



Angelology

The Study of Angels

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THE NATURE OF ANGELS

ANGELS ARE PERSONALITIES

The essential facets of personality are considered to involve intelligence, emotions, and will. This is true of both the good and evil angels.

1. Good angels, Satan, and demons possess intelligence

Matthew 8:29 "What do you want with us, Son of God?" they shouted. "Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?" New International Version

2 Corinthians 11:3 But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. New International Version

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

2. Good angels, Satan, and demons show emotions

Luke 2:13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, New International Version

James 2:19 You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that--and shudder. New International Version

Revelations 12:17 Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to wage war against the rest of her offspring--those who keep God's commands and hold fast their testimony about Jesus. New International Version

3. Good angels, Satan, and demons demonstrate that they have wills

Luke 8:28 When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell at his feet, shouting at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don't torture me!" 29 For Jesus had commanded the impure spirit to come out of the man. Many times it had seized him, and though he was chained hand and foot and kept under guard, he had broken his chains and had been driven by the demon into solitary places. 30 Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "Legion," he replied, because many demons had gone into him. 31 And they begged Jesus repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss. New International Version

2 Timothy 2:26 and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will. New International Version

Therefore, they can be said to be persons. The fact that they do not have human bodies does not affect their being personalities (any more than it does with God).

Because they are creatures, angels possess only limited knowledge - Matthew 24:36 "But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. New International Version

Yet angels seem to have greater knowledge than humans. This may be due to three causes.

1. Angels were created as a higher order of creatures in the universe than humans. Therefore, innately they possess greater knowledge.
2. Angels know more about God than humans do
James 2:19 You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that--and shudder. New International Version
Revelations 12:12 Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short." New International Version
3. Angels gain knowledge through long observation of human activities. Unlike humans, angels do not have to study the past; they have experienced it. Therefore, they know how others have acted and reacted in situations and can predict with a greater degree of accuracy how we may act in similar circumstances. The experiences of longevity give them greater knowledge.

Though they have wills, the angels are, like all creatures, subject to the will of God.

- Satan is limited by the will of God - *Job 2:6 The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life." New International Version*
- Demons are subject to the will of Christ - *Luke 8:28 When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell at his feet, shouting at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don't torture me!" 29 For Jesus had commanded the impure spirit to come out of the man. Many times it had seized him, and though he was chained hand and foot and kept under guard, he had broken his chains and had been driven by the demon into solitary places. 30 Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "Legion," he replied, because many demons had gone into him. 31 And they begged Jesus repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss. New International Version*

The personality of angels means that they are not merely personifications of abstract good or evil, as some have considered them to be. This includes Satan, who also is a personality, not a personification of man's collective idea about evil.

ANGELS ARE SPIRIT BEINGS

Angels, demons (assuming they are fallen angels), and Satan belong to a class of beings that may be labeled spirit beings.

- Angels are said to be ministering spirits - *Hebrews 1:14 Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation? New International Version*

Demons are called evil and unclean spirits - *Luke 8:2 and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out; New International Version*

Luke 11:24 "When an impure spirit comes out of a person, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, 'I will return to the house I left.'" New International Version

Luke 11:26 Then it goes and takes seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that person is worse than the first." New International Version

Satan is the spirit that now works in the sons of disobedience - *Ephesians 2:2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. New International Version*

As spirit beings they are immaterial and incorporeal, but are not omnipresent. They have special

limitations. Scriptures explicitly call angels and demons spirits (pneumata) in:

Matthew 8:16 *When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick.* New International Version

Luke 7:21 *At that very time Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind.* New International Version

Luke 8:2 *and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out;* New International Version

Luke 11:26 *Then it goes and takes seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that person is worse than the first."* New International Version

Acts 19:12 *so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.* New International Version

Ephesians 6:12 *For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.* New International Version

Hebrews 1:14 *Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?* New International Version

Though God is also a spirit Being, this does not mean that angels are infinite in nature as God is; rather they are finite spirit beings.

However, their spirit nature does not forbid them from appearing to human beings.

