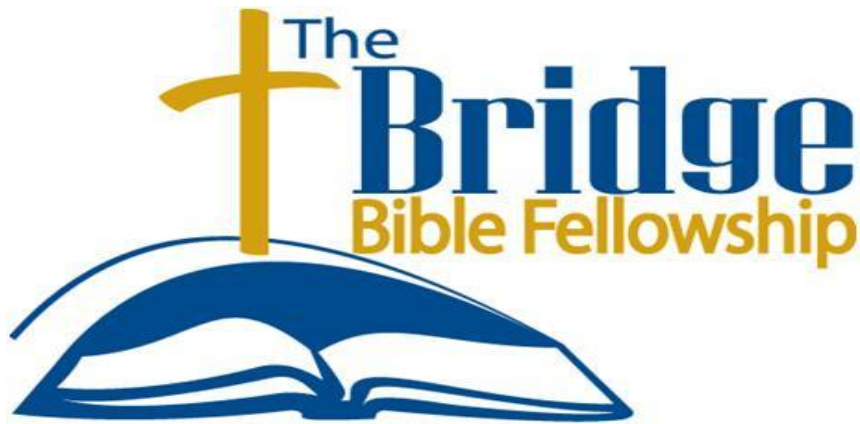


**Outline Study Notes**  
*on*  
*The Biblical Doctrine of Angels*



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**Disclaimer**

This outline study will not address the topics of demonism, Satanism, spiritism and witchcraft. Also, this study only touches superficially the broader, related topics of spiritual warfare and overcoming temptation, topics which are certainly vital to growth in sanctification. These topics merit a much more extensive elaboration than is in view here and, although integrally connected to God’s creation of angelic creatures, the author believes that they are somewhat peripheral to the goals of this study and, furthermore, are properly and best addressed only after the foundations addressed here are firmly in hand.

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## Introductory Perspectives:

- In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, He made two classes of “God kind” creatures: angel-kind creatures and human-kind creatures. Although angel-kind creatures are never referred to as being “in the image of God”, they do nevertheless have a certain likeness to humans in that they are intelligent, rational, communicative spirit-beings capable of moral reasoning and choice.
- The term “angels” is used in this study to refer to all spiritual (purely soul-spirit) creature-beings—beings of the “God kind” who nominally exist and function without physical bodies. Nevertheless, a physical manifestation of their existence and presence may be granted on occasion for specific, divinely-ordered ministries where and whenever sovereignty deems such manifestation strategic to His kingdom purposes.
- Angels are intrinsically spiritual (i.e., soul-spirit) beings, as contrasted with man who is a soul-spirit being housed in a physical temple; that is, man is a creature with a physical + soul-spirit unity. Thus, angels are almost always invisible to our eyes and, in their normal activities, are not subject to the laws of nature as man is. Nevertheless, their influence is real, in both the physical and the spiritual realms, and their influence is frequently observable in terms of discernible, and in some cases even measurable, consequences. Although they are spiritual beings, the record of Scripture reveals that they are subject to being embodied in human (or other) physical likeness on sovereignly-determined occasions for specific physical or spiritual purposes (cf., *Ezek. 9:1-2; Heb. 13:2*).

**Comment:** The embodiment of angels on occasion must come to pass through a direct act of special (divine) creation, for it is very doubtful that angels possess innately (i.e., solely within their power and will) the capacity to create their own temporary embodied manifestation at will.

If angels indeed have such an inherent self-creative capacity, it seems likely that fallen angels would exploit this power freely in their malevolent objectives. However, Scriptural evidence suggests that demons, at least nominally in this post-diluvian age, are limited in any manifestation of their presence and power ... effecting any physical manifestation of their power and presence only through an invasion of existing physical creatures, either man or animal.

- Angels, apparently, do not have procreative capacity (*Matt. 22:30; Lk. 20:34-36*) and are, therefore, “lower than man” in this capacity. Full likeness to God must include certain “creative” capacities, and Scriptural evidence strongly suggests that angels are intelligent, moral creatures limited with respect to such creaturely capacity.

**Comment:** Angels were created “*en masse*” – they do not multiply and their total population has remained fixed (constant) since the day of their creation. This does not necessarily require, however, that all angels are “wholly sexless”. It simply means that there are not differing genders among the angelic class of creatures, and that the Creator did not ordain a procreative exercise within and among any of the classes of angelic beings.

- The Scriptures contain many references to the existence of angels and to their activity relative to the throne of God, to creation, to Israel in their national and redemptive calling, and to mankind generally and the church particularly.

- It is interesting to observe that there are more references to angels in the New Testament than in the Old Testament. Over half the books of the Bible (34) contain references to actions and communications by angels.
- Biblical references to angels include such terms as: “sons of God” (*Job 1:6; 2:1*); “morning stars” (*Job 38:7*); “heavenly host” (*Neh. 9:6*); “holy ones” (*Ps. 89:5, 7*); “watchers” (*Dan. 4:13; 7:23*); “powers” (*Eph. 1:21*); “the rulers (principalities) and the authorities (powers) in the heavenly places” (*Eph. 3:10 (KJV)*); “thrones or powers or rulers or authorities/principalities” (*Col. 1:16*). These terms refer to the existence of various classes or ranks of spiritual (angelic) beings. The Scriptures provide the names of only three angels: Gabriel, Michael, and Lucifer.
- Angels are powerful and wise, but not omnipotent or omniscient.
  - *Ps. 103:20*. “Bless the LORD you His angels, mighty in strength, who perform His word, obeying the voice of His word.”
  - *II Cor. 10:3-4*. “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are mighty before God for the destruction of fortresses.”

**Comment:** Omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence are non-communicable attributes of Deity. As such, they are not communicated to (not shared with) any creature and, since angels are most certainly creature-beings and are finite, they do not have any likeness to God with respect to these attributes.

- Angels are not omnipresent; hence, any missional activity in which they engage is limited in time, space, and effect. From all indications, they can move quickly from the third heaven, the abode of God, into the physical realm in order to accomplish their assigned earthly missions (*Dan. 9:22* “... being caused to fly swiftly ...”, *KJV*).
- Since Scripture is given for our instruction in righteousness, and to provide for us a more complete understanding of God and His purposes in creation, it follows that He intends for us to be informed regarding the existence of these creatures, and about aspects of their role in His sovereign plan in creation and redemption. As angels are fellow “God kind” creatures and, as man appears at the highest level of God’s created order of physical beings, man does not exist and move and have his being in isolation from God’s other creature-ministers, all created purposefully for the Creator’s glory. Hence, we ought to pursue awareness of all that God has made for our benefit, and seek to gain His perspective as to how we ought to exercise our stewardship in light of the full revelation of His creative order and purpose.

### **Some Summary Points of Contrast and Unity**

- Angels are spiritual beings in the full unity of their creaturely essence.
  - ♦ Man is a person holding a physical + soul-spirit unity in the fullness of his creaturely essence.
- Angels are immortal beings; since they are pure soul-spirit creatures they never undergo disintegration (death). The judgment of eternal imprisonment in hell for fallen angels is a matter of eternal destiny—a destiny to be experienced in their innate immortality without ever experiencing any disintegration in their being.

- ◆ Man is an immortal being, albeit in this present age the physical temple housing his soul-spirit essence has been judged with a sentence of sure disintegration and decay because of Adam's fall. Man's true immortality, even the immortality of the body as well as the soul-spirit, will only reach its completed form and fullest expression after a future creative act of resurrection and glorification, and man will only then be immortal in the full unity of his glorified physical + soul-spirit essence.
- In God's ordained consummation of the present age there will be a sharp, eternal separation of the righteous and the unrighteous—a separation that applies equally to angel-kind and human-kind creatures in the totality of their populations. Condemned human-kind sinners will be consigned to a separately-created domain of existence the Scriptures refer to as "hell" [*Gr.*, "Gehenna"] – a place originally created for "the devil and his angels" (*Matt. 25:41*).
- Each of these two classes of "God-kind" creatures, angel-kind and human-kind, has a stewardship-ministry responsibility, and these divinely appointed responsibilities are not so distinct that they have no overlap in God's sovereign purpose in creation. To the contrary, God has so purposed that, in many respects, angel-kind and human-kind person-creatures have common, overlapping expressions in the exercise of their ordained stewardships. The stewardship-ministry responsibilities of both classes of creatures are closely linked in the out-working of God's sovereign providence in many space-time circumstances. This fact makes a study of the doctrine of angels both illuminating and relevant to how we ought to "live and move and have our being" in this present age.
- Further to the point, God does not have distinctly different ends in His creation of angel-kind and human-kind person-creatures. There is a unitary end for which God created all things; namely, His glory. According to His eternally-true Word, the consummation of all things will find both angel-kind and human-kind creatures submitting uniformly to His authority and fulfilling precisely His creative purpose, both in the heavens and on earth.

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## I. Basic Questions and Answers Regarding Angels

### A. Question. How did angels come into being?

#### Answer: Angels are created beings,

"For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor an angel, nor a spirit;"

*Acts 23:8*

The Sadducees were the pure naturalists (material rationalists) of that day. They held to the authority of Moses and the Mosaic law, but were, at best, compromised "theistic evolutionists" in their time.

- *Neh. 9:6* "Thou alone art LORD. Thou hast made the heavens, the heaven of heavens with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. Thou dost give life to all of them and the heavenly host bows down before Thee."
- *Ps. 148:1-6*. "Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the highest heavens; ... Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts! ... Let them praise the name of the LORD, for He commanded and they were created. ..."
- *John 1:3* "All things came into being by (or, through) Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being."
- *Rom. 11:36* "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever."
- *Col. 1:16* "For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible or invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things have been created by Him and for Him."
- *Ex. 20:11* (see quote immediately below) and *Ps. 33:6-9*. The terms "all" and "all their host" most certainly include the full complement of angelic hosts.

### B. Question: When did angels come into being?

#### Answer: Angels were created early in Creation Week.

*Psalm 136:6* speaks of God spreading out the earth over the waters – a clear reference to His creative working on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of creation week (see *Gen. 1:9-10*).

Further, *Ezek.*

*28:13* suggests that Satan was present when the beautiful gems of the earth were originally formed: "on the day that you were created they were prepared."

- *Gen. 2:1* "Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts."
- *Ex. 20:11* "For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."
- *Job 38:1-7* "Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said, ... 'Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth! ... When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God (Heb., *bene elohim*) shouted for joy?'"

Note: See *Job 1:6* for identification of "sons of God" as created angelic beings, a generic group that includes Satan. Angelic creatures are referred to as "sons of God" quite likely because their parentage is exclusively "of God" – they were all created by God, coming into being in one creative event.

Comment: Regarding *Job 1:2* & *38:7*, the two terms "sons of God" and "morning stars" almost surely appear as a Hebraic poetic parallelism, indicating that an identity of creature-beings is being referred to by these separate terms.

### C. Question: Why, or for what purpose, were angels created?

#### Answer: Angels are ministering spirits.

The Scriptures clearly set before us the existence of an unseen spiritual reality, namely angels, who exercise a pervasive agency in God's sovereign governance of His created physical reality

1. Ministries around the throne of God (guardians, worship leaders, etc.).
2. Ministries sustaining creation. (*Rev. 7:1-3*)
  - *Rev. 7:2* "And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, ... and he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea,"
3. Ministries to saints, the heirs of salvation.
  - *Heb. 1:14*. "Are [angels] not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?"
4. Ministries as agents in divine judgment. (*I Chron. 21:1,15*)
  - *I Chron. 21:15* "And God sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it; ..."
  - *Ps. 104:4*. "He makes His angels spirits; His ministers a flame of fire."

### Comment on the Phrase “sons of God”

The phrase “sons of God”\*\* (Heb., “*bene elohim*”) appears five times in the OT: *Gen. 6:1-2* (twice); *Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7*.

The three texts in Job refer decisively to angelic beings.

Hence, by comparison with its first usage in Scripture, we have firm ground for concluding that the appearance of the term in *Gen. 6:1-2* is also referring to angelic-kind beings.

Note: A similar phrase, “*bar elohim*”, appears in *Dan. 3:25*, and a related phrase, “*bar elim*”, in *Ps. 29:1* & *Ps. 89:6*. All three of these Hebraic terms clearly refer to angel-kind beings.

Adam is called “the son of God” (*Lk. 3:38*), a specific reference to a very particular person, even that person who is the federal head of humanity and brought into existence at the beginning by a direct creative work of the Creator.

A quite similar phrase, “sons of God”, is used several times in the NT (e.g., *John 1:12; Rom. 8:14-16; Gal. 3:26; 1 John 3:1-2*) to refer exclusively to elect members of Adam’s race that God redeemed, regenerated and reconciled to Himself. It is an appropriate identity because such sons of Adam are “created in Christ Jesus” (*Eph. 2:10*), and have become thereby legitimate members of God’s family ... individuals who are graciously granted a new ‘creative-adoptive’ family identity, even an identity so authentic that all elect ones will one day have a full conformity to the “only begotten Son of God” (*Rom. 8:29*).

Note: We read in *Gen. 5:3* that “Adam ... begat a son in his own likeness, after his image.” All members of the race of human-kind creatures—offspring of the originally created parents—are “sons of Adam” (alt., “sons of men”).

The phrase “daughters of men” appearing in *Gen. 6:2* speaks of a gender-specific group from among the “sons of Adam” who were participants in a very particular and ‘out of order’ sexual transgression of the created order.

Nevertheless, because of God’s sovereignly ordained generational principle of life, all “sons of Adam” are in the image of God—holding an authentic likeness to the Progenitor of human life through a special, divine act of creation”.

### The “Son of God”

The incarnate Christ is the “only begotten Son of God” (*John 1:14*). This phrase stands in distinction to *John 1:12-13* which speaks of God having multiple “sons” ... sons who are “born of God” ... “born again” from among the sons of Adam by a direct, re-creative act.

The term “only begotten” (Gr., “*monogenes*”) speaks precisely and profoundly concerning the only Person coming into the family of human-kind creatures in true humanity who issued directly from the Father, being “begotten”, not made, and possessing at the same time a singular essence with His true and eternal deity.

The “only begotten Son” entered the human race with a wholly unique “divine genetics” and through a wholly unique “divine genesis”. He is the only sent One from the Father who manifests and reveals God fully and truly because He comes as true and perfect man who is true and comprehensive Deity.

