

Foundations 101

Date: December 3, 2008

Topic: **Angleology: The Study of Angels, Satan and Demons**

Summary: The nature of humanity, complimentarianism, “soul” and “spirit” debate

Reading Assignment: *Systematic Theology, Grudem* pg. 439-489 or *Bible Doctrine, Grudem* pg. 187-209.

I. Angels

1. What are angels?

Angels – created beings with moral judgment and high intelligence but without physical bodies (Wayne Grudem, ST, pg. 397)

Moral Judgment is seen in some of the angels deciding to follow the Devil in leaving heaven and warring against God.

“For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment;” (2 Peter 2:4)

We see three types of Angels throughout the scriptures. One, the “Cherubim”, is mentioned several times in the Bible but mostly as “guardians” of what is holy. We see them protecting the garden of Eden (Gen. 3:24) and we see them acting as a “chariot” for God (Ezk. 10:1-22) and with the Ark of the Covenant. Two, the “Seraphim”, is mentioned in Isaiah 6:2-7 as those who continually worship God in heaven, singing “holy, holy, holy”. Thirdly we see the “Living Creatures” in the books of Ezekiel and Revelation and these angels take on many different forms like a man, an ox, an eagle and a lion. We see these angels explicitly in heavenly scenes only.

Now, there are also two angels that are mentioned by name in the Bible and they seem to rank above most angels in power and authority. We see Michael “the archangel” who is the “leader of the angels” according to Jude 9 and according to Revelation 12:7-8 he will lead the war against the “dragon” or the devil along side Jesus. The other angel mentioned by name is Gabriel who acts as a messenger for God to Daniel. It appears that Gabriel is primarily for communicating and Michael primarily

for fighting as we see that Daniel calls in Michael for help with some rebellious leaders in the Old Testament.

In saying that there could be many other types and names that we are not given in the scriptures. *“The chariots of God are twice ten thousand, thousands upon thousands” (Psalm 68:17)* There are untold numbers of angels at the service of God.

2. What do Angel's do?

Angels are found serving the following functions in the Bible: guarding believers (**Matthew 18:10**), constantly observing what goes on in the church (**1 Cor. 11:10**), it is implied that they are more knowledgeable about divine things than human are (**Mark 13:32**), and they have a special ministry to believers at the time of death (**Luke 16:22**) though we are not told anything about that ministry.¹

The crux of the role of angels is found in **Hebrews 1:14**, *“are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?”* They serve God through serving God's people.

“For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.” (Psalm 91:11)

So for the 1st century Jewish Christian angels held a central place in their spiritual life. We have to realize that angelic activity was prominent at the great points in redemptive history; the giving of the Law and the time of the Exodus, the birth, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus and the planting of the first church. They had read about angels in their history, heard about angels in the life of Jesus and the stories of the first believers and their leaders like Peter, John and Paul. Angels represented the physical touch of an invisible God.

3. What does this mean for me practically?

Angels, we are told, will again be prominent at the return of Jesus, but what role do angels have now, among us? How should I respond to this truth that Angels are a part of God's redemptive work today?

The Bible is clear that the work of Angels did not stop in the 1st century. The Hebrew hearers were not first generation Christians (**Hebrews 2:3**) yet they are told late in this sermon (**Heb. 13:2**) to not neglect showing hospitality to strangers because they could be entertaining angels! This

¹ List taken from Concise Theology, JI Packer, pg. 65

shows that Angels are still serving, protecting and watching the children of God today. All of the functions of angels stand today.

Here are the major reasons we should not neglect the role of Angels in our lives today.

1. Angels remind us that the spiritual world is real
The Saducees in the day of Jesus said, “there is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit” (Acts 23:8) and Jesus healed the sick and raised the dead in their midst. We would call them foolish but what does our attitude tend to be about the “spiritual realm”?
2. Angels are a good example for us.
Jesus prayed, “Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10) The Angels were those doing the will of God in heaven, so they give us a picture of dedicated service to God and authentic surrendering worship of Him.
3. Angels help hold us accountable
Scripture makes it clear that God wants us to be aware of the presence of Angels in the world and the nature of their activity. In Hebrews 13:2 we see God use the presence of Angels to let us know we are being watched and held accountable for our faith. Just as demons watch and work and hope for Christian failure, Angels watch and work and hope for the triumph of grace in our lives.
4. Angels protect us
This is a touchy subject because certain teachings on this can be dangerous. There is some teaching out there that says every person has a “guardian angel”. While this idea comes from a sentence in the Bible that says, “in heaven their (children) angels always behold the face of My Father” (Matthew 18:10). This text is teaching that Angels have a unique affection for protecting children, but not necessarily every person on earth has a “personal” angel. This teaching leads us to rely on Angels for protection rather than our heavenly Father. No matter who does the protecting physically, it is God who actually protects. He is sovereign over the wind and rain and ultimately every protection comes from Him. This idea and their glorious appearance has led many in history to worship them and many in present day to obsess over them and I would warn us with the words of an Angel himself:

In the book of Revelation an Angel appeared before John and he fell to his face to worship this glorious being that was before him and the Angel responded like this...

