

Angelology



Introduction

Why study Angels?

They teach us about God

- ✘ As part of God's creation, to study them is to study why God created the way he did.
- ✘ In looking at angels we can see God's designs for his creation, which tells us something about God himself.

They teach us about ourselves

- ✘ We share many similar qualities to the angels.
- ✘ We also have several differences due to them being spiritual beings.
- ✘ In looking at these similarities and differences we can learn more about the ways God created humanity.
- ✘ In looking at angels we can avoid "angelic fallacies" which attempt to turn men into angels.

They are fascinating!

- ✘ Humans tend to be drawn to the supernatural.
- ✘ Spiritual beings such as angels hit something inside of us that desires to "return to Eden" in the sense of wanting to reconnect ourselves to the spiritual world.
- ✘ They are different, and different is interesting to us.

Angels in the Christian Worldview

	Traditional Societies/World of the Bible	Post-Enlightenment Worldview
Higher Reality	God, gods, ultimate forces like karma and fate	God (sometimes a “blind watchmaker”) [Religion - Private]
Middle World	Lesser spirits (Angels/Demons), demigods, magic	[none]
Earthly Reality	Human social order and community, the natural world as a relational concept of animals, plants, ect.	Humanity, Animals, Birds, Plants, as individuals and as technical classifications [Science - Public]

-Adapted from Heibert, “The Flaw of the Excluded Middle”

Existence of Angels

- ✘ Revelation: God has revealed their creation to us in scripture.
- ✘ Experience: People from across cultures and specifically Christians, have attested to the reality of spirits both good and bad.
- ✘ Incomplete creation: St. Aquinas argued for a great chain of being. If there are no angels, he said, then creation seems incomplete. There are rocks, then plants, then humans, and then God. But this creates a “gap” between an infinite spirit without a body (God) and finite spirits with bodies. It would be fitting for this to be filled by finite spirits without bodies, angels.

Angel Orthodoxy

Much about angels is theological speculation. Even those things that are more certain are not important enough to divide the Church. There are, however, a few concepts of angels that must be held to keep within a Christina worldview.

Necessary dogmas concerning angels

- ✘ They are created creatures
- ✘ They are finite beings
- ✘ They are lesser than God and should not be used as a substitute for protection and guidance
- ✘ They do not mediate divine grace

Popular Misconceptions

Angels and the afterlife

Human beings do not become angels at death. Angels and Humans are separate parts of God’s creation. Humanity will be resurrected in physical bodies, whereas angels are eternally spiritual.

Angles and power

When people encounter angels in the Bible there are only two responses. Either the angel hides their true nature and are seen as humans, or the people respond in fear at the angel's power. Angels are powerful creatures, capable of wiping out entire human armies. In fact, considering that Satan can appear as an angel of light, it may be more likely evil spirits that put on a fearless persona for the sake of deception.

Angels and personal guidance

The idea of Guardian Angles will be discussed later. However, there is real danger in following any spirit that presents itself as a "guide". Particularly if that spirit seems harmless (see above) and certainly if the spirit guides a person to disobey God or deny some aspect of the Christian Faith. There is no Christian tradition to seek out our own personal angel guides. Angels come to us when God sends them, they do not respond to our demands or desires.

Angels and wings

The idea that angels have wings comes from a few passages about Cherubim and Seraphim, along with some art described in the Temple. Other than that appearances of angels in scripture do not include any wings. This idea developed from iconographic art which used the wings as symbols.

Angel Typology

Angels in General

Angel [מַלְאָךְ / ἄγγελος]

The English word "angel" is a transliteration of the greek ἄγγελος, which is the translation of the Hebrew מַלְאָךְ. In both cases the word means primarily *messenger*. Both terms can be used to refer to human and spiritual agents who perform the function of a messenger. For instance the prophet Haggai, (Hag 1:13) as well as the priests (Mal 2:7) are called "angel/messenger of the Lord" (מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה). In the New Testament ἄγγελος can refer to disciples of John the Baptist (Luke 7:24), messengers from Jesus (Luke 9:52) or even used by James to reference the spies at Jericho. (Jas 2:25)