By contrast, Adam was a *created* person ... a person of the human-kind only *made* in God’s likeness.

The “only begotten Son” is an eternally-existing Person who was eternally “begotten” of the Father, appearing in time (“a body Thou hast prepared for Me”, *Heb. 10:5*) for the salvation of sons of Adam.

\*\* Note: For further discussion of the Hebraic phrase “sons of God” see Appendix C, especially pp. 39-40.

### D. Question: How many angels were created?

Answer: God created a great multitude of angels.

- *Dan. 7:10*. “Thousands upon thousands were attending Him, and myriads upon myriads were standing before Him.”
- *Heb. 12:22*. “You have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels (in festal assembly),”
- *Rev. 5:11*. “And I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne ... and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands,”

## II. Divisions of Angels.

There are two fundamental classes of angels: **righteous** and **fallen**. Among both classes, righteous and fallen, there are distinct hierarchies of angels.

### A. Righteous angels

#### 1. Cherubim (see also Appendix A, p. 25)

##### Sidebar Note:

The fact that there are a variety of hierarchies of angels (cherubim, etc.) is clear evidence of the sovereignty of God in all things. The rank of each angel was divinely set by the will of the Creator at the moment of their creation. His sovereignty is in every way as absolute and certain in all affairs in all reality today as at creation.

- *Gen. 3:24*. This text is the first mention of ministering, righteous angels in Scripture, and the first mention of a particular hierarchy of angels. The preceding communicative presence of the serpent reasoning/arguing with Eve is properly the first manifestation of a spiritual (angelic) creature ... the creature commonly referred to as Satan.

Note: *Ezek. 28:11-16* speaks of Satan as a cherub who held the title of “guardian/covering cherub” (vs. 14 & 16). He was a “created” cherub (vs. 13 & 15), an angel-kind creature who was assigned, or else who assumed by self-willed intrusion, a position of influence “in Eden, the garden of God” (vs. 13a).

Comment: Observe particularly the “guardian” responsibility of this class of angels called “cherubim”. Cherubim are associated with the immediate presence of God (a “throne-ward” presence), and they seem to have a special guardianship role relating to the protection of all that embodies and surrounds the throne of God, especially that inviolable divine quality of holiness.

- *Ex. 25:17-22; Heb. 9:3-5*.

Note: Moses received the pattern for the mercy seat while on Mt. Sinai, and may have encountered cherubim while there.

- *Ps. 80:1-2*. “Oh, give hear, Shepherd of Israel, Thou who dost lead Joseph like a flock; Thou who art enthroned above the cherubim, shine forth! ... And come to save us!”
- *Ps. 99:1*. “Yahweh reigns, let the peoples tremble; He is enthroned above the cherubim, let the earth shake.”

These last two texts seem to place the cherubim as the highest group of angels. Only Yahweh, the Great Shepherd of Israel and Sovereign, is enthroned above them.

- *Ezek. 1:4-28; 10:1-22; Rev. 4:6-8*.

#### 2. Seraphim

- *Isa. 6* (esp. vs. 2 & 6).

This is the only reference to this particular hierarchy of angels. The name “seraphim” means “burners” – referring probably to their function relating to the burning and searing force of God in His holiness, and His holy judgment on sin (see vs. 6-7).

#### 3. Archangels (principal angels).

- *Jude 9*. “But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, ...”
- *Dan 10:13, 21 & 12:1*.

These texts refer to Michael as “one of the chief princes”; “[Israel’s] prince”; and, “the great prince who stands (guard) over the sons of your people (Israel)”.

Note: Archangels seem to also have a “guardian” responsibility (at least so for Michael), but their guardianship may have a different focus, or missional objective, from that assigned to the cherubim. The cherubim may have a more “throne-ward” guardianship while the archangels may have a more “chosen-people-ward” guardianship (e.g., Israel and the elect/Church).

- *Rev. 12:7-8*. This text speaks of Michael as having command over an angelic host.

Note. Since Michael refers to himself as “one of the chief princes” it is implied that there are others, but we have no indication as to the names or specific assignments of the others.

- *I Thess. 4:16*. “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first.”

#### 4. Presence angels.

- *Luke 1:19*. “... I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God; ...”  
Gabriel appears, and identifies himself by name, to Daniel (*Dan. 8:16; 9:21*), to Zacharias (*Lk. 1:19*), and to Mary (*Lk. 1:26*).
- *Rev. 8:2*. “And I saw the seven angels who stand before God; and seven trumpets were given to them.”  
Comment. These seven angels may well be archangels, including the likes of Michael and Gabriel. The apocryphal book of Enoch makes mention of the existence of seven “presence angels.”

#### 5. Guardian or personal angels.

Comment: This angelic class has a more “individual person” protective/guardian role. It may be that they exercise their roles regionally in space, or perhaps quite specifically through individual, personal assignment. The ministerial distinctiveness of their guardianship role seems not to be delineated in explicit terms in Scripture.

- *Matt. 18:10*. “See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you, that their angels in heaven continually behold the face of My Father who is in heaven.”  
Comment: These personal angels apparently have direct access to the throne of God. Also, we have no explicit revelation stating that such personal angelic ministry continues unabated throughout the lifetime of each person. If such angelic assignments continue on into adulthood, what contrasts might exist between the personal, angelic ministry extended to unsaved adults and that to saved adults?  
Thot. Contemplate the significance of the fact of personal angelic assignment to each child in relation to the issue of the sanctity of life and the practice of abortion and infanticide.

“But an angel of the Lord during the night opened the gates of the prison, and taking them out said, ‘Go your way, and continue to speak to the people in the temple the whole message of this Life.’”  
*Acts 5:19-20*  
“For this very night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood before me,”  
*Acts 27:23*

- *Ps. 34:7*. “The angel of the LORD encamps (is on guard) around those who fear Him, and rescues them.”  
Comment: A host of angelic beings were specifically created to serve as “ministering spirits” to the “heirs of salvation” (see *Heb. 1:14*), and this text likely refers to this class of what we might properly call “personal-guardian” angels.
- *Ps. 91:11-12*. “For He will give His angels charge concerning you, to guard you in all your ways. They will bear you up in their hands, lest you strike your foot against a stone.”
- *Acts 12:15*. “... And they kept saying, ‘It is his angel.’ ”  
Comment: This comment regarding Peter’s deliverance from prison and his arrival at the house Mary where Christians were praying reveals (at least a prevailing belief) that angels do at times assert a powerful, personal influence as God’s direct “sent answer” to prayer. Furthermore, the explicit reference to “his angel” might speak to a ‘sent ministry’ being carried out by that self-same personal angel that represented Peter before the throne when he was born (see *Matt. 18:10* above). To go further, however, is to engage in speculative and conjectural discussion which cannot arrive at any definitive conclusion, and is properly left open here.

#### 6. Other groups or hierarchies.

- *Rev. 12:7*. “... Michael and his angels ...”  
Comment: Michael, one of the chief or archangels, may have administrative authority over a host of angels who were created as subordinate ministers.

## B. Fallen Angels.

### 1. The fall of angels occurred in concert with Satan's rebellion against El Elyon.

#### Revelatory Insights Pertaining to Satan's Origin & Fall

Satan is a creature of the angel-kind, being created with attitudes, desires and inclinations which are intrinsic to "God-kind" creatures endowed with intelligence, a rational mind and a will.

- He is a creature:  
"you were created" (*Ezek. 28:13, 15*)
- He was within the hierarchy of the cherubim:  
"you were the anointed cherub who guards" (*Ezek. 28:14*)
- He surpassed all other angel-kind in wisdom and beauty:  
"You were the one sealing a pattern of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty." (*Ezek. 28:12*, literal translation)

Early in his existence, and holding a supremacy of beauty and authority relative to all other angel-kind creatures, he conceived a willful rebellion against the eternal, omnipotent Creator – the Most High God (El Elyon). As a consequence, God judged him with an eternal condemnation, albeit allowing him certain freedoms of adversarial and devilish exercise in God's creation for a determined period of time.

- "You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, until unrighteousness was found in you. ... you sinned; therefore I have cast you as profane from the mountain of God." (*Ezek. 28:15-16*)

It is important to note that God did not create Satan as a creature with his present evil nature. With reference to *Isa. 14:12*, God created a creature named "Lucifer" (*KJV*) [Heb., "Helel"] → a name meaning "light-bearer", or "shining one". We find such correlative terms as "morning star" or "day star" in some translations of the text.

The text in *Isa. 14:12-15* lists five "**I wills**" which define the essence of Satan's reasoning in his self-willed rebellion and his attempted self-exaltation.

"How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to earth, you who have weakened the nations! But you said in your heart,

1. **I will** ascend to heaven;
2. **I will** raise my throne above the stars of God, and
3. **I will** sit on the mount of the assembly in the recesses of the north.
4. **I will** ascend above the heights of the clouds;
5. **I will** make myself like the Most High (El Elyon).'

Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, to the recesses of the pit."

Note: All 5 "I wills" pertain to a driving passion for supremacy – a supremacy of authority and of exaltation in worship.

- *Luke 10:18*. "And He said to them, 'I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning.' "

Comment: This vision recounted by the Incarnate Son harkens back to that time early in creation when Satan fell – the occasion when Satan was "internally filled with violence" and "unrighteousness was found in him," and he was judged in his nature and his ultimate fate was pronounced. (*Ezek. 28:15-16*)

This statement by Christ is also surely prospective; it looks forward to that time when Satan will be banished from any further access to the throne of the Creator, and shortly thereafter be imprisoned for 1000 years, and subsequently, after only a further brief interlude, be forever sealed in his eternal destiny → hell ... a destiny which was specifically "prepared for the devil and his angels." (*Matt. 25:41*)

- *John 8:44 (KJV)*. “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth [and does not stand in the truth], because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own [character]: for he is a liar, and the father of it.” [ESV]

Implication: Satan was once “in the truth”. His departure from the truth came about via a wholly self-conceived and self-willed perversion of what was obviously true, making him the original liar and the “father of lies”.

## 2. About one-third of the original body of angels participated in Satan’s rebellion.

- *Rev. 12:1-4*. “... behold, a great red dragon [Satan] ... his tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven (i.e., created angels) and threw [cast] them to the earth.”

Implication: One third of “myriads of myriads” of angels is indeed a vast host, so the number of demons with allegiance to Satan is large.

### Perspective Comment on the Origin of Sin The Fall of Angels vs. The Fall of Man

Sin originated in the spirit realm (i.e., with angels in their domain), not with humans in the restricted physical domain.

Further, angels fell (sinned) entirely “within-and-of themselves” – that is, they were (as best we can discern from revelation) not tempted/enticed to rebel against the Creator by some “creature-beings” of another genre (kind). Their “very good” creation and subsequent fall suggests that angels had a probationary period of testing following their creation. This period was apparently quite brief because Satan manifested his presence and evil nature seemingly very early after the end of creation week.

The God-ward dispositions and eternal destiny of fallen angels were, so it seems, permanently set following this brief probationary time. The Scriptures indicate that righteous angels do not continue in their immortal existence possessing any potential to rebel and fall. In the same way, there is no indication that fallen angels will ever be graciously granted opportunity for conversion from their fallen state and reconciliation with the Creator.

“Therefore, lest we ourselves linger over superfluous matters, let us be content with this brief summary of the nature of devils: they were when first created angels of God, but by degeneration they ruined themselves, and became the instruments of ruin of others.”

(Calvin)

Contrary to the sin/fall of angel-kind beings, the fall of man from a state of righteousness came about through the agency of an evil spirit-intrusion into the physical domain. Of course, this external influence on man (Adam) by no means provides an excuse for his rebellion against his Creator, but it does, however, reveal a marked distinction in God’s economy between the sin of angelic-kind beings and that of human-kind beings.

### Associated Question

Could it be that the ‘wholly-internal’ temptation for angels to rebel and the ‘externally-excited’ enticement for humans to rebel explain, in measure at least, why angels are not graciously granted a similar measure of mercy and salvation as man is granted? The Bible seems to leave the answer to such a question in the realm of “secret things”. (cf., *Deut. 29:29*).

Comment: Since there are “unrevealed things” (i.e., truly “secret things”) that God has purposed, in His infinite wisdom, to keep hidden from man, we should be cautiously circumspect and not go beyond Scripture by engaging in rampant conjecture or presumption. Neither should we devote time and energy to pursuing subjects that, after careful study of Scripture, are deduced to clearly be “closed and secret”. Instead, we need to assert wisdom in majoring on the “revealed things”, seeking to be diligent in forming a truly Biblical world view.

“Therefore let us remember not to probe too curiously or talk too confidently.” (Calvin)

### 3. There are two basic classes of fallen angels. (see also p. 35 in Appendix C)

- free (loosed) demons – demons who currently serve as Satan’s active agents
  - ♦ see items #4 and #5 immediately below
- bound (imprisoned) demons → there are apparently two groups of bound demons
  - ♦ one class of bound demons are imprisoned temporarily, awaiting a future release for a specified period of time
    - *Rev. 9:14-15*. “... Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates. And the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released, ...”
  - ♦ another class of bound demons are incarcerated in Tartarus (Gr.) awaiting their final sentence of eternal condemnation in hell at the Great White Throne judgment
    - *Job 4:18b*. “And against His angels He charges error.”
 

Comment: This reference most likely pertains to those fallen angels who participated in the great spiritual apostasy of the antediluvian world (cf., *Gen. 6:1-4*), and are now imprisoned awaiting the final judgment.

Note: Since God has judged angels who rebelled and fell, He will most certainly also judge man for his rebellion and fall as well. This seems to be the point of *Job 4:17-19*.
    - *II Pet. 2:4*. “For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment;”
    - *Jude 6*. “And angels who did not keep their own domain (their first estate, *KJV*), but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day.”
 

Comment: The angels that fell left “their first (their own) estate (domain)” [alt., “positions of authority”] – they abandoned their ‘home’ position and purpose, transgressing their Creator-ordained boundaries and responsibilities.

### 4. Some fallen angels exert powerful influences in world politics. (also Appendix B, p. 28)

- *Dan. 10:12-13, 20-21*. Comment: Hierarchies of fallen angels are assigned to governments at all levels, with assignments ranging from influence/control of national leaders to local municipalities. These hierarchies of fallen angels are referred to in Scripture by such terms as principalities, powers, thrones, dominions, etc.