“You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus. Worship God!”

(Revelation 19:10) So our response to the truth that Angels are real, helpful and heavenly beings should be one of thanks and confidence and worship for God, but never his messenger. We must balance our view of Angels and not neglect them entirely or concern ourselves with them too much. They are helpful messengers, but not to be worshipped or obsessed with.

II. Satan

1. Who is Satan?

Foundational to our study of Satan is to recognize that he is in no way equal to God. His knowledge, presence, and power are limited because he is an angelic being (a guardian cherub according to Ezekiel 28:14) created by God for the purpose of glorifying and serving God. However, he became proud in his heart and desired to be worshiped and exalted like God. So, he declared war on God and one-third of the angels joined his army to oppose God. Judged by God for his sin, the Serpent was then cast down to the earth

“Your pomp is brought down to Sheol, the sound of your harps; maggots are laid as a bed beneath you, and worms are your covers. 12 "How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! 13 You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' 15 But you are brought down to Sheol, to the far reaches of the pit. 16 Those who see you will stare at you and ponder over you: 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, 17 who made the world like a desert and overthrew its cities, who did not let his prisoners go home?' 18 All the kings of the nations lie in glory, each in his own tomb; 19 but you are cast out, away from your grave, like a loathed branch, clothed with the slain, those pierced by the sword, who go down to the stones of the pit, like a dead body trampled underfoot. 20 You will not be joined with them in burial, because you have destroyed your land, you have slain your people. "May the offspring of evildoers nevermore be named! 21 Prepare slaughter for his sons because of the guilt of their fathers, lest they rise and possess the earth, and fill the face of the world with cities." 22 "I will rise up against them," declares the Lord of hosts, "and will cut off from Babylon name and remnant, descendants and posterity," says the Lord. 23 "And I will

make it a possession of the hedgehog, and pools of water, and I will sweep it with the broom of destruction," declares the Lord of hosts." (Isaiah 14:11-23) see also Ezek. 28:1-19

Upon the earth he appeared as a serpent to tempt Adam and Eve by twisting God's word and lying (Gen. 3:1-24). After successfully tempting Adam and Eve to sin, he was judged and cursed by God for his sin and told that Jesus would ultimately come to completely defeat him, though Jesus would suffer physical harm in their conflict.

"The Lord God said to the serpent "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." (Gen. 3:14-15)

The motivation for all of the Serpent's work is pride and self-glory instead of humility and God-glory (Ezek. 28:2; James 4:6-7). Subsequently, one of his most powerful allies in opposing God's people is their own pride. Some have speculated as to why the Serpent continues in his war against God even though Scripture is clear that ultimately he will be defeated and painfully judged. It may be that the Serpent is indeed so proud that he has deceived himself and now believes that God is a liar who can be beaten. In his war against God, the Serpent not only has the fallen angels who are now known as demons, but also has people who are allies in his army either by demonic possession, demonic influence, or simply living according to their sinful nature and flesh (2 Pet. 2:4; Rev. 9:1; 12:3-4). Such people include false prophets who speak for the Serpent (2 Pet. 2:1), false apostles who begin ministries for the Serpent (2 Cor. 11:13), false Christians who divide churches (Gal. 2:4), and false teachers who teach heretical doctrine for the Serpent (2 Pet. 2:1).

2. What does he do?

Regarding spiritual warfare as it is experienced on the personal level, 2 Corinthians 2:11 (NIV) says, "Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes." Therefore, knowing Satan's tactics helps us anticipate his work and live in victory rather than as victims.

In each of the synoptic gospels, Satan appears as the tempter of Jesus Christ (Matt. 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13). From the opening to

the closing pages of Scripture, Satan is presented as an enemy of God and, subsequently, an enemy of God's people. He is named in a variety of ways, as the following list demonstrates, with varying titles each relating to the various aspects of his work.

