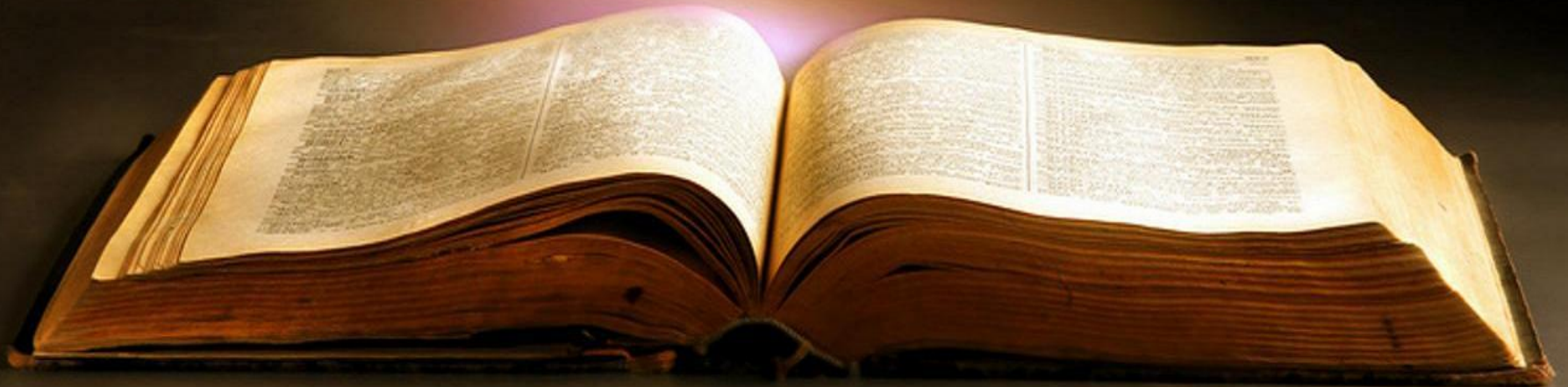


Stow Park Bible Fellowship

Bible Doctrines

Based on the teachings of Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

8. Good Angels



Good Angels

- Last week we began to discuss the Eternal Decrees of God, or the works of God, the activity of God, that is, what God has done, and naturally what comes to mind is God's work of Creation.
- But before we even start on God's Works, Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, whose writings we are basing these discussion on, felt we should look at the **ways in which God does things.**
- And he continues in this way be stating that 'Before we come to deal with the doctrine of Creation there is still another doctrine which we have to consider. We are approaching these great Biblical doctrines in an order which seems to me quite inevitable.'
- 'We are concerned with God – not with man, as the present tendency is. We are concerned with God's revelation of Himself and have considered His being, person, character, etc. and arrived at the great doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and then, naturally we asked: What has God done and how did He plan His actions?'

Good Angels

- So, then, the next question, quite logically, is this:
What was God's first action?
- Here we are speaking, of course from the standpoint of 'time'. It is very clear that before God made the world, or made anything in connection with men and women, He first of all brought into being those heavenly intelligences which are called angels. The Bible makes it clear that angels were in existence even before the creation of the world. Did you ever realise that?
- Let me ask another question I have asked before about other things:
- How often have you heard a sermon on the doctrine of angels?
- Probably never, or very seldom.
- No doubt we have heard very many on the doctrine of 'Salvation' and that is good and proper, but we must not ignore the other doctrines that God is telling us about in His book we call the Bible and so we must look at the doctrine of Angels

Good Angels

- The term ‘angel’ means ‘messenger. It is a word that is not only used with regard to angels, and its use. To describe angels indicates that they are sent as messengers. It was also used by the Son of God Himself. He, as we have seen, was undoubtedly the ‘Angel of the Covenant,’ to whom several references are made in the Old Testament literature.
- But now we are concerned with what is meant by ‘angels’, these bright intelligences, these beings of whom we read in the Scriptures.
- Firstly we learn that angels are created beings. They have not existed from eternity as the Holy Trinity had, but were created by the Son. Paul in Colossians 1:16 under the heading, The Supremacy of Christ, states: ‘For by Him all things were created: things in *heaven* and on earth, visible and *invisible*, whether thrones or powers, or rulers or authorities – all things were created by Him and for Him.’

Good Angels

- So we start by realising that angels are beings that were created by God *before* He created the world.
- Now another thing that has been discussed in the long history of the church is: Do angels have bodies? This question arises because they are referred to as spirits, in the same way as people, after their death, are referred to as spirits.
- These are people not in the body, and that has sometimes led some people to think that the angels have no bodies, Lloyd-Jones considers that is false teaching and that angels have bodies, and as Jesus's human frame became a spiritual body, a glorified body after His resurrection, so angels have a body which is appropriate for their spiritual condition and thus you can account for what are called 'apparitions' or the 'appearances' of angels to different people.
- But they can also appear in the form of human beings. In Genesis 18, for example, we read that 3 men appeared to Abraham, and there are other examples of the same thing.

