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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Existence

There is no question that there exists, in both secular society and among religious types, a belief in the supernatural and in particular a belief in angels. Books, magazines, newspapers, movies, and television attest to this fact, to say nothing of the insatiable public appetite for and fascination with the occult. This frenzied interest does not, however, prove the existence of angels; but it certainly causes us to investigate that possibility. This paper will examine some of the Biblical evidence for angels and a Christian perspective of their existence, purpose, and function.

Establishing the existence of angels is as illusive as proving the existence of God. However, as Christians, we believe that God not only exists, but that His word, the Bible, is our absolute authority in all matters of faith and practice. Therefore, we accept what the Bible teaches about angels. “The combined witness of the Scriptures, the Old and New Testaments, and of the Savior, assure us that there is a world of intelligent, powerful, invisible creatures about us and above us that warrants our prayerful and careful study...”¹

We deal with things that are invisible to us in our world every day, such as electricity, x-rays, and even wind; yet, we know they exist. The Scripture tell us that God created the “visible and the invisible” in Col. 1:16 of the New American Standard Bible (NASB). Angels

¹ Fred C. Dickerson, *Angels, Elect and Evil* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1975; reprint, Chicago: Moody Press, 1978), 23 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

are specifically referenced in 34 of the 66 books of the Bible. The word for angel is found 273 times, 108 times in the Old Testament and 165 times in the New Testament.² Biblical evidence for the existence of angels is overwhelming.

A Biblical Definition

Who or what then are these illusive and invisible entities? While we have a great deal of Scripture which mentions the existence of angels, there is little explanation of their exact nature and almost none with reference to their composition. Scripture indicates that angels are a higher order of beings than mankind (Heb. 2:6, 7, 9, NASB). The angels are lower than God and belong to Him and they praise and worship Him (Ps. 103:20; 148:2; Heb. 1:4, 6, NASB).

One of the best definitions of angels is found in Heb. 1:14, which asks the rhetorical question, “Are they not **all ministering spirits**, sent out **to render service** for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?” This question of course demands an affirmative answer; but it also defines them “all” as “spirits,” and as servants. In this passage they are servants of mankind; but in Heb. 1:7, they are also seen as “servants” of the Lord. In Ps. 103:20, they are “...Mighty in strength, who perform His word, Obeying the voice of His word!”

Biblical Terminology

There are basically two general terms used for these spirit beings. “The primary Hebrew term for angel is מַלְאָכִים (*mal'ak*); the corresponding word is ἄγγελος (*angelos*); in each case, the basic meaning is messenger, whether human or angelic.”³ Other words used in the Old Testament to designate these supernatural beings are “holy ones” (Ps. 89:5,7), and “watchers”

² Ibid., 13.

³ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1983; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 462 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

(Dan. 4:13, 17, 23).⁴

There are also some collective terms used for angels, such as “the council” (Ps. 89:7), the “assembly” (Ps. 89:5), the “hosts” or “host” (Ps. 148:2; Luke 2:13), and the “sons of God” (Job 1:6; 38:7). The New Testament uses a variety of additional terms for angels including “principalities,” “powers,” “thrones,” “dominions,” “authorities,” and “spirits.” The term “archangel” is only found twice in the New Testament; and once it refers specifically to an angel named Michael (Jude 9).⁵ Other terms applied to angels; namely, “cherubim,” “seraphim,” and “living creature” will be discussed later in this paper under “classification and organization.”

Although there are many terms used for these heavenly supernatural beings, no one term seems to be particularly better than any other for use as a general term to describe these beings. However, most theologians have chosen the term “angel” to describe all of these creatures.

⁴ Ibid., 462.

⁵ Dickerson, *Angels, Elect and Evil*, 68-69.

CHAPTER 2

ORIGIN AND NATURE

Creation and Purpose

Scripture clearly teaches that the angels were created in Ps. 148:2, 5. While Millard Erickson maintains that this creation is stated implicitly rather than explicitly; nevertheless, he agrees that they were created by the Lord. In Col. 1:16, Jesus Christ is seen as the agent of creation, who created all “things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible,…” (NASB). This passage certainly would include the angels in light of Ps. 148:2, 5.

