

## The Spirit World

### What Scripture Says About Angels

Richard T. Ritenbaugh

Given 19-Jul-25; Sermon #1828

We tend to speak of separate or unique kinds of things, or a sector of activity, as worlds. We say or read things like, the 'sports world' was stunned at the sudden death of the football superstar. We say things like, the 'English speaking world' has held hegemony for several hundred years. Or, the new CEO could not seem to help himself descending quickly into the 'criminal world.' Or, for all its variety, studying the 'insect world' can be a fascinating educational pursuit. (I will give you one more.) He entered the 'political world' with trepidation, knowing it had ruined many before him.

Of course, there is the world itself, our planet Earth, all its peoples and all its natural features. We tend to divide our world into the Western world and the Eastern world, and the new world and the old world. We even cordoned off historical periods as worlds, the prehistoric world, the ancient world, the Roman world, the medieval world, the modern world. We use this in a lot of different ways, do we not?

Speculative fiction authors write about far off worlds, their planets in the other solar systems, or fantasy authors often talk about the unseen world, those imagined intelligent beings that exist beyond our sense perceptions.

Let us turn as we begin here to II Peter 3 and we will see that the Bible itself uses such terms as a world. In this case, it is talking about worlds in terms of eras or epochs in time.

**II Peter 3:5** For this they willfully forget. . .

He is talking of the scoffers that he had just written about because they are saying, "Hey, nothing's happened. This can't be the last days."

**II Peter 3:5-7** For this they willfully forget, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water

and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. But the heavens and the earth which now exist are kept in store by the same word, reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

Let us go back a chapter to chapter 2, verse 5. We are breaking into a series of examples that he gives of God's judgment.

**II Peter 2:5** [God] did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly.

There is another one, the world of the ungodly. One more, let us go back a few chapters to Hebrews 2 and we will look at verse 5.

**Hebrews 2:5** For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels.

We have here in these verses an idea of we might call a tripartite way of looking at time, at least the time since Adam and Eve. So we have different worlds. We have the world that was, as Peter mentioned in chapter 3, and of course we have the world that is, which is not God's world. It is a world dominated by Satan and people who have basically surrendered to his way of life. And then of course, the one we are looking forward to is the world to come, which is God's world. We most often talk about it in terms of the Kingdom of God, but it is, by definition here in Hebrews 2:5, the world to come.

But there is another world that I really have not mentioned yet and that is the world that I am going to speak on for the rest of our time today. And that is the spirit world. We might also call it the angelic world. So today's sermon will be a basic primer on what the Bible, and only the Bible, tells us about angels, good and bad angels. We will mostly stay positive in this sermon, so we will be talking about the good angels mostly. But they have their own world that we have very little, well, almost *no* access to. Those who are called of God have more access to it, but it is something we cannot see, we cannot hear, it is beyond us.

I did give a sermon not too long ago about the invisible world and this of course is part of that. But I want to speak specifically about angels today and what the Bible tells us about angels. Because our current culture spews out a great deal about angels and demons that you could get every day on your TV or read in a book, even hear in music that comes out, your death metal and stuff like that, I do not listen to that. But very little of that, that we get from our culture is actually from Scripture.

In fact, if you go through the Bible, maybe verse by verse or chapter by chapter, you begin after a while to get the impression that Scripture does not provide us very much information about the spirit world. It provides a great deal of information about God, but not about angels. It actually provides a great deal more information about demons than it does about the good angels.

So there is scant information in the Bible to help us understand the spirit world. And I have come to the conclusion that it is by design. God gives us just enough that we need to know, reveals just enough so that we can go forward on our trek to the Kingdom of God and not be burdened or tripped up by things that are far outside our ken, as it were, far outside our ability to understand, beyond our knowledge. But what He does reveal is enough for our spiritual walk.

And if I may make a warning here in just one sentence. We do not need and should not supplement the Bible's knowledge or revelation about the angelic world with outside information. The stuff that we get from outside Scripture is certainly apocryphal if not just plain lies. It is the imagination of people's minds rather than the truth. The only truth we get about angels is in between the covers of that Book in your lap. So that is what we are going to focus on so that we can pare down our understanding of angels from what the Bible says.