### 5. Many fallen angels serve as active emissaries of Satan and adversaries of the saints.

- *Matt. 13:37-38*. “... The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, and the field is the world; and as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one.”
- *Eph. 6:12*. “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.”

### 6. Fallen angels are not included in Christ’s redemptive working

- *Heb. 2:16*. “For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham.”

Comment: Angels who asserted their rational and moral choice to rebel are evidently never to be granted saving mercy. Mercy is God’s work of pure and free grace toward undeserving creatures. Human-kind creatures should be properly stunned by every expression of God’s mercy, but most particularly in the case of God’s gracious and merciful work of redemption ... and this is accentuated in the light of God’s withholding of any such mercy to angel-kind creatures.

### III. Specifics about Satan ... and His *Modus Operandi*

#### 1. Satan is a person

- He is a created person—a creature-person; an intelligent, rational, willful person with specific innate traits that define his character, his values, and the nature of his life objectives.

#### 2. Satan's names: a revelation of his nature and character

- Satan = adversary (*I Pet. 5:8*): this name speaks of his being hatefully adversarial (contrarian) in all his objectives, with a particular adversarial assault directed toward God and toward creatures made in God's image.
- Devil (Gr. "diablos") = slanderer: this name speaks of him as one who is intent on accusing and maligning everyone in his adversarial sights.
- Evil (wicked) one (*John 17:15; Matt. 13:19, 38; Eph. 6:16; I John 2:13, 14*): this name speaks of his essential nature → of the fact that his character is pure evil. As the "purely evil one" he is perverted, cruel, dark, malicious, destructive, filthy, despicable, rebellious ... and so in extreme measure, even beyond what fallen man can conceive.  
 Note: The characterization of man that God has "given over" to evil, as recorded in *Rom. 1:28-32*, is an apt description of who Satan is as the "wicked one". Whenever such deeds are manifest, Satan is active inciting man according to his nature.
- Serpent / dragon (*Gen. 3:1; Rev. 12; 20:2*): these identifiers speak of his being crooked and twisted in his deceitful nature, and his being sly and cunning in his tactics.
- Roaring lion (*I Pet. 5:8*): this identifier speaks of his being cruel and ferocious in his nature, and his determined intent to devour (conquer and consume) prey.
- Tempter (*Matt. 4:3; I Thess. 3:5*): this identifier speaks of his persistent intent on inciting man to sin (to engage in evil), and his inciting of evil through subtlety and through assaults involving devious and deceitful devices.
- Prince of the power of the air (*Eph. 2:2; 6:12*): this identifier speaks of his 'world-enveloping' despotic power exercised through leadership over underling demons.
- Prince (or god) of this world (*John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; II Cor. 4:4*): this identifier speaks to his despotic influences over culture, governments, false and cultic religions, etc.; he seeks to exercise influential control over all that defines the world system, and he incites all components of this world system to be particularly antagonistic toward Christ and His Church.
- Beelzebul/Beelzebub (*Matt. 10:25; 12:24, 27; Mk. 3:22*): this name identifies Satan as the prince of demons, or as the ruler over the house of demons.
- Belial (*II Cor. 6:15*): this identifier speaks of his "worthlessness"; he is worthless and contrary with respect to all that is right and true and worthy of honor and respect, and he seeks to diminish and destroy standards that uphold all that is noble and worthy.
- Angel of light (*II Cor. 11:14*): this identifier speaks of his masterful employment of imitation and the counterfeit; he exploits through means that have the appearance of being reasonable and noble, but whose ends are dark and destructive.

*I Pet. 5:8*

"Be of sober spirit, be on the alert.

Your adversary the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."

*Rev. 12:9*

"And that great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world;"

*I John 5:19*

"We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one."

*I Thess. 3:5*

"For this reason, ... I also sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the tempter might have tempted you, and our labor should be in vain."

*II Cor. 4:4*

"the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ,"

*Matt. 12:24*

"This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul, the ruler of demons."

*II Cor. 11:14*

"And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light."



### 3. Satan is an active, personal adversary

- *Job 1:7*. “And the LORD said to Satan, ‘From where do you come?’ Satan answered the LORD and said, ‘From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it.’ ”
- *I Pet. 5:8*. “... Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”

### 4. Satan is a personal adversary with sinister and ultimate objectives

Satan always works toward wholly destructive ends through sinister tactics, sometimes using overt and direct means and at other times using hidden and indirect means

- *Luke 22:31*. “Satan has desired to sift you like wheat.”
- *Acts 5:3*. “Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, ...?”
- *I Cor. 7:5*. “... lest Satan tempt you because of your lack of self-control.”
- *II Cor. 11:3*. “... lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.”  
Comment: Deception through crafty and sly means is one of his prime tactics. Deception begins in the mind – it is a mental “break-away” from anchors of truth initiated by subterfuge, by fraud and dishonesty with hidden objective.
- *I Thess. 2:18*. “... yet Satan thwarted (hindered) us.”

### 5. Satan is a personal adversary with a definite strategy

Satan’s strategy, generally, is to move from an initial approach as “an angel of light” on toward a decisive and concluding end as “the destroyer”. In all steps in his strategy he functions deceptively as an evil adversary with wicked intentions. We might summarize his strategy as being played out along the lines of four progressive stages of attack.

- Stage #1: Confusion and deception.
  - he purposes to mix and muddle ideas, blind minds, distort and oppose truth, confuse distinctions between good and evil, plant counterfeits, and incite controversy
- Stage #2: Contention and division
  - he purposes to destroy order and balance, magnify differences, plant and intensify divisive opinions, incite resentment, and strengthen stubbornness
- Stage #3: Control and dominion.
  - he purposes to enslave by inciting influential and charismatic leaders to promote false and perverse doctrines, entrap in religious rituals, enact oppressive laws, impose excessive or unjust judgments, etc.
- Stage #4: Conflict and destruction.
  - he purposes to stimulate strife, incite fear, inflict terror, tear down institutions upholding societal order and noble causes, and to enslave and destroy people

As an illustrative example of these stages of strategic assault, consider the lie of naturalism and evolutionism. Its reach has long since moved from the realm of ideas (muddled and false thinking) to control and dominion. And it has a long trail of deep conflict (lit., war) and destruction. Ideas matter! True ideas matter!

### 6. Satan is a personal adversary with specific goals

- destroy the works of God and subvert (undermine and corrupt) the Word of God

“Behold, the sower went out to sow; and as he sowed, some seeds fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate them up.” *Matt: 13:2-3*

“Hear then the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom the seed was sown beside the road.” *Matt. 13:18-19*

“The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares (bastard wheat) also among the wheat, and went away.” *Matt. 13:24-25*

“... as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, ...”  
*Matt. 13:37-38*

*Rom. 1:25*

"For they exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever."

*Col. 1:13*

"For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son."

*I Tim. 6:5*

"... men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain."

*Titus 1:15*

"... to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled."

- deface the image of God in man
  - his attacks reach into all areas: intellectual, moral, spiritual and physical
- deny God the rightful "glory due His name"
- dispel light with darkness (*Col. 1:13; cf. Lk. 22:53*)
  - he seeks to destroy truth by attacking and undermining foundations of truth
  - he seeks to destroy moral foundations and all that is noble and right
- destroy relationships by promoting conflict and resentment
- distort the commands (will) of God
  - he seeks to deny, distort and darken the truth about God by promoting erroneous beliefs about God, most often through the planting of lies, erroneous doctrines, etc.
  - he seeks to diminish the knowledge of God and to inspire conduct contrary to the will of God

Note: Satan commissions his demon hosts to seduce and deceive teachers of the Word, inciting them to hold false doctrines ("doctrines of demons").

*I Tim. 4:1.* "But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful (seducing [KJV]) spirits and doctrines of demons."

Perverting and subverting the message of the Word of God through both introduction of perverse doctrines and planting deceptive teachers ranks as Satan's most insidious works – ensnaring, treacherous and beguiling strategy.

"When Satan gets into the pulpit, or the theological choir, and pretends to teach Christianity, when in reality he is corrupting it ... [when he] pretends to be teaching Biblical Introduction, when in reality he is making the Bible out to be a book that is not worthy of being introduced – then look out for him; he is at his most dangerous work."

*R.A. Torrey*

"Satan tries both to trap us into what is formally wrong and also to distort enough of what is formally right in our habits and actions to make it wrong in its effect.

- thought without action,
- love without wisdom,
- love of the truth without love of people,
- [love of people without love of truth],
- zeal with error,
- orthodoxy with unrighteousness,
- conscientiousness with morbidity and despair,
- selectiveness in one's concern for what is true and right;

[these] are samples of [his fostering unbalance and one-sidedness]. If we watch Satan at one point on the battlement of our living, he will try to break in at another, waiting for a moment when we feel secure and happy, and our defenses are likely to be down. So it goes on, all day and every day."

Quote from *J.I Packer* [slight amendments]

## 7. Satan is a doomed adversary.

- *Matt. 25:41.* "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.' "
- *Rom. 16:20.* "And the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet."

- *Rev. 20:10*. “And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, ... and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”  
Note: One of the purposes of the Incarnation was to ensure the doom and destruction of Satan, together with all his works.
  - *I John 3:8*. “the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil.”
  - *Heb. 2:14*. “Since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death he might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.”

❖ **Our Charge:**

- ♦ **We are called to be informed:**
  - to know your enemy is a foundational principle in warfare
    - *II Cor. 2:11*. “... we are not ignorant of his schemes.”
- ♦ **We are called to stand firm:**
  - victory in combat requires holding the line at all cost, no matter what weapons may be employed, whenever and wherever the enemy launches an assault
    - *Eph. 6:11, 13*. “...stand firm against the schemes of the devil. ... Take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.”
- ♦ **We are called to struggle and wrestle:**
  - engagement in combat action requires skillful exercise of offensive and defensive tactics, intense determination, and focused exertion of energy
    - *Eph. 6:12*. “For our struggle (we wrestle) against ... the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.”
- ♦ **We are called to resist:**
  - victory requires resistance against all enemy forces – resisting with a determined tactical opposition focused at the point of attack
    - *Eph. 6:13*. “... take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.”
    - *James 4:7*. “Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”
- ♦ **We are called to be alert: sober, vigilant, and resisting with a firm faith:**
  - victory over, and holding the line against, determined enemy forces requires combat readiness through advance preparation, vigilant alertness with respect to enemy movements, and skillful attack with effective arsenal
    - *I Pet. 5:8-9*. “Be of sober spirit, be vigilant, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. But [you] resist him, firm (steadfast) in your faith,”

“Christ, the Scripture, your hearts, and Satan's devices are the four prime things that should be first and most studied and searched. If any cast off study of these, they cannot be safe here, nor happy hereafter. It is my work as a Christian, but much more as I am a watchman, to do my best to discover the fullness of Christ, the emptiness of the creature, and the snares of the great deceiver.”

Thomas Brookes: *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices* (~ 1700 A.D.)

## **An Abbreviated Exposé of Satan's Notable Schemes in the History of Creation** ( *Alt., Some of the Prominent Battles in Satan's Long War Against God* )

[Ref. *Gen.* 3]

**Satan's Assault:** Incite Adam and Eve to rebel against the direct, verbally-communicated will and command of the Creator, and against His purpose in creation, in order to gain dominion over the physical world and to prevent the development of a righteous offspring who would worship and serve the Creator.

**The Creator's Response:** Initiate the foreordained Covenant of Redemption and issue to fallen man the promise of a future Redeemer-Restorer for man through the "seed of the woman".

[Ref. *Gen.* 6; *II Pet.* 2:4-11; *Jude* 6-7]

**Satan's Assault:** Incite a demonic intrusion into the sphere of human procreation in order to pervert the whole line of human descent from Adam, and especially to frustrate the promised "seed of the woman" and, therewith, undermine the Creator's promise of a Redeemer-Restorer.

**The Creator's Response:** The Creator, in both great grace and intricate providence, preserved a righteous seed (remnant), and then proceeded to destroy all perverted and rebellious offspring of Adam in one cataclysmic act of global judgment, and then moved beyond the global, physical judgment to a spiritual judgment of arresting the whole class of angelic (demonic) invaders and imprisoning them in "eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day" at the consummation of the age.

[Ref. *Gen.* 11]

**Satan's Assault:** Seek to gain dominance over all human-kind creatures and, in particular, to pervert the line of the "seed of the woman", through introduction of evil and false (damnable and anti-God) philosophies that promote monstrous systems of idolatry and lead to enslavement in creature-creation worship, even destruction in demon worship.

**The Creator's Response:** The Creator judged the human race with linguistic confusion, and consequent societal disbursement and isolation, and then graciously preserved a remnant of patriarchs who would be providentially stirred to guard the true record of revelation and perpetuate the true knowledge of the Creator and His creative working under covenantal promise.

[Ref. *Gen.* 12:9-20]

**Satan's Assault:** Exploit a divinely-initiated test of Abraham, the friend of God (a test providentially-designed to strengthen Abraham's faith in Yahweh's promises), by inciting Abraham to journey to a foreign territory and, while establishing residence there, lie about his sacred relationship with Sarah, therein seeking to undermine the covenant promise to Abraham and pervert the line of the "seed of the woman".

**The Creator's Response:** The Creator troubled the king of this foreign territory with "plagues" whereby the true and sacred marital relationship of Abraham and Sarah was revealed, preserving Sarah's purity and honor and sustaining the descent of the covenant promise and of the Messiah, the One through whom "all the families of the earth will be blessed".

[Ref. *Esther*, *Chs.* 1-9]

**Satan's Assault:** Direct the "prince of Persia" to incite the deputy minister of internal affairs in Persia to deceive the ruling Ahasuerus into signing an irrevocable decree whereby the whole population of God's appointed nation of the Messiah, Israel, were to be annihilated, and therewith the coming fulfillment of absolute and irrevocable promises would be prevented from fulfillment; the promises of the "seed of the woman", of the Covenant-Blessor of the seed of Abraham, of the eternal

priest of the order of Melchizedek, of the ruling Shiloh of Jacob through Judah, of the greater prophet of Moses, and of the greater kingly heir of David.