Angels were apparently “all created at or near the same time” by fiat command of God.⁶ This can be inferred from the niphil perfect form of the Hebrew verb, בָּרָא (*bara'*), meaning “create out of nothing,” found in Ps. 148:5, and from the corresponding aorist tense of the Greek verb κτίζω (*ktidzo*) meaning, “create out of nothing,” found in both the Septuagint and in Col. 1:16. In addition, according to Matt. 22:28-30, angels do not procreate; and according to Luke 20:36, they do not die.

God’s “primary purpose for creating the angels was that they might glorify God and His Christ.”⁷ Angels glorify God by serving Him, administering His will, and praising and worshipping Him (Heb. 1:6-7; Job 38:7; Ps. 103:20; 148:2). In addition, angels are growing in their knowledge of God by revealing and communicating His message to mankind and by

⁶ Ibid., 25.

⁷ Ibid., 25.

ministering to believers and observing their lives.⁸

Uniqueness and Capabilities

Angels are unlike man or any of the lower order of creatures, which came from the hand of God, in that they are for the most part invisible. Scripture teaches that while they can, with authority from God, approach the sphere of man, this in no way imposes upon them conformity to human existence (Gen. 18:1; 19:1). They live in the dimension of the spirit world (Heb.14). They are unlike God, in that they are created and finite beings, while God is their creator and infinite in being. In the Bible, angels are sometimes seen, appearing as men as in Gen. 19:1-5 and Mark 16:5. There is no Biblical reference to angels as ever being female.

At times, angels appear as figures of radiant white or blazing glory (Daniel 10:5, 6; Luke 24:4, 24; John 20:12; Acts 1:10). Angels have some type of localized, determinate, real, and spiritual bodies. The composition of these bodies is unknown; however, R. B. Thieme Jr. conjectures that “angelic bodies appear to be composed of light; and since light has content,” particles and waves, “it could make a definite body and one which could easily become visible or invisible” (Isa. 14:12; 2 Cor. 11:14).⁹

They appear to have differences in both beauty and power one from another (Ezek. 28:12, 17; Dan. 10:11-21; cf. 1 Cor. 15:40-41). There are several supernatural creatures, most likely “angels,” called cherubim, seraphim, and living beings, who have wings (Exod. 25:20; Isa. 6:2; Ezek. 1:6; Dan. 9:21; Rev. 4:8). However, we cannot infer from this that all angels have wings.

Angels are seen as individual persons with individual names and activities. Only three

⁸ Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 468.

⁹ R. B. Thieme Jr., *Angelic Conflict* (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries), 1971, 7.

angels are specifically named in Scripture: “Michael,” whose name means “Who is like God?” (Dan. 10:13, 21; 12:1; Jude 9; Rev. 12:7), “Gabriel,” whose name means “the mighty one of God” (Dan. 8:16; 9:21; Luke 1:19, 26), and “Lucifer”, a translation of the Hebrew noun לְיָלֵךְ (*Helel*) meaning “bright or shining one” (Isa. 14:12).¹⁰

They have superhuman intelligence (2 Sam. 14:20), superhuman knowledge (Matt. 24:36; Gal. 3:19), and free will (Ezek. 28:14-17; cf. Matt. 25:41; Jude 6). From the preceding passages, it can be seen that angels are moral creatures, some holy and obedient to God (Matt. 25:31; Rev. 14:10), and others, the Devil and his angels, unholy or fallen (John 8:44; I John 3:8-10).¹¹

Angels also have great power (Ps. 103:20; Rev. 5:2; 10:1; 18:21), but they are not omnipotent; therefore, they are subject to the limitations of the permissive will of God (Job 1:12; 2:6; Dan. 10:13). The great power of angels can be seen in many passages of Scripture, particularly in the judgments found in the book of Revelation. There are four angels who hold back the four winds of the earth (Rev. 7:1), four angels who harm the earth and sea (Rev. 7:2), an angel who throws fire to the earth (Rev. 8:3-5; 14:18), and an angel who has the key to the abyss and incarcerates Satan for a thousand years.(Rev. 20:1, 2), just to mention a few.

¹⁰ Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 7, *Doctrinal Summarization* (Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1964), 14.

¹¹ Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 465.

