

Unbiblical Perceptions of Angels

There is an unusual fascination with angels. Perhaps this is because we know very little about angels. Because of this, much is believed regarding angels that is generated by the culture than is biblical. Think of the popular TV show *Highway to Heaven* or *Touched by An Angel*. Even around Christmas time we think about the Movie *It's A Wonderful Life*.

A Jewish perspective of angels

- Four angels surround God's throne

Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, and Uriel ('Raphael and Uriel' are taken from the apocryphal book of Enoch)

"Some Jewish rabbis taught that the angels were created on the second day; others on the fifth day. They are united in saying that the angels were created before mankind."

¹(Rabbinical teachings are not the Bible.)

"Jews have taught that angels could argue in heaven and when there is "turmoil" in the household above, it affected the "household" below." ²

"Judaism sees Genesis 1:26 as referring to God and angels, in which they were envious of man becoming a potential competitor for God's affections. The angels, then, were against the creation of man." ³

"Judaism is given shape by the writings of rabbis. The Talmud, rabbinic commentary encompassing both Jewish law and legend written in the years between 200 AD to 600 AD. In rabbinic literature angels are depicted as having their own dependence in thought. They argue with God, making a persuasive case that human beings should not be created. The angels argue that people will commit offenses against truth and peace. Since angels' arguments are not refutable – human beings do indeed sin continually

¹ Excerpt from Bible Doctrines, West Coast Baptist College, *Angelology*

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

against both truth and peace. – God dashed to the ground, and creates human beings in spite of their deficiencies. (Genesis Rabbah 8:5)”⁴

Here is a list of archangels as named by the rabbis:

Metatron – All-illuminating

Raziel – Divine wisdom

Tzaphkiel – Understanding

Tzadkiel – Loving-Kindness, Grace

Gabriel – Justice

Uriel – Beauty, Mercy

Haniel – Victory

Michael – Glory

Raphael – Foundation, Healing

Sandlephon – Kingdom

“The Jewish perspective is shrouded in mysticism and based heavily upon rabbinical teachings.”⁵

“According to rabbinic lore, the angel Sandalfon (whose obviously Greek name means something like “brother archangel,” syn=with, adelfos=brother) is tasked with “tying crowns on the divine head” [Talmud Hagigah 13b].” “The midrash depicts this angel as going from synagogue to synagogue the world over, collecting the flowers of Jews’ prayers, weaving them into crowns for the glory of God, who is said to be adorned with Israel’s blessings [Exodus Rabbah 21.4].”⁶ (Jewish Midrash - an ancient commentary on part of the Hebrew scriptures, attached to the biblical text. The earliest Midrashim come from the 2nd century AD, although much of their content is older.)

“Ultimately however, in the Jewish mindset, angels hand an ancillary role. Every year Jews recite during Passover “And the Lord brought us out from Egypt—not by an angel, not by a seraph (fiery angel), and not a messenger but the Holy One alone...”⁷

An Islamic perspective of angels

“They are light-based creatures, created by God to serve and worship God. Belief in angels is one of the beliefs in Islam. Whoever does not believe in any of these 6 faiths or

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ <https://www.anschechesed.org/sharing-gods-crown/>

⁷ Excerpt from Bible Doctrines, West Coast Baptist College, Angelology

beliefs is not a believer (mu'min). These pillars are: belief in God, His angels, His books, His messengers, the Last Day, and that predestination, both good and bad, comes from God.”⁸

“Angels are intangible, sentient (have the capacity to feel) entities, who do not have a free will. Their purpose is to serve God. Being made of light, they can assume almost any form, completely real to the human eye, and traverse a distance just as fast as light or faster.”⁹

“While Iblis (the Arabic Devil/Satan) did disobey God, was expelled from Heaven, and became the avowed enemy of man he was “Jinn” (from whence we get the English word Genie) and not an angel, which is not angelic in any way. They are made of smokeless fire, not light, have free-will, and can disobey or openly defy God.”¹⁰

“There are four archangels whom Muslims are required to acknowledge:
Gabriel – revealed the Qur’an to Muhammad.
Michael – brings thunder/ lightning to earth.
Raphael – signals the judgement day by blowing a horn.
Azrael – angel of death; separates soul from the body.”¹¹

What we see here is a mixture of truth and man’s invention. Some of these beliefs are biblical, while most are not.

“Ibid. is an abbreviation for the Latin word ibīdem, meaning “in the same place”, commonly used in an endnote, footnote, bibliography citation, or scholarly reference to refer to the source cited in the preceding note or list item”¹²

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibid.>