Now, the *Lexham Bible Dictionary* in its article "Angels," exposes the source of our culture's ideas about angels and demons. They are going to be very frank here and tell us what the source of most of our knowledge about angels and demons is. And if I can just make a general summary, these ideas that we have in our culture about angels and demons are Bible-adjacent at best. Most of them are plain false. Here is the quote from the *Lexham Bible Dictionary*:

But misconceptions about angels increased in the centuries between the close of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament. Today's conceptions reflect deuterocanonical, pseudopographical, and Greek literature of the Hellenistic period from 323 to 30 BC. Jewish views on angels developed during pre-New Testament and New Testament times as reflected in the writings of sectarian communities around the Dead Sea, often called Qumran, and in rabbinic literature. Philo, who lived from 20 BC to 50 AD, merged Jewish angelology with Greek demonology. Angels and demons were thought to be powers behind the universe.

So, from their own writings here, we have a very definitive comment that this world's ideas about angels are very suspect. Jewish mysticism and Greek demonology are not reliable sources. Do not trust angelology that comes from Jewish sources because it comes from this time between the Testaments and into the New Testament era where it was fairly radicalized, and then supplemented by Greek ideas about demons. *Do not trust any kind of ideology that comes from apocryphal writings.* You know, those ones that are included in some Bibles between the Old Testament and the New. Do not trust angelology that comes from writings like the Book of Enoch. The Book of Enoch has led many astray. It is leading people astray even now because they trust the Book of Enoch above the Bible. Which is crazy, because the Book of Enoch is not authoritative at all.

Now, if you want a good summary of the subject of the spirit world of angels and demons, read Mr. Armstrong's *Mystery of the Ages*. Chapter 2 of that book, "Mystery of Angels and Evil Spirits" runs from page 58 to 95 and it is very good. It is doing what I am trying to do in this sermon to give you from the Bible what it says about angels. But even with Mr. Armstrong's writing, you have to be thinking, because Mr. Armstrong, like every human being, makes assumptions. I am sure that during this sermon, I am going to be making a few assumptions. And it is not terrible to make assumptions. But when you do make assumptions, you have to make sure, you have to determine if such assumptions are reasonable, logical, and supportable by a plain reading of Scripture. And even then you should say, "I'm assuming this," or "it's a speculation." Because the Bible actually does not say a whole lot about angels. So we have to be very careful that we do not read into what

the Bible does say and thus add something to Scripture and and twist it in some way.

Let us go back into the Old Testament into Job 38. We could perhaps call this series of verses the beginning of the story of angels. We will read verse 1 and then we will read verses 4 through 7.

**Job 38:1** [This is where God is responding to Job in his trial.] Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, . . .

**Job 38:4-7** "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements? Surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

Chronologically, like I said, this is the first we hear of angels. We are not told when they were created. We assume that they were created a long time before man. We do not know how long before man they were created. All we know from this verse is that they were already in existence when God created the earth. So they were there to witness this beautiful blue ball come into existence in the heavens. And it was so beautiful, evidently, such a remarkable creation of God that they sang together in joy seeing this planet come into existence in such great beauty.

Herbert Armstrong surmised that their joy was because earth would be their home, that God had made it as a place for them. Now, we do not know if that is true. I could just see them in my mind's eye, singing and shouting for joy just because God had done it and them being able to see this great work. But Mr. Armstrong took it a little farther and thought that their joy was because the earth would be the place where they would reside. And many have speculated that they were given tasks in that creation to help finish things. God did the creating, but they would do the finish work.

But notice, that is a lot of assumption. We have added stuff to it already. The basic facts are quite meager. God created them before creating the earth. They were in existence when He created the earth. And we could also make

an assumption that is true. It said right there, it is part of the fact, that they can sing and they can show joy. I mean, maybe we can get something else out of there if we pull hard enough, but that is basically all it says, and we have to use our imagination to pile on a few more suppositions. And that is all they are, they are suppositions.

Let us move on to the book of Psalms, just a few pages over in chapter 8.

**Psalms 8:3-5** When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him? For you have made him a little lower than the angels, and you have crowned him with glory and honor.

By the way, this is quoted again in Hebrews 2:7, when it is speaking about the Son of Man, showing that Jesus was made a little lower than the angels because He became a human being, but He would be made greater and rule, unlike the angels.