CHAPTER 3
CLASSIFICATIONS AND ORGANIZATION

Elect Angels

The phrase, “elect angels,” occurs only in 1 Tim. 5:21 and most certainly refers to those good or “holy angels,” who are obedient to God (Mark 8:38). They are distinguished from angels who have apparently disobeyed God, the so-called “fallen angels,” who followed the devil, “fallen from heaven” (Matt. 25:41; cf. Isa. 14:12; Ezek. 28:15-17). Therefore, there are two main classifications of angels, “elect” and disobedient or “fallen.”¹²

The classification of angels beyond these two general categories is extremely difficult and the subject of much debate. Chafer believes that the terms “cherubim,” “seraphim,” and “living creatures” are actual designations for angels of the “highest station,” but “The different terms used seem to indicate a distinction in service rendered rather than in essential position.”¹³ Dr. C. I. Schofield, in his *Reference Bible*, adds the idea that the “cherubim” and the “living creatures” are identical, by comparing Ezek. 1:3-28; 10:1-22 and Rev. 4:6-5:14.¹⁴ However, Dr. Schofield does not address the differences between the “cherubim” and the “living creatures” in regard to the number of their wings and faces. These differences may be explained by the figurative nature of the passages or by the fact that, in the Ezekiel passages, the local presence of God is in view in the “shekinah glory cloud” (Exod. 13:21-22; 24:15-18; 40:34); whereas, the

¹² Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 7, *Doctrinal Summarization*, 15.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 18.

scene in Rev. 4:1-11 appears to be around the heavenly throne. While the origin of the Hebrew term “cherubim” is uncertain, Chafer maintains its use in context indicates “their high and holy position.” According to Chafer, their main function seems to be “related to the throne of God as defenders of His holy character and His presence.” Only these angels, the “living creatures,” and the “seraphim” are said to have wings: four wings for the “cherubim”, six wings for the “living creatures,” and six wings for the “seraphim” (Ezek. 1:6; Isa. 6:2; Rev. 4:8).

The term “seraphim” appears only twice in the Bible, Isa. 6:2, 6, and its Hebrew origin seems to come from the verb שָׂרַף (*saraph*), meaning “to burn,” hence, the “burning ones.”¹⁵ The “sariphim” are seen in constant worship; and one functions in this passage as God’s agent of purification with regard to Isaiah.

The “living creatures” may or may not be identical with the “cherubim” or “seraphim;” but they certainly function in and around the throne of God and worship Him (Rev. 4:6-9). They are mentioned again ten more times in Revelation and possibly once in Zech. 6:4, as “the four spirits of heaven.”

With regards to angelic organization, Chafer believes that there are “varying degrees of rank” among angels described by the terms “thrones,” “dominions,” “principalities,” “authorities,” and “powers.”¹⁶ The order of rank in the previous list may be from the first to the last, comparing Col. 1:16; 2:10,15; Eph. 3:10, 1 Cor. 15:24; and 1 Pet. 3:22. However, where to place “archangels” in this list becomes problematic. Also, which of these, if any, would be included in the previous categories of “cherubim,” “seraphim,” and “living creatures” is uncertain. While there are certainly different functions implied by these terms, and there seems

¹⁵ Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, *Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon of the Old Testament Scriptures*. 11th ed (Grand Rapids: William. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949. reprint, William. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974), 795-796 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

¹⁶ Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 7, *Doctrinal Summarization*, 16-17.

to be some apparent table of organization for angels, it is known only to God. Therefore, it seems best not to speculate beyond this point.

Fallen Angels

It has already been noted that *Helel*, translated “Lucifer” (NKJV) and “son of the morning” (NASB), is a specific angel, who has “fallen” from heaven as a result of his disobedience to God (Isa. 14:12; Ezek. 28:15-18). This “fallen” angel is seen as one and the same with the “Devil” and “Satan” (Rev. 12:9) and the “anointed cherub” (Ezek. 28:14).¹⁷ There are more than thirty terms used in Scripture to refer to this leader of the so-called “fallen angels.” Some of these terms describe his nature and his actions: adversary (1 Pet. 5:8), accuser (Rev. 12:10), evil one (Matt. 13:19, 38), murderer (John 8:44), father of lies (John 8:44), and tempter (Matt. 4:3). It is believed by many that a certain number of angels followed Satan and share his fall, his rebellion against God, and his eventual destiny in “eternal fire” (Matt. 25:41, NASB).

