



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Systematic Theology

TRANSCRIPT

“Guardian Angels? or the Nature, Work and Destiny of the Good Angels”

Let's begin with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for the privilege of the study of the word of God. And we ask again for the blessings of the Holy Spirit upon us as we open the Scriptures. We pray that Thou will guide and direct us in such a way that Jesus Christ may be honored and glorified and that the needs that we have as Christians can be met through the pondering of Holy Writ. We commit each one present to Thee and we pray Thy blessing upon them.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] It seems like a long time since we've been together in our Monday night classes, and as a matter of fact, it has been about five weeks or so, I think. And so, we're going to the next two Monday nights try to finish up our series, which still has two subjects in Systematic Theology and two of our subjects in the prophecy of Isaiah. And tonight our subject is “The Guardian Angels? or the Nature, Work and Destiny of the Good Angels.” And for Scripture reading, I want to turn to a passage in the Old Testament, first. And then we want to turn to a couple of short passages in the New.

Second Kings chapter 6 verse 15 through verse 17, 2 Kings chapter 6 verse 15 through verse 17.

Now, just one word about the context before we read it. Remember, the Children of Israel are having difficulties with the Syrians. And in this little warfare which is being carried on Benhadad, the King of Syria, discovers that all of his battle plans are known by the children of Israel. There is a leak in his intelligence, apparently, and he does not quite understand it. And the word comes to him that the leak is the prophet Elisha. It is he who is telling Israel all of Syria’s plans. And, of course, this is done supernaturally. But he hears that Elisha is at a certain place, and so he determines that he’s going to take the prophet for if he takes him, he’ll shut off his leak, his intelligence leak. And so, consequently, we read now of Elisha at Dothan and the attempt of the Syrians to take him. Now he is surrounded, and we read in verse 15 of chapter 6:

“And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, a host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, ‘Alas, my master! What shall we do?’ (With all of the Syrians about, it appears to be an impossible situation for a prophet and his personal servant.) And he answered, ‘Fear not: (That is Elisha) for they who are with us are more than they that are with them.’ And Elisha prayed, and said, ‘Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see.’ And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.”

And so, the prophet Elisha was really garrisoned about with a select company of angelic beings. And no wonder you say “fear not” in a situation like that. Well, the young man from this giant Texas-sized-object lesson learned that when God’s angelic beings surround us, we are safe.

Now, let’s turn to the New Testament and let’s turn first to Mark chapter 8 in verse 38, Mark chapter 8 in verse 38. I want you to just note one word here which will come up in our discussion a few moments later. Mark 8:38 is the last verse of the 8th chapter and we read:

“Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.” Now, just notice the adjective “with the ‘holy’ angels.”

Now, let’s turn to 1 Timothy chapter 5 in verse 21. And, again, I wish you to notice just one word. 1 Timothy chapter 5 in verse 21, 1 Timothy 5 verse 21 is a word of the Apostle Paul to Timothy in this pastoral epistle. And he says, “I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels.” Now, will you notice that word “elect.” There are angels that are holy. There are angels that are elect, chosen. “That thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.”

And then, for our final passage, turn to Hebrews, chapter 1 and we’re going to read two verses, the last two of this chapter. Hebrews chapter 1 verse 13 and verse 14. Now, our author writes, verse 13 Hebrews chapter 1:

“But to which of the angels said he at any time, ‘Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?’ Are they (that is, the angels) are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?”

Now, you notice the plain statement of this text is that the angels sustain a ministry toward those who are about to inherit salvation. Or, if we were to put it in our

language, we would say the angels carry on a ministry for our benefit, we, who are Christians.

Now, “The Guardian Angels? or the Nature Work and Destiny of the Good Angels.” The more radical modern theologians regard belief in angels as a throwback to the well-nigh universal mythological eastern concepts of genii, semi-gods, fawns, nymphs, and naiads who visited the earth.