**The Creator's Response:** The Creator strategically positioned a godly man of integrity in close proximity to the governmental headquarters, and so ordered affairs in the ruling palace of Persia to the end that a young Jewess would rise to the position of Queen of Persia. He then, during a pivotal night of decision, so afflicted the King of Persia with indigestion which led, through amazing providence, to King Ahasuerus being inclined by logic and reason to issue another irrevocable edict – an edict that allowed his previous decree to be rendered wholly ineffective, therewith preserving the line of Messiah together with His chosen nation, the “apple of His eye”. This second decree also included a provision for decisive revenge to be exacted on the plotters who were diabolically bent on destroying the line of Messiah and the concomitant trashing of the whole redemptive program ordained from “before the foundation of the world”.

[Ref. *Matt. 1:18–2:23*]

**Satan's Assault:** Seek to destroy the Incarnate Son in His infancy by inciting an evil dictator to perpetrate the horrific murder of all the young children born in Bethlehem over a period of two years, therewith preventing the Messiah-Redeemer designate from becoming the righteous Substitute necessary to accomplish the divinely established criteria for a full atonement for sin and a complete salvation of the elect.

**The Creator's Response:** Overcome the purpose of Satan and the power of Herod by providing an angelic communication of life-preserving directives; that is, by commanding an “angelic led escape” from the murderous scheme of Herod and providing a “place of shelter” for the Christ Child and His family in a foreign land (Egypt).

[Ref. *Matt. 4:1-11; Lk. 4:1-13*]

**Satan's Assault:** Encounter the Incarnate Son at a time of great physical weakness and personal loneliness (i.e., at the conclusion of a time of fasting and isolation for 40 days in preparation for His ordained ministry), and afflict Him with tests designed to appeal to intense human desires plus weakened resolve and entice Him into denying His “bond-slave commitment” to the Father's will.

**The Creator's Response:** To bring to His remembrance vital Scriptures that completely overturned the force of Satan's temptation, and sent them forth as spiritual arrows that both nullified the logic, thrust and design of Satan in his appeals and sent him into full retreat.

[Ref. *Matt. 16:13-23*]

**Satan's Assault:** Seek to frustrate the “bond-slave commitment” of the Incarnate Son-Redeemer from fulfilling the will of the Father by diverting the Son's “cross focus” through a “natural” and “this world centered” challenge from His chosen disciple, Peter.

**The Creator's Response:** Issue an outright rebuke of Satan, forcing him to retreat.

[Ref. *Matt. 27:62–28:15; Lk. 24; John 20-21*]

**Satan's Assault:** Seek, by inciting the religious and political leadership in Jerusalem, to promulgate a blatant lie concerning the true, factual reality of the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and therein to frustrate the impact of the accomplished victory over death and the grave – a frustration foisted by creating confusion concerning the facts and by suppressing the glorious and true reality concerning the person of Christ.

**The Creator's Response:** Provide irrefutable, eye-witness evidence of the truth of the resurrection, and validate this evidence through both angelic communication and personal appearances of the risen Christ, and by Spirit-fueled emboldening of eye-witnesses to irrepressibly articulate illuminating insights into the whole scope of God's redemptive working as revealed in the OT record.

**Study / Discussion Exercise:** Seek to identify how Satan's names, objectives, strategies and goals, as described above in this section, have relevance to each of these Biblical accounts of Satanic attacks, and also how the elements in "Our Charge" might relate in each context.

**Comment:**

A Biblically solid and sound understanding of Satan and his fallen angels, and the general operation of evil in the present world as it operates under the certain and absolute sovereignty of God, the Creator of all things, is vital to having a true (i.e., a Biblical) worldview.

When clarity of the truth regarding this conflict between good and evil is absent, the battle for the mind and soul is virtually lost.

**A Mighty Fortress Is Our God**

Martin Luther (see *Psalms 46*)

"A mighty fortress is our God;  
A bulwark never failing.  
Our helper He amidst the flood  
Of mortal ills prevailing.  
For still our ancient foe  
Doth seek to work us woe.  
His craft and power are great,  
And armed with cruel hate,  
On earth is not his equal."

"Did we in our strength confide,  
Our striving would be losing  
"Were not the right Man on our side,  
The Man of God's own choosing.  
Dost ask who that may be?  
Christ Jesus, it is He!  
Lord Sabaoth His name;  
From age to age the same;  
And He must win the battle."

"And though this world with devils filled  
Should threaten to undo us,  
We will not fear, for God has willed  
His truth to triumph through us.  
The prince of darkness grim,  
We tremble not for him.  
His rage we can endure,  
For lo! His doom is sure.  
One little word shall fell him."

"That word, above all earthly powers,  
No thanks to them, abideth."  
The Spirit and the gifts are ours  
Thru Him who with us sideth.  
Let goods and kindred go,  
This mortal life also —  
The body they may kill;  
God's truth abideth still:  
His kingdom is forever.

**Discussion Questions.**

- What are some of Satan's strategic targets today (locally, globally, culturally, etc.)?
  - What are some of his most prominent (notable and obvious) battlefronts today?
  - What are some of his less obvious (more obscure, even hidden) battlefronts today?
  - What are some of his most ignored, yet vitally important, battlefronts today?
- How can we effectively oppose his strategies?
  - What are our accessible resources?
  - How would you measure the Church's training and skill in opposing Satan's attacks?
  - Where might we strategically apply available resources for greatest effectiveness today?
- How can we stand firm in our personal resistance and wrestling against evil?
  - What are our weapons for spiritual warfare against all enemies – the world system, the inherent weakness of the flesh, and the assaults of Satan?
  - How might we better access and gain practical efficiency (become skilled) in the use of these weapons?
  - How would assess your personal vigilance in detecting enemy assaults, and your personal skill level in resisting and standing firm in the face of spiritual assault?
- Is the Christian church adequately alert (tuned in) to Satan's strategies in the culture today?
- What specific steps, if implemented, would:
  - significantly strengthen the church in fulfilling its obligation to serve as both salt and light, and as an influential force for opposing evil and promoting righteousness in our world?
  - significantly strengthen your personal ability and acuity to resist Satan's schemes and to stand firm and know victory?

## IV. Ministries of Righteous Angels.

"The LORD has established His throne in the heavens, and His sovereignty rules over all. Bless the LORD, you His angels, mighty in strength, who perform His word, obeying the voice of His word! Bless the LORD, all you His hosts, you who serve Him doing His will. Bless the LORD, all you works of His, in all places of His dominion; bless the LORD, O my soul!"  
*Ps. 103:19-21*

"Now as Jacob went on his way, the angels of God met him. And Jacob said when he saw them, 'This is God's camp [host (KJV)]'. So he named the place two hosts"  
*Gen. 32:1-2*

"Are [holy angels] not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?" *Heb. 1:14*

One of God's high purposes for His creation of angels is to provide a host of "spirit-ministers" to serve with specific reference to His elect whom He chose in Christ "from before the foundation of the world" – those He purposed to include as joint-heirs with His Beloved Son.

### 1. Guidance

- *Acts 8:26-28*. "But an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying, 'Arise and go south to the road that descends from Jerusalem to Gaza.' ... and behold there was an Ethiopian eunuch, ... and he had come to Jerusalem to worship. And he was returning and sitting in his chariot and was reading the prophet Isaiah."
- *Acts. 10:1-8* (esp. vs. 3 & 7), 30-32. An angel asserted a pivotal role in leading Peter to go to the house of Cornelius, thereby opening the way of the Gospel to the Gentiles.
- *Gen. 24:6-8* (see also vs. 26-27, 39-41, 48). "He will send His angel before you, and you will take a wife for my son from there." [Abraham speaking to his servant regarding the finding of a wife for Isaac.]

### 2. Guard, defend, protect, and deliver

- *Ex. 14:19-20*. "And the angel of God, who had been going before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; ... So it came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel; ... Thus the one did not come near the other all night."
- *Ex. 23:20-23*. "Behold, I am going to send an angel before you to guard you along the way, and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. ..."
- *Dan. 3:28*. "Nebuchadnezzar responded and said, 'Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent His angel and delivered His servants who put their trust in Him, ...'"
- *Dan. 6:22*. "My God sent His angel and shut the lions mouths, ..."
- *Matt. 26:53*. [Jesus states that He could appeal to more than 12 legions of angels to deliver Him from the mob seeking to crucify Him.]
- *Acts 5:17-20*. [An angel opened the gates of the prison and freed the apostles after being imprisoned by the Sanhedrin for proclaiming the Gospel.]
- *Acts 12:5-11*. [Peter is delivered from prison and certain execution through angelic intervention against the Satan-inspired intentions of the evil dictator Herod.]

### 3. Strengthen and encourage.

- *I Kings 19:3-8*. [An angel ministered to Elijah after the great victory over the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel, and during his escape to the wilderness.]
- *Acts 27:23-24*. "For this very night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood before me, saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar; and behold, God has granted you all those who are sailing with you.'"
- *Matt. 4:11*. "Then the devil left Him; and, behold, angels came and began to minister to Him."

Note: Angels may perform a similar ministry in our lives when we resist temptation.

- *Lk. 22:43*. "Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him."

Comment: This ministry by an angel occurred immediately following Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane: "... yet not My will, but Thine be done" – a prayer of agony concerning the demands that submission to the will of the Father required. Angels may perform a similar ministry when we "fight the good fight of faith," especially where submission to the Father's will involves special testing and sacrifice.

#### 4. Attend believers at death.

- *Lk. 16:22*. “Now it came about that the poor man died and he was carried away by the angels to Abraham’s bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried.”
- *Jude 9*. [Michael, the archangel, guarded the body of Moses following Moses’ death.]  
Note: *Deut. 34:5-6*. “So Moses the servant of Yahweh died there in the land of Moab, according to the mouth of Yahweh. And He buried him in the valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth-peor; but no man knows his burial place to this day.”

#### 5. Attend to the church.

- *Rev. 1:20*. “As for the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.” (See also, *Rev. 2:1 – 3:14*).

Comment: The word for angels carries a meaning of “messenger”, and can (although rarely) refer to human messengers. Some expositors prefer to follow this possible sense and apply the meaning of “angel” in these references to the human elder-leaders of the respective churches. However, the context does not seem to require that sense and, further, the same word (Gr. *aggelos*) appears some sixty other times in *The Revelation* and all of these refer clearly to “spirit-being” creatures – angels in the nominal sense. In further support of seeing this reference (*Rev. 1:20*) as referring to this class of angelic “ministering spirits”, there are following texts in *The Revelation* that make mention of “elders” (elders/bishops) who would be the proper ‘leader-heads’ of churches. It is logical that this usual term for human leaders in local churches would have been used here if indeed that was the intended identity. Furthermore, the elders/bishops of local churches hold their positions only temporarily, but an assigned angel can serve for as long as God purposes for a local church to sustain its ministry. Primarily for these reasons, this author prefers to see the references in *Rev. 1:20*, and following in *Rev. 2 – 3*, as referring to holy angels as superintending ministering spirits assigned to a local church – an angelic assignment not unlike that of particular fallen angels assigned to nations/governments as revealed in *Dan. 10:13, 20-21*.

- *I Tim. 5:21*. “I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels, to maintain these principles without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality.”

Comment: This is a solemn and important thought relative to worship and administration of spiritual duties within the local assembly of the Body of Christ.

- *I Cor. 4:9*. “For, I think, God has exhibited us apostles last of all, as men condemned to death; because we have become a spectacle (lit., on stage) to the world, and to angels, and to men.”

Comment: In some mysterious way, the church and its worship of the Triune Godhead in truth (i.e., as sovereign Creator and gracious Redeemer) is used to instruct angels as they observe the manifold wisdom of God, His unsearchable judgments, and His glorious love and grace revealed through the plan of redemption in building His church.

*Eph. 3:9-10*. “and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things; in order that the manifold wisdom of God might be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places.”

Note: The reference to “rulers and authorities in the heavenly places” almost surely has reference to angels of all classes (i.e., both righteous and fallen angels).



- *I Cor. 11:10*. “Therefore the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels.”

Comment: This text implies that angels are observers (spectators) of local assemblies of saints as they gather as part of the body of Christ in worship. In particular, it seems that they observe with focused attention the attitudinal roles adopted by both men and women in their worship of the Creator, noting whether the order of creation detailed in *Gen. 2* and the events of the Fall detailed in *Gen. 3* are impacting how they draw near in their meeting God in corporate assembly.

In the Garden of Eden the woman usurped the place of headship over the man in dealing with Satan, and the man failed to assert his rightful guardianship and leadership with respect to the woman. Further, the holy angels have a keen awareness of the judgment administered on rebellious angels who failed to perform perfectly the will of the Creator, and to offer exclusive, submissive worship to Him as the Most High God.

There seems to be, in this text, evidence of an angelic concern, and even an angelic curiosity, as to whether men and women will humbly submit to the authority of the Creator (respecting the created order and design) as they gather for worship. Even as holy angels serve *coram Deo* with respectful submission and holy obedience, they with keen interest observe how man, the creature so radically and comprehensively fallen, and then redeemed through such unfathomable grace, will approach his highest service duty of worship *coram Deo*.

Thot: It might be in this context that local churches, in fact, at times “entertain angels unawares” (see *Heb. 13:2*) – angels visiting as “interested observers”.

### **Hymn: “Holy, Holy, is What the Angels Sing”**

Johnson Oatman, Jr. 1894  
(Scripture: *Rev. 5:11; 14:3*)

There is singing up in heaven such as we have never known,  
Where the angels sing the praises of the Lamb upon the throne;  
Their sweet harps are ever tuneful, and their voices always clear;  
Oh, that we might be more like them while we serve the Master here!

#### *Refrain:*

Holy, holy, is what the angels sing;  
and I expect to help them make the courts of heaven ring.  
But when I sing redemption’s story,  
they will fold their wings;  
For angels never knew the joy that our salvation brings.

But I hear another anthem, blending voices clear and strong,  
“Unto Him who hath redeemed us and hath bought us,” is the song;  
“We have come through tribulation to this land so fair and bright,  
In the fountain freely flowing He hath made our garments white.”