This etymology points to the primary function of good spirits as presented in scripture, that of being messengers. Although the term "angel" denotes function and not nature, as for any word, usage is more important than etymology. Throughout the Old Testament, and particularly in the records of the intertestamental period, the word "angel" began to develop a more technical meaning for holy spiritual beings while still retaining usage for human messengers. This



is evidenced by how and when the LXX chooses to use the greek ἄγγελος to translate various Hebrew texts traditionally seen as angelic, and when it chooses to avoid translating מַלְאָכִים as ἄγγελος when the referent is human.¹ Thus even when these beings are not functioning in a messenger role in the New Testament they are still termed ἄγγελος. This also explains why there is larger set of words in the Old Testament such as “sons of God”, “watchers”, and “holy ones”, when in the New Testament the only term used is “angel”. To sum up the entire evidence of the word an "angel" is helpfully defined by Kevin Sullivan as "a heavenly divine being that mediates between earthly and heavenly realms"² and more specifically a being that:³

- 1- Has as a primary function the delivery of God's message/plan to human beings (and sometimes interpretation of the message).
- 2- Typically resides in heaven but also travels to earth to perform various tasks.
- 3- Is able to alter its form (e.g., can become anthropomorphic), especially when on earth.
- 4- Is not bound by limitations of the earthly realm, such as the passage of time, death, hunger, sexual desire, ect.

Sons of God [בְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים]

This phrase occurs rarely in the Old Testament with the most famous being Genesis 6:2. As Genesis 6:2 is debated, the meaning of the term is better gleaned from other passages. One of the few other places for this term is in Job where it clearly refers to angels. (1:6, 2:1, 38:7) The first two references in Job have the Sons of God coming before the Lord in the context of a meeting of heavenly beings, when the Lord holds court, fitting into the Ancient Near Eastern context of the chief god who has a divine council of lesser deities. Interestingly, Satan appears at both instances and thus appears to be classed among the "Sons of God", though some argue the text is intending to differentiae him from the others. The last reference in Job concerns angels and creation. Here God points out that the Sons of God watched him set the foundations of the earth. This indicates that to some extent angels were created before the rest of creation.

There are other Old Testament phrases that are close, usually interjecting another adjective such as in Hosea 1:10 which has "sons of the living God", other times there are references to Israel being "children" (Deut 14:1, 32:5; Ps 73:15) but all contexts are with Israel as a national whole. There are no references to a King of Israel or King of any Gentile nation being a son of a god in the Old Testament. Although pagan kings did use this title, there is no apparent reason within the text of Genesis 6 to equate the sons of God with tyrants. Although culturally this is a good argument, there is no corroborating scriptural evidence nor evidence from Jewish sources that the Israelites used this phrase of kings. With other possibilities that fit the context closer, this solution should be rejected unless others prove untenable.

The context leading up to chapter six are two genealogies, Seth and Cain. A leading alternative to the angel view is to argue a Sethite/Cainite marriage issue. God was

¹ See R.M.M. Tuschling, *Angels and Orthodoxy*, (Tubingen, Germany: Mohr Sibeck) p.82.

² Kevin P. Sullivan, *Wrestling with Angels*. (Boston: Brill, 2004), 34.

³ Ibid.

angered that faithful decedents of Seth were marring unfaithful decedents of Cain. This is certainly tenable as would be a good flow into the passage in question. The issue is that the phrase "sons of God" in common scriptural context, and thus also all standard lexicons, means "angels". There is also no indication that the Sethites were really more faithful than the Cainites. In chapter six only Noah and his family were considered righteous, not all Sethites. The context of verse one is that men began to increase on the face of the earth, this surely cannot only be a reference to the line of Cain, and if not then it is hard to see how the next verse which contrasts the sons of God with daughters of men could be using "men" in a different more exclusive sense. If this is the case then in verse six should we assume that God was only sorry he made Cainites on the earth? This position does not deal well with these issues and is more likely based on other theological objections to the idea of angel/human offspring of some sort.

