

1. **Introduction:** Angels are spiritual beings created by God to carry out various aspects of His will, at least some duties involve direct interaction with humans. Both the holy and the rebellious (evil) angels focus significant attention on humans, the holy angels to help humans as God dictates, the rebellious angels to tempt humans to disobey God.
  - Thus, both holy and fallen angels are spiritual beings with surprising characteristics. In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus encounters a man possessed by a "legion" of demons or fallen angels (a Roman legion was 5-6 thousand men). Jesus casts out the demons into a herd of pigs.
  - A legion of demons possessing a man means the 5-6 thousand demons could not have taken up much if any physical space. Is there a maximum number of demons that can possess one person?
  - Some past theologians argued about how many angels could dance on the head of a pin.
  - The Bible mentions many encounters between angels and humans beginning in the Garden of Eden to the end times description in Revelation. In the end times, angels will be God's agents involved in the final earthly judgement and second coming of Christ (Rev 19:17-20:3).
  - Among other things, angels are involved in visits with Hagar, Lot, and Jacob, the feeding of Elijah, saving Daniel in the lion's den, speaking to Zechariah, guiding Philip to the Ethiopian, encouraging Paul when his ship was sinking, comforting Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.
  - As seen in the experience of Elisha and his servant at Dothan, it appears God only opens peoples' eyes to enable to see angels when it serves His purposes.
  - A comical example of encountering angels is found in Numbers 22. God sends the Angel of the Lord to block the path of the wicked prophet Balaam who intends to curse Israel. Balaam's donkey sees the angel, stops in her tracks and huddles against a wall, crushing Balaam's foot. Balaam cannot see the angel and beats his donkey.
  - **Numbers 22:31:** *Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, with his drawn sword in his hand. And he bowed down and fell on his face.*
2. **Angels and Humans:** Angels and humans were created with distinct differences. Angels appear to have been created before any of the physical world was created.
  - Jewish tradition is there is a spirit world that exists parallel to our physical world. Much of the spirit world is hidden from humans, but the two worlds are intertwined such that events of the spirit world can influence the physical world and vice versa.
  - The connecting link is God who created and controls both worlds. A well-known Bible passage relates Jacob's dream of a ladder reaching from earth to heaven's spirit-world.
  - The ladder symbolizes the connection between the physical and spirit worlds. The connection enables the angels to do their assigned tasks in both worlds.
3. **Angels:** Angels are created immortal spirit beings who were all created simultaneously. Like snowflakes, each angel is a distinct individual. Angels do not procreate. The number of angels remains fixed at the number created, no angel parents, no baby angels, no old angels.
  - Angels are finite spirit beings with no physical body (Heb1:14). They are moral, spiritual, and intelligent with intellect superior to that of humans. As spirits, they seem to not take up space.
  - In fact, angels do not appear to be constrained by physical laws. They seem unbound by the limitations of time, space, and matter, all of which constrain humans.

- Angels are spirit beings characterized by light. They are heavenly emissaries created to have an essential role in the unfolding of God's plan for humanity and all creation. Their presence reminds us that the spirit and physical worlds are intricately interconnected.
  - The words for "angel" in Hebrew and Greek signify a "messenger" which identifies their official function. Messengers provide information but can also provide physical things like food.
  - God's angel messengers constitute an army of helpers. They are given tasks such as protecting, guiding, heralds conveying vital information, embodying God's grace and intervention at times of need. They have been God's instruments of communication, guidance, and support from creation of Adam and Eve to the present day.
  - Though they are "spirit beings" invisible to the human eye, angels can make their presence known to humans. Usually they assume the form of human men (Daniel 8:16. 9:21).
  - They have appeared when people were awake and alert (Gen 19:1-8; Mk 16:5; Lk 2:13) as well as in visions and dreams (Mt 1:20; Is 6:1-8).