Then the angels stand and listen, for they cannot join the song,  
Like the sound of many waters by that happy, blood-washed throng;  
For they sing about great trials, battles fought and vict’ries won,  
And they praise their great Redeemer, who hath said to them, “Well done!”

So, although I’m not an angel, yet I know that over there,  
I will join a blessed chorus that the angels cannot share;  
I will sing about my Savior, who upon dark Calvary,  
Freely pardoned my transgression, died to set a sinner free.

## V. End Notes

Angels have had an active and participatory role in all of God's great works in the past, and will continue to do so in future events.

*Heb. 1:6.* "And again, when He brings the first-born into the world, He says, "And let all the angels of God worship Him."

Note: The use of the word "all" may imply that the Sovereign Creator required both righteous and fallen angels to worship Him (bow before Him) at the incarnation of the Son.

- ◆ Angels were present during many of the works of creation (*Job 38:7*).
- ◆ Angels were present at the giving of the Law (*Duet. 33:2; Acts 7:38,53; Gal. 3:19; Heb. 2:2*).
- ◆ Angels were active in the Incarnation, the first advent of Christ: an angel announced the birth of the forerunner of Christ to Zacharias (*Lk. 1:11, 18-20*); an angel announced the birth of Messiah to the virgin Mary (*Lk. 1:26-33, 35-37*); an angel instructed Joseph concerning God's purposes and will for him (*Matt. 1:20-25*); an angel announced the birth of Christ to the shepherds (*Lk. 2:9-14*); all the righteous angels bowed in worship at the birth of Mary's virgin-conceived child at the command of the Creator (*Heb. 1:6*); angels directed Joseph to flee to Egypt (*Matt. 2:13*), and then warned him to lead his family back to Nazareth in Galilee by a route that circumvented Bethlehem and Jerusalem (*Matt. 2:22*).
- ◆ Angels were present at the birth of Christ (*Lk. 2:13*); at His temptation (*Matt. 4:11*); at His agony in Gethsemane (*Lk. 22:43*); at His resurrection (*Matt. 28:2; John 20:11-13*); and, at His ascension (*Acts 1:10*).
- ◆ Angels were actively involved in the development of the church (*Acts 5:19; 8:26; 10:3,7 & 22; 12:7-11; 27:23*).
- ◆ Angels will accompany Christ at His 2<sup>nd</sup> coming (*Matt. 16:27; 24:29-31*).
- ◆ Angels will be present at the final judgment (*Matt. 25:31*).

### ❖ A note of contrast between angels and mankind.

- Angels observe with great interest, and participate in the outworking of, God's marvelous work of redemption for mankind, but nowhere do we find any hint of a possible means of salvation for fallen angels.
  - *I Pet. 1:10-12.* "As to this salvation ... – things into which angels long to look (i.e., to gain a clear glimpse or grasp)."

The angel who announced the birth of Christ to the shepherds spoke of a salvation that was exclusively for human-kind creatures.

  - *Lk. 2:10-11.* "... I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be for *all people*; for ... there has been born *for you a Savior*, who is Christ the Lord."
- Angels were commanded to worship God as they observed the humiliation of Christ at His incarnation.
  - "And when He brings the first-born into the world, He says, 'And let all the angels of God worship Him.' " (*Heb. 1:6*)
- Angels marvel at the mercy of God bestowed on mankind, but experience none of the same in relation to their position in God's creative purposes.
- *I Cor. 6:2-3.* "Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is judged by you, are you not competent to constitute the smallest law courts? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, matters of this life?"

Comment: This is an astounding, and an essentially "stand alone", revelatory statement that sets before us a mystery that receives no other, even semi-direct, explanatory clarification in Scripture. Hence, its specific revelation must be discovered, at most, by a careful and cautious "Word-based" speculative reasoning.

To begin, the statement raises several obvious questions:

- a) Does this judgment pertain to both classes of angels, fallen and righteous, or to only a single class, either fallen or righteous?
- b) What is the meaning of the word "judge" in this text?

First, the word “judge” means *i)* to distinguish or separate; *ii)* to render an opinion or decision – often in a forensic sense (a judgment or condemnation); or *iii)* to administer affairs, to govern. Hence the word can refer to either an action of “rulership” or one of “judicial exercise”. The context in *vs. 1-2* implies, at minimum, that an action of rulership is definitely in view, and specifically one requiring a distinguishing and separating of matters arising in relation to the administration of affairs within the community of saints in a local church. Based on context then, it would appear that whatever “judgment” is to be exercised with respect to angels, it would be in relation to holy angels.

Second, the Scriptures reveal that all resurrected, glorified saints of the Church and tribulational ages will have a participatory role with Christ in His sovereign governance during the millennial kingdom age (see *Rev. 20:4-6*; also *Rev. 3:21 & 5:10*). Further, the Scriptures clearly reveal that there will be a host of mortals born during that coming kingdom age, and among these will be many “heirs of salvation”. Thus, the “judging” of angels in view in *1 Cor. 6:3* could well pertain to a sort of “co-regency directorship” over holy angels that glorified saints are privileged to exercise (all under the Lordship of Christ, to be sure) as these angels fulfill their divinely-appointed service ministry to the heirs of salvation from that millennial age.

Any other view as to what “judgment” Church age saints might administer with respect to angels lies in the realm of “untethered speculation”, at least so it seems to this author, and the matter will be left here without further comment. “Untethered speculation” does not have a place in a text entitled “*The Biblical Doctrine of Angels*”.

“The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law.”  
*Deut. 29:29*

❖ **A note of perspective regarding divine providence and the mediating agency of angels.**

God’s providence flows out of His sovereign omnipresence, and most often His unseen hand in earthly affairs can only be properly discerned in hindsight, even a distant hindsight.

- Angels function under the administration of God’s sovereignty – they do not minister as independent agents or apart from divine command/permission.
- Angels certainly may serve as mediating agents of God’s providence, but caution is in order in ascribing the outworking of His will in specific circumstances as always being an occurrence of angelic ministration.
- On the basis of Scriptural accounts, it seems that angelic intervention is more exceptional and occasional as opposed to common and frequent.

❖ **A word of personal encouragement in light of the truth regarding the existence and active working of Satan and fallen angels.**

God’s merciful and gracious work of salvation, particularly His placing every saint “in Christ”, and His forming “Christ in us” through His immersion of us into the very sphere and operation of the Holy Spirit, forms both our surety of victory in spiritual warfare and that fountain of life which leads inevitably to conformity to Christ.

- Be confident of, and maintain an active mental awareness of, the following promises:
  - *1 Cor. 3:16*. “Do you not know that you are the temple (sanctuary) of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? (see also *1 Cor. 6:19*)
  - *1 John 4:4*. “You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.”
  - *Rom. 8:38-39*. “For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
  - *Col. 2:15*. “When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through the cross.”

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## **Appendix A:**

### **Further Reflections Concerning the Angelic Rank of Cherubim**

Since cherubim are, apparently, the highest rank of angelic creatures, and since Scripture provides more direct references to cherubim, we would do well to delve a bit deeper into the assigned ministries of this rank of angels. The goal of this appendix is not intended to be exhaustive on the subject, but simply to bring to focus a few of the more prominent revelations concerning the Creator's ministry purposes for these spiritual creature-beings.

The earliest reference in Scripture to cherubim occurs in *Gen. 3:24*, where we find the Creator stationing them at the eastern gate of the Garden of Eden to "guard the way to the tree of life". Their appearance is in reference to the first divine judgment administered on earth in God's "very good" creation, following of course His earlier judgment in the heavenly sphere administered on Satan and his host of rebellious angels.

"So [Yahweh Elohim] drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim, and the flaming sword which turned in every direction, to guard the way to the tree of life." *Gen. 3:24*

The cherubim appearing here are clearly charged with serving a "guardianship" role under command of Yahweh, and in support of Yahweh's purpose in creation and redemption. But of particular note is the fact that, as God seemingly continued to meet man and manifest His personal presence here at the garden entrance, so cherubim are seen to have an "immediate presence" ministry. This early insight into the role and place of ministry of cherubim is reinforced as we follow further references to cherubim in God's progressive revelation.

The next mention of cherubim appears in the divine instruction to Moses at Sinai regarding plans for construction of the ark of the covenant which was to be positioned just behind the veil separating the Holiest Place in the tabernacle. (See *Ex. 25:10-22*) Two replicas of cherubim formed of hammered gold, fashioned in a unitary construction with the mercy seat, comprised the cover of the ark. When the tabernacle was erected and dedicated, Yahweh graciously drew near, manifesting His presence and communicating in audible voice from between the cherubim over the mercy seat. (See *Ex. 25:22 & Num. 7:89*) This ark and mercy seat, with the cherubim overshadowing, served in a profound and powerful way as the "throne presence" of Yahweh dwelling in covenantal relationship with His people.

"And you shall make two cherubim of gold, make them of hammered work at the two ends of the mercy seat. And make one cherub at one end and one cherub at the other end; you shall make the cherubim of one piece with the mercy seat at its two ends. And the cherubim shall have their wings spread upward, covering the mercy seat with their wings and facing one another; the faces of the cherubim are to be turned toward the mercy seat." *Ex. 25:18-20*

"And there I will meet with you; and from above the mercy seat, from between the cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, I will speak to you about all that I will give you in commandment for the sons of Israel." *Ex. 25:22*

Comment: One wonders how the artisan who fashioned the mercy seat discerned the pattern for modeling the two cherubim on each end. Perhaps there was a remnant description, oral or written, that was passed down from the antediluvian patriarchs through Noah to Moses concerning the cherubim stationed at the gate to the Garden of Eden. Alternatively, and perhaps more likely, cherubim may have appeared visibly before Moses while he was in the thick cloud on Sinai receiving from Yahweh verbal, and perhaps visual, communication of the plans for the tabernacle. Since the instructions were specific and detailed, a physical form had to have become known to Moses, and to Bezalel the craftsman who hammered out the unitary shape of the mercy seat. (*Ex. 37:1-9*)

The association of cherubim with the “throne presence” of Yahweh is reinforced in several Biblical texts. For example, in the reference quoted below, the connection of cherubim with the immediate “communicative dwelling presence” of Yahweh under the Mosaic Covenant is unmistakable. Of specific note, the two texts in *I Sam. 4:4* & *II Sam. 6:2* employ a particular compound name for Yahweh, namely Yahweh Sabaoth (LORD of hosts [i.e., LORD of the armies of angelic powers]). This name has special reference to Yahweh as “the King of glory” (*Ps. 24:10*), and communicates something of Yahweh’s vigilant and passionate defense of His glory, a defense that is often revealed in decisive judgment in the face of gross irreverence and disrespect of His covenant name. (See, for example, *Mal. 1:4, 6, 14; 2:16*). Cherubim, especially in their guardianship function, serve to magnify the Creator’s absolute and supreme passion for the infinite value and worthiness of the fullness of His character and the exalted perfection of His Being.

“So the people sent to Shiloh, and from there they carried the ark of the covenant of *Yahweh Sabaoth who sits above the cherubim*,” *I Sam. 4:4*

“And David arose and went with all the people who were with him to Kirath-jearim, to bring from there the ark of God which is called by the Name, the very name of *Yahweh Sabaoth who is enthroned above the cherubim*.” *II Sam. 6:2*

“and for the construction of **the chariot**, that is, the gold cherubim that spread their wings and overshadowed the ark of the covenant of Yahweh.” *I Chron. 28:18* [NKJV]

“also His plan for **the golden chariot of the cherubim** that spread their wings and covered the ark of the covenant of Yahweh.” *I Chron. 28:18* [ESV]

“Oh give ear, Shepherd of Israel, Thou who dost lead Joseph like a flock; *Thou who art enthroned above the cherubim*, shine forth!” *Ps. 80:1*

“Yahweh reigns, let the people tremble;  
*He is enthroned above the cherubim*,  
let the earth shake!” *Ps. 99:1*

“And Hezekiah prayed before Yahweh and said, ‘*Yahweh, the Elohim of Israel, who art enthroned above the cherubim*,  
Thou art Elohim, Thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. Thou hast made heaven and earth.’” *II Kings 19:15*

Side Note: *I Chron. 28:2* & *Ps. 132:7-8* speak of the ark as Yahweh’s footstool since He has revealed Himself as being enthroned above (over) it.

Further, cherubim are associated with the movement of Yahweh’s throne presence as it appears in manifested glory at different times in different places. The text in *I Chron. 28:18*, quoted above, makes reference to the “chariot of the cherubim” – referring to the ark of the covenant which represented His presence among His people, even a visible manifestation of His glorious presence that included, on occasion, an audible commanding presence.

Another quite amazing, and certainly somewhat mysterious, record of the appearance of cherubim is given in the early chapters of Ezekiel’s prophecy. Here, in *Ezek. 1:4-28*, we find Ezekiel’s description of a vision he received that included an encounter with four “living creatures”.

vs. 5. “And ... there were figures resembling four living creatures/beings”

vs. 5. “And this was their appearance (likeness)”

vs. 6. “Each of them had four faces and four wings”

vs. 10 “As for the form of their faces, each had a face of a man, all four had the face of a lion of the right side and the face of an ox (bull) on the left, and all four had the face of an eagle.”

Comment: We find the four creatures described as having faces corresponding to humans, to beasts of the earth (a lion – the chief of the beasts), to cattle (an ox or bull – the chief of domestic-servant animals), and to fowl (an eagle – the chief of flying creatures). Observe that there is no visible correspondence with fish or creeping creatures. The represented faces of these spiritual creatures correspond to the highest kinds of created life among the various classes of physical creatures on the face of the earth.

The true identity of these “living creatures/beings”, although unspecified in *Ezek. 1*, is explicitly delineated as cherubim in *Ezek. 10:15, 20-22*.