Satan's Names

- Abaddon ("destroyer") (Rev. 9:11)
- The god of this world (2 Cor. 4:4)
- Accuser (Rev. 12:10)
- Great Dragon (Rev. 12:9)
- Adversary (1 Pet. 5:8)
- Lawless One (2 Thess. 2:18)
- Apollyon ("destroyer") (Rev. 9:11)
- Liar (John 8:44)
- Beelzebul (Matt. 12:24)
- Morning Star (Isa. 14:12)
- Belial (2 Cor. 6:15)
- Murderer (John 8:44)
- Deceiver (Rev. 12:9)
- Prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2)
- Devil (Luke 4:13)
- Ruler of this world (John 12:31)
- Enemy (Matt. 13:28, 39)
- Satan (Acts 26:18)
- Evil One (Matt. 13:28, 39)
- Serpent (Rev. 12:9)
- Father of lies (John 8:44)
- Tempter (1 Thess. 3:5)

Satan is the head of all the demons and serves as a general of sorts over their dark army. Job 1:6 speaks of Satan set apart from but along with demons. So clearly he is on that team, but important enough to be separated out.

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

The primary activity of Satan and his demons is to tempt people to sin and ultimately lead them to death. He is described as a "murderer from the beginning" and "a liar and the father of lies" in John 8:44. He tempts, lies and manipulates people to rebel against God. All of his activities, whether normative or extraordinary have the goal of leading people to rebel against God.

3. What does this mean for me practically?

(Dealing with Satan will be the same as dealing with demons and will be dealt with in the "demon" section)

III. Demons²

1. What are demons?

2. What do they do?

- *Can a Christian be possessed by a demon?*

This is one of those questions that many people answer too quickly. The problem is that the word *possess* has several meanings. According to the Merriam- Webster dictionary it can mean three things. First, *possess* can mean “own” so that a Christian would essentially belong to Satan. Second, *possess* can mean “dominate” so that a Christian would be controlled by Satan. Third, *possess* can mean “influence” so that the life of a Christian would be marked by the influences of Satan. Obviously, what one means when they use the word *possessed* matters very much when answering the question, “Can Christians be possessed by demons?”

In the first sense, the devil never *owns* a Christian. We have been rescued from the dominion of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of the Son, Paul tells us in *Colossians 1:13*. In the third sense, the devil can *influence* a Christian. We are in warfare against the enemy who seeks to steal and kill and destroy (*John 10:10*). Even Jesus was attacked by the devil in this way according to *Matthew 4:1 11 and Luke 4:1–13*.

It is the second sense where there is a lot of debate among Christians. Can demons dominate a Christian? While some teach that through personal sin, generational sin, or even curses, demons can have authority to dominate believers, Scripture is clear that Christians are never under the ruling authority of darkness. The devil can never take authority over a Christian. Others teach that if we pray and feast on God’s Word we never need fear a demonic attack. But if Jesus can be attacked, how can we say we cannot? We believe Christians may be deceived, accused, or tempted by Satan and may yield to those attacks (though they do not have to). If believers begin to wrongly respond to such things, they may give demons influence in their lives.

Apparently an evil spirit can empower, energize, encourage, and exploit a believer’s own sinful desires. Examples would include Peter (*Matt.*

² material adapted from “Spiritual Warfare” talks from Mark Driscoll

16:22–23) and Ananias (*Acts 5:3*). As children of God, regenerated and indwelt by the Spirit, we are responsible to and empowered by God to resist Satan and if we do we need not suffer from his influence (*Eph. 6:10–18; James 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:7–9; 1 John 4:1–4; 5:1–5, 18–19*). We believe Christians may be deceived, accused or tempted by Satan and they may yield to those attacks (though they do not have to) and if they do and respond wrongly they may open themselves up to demonic influence. It is clear that even Christians should not trust every spiritual inclination, even if it seems “good” at the time.

“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.” (1 John 4:1)

How do I differentiate between a demonic attack and a tough day?

Puritan Thomas Brooks, in his book *Precious Remedies Against Satan’s Devices*, speaks of the ordinary demonic and the extraordinary demonic. Most of us think of demonic attack in only extraordinary ways. That’s because most of our thoughts on demons come from movies not the scriptures. Demonic attack can be detected in many forms including:

Ordinary Demonic

- Sexual sin (*2 Cor. 7:5*)
- Marriage between Christians and non-Christians (*2 Cor. 6:15*)
- False religion, false teaching, false Jesus (*1 Cor. 10:14–22; 1 Tim. 4:1–2; 2 Cor. 11:1–4*)
- Bitterness (*Eph. 4:17–5:2*)
- Foolishness and drunkenness (*Eph. 5:8–21*)
- Idle gossip and busybodying (*1 Tim. 5:11–15*)
- Lies (*John 8:44*)
- Idolatry (*1 John 5:18–21*)

Extraordinary Demonic

- Torment (*Acts 5:16*)
- Physical injury (*Matt. 9:32–33; 12:22–23; Acts 8:4–8*)
- False miracles (*Acts 8:9–23; 16:16; 2 Thess. 2:9–10*)
- Accusation (*Rev. 12:10*)
 - Vain regrets and condemnation (*Rom. 8:1*)
 - General guilt vs. specific conviction
 - Second person (“you” language instead of “I”)
- Death, e.g., food, sex, drink, recklessness (*Prov. 8:36*)
- Murder/Suicide (*John 8:44*)
- False spirits (*1 John 4:1–6*)

3. What does this mean for me practically?

“There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them.”

