Session 39 - Angels

Question: *Who are the angels? What is their nature? Is there a hierarchy among the angelic hosts? Can they procreate? Fallen angels, did they procreate with man at the time of Noah? What happened to them? Is there such a thing as a guardian angel?*

1. *Who are the angels?*
   1. Theologically - Angels are personal (intelligent, emotional, willful) beings of pure spirit, who were created by God and contingent upon God.
      1. They have the role of messengers sent by God to man; they are ministers sent by God to man; they also soldiers that fight on behalf of God and creation against evil. They are also called “sons of God” in the book of Job.
      2. They are spiritual beings, but they are not to be sought out or worshipped by man. We pray to God for help; God sends angels.
         1. Author of Hebrews had to address the problem of angel worship.
      3. Angels were created holy, on an unknown day of creation sometime between the First and sixth day of creation.
         1. God is creator of all things “Visible and Invisible”
   2. Etymologically, angel is simply the greek word for messenger (angellos). In this sense, even a human being or the Son of God can be an “angel”, i.e., messenger.
      1. “The Angel of the Lord” in various places mentioned in the Old Testament is clearly a designation for the Son of God.
   3. The only angels mentioned by name in the 66 books of the Canonical Scriptures are Michael and Gabriel and Lucifer/Satan.
      1. Raphael is mentioned in the Apocryphal book of Tobit. This can be believed and trusted, though the apocryphal books are not considered to be inerrant or infallible.
      2. Many pseudoepigraphal scriptures list other angels, and some works elaborate on their hierarchy and rank. These are forgeries and should be read critically.
   4. Fallen angels are called devils, demons, or unclean spirits in the bible.
      1. Demons were created good angels in the creation, but willfully turned away from God and became evil.
         1. This happened sometime after they were created by God, but before the temptation of Adam and Eve.
      2. The fall of Satan, the Devil, is thought to be described in the OT passages about Lucifer.
2. *What is their nature?* 
   1. They are personal beings (intelligent, emotional, willful) whose nature is pure spirit. This means they are naturally invisible to the human eye (although they can appear in bodily form), and they are not physically limited by the nature of creation in the way mankind is, i.e., having the same dimensional limitations of time and space.In other words, they are supernatural beings.
3. *Is there a hierarchy among the angelic hosts?* 
   1. There is a biblical distinction between angels and archangels (chief angels); there is also a classification of cherubim and seraphim mentioned in the bible.
4. *Can they procreate?* 
   1. Apparently not. Jesus says that in the new creation men and women will not marry or be given in marriage, but will “be like the angels”
   2. LCMS Dogmatics teach that the angels were all created in the beginning by God, and that their numbers do not increase.
5. *Fallen angels, did they procreate with man at the time of Noah?* 
   1. That is one interpretation of Genesis 6:1-4, and the Nephilim. It has a sort of *prima facie* appeal, but it has theological problems.
   2. A better interpretation of Gen. 6 is that the Sons of God are descendents of Seth, and Daughters of Men are the descendents of Cain. This would keep with the them so prominent later on in the OT that God’s people should not intermarry with Caananites or Pagans, because they will turn their hearts away from God towards idols.
6. *What happened to them?* 
   1. The Nephilim were wiped out in Noah’s flood.
7. *Is there such a thing as a guardian angel?*
   1. Yes,
      1. Matt. 18:10 10 “See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven.
      2. Psalm 91:9-12 “ Because you have made the LORD your dwelling place— the Most High, who is my refuge— 10 no evil shall be allowed to befall you, no plague come near your tent. 11 For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. 12 On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.
         1. This is shown to be a messianic psalm in the NT, in which case one could argue it’s only talking about Jesus, not all men.