 1 Samuel 15:2+3), where Satan was trying to keep Israel away from (knowing it was in Canaan that God had promised Messiah – Satan’s destroyer – would be born). This is also why God was not calling for the killing of actual human beings, but these soulless, violent, giant abominations that fallen angels had reproduced with women.

Whereas the Nephilim were merely annihilated, their angelic parents were sentenced to imprisonment before judgment in hell (Jude 1:6).

So it is clear that angels can choose to do wrong, and be removed from heaven. As well, they have tried (or will try) to fight to win back their previous home, but have lost or will lose (Revelation 12:7-9).

A common assertion that is made is that fallen angels and “demons” are synonymous, but they are in fact not:

1) Angels do not possess people; demons regularly do.

2) Demons are always desiring a body, seemingly in torture without one (Matthew 8:31; Mark 5:12); angels are spirit (Psalm 104:4; Hebrews 1:7+14), not in need or desiring a physical body, but when they appear with a body, they do not need to possess one – they can simply change form for that purpose – such as in Genesis 18:1ff, 19:1ff, and Hebrews 13:2).

2) Angels are present often in both the Old and New Testaments; demons are only present in the New Testament.

3) “Spirits” and “angels” are mentioned separately - Zechariah 6:5 and Acts 23:8+9 (angels and spirits mentioned twice each in that passage). Of course, angels are “spirit”, but it’s obvious from the passages above that there are “spirits” who are not angels. These “spirits” are mentioned as “good” in Zechariah 6:5, and also in Acts 23:8, but mentioned in the neutral in Acts 23:9. Like angels (but they are not angels), demons are spirits, but in this case, bad spirits. Just like a gerbil and a human both are “flesh”, but are otherwise not the same.

4) In Jewish tradition, that neither Jesus nor any Apostle seems to have challenged, demons are spirits of the wicked dead.⁵ This was also the understanding of many other early church fathers, ancient Jewish rabbis, and the general culture’s understanding of the issue of the time.

⁵ http://biblehub.com/library/edersheim/the_life_and_times_of_jesus_the_messiah/appendix_xvi_on_the_jewish.htm

The idea that demons are fallen angels has no direct support in Scripture, but instead has simply become a theological assumption taken for granted over time.

If the above is true (that fallen angels and demons are different), then the following Scriptures teach us that not all wicked dead become demons (Psalm 9:17; Luke 16:23; Revelation 20:13). Instead, the rest of the wicked dead are in Hades, awaiting the final judgment.

Finally, Revelation 9:20, 16:14, and 18:2 let us know that Satan is still using and going to use demons to try to keep people from Christ. As well, his fallen angels are still out there wreaking havoc. So we must stand guard, with the full armor of God! (Ephesians 6:10-17)

UNDERCOVER ANGELS

Some angels do not look “celestial” in their appearance; instead, they look like men:

“² Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed low to the ground... [Abraham said] “Let a little water be brought, and then you may all wash your feet and rest under this tree. ⁵ Let me get you something to eat, so you can be refreshed and then go on your way—now that you have come to your servant.” “Very well,” they answered, “do as you say.”” – Genesis 18:2, 4+5

The two of the above men were angels, as their story continues in the next chapter:

“The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city. When he saw them, he got up to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground... Before they had

gone to bed, all the men from every part of the city of Sodom—both young and old—surrounded the house. They called to Lot, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them.” – Genesis 19:1, 4+5

The above passages tell us that some angels not only look like men, but apparently eat (Psalm 78:25), sleep, and are sexual beings (also see Genesis 6:1-3 and Jude 1:6+7), like men.

“Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to **angels** without knowing it.” – Hebrews 13:2

The New Testament continues along this same thought: Many angels (though we do not know how many) look and act just like us, but they are on earth for one or more specific purposes of God.

One speculation this author has long wandered – if there are undercover good angels, are there undercover fallen angels? The Bible does not speak to this directly, but only suggests it as a possibility (as it has happened in past) via Genesis 6:1-3 and Jude 1:6+7. It would explain some people all of us have met that seem to be unbelievably good, patient, and godly people (possibly good angels?), and some people who are so bitter, angry, relentless, and ruthless, that perhaps they were or are fallen angels in disguise? It would also explain where some of the forms of barbarism and immorality comes from, both in “civilization” (like abortion and homosexuality) and in the more anarchic parts of the world (such as dictator governments and extreme human rights abuses). There is no way to know for sure, but it is a distinct possibility.