— C. S. Lewis, *Screwtape Letters*

How do Christians deal with demons and demonic influence? Should we be asking friends having a hard time if they have a demon? Should I assume that my depression is really a demon? There are two basic implications for this doctrine in a practical living sense.

Preventative Awareness

If Christians cannot be “owned” or “controlled” fully but can be internally “influenced” then it is vitally important for us to actively “shut the doors” of our soul through repentance and being in the Word of God. This involves us being actively sitting under good Bible teaching and not skipping church. This involves you being in an active accountability relationship to help you actively repent of your sins and not be isolated. So you will see that our normative sanctification is also preventative for demonic influence. So Christ’s victory in us is the same as demonic defeat in us.

You will notice in the NT there is not a great deal of instruction on “rebuking demons” and dealing with spiritual warfare. But there is a great deal of texts commanding and instructing people to repent of their sins and live righteously. For example, **1 Corinthians 1:10** Paul addresses the issue of dissension in the church by saying, “*agree...be united in the same mind and the same judgment.*” He does not tell them to rebuke the “spirit of dissension” but rather repent of your selfishness and agree. This shows that while some sin is the influence of Satan and demons not all of it is. And whether Satan, demons or you are responsible for the sin/issues beginning we have the same response, repentance and trusting in Jesus.

“Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil.” (Ephesians 4:26-27)

This text says that a lack of repentance opens the proverbial door for demonic influence. Genuine repentance is the action step to “exorcise” demons or cast them out. Pop culture has led us to believe in a mystic, hyper-religious ceremony in dealing with this issue, but dealing with even the most intense demonic or “Satanic” influence is more counseling and repenting, not chanting or drinking holy water.

Active Warfare

The other piece to dealing with Satan and demons is being active and aggressive in our spiritual warfare. This question is generally asked like this, how do I “cast out” a demon if someone is under demonic influence? Answering this question will give the general principles for active spiritual warfare.

First, understand that all Christians have the power to deal with demons and resist our enemy. It is seen first when Jesus sends out his disciples.

“And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases,” (Luke 9:1)

“The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!” (Luke 10:17) Jesus responds to this by saying: “Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you.” (Luke 10:19)

Then we see Phillip the evangelist preaching in Acts and we see him having power to deal with demons.

“For unclean spirits came out of many who were possessed, crying with a loud voice, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed.” (Acts 8:7)

Then we see Paul doing the same thing in his ministry.

“And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And it came out that very hour.” (Acts 16:18)

“For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.” (2 Corinthians 10:3-4)

Then Paul helps us use the same power and authority to fight the enemy in the name of Jesus.

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes

of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints," (Ephesians 6:10-18)

James agrees with this assessment when he says to all believers, "*resist the Devil and he will flee from you*" (James 4:7)

So, understanding that through Christ you can deal with a demonic issue you should also understand that you should never deal with an enemy alone. Always have a godly witness or third party to pray, testify to the truth and help.

Most demons attack Christians rather than non-Christians for the same reason you wouldn't attack a country you're not at war with, but every once in a while a non-believing friend or person in need will have this issue. When dealing with a non-believer the most important issue is the lack of the Holy Spirit in their life. If you just cast out a demon in someone without the Holy Spirit you've simply opened the door for more demons to come back.

"When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, but finds none. 44 Then it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when it comes, it finds the house empty, swept, and put in order. 45 Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there, and the last state of that person is worse than the first. So also will it be with this evil generation." (Matthew 12:43-45)

So the primary concern should be the gospel of Jesus being accepted and God saving that person from darkness. (Col. 1:13)

The Scriptures also reveal that the spiritual life of the one ministering or helping deal with the demonic power will affect the effectiveness of the counseling/prayer session.

And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon came out of him, and the boy was healed instantly. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" He said to them, "Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you." (Matthew 17:18-19)

Mark also reports that in this scenario Jesus says, “*This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.*” (Mark 9:29) This helps us see that while we should be spiritually mature and ready for battle, the battle still belongs to the Lord and the victory is his.