Let us go back to the book of Job, chapter 1, verse 6. This is also seen in Job 2 starting in verse 1, but I just want verse 6 here of chapter 1.

**Job 1:6** Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan [or the Adversary] also came among them.

We know here that they are called sons of God and they present themselves before God at various times.

In these two scriptures that we have seen, these two passages, I am going to try to take them together. God compares them, angels that is, which He calls sons of God, He compares them to us, to humans. And we can surmise again that God must have created them individually because they have different functions, different strengths, different talents. And there is nothing in the Bible that would give us an idea or where it would be conclusive that they are sexual beings at all, unlike human beings. God made us male and female,

and we can reproduce ourselves. But we have no conception from the Bible that they are able to reproduce in any way. So they must have been created individually and have a fixed population now. There is only so many angels.

Now, maybe some of you are thinking about Genesis 6:2, where it talks about the sons of God finding the daughters of men beautiful and they came down and produced the Nephilim. If you go back to my sermons on the great Flood (I believe it is in the first or second sermon), I show that that can be explained without assuming that angels are sexual, or that they can have sexual liaisons with human women. I do not believe that at all, that they created a race of demigods or giants by having sexual relations with human women. That just does not fit the rest of the Bible. So, like I said, if they do not have a sexual reproductive component to them, then they do have a fixed population. They can only be created, not born.

And we have little idea of how many there are. What is the number of the angels? Of course you probably have heard that back in the Middle Ages, they used to argue about how many angels can dance upon the head of a pin. I mean, that is really taking it far. But the Bible suggests that there is over 100 million of them. Let us go to Revelation 5:11. I think this is the clearest one of that. We often go to 5:10 talking about we shall reign on the earth with God. But verse 11 says,

**Revelation 5:11** Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders [all three of them are angelic beings]; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.

Now, if you do your math, you multiply 10,000 times 10,000, that is 100 million. And then John adds on, thousands of thousands, which is millions. So, you get the idea that there is a very large population of angels. And what scares me is Satan took one-third them! So there are also a very large population of demons. Whoever the author of Hebrews was gave up trying to count them all. He just said they are "innumerable." (You can find that in Hebrews 12:22.)

Another thing that we can see in these verses that we have read is that the Bible refers to them in the masculine gender. Their pronouns, if you will, are

all masculine. They are called "sons of God." Now, unlike humans, they are made of spirit rather than matter. Like God is a spirit being. We could, if we wanted to, very readily say that God is part of the spirit world. He is not a part of the angelic world necessarily, but He is a part of the spirit world. And I will make an exception: the pre-human Jesus Christ appeared many times as the Angel of the Lord, appearing to several of the Old Testament heroes of faith as the Angel of the Lord. So sometimes He comes (as we will get to in a few minutes), in terms of the idea of being a messenger, that sometimes He comes as a messenger from God and so technically then He is an angel because He bears a message. So angels, as spirit beings, are lesser than God in every way. No created being can be greater than its creator.

They are not ultra powerful. There is a limit to their power, their strength. It is less than God's, but it is far greater than ours. So we can say that because of this difference in composition and the talents and abilities that God gave the angels, human beings are a rung lower on the scale of cognizant beings, a rung lower than the angels. But we have a potential that is *greater*. We were made for a little while lower than the angels, but God will crown us with glory and honor. And will be sons of God in a greater way than they are now sons of God.

Let us go to Hebrews the first chapter and see some more. This is where I can say that, because we are fellow heirs or joint heirs with Christ, that we have a greater potential, because this chapter is an argument that the Son of God is far greater than the sons of God. That the Great Son of the Father is far superior to angels. And the author here, which I believe is the apostle Paul, wrote this introductory section to the book of Hebrews combating that Jewish mysticism concerning angels that was very popular at the time. And, as you heard in the quote, they thought that the angels were the actual powers behind the universe and all that was going on. And here, how could a mere human like Jesus of Nazareth be so great if these angels, who were really demons, were so wonderful and they were the ones that were working everything out in the universe.

So here we have chapter 1. I only want to read five verses out of this. Because here we are comparing the Son of God, Jesus Christ, now glorified, sitting at the right hand of the Father in heaven, as he says in the first three verses of this chapter, and then you have this idea of angels as very powerful



beings. But he is saying no, there is no comparison. The Son of God, Jesus of Nazareth, who gave Himself for us, He was buried, rose the third day and ascended to sit at the right hand of the Father, is far superior to any angel, even the cherubim.

