

Angels and Demons | Sunday, November 30, 2025 | Jakob Guy

Do you think much about the words we sing, especially around Christmas? *Away in the Manger* and *Silent Night* claim that the God-Baby Jesus wasn't crying as He laid in the manger. *We Three Kings* claims there were only three Magi when there likely were more than that. *God Rest Ye, Merry, Gentlemen* says that Jesus was born on Christmas day, when that's not very provable. We sing about Angels, but do we understand them? Some of us come from traditions that assert the presence of guardian angels who follow us around to keep us safe or that we ought to be praying to. Others think of angels as they are portrayed in the media - human-looking creatures that seem annoyed that they have to help us mortals with the same things over and over again. Or we envision little cherub babies on Hallmark cards and winged dancing women in Christmas and Easter pageants. Still others picture shoulder angels and demons that appear when a movie character is trying to decide between right and wrong. All these work together to paint a strange picture of angels as we sing our Christmas songs.

I wanted to begin the Advent season by briefly studying angels because we got this question: "*We talk about Satan, but where did he come from? Did God create him?*" The best way to understand Satan and his influence in the world is by understanding angels. But even talking about angels, demons, and Satan is hard. Either you over-fixate on them or you are content with believing in God, but believe that everything else in the universe is merely physical.

That mindset is the result of the Enlightenment. Many of us grow up looking down on the ancient world, believing people back then were ignorant and didn't understand the universe as well as we do. Modern science tell us that what we see is all there is - the result of millions of years of evolution, survival of the fittest, and natural causes: anything that exists can be explained, analyzed, and manipulated to our ends. Yet in our hearts we sense that there is something deeper - something non-physical that is just as real as we are. In the past few years, more people have begun to understand that what we see is not all that there is - the world is not merely physical and we cannot explain the supernatural with the natural. Unfortunately, the *God-shaped hole* that Augustine and the 90's music artist *Plumb* both wrote about is filled with the pursuit of Neo-Paganism, Astrology, and Eastern Mysticism - things that ultimately are leaving us more empty than we started. Yet we are not alone in our attempt at understanding the supernatural. God has explained a lot about the spiritual realm in His inspired Word.

As with any topic this big, we won't get to everything the Bible has to say, but hopefully this will give us a good baseline. We will return several times to **Hebrews 1-2** because, as much as the author describes angels in that passage, he does so in the context of Jesus. Whatever we come away with from this message, we need to dwell on the fact that ***Jesus is greater than every other spiritual being and is the only one who deserves our worship as our Lord and God. With the Father and the Spirit, He acts alone in creation, salvation, and authority over all things.***

A Worshipful Presence, Not a Creative Force

Angels have been present since very early in creation, but they are not eternal. We understand that the Lord had an audience when He was creating the heavens and the earth: **Job 38.4-7**. This is one time in Scripture where “*sons of God*” refers to angelic beings. They seem to have the purpose of worshiping and giving glory to the Lord. This concept is captured beautifully in *The Magician’s Nephew* when Aslan the Lion sings Narnia into existence and suddenly millions of lighter voices join him just as the sky explodes with stars. The humans discern that it is the stars singing as they witness Narnia’s creation. Angels, who are associated with the stars in the heavens, did not assist with creation, but rather bear joyful witness to the act of creation.

Scripture is emphatic that the Lord God created all things by His power alone. We have seen this as we have studied the creation account in Genesis, but it is also communicated in the Psalms, Job, John 1, and Colossians 1: the creator God does not share power. Some have attempted to reason that the “us” in Genesis 1.26 refers to God and angels working together, but that doesn’t make sense of the grammar in that passage: humans were made “in the image of God and in God’s image he created them.” If a being exists - regardless of the nature or power of that being - it is a result of the Lord’s creative imagination and power. **Hebrews 1.3-7, 13-14. Colossians 1.16**. Angels are *worshippers*, not *co-creators and saviors*. But do they do more than worship?

Rulers with Authority

Angels were created to have some kind of rule and authority over aspects of the heavens. **Ephesians 6.12, 1 Peter 3.22**. Given their connection to the stars in Job 38, Revelation 12, and elsewhere, many theologians have connected their rule to the governing of the heavenly bodies. Augustine and others believed it was possible that they spiritually inhabit the stars just as our souls inhabit our physical bodies; at the very least, he believed that they are responsible for the movement of the stars. Gavin Ortlund, a modern pastor and theologian, says this could help make sense of the star that guides the Magi to visit the toddler Jesus¹. If this makes you uncomfortable, ask yourself, *why? Am I so beholden to a purely naturalistic view of the universe that I can’t fathom the concept that spiritual beings may be tasked with authority over the physical realm?* As a retired star tells the children in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, “Even in your world, [balls of flaming gas] are merely what the stars are *made of*, not what they *are*.” We can accept the physical realities of what the stars and heavenly bodies are made of *and* discern that there are spiritual beings who govern them with authority given them by the Lord.