Hesiod, one of the ancient Greek poets, I think really, next to Homer the oldest of the Greek poets said, “Millions of spiritual creatures walked the earth.” So, it was quite common for people, long before our Lord came, to believe that there were spiritual beings. And most of our contemporary theologians, who are liberal in their theology and most of them are, they believe “belief” in angels to be something of a throwback to ancient mythological concepts that the ancient eastern peoples had.

Now, this is not universal among our liberal theologians. Today, for example, when I was thinking about this class, I went over on the other side of my desk to the theology section of my library and took down a volume written just a few years ago by a Professor John MacQuarrie. He is a Scottish theologian and very much a very prominent on the contemporary scene. And he has a book, which he put out a few years ago, called “Principles of Christian Theology.” And I looked up what he had to say about the angels. Now, he had toyed with the idea that “angel” is simply a pictorial way of representing the action of God in the world. He said it’s quite common for men to believe simply that and it may well have been that that is the way we should have interpreted the New Testament passages. We should look at this as simply their way of saying this is what God did. They said the angels did it, but we’re not to take that literally, we’re to take that symbolically. What the angels did is what God did. And so, this is a way of pictorially or symbolically representing the action of God.

But then he went on to say, and for this I respect him at least, he went on to say that there is really nothing that prevents us from believing in the existence of angels. In

fact, he said, since we have an order of beings that are not as high as men and then we have an order of beings such as men, there is nothing logically to prevent us from having an order of beings that is higher than men. In fact, he said it may even seem probable to us who live in this part of the 20th Century because of the vastness of time and space. And when we do think of the vastness of the space, which is about us, it’s almost more than you can really comprehend, isn’t it?

I sat down in my study this afternoon with a scientist who actually is working on the Apollo project and has been for several years. He’s from Houston, and we were talking about the illimitable space that is about us. And we think of our solar system, it’s giant for us, and then we realize that there are galaxies and galaxies and galaxies that are on out beyond our system and so far as we know some that we cannot even see anyway.

We have ways, so scientists tell us, of discerning their existence sometimes by means of a radio type of signal, some kind of radio astronomy. I don’t keep up with science and unfortunately there are some men in the audience here who are scientists, and so I just want you to understand that there is one subject that I know nothing about, and that’s why I’m saying what I’m saying.

But I remember a few years ago, about ten that I read a little book that had to do with radio astronomy. And at that time, they were hearing strange signals from outer space and some were even suspecting that perhaps people were trying to communicate with us or at least communicate among themselves. Now, as far as I know, no scientist believes that now. And I just give them a little bit of advice too, I don’t think you should believe that. But that’s very unscientific to say that I know.

But anyway, the point is that our space is so illimitable that it surely is at least logical for us to suspect that there might be in this space somewhere an order of beings that is higher than man. I think we could argue the point much more convincingly than Professor MacQuarrie does. If our solar system is a kind of mansion in a giant kingdom, just one little mansion apparently, and if our earth is just one little blue room in this

mansion in this giant kingdom, well then we might suspect that there are some beings out there that we cannot put our fingers upon.

Or, to be a little more logical, we can look at the creation and say, we have beings that are purely corporeal or purely material such as a stone and then we have beings who are a combination of material and immaterial such as a human being. Why not have a being that is purely and wholly spiritual? So it surely is logical that we might have something like this, but that’s all we can say. Now, we cannot as a scientist say there are no angels. Nor, can we say that there are angels, scientifically. We are really shut off to divine revelation.

Now, when we come to the Bible, then we have a clear voice. Revelation tells us that there are angelic beings. Now, we’ve been studying the evil angels, but we want to look tonight at good angels. Isn’t it interesting that Christians are more interested in the evil angels than they are in the good angels, because there’s just a lot of good interesting material in the Bible about Satan and his demons? And, it’s I guess part of our human nature to be more curious about the evil than about the good.

In the Old Testament we have angels mentioned about one hundred and eight times. And in the New Testament we have angels mentioned about one hundred and sixty-five times. Now, I didn’t count those precisely, you notice I said “about,” so if you get one hundred and nine when you go home tonight and count it, remember I said “about.