“Now it came about in the 30<sup>th</sup> year, on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the 4<sup>th</sup> month, while I was by the river Chebar among the exiles, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.” *Ezek. 1:1*

“And each one had four faces. ... Then the cherubim rose up. They are the living beings that I saw by the river Chebar” *Ezek. 10:14-15*

“These are the living beings that I saw beneath the God of Israel by the river Chebar; so I knew that they were cherubim. Each one had four faces and each one had four wings, ... As for the likeness of their faces, they were the same faces whose appearance I had seen by the river Chebar.” *Ezek. 10:20-22*

These verses tie the vision recorded in *Ezekiel 1* together with the divine action of Yahweh as He clearly is proceeding to lift His manifest presence from the Temple and from Jerusalem in judgment against an apostate nation. The lifting of Yahweh’s “manifest presence” associated with the ark and the mercy seat, with the overshadowing replicas of cherubim, is clearly the central message being communicated to Ezekiel in the visions appearing in the first ten chapters of his prophecy. To this point, note the following texts:

“Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Yahweh. And when I saw it, I fell on my face and heard a voice speaking to me. *Ezek. 1:28*

“Then the glory of the God of Israel went up from the cherub on which it had been, to the threshold of the temple.” *Ezek. 9:3*  
(See also *Ezek. 10:4*)

“Then the glory of Yahweh departed from the threshold of the temple and stood over the cherubim. When the cherubim departed, they lifted their wings and rose up from the earth in my sight with the wheels beside them; and they stood still at the entrance of the east gate of Yahweh’s house. And the glory of the God of Israel hovered over them from above.” *Ezek. 10:18-19*

The cherubim observed in *Ezek. 1* and in *Ezekiel 9 & 10* appear to form a “throne chariot” for God’s glory, just as is revealed in the text of *1 Chron. 28:18* quoted above. We might also note in this connection that the mysterious references to “wheels” and their movement, both in chapters 1 and 10, may have possible relevance to the “chariot movement” associated with physical manifestations of God’s glory, and to appearances of judgmental actions associated with Yahweh Sabaoth’s burning passion for His glory.

Comment #1: It is apparent that the actions of the cherubim in *Ezekiel 10* are actually exercises in mercy. They are associated with a guardian role with respect to the unconditional covenant Yahweh made with Abraham (and affirmed and amplified to Isaac and Jacob) ... and later solidified through Moses. These covenants contained both blessings and curses, both weal and woe, in order that through prospering and judgment Yahweh might bring to pass His kingdom purposes – purposes that are entirely and manifestly for His glory.

Comment #2: The cherubim are, in a real sense, ministering on behalf of the “heirs of salvation” ... and actually, on behalf of all the elect of God in order to preserve the way of His redemptive working and His righteous rule. The cherubim were serving us at Eden, in the Flood, in the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem, etc. We should not see the action of cherubim as described in *Ezekiel 9 & 10* as an isolated working in past history, and certainly not disconnected from God’s purpose for saints in other ages.

We have basis to conclude, therefore, that cherubim minister in some quite direct senses on behalf of the glory of God. And, toward this purpose, they have an “immediate throne presence”. They exercise both a guardianship role with respect to God’s glory and assert a defensive protection and vindication of God’s glory, even in a judgmental administration on behalf of His glory.

## **Appendix B**

### **A Brief Biblical Perspective on Demonic Influence in World Politico-Military Affairs**

“And [the angelic visitor] said to me, ‘Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words.

But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for 21 days; then, behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia.’ ” *Dan. 10:12-13*

“Then [the angelic visitor] said, ‘Do you understand why I came to you? But I shall now return to fight against the prince of Persia; so I am going forth, and behold, the prince of Greece is about to come.

However, I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth. Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against these forces except Michael your prince.’ ” *Dan. 10:20-21*

The texts quoted above from *Dan. 10* provide a very enlightening insight into the permissive dominion of Satan over God’s created order in the present age. *Dan. 10:13 & 20*, with their reference to “kingdom princes”, provide a “behind the curtain” glimpse into a reality that is, in one sense, quite astounding in its nature. However, from another perspective, this glimpse into an operational reality that is behind many of the affairs occurring in the physical arena allows one to better understand the flow of history and the unfolding of current events. A key point revealed by these texts is that, just as there are righteous guardian angels who are involved in the accomplishment of righteous purposes in specific instances and with respect to specific individuals, so also Satan has his host of “guardian” demons assigned to specific realms and specific individuals for the purpose of thwarting God’s will and the promotion of his own evil ends.

The “prince of Persia” is an evil, powerful, spiritual being who was active in influencing political, military, and cultural affairs under Persian rule, and so also for the “prince of Greece” and the coming Greco-Macedonian empire. Some have disputed the identity of the “prince of Persia” as a fallen angel (a demon), but the fact that “the prince of the kingdom of Persia” obstructed the righteous angel sent to communicate the divine response to Daniel’s prayer, and even more significantly, since Michael the archangel came to resolve the obstructing force of the “prince of Persia”, these facts taken together argue convincingly that this “prince of Persia” was in truth a demon – a powerful, fallen, spiritual being who was hostile toward Israel and God’s imminent purpose in the return of the captives to the land and the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple.

Furthermore, the text of *vs. 21* makes it quite explicit that the conflict in view in these texts is one that is occurring in that realm where Michael, the archangel, operates; namely, the spiritual/angelic realm.

Recall: Michael is a high-level commander of a host of holy angels (*Jude 9; Rev. 12:7*).

“There are spiritual forces at work that are far in excess of what men who disregard revelation would suppose. They struggle behind the struggles that are written on the pages of history.”  
(H.C. Leupold)

“God has arranged the angelic realm in differing ranks referred to as “rule, authority, power, and dominion” (*Eph. 1:21*). Gabriel and Michael have been assigned authority over angels who administer God’s affairs for the nation of Israel (cf. Michael in *Dan. 10:21; 12:1; Jude 9*). In imitation Satan has also apparently assigned high-ranking demons to positions of authority over each kingdom. The prince of Persia was a Satanic representative assigned to Persia.” (J. Dwight Pentecost)



The mention of both the “prince of Persia” and the coming “prince of Greece” implies that this spiritual warfare, under the command of high-level demons and their hosts, and directed toward nations and governments, is incessant. The ebb and flow of nations, as well as the fortunes of nations, whether politically, culturally, militarily, or materially, are intricately connected with spiritual forces arrayed in high places. Something of the reality of this spiritual conflict can be gleaned by reference to the following texts:

- *I Kings 22:19-23*. In this text we see a demonic spirit used by God to move Ahab, king of the northern kingdom Israel (alt., Ephraim), to engage in a military conflict against Syria – a conflict that would end up costing Ahab his life. It is clear in the context that Ahab, in concert with his 400 false prophets/advisors, had already made his decision to engage Syria in battle. However, the key influence undergirding his decision most likely came via a demonic spirit, even one that at the moment in view is directed by absolute sovereignty to work for Ahab’s demise. We see here that God in His sovereignty, in addition to the granting of His permissive will with respect to Satan’s purposes, exploits demons for His purposes.
- *II Kings 6:14-18* (esp. vs. 17). In this text we see a force of righteous angels, perhaps under Michael the archangel’s direct command, standing in defense of the forces of Israel in the time of Elisha. However, the broader scene described in *II Kings 6* is almost surely one in which a spiritual influence/control of the king of Aram, Ben-hadad, by a “prince of Aram” (a demon assigned to Aram) has been operative behind the physical realm.
- *Rev. 16:12-16*. In this text we have a prophetic view of demonic spirits at work behind the politico-military movements leading to the battle of Armageddon. Here we have a clear case where the wrath of both man and demons directed toward thwarting the purpose of God is, in the grander scheme of God’s sovereignty, used by Him to accomplish His own end in consummating the present age and bringing to pass the full scope of His kingdom promises.

One point regarding these texts stands out clearly: there is a real and vicious warfare being waged on behalf of national and international political affairs of every stripe, and this warfare is specifically directed against God’s covenant promises to Abraham – even promises which relate especially to the nation of Israel and the Church, prime targets of the evil one and his demon hosts of every rank.

“And so it will happen in that day, that Yahweh will punish the host of heaven (the host of exalted ones), on high, and the kings of the earth, on earth. And they will be gathered together like prisoners in the dungeon, and will be confined to prison; and after many days they will be punished.”  
*Isa. 24:21-22*

Comment: The “host of exalted ones” (*NKJV*) are Satan’s hosts ... the so-called gods of the nations.  
“Beelezebul, the ruler of the demons” (*Lk. 11:15*)  
This text refers to princes/kings in two different realms: the spiritual realm and the physical realm.  
A true Biblical worldview recognizes the reality of both realms, and properly accounts that these two distinct realms are not independent of each other, but are rather inter-related in causal ways.

It is also clear that the “host of exalted ones on high” who are engaged in deceiving the nations already stand under an indictment of severe judgment. And, per the text from Isaiah quoted above, this indictment of judgment also pertains to all those kings, leaders, officials, judges, etc. operating in the physical sphere who either submit to the influence/control of demon powers, or who of their own accord in their fallen nature perpetrate evil influence, laws and judgments. It is a truth that should sober every officer of all ranks in every jurisdiction, and move them to be conscientious in promoting righteousness and truth as the hallmark of their rule and reign.

### **A Note of Perspective:**

The demon commander called “the prince of Persia” in *Dan. 10:13 & 20* had prevented the angelic messenger sent to communicate the answer to Daniel’s prayer for a full three weeks (21 days, *vs. 13*). Not until Michael, the righteous angel with higher rank (archangel) arrived, and changed the force of battle, was the divine messenger and the “already commissioned” answer able to get through to Daniel.

**Ques.** Why didn’t God intervene immediately to overcome the demonic opposition to His own commissioned answer to Daniel’s prayer?

**An Ans.**

“While God can, of course, override the united resistance of all the forces of hell if He chooses to do so, He accords to demons certain limited powers of obstruction and rebellion somewhat like those He allows humans. In both cases the exercise of free will in opposition to the Lord of heaven is permitted by Him when He sees fit.” (Gleason L. Archer)

**Author’s Comment:** God’s sovereignty always stands and cannot ever waver. He rules supreme over all at all times without fail. It is an absolute truth of revelation that He never slumbers or sleeps, but is by contrast incessantly omnipresent in His unassailable omnipotence. As such, any exercise of resistance against His will, and any rebellion against His authority, is in fact and in truth an exercise that is necessarily ordained by and comes to pass under His sovereign providence.

### **Some Summary Points of Note:**

- This world under the Curse is “enemy territory”. God has sovereignly ordained that Satan function as “the prince of the power of the air” and as “the god of this world”. As such, we “always ought to pray and not to lose heart” (*Lk. 18:1*), for although there is a real enemy at work, God promises that His sovereign will can never be overcome. For this reason, saints of God are, by divine call and by eminent logic, to persevere and stand firm.
- Demonic forces may be allowed to be operative in delaying answers to prayer. However, and take careful note, God hears immediately when His children pray.
  - ◆ Because we have a permanent, installed, and forever effectual High Priest, we always have immediate access to God’s attentive ear and His throne of grace (*Heb. 4:14-16*) – He “does not become weary or tired” (*Isa. 40:28*), neither does He ever “slumber nor sleep” (*Ps. 121:1-4*).
  - ◆ To pray is to engage in an invisible, but very real, spiritual warfare. Spiritual warfare stands in front of and behind every prayer. But we are called to both put on the full armor of God and to persist in prayer (see *Eph. 6:12-20*).
- In light of the truth that principalities, powers, dominions, etc., are real, and are actively arrayed against the way of righteousness and truth, we should not be:
  - ◆ overly surprised when we see, either in history or in current events, national entities or lawless groups engaged in perpetrating great evils that astound our sensibilities, for Satan was a liar and murderer from the beginning, and he has a host of underlings of various ranks to ply his devilish strategies and work toward his evil goals;
  - ◆ also, we should not be too ready to attribute every evidence of unrighteousness to demonic working for man himself is a fallen creature with great propensity for moral, cultural, and political evil.

## **Appendix C:**

### **“The Sons of God” and “The Nephilim” Toward a Textual and Historical Analysis of Genesis 6:1-4 ( Confronting One of the ‘Hard Sayings’ of Scripture )**

#### **Starting Point Questions:**

**Ques. #1.** What is the *prima facie* sense of what is being communicated in the opening paragraphs of *Gen. 6*? That is, what is the “surface” or “face” understanding that one takes away from a straightforward reading of the text?

**Note:** The specific words “and they took wives” and “they bore children” in vs. 2 & 4 seemingly provide an obvious reference to sexual activity and consequent procreation. The text seems to suggest that the sexual encountering in view was unnatural, even alarming, and clearly involving women offspring of Adam’s race, “the daughters of men”. However, the identity of the male partners, “the sons of God”, and the identity of the offspring referred to as “Nephilim” is not obvious from a “surface” reading of the text.

**Ques. #2.** Does a “face” reading of the text not imply that the offspring issuing from the sexual encountering in view in vs. 4 were uncommon in some physical (perhaps, even genetic) respects?

**Note:** The text highlights a severe corruption of the race, plus a profound and contemptible decline in civility. The root cause of this devolution seems to spring from this ‘apparently uncommon’ sexual intrusion into Adam’s race, and the degrading influence on the global culture seems to stem from the resultant offspring of this intrusion.

**Point:** The key interpretive hurdles that need to be cleared relative to a deciphering of the intended communication of this “hard saying” pertain to the establishment of two key identities:

1. first and foremost, the identity of the “sons of God”;
2. secondarily, the identity of the “Nephilim”.

An understanding of the text clearly pivots on the identity of the male participants in this uncommon sexual intrusion, and on the definition of what, if any, peculiar genetic, physical, or spiritual characteristics differentiated the Nephilim from ordinary offspring sired in the line of Adam’s direct descendants.

#### **Historical Interpretive Views re “the sons of God”:**

Four interpretive views of *Gen. 6:1-4* have gained particular traction with respect to the identity of the “sons of God”:

- **angels:** An angelic identity seems to have been the prevailing view in the earliest, non-Biblical texts of Jewish writers dating back to centuries before the NT era. This interpretation was the established view appearing in early extra-Biblical writings principally because the identity of the “sons of God” in *Gen. 6:2,4* accords precisely with the same phrase appearing in *Job 1:6 & 2:1* – texts where the identification with angels prevails essentially without dispute.
- **demon possessed men of Adam’s race:** This view identifies “sons of God” as human-kind males who gave themselves over to demon possession to the such an extreme extent that they became “demon dominated” – a demon domination reaching particularly to a perverse procreative activity with women that led to offspring who were alarmingly gross and violent.
- **royal, tyrannical men of Adam’s race:** This view identifies “sons of God” as kings and chieftains (sons of gods) – individuals who achieved positions of royalty and engaged in a promiscuous gathering of harems. In particular, they are postulated to be a class of ruling, tyrannical men who were successors of a sort similar to Lamech of the Cainite line (*Gen. 4:16-24*). This interpretive view springs largely from the phrase “whomever they chose” [“of all

which they chose” (KJV)] → meaning that a prolific promiscuity developed, perhaps even one deeply influenced by demon activity. This view seems to find its origin in the writings of Jewish historians/rabbis in the early Christian era (2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D.), and as such lacks the weight of historical and scholarly support.