At the same time, this idea has been abused by people who turn everything into a hierarchy and seek to determine which beings ought to be more greatly revered. But I think the Lord has left things vague so we will worship Him alone. I believe that’s why there are only *two* named angels

¹ Ortlund, Gavin: A Christian View of the Stars. https://youtu.be/pey9uQna2U4?si=8PSw_Z521KBdUhqW

in the Scriptures. Gabriel, the messenger of the Lord (Daniel 9.20-23, Luke 1.5-38) and Michael, a military commander (Daniel 10.15-21, 12.1; Jude 9; Revelation 12.7). Scripture also refers to the *Angel of the Lord*, but that seems to refer mostly to the Lord Himself, and not a messenger.

Understanding their rule and authority is complicated, but is further complicated by **Psalm 82**. This Psalm seems to vacillate between referring to heavenly rulers and earthly rulers. In the Old Testament, the angel Michael was tasked with defending Israel; a role he continues to this day on behalf of those who Scripture calls *Spiritual Israel* - that is all who follow Jesus as their God. He battled the *Princes* of other peoples, that is angelic beings who were over the nations of Persia and Greece, and Satan himself who is described as *the great dragon* in Revelation 12.

So angels have some rule over the peoples, and possibly over the heavenly bodies in the same way that humans do over the earth: **Psalm 8.3-8**. This Psalm reiterates our creation mandate to *be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth, and have dominion over it*. Whereas God gave dominion and authority to the angelic hosts over the heavens, He bestowed dominion and authority over the earth to humans. I don't know what that means for space exploration, but we have a great responsibility and position that is not shared by the angels: dominion over the earth and over the world to come: **Hebrews 2.5-9**. So even though angels were created before us, we have a *glory, honor, and dominion* they won't ever experience because we can be united with Jesus in His rule over all things. This brings us to Satan himself: the serpent in Genesis 3.

Envy and Pride lead to Satan's downfall

Some angels were not content with their place of authority: **Jude 6**. The Bible Project: "...it's safe to assume that envy was involved [in the serpent's fall]. Possibly, the firstborn sky rulers envied the exalted position of lowly, second-born humans."² Envy of our position led to pride.

Two Old Testament prophecies against ancient kings bring this point to bear: The king of Babylon (**Isaiah 14.12-15**) and the King of Tyre (**Ezekiel 28.12-15**). The language used against these kings is meant to invoke heavenly pictures: *you kings were already elevated like the spiritual beings, and your fall will be like their fall*. Consider the New Testament: **Luke 10.18; John 12.31; 2 Peter 2.4, 9-10; Revelation 12.7-10**. So an angelic being was envious of our position and sought to place himself above God, leading other angels to open rebellion against Him. Thus, they were banished from the heavens, bound to the earth, and destined for the fires of hell. We refer to this being as *Satan* (adversary) and *the Devil* (the accuser) and his followers as *demons*. They gladly accept worship from those who have been led astray to false gods.

But doesn't Satan have some kind of power on earth? **Ephesians 2.1-2; 2 Corinthians 11.14-15; 1 Peter 5.8-9**. ***We are so used to arguing our own point on theological matters, that we forget***

² Mackie, Tim: Seizing vs. Receiving Power <https://bibleproject.com/podcasts/seizing-vs-receiving-power/>

something important: Two things can be true at once. Scripture seems to make clear that Satan is simultaneously bound to the earthly realm and stripped of his original power and glory **and** he rules over the powers of earth, prowling around to devour us. Our Doctrinal Statement alludes to this when it says Satan **became** *the prince of this world*. He has lost his original position before the Lord and now temporarily rules here until his final destruction comes. I recommend *The Space Trilogy* and *The Screwtape Letters*, both by CS Lewis, and *The Silmarillion* by JRR Tolkien. These are works of fiction and fantasy that explore the spiritual realm through the lens of angels having dominion over the heavens and demons exerting their influence over this world. Satan and his angels are powerful and have sway over the peoples, idols, and false religions of the world. They can cause diseases, inhabit those who don't follow Christ, tempt us, and lead us astray. As bad as this is, the good news is we aren't just subjected to nameless and faceless evils and random events. We have an enemy who seeks our downfall - one who will ultimately meet his demise: **Hebrews 2.14-18**.

Jesus is Greater

The Bible describes our enemies as an unholy trinity: *the world, the flesh, and the devil*, so it is unwise to assert every negative event in our lives as coming from the hand of Satan himself. We are perfectly capable of messing up our lives and other people's lives apart from Satan's direct influence. Likewise, the fallen state of the world lends itself to pain and suffering. But Satan has a primary role in bringing sin and temptation into this world because he wants the rule and authority that we have in Christ. But this enemy who has been cast down from heaven to wreak havoc upon our world will be fully and finally put to death when Christ returns and establishes his New Heavens and New Earth - His Kingdom where Righteousness dwells. The invitation for us is to not worship the ones who were made to worship the Lord continuously, not subject ourselves to the powers that were never meant to rule over us, and not fear the one who cannot take us away from the presence of the Lord and whose accusations against us cannot stand. If you are in Christ, you worship Jesus alone as our God and King, you will one day have the dominion over the earth that you were created to have, and you are seated in Christ's presence in the heavenly places *now* where no-one can separate you from His goodness.

1 John 4.4. The people of God are people who wait for deliverance. Until that deliverance is finally realized in Christ, we do not fear our enemy. He fears us because of The Spirit in us.