For all the conceptual problems, seeing "sons of God" as angels seems the most plausible from an exegetical level in Genesis 6. This is the most natural and scripturally-contextual interpretation of "sons of God", and explains the contrast with "daughters of men".

One reference that is at issue is Deuteronomy 32:8 which is translated various ways due to a textual issue, (NRSV="number of the gods", ESV="number of the sons of God", NASB="number of the sons of Israel", NET="number of the heavenly assembly"). The reason for this is that the MT text reads בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל ("sons of Israel"), while the LXX reads ἀγγέλων θεοῦ ("angels of God"). The LXX reading may be supported by a fragment from Qumran that reads בְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים ("sons of God") and thus indicates the LXX and MT have conflicting interpretations of that passage. This verse will become important later when we discuss the possibility of a "Divine Council" of angels.⁴

Holy Ones [קְדוּשִׁים]

Only occurs in a few places. Psalm 89:5-7 presents an image of God surrounded by a council of "Holy Ones" in the context of praise for his power. Several times in Daniel (4:13-23, 8:13) during apocalyptic visions. Finally in Zechariah 14:5 also in an apocalyptic vision. Perhaps in these cases the phrase was chosen because these creatures were not functioning in a role as messengers, and so the writer needed a different word.

Watchers [עִיר]

The exact meaning of the Hebrew is not entirely clear but the root means "to rouse oneself" or "be awake".⁵ In Scripture they are only found in Daniel 4:13-23 in the same context as "Holy Ones". Later pseudepigraphal books of Enoch and Jubilees classed these beings primarily as those who were seduced by human women and taught secret arts to men, thus falling from grace. (1 Enoch 6, 10) Fallen angels was the most common meaning of "watchers" from intertestamental times though the early history of Christianity. Though it is important to note this is not always the case. Not only does

⁴ For more information see M. S. Heiser, "Deuteronomy 32:8 and the Sons of God" *Bibliotheca Sacra* 158 (2001) 52-74.

⁵ Kevin Sullivan, *The Watchers Tradition in 1 Enoch 6:6-16*, in "The Watchers in Jewish and Christian Traditions", Angela Harkins, Kelley Bautch, and John Endres (eds.) (Minneapolis: Fortress 2014) p.92

Daniel list Watchers beside Holy Ones, 1 Enoch 20 also calls such holy angels as Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael as "those who watch". In Syriac literature this become the most common term for angels.⁶

Elohim (?) [אֱלֹהִים]

One interesting and controversial idea may be that the term אֱלֹהִים (usually translated as God or gods) originally in ancient Hebrew meant merely "divine being" and had a broader range than what developed as revealed monotheism took root in Israel. Some argue that the word אֱלֹהִים (elohim) was in the similar category as "bird", or "beast".⁷

These words perhaps denoted the realm of existence for a creature. Therefore when Scripture calls God the unique elohim it means that out of all the elohim (including angels) God is special and in some sense not really like the others, something ancient Israel had a difficult time conceiving due to the influence of polytheistic neighbors.

One possible example of this is Psalm 82 where God brings judgment on the "gods". This idea is associated with the opinion that God appointed angels to have charge in governing creation and as part of a "Divine Council". These ideas will be discussed later.

Archangel

Archangel (ἀρχάγγελος) means "chief angel". Scripture gives little more information than that. There is apparently some form of authority structure among the angels, an idea that will be developed later in Jewish and Christian tradition. Typically these are the only angels given an actual name, and so more detail will be discussed later.

Only Michael is referred to by name as an Archangel in Jude 1:9, although in the OT he is referred to as a "prince" (שֵׁר) (Dan 10:11-21, 12:1-2). The only other reference to an Archangel is in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 and gives no name, although the similarity to this angel as eschatologically important may indicate Michael is intended.

It is important to note that Gabriel is not called an Archangel in either Scripture or the Apocrypha. In the New Testament he says he is one of the angels that stands in the presence of God. He is typically classed as an Archangel due to his association with Michael in intertestamental literature, and a few references such as 2 Enoch 21:3-6 to him as an Archangel.