ANGELS WHO WORSHIP AND CELEBRATE

Although it is correct to say that all angels who have not fallen worship God (Psalm 148:2; Hebrews 1:6), some angels may be especially set aside to the task:

“while the morning stars sang together and all the **angels** shouted for joy?” – Job 38:7

“Praise the LORD, all his heavenly **hosts**, you his servants who do his will.” – Psalm 103:21

“Praise him, all his **angels**; praise him, all his heavenly hosts.” – Psalm 148:2

“Suddenly a great company of the heavenly **host** appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,” – Luke 2:13

“In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the **angels** of God over one sinner who repents.” – Luke 15:10

“But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of **angels** in joyful assembly,” – Hebrews 12:22

“Then I looked and heard the voice of many **angels**, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders.” – Revelation 5:11

From the very beginning (Job 38:7), there were angels created and set aside for the purpose of worshipping God and celebrating His work. Revelation 5:11, and all the examples in between, demonstrate this is still

going on, to the glory of God, and for the encouragement of His creation.

ANGELS THAT DO NOT FIT IN A CATEGORY OR, MISCELLANEOUS FACTS ABOUT OR CONCERNING ANGELS

This author has friends who are never happy when an item in a checkbook or ledger is named, “miscellaneous”, because from what they tell me, “It has to fit under some category!”

Well, there are some angels that unfortunately do not fit in any of our above categories, or some Scriptures that simply tell us something about angels without a lot of specifics. The following are some examples:

“He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the **angels** of God were ascending and descending on it.” – Genesis 28:12

The angels here are part of the vision of Jacob’s ladder, where God will give Jacob the same promise He gave to his father and grandfather before him. However, other than simply being in the vision, their purpose or nature is not spelled out.

“One day the **angels** came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them.” – Job 1:6 (and see Job 2:1 as well)

This passage does not tell us anything about angels except that Satan is also an angel, since they are in heaven, and Satan has managed to wander up there as well (this passage regarding Satan has always fascinated this author and while a book on Job [alongside Ecclesiastes] is in the long-term plan, it is out of context to discuss it further in this book).

“At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the **angels** in heaven.” – Matthew 22:30 (also see Mark 12:25 for a parallel passage)

The above passage tells us something very unique about angels that is commonly misunderstood. The verse tells us that when we are in heaven, we will not married, just like angels are not married. However, there will still be male and female people obviously, so are there female angels? Since angels are sexual creatures (Genesis 6:1+2, Jude 1:6), it is a possibility, although Scripture says so.

““But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the **angels** in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.” – Matthew 24:36 (see Mark 13:32 for a parallel passage)

No new information here about angels, other than the fact that they know no more about Jesus’ return that we do.

“and they can no longer die; for they are like the **angels**. They are God’s children, since they are children of the resurrection.” – Luke 20:36

Jesus is speaking about people who have died but are saved; they will become “like” angels *in the sense* that angels do not die. The Scriptures do not teach that people become angels when they die. Instead, we learn here that angels do not die.

“He [Jesus] then added, “Very truly I tell you, you will see ‘heaven open, and the **angels** of God ascending and descending on’ the Son of Man.”” – John 1:51

Sort of like Jacob’s ladder in Genesis 28:12, Scripture tells us about angels ascending and descending from heaven, but this time upon Jesus, instead of Jacob. This is likely informing us that the promise given to

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is fulfilled in Christ, and the angels in the vision represent the promise being fulfilled.

“You have made them a little lower than the **angels** and crowned them with glory and honor.” – Psalm 8:5

The Psalmist here is referring to the fact that human beings are not as physically powerful as angels. In terms of service, angels actually serve righteous men (Hebrews 1:14), and the day will come when angels will sit in judgment by righteous men (1 Corinthians 6:3).

“(The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, and that there are neither **angels** nor spirits, but the Pharisees believe all these things.)” – Acts 23:8

The Sadducees did not believe in angels (or many other things, for that matter). However, their unbelief did not change the reality that angels are real. This author believes it is strange to live in a world where people actually think their beliefs change reality (this is the common assertion about hell – “I don’t believe in hell! It’s too awful!”). Although I can sympathize with their feelings in that area (I do not believe any human being “wants” to believe in hell), like cancer, it is real. So are angels, because God’s Word says so.

“For it seems to me that God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like those condemned to die in the arena. We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to **angels** as well as to human beings.” – 1 Corinthians 4:9

Paul’s lament here is not self-pity, but rather for the church at Corinth to understand that being an Apostle was not a position to envy! God had put the greatest weight upon them, and their fates would each

reflect that burden. Tradition has it that all of the Apostles died as martyrs, including Paul by beheading. Angels watched this spectacle, Paul states, and it is certain it was a gruesome, awful thing to behold (as well, the angels wanting to help, would have been restrained, helpless to help those they were born to aid – Matthew 18:10; Luke 4:10; Hebrews 1:7+14). This was very difficult for the Apostles of course, but also for the angels who watched as well.

“But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the **angels** for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.” – Hebrews 2:9

Just like in Psalm 8:5 repeated in Hebrews 2:7, the verse above is not talking about Jesus actually being “lesser” than angels in reality; instead, by Jesus becoming a man, He had taken on the limitations of man, of which some limitations do not apply to angels. Jesus was willing to make this compromise so He could become the perfect High Priest (Hebrews 4:15) to offer Himself as the perfect sacrifice for our sins (Hebrews 9:28, 10:10).