Well, let’s take a look at what the Bible has to say, then, about the good angels. And, first of all Roman I - The existence of the good angels. Now, you will recognize that as we talk about the existence of the good angels and that these arguments that I’m going to suggest are similar to the arguments for the existence of evil angels, as you might suspect. We remind ourselves, remember that philosophy and science cannot prove or disprove the existence of angels. We are dependent upon revelation for light.

Now, the evidence from Scripture itself is very plain. Just take one passage, one that we have already read. Paul said in 1 Timothy chapter 5 in verse 21, “I charge thee before God and the elect angels”. And then those many other references make it very plain that evidence from Scripture supports the existence of angelic beings.

There is a second form of evidence that we might induce; now if I had a lot of space here I would put - A. “The evidence of Scripture.” B. “The evidence of human nature.” Belief in spirits is universal. Wherever you go, people have words for ghost, spirit, angel. Is this just chance? Is it chance that all sane men are seized with this insane idea that there are spirit beings? This is, I think, best traced to the fact that there was primal revelation from God in the beginning he told man there were angelic beings and that some men had some contact with angelic beings, as is stated in the word of God. And that the reason that wherever you go men believe in angels is because originally God gave them word concerning angels and some had experience of them and that information has been transmitted down in various ways, various lines of tradition down to the present time. Well, everybody accepts the idea of a spirit being, naturally. And that in itself is evidence of the fact that it is part of the inherent nature of men.

We live in the South and some of the funniest stories are told about those who are superstitious in angels. Now, I’m not going to tell you a joke tonight, but I do remember one story about a [black] fellow who went in a cemetery. And when he passed through this cemetery a ghost saw him and began to run toward him. And he described it later. He said, “I took out and ran as fast as ever I could. And I turned around and that ghost he still running after me. Then I ran faster than ever I could and the ghost still after me. I run and run and run and finally I get tired and I sit down on a stool and the ghost he come and sit down on a stool opposite me. I said I reach out my hand to touch that ghost and he weren’t there. And he reach out his hand to touch me and I weren’t there.”
[Laughter]

Why is it that every time we walk through a cemetery we think of some ghost? Well, I think it’s because deep down in the human heart there is this inherent belief in the spirit world about us. I think evidence from human history might be enough of line of evidence for the existence of angels. And if I were to try and argue the point, I would argue it simply on the basis of what the Bible says, what human nature seems to suggest and what human history seems to suggest.

And I think it is difficult to explain human history without the fundamental fact of the assumption of the existence of spirit beings in this universe. Now, of course, we could never so far as human history is concerned, distinguish between the angels and God just by reason because all that is good we could say God is responsible for and not the good angels. But when we turn to the things that are evil that seem to be from evil or demonic or spirit influences then we are led to posit some force in the universe that is not of God.

And then we come to what the German Von Ranke said was that occult force that I referred to when we talked about evil angels; that when you study history and finally you’ve set down the facts of history and study the great movements of men and events in history you come to the conclusion that there is a substratum in history which may be called an “occult” force. And that history cannot really be understood apart from an understanding of that. That is an argument for a spirit being.

Well, the Bible settles the question, so let’s pass on at least for us who accept divine revelation to Roman II - The origin of the good angels. The Bible is all but silent concerning the origin of the evil angels. Remember, I said that and I think we can substantiate that. It is, however, very clear that the good angels were created. And by logic since when God created everything he said that “everything was good” we said when we studied the evil angels that God created them and that he created them good and that they fell as the Bible indicates in other passages. So when we come to the origin of the good angels, I think, it’s very plain that the Bible states that they were created and

probably just before man was created. I’m not sure about this -- the Bible really doesn’t tell us precisely when the angels were created. It tells us that they were in existence, apparently, when the creation took place but how long, we do not know.

Let’s read a couple of passages. Turn to Psalm 148, verses 2 through 5, Psalm 148:1-5: “Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the Lord from the heavens: praise him in the heights.” Now verse 2, “Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts. Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light. Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that are above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the Lord: for he commanded, and they were created.” And so, all of these things that the Psalmist has been speaking about were created.