Raphael from the Apocrypha is classed as an Archangel many times as well. Although Tobit does not use the term specifically, it does call him one of the seven holy angels who stands before the presence of God (Tobit 12:15). He is, like Gabriel, listed with Michael in the Pseudepigrapha, and called an Archangel

⁶ R.M.M. Tuschling, *Angels and Orthodoxy*, (Tubingen, Germany: Mohr Sibeck) p.91.

⁷ See the argument in M. S. Heiser, *You've seen one Elohim, you've seen them all? A Critique of Mormonism's use of Psalm 82*. Paper presented to the Evangelical Theological Society, Washington DC 2006.

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directly in the Testament of Solomon 5:9-10 (24) in a clear reference to the Book of Tobit.

The tradition of seven archangels derives primarily from intertestamental literature. Only in the Book of Revelation are there references to a specific set of "seven spirits". (1:4, 3:1, 4:5, 5:6) Though they are never called "archangels" in the text, the reference to spirits who stand before the throne/presence of God is similar to Gabriel's statement about himself, (Luke 1:19) in addition to Raphael in Tobit 12:15. Assuming the tradition of Gabriel as an archangel it is possible Revelation is also referring to a set of seven archangels.

All other archangels are variously named depending on the source, and there is little consistency among the different traditions aside from Michael and Gabriel. Raphael is mentioned much more often, and then the next runner up is Uriel. Beyond those four the names can get confusing, with only one letter difference between a supposed holy angel and a supposed fallen watcher.

Note that you may encounter four of the Archangels (Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, and Uriel) connected with the four compass points. This attribution seems to date late and is found earliest in a "Bedtime Shema" prayer in the Jewish tradition and first recorded in the Siddur of Rashi in the 11th Century. This arrangement then become more widely known through Kabbalah, and through that into the western occult tradition during the European renaissance such as in *The Lesser Key of Solomon*. If you see this in context of art it does not mean the person is aware of the non-Christian origins, but be advised that there is little in Jewish tradition and none outside of western occultism that associates these angels with the four compass points or four winds. There is however a Biblical connection with the Cherubim and the four compass points which will be covered below.

Archangels by Source, cf Davidson, *A Dictionary of Angels*

	<i>1 Enoch</i>	<i>3 Enoch</i>	<i>Testament of Solomon</i>	St. Gregory the Great	Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite in <i>De Coelesti Hierarchia</i>	Modern Eastern Orthodoxy
	<i>3/4th BC - 1st AD</i>	<i>5th AD</i>	<i>1st-3rd AD</i>	<i>6th AD</i>	<i>5th AD</i>	<i>Present (?)</i>
1	Michael	Michael	Michael	Michael	Michael	Michael
2	Gabriel	Gabriel	Gabriel	Gabriel	Gabriel	Gabriel
3	Raphael	Shatqiel	Uriel	Raphael	Raphael	Raphael
4	Uriel	Baradiel	Sabrael	Uriel	Uriel	Uriel
5	Raguel (Ruhel, Ruagel, Ruahel)	Shachaqiel	Arael	Simiel	Chamuel	Selaphiel
6	Zerachiel (Araqael)	Baraqiel	Iaoth	Orifiel	Jophiel	Jehudiel
7	Remiel (Jeremiel, Yeahmeel)	Sidriël (Pazriel)	Adonael	Zachariel	Zadkiel	Barachiel
Alt.						(Jeremiel)

Cherubim (Tetramorphs) [כְּרֻבִים]

The Cherubim are first described in a manner that indicates the Israelites had some concept of these creatures. In Genesis they are "matter-of-factly" guarding the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:24), and when God commands the Israelites to make the Ark of the Covenant (Ex 25:19-22) and Tabernacle (Ex 36:35). He never describes the Cherubim they are to make, seeming to imply that a cherub was common knowledge for both the Israelites and the readers. This gives weight to the idea that "Cherubim" were not original to Scripture, but something already known in the time of Moses, and something common to the Ancient Near Eastern culture. Etymologically, the word is uncertain, but may come from Akkadian "karibu", genii in Mesopotamian art.⁸ In Babylonian religion these karibu were human/animal composite creatures who protected doorways and gates.⁹ Outside of Mesopotamia, some scholars see a parallel in Canaanite and Egyptian religion of winged animal/human spirits who guarded royal and divine thrones.¹⁰ Considering the parallels of both aspects, it seems likely the Cherubim in scripture are related to both.