Another category of spiritual creatures mentioned many times in the Scripture is “demons.” Many theologians believe that “demons” are “fallen angels,” among these are R. B. Thieme, Jr., Merrill Unger, Millard Erickson, and C. Fred Dickason. While there are no direct references, which state that demons are angels; nevertheless, several passages seem to connect these terms. In Matt. 12:24-27, “Beelzebul” is said to be “the ruler of the demons;” but in these verses, Satan is equated with Beelzebul. Comparing these passages with Rev. 12:7 and Matt. 25:41, where Satan is spoken of being “with his angels,” it is inferred that demons are angels, albeit “fallen.”¹⁸

¹⁷ R. B. Thieme Jr., *Demonism* (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 1971; reprint, Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 1974), 7 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

¹⁸ Merrill F. Unger, *Demons in the World Today* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1971. reprint, London: Cloverdale House Publishers Ltd., 1972), 15 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

There is obviously a conflict between the angels who are associated with or under the control of Satan and those angels who remain faithful to God. This spiritual warfare, termed the “angelic conflict” by R. B. Thieme Jr., began with the rebellion of Lucifer, found in Isa. 14:12 and Ezek. 28:12-15; and his rebellion apparently spread to include about one-third of the angels (Rev. 12:4).¹⁹ This “prehistoric conflict...continues into the present and will not conclude until the end of human history,” when God will render His final judgment.²⁰ Thieme conjectures that man was created, in part, to resolve this “angelic conflict.” This resolution comes about as God displays “His perfect justice” through mankind, endowed with free will to choose for God’s plan or against it.²¹ There are two aspects of this conflict. First, there is warfare between Michael and his elect angels and Satan and his angels (Rev. 12:7-9; but there is also war between believers in Jesus Christ and the spiritual forces of darkness (Eph. 6:11, 12; 2 Cor. 10:4).²²

The Angel of Jehovah

This angelic designation is the matter of much discussion. There are basically three interpretations of the phrase, “the angel of the Lord”: (1) he is an angel with a special commission; (2) he is a theophany of God in human form; and (3) he is a pre-incarnate appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ, a Christophany.²³ Although some passages are unclear as to which of these interpretations is correct, the “angel of the Lord” is identified as both the Lord, who spoke to Hagar, and God, who sees (Gen. 16:7-13). Here, the sovereignty of God is

¹⁹ R. B. Thieme Jr., *Satan and Demonim* (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 1960; reprint, Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 1977), 1-3 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

²² Kent Crocket, “Angels-What They Do,” *Home Bible Studies*. [Bible studies on-line]; available from <http://www.cornerstonechurchonline.com/biblestudies/AngelsDo.htm>. Internet; accessed 22 November 2001.

²³ John Macartney Wilson. “Angel,” in *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952), 134.

expressed in the “angel of the Lord” by His promise to multiply her descendents (Gen. 12:10).

Several divine activities are ascribed to the “angel of the Lord”: “(A) swears by is own character, (B) provides blessing, (C) provides the building of posterity, (D) claims to be the voice of God.”²⁴ In addition, the “angel of God,” probably a reference to this same person, accepts a sacrifice from Abraham offered to himself and claims to be the God of Bethel (Gen. 31:11-13).

Therefore, it is fair to conclude from even this limited evidence that the terms, “angel of the Lord” and “angel of God” both refer to the same person, and that person is the preincarnate Lord Jesus Christ.²⁵

²⁴ Ron Wallace, “The Angel of Lord (Yahweh),” *The Bible Fragrances Commentary on the Scriptures*, [Bible studies on-line]; available from <http://www.biblefragrances.com/pages/angels.html>. Internet: accessed 22 November 2001.

²⁵ Landrum P. Leavell, *Angels, Angels, Angels*, (Nashville: Broadman Press. 1973), 83.

CHAPTER 4

RELATIONSHIPS

To God

All angels, with the possible exception of the “angel of the Lord,” were created by God to give glory to Him and serve Him. Their creation, although not mentioned in the Genesis account, must have been after the creation of the universe and before the laying of “the foundation of the earth,” at which “all the sons of God shouted for joy,” according to Job 38:4-7 (NASB). They act as His agents to communicate His messages, to give protection and assistance to mankind, and to administer His judgment.

He apparently gave free choice to the angels, as evidenced by the fact that Lucifer and a host of angels rebelled against Him. Therefore, an “angelic conflict” ensued, resulting in alterations to the creation itself (Rom. 8:22), which God is resolving through the creation of the human race and His redemptive work through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ (Col. 1:20). The details of this work, related to the creation proper or to any possible salvation for the angels, are not given in the Scripture. It must be assumed that the elect angels continue forever serving God and the redeemed of mankind (Heb. 1:14).