**Hebrews 1:5-7** For to which of the angels did He [the Father] ever say: "You are My Son, today I have begotten You"? [This is a rhetorical question, so the obvious answer is, none of them. He said this to none of them.] And again, "I will be to Him [that is, the Son] a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son"? [To which of the angels did he say this? None.] But when He again brings the firstborn into the world [Remember, angels were created. The sons of God, the ultimate sons of God who follow the path of Jesus Christ, are born into that position.], He says: "Let all the angels of God worship Him." [So now we have this idea that the angels must worship the Son because they are lesser, far lesser.] And of the angels [let us get the other side of this] He says: "Who makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire."

So yeah, He did make them of spirit. But what does He call them? Ministers, servants, that is what minister means. His intention in bringing Jesus Christ into the world was to make Him the King of kings. But of the angels, He made them to be servants.

**Hebrews 1:13** But to which of the angels has He ever said: "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool"?

To which of the angels did He promise lordship, rulership, kingship over all things? So then he puts the final nail into the coffin of his argument here in verse 14, repeating what he said in verse 7.

**Hebrews 1:14** Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?

Let us get these roles correct, he says. The Son of God was sent to die for our sins and to preach the gospel and all that—but also to rule in the Kingdom of God. The angels, however, were created to serve.

Let us just kind of summarize what we see here as biblical facts out of Hebrews 1 about angels. Let us start though with just an overall idea that the Son of God, Jesus Christ, is very God. He is our God. And He is also their God. He is the Creator and therefore He is worthy of worship. And He is destined to rule forever. So this idea is what he is comparing the angels to. You have got the very God who is the Son and then you have these many millions of spirit beings. But He made them to be servants. I have got five points that we can draw out of Hebrews 1.

1. Angels are not begotten sons of God, but created.
2. They worship the Son.
3. They are spirit messengers. Where do I get that? From the word angels. Angel means messenger in both Hebrew and Greek. And they are servants which is what the word ministers means, so they are spirit messengers and servants. They are certainly not lords of creation or *the* Lord of creation.
4. They are not destined for rulership. They are servants. They are ministers.
5. Their responsibilities include serving God by taking care of His elect who will inherit the Kingdom of God. Here we get a little bit of a taste that their service is oriented toward our salvation and glorification. They are working for the plan, as it were. They are working in the plan as servants to bring us to Godhood, to be sons of God, like Jesus Christ is. And so God made them to assist Him and to assist us in His plan.

I have a story that my dad told me several times about his training in Pittsburgh. This must have been in the early 1960s. He was out with Bob Hoops, who was also a young minister at the time, and they were assisting the pastor there to do visits of prospective members. And so they went out, I believe it was in Mr. Hoop's car, to this visit this lady and she had purposely scheduled the appointment so that her husband would not be home because he was antagonistic toward the church and he did not want her to get involved in this stupid radio ministry of Herbert Armstrong. But she had Mr. Hoops and my dad out and they talked to her.

But in the middle of the meeting, the husband came home and caught her red-handed with these two men from Radio Church of God. And he was incensed; and Dad and Mr. Hoops were trying to get out of the house because the meeting was over, essentially, when this man came out and he started threatening them. And their car was parked out on the street. It was you know, probably about 50 feet away. But this man was in their way and they were trying to get to the car as safely as possible. And so the situation was getting more stressful all the time and the man started making moves to cause violence to Mr. Hoops and my dad. And out of nowhere appeared this very fit man. And he said, "Don't do it, Jack," which was the name of the husband, and he restrained the husband while Dad and Mr. Hoops scrambled to the car and squealed away as fast as they could go.

I put the story here because my dad was convinced, and I am pretty sure Mr. Hoops was also convinced, that this was an angel sent by God to make sure that Mr. Hoops and my dad were not harmed because of this church visit. Like I said, point number 5, angel's responsibilities include serving God by taking care of His elect. And that is what, we will just call him, this angel did for my dad and Mr. Hoops. And I am sure other people have interesting stories about angelic interventions into their life. But that is part of their job.