Now, let’s turn to the Book of Job or turn back to the Book of Job, chapter 38, for just a moment. Job 38 in verse 7, verse reads, “Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and said, “Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures of it, if thou knowest? Or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? Or who laid its corner stone when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?”

Now, you’ll notice that the morning stars are referred to here and the sons of God. These are expressions that refer to the angelic beings and Job is challenged to answer the questions of God. Who is responsible for these things, Job? Where you there when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? Now, that implies that angelic beings were in existence as God performed his creating acts. Some have thought that perhaps in Genesis 1 where we read, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And then, since verse 2 and following has to do with the earth “and the earth was without form and void,” that we are to regard the angels as included in

Genesis 1:1 and then everything else in Genesis 1:2 and following. At least we can say from this that they were created.

Now, turn over to the New Testament to the Epistle of Paul to the Colossians.

Colossians chapter 1 in verse 16. I heard one preacher got his tongue twisted a little and said “Now let’s turn to the Epistle of Paul the colossal to the Epocians.”

[Laughter] Well, he is Paul the colossal and one of the reasons that he is, is because of the greatness of his revelation in the Epistle to the Colossians, Paul relates the ministry of Jesus Christ to the whole of the cosmos. And listen to what he says in verse 16 of chapter 1, “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.”

Now, when he speaks of the creation of thrones and dominions and principalities and powers, we know from Paul’s language that he is referring to the angelic hierarchies. And the evidence of this text supports it. For he says, “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones.” So among these are invisible things. Therefore, we conclude, and I think without much question, that the good angels were created by God. They are not infinite or eternal beings. They are created beings. They are great beings. But they are not eternal beings.

Roman III - The nature of the good angels. Now, we must be careful. And I try to be careful when I said that they are great beings. We must be careful and not say that the angels are superior to men. I am convinced, myself, that the angels are not superior to men. And I’ll let you know in a moment why I think that’s true.

Now, I grant I would have a difficult time handling an angel. There is some sense in which I am inferior to him. But I am really, in the mind of God, superior to angels. So I would be careful to avoid saying that the angels are superior to men. They are greater in power and might to men now. Now, man is in sin; man is in a body in which the sin principle dwells. Our natural powers have been vitiated by sin. We are not what

we were destined to be. And, consequently, we are inferior in power and might to angels at the present time. In fact, we are inferior to a lot of things. I’m quite inferior to a lion, myself. [Laughter]

I saw a nature film on TV, course I only look at films like that on TV. I saw a nature film of a cougar and after looking at that cougar, I think that I would say that I am inferior to a cougar, too and a tiger and I’m inferior to a whirlwind and I’m inferior to a tornado. And when I see what is coming up right here in a few moments, I feel somewhat inferior. There are lots of things that I am inferior to at the present time. So, I want to avoid saying the angels are superior to men but I want to recognize there are some things in which I am inferior to them, truly.

They learn from us and, of course, the climactic proof that we are ultimately superior to angels is that Paul makes the amazing statement, the astounding statement, really. In 1 Corinthians chapter 6 in verse 2 that “we shall judge angels.” Isn’t that amazing? We shall judge angels? If I have a guardian angel, the day may come when I stand and judge him. Isn’t that amazing?

Now, what about the nature of the good angels? Let me, as we did in the case of the evil angels, just bring out a few things that probably most of you now know. First of all, the good angels like the evil angels have a spiritual nature. That is evident from Hebrews chapter 1 in verse 14 where the writer of the epistle stated, remember, are they not all ministering spirits? We have a spirit. They are spirits. They do not have a body. We have bodies. Sometimes, you read the New Testament and you gain the impression that some of the angels would like to have a body. Why? I don’t know. But, you remember that some of the demons, after Jesus cast them out, desired to be embodied in the animal. And so, there seems to be some desire on the part of some of the angels to have a body. And as I look at human bodies, I say, I wonder why they would want any of these tabernacles. At least, why they would want mine. They do not have bodies.

They are spiritual in nature. They are spirits. In that chapter of Hebrews chapter 1 also in about verse 7 the statement is made that they are “winds or spirits.”