Jesus Christ, as God incarnate in hypostatic union, submitted to His Father in all things during the incarnation, being “obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Phil. 2:8). After Satan attempted but failed to defeat Jesus, He was sustained and ministered to by angels (Matt. 4:11). Similarly, an angel came to Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, “at that critical

moment...to assist Him, ‘strengthening Him’ ” (Luke. 22:42).²⁶

Fallen angels, led by Satan, have an adversarial relationship with God, and attempt to thwart His plan throughout human history. Satan first attacks mankind through the woman in the garden of Eden, using the serpent in Gen. 3 1-5. In his final attack, he attempts to deceive the nations of the world one last time; but he is defeated once and for all and is “thrown into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:7-10; cf. Matt. 25:41).

To Mankind

While mankind is not usually aware of the presence of angels; nevertheless, they are observing and constantly ministering to believers in Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:14); and they “share our rejoicing over those who repent” (Luke 15:10).²⁷ One of the main activities of angels is “revealing and communicating God’s message to humans.”²⁸ In fact, angels in some way participated in ordaining the Law, which was mediated by Moses (Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19; Heb. 2:2). Angels administer the judgment of God on the earth and consequently against mankind (Rev. 8:6-921; 16:1-17; 19:11-14). Angels are given the responsibility of gathering the elect of God at the second coming of Jesus Christ (Matt. 24:31; 1 Thess. 4:16-17).

Angels who rebelled against God do not fulfill these ministries of service to mankind; but instead, they antagonize and afflict mankind and specifically oppose believers (Eph. 6:11-12). These “fallen angels,” also known as demons, attempt to thwart the plan of God by influencing the minds of people to blind them to the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4:4). There are varying degrees of demon influence and oppression, up to and including demon possession. The demons can produce “actual sickness” and “can cause speech and behavior abnormalities”

²⁶ Billy Graham, *Angels: God’s Secret Agents* (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1975) 126.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 82.

²⁸ Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 468.

in their victims; and in demon possession, “the demonic spirit...takes over the body of the victim and speaks through it with his own voice and language,...”²⁹ However, Thieme states that, “While believers can come under demon influence, they cannot be demon possessed” because a demon cannot indwell a believer’s body, which is already permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit.³⁰

²⁹ Unger, *Demons in the World Today*, 33.

³⁰ Thieme, *Satan and Demonism*, 17.

CHAPTER 5

PERSPECTIVE

Historic

The Bible portrays angels as being real creatures associated closely with God. Because of the multitude of Scripture references expressing their similarities, differences and activities, it is difficult to interpret them as being impersonal forces, as is sometimes believed. To reject the reality of angels brings into question the reality of God himself. Since both God and angels are often spoken of in the same context, it is not hermeneutically sound to view God as real and personal while taking angels as metaphoric, for natural forces, and impersonal. They are specifically called “living creatures” (Rev. 4:6-9); and they are said to control the forces of nature rather than be those forces (Rev. 7:1-3).

From ancient times, these creatures have been alternately believed in as gods, angels serving God, or myths. The polytheism and resulting pantheons of gods and demigods in ancient Sumer, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome all attest to this.³¹ Early Hebrew extra Biblical literature, tradition, and the Bible itself express the reality of angels. However, often the truth of angels became distorted and embellished. For example, the book of 3 Enoch reads like a comic book. In it there “is an angel whose name, Metaton, sounds uncannily like that of a comic book superhero.”³² The Talmud teaches on the reality of angels, but it also contains legendary

³¹ Duane A. Garrett, *Angels and the New Spirituality* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 58-59.

³² *Ibid.*, 66-67.

traditions concerning angels. Orthodox rabbis began to move away from a literal interpretation of angels, demythologizing the teachings about angels by making the stories into moral parables.

The early church fathers believed in the reality of angels, however, they were not pre-occupied with them. Thomas Aquinas greatly influenced Christian thinking, possibly more than any other person until the Reformation. His teaching in *Summa theologiae*, addressed and answered 118 specific questions concerning angels.