I cannot remember exactly where it is, but Jesus intimates in one of His sayings that each person has his or her angel. And this is where the idea of a guardian angel comes in. I am not exactly sure how extensive that is, that each person has a guardian angel or is it just each of the elect has a guardian angel? I do not know. That is another thing that we have to just kind of take on faith and understand that God is going to send His angelic spirits to help us, to protect us, if the need arises and it is His will that we have additional time to finish our spiritual maturation.

But that is one of their jobs, that they watch over us. Actually, we will get into it in just a few minutes here. That is one of their names, that they watchers. They keep an eye on us and keep an eye on things. And that is actually a section we are going to get into now.

We can learn more about angels by understanding the words that the Bible uses in reference to angels. Actually, these words probably give us the most

information about angels and their duties toward us and in God's overall plan. I do not want to get too deeply into these words, but just enough so you know what they mean.

The general term that we use, angel, is actually a transliteration of the Greek word *angelos*. You will see it also spelled *aggelos*. In Hebrew, the similar term is *mal'akh*. They mean the same thing. They mean "messenger." Now we should make sure that we do not restrict this idea of messenger *just* delivering messages or just that God sends them with a communication to a man. Because we know from the stories about angels in the Bible that they do a lot more than just carry messages. It is one of their primary activities, but it is not the only thing. For instance, God sends angels to do things at certain times or in certain situations that call for a powerful spirit being to do something for Him. So we find in Genesis 19 that He sent angels to deliver Lot and his family from Sodom. So He sends two angels down to the city to try to drag them out.

A little bit later in the Old Testament we see that God sent an angel, we do not know if this is a regular angel or whether it was the Angel of the Lord. II Kings and II Chronicles, one says the Angel of the Lord, the other one says an angel. But anyway, this angel was sent to Jerusalem to kill the Assyrians besieging the city in Hezekiah's day. The star of Bethlehem, one of the interpretations of that is that the star of Bethlehem may have been an angel sent to guide the magi to Bethlehem rather than a natural occurring star.

We read in the Gospels that angels were sent to comfort Jesus in Gethsemane before His arrest. And one rolled away the stone from Jesus' tomb. That must have been fun. An angel was sent to break Peter from prison. I always liked that story. The angel comes in and kicks Peter and says, "Get up, we're leaving."

I would recommend that if you have some free time this week, just flip through the book of Revelation and see all the different things that angels do in that book. They are not always delivering a message, they are doing things: they are blowing trumpets, they are sending plagues, they are going here and there making announcements obviously as messengers, but they do a whole lot of other things. So, we cannot say that all they do is come down and speak a word to the people who need to hear it.

Another way we could interpret or define these words for angels might be as an emissary, emissaries from God. And I think that is an acceptable translation but we need to restrict its meaning to one sent on a special mission. Not necessarily that it is like a senator being sent from the Roman Senate to carry the power of Rome to some region or whatever. In this case, it is someone sent from God to do something, whatever that special mission is, but not in a political sense. That is what I am trying to say.

Let us look at some more words. You do not necessarily need to get these down, but get the gist of what they mean. In the Old Testament, angels are called *bene ha' Elohim*. And this is what we normally have under the words sons of God. They are also called *kedoshim*, meaning "holy ones." That is, it is a designation that they belong to God. They are set apart as a distinct people that belong to God, and He uses them for His purposes. They are called *ir* or *irim*. And this is the one I mentioned earlier, those words mean "watcher" or in the plural watchers. And the word itself literally means "wakeful," because evidently angels do not need to sleep. So they are always watchful and on guard.

Certain ones are called cherub or a cherubim and that is a transliteration of the Hebrew. And some of the etymological work that has been done on that word, seems to be that this word means or implies "a guardian," a guardian of a sacred place, and that is where we see them in the Bible. Cherubim were put outside the Garden of Eden to block the entrance at the four cardinal points. Cherubim stand next to God's throne and cover it with their wings. So they are guardians of sacred places.

Seraphim, you might have heard that word. That is also a translation direct from the Hebrew. This word means "burning ones." These are the ones like in Isaiah 6:2 and Ezekiel 1 that have six wings and different faces. You know, the calf, the lion, the eagle, and the face of a man. They are perhaps some of the most mysterious of all, the seraphim. It is hard to pin them down exactly what they are, what their function is. But in Ezekiel 1, they are seemingly attached to God's portable throne and take Him wherever He wants. Very interesting beings.