- Usually they appear as males (though possibly the women of are angels) - **Zechariah 5:9** *Then I looked up--and there before me were two women, with the wind in their wings! They had wings like those of a stork, and they lifted up the basket between heaven and earth.* New International Version
- They have appeared in dreams and visions - **Matthew 1:20** *But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.* New International Version

Isaiah 6:1 *In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. 2 Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. 3 And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." 4 At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. 5 "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty." 6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. 7 With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for." 8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"* New International Version

- They have appeared in a special unveiling of their presence - **2 Kings 6:17** *And Elisha prayed, "Open his eyes, LORD, so that he may see." Then the LORD opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.* New International Version
- They have appeared to people in a normal, conscious, waking state - **Genesis 19:1** *The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city. When he saw them, he got up to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground. 2 "My lords," he said, "please turn aside to your servant's house. You can wash your feet and spend the night and then go on your way early in the morning." "No," they answered, "we will spend the night in the square." 3 But he insisted so strongly that they did go with him and entered his house. He prepared a meal for them, baking bread without yeast, and they ate. 4 Before they had gone to bed, all the men from every part of the city of Sodom--both*

young and old--surrounded the house. 5 They called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them." 6 Lot went outside to meet them and shut the door behind him 7 and said, "No, my friends. Don't do this wicked thing. 8 Look, I have two daughters who have never slept with a man. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do what you like with them. But don't do anything to these men, for they have come under the protection of my roof." New International Version

Mark 16:5 *As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. New International Version*

Luke 2:13 *Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, New International Version*

In heavenly visions they are described by superhuman characteristics that are quite different from other humanlike appearances

Daniel 10:5 *I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. 6 His body was like topaz, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude. 7 I, Daniel, was the only one who saw the vision; those who were with me did not see it, but such terror overwhelmed them that they fled and hid themselves. New International Version*

Revelations 10:1 *Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven. He was robed in a cloud, with a rainbow above his head; his face was like the sun, and his legs were like fiery pillars. 2 He was holding a little scroll, which lay open in his hand. He planted his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, 3 and he gave a loud shout like the roar of a lion. When he shouted, the voices of the seven thunders spoke. New International Version*

Revelations 15:6 *Out of the temple came the seven angels with the seven plagues. They were dressed in clean, shining linen and wore golden sashes around their chests. New International Version*

Revelations 18:1 *After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven. He had great authority, and the earth was illuminated by his splendor. New International Version*

Some angels have wings

Isa 6:2 *Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. New International Version*

Isaiah 6:6 *Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. New International Version*

Ezekiel 1:5 *and in the fire was what looked like four living creatures. In appearance their form was human, 6 but each of them had four faces and four wings. 7 Their legs were straight; their feet were like those of a calf and gleamed like burnished bronze. 8 Under their wings on their four sides they had human hands. All four of them had faces and wings, New International Version*

ANGELS ARE IMMORTAL AND DO NOT PROPAGATE

The number of angels is and always will be the same. The Lord taught that angels do not propagate baby angels - Matthew 22:30 *At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. New International Version*

He also taught us that they do not die - Luke 20:36 *and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection. New International Version*

The Lord also taught that the wicked angels will be punished in a place of separation from God - Matthew 25:41 *"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. New International Version*

Luke 8:31 *And they begged Jesus repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss. New International Version*

ANGELS ARE HIGHER CREATURES THAN MEN

The writer to the Hebrews said that when our Lord became incarnate He became for a little while lower than the angels

Hebrews 2:7 You made them a little lower than the angels; you crowned them with glory and honor 8 and put everything under their feet." In putting everything under them, God left nothing that is not subject to them. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to them. 9 But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. New International Version

In the incarnation Christ was placed in a position lower than the angels (though, of course, this was only temporarily true during the time of Christ's humiliation on earth). This is because man who was created in the image of God is lesser than God by nature. He is also lower than angels since they belong to a class of superhuman beings (elohim) who are stronger than man by nature and, unlike man, not subject to death.

ANGELS WERE ORIGINALLY HOLY BEINGS

The Bible gives little specific evidence about the original state of the angels, though we know that when God finished His work of Creation He pronounced everything to be good

Genesis 1:31 God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning--the sixth day. New International Version

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

The Bible also indicates that originally all the angels were holy creatures. Some angels remained holy

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

Other angels sinned - *2 Peter 2:4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them in chains of darkness to be held for judgment; New International Version*

Presumably all might have remained in that original state of holiness, and those who did not rebel were confirmed forever in their holy state. In other words, those who successfully passed the probationary test will always stay in that original holy state. Those who failed are now confirmed in their evil, rebellious state.

To sum up: though there are similarities between angels and Deity and between angels and men, angels are a distinct class of beings. Like Deity, but unlike men, they do not die. Like Deity, they are superior in strength to men though they are not omnipotent as God is. Like both Deity and men, they have personalities. Like Deity they are spirit beings, though not omnipresent as God is. Men, by contrast, are both spirit and material beings. Angels do not procreate as men do. Man was made a little lower than the angels. And yet in his resurrected and glorified body, man will judge angels.