So, the angels are spiritual. By the way, they do not die. That is evident from Luke chapter 20 in verse 36. You might want to look at that text. Why don’t you look there? We haven’t had you look at Luke in a good while. Luke chapter 20 verse 34, “And Jesus answering said unto them, ‘The sons of this age marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage.’” Now verse 36 of Luke 20, “Neither can they die anymore: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the sons of God, being the sons of the resurrection.” So, the angels have a spiritual nature.

Secondly, they have an intellectual nature. The Bible states that the evil angels, for example, knew Jesus. “We know who Thou art, they said to him.” In Revelation, chapter 22 in verse 9 when John falls down before the angel to worship him they say to John, “See that thou do it not,” which indicates that they not only have intelligence, but they have a will, too. And they issue a command to John. They say, “We are thy fellow servant of the true God.” So they have a spiritual nature; they have an intellectual nature.

They are superior to men in knowledge, now, in many ways. They are not superior to us in knowledge in every way. For example, angels do not know anything about conversion. They do not know what it is to be “lost” and what it is to be “saved.” They do not know anything about the grace of God, only what they can see, they have never experienced it. So there are certain things that you and I know that even the angels at the present time do not know. As a matter of fact, the angels are learning from us, the church, you knew that of course.

Now, let’s look at the text, Ephesians chapter 3 in verse 10 and this refers not only to the evil angels but to the good angels, as well. Ephesians chapter 3 in verse 10. Did you realize that you are a kind of stage on which is played out a drama and the angels are spectators and are observing you? That’s a challenging thought, isn’t it? Ephesians

chapter 3 in verse 10, Paul says, let’s read verse 9. “And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages hath been hidden in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places (The angelic sphere... The angelic beings...) might be known by means of the church (By the church) the manifold wisdom of God. In other words, the angelic beings are learning through the church, the manifold wisdom of God. They are gaining in intelligence.

So, they are spiritual in nature. They are intellectual in nature, although they are limited. They do not know everything. Turn back to Matthew chapter 24 in verse 36. Jesus is speaking about the Second Advent and in verse 36, he says, chapter 24 of Matthew, the Olivet Discourse which some of you are studying under Bill McCrae. Verse 36 says, “But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.” Isn’t that an interesting statement? You know when I teach at the seminary, I sometimes say, “How can you harmonize the omniscience of the second person of the blessed trinity with the ignorance of Jesus?” And you know, when I say that you can just see the wheels turning. The very idea of the ignorance of Jesus, if we believe in the true deity of our Lord Jesus, the full deity is a phrase that makes a spark, doesn’t it? He is the eternal son, but he says he is ignorant of the precise time of his Second Advent.

Well, of course, you can see that this is an ignorance that is not sin. There is an ignorance that is not sin. Jesus never knew anything that was in error. Now, there are some things that he did not know. And he had to learn obedience through the things that he suffered. He had to grow in his human nature, in the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. He was not born with the knowledge of the Bible. He acquired it by being taught by the Holy Spirit in perfect obedience to God. And there were some things that were kept from him, even at this point. But he did not sin. It’s not sin to “not” know something that God keeps from you in your human nature. So, there is really no problem. But, I want you to notice that in the way that Jesus states this there is an

indication that he regards himself as greater than angels. Notice, verse 36, “But of that day and hour knoweth no man.” Put it this way, no man. Then next, what does it say right after that Tom? “Not even the angels of heaven.”

OK next, now in Mark he says, “Not even the Son.” Now in the Marken passage, we have man, we have angels, we have son. You notice the order in which they are referred to? Perhaps, you ought to look at that so you can see it yourself. Turn over to Mark chapter 13. You thought I was putting that in, didn’t you? Verse 32, “But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no not the angels who are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.” Now, how can I put this? Shall I put this Father up here as if he is greater than the Son? Or shall I put this Father out here as if the Son and the Father are equal? Well, we could never know from this text. All this text says is that Jesus is greater than man. Jesus is greater than angels.

It’s a striking thing you know but some of our liberal theologians use this text to prove that Jesus was not anything more than a man. They point and they say you see there were some things that Jesus didn’t know. He was just a man.