  - Like the angels He created, God is a spirit being with no physical body. The difference is that God is an infinite spirit with attributes far superior to angels. God is omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent while angels are finite, not omniscient, omnipresent, or omnipotent. In addition, all other angel' attributes are inferior to those of God.
  - After they were created, all angels underwent a probationary test in which each had the opportunity, by obeying God, to remain in their original state of holiness.
  - About one third of the total number of angels, led by Lucifer (Satan) chose to rebel rather than obey, thereby committing the first sin against God. They became "unclean spirits" or "demons" (Mk 1:23; Lk 8:2, 11:24). Actions of rebellious angels confirm them to be evil. The angels who did not rebel are called "holy angels." They remain obedient to God, continue to obey His commands, and have been confirmed in righteousness forever. The rebellious angels and their leader, Satan, are at constant war with the holy angels and the humans who follow God.
  - Being immaterial, angels do not experience physical suffering and harm like humans do. The angels ("holy" or "fallen") are not subject to death, decay, or any form of extinction.
  - The Bible never mentions any possibility of fallen angels becoming mortal and subject to death.
  - Angels, who rebelled, continue to be immortal. All were judged. Some were confined until the Day of Judgment. The others were left free to work with and follow Satan. All rebellious angels will ultimately be subjected to eternal punishment.
4. **A Story About Angels with Amazing Details:** When Herod put Peter in prison, an angel of the Lord rescued him. *"Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries before the door were guarding the prison. <sup>7</sup> And behold, an angel of the Lord stood next to him, and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him, saying, "Get up quickly." And the chains fell off his hands. And the angel said to him, "Dress yourself and put on your sandals." And he did so. And he said to him, "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me." <sup>9</sup> And he went out and followed him. He did not know that what was being done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. <sup>10</sup> When they had passed the first and the second guard, they came to the iron gate leading into the city. It opened for them of its own accord, and they went out and went along one street, and immediately the angel left him."* (Acts 12)
5. **Angels in Amazing Forms:** The Bible at times describes angels in amazing forms.

- In a daytime vision, Daniel saw an angel with “*eyes like flaming torches*” (Dan 10:5-7).
  - In a vision, Isaiah saw angles with six wings (Is 6:1-8). On the isle of Patmos, John saw several angels including one angel having legs like “*legs like pillars of fire*” (Rev 10:1-3).
6. **Humans:** Adam and Eve and their progeny are set apart from all other created beings in that they have both a material physical body and an immaterial soul or spirit.
- Rather than create all humans simultaneously as He did for the angels, God chose to create one pair of humans designed for procreation and from them produce descendants to “fill the earth.”
  - Like the angels, the first human pair, Adam and Eve, when created, were holy and immortal. Like the angels, they were given a probationary test of obedience. They failed the obedience test and committed the first human sin by disobeying God’s command.
  - Their sin caused them to lose their holiness which, since their creation, had enabled them to live in Eden in the presence of God since their creation.
  - As unholy sinners, they were forced to leave the Garden of Eden where they had lived in the presence of God since their creation.
  - There were radical changes to their “being” as they were changed from being “holy” to being “unholy.” In addition, there was the lawful penalty due their sin. The penalty for sin is death.
  - They lost their immortality and became subject to death. When they sinned, Adam and Eve immediately died spiritually and began to disintegrate physically. That physical disintegration was a sign that they would die mortal death.
  - Hebrews 9:27 says, “*it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment.*” The appointment every human being has with death is a consequence of Adam and Eve’s sin and its effects on all their progeny.
  - The radical, disastrous changes in Adam and Eve’s being are, even now, transmitted to their progeny. The penalty for sin is eternal death which can only be avoided through God’s grace.
  - Because all Adam and Eve’s progeny do themselves sin, God graciously provides a way of redemption, a way to be saved from sin’s death penalty and gain the righteousness required to be holy like Christ.