They are also called the heavenly host. The phrase, "the Lord of hosts," they are the hosts. They are what we could call angelic or spirit warriors that follow God and fight for Him as He wills.

In the New Testament, angels are called spirits. This is the word *pneumata*. That simply means "a being that is composed of spirit." So they are called spirits, makes sense. One is called an archangel. *Archangelos*, that is a direct transliteration from the Greek and it means "a powerful or high angel," one of great either power or position. And the only one that is actually called an archangel is Michael. In Revelation, there are spirit beings called elders. There are 24 of them around God's throne. There are also the living creatures in Revelation 4 and 5, and they are described like the seraphim of Isaiah 6:2 and Ezekiel 1. And then there are other ones called spirits of God, and that makes sense. They are God's property, they are God's servants, so they are called God's spirits.

Other than these names, there is not enough information to make conclusive statements about many of these. We just know the name, we can kind of figure out what the meaning is, but it does not tell us a whole lot. It just gives us a few categories of angels. So we cannot make a lot of definitive claims about their meanings, just only inferences.

Another set of words are used primarily of fallen angels, or demons, and these are often used in combination like in Ephesians 6:12; Colossians 2:15; Romans 8:38; I Corinthians 15:24. And these are the principalities, the powers, the thrones, the dominions, and such words like that. In Greek, these are *archi*, principalities, meaning "high position." Powers is *exusiai* or *dunamais*. These are reflective of powerful beings. Thrones, they just transliterate that from the Greek word *thronoi*, which means "a seat of power." And their *kuriotities*, which is the word translated as dominions, and it basically means "lordships." And I will just mention here, only in Ephesians 3:10 and Colossians 1:16 do some of these that are mentioned there seem positive, that there may be ranks among the good angels where some of these names might fit. Principalities and powers, I think is the ones that are used there. *Archi* and either *exusiai* or *dunamais*.

Fallen angels are also called demons, evil spirits, unclean spirits, evil ones, and of course there are the several names of the being who is known as Hillel, or Satan now, the Adversary, tempter, accuser, Devil, evil one, Baalzebul, destroyer, the enemy, the Serpent, the dragon. Jesus calls him the father of lies. Leviathan is an image of Satan the Devil. He is king over all the children of pride, it says in the last verse of that chapter.

As I mentioned before, Michael is an archangel. He is one of three angelic beings who are actually given a specific name. So, Michael, the word means "who is like God." It is found in Daniel 10:12; Jude 9; and Revelation 12. Like I said, he is the only one specifically named an archangel. There is Gabriel whose name means "man of God." You will find him in Daniel 8:9 and Luke 1. He is the one that was sent to Daniel and Michael had to come help him because the king of Persia, who is another code name for Satan the Devil, was trying to stop him from delivering the message, but Michael came and helped him so Gabriel could go do his task. And the third one I just mentioned is Hillel. That is incorrectly translated as Lucifer in Isaiah 14:12. His name is not Lucifer, it is not light bearer, as has been said, but the word actually means "shining one." I guess that is close enough to light bearer, but the true Light bearer is Jesus Christ. You will find that in John 1. In Him is light and no darkness at all.

Any other names of angels that you may have heard or read are apocryphal. There is no such being named Raphael as far as we know, or any of the other names of God that came from Jewish mysticism between the Testaments. Legion, which you will find in Mark 5 and Luke 8, is not a name of a specific demon. It is actually a group term, like a Roman legion. It just means that there was a large group or a large host in terms of an army of them acting in unison, and they were there to torment the poor man that they had taken over. They are the ones, Legion, that group of demons were the ones that were sent into the pigs and they ran over the cliff and died.

Let us go to Revelation 19. We are done with all the names. It was probably boring, time to wake up again.

**Revelation 19:9-10** Then he [this is an angel] said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the

Lamb!" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God." And I fell at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, "See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

Now to chapter 22 to pick up those other two verses.

**Revelation 22:8-9** Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. Then he said to me, "See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God."