But, you know, I learned a long time ago that the Bible contains a lot more wisdom than the men who study it. And the text itself becomes a strong statement for the greatness of our Lord; no man knows it, no angels, not even the Son greater than man and greater than angels, but the Father.

Now, we could never answer this question from this text. We would have to go elsewhere. And we could go in this gospel. Do you remember how this gospel concludes? Well it says, “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel, teaching, baptizing in the name.” Wait a minute in the names. Which is it? Which is it? In the name, singular. “In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.” In other words, from Matthew chapter 28, Jesus is equal with the Father. “Baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.” So, this is the way we should read it. You see the reason Jesus did not know it is not because he was not God; it was because he was also man.

So, the angels are intellectual beings. They are moral beings too. Remember, we said in Mark chapter 8 verse 38, “holy” angels. So, the nature of angels, they are spiritual, they are intellectual, and they are moral beings. Man is the crowning work of the creation. The creation leads up to the creation of man. That is God’s crowning work. Man created in the image of God, therefore, man is superior to angels, but not now, man is in sin.

The organization of the good angels. Now, someone has said, “The devil is the ape of God.” And just as the good angels have organization, remember, we studied the organization of the evil angels and we saw that the evil angels had organization. Well, just as with them there exists an elaborate organization with great numbers and diverse ranks of good angels. How many angels are there? Well, the Bible states, of course, that they are practically without number. It does not say they are without number, but the descriptions that are given lead you to believe that there are myriads and myriads of angels. In fact, that is exactly what the Bible states in Revelation chapter 5 in verse 11, there are “thousands of thousands and ten thousands of angelic beings.”

In Matthew chapter 26 in verse 53, Revelation 5:1 and various other passages emphasize their great number. There were so many angels that the Pharisees, who liked to take the good truth of the Bible and by their tradition destroy it, came to believe that the angels were almost everywhere. They became almost like the animists of the present day who believe there’s a spirit in a stick in every stick, in a stone, in a tree, in the fire -- in the wind there’s a spirit. The windy spirit is acting up right now according to them. The Pharisees came to believe that if you tossed a stone over your shoulder it was a good thing to apologize to the angel that you hit by so doing. And you’ll remember that the scholastics in the Middle Ages debated how many angels could stand at once on the point of a needle.

Now, all of this is ridiculous to us of course because we’re talking about spiritual beings in a material way. But those views do represent, at least, a belief in the innumerable character of the angels. So, they are great in number.

Their orders. Now, “angel” that name really means “messenger,” as you know. That’s a name that does not have to do with the nature of the angel; it has to do with his “office.” He’s someone who’s sent on an errand. He’s a messenger. Angel means messenger. So when we think about the angels as orders, we’re not talking about their offices, we’re talking about their names as they express the “classes” or classifications of angel.

Now, I’d like to suggest to you that there are several classes of angels. There are cherubim, for example. They are referred to in Genesis chapter 3. Remember when Adam was ousted from the Garden of Eden. Cherubim were placed in the garden eastward to prevent Adam and Eve from returning to the garden. Cherubim, they are mighty, powerful spirit beings, stress rests upon their power. There are also seraphim mentioned in one place, in where? What book? Isaiah. What chapter? Chapter 6 verse 2 and verse 6. They stand around the throne. The seraphim do not seem to be known so much for their power as for their majesty. And some have said they are the nobility of the angels. Then there are principalities, powers, and thrones and dominions. These are differences in rank and dignity among the angels that we do not have specific information about. There are also archangels. Can you name one archangel? Gabriel perhaps, he’s not specifically called an archangel in the Bible, but I think he probably should be called that. What else? Michael, the Archangel. In fact, the archangel is important to us because he is involved in the Rapture of the Church. It’s at the voice of the archangel and the trump of God that our Lord comes for the Church.