  - God’s salvation from sin’s effects and penalty is not offered to angels (1 Peter 1:10-12). Even though they cannot experience God’s saving grace themselves angels are fascinated by the process and its results for humans (Lk 15:10; 1 Cor 4:9; Eph 3:10).
  - For reasons not revealed, rebellious angels were not given an opportunity for forgiveness of sins.
  - Of all God’s creatures, only humans were created in God’s image. Even after the Fall, they are destined to be conformed to the likeness of Jesus Christ (Rm 8:29).
  - Humans were created a little lower than the angels (Heb 2:7,9; Rm 10:9-10). However, redeemed, glorified human believers will judge the angels (1 Cor 6:3).
7. **Worship God:** Both angels and humans properly worship God and God alone. In Revelation, two times, during angelic revelation of future things and their meaning, John fell before an angel.
- One of the times was just after John’s experience of intense heavenly praise (Rev 19:1–5) and the glorious marriage supper of the Lamb. Apparently overwhelmed had a lapse in judgment and was ready to worship the angel who had shown him such wondrous things.

- The angel immediately responded with “don’t,” explaining that he, too, was a creature, a servant of God. That should be the natural reaction of all creatures. Worship God alone.
  - The angel’s reaction reminds us that the incarnate Jesus was quite willing to claim divinity during His earthly ministry and did not refuse worship. He accepted worship as proper because He is God (Mt 14:33; 28:9; Jn 9:37–38; 20:28–29).
  - In Revelation 1, John appropriately fell before the risen Jesus. People are to worship the Triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three Persons sharing the same essence – one God!
  - Jesus created all things, whether in heaven or on earth, *"visible and invisible...all things were created through him and for him"* (Col 1:16). John 1:3 says concerning Jesus, "All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made."
8. **Summary:** Both angels and humans were created by God. Both are rational, personal beings, both capable of thought, emotions, and making decisions. Humans are physical- spirit combination beings. Angels are spirit beings. Angels neither marry or procreate.
- Humans were created in God’s image, but angels were not. Images glorify. We humans, as His created image, are to bring Him glory as we honor the One in whose image we are created.
  - As we live our lives, properly imaging God should be our goal. If we have difficulty visualizing what constitutes God’s image, God gave us His incarnate image in Jesus. The meaning of being a proper image of God is revealed in the life and death of Jesus. He is the true “image.”
  - Humans are made in God’s image. Jesus is God’s incarnate image (Col 1:15).
  - It is startling to realize that humans are the creatures in body and soul that were created to be the vessel in which God’s Son would perfectly glorify God as a creature in the created world.
  - Both humans and angels were created holy and perfect, but both were capable of disobedience.
  - About a third of the huge number of angels created did disobey, rebelling against God.
  - Adam and Eve, the ancestral parents of all humans, also disobeyed God causing them to become unholy and unable to live in God’s presence. They lost their immortality. The effects of their sin has been transmitted to all their progeny to this day.
  - To restore a right relationship with God and be able to dwell in His presence, humans must be redeemed. Redemption was made possible by the incarnate life and sacrificial death of Jesus, the Man-God. To all who (by faith believe), redemption is applied by the Holy Spirit.
  - Fallen humans can be redeemed from their fallen state, fallen angels cannot. Fallen angels are not offered the opportunity to repent and be redeemed. They were judged and will be punished.
  - Angels are immortal, they cannot die. Though created immortal, Adam and Eve lost their immortality when they disobeyed God.
  - Redeemed humans are destined to be transformed into an image of Christ and, after glorification, to live in the presence of God forever more. Holy angels have lived in God’s presence since they were created and will continue to do so forever.
  - Humans were created to have a relationship with God and to reflect His image. Angels serve God as messengers and ministers at least to humans and maybe to other angels.
  - Rebellious angels were banished from God’s presence. Holy angels delight in God’s presence.
  - Much more can be said about angels, how they relate to humans, and all the things we learn about angels from Scripture.