“who has gone into heaven and is at God’s right hand— with **angels**, authorities and powers in submission to him.” – 1 Peter 3:22

An interesting fact about angels is that they can enter or leave heaven at will (Job 1:6, 2:1) and thus they have seen God’s face (Matthew 18:10), and Jesus Himself is at the right hand of God (Mark 16:19; Luke 22:69; Acts 7:55+56; Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:20). However, no person has ever entered heaven or seen God’s face (John 1:18; 1 John 4:12), which means no person has ever entered heaven yet. Instead, the

righteous dead people are in “paradise” (Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 12:4; Revelation 2:7), awaiting judgment and entrance into heaven, which is still being prepared by Christ (John 14:2-4). Jesus states that He too is in paradise (Luke 23:43), and since Jesus has returned to His glorified state, He is once again omnipresent (a quality he temporarily suspended to be a man while on earth – Philippians 2:6).

THE ANGELS IN THE BIBLE WHO ARE NOT “ANGELS”

“The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the **angels** of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.” – Revelation 1:20

In this particular Scripture, John tells us himself that the seven stars are the “angels” of the seven churches. These “angels” are not angels in the celestial sense, but the ministers of each local church to who John is writing:

““To the angel^[a] of the church in Ephesus write:” – Revelation 2:1

“To the angel of the church in Smyrna write:” – Revelation 2:8

“To the angel of the church in Pergamum write:” – Revelation 2:12

And so on for the other four churches listed in Revelation chapters 2 and 3. When the “angels”, or ministers, of each church received the letter, their job was to read it to the congregation and act accordingly.

WHO WILL JUDGE ANGELS?

In the “Angels of Judgment” subsection above, it is clear that God uses angels for the purpose of rendering and executing His judgments on the earth. However, it is a two-way street:

“Do you not know that we will **judge angels?**” – 1 Corinthians 6:3a

One day, after the angels have done their reaping and harvesting of the earth, the faithful will render judgment on those angels who were not faithful (Jude 1:6+7), just as the angels separated the wheat from the tares in the judgment of men (Matthew 13:30).

WHAT DO ANGELS KNOW? DO THEY HAVE FREE WILL?

“It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even **angels** long to look into these things.” – 1 Peter 1:12

Simply put, angels know what people know, plus whatever specific assignment God has given them. God did not reveal His plan to angels in advance of revealing it to mankind. Why is this?

Angels have free will, and some angels had fallen and followed after and served Satan:

“If God places no trust in his servants, if he charges his **angels** with error,” – Job 4:18

“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and **his angels.**’” – Matthew 25:41

“⁶ And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their proper dwelling—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day. “ – Jude 1:6

“For if God did not spare **angels** when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them in chains of darkness to be held for judgment;” – 2 Peter 2:4

So it is clear that angels have free will, can sin, and are punished justly for it. Although salvation is not for angels, God created, cares, and knows each of His angels individually (Isaiah 40:26).

Finally, if God had revealed everything to the angels in advance of mankind for whom the information was meant, a fallen angel could have informed Satan, or Satan could have more easily found out about things himself. Instead, God progressively revealed prophecy concerning the coming Messiah in the Old Testament, and His plan for the church in the New Testament, for the sake of honestly not burdening man with any more difficulty from Satan than he already had to endure. One truth at a time allowed the progress of Jesus coming into the world, sacrificing Himself for it, and rising again, establishing His church, to be absorbed and understood by humanity as God chose to reveal it.

One major item the angels have over man is the fact that they have seen the face of God (Matthew 18:11), and we have not yet (John 1:18; 1 John 4:12).

DO WE WORSHIP ANGELS?

No!

“Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of **angels** disqualify you. Such a person also goes into great detail about what they have seen; they are puffed up with idle notions by their unspiritual mind.” – Colossians 2:18

As well, Jesus is superior to angels and is alone to be worshipped:

“So he became as much superior to the **angels** as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.” – Hebrews 1:4

We can also see the reaction the Apostle John received when he about worshipped an angel:

“At this I fell at his [the angel’s] feet to worship him. But he said to me, “Don’t do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers and sisters who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For it is the Spirit of prophecy who bears testimony to Jesus.” – Revelation 19:10

CONCLUSION

There is much more to say about angels, but the above was hopefully an overview of Scriptural truth regarding the nature, kinds, and purposes of angels both in the Bible and in our own lives. Spiritual warfare is still going on for every soul of each man, woman, and child, and Satan and his angels are battling Michael and his angels every step of the way for them. Although it seems there are times when that battle is being lost, the final victory is coming, by the hands of Christ Himself! (Revelation 19:20+21)