There is actually plenty of evidence for similar creatures from the Ancient Near East. An example of this is from an image found in Arslan Tash dating to the 9th or 8th century BC, carved in ivory and decorated with palms.¹¹ The creature on the image is a composite of a man, a lion, a bull and an eagle. This composition was to denote omnipotence and omnipresence by combining the wisdom of a man, the strength of a lion, the swiftness of an eagle, and the procreative power of a bull. (Ibid.) In the vision it is obvious that Ezekiel is being given a living image of the common ANE creatures that both guarded the sacred and deities, (Gen 3:24,¹² Ex 36:35) and provided a throne for divine kings. (Ex 25:19-22) In Ezekiel they are the chariot of God as well as guardians and indicators of sacredness, as would have been common to the culture of the time.

In the Book of Ezekiel there are two visions with similar, but different, descriptions. Ezekiel spends most of the first vision describing two things: the living creatures (1:1-14) and the wheels beside them (1:15-21). Each creature had the body, or form of a human (1:5), but differed from humans in that each also had four faces and four wings (1:6), calf's hoofs (1:7), and perhaps four "sides" with human hands (1:8). The number four is a major image in the section and likely references the four cardinal

⁸ *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, p.190

⁹ As noted in R.M.M. Tuschling, *Angels and Orthodoxy*, (Tubingen, Germany: Mohr Sibeck) p.16.

¹⁰ As noted in Ibid. 17

¹¹ Image can be found in *Borowski, Elie. "Cherubim: God's Throne?." Biblical Archaeology Review*, Jul/Aug 1995.

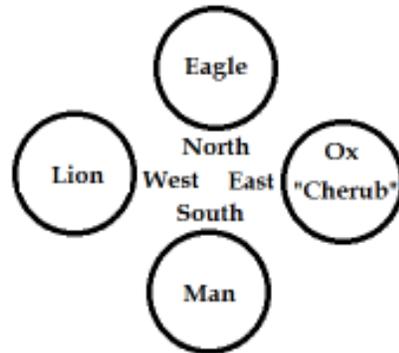
¹² See Othmar Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, trans. Timothy J. Hallett (New York: Seabury Press, 1978), 142-3. for an example of guarding a sacred tree of life.

directions.¹³ Demonstrating this is verse seventeen where the wheels are able to move in any direction without turning, and the movement of the wheels and the creatures are unified (1:19). Each creature had four heads: man, lion, bull and eagle (1:10). From the vantage point of Ezekiel each must have been "facing" the same direction, because on all four the lion face was on the right and the bull on the left.

One of the oddest parts is the connection between the wheels and the creatures. Each creature's spirit was said to actually be in the wheels (1:21ff). It's hard to tell how Ezekiel could determine that their "spirit" was in the wheels, yet he does not explain what this meant exactly. Due to the throne above the creatures and the wheels (1:22-28), which seems to be the throne of the Lord, the entire vision takes on the idea of a chariot. This would be consistent with other imagery in the Old Testament such as 2 Samuel 2:11 and Psalms 104:4 where the Lord rides on cherubim in judgment and deliverance, as a divine warrior.¹⁴ The vision is that of a living throne, later he would receive a similar vision, but with a few differences.

The second vision takes place inside the Temple itself. In this instance Ezekiel says he sees "cherubim" specifically (10:2). These creatures are the same as in the first chapter, not only because he directly makes the connection (10:15), but also because both describe a relationship between the wheels and the beings (1:21; 10:2, 9), both had coals of fire between them (1:13; 10:7), and each had similar faces (1:10; 10:14). Ezekiel spends less time describing the creatures, but now realizes what they are.