The Jews believed that there were seven angels that stood in the presence of God, and their names were: Uriel, Raphael, Raguel, Sariel, Remiel, Gabriel, and Michael. These are the seven. And, strikingly, in the Book of Revelation chapter 8 reference is made to

the angels that stand in the presence of God, and there are seven spirits. And there may be some Scriptural support then for these angelic beings. Archangels, seven of them but we cannot be sure. Two of them, we know. The rest we’ll have to get acquainted with later, if they really are angels.

Roman V - The abode of the good angels. The evil angels, boy, I drew a diagram on the spur of the moment, it’s not very good. In fact, I wish I hadn’t drawn it, really. But, there are evil angels who sinned at the time of the flood and the Bible states that they are in Tartarus at the present time. There are evil angels who are in the abyss at the present time. They are bound and they are in the abyss. Then there are evil angels that are free. What do we call them? The demons. They are destined for the abyss but they are free now. Remember, one of them or several said to Jesus, “Art thou come to commit us into the abyss before the time.” They know their destiny.

Where do the good angels dwell? Well so far as we can tell, the good angels dwell in heaven. They have access to the earth as they obey God but they dwell in heaven. Let’s just read Matthew chapter 18 in verse 10, Matthew chapter 8 in verse 10. “Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you that ‘In heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven.’ I say unto you that ‘in heaven.’” So the good angels, apparently, have as their abode heaven itself, “in heaven.”

Roman VI - The service of the good angels. The Bible presents the angels as untiringly and unceasingly at work just as the evil angels. If Satan is the ape of God and God is always busy, they are always busy, the evil angels and the angels. Now, I’m just going to list some of the things, most of you know the things that the angels do. They worship God and they worship the Lamb. I love that, you know, because that in itself indicates their regard for the Lamb of God. If you read Revelation chapter 5 verses 11, you will discover that the whole of the creation worships the Lamb of God. And he who, in the 20th century and in the United States of America in Texas in Dallas, does not

worship Jesus of Nazareth, he’s out of step with heaven itself. And surprisingly, when you read of heaven itself, it is the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne.

As a matter of fact, Jesus, the Lamb of the tribe of Judah, the Lamb of God, has the center place in all heaven and all heaven worships him. If we don’t, we’re out of step with heaven. And furthermore, they sing that they shall reign with him upon the earth. They are not disturbed when someone down on earth says, “Ah, that’s a carnal view of the human to believe that there should be a kingdom upon the earth.” The angels sing it and enjoy it because they know it’s the truth. We shall reign here upon the earth as they express the future. They worship God, they rejoice in God, they serve God’s will in nature, they obey his commands. It was an angel who came and rolled away the stone from the tomb, from the sepulcher of Jesus. He rolled away that stone from the sepulcher of Jesus. That, by the way was a very heavy stone too. And he rolled it away and produced terror on the part of the Roman soldiers. They serve God’s will in history. If we had time, we could turn to Daniel and read those passages. I think we referred to them once before, in which the angels attempt to carry out the will of God and are hindered by the evil angels. They care for the churches. Did you know that every time the church meets, apparently, not only is our Lord there, but the angels are there, too? In fact, the women are told that they should have a covering on account of the angels. Isn’t that interesting? On account of the angels. That’s all right ladies, this is not the meeting of the church. You don’t have to have it except at the meeting of the church but on account of the angels. They are there.

In Colossians chapter 2, Paul warns the Colossians against the worship of angel. Is it, perhaps, because they knew the angels were there and some tended in their local church meeting in Colossi to accord some deference to the angels that was wrong? Perhaps? We don’t know all the facts about Colossians.

They care for the churches. In fact, some think that the angel of the church at Ephesus, the angel of the church at Thyatira, the angel of the church of Philadelphia and

so on, who received those communications from the Lord in the Book of Revelation that those angels are really angels because the term angel is used in the Book of Revelation, everywhere else of a spiritual being. And many of us, such as [name indistinct] and others have felt that even the churches have their guardian angels. We’ve got a good one. Even churches, perhaps. They punish God’s enemies.

