

BC art. 12; Luke 2:8-14; Rev. 20:1-10; The Origin of Angels I. Their Creation II. Their Work III. Their End

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, now that we have entered the Christmas season, angels are not all that uncommon! We see these white, winged beings in many windows and front lawns with their trumpets in hand. But although angels are very common during this season, many people do not really think about the origin of angels nor do they consider their work. The fact remains, many people see angels in the same category as fairies and trolls. Old stories or fables and nothing more. But we need to avoid the heresy of the Sadducees who believed that there was no spirit realm and thus no angelic beings. Today the Scientific Man denies anything that cannot be seen or quantified. While others seek to communicate with spirits like the New Age or Occult religion- hoping that these spirits will aid them or show them the future. In contrast to these false concepts- either a rejection of or worship of- today we see the Biblical origin of angels as we consider BC art. 12. In considering their creation and function we must also avoid speculation- the point is not how big or small an angel might be- but rather what place does Christ give them in this world. So today we see that Jesus reveals the angelic host to be a comfort and example for His people.

I. Their Creation

In our first point we will consider where angels came from- what is their origin? Have they always been there- like God- or do they have a beginning? Our confession states- God created the angels good. The creation of these spiritual beings is evidenced in the fact that before God created anything, there was only God. Since angels are creatures and not God Himself, their coming forth must be during the creation week. Exactly when during the creation week the angels came forth is not expressed stated in Scripture. However, Job 38:7 reads, where you there, Job, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy? There is link between the creation of stars and the singing of the angels- called the sons of God. We find a further link in Rev. 1:20 where the 7 stars that Jesus holds in His hand represent the 7 angels of the 7 churches. So there is link between angels and the heavenly host- the stars up above. So perhaps the angels were created on the 4th day of Creation. But what is clear is that these angels were created good and by God. They are powerful

beings who have a will- and were created with the ability to obey God perfectly. They are more powerful than man- having been clothed with might and splendor. But they were not created in God's image as man was. Since they are created being- being made by God- they must not be worshipped as even the angel in Rev. 22 said, do not worship me because I am a creature like you. It is safe to say that there are angels in this room right now- and likely more angels are here than you or I care to admit! We are in the presence of an angelic host when we praise God! But they remain creatures- powerful but not divine. Speedy but not omni-present. Although created beings – as we are- they are not identical to us. Jesus tells us that they are finite in number- they do not increase- nor do they marry and have children as revealed in Mt. 22. For at the resurrection we will be like the angels in this way- as human procreation will cease. It is also important to remember that although they are real beings, they are not flesh and blood as we are. They are spiritual being- or not of this earth or physical nature. They have taken on the form of a person in the past- looking like a man- but they are swift on the wing and they work outside of the natural laws that limit our movement. But although created good- with great power and privileged to look on God's face- some of these angels did not remain in this perfect state. The devil or satan led a revolt against God. Not satisfied with his position, he tried to overthrow God. Being moved by pride and greed, he fell from his position and God cast him down. Rev. 12:4 speaks of the great red dragon who cast 1/3 of the stars down to earth- this is perhaps a reference to the number of angels that fell- but what is clear is that these were expelled from the presence of God and they are now bound to this earth until their judgement. All of these angelic beings were created by and through Jesus- and their existence is for Jesus as Col. 1 says. Having looked at their creation- and what they are like, we move on to their work.

II. Their Work

Each angel was created unique- as an individual with their own name, position and work. For example, we read of two angel who were named- one Michael and the other Gabriel. If the heavenly stars each have a name, so does each angelic being. So also they have different ranks. Some are seraphim, others cherubim-

and others called archangels or mighty angels as John describes them. There are different principalities and powers. When it comes to the elect angels, as I Tim. 5:2 describes them, these are the good angels who serve as God's messengers- having been sent by God to do and carry out His will in heaven and on earth.

Sometimes these angels are like Gabriel- who are sent from God to bring a message to His people- to announce a message of good news as was brought to the shepherds in Luke 2 or to reassure Mary and Joseph in Mt. 1. These prophetic angels also explain matters to John in Rev. 10- revealing the will of God to His people. Other angels have the expressed purpose of praising God night and day- as Isaiah saw in Isaiah 6- where the seraphim shouted out- declaring the holiness of God night and day. And still other angels are militaristic- like Michael who fought against the Dragon and against the forces of evil that sought to destroy Christ's bride- the church. These mighty angels even engage in warfare in the geo-political realm as they bring about God's will in the rising and falling of nations. It is the faithful, cheerful obedience of these angels that are given as an example in the Lord's Prayer- help us to obey Your will as willingly and cheerfully as the angels do obey your will in heaven. There are other angels who are instruments of God's wrath- who will carry out God's punishment on those who rebel against Him. And although we do not have guardian angels as such, we are surely the benefit of angelic guardians! The very presence of an angelic host is meant to comfort us! Our God has set His army of mighty, spiritual beings around His people- to keep us from the attacks of the evil one! This point should encourage us- because we also know that there are fallen angels at work as well. These fallen angels or devils are just as busy as the elect angels are. The fallen or depraved spirits seek to lead astray, destroy and even hinder the spread of the gospel. These are enemies of God and of everything good! These fill the hearts of men with rebellion- fighting against the church- and even lead nations into war against God's people. They seek to destroy order and peace- to spoil anything good and clean. These need to be resisted- their work stood against! And here is where the comfort of the Holy Spirit returns. He who is in us is greater than He who is in the world as I John 4 says. This means that if the Holy Spirit is in your heart, no devil or evil spirit can get in! When your heart is filled with the Spirit of God- no enemy of darkness can prevail

against you! Added to this fact, Jesus has already crushed Satan's head and He has overcome the world! So as we sang last week, the devil knows that His doom is sure and His end is near! We could say that God ordained the fall of Satan so that Jesus could have a foe to tempt him- and an enemy whom He could crush!

III. Their End

As we come to our last point, we consider the end or the destination of these angelic or spiritual beings. The fallen angels, having already been defeated by Christ on the cross, will one day be fully cast out. As we read in Rev. 20, these enemies of truth will be consumed by God's fire. The devil or the dragon will be thrown into the lake of fire and they will be tormented in hell forever and ever! The devil and his host know what is coming- as revealed in Mt. 8- demons know that punishment is certain and near! So their end will be that of punishment because of their rebellion and sin against the Holy One of Israel! Their destination is the same as that of mankind who refuse to bow the knee and kiss the Son! But not all angels rebelled- many of them remained in their original state of holiness. These elect angels will praise God with us for all eternity. Being sent out by Jesus, the angels will gather the elect from the 4 corners of this earth. And having brought us to our Savior, they will join with us in singing! In a beautiful parallel- Job 38:7 reveals that the angels sang at creation. In Psalm 148 the angels are exhorted to praise God- and in Rev. 7:11 we find that the angels will one day stand around the throne- falling on their faces as these also worship the LORD God of glory! This applies to us as well! If the holy angels cry out- that God is holy! If the blessed angelic spirits who have never sinned and are not saved by the blood of Jesus- if these worship and praise God- how much more we who have been delivered from our sins- who have received salvation by the blood of the Lamb! Must not we also praise God with all our heart! Surely the recipients of salvation have more reason to praise God than those who never fell into sin! Those who received the mystery of the gospel- who today get to taste the bread and the wine- who eat this heavenly food and drink- who are nourished by Jesus body and blood! Surely we will praise God for the riches and grace that we have received! So let us join our hearts and voices with the saint and holy angels- in praising God- because to Him belongs salvation and glory and power!