

I Corinthians First Things First II notes

I Corinthians 6:1-3

The last time we were together we started a small mini-series on what I called “first things” given Paul’s directive to know “last things” like judging the world and judging angels.

- We saw that Satan and angels are among the “First things” since they were here before anything else.
- We also saw that, among the prominent players in the epic called the Bible, Satan wasn’t exactly what we may have believed him to be.
- We saw that Satan is not an *angel* but a *cherub*—a supernatural creature that is of a higher rank and has a different purpose than angels.
- Does it hurt if we call him an angel? Does it matter if you call all four legged creatures “cat”?

We left off with a verse that speaks of Satan’s final demise.

Matthew 25:41

Who and what are the “devil’s angels”?

- I asked you to go home and research your answer.
- I did this because we don’t realize how much of our beliefs are actually just traditional and have no real biblical basis.
- Demons are one of our traditional beliefs that haven’t been challenged, so, we are going to be doing that in future messages.

Who are these fallen angels?

- We cannot accurately speak to the topic of fallen angels until we understand what they were before they fell.
- What were they *first*?

1. Angels – Supernatural creatures created before the material world. **Job 38:4-7**

- Remember, our focus is not on what you or I *believe* angels are, but on what the Bible teaches us about them.
- Angels are mentioned 273 times in half of the books of the Bible (33).

Angels, among other things, are messengers of God—that is what the word “angel” means in both Testaments.

- This presents our first problem with figuring out angels: the name we give them may not be the best.
- “Angel” more refers to what they do as opposed to who they are.
- One of the problems with using the word angel is that ‘angeling’ isn’t all that they do! They have more ministry than just being messengers.
- Another problem with the name angel is that the same word is used in both Testaments to refer to persons who are not “angels.”
- Genesis 32:3** – These were humans but the Hebrew says “angel.”
- Another example: “The Angel of the Lord” often but not always in the Old Testament refers to the preincarnate Christ.
- Malachi 3:1** – This is a clear Messianic passage calling the Messiah a “messenger” or angel. Do you see the problem with the word?

- There are numerous occasions in the New Testament where the Greek word for angel is clearly referring to humans.
- The word messenger/angel is used in several places in Revelation to

refer to what is almost certainly the pastors of churches:

Revelation 2:1

While being messengers is part of what these creatures we call angels do, they also have other functions.

Another word that refers to what they do is in Daniel 4:13; 17; 23.

- "Watcher" means literally "one who does not sleep" in the Aramaic.
- Some still refer to different times of night as "watches" implying that you have to be awake to see them.
- Thus, "watchers" = "awake ones."
- In most of the ancient middle east traditions including the Jewish traditions, they were referred to as those watch or never sleep.
- So we can add "watching" to the function of angels.

We can also add "protecting" to their roles as servants of God.

- Hebrews 1:14; Jesus warned: Matthew 18:10

"Warriors" is also a function of these we call angels: II Thessalonians 1:7-8; Matthew 13:40-42

Messengers, watchers, protectors and warriors are all descriptives of what these creatures **do**.

- What about what they actually **are**?
- The Old Testament has a term that is exclusive to these creatures, but they aren't called this in the New Testament because of the obvious confusion.
- The exclusive term for angels in the Old Testament is "sons of God."

Job 38:4-7

- What is interpreted in English as "angel" is actually the phrase "Ben'ei Elohim" or, literally, "sons of God."
- Again, "Sons of God" is used in the Old Testament to refer to angels exclusively.
- It just simply means God's creations or coming from God.

When you hear the phrase, "sons of God" who do automatically think of? Christians? That is very New Testament of you!

Let's lay this out:

What they are = Sons of God

What they do = deliver messages among other things.

- One is a state of being and the other is a function.
- Our problem is the limitations of our language where we have conflated the function with the person.
- It causes us problems just like calling Satan a fallen angel—not a huge theological issue, but it is not completely accurate.

Let's be alerted to the term "Sons of God" in the Old Testament and how it is translated.

Job 2:1 – They are reporting in, and so is Satan.

- What in devil is the devil doing in Heaven? His job! Attacking people and attacking God.
- Since God requires the death every person who breaks His laws, and

yet here we all are, the “accuser” is allowed to have a place in God’s court.

--If this accuser had his way, we would all be toast, but because God is gracious and merciful, we are not condemned and are not getting what we do deserve.

A special note: “Satan” is not a name here because it comes with the definite article--“the satan” is actually how it reads in the Hebrew.

--The Old Testament doesn’t give him the privilege of a name only a function: “the satan” = “the accuser” or “adversary.”

Last time we read the description of the cherubim: multi-faced, multi-winged, multi-handed and glowing superclass of celestial beings.

--These are amazing in appearance; not to be confused with angels.

What do angels look like? The simple answer is *like men*.

Genesis 18:2-5; 8 – They are clearly recognized as being different, but they eat and walk and are referred to as men not as winged creatures.

--Notice: they have bodies! They are not immaterial strictly speaking.

Genesis 19:1; 5; 15 (angels)

--Could it be possible that our classifications of material/immaterial is not accurate?