These two passages show the position and the attitude of the righteous angels. We do not know who this angel was. He is not given a name. It could have been Gabriel. That would be a total assumption. I do not know. Gabriel does seem to have been used by God to make revelations of things. He did it to Daniel and he revealed to Mary that she would have the Son. So it is not without a good biblical background that this might have been Gabriel, but since he had already been introduced in the Bible, why did God not put it in here? Well, He did not. So we just have to say, well, we do not know.

So these two passages show here that the angels do not consider themselves worthy of worship, and they are not. Like I said earlier, they are higher than us on the scale of things right now, at this time. But they are not worthy of worship. And just from the sound of this angel's response to John falling down on his face here, they do not want it. They do not want the reverence of human beings.

Now I am just wondering, did John have a lingering influence from Greek and Jewish thought at the time about angels? Or was he just overwhelmed? I kind of lean toward the overwhelmed thing, that he just kind of forgot himself because of all the things that he was being shown. They were just so magnificent and this angel seemed to be the representative present and he just fell on his face. But whoever the angel was here admirably said, "No. Don't do this. This isn't right. Worship God!"



And so we can take from this that the righteous angels know and accept their roles in God's plan. They know that they were created as ministering spirits. They are helpers, they are servants, even though they are created with great skills and talents and powers and minds. But they have decided with their free moral agency to be humble and to do what God has made them to do. So this submission and humility among the righteous angels are what sets them apart from the demons. The demons all became proud, following Hillel, the one who became the Adversary, because he was proud. He wanted to rule. He wanted to be the one making all the decisions and using power and as we know from Isaiah 14, he wanted to be like God. He wanted God's position.

But the righteous angels said no. They refused to take that position and they act in humility. They speak in humility. They submit to God's orders about what they should do. They accept that they were created as servants. So this angel gives a plain statement of his role and his relationship to God, and his relationship to us. He mentions John and his brethren. His brethren are the other people in the church. We call ourselves brothers and sisters in Christ. So, we are seeing here in Revelation 19 and Revelation 22 what the angels think about us and their relationship with us.

He calls himself in the Greek *syndoulos*. And that word means literally "a fellow slave." It refers to slaves or servants who have the same master. So we could say the angels consider themselves our brothers. We could say we are players on the same team. We are all trying to score a touchdown just like you are. We are trying to do what our quarterback tells us to do. And I may be the running back, but you are the wide receiver; we are on the same team. So they have a common master, a common mission, and a common goal with us. We are buds. They have more power than we do and they are certainly smarter than we are and they know more about what is going on than we do. But they think of us as brothers.

This term *syndoulos* in secular usage was sometimes used for slaves that were manacled together to work on some project. You know, we see this in our own culture now. They sometimes still have chain gangs out working on roads or picking up trash or whatever. They are all doing the same thing under a common leader. And that is kind of the idea here. It is not what is in view here, but the idea is there that we are all working for the same master—

the Great God—doing something for the good of all. And as we saw in Hebrews 1:14, they also work for our benefit. They are helping us walk towards salvation, and they are fully engaged in that. They really are rooting for us, and they do for us what we cannot do for ourselves under God's direction. Remember, they are the watchers. They are the ones that are keeping an eye on us for God.

Let us go to II Peter 2, verses 9 through 11.

**II Peter 2:9-11** Then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment, and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries, whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord.

Let us move forward to Jude.

**Jude 8-9** Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries. Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"

These two passages speak of false teachers, human teachers, and apostates, and both of these apostles describe them as very rash and taking rights and liberties that do not belong to them. That is, he says specifically "they despise authority." As a matter of fact, they are very full of pride and they want to *be* the authority. But they despise others who are a legitimate authority. So, what he says here, especially Peter says that they do not defer or respect those who are more powerful or who rightly hold a higher office or a higher position.

By the way, just as an off-handed thing, these dignitaries that it talks about, "they speak evil of dignitaries," is the word *doxa* in Greek, and it means "glorious ones." So they are people or beings who command recognition, respect, or honor. A term that we have used in recent times, and I mean the

last few centuries, is by calling someone who is in a high office, your excellency. So the dignitaries are an excellency in terms of position or power.