- **Sethites:** This interpretation identifies the “sons of God” as human-kind males born into the (presumed) godly line of Seth. The view then contends that these godly male offspring of Seth intermarried with the ungodly female offspring of Cain. This interpretive view appears first in early Christian writings, writings traceable particularly to Chrysostom and Augustine as its preeminent advocates in early centuries A.D.

### **Supportive and Contrarian Arguments re the Historical Interpretive Views**

The historical interpretive views briefly defined above are now scrutinized in reverse order.

- ♦ **Sethites:** This interpretation considers (presumes) that the “sons of God” refer to a preserved line of godly men who were descendants of Adam through Seth, and that the “daughters of men” refer to ungodly women who were descendants of Adam through the line of Cain. This view supposes that these two lines of offspring maintained a family separation over the several preceding generations leading up to the time of the mentioned onset of ‘sexual intermingling’, an intermingling where entirely natural sexual encounters occurred giving rise to fully-human offspring of mixed “godly-ungodly”, but fully-human, parentage. The text seems to clearly suggest that a mixing of two different (and apparently previously separate) lines of parentage was the instrumental cause behind the widespread proliferation of evil.

Some pertinent issues relative to this view include:

- We know that the whole Sethite line was becoming corrupted as well as the Cainitic line. The Scripture is explicit in saying that only Noah, who had a sustained and direct patrilineal connection back to Adam, was righteous and found grace in the eyes of Yahweh at the time of the Flood. Hence, the question persists: why was there no intermarrying between the line of Cain and the line of Seth before this onset of promiscuous intermingling?

“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.” *Gal. 3:26*  
 “And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba Father.” *Gal. 4:6*

Comment: We know that the line of Seth clearly did not sustain a godly identity that comports with the corresponding NT usage of the phrase “sons of God”, because all “pure” descendants of Seth, with the exception of Noah and his family, were engulfed in the judgment of the Flood. This fact argues strongly against those who purport that the phrase “sons of God” in *Gen. 6* can be seen as carrying equivalent identity to its use in the NT as saints who are “born of God” (*John 1:12-13*).

- It seems both logical and natural that intermingling of Adam’s progeny from the line of Cain and the line of Seth occurred before the onset referred to in this text, including an intermingling of the lines of other sons of Adam and Eve. Such an intermingling of the lines of the sons of Noah (Shem, Ham, and Japheth) seems to have occurred after the Flood: why wouldn’t such family intermingling have occurred from the beginning? And, wasn’t such intermingling implied in the command to “be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth”?
- Why should such sexual intermingling of direct descendants of Adam and Eve give rise to a special offspring → Nephilim? There is seemingly no rational basis for any genetic or physical predisposition from such a common/natural intermingling. We know that there was no genetic danger from even siblings marrying for many generations following creation. The human race began with an original genetic richness that was absolutely perfect, wholly devoid of any defect.
- This interpretive view has the advantage, of course, in that it does not require any ‘mixed-kind’ parentage (any unnatural sexual-genetic mixing) such as is implicit in the view that the phrase “sons of God” refers to angels.

- With regard to the latter point, this view does require an interpretive understanding of the phrase “the sons of God” that is contrary to the identification as a clear reference to angels in all other appearances of the phrase in the OT.
  - Why did this interpretive view, especially with its complete ‘natural reasonableness’ regarding the issue of parentage of offspring, not gain any traction over the multiple millennia before its first proposal in the early Church era?
- ◆ **royal, tyrannical men of Adam's race:** This interpretive view does not require any peculiar distinctions relating to the nature of the sexual intermingling between the “sons of God” and the “daughters of men”. But it also does not provide, on the other hand, any correlating cause for the rise of a distinctive offspring ... even a unique offspring – namely, Nephilim. Furthermore, it requires a linguistic interpretation of the phrase “the sons of God” that is clearly at odds with the obvious meaning of the identical phrase in three appearances in The Book of Job.
  - ◆ **demon possessed men of Adam's race:** This view overcomes some of the objectionable issues pertaining to angels having intercourse with women. It purports that ordinary men, fully-human descendants of Adam, became engrossed in profound demon manipulative control, and then engaged in sexual relations with fully-human women. However, use of the term “sons of God” to refer to ordinary men, whether or not demon possessed, seems problematic given the “face” understanding of the term as well as its other usages in the OT where an identity with angels is clearly required. In a somewhat “reaching and speculative” argument in favor of this view, one might postulate that these demon possessed men became engaged in some form of genetic manipulation, even one with the consequence of a perverted genetics in the offspring.
  - ◆ **angels:** The text of *Gen. 6:1-4* seems to require, linguistically, some form of demonic intrusion that affected and infected offspring born of women. The chief argument offered against the interpretive view that “the sons of God” are fallen angels is that it is purported to stand in contradiction with a statement Jesus made to the Sadducees – a statement purportedly teaching that angels are “sexless” creatures. Also, assuming that real “angel-kind” sexual encounters with “human-kind” women is in view (i.e., were indeed possible), and such relations are being factually described in *Gen. 6:2-4*, a puzzling question arises with respect to the nature of the offspring springing from an “angel-human genetic mixing”. The offspring – the Nephilim – seem to be mortal creatures, but are they truly (fully) human?

#### **Contrarian Questions and Concerns re the “sons of God = angels” View**

Arguments and questions that can be framed in opposition to, or problematic for, the historical interpretive view that “the sons of God = angels” include the following:

- Were the “sons of God” who sinned and (supposedly) had relations with the “daughters of men” a peculiar class of angels – a particular class created with capacity to “incarnate” themselves (i.e., embody themselves in human bodies)? We know that righteous angels do appear with human embodiment on occasion when they are commissioned to manifest themselves physically for some ordained ministry assignments. The questions to the present point are:
  - ◆ can demons assume a physical embodiment on their own initiative, or are they restricted in any manifestation to do so simply through a “soul-spirit possession” of existing human kind persons, as is the driving concept behind the “demon possessed men of Adam's race” view described above? And,
  - ◆ did the “sons of God” in *Gen. 6* truly assume a physical embodiment with truly human-like bodies possessing a capability for procreation?
- Is it even possible that the sexual union of creatures of such a distinctly different kind (i.e., angel-kind and human-kind) can sire “human-like” offspring?

- Supposing that an angel-human genetic mixing was possible (i.e., the joining of an angelic sperm and a human ovum), what about the nature of the offspring?
  - ◆ Recalling that there is no salvation for Satan and his demon host, and that the angels involved in such an invasion of the procreative capacity of humans are most certainly “fallen angels”, what about the offspring’s potential for salvation through the redemptive work of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Adam?
  - ◆ How is it that the death of the Incarnate Christ in His humanity could possibly serve as a substitutionary, atoning, propitiatory sacrifice for such creatures?
- Who are the Nephilim? Are the Nephilim truly creatures of the human-kind?

### **A Further Examination of “the sons of God = angel” Interpretive View**

Several contrarian issues relative to the interpretive view that “the sons of God = angels” are now addressed in terms of two “counter questions:

- **Counter Question #1.** What about angels? Should we see Jesus’ statements printed below as truly precluding any possible identity of the “sons of God” with angels?

“But Jesus answered and said to them, ‘You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures, or the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven (as the angels of God in heaven [KJV]).’ ” *Matt. 22:29-30*

“And Jesus said to them, ‘The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage; for neither can they die anymore, for they are like angels, and sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.’ ” *Luke 20:34-36*

Points of note relative to Jesus’ statement regarding marriage in the future age:

- First, these texts seem to be speaking primarily about righteous angels, although the principle of non-procreation *may*, admittedly, apply to all angel-kind creatures – to all classes of both righteous and fallen (demons).
- Second, these texts do not say that angels are “sexless” beings. It only says that these righteous angels do not marry; that is, they do not form sexual unions for the purpose of procreation – a fact quite in contrast to the “creation command” given to man for the present age: “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth”.
- It is a universal fact that all accounts of angelic manifestations in Scripture speak of angels as men; that is, as creatures appearing in the male gender.
- The main point being communicated in these texts is that, with respect to the case of glorified man, sexual unions for the purpose of procreation will no longer exist. Man in the future, post-resurrection age will be immortal and procreation will no longer occur. The present age is the only probationary period noted in revelation when procreation occurs, an age when God has purposed to form an elect company of saints from among human-kind creatures that He has purposed to call to faith, to justify, and to glorify.
- We should not take from this statement by Jesus the idea that glorified man in the future age will comprise a single class of genderless beings with no continuity between one’s present physical form and nature. (*I Cor. 15:35-49*) We will be like Christ, and eye-witnesses of the glorified Christ spoke of Him as having a likeness corresponding to His pre-glorified form. Further, Jesus was born as a male child – not a genderless person.

Comment: As best we can discern from revelation, the angelic host was created “*en masse*” – they were created in total number at one time and in a state of immortality from the beginning. As such, there was no need (and no place) for marriage and procreation in their proper abode (their estate of existence).

**Note :** The interpretive view that the “sons of God” were a class of angels is supported by:

- internal consistency with usage of the same term in *Job 1:6; 2:1 & 38:7* – the only other OT texts where the identical phrase appears. (See text box on page 6 of these notes for further discussion of this point.)
- the Septuagint (dating to ~ 300 B.C.) translates the phrase as “angels of God”
- the second-tier apocryphal Book of Enoch speaks of angels who “have gone to the daughters of men upon the earth, and have slept with the women, and have defiled themselves, and revealed to them all kinds of sins.”
- the Jewish historian Josephus, speaking of this incident, describes it as an angelic intrusion with women.
- ancient Jewish writers during the time before Christ agree that *Gen. 6:1-4* speaks of angels who defiled themselves with women.
- early Christian era writers, aside from Chrysostom and Augustine who advocated the Sethite view, continued to support the Septuagint translation and followed early Jewish writers in acceptance of the view that “sons of God = angels”.

**Further Ques.** Is there any Biblical support for the interpretive view that the “sons of God” in *Gen. 6* are indeed angels, and that there was, at minimum, some sort of angelic insurrection and invasion that profoundly corrupted the antediluvian race of man descended from Adam?

**Ans.** The most likely Biblical references describing such an insurrection-invasion are found in the NT texts printed below.

<p>“For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell (Gr., tartarus) and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; ... and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment, and especially those who indulge (lit., go after) the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority. Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties (lit., glories), whereas angels who are greater in might and power do not bring a reviling judgment against them before the Lord.” <i>II Pet. 2:4-11</i></p>	<p>“And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day.”          “Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example, in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.”  <i>Jude 6-7</i></p>
	<p>“For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the Spirit, in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison, who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water.”  <i>I Pet. 3:18-20</i></p>

**Note #1:** All three texts speak of imprisoned angelic spirits, using such terms as:

- “committed them to pits of darkness” *II Pet. 2:4*
- “kept in eternal bonds under darkness” *Jude 6*
- “spirits now in prison” *I Pet. 3:19*

Satan’s hosts (fallen angels: principalities, powers, thrones, demons, etc.) are not now in prison awaiting judgment, but rather are free to move about in the created domain to execute their master’s commands – commands issued under the permissive sovereignty of God, to be sure – they are “loosed” angels (see p. 11).

**Note #2:** The occasion of the gross sin leading to this judgment is specifically set as being in the time prior to the Noahic Deluge. Note the explicit terms:

- “and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah” *II Pet. 2:4*

**Comment: Sethite View**

“the spirits in prison” seems to require Sethites who intermarried with Cainitic women, and fathered the Nephilim, be imprisoned in a special place in Sheol-Hades. Is this reasonable?

- “who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah” *I Pet. 3:20*

**Comment:** The word “spirits” (*I Pet. 3:19*) [Gr., “pneumasin”] is used in reference to both angels and humans. However, the spirits of unsaved, deceased humans are not in prison, but are rather presently in Sheol. Further, the only reference to spirits “who once were disobedient” in the time of Noah were the “sons of God” who took wives from among the “daughters of men”. Hence, the reference being to angel-spirits in *I Pet. 3:18-20* is not ruled out, but is in fact a quite natural and logical understanding of the text.

**Note #3:** The above texts seem to be speaking of a particular group (class) of fallen angel-beings who have been condemned for a particular transgression of their proper domain and created limitation. Their sin is noted as that of:

- “indulged in gross immorality” *Jude 6*
- engaged in an evil pursuit of “strange flesh” *Jude 6*
- being driven with “corrupt desires” *II Pet. 2:10*
- being self-willed they “despise authority” *II Pet. 2:10*

**Comment:** The term “strange flesh” (*Jude 7*) [Gr., “sarkos heteras”] implies a flesh of a distinctly different nature (kind). Two distinct terms in the Greek language used for “different” appear in *I Cor. 15:39-40*:

- vs. 39: “another” = “allē” (meaning different, although still of the “earthy kind”)
- vs. 40: “another” = “hetera” (meaning entirely different – “earthy kind” as compared to “heavenly kind”).

Use of “sarkos heteras” to describe “strange flesh” seems to suggest that some form of a “wholesale class distinction” is in view.

**Note #4.** There is another interpretive difficulty here. Consider the phrases:

- “kept not their first estate” (*KJV*)
- “did not keep their own domain” (*NASB*)

“estate” = (Gr. “arche”) translated “principality” (*Eph. 3:10; 6:12*)

What was the proper abode that they abandoned? Do these terms refer to the time of that original rebellion and fall of angels led by Satan following shortly after creation week, or do they refer to a particular class of angels who had already joined with Satan and then, on a later occasion during the pre-flood world, engaged in a further transgression of their imposed boundaries of operation? That is, was there a second rebellion/defection that was particularly egregious with respect to divinely-imposed “kind” boundaries, and to the genetic purity of Adam’s race? Observe the words “revile angelic majesties (despise authority)” [*II Pet. 2:10*].