The major difference between the two accounts is with the faces. In this second account the face of the bull has been replaced with the face of a cherub, the order of the faces is also different. There is little description as to what a "cherub" face looks like. Scripture normally only mentions Cherubim as if the reader is to know what they are, and what they look like. If these are descriptions of Cherubim, then to describe the face as that of a cherub is to not describe anything at all. One suggestion to the problem comes from the Talmud, where it is said this face was changed on account of the Lord being asked for mercy. The bull was a symbol of idolatry according to this Jewish tradition, and so being changed was indicative of the Lord's mercy. (Block, 324-5) Some Rabbi's also believed that the cherub face was a boy's face, and the man an older human. (Block, 325) Neither are probably correct, yet the reason for the change is uncertain, as well as what a "cherub" face is. Making the passage even more puzzling is that he states they each had the "same faces," even though he called one a bull and the other a cherub. Due to the connection in the ANE between bulls and fertility, the removal of the bull may have been an indication that God's fertility towards Israel had already been rescinded.



When it comes to the order of faces, Block notes that the vantage point of Ezekiel is different than in the first vision, leading to a different order. (p.325) In the first vision, the cloud came from the North (1:4) indicating the prophet was facing that direction. In that account the human face was mentioned first (1:10) because it was the first face of each creature that he saw, then he described the two flanking faces, and the last face

¹³ Daniel Block, *The Book of Ezekiel. Chapters 1-24*. NICONT, p.97

¹⁴ Ibid. 319-320

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which was behind them. In the second instance he saw the glory of the Lord lifting up to the cherubim, which probably put him facing the east gate as indicated by 10:19. Here the first face seen would be the Eastern one, the bull/cherub, then he moves counter clockwise, which makes the order of the faces the same as in chapter one.

Later in Revelation these creatures appear again, this time just called “living creatures” (4:5-11) Although Revelation only says "living creatures", the description is almost identical in form and function to Ezekiel's visions, except that each creature has a single different face of a lion, man, ox, and eagle. Traditionally the Cherubim have been seen as a class of angel closest to God. (Noll, *Angels of Light, Powers of Darkness*, 180) There are at least six of them, the four that form God's throne and the two that guard Eden. There are possibly more, especially if Ezekiel 28:14 is taken as a reference to Satan who would then be a Cherub class angel. There is not a completely consistent image of these beings, but in general when they manifest physical presence they display power, royalty, wisdom and speed. Four faces, with the ability to move in any direction also indicates the omnipresence of God's throne. Each reference to them is slightly different in number of wings, and faces, and which faces are present. It may be they take on similar, yet different and appropriate forms depending on the situation they are in. Unlike other angels, they have a unique role as guardians of Divinity, and direct servant of God as his throne.

Christian tradition would also associate the Cherubim with the four evangelists:

Man	Lion	Ox	Eagle
Matthew	Mark	Luke	John

Seraphim [שֶׁרָפִים]

It is difficult to provide much commentary on Seraphim because they are mentioned only in one passage in scripture. In Isaiah’s vision (Isa 6) they are described as having six wings, with two that cover their heads, two their feet, and fly with the remaining two. Beyond that they had two actions, praise God continually with the trisagion (“Holy, Holy, Holy”) and place a burning coal on the lips of Isaiah to purify him to proclaim God’s message to Israel.

The root word for seraphim is שָׂרַף which means “burn” as in fire or metaphorical burning. The serpents used to punish Israel in the desert are also called “(the) Seraphim” [הַשֶּׂרָפִים] (Num 21:6, Deut 8:15), likely due to the intense burning sensation of the poison. In two other places Isaiah uses the term more likely to also refer to poisonous serpents, (14:29, 30:6) this is indicated by the connection in judgment between the two verses and that 30:6 is in a list that contains real animals.

They appear twice in the Book of Enoch (61:10, 71:7) in a list that includes both Cherubim and Ophanim (“wheels”, the Book of Enoch takes the wheels in Ezekiel’s vision as separate beings). In later Christian angel hierarchy lists the Seraphim are consistently placed at the very top. Although generally considered different from the Cherubim, note the strong similarities in Revelation 4:8 where

the Cherubim have six wings and stand around God's throne singing the trisagion.