Now the example that these two give, Peter and Jude, is of angels, and most specifically in Jude, the archangel Michael, who though he is powerful in his own right, he seems to be right at the top of angelic leadership, but he did not speak evil of even the Devil when they contended over the body of Moses, as it says, but he treated Satan with proper respect, deferring to the Lord to rebuke him. Righteous angels are humble. They do not go outside of their sphere of authority at all. And they treat those of high authority with great honor.

This section also verifies that angels are greater in power and might than humans. These two passages also cover things like their great intelligence and knowledge and understanding. Although in I Peter 1, verse 12,

**I Peter 1:12** To them it was revealed, that not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into.

So even though they are of great power and knowledge and intelligence and understanding, Peter says they do not understand everything. And they desire to look into the deeper matters of salvation and into God's plan of redemption. So one thing that we can garner from this is that angels are not omniscient. There are still things that they do not know.

Back in Ephesians 3, Paul writes,

**Ephesians 3:8-11** To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all people see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ [He is saying that this great mystery was a secret, that God kept it to Himself.]; to the intent that now [in this current age] the manifold wisdom of God might be made

known to the church [He kept this secret so that He could reveal it to us.], to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places [this is one of the places where I said that principalities and powers probably refers to the good angels], according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

What Paul is suggesting here, really, it is more than a suggestion, he is telling us outright, that the unfolding of God's plan in the church is a revelation to angels as well. They were not exactly sure how all this was going to work out, but they had to wait until it was revealed through Jesus Christ in this time. So the mystery of God's grace and His plan of redemption was hidden even from them, who play such an important part in the plan of God, especially toward us, because they are God's servants to minister to those who are now seeking salvation. And just to add this here, in Matthew 24:36 in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says that even the angels do not know when He will return. Only the Father.

Let us conclude in Revelation 4. I want to read all 11 verses here because this is a revelation of the spirit world, especially in God's throne room.

**Revelation 4:1-11** After these these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this."

Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. And He who sat there was like a jasper and sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald. Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads. And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God.

Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures [these are the seraphim] full of eyes in front and in back. The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature

was like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!" Whenever the living creatures gave glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created."

Now, if you do not understand what is happening here, join the crowd. Because the spirit world is something beyond our ability to comprehend fully. I mean, these are just broad strokes of what is happening before God's throne. And we can readily understand certain aspects of it while others of them just throw us for a loop. Our imaginations just cannot stretch enough to make sense out of it. And this scene, the throne room of heaven, just boggles the mind. Who are the 24 elders? What do they do? Are they like department heads? I do not know. Maybe they are. And the living creatures, the seraphim: Lion, calf, man, and eagles' faces? Six wings? Full of eyes all around and within? What does that mean? Do other angels look like animals? Do you have angelic horses? Some have said that in Revelation 19, the horses are angelic.

All these angels are constantly praising God. I mean, that boggles the mind! Just day and night they are praising God. Is the strong angel in chapter 5 Michael? I do not know. I would think that Michael would be in the throne room somewhere, but it does not say. Is Michael a covering cherub? Is Gabriel? I do not know. It does not tell us. I mean, Michael is called one of the chief princes in Daniel 10. But you know, what does that mean? I would guess that it means he is one of the top three angels and I would include Gabriel in there, and someone must have replaced Hillel, I would think. He was the covering cherub and he fell so somebody had to replace him. I do not know who that was.

All in all, these questions indicate that we lack a great deal of specific knowledge about angels. We will likely get answers to them only in God's Kingdom. They have to remain a mystery to us. And God has determined that the mystery of angels should be hidden from us, just like He hid parts of His plan from the angels, He has hidden from us a lot of what the angels do. And so we should be satisfied with what we do know. They are intelligent, powerful, but very humble and deferential spirit entities, who serve God and also help us as fellow servants to salvation. Any more than that, God has determined we do not need to know.

Take it as a warning, because when God withholds something, He does it for our good. So take it as a warning that searching too deeply into such things could be harmful, it could take us off the track.

So we need, as the church of God, to learn the lesson that the Jews between the Testaments did not. Do not speculate beyond what Scripture reveals because doing so can lead us astray. And as it happened to the Jews, to the point that they fell under the influence of Satan and his demons. Look at how against the Son of God they were when He came among them. We will do better if we heed the advice of the angel in Revelation 19 and 22. What did he say? He said this twice, "Worship God!" But he also said, "Keep the words of this Book and follow the testimony of Jesus."