And, now last, in just a few moments I want to try to answer this question. Do they serve as guardian angels? Is this part of their service too? Now, let me point out something. I want you to think for a moment. There is no question but that the angels minister to the saints collectively. Hebrews says, “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for those who are about to inherit salvation.” So there is no question but that the angels minister for the benefit of us who are Christians. But do we each have an individual guardian angel? That’s the question. Do we each have an individual guardian angel? Well, now Matthew chapter 18 verse 10, said, remember “Take heed that you despise not one of these little ones (these little children) for I say unto you, that in heaven they are angels.” But again, perhaps that’s just a group of angels who especially watch out for children. Or, perhaps, we could say that every child has an angel but when they grow up they don’t need them anymore. [Laughter] I would say that the teenage years are the years when they need them most.

Now, still that could be understood as an angel for each one, couldn’t it? Turn over to Acts chapter 12 in verse 15. Peter, remember, has been imprisoned and they are praying for him. And Peter has an angel come to wake him up, and he is delivered from prison. And, finally, he comes home to the prayer meeting and what would you expect the people in the prayer meeting to be doing? Well, they have been praying and so you’d expect one of them to say, “Now you can expect Peter to knock on the door at any moment because we’ve been praying.” But Christians are so human, aren’t they? The last thing that they expect after they pray is the answer to their prayer. And so, we read, in verse 13, “And Peter knocked at the door of the gate, and a maid came to hearken,

named Rhoda. And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate. And they said unto her, “You’re mad.” (You’re mad, you’re crazy, you’re a ding-a-ling, a real yo-yo, as they would say today) But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, it is his angel. Notice, “his angel.”

Now, I think we can say this, whether the Bible positively teaches that each one of us has a guardian angel or not, there may be still some question. I don’t know of a text that says that, in so many words. But, I think that we can say that they believed it. They believed that everyone had an angel. They said, “It’s his angel.” And it’s put in the word of God without any criticism. The indication seems to be that we are to accept it. And so, frankly, I accept the idea of guardian angels. I believe we each have an angel. I believe also that we can draw upon the resources of all the angels as God gives them commandment for our benefit. But it seems to me that we do have a guardian angel. When I get to heaven, I’m going to rejoice in the making of his acquaintance, too.

Now, just one word here - The destiny of the good angels. We know this from the fact that they are called “elect” they were created holy. They had a probation. They did not fall like the satanic, the evil angels. They were elect. They were chosen. And they are confirmed in good and, apparently, so far as the Bible is concerned, they cannot, they cannot sin and fall any longer. They are the chosen ones. I think that they were chosen from the time of their creation just as some of us.

Well, we have to stop. I wanted to say just a few words about what’s the use of this doctrine. It has some important ramifications for us. It gives us a new sense of the greatness of the divine resources. It confirms our faith in his providential care for us. Not only is God for us, but his good angels are for us, too. It teaches us humility as we see their greatness and their obedience to God in spite of their greatness. And it enlarges the conception of our own human dignity in Christ to realize that we shall judge the angels. What an amazing fact? And it shows too that sin is not simply finiteness. The angels

were finite beings, created being, but they could sin. Sin is not fleshliness. Sin is disobedience. It is unbelief. And a spirit being and a finite being may sin.

Well, time is up. Angels are distinct. Two years ago, I attended some meetings at the University of Dallas and heard an evolutionist speak. It was really an attack on Darwin. And it was a beautiful attack on Darwin, and it was a beautiful attack on almost all of evolutionary theory up to the present time, two years ago. But, when he finished, he was a Catholic man for a Catholic audience, when he finished, he said “I still believe that there is progress in humanity.” And he said, “I really think, from my study of man in the light of evolution, what I really think is that one day, we shall be angels.” You know, a long time ago Victor Hugo said, “I believe that we are the tadpoles of archangels.” We are not. I am so thankful I’m not going to be an angel. I’m not even going to be an archangel. I am a man redeemed by Christ. Blessed with all of their abilities but the day shall come when I shall judge angels. I am greater than an angel by the grace of God.

Let’s bow in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for Thy word and for the good angels, for their faithfulness and faithfulness to us. Enable us, O God, to emulate their obedience and humility.

For Jesus’ sake. Amen.