There is some possible evidence for these beings in iconography from ancient Egypt. The ancient Egyptians had images of snake-like beings with wings, and sometimes human faces, called "uraei" that adorned and protected gods and kings.¹⁵ None of these images have six wings, and many have none. The closest cultural parallel to a six winged being comes from the ancient city of Byblos where six wings commonly symbolized divinity, such as on the god El.¹⁶

I'm skeptical about this connection due to lack of evidence in description and out of hesitancy to put too much stress on the root of a word. In addition, as Tuschling notes, their role in Isaiah bares little to no connection to other serpent pagan deities of the time.¹⁷ But if there is something to this background perhaps it shows the ultimate power and holiness of Yahweh that these creatures that protect the gods and kings of the nations themselves stand in terror and cover their faces in the presence of Yahweh who needs no protection. (For more see Toorn, Becking, and Van der Horst. *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*. 2nd ed. Boston: Eerdmans, 1999)

Other Terms

General Overview

These terms come almost exclusively from intertestamental literature such as the Pseudepigrapha as well as early Christian tradition. We associate them with angels primarily through the influence of pseudo-Dionysius' *Celestial Hierarchy*. In Christian art and music they have become a standard part of the Nine Choirs (discussed later).

Thrones and Dominions

Both appear sparingly in the Pseudepigrapha, but one instance is 2 Enoch 20:1 [J] along with a list of the angelic hierarchy which may or may not be in any order. In the New Testament Paul uses these terms in Colossians 1:16 in a possible reference to spiritual powers. In the *Celestial Hierarchy* the Thrones are "exempt from...any base and earthly thing" (VII), and represent "openness to the reception of God" (XIII). Dominions have a "certain unbounded elevation to that which is above" and are seen as true lords encouraging perfection to the ultimate Lord, God. (VIII)

Virtues

In the Book of Adam and Eve they help prepare Eve for the birth of Cain. Eusebius says that it was this order of angels that were present at the ascension of Jesus. (see citation in Danielou, 35) In *Celestial Hierarchy* Virtues have a "powerful and unshakable virility welling forth into all their Godlike energies; not being weak and feeble for any reception of the divine Illuminations granted to it" (VIII)

¹⁵ R.M.M. Tuschling, *Angels and Orthodoxy*, (Tubingen, Germany: Mohr Sibeck) p.18

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid. 19

Powers

Although the Old Testament does not really use this term for angels, the LXX does use the Greek for “power” (δύναμις) several times when translating words of military power such as “army” or “host”. See 1 Chronicles 18:18 for a case where δύναμις is used for an army/host of angels. This word is used only a few times in the New Testament to refer to some form of spiritual being, in some cases and evil one, particularly by Paul. One specific case is in Rom 8:38 where he argues that powers as well and principalities and angels cannot separate Christians from God’s love. Another place may be Eph 1:21, but this is ambiguous and could be used generically here, although Eph 6:12 is much more definite for evil powers. A more certain example is Colossians 1:16 where the context seems very likely to refer to personal powers as well as principalities, dominions, and thrones. However in this text the reference is more likely neutral or good. A non-Pauline example is in 1 Peter 3:22 in reference to Christ’s future triumph over all power and authority, although this as well could be generic or refer to any personal power angel and human. Another possible positive example is Eph 3:10 which is specifically those powers in heavenly places, so perhaps the qualifier of heavenly could mean good angels. In the *Celestial Hierarchy* the Powers signify “the regulation of intellectual and supermundane power which never debases its authority by tyrannical force” (VIII)

Principalities

Like Powers, used some in the Pseudepigrapha for part of the angelic hierarchy (cf 2 Enoch 20:1 [J]) and by Paul in the New Testament at times for something evil. Examples include Eph 6:12, and Col 2:15. Like Powers, Eph 1:21 and 3:10 may actually be a case for a positive conception of them as the text is somewhat neutral. Essentially, Christian tradition saw these negative NT references as evil versions of good angels and not terms for demons *per se*. In the *Celestial Hierarchy* the Principalities signify “signifies their Godlike princeliness and authoritativeness in an Order which is holy and most fitting to the princely Powers” (IX)