**Note #5.** The text of *Jude 7* makes a quite pointed comparison between the sexual perversion that characterized the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah before their destruction and the angels who “did not keep their own domain” in the time before the Flood.

- “they (citizens of Sodom) in a similar way as these (angels who “abandoned their proper abode”))” (*NKJV*)
- “in the same way as ...” [*NASB*]; “which likewise indulged ...” [*ESV*]

The point that is emphasized in the use of clearly direct, comparative language is that both groups stepped over proper (creation ordained) bounds in pursuing after “strange flesh” [Gr., “sarkos heteras”], and for this reason fell under divine judgment.

**Note #6.** The angels who sinned were evidently of a lower hierarchy compared to several other classes because we find the phrase:

- “Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties, whereas angels who are greater in might and power do not bring a reviling judgment against them before the Lord.” *II Pet. 2:11*

**Comment**

The judgment meted out on the angelic class who engaged with the “daughters of men” in *Gen. 6:1-4* is, so it seems, a specific and dire warning to all those who would indulge “corrupt desires” and engage in “gross immorality”, pursuing “strange flesh”, as per the men of Sodom and Gomorrah. Those engaging in such pursuits will undergo a similar severe judgment.



- **Counter Question #2.** What about the Nephilim? Are they truly human offspring or are they a separate category of offspring (a unique ancestry) who are differentiated through some mixed (and perhaps perverted) genetics and notable physical features?

“The Nephilim (giants, *KJV*) were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.” *Gen. 6:4*

The meaning of name “Nephilim”:

- “Nephilim” derives from the Hebrew verb “naphal” meaning “fall”; hence,
- “Nephilim” = “he/it fell”; “those who have fallen” or “the fallen ones”.

**Note #1:** The name “fallen/fallen ones” may have reference to the fact that fallen angels had some role in their parentage, or it may also mean that they, the offspring, were fallen in their nature quite beyond even that which characterized the ungodly line of Cain.

**Ques.** Does not the use of the term “Nephilim” in *Gen. 6:4* imply that the progeny of the implied sexual intrusion were, in some sense, non-ordinary offspring of the “daughters of men” relative to the class of ordinary descendants of Adam?

Does the use of the term “Nephilim” separate offspring who are genetically impacted by “the sons of God” and set them in a class distinct from those fully human offspring who are direct descendants of Adam?

**Note #2:** The word “giants” is used in several translations even though the original word in the Hebrew text is indeed “nephilim”. Such a translation, so it seems, was imported from the sense communicated in *Num. 13:32-33*, the only other appearance of the word in Scripture.

“So they gave out to the sons of Israel a bad (evil [*KJV*]) report of the land which they had spied out, saying, ‘The land ... devours its inhabitants; and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great size (stature [*KJV*]). There also we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim); and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.’ ” *Num. 13:32-33*

“(The Emim lived here formerly, a people as great, numerous and tall as the Anakim. Like the Anakim, they are also regarded as Rephaim, but the Moabites call them Emim. ...)” *Deut. 2:10-11*

**Note #3:** The usual Hebrew word for “giants” is “Rephaim”, whose first appearance in Scripture occurs in *Gen. 14:5 & 15:20*. From a purely linguistic perspective, it seems clear that “nephilim” in *Gen. 6:4* is used deliberately to communicate some defining characteristics about both the parentage and the nature of the offspring of the intrusion of the “sons of God” into the human sphere.

**Note #4:** It is Biblically untenable to consider the sons of Anak to be descended from the Nephilim. Why? Because *Gen. 6:4* seems to quite explicitly link the origin of the Nephilim with that occasion when “the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men”, and we know with certainty that all of the offspring from this intrusion were destroyed in the Flood. Hence, there could be no post-flood Nephilim creatures. However, there certainly was latent genetic capacity for post-flood Rephaim (i.e., for giantism).

**Note #5:** The text in *Num. 13-14* identifies the sons of Anak as living in Hebron (*13:22*), a city in the region of the Amalekite and Canaanite populations, and the Amalekite and Canaanite peoples lived in the Valley of Eschol (*13:23; 14:25*). The Anakim, who were of “great stature” (*13:32*), were a family line included in these populations and, therefore, not part of the Nephilim per its defining usage in *Gen. 6:4*.

“(For only Og of Bashan was left of the remnant of the Rephaim. Behold his bedstead was an iron bedstead; ... Its length was nine cubits and its width four cubits by ordinary cubit)” *Deut. 3:11*

**Note #6:** Since the word of the ten spies is indeed identified as “a bad (evil) report of the land” (13:32), it is entirely likely that these spies were so impressed with the superior stature for the Anakim that they made reference to certain remnant legendary tales of the pre-flood Nephilim. They certainly resorted to hyperbolic language when they spoke of themselves as being “like grasshoppers” (13:33) in comparison to the Anakim.

**Textual Comment:** In regard to the use of “giants” in some translations of the Hebrew term “nephilim” (e.g., *KJV*, *NKJV*, *ESV*), it may be that the translators were influenced by the words that immediately precede the term “Nephilim” in *Num. 13:33*:

“... and all the people that we saw in it were men of great stature”. (*Num. 13:32 [KJV]*), and, therefore, attributing giantism as an implied, inherent aspect of those called “Nephilim”.

The text in *Gen. 6* uses several descriptive terms to characterize the Nephilim:

- “mighty men”: this term derives from a translation of a Hebrew word nominally meaning “heroes”, and signifying a group who are known for exceptional physical prowess – for being aggressive and known for exhibiting bravery and valor .
- “men of renown”: this is a Hebrew term denoting “fame”; having a notable reputation. They gained notoriety particularly because of their prolific and aggressive acts of cruelty, degrading civility, promiscuity, and destruction of life; that is, indulging and promoting pure evil.

**Comment:** The phrase “every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (*Gen. 6:5*) seems to have reference to a pervasively degrading culture in the pre-flood population. Yet, the astounding rise of intense evil appears to be linked quite directly with the offspring called “Nephilim”, offspring sired through the onset of an implied sexual intrusion of “the sons of God”.

It is interesting that the accent on the evil of that generation follows immediately the special descriptive terms that differentiated the Nephilim from the rest of mankind. The corruption in view seems to have been both cultural and spiritual; a corruption that included moral elements as well as physical. It is also important to note that, per the texts of *II Pet. 2:4-11* and *Jude 6-7*, the judgment of the Flood brought on both the death of most of mankind plus the imprisonment of a class of angels.

**Point:** The damnation associated with the Flood affected *both* the physical world *and* the spiritual world; *both* human-kind creatures *and* angel-kind creatures. This connection argues, in the author’s opinion, that the root cause for the devastating cataclysm of the Flood was a definitive intrusion of angels that both affected and infected the human population.

## Appendix C Supplement

Summarizing some of the “*supportive vs. contrarian*” arguments regarding the more prominent interpretive views of the phrase “sons of God” appearing in *Gen. 6:2, 4*.

**“sons of God”**  
a godly line of human-kind  
creatures → descendants of  
Adam through Seth

### Supportive Arguments

1. Comports with the presumed sense of Jesus’ words regarding angels and marriage (cf., *Matt. 22:29-30; Lk. 20:34-36*)
2. Rests on a presumed correspondence between use of “sons of God” in *Gen. 6:2,4* and “sons of God” in multiple NT texts (e.g., *Gal. 3:26 & 4:6*)
3. Raises no disturbing questions about “cross-kind” mating plus issues of genetics and the spiritual nature of consequent offspring

### Contrarian Arguments

1. Conflicts with the uniform OT use of the Hebraic phrase “sons of God” to refer to angels (cf., *Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7*)
2. Sethites were fallen human-kind creatures just as descendants of the Cainitic line
3. It is an unsupported presumption that descendants of Seth were “predominantly godly” and that the descendants of Cain were “predominantly ungodly”, at least after the first several generations of the antediluvian age. Both lines were equally inheritors of original sin, and both lines became pervasively corrupt in later generations
4. The apparent “special” or “unique” nature of the consequent offspring (“Nephilim”) seems to argue for a “special” or “unique” parentage

**“sons of God”**  
a particular class or rank of  
angel-kind creatures

### Supportive Arguments

1. Comports with the uniform usage of the Hebraic term “*bene elohim*” (“sons of God”) to refer to angels
2. Provides a basis for the apparent textual uniqueness of the offspring → Nephilim
3. Agrees with the understanding of *Gen. 6:1-4* since earliest writings and traditions
4. Comports with NT texts regarding a class/rank of imprisoned angels (cf., *II Pet. 2:4-11; Jude 6-7; I Pet. 3:18-20*)

### Contrarian Arguments

1. Conflicts with the presumed sense of Jesus’ words regarding angels and marriage ... and the associated presumptive interpretation that angels are sexless beings
2. Raises troublesome issues regarding “cross-kind” mating of angel-kind and human-kind creatures
3. Raises troublesome issues with respect to the consequent offspring:
  - Are they truly human?
  - How do they relate to God’s promise of redemption through the “seed of the woman”?

**“sons of God”**

ordinary men of Adam’s race,  
perhaps of the Sethite line, overtaken by  
demonic control/manipulation

**Supportive Arguments**

1. Comports with the presumed sense of Jesus’ words regarding angels and marriage (cf., *Matt. 22:29-30; Lk. 20:34-36*)
2. Raises no disturbing questions about “cross-kind” mating plus issues of genetics and the spiritual nature of consequent offspring
3. Allows a “double” understanding of “sons of God” – men of the Sethite line (presumed godly members) plus an angelic participation (fallen angels)
4. Allows for “linked understanding” of both a pre-flood (*Gen. 6:4*) and a post-flood existence of Nephilim (*Num. 13:33*)

**Contrarian Arguments**

1. Conflicts with the uniform OT use of the Hebraic phrase “sons of God” to refer to angels (cf., *Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7*)
2. The apparent “special” or “unique” nature of the consequent offspring (“Nephilim”) seems to argue for a “special” or “unique” parentage .
3. A unique parentage might have occurred *IF* the presumed demonic control extended so far so as to include an involvement in a perverse genetic (“seed”) manipulation leading to an especially “fallen” offspring. However, is this possibility not as, or even more, mysteriously far-reaching than angelic procreation with women?
4. The Anakim, presumably referred to in *Num. 13* as also being of the “Nephilim class”, were ordinary human-kind creatures descended from Adam through Noah, albeit uncommonly large in stature, but not necessarily distinctively “fallen” nor of a perverse genetics.

**Further perspective regarding the phrase “sons of God” (“bene elohim”)**

Although the precise Hebraic phrase “sons of God” in *Gen. 6:2, 4* only appears in *Job 1:6; 2:1 & 38:7*, there are other OT texts that use related terms referring to men and to angels. Several are summarized here in order to give an enlarged understanding of why variant views of this phrase “sons of God” in *Gen. 6:2, 4* might arise.

**Reference to angels:**

“Ascribe the the LORD, O sons of the mighty (“bene elim”), ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.” *Ps. 29:1*

“For who in the skies is comparable to the LORD? Who among the sons of the mighty (“bene elim”) is like the LORD?” *Ps. 89:6*

**Reference to men:**

“I, on My part, said, ‘You are gods, and all of you are sons of the Most High. Nevertheless, you will die like men, and fall like any one of the princes.’ ” *Ps. 82:6-7*

“Yet the number of the sons of Israel will be like the sand of the sea ... Where it is said to them, ‘You are not My people’, it will be said to them, ‘You are the sons of the living God’.” *Hosea 1:10*

## **Concluding Remarks**

### **Comment on General Perspective:**

In the title “The Biblical Doctrine of Angels”, the word “doctrine” is not used to imply a communication of some set of abstract facts in a dry or pedantic manner. Quite to the contrary; “doctrine” literally means “teaching”, and use of the word “Biblical” means that the teaching in view is according to Scripture, even a teaching that is “profitable” (*II Tim. 3:16*). The doctrine/teaching that springs from Holy Scripture is profitable because it is according to truth. It is teaching that is centered on and rooted in:

- the Holy Scriptures that comprise the “breathed out” Word of God that He has purposed to magnify according to (together with) “all His name” (*Ps. 138:2*);
- the true Biblical worldview – that foundationally true understanding of reality as God has defined it ... the view regarding God’s creation and His sovereign, operational governance of the reality that He has defined for His glory.

When we open the Scriptures we come to encounter God in His personal revelation of truth. Further, the goal of doctrine/teaching is to set down the truth revealed in a clear and systematic way – in a manner through which the mind can more readily understand what is real and true with greater clarity. Of course, the over-arching purpose in teaching God’s Word of truth is always to encounter Him in a life-changing way ... even a way wherein we are conformed in mind and heart to the image of God in an ever-increasing measure. These notes are herewith sent forth with the prayer that these purposes might be realized, at least to some degree, for the glory of His great name.

### **Cautionary Remarks of Perspective and Principle with respect to Hard Sayings:**

- ◆ There is (there can only be) one true interpretation of historical-narrative passages of Scripture. Truth does not bend to embrace either multiple, divergent, or cross-contradictory interpretations.
  - All true interpretations of historical-narrative passages must exhibit coherency between, and consistency within and across, related texts.
  - God is the author of language, knowing how to communicate precisely what He intends to communicate. Further, He has created man in His image, meaning that our communicative capacities have a correspondence with His own, to the end that we might know Him and understand His thoughts and ways.
- ◆ Be stubborn to abandon the *prima facie* sense (i.e., the first impression, face understanding) of a text when properly considered in its context.
- ◆ Be stubborn to step away from the plain statements of a text; in fact, attempt to make the plain statements frame the main interpretation of the text.
- ◆ Be vigilant and careful to respect full consistency and coherency with all related texts, especially those relevant texts involving the same events or similar subjects that communicate in direct and explicit terms.
- ◆ Do not be impulsive or overly zealous to demystify a text, or to seek to diminish or empty it of supernatural elements, when the plain statements of the text seem to allow, or even imply, an aspect of mystery or elements that strain our reason which derives simply from common experience and natural states of affairs.
- ◆ Be humble and circumspect with respect to variant interpretations when the previous principles do not clearly converge to a single, definitive conclusion that is logically and respectfully reasoned using Biblically-sound hermeneutics.
- ◆ Remember: “The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law.” *Deut. 29:29*