John Calvin, the great Bible interpreter in the sixteenth century, believed in angels; but was unwilling to speculate about them beyond the teachings of the Scripture. Emanuel Swedenborg, an eighteenth-century Swedish scientist, believed that he was having daily conversations with angels and developed his thirty volume theology from those communications. Needless to say, his theology was a strange mixture of mysticism and the science of his day. His peculiar “angel-inspired religion” was a precursor to many of the New Age groups of today.³³

Karl Barth, the great Swiss theologian of the first half of the twentieth century, held to a neoorthodox protestant position; nevertheless, he believed in angels, but “Barth everywhere saw the work of angels as subordinate to and glorifying God in Christ.”³⁴ However, Rudolph Bultmann, a contemporary of Barth, considered the Biblical stories involving angels as myths. His demythologization program “eliminated angels from theological consideration.”³⁵

In the latter part of the twentieth century, another strange theory has emerged. One proponent of this theory, Geddes Mac Gregor, wrote *Angels: Ministers of Grace*. In this work, he presents the so-called gods of antiquity and the angels of the Bible as being, in reality, highly evolved human beings, extraterrestrials, from other planetary systems, who communicate with

³³Ibid., 95.

³⁴ Ibid., 97.

³⁵ Erickson., *Christian Theology*, 461.

certain members of the human race. Those who communicate with so-called extraterrestrials are, in fact, communicating with demons, also known as familiar spirits (1 Sam. 28:7). This practice is forbidden in the Scripture (Levit. 19:31). Usually, this **communication**, called “channeling,” is said to come in the form of automatic writing or mental telepathic impressions. One of many such communications is found in the book, *The Dynamics of Cosmic Telepathy*, supposedly channeled and compiled by a **medium**, named Tuella, and published by Guardian Action Publications in Aztec, New Mexico.

Contemporary

As the twenty-first century begins, there is once again a preoccupation with the phenomenon of angels and an increased interest in the occult, in the so-called gods and goddesses of antiquity, in demons, and now even in extraterrestrials. Part of this increased interest may be “a reaction against naturalistic scientific rationalism.”³⁶ However, this fascination seems to be cyclical throughout history. Just about the time Rudolph Bultmann was writing his *New Testament and Mythology*, demythologizing angels, something later called the New Age Movement was beginning to gather followers. Their preoccupation was with the occult and spiritual phenomena including angels. Constance Cumby states “the heart of the New Age Movement is old-fashioned Hindu occultism, which embodies the ancient lie of the serpent right out of the Garden of Eden. This promise of godhood that so captivated Eve continues to have an amazingly strong appeal for humanity today.”³⁷ This is not surprising in light of 1 Tim. 4:1, which reads “...in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons,...” (NASB).

³⁶ Erickson., *Christian Theology*, 461.

³⁷ Constance Cumby, *The Hidden Dangers of the Rainbow* (Shreveport: Huntington House Inc., 1983), 168.

This interest in the occult, without sound Biblical teaching to counteract its influence, grew and continues to flourish to this day. This “new spirituality” permeates all aspects of society including education, science, politics, business, pleasure, and religion. The only thing that seems to be missing in this current frenzy over angels and this “new spirituality” (old occultism) is correspondingly strong sound Biblical teaching an angels, demons, and true spirituality.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

In this paper the author has given a brief overview of the phenomena of angels. Many areas of study with regard to an angelic conflict, demonology, Satanology, the occult, and the New Age Movement have not been developed fully here and must be left to other studies. However, it is the opinion of this writer that angels, including demons and “Lucifer,” are real creatures, who were created originally by God to serve Him and perform His will. The angels are ministering spirits who render service to those who believe in Jesus Christ as their personal savior (Heb. 1:14).

A sound Biblical understanding of who and what angels are is essential for every Christian in order to combat the attacks of the “...spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*” (Eph. 6:12). At the same time, believers in the Lord Jesus must guard against becoming inordinately preoccupied with angels, demons, and the occult. Believers are to worship God, not angels (Rev. 19:10; 22:8, 9; cf. Col. 2:18). Furthermore, they are not to accept “another gospel contrary to that which” was preached by the apostle Paul, even if it comes from “an angel from heaven.” (Gal. 1:8). Believers are to recognize that Satan is their adversary, and he is seeking to destroy them or their testimony for the Lord (1 Pet. 5:8). With regard to angels, then, “we must not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God...” (1 John 4:1).

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