Good Angels

- For example in Judges 13 at the birth of Samson, an angel came to his father and mother as a person but was able to move in a way that an ordinary, physical, earthly frame cannot move.
- Another question arises: Are the angels sexless? Are they divided into male and female? We cannot be dogmatic about that but in Matthew 22:29-30 we are given evidence of this. Jesus told the Sadducees who had tried to trap Him, “You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God. At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage, they will be like the angels in heaven”.
- However we must also note that the angels are always referred as ‘he’, as if they were masculine.
- Another thing we know for certain is that angels never die – see Luke 20:36 where we are told that believers who have passed on to the final resurrection cannot die, like the angels. They are immortal.

Good Angels

- The last general point about the angels is their status. They are inferior to the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. But, on the other hand, they are superior to man.
- Next we must consider certain names which we find attached to the angels. They are referred to as 'spirits' but in Ephesians 1:21 they are described as 'Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion . . . ' Now when those terms are used, they are always used of angelic beings, both good and bad.
- When Paul, in Ephesians 6:12 talks about wrestling 'not against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world' he is referring to angelic beings, evil angels, and we will deal with them later..
- Another term that is used of angels is 'holy' angels (Luke 9:26). Also as 'the elect' angels and we shall return to this 'elect' later this morning. but just note that only some angels are 'elect' and some not. They are often described as 'ministering' angels . . .

Good Angels

- ...and the crucial statement in the last verse of Hebrews 1, where they are described as ‘ministering spirits’. ‘Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?’ That refers to us, the saved, does it not?
- We must also deal with the descriptive names of Cherubim and Seraphim and in Revelation 4 as the ‘living creatures’ or ‘beasts’.
- The Dr. says: “We cannot now go into all the evidence, but I think we can take it that these terms are synonymous, and all these names probably refer to the same beings. We speak with comparative ignorance, we are told very little about them. But we are told that they have the appearance of different animals, though generally the face of a man.”
- What then, are they? There is no doubt that they belong to this generic category of angels, but they are very special beings.

Good Angels

- They seem to stand for and to typify redeemed and glorified mankind. They seem to be symbolic of the highest properties of created life, and there can be little doubt but that their main function is to minister to us.
- There is a very interesting mention of the Cherubim in Genesis 3:24. “After He drove the man out (of the garden of Eden), (God) placed on the east side of the garden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.”
- The flaming sword, Lloyd-Jones suggests is to prevent man from entering back again into Paradise. He can never go back on his own. There is only one way back, and it is the way that has been opened by the Lord Jesus Christ.
- The next question is: How many angels are there? And the answer in Scripture is very many, countless in number. Jesus said, if He chose He could call on 12 legions to defend himself. (Mat.26:53). Also the shepherds saw ‘a multitude of the heavenly host’.

Good Angels

- And Revelation 5:11 states ‘that there are thousands upon thousands, a great, mighty host, a myriad of those angelic beings.
- And that leads us to the next question, are there Rankings among the angels? Are they all identical? Are they equal in power and authority?
- It seems quite clear that there is a division both in status and in work. For instance we read of one who is described as ‘the archangel, the chiefest of all, the supreme angel.
- The word only appears twice, but it is important to notice it. In 1 Thes. 4:16 we read “For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.”
- The other reference is in Jude, the 9th verse gives him a name by stating:” But even the archangel, Michael.

Good Angels

- So we must therefore realise that the archangel is called Michael and that name is also given to the archangel in Daniel 10 where he has a special relationship with the children of Israel.
- There is one other angel with a name and that is, of course, Gabriel who stands in the presence of God waiting as it were, to be given a message, and he was given messages, one to Mary the mother of Jesus telling her of all that was going to happen to her.
- And the other message was to Zacharias that his wife was to have a baby called John (the Baptist).
- There is obviously, therefore, some kind of order or ranking. Indeed all of God's work shows an order, a planned progression of order.
- Matt.22:30 tells us that we are to be like the angels in heaven, meaning the 'good angels' (we shall deal with the bad angels later).

Good Angels

- Matthew 18:10 also tells us that “See that you do not look down on one of these little ones (little children) for I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.”
- So the angels dwell in heaven but what else do we know of their business or purpose? What do they do?
- The 5th chapter of Revelation tells us that we will find them singing God’s praise, worshipping God and the Lamb and adoring Him. Beholding the face of God looking for the slightest indication of the will of God.
- They spend time in looking into the question of our salvation. 1 Peter 1:12 “It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel (of Salvation) to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look on those things.”

Good Angels

- The Bible teaches us that God uses His angels as the instrument of His will. For example we are told that the law was given to the children of Israel through the medium of angels. We read in Hebrews 2:2 “For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation?” and similar verses are in Galatians 3:19 and Acts 7:53 the work of the angels is to reveal God’s purposes.
- Another function of the angels was to reveal God’s purposes through them. For example, God revealed to Abraham His purpose with regard to Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen:18) and He revealed his will to Jacob more than once in the same way.
- Also Gideon, and in the New Testament, Zachariah and to Joseph, not to worry about Mary and it was an angel that told Joseph to flee to Egypt and then later told him to come out of Egypt.

Good Angels

- All messages delivered from God to humans.
- I think that we are entitled to realise that the greatest function of angels is to minister to you and to me, the heirs of God's salvation.
- Surely, are we not always finding coincidences when things happen that we cannot understand, when we meet someone whom we have been thinking about, etc.
- Are these not arrangements from God's will delivered to us by His messengers, His angels?
- What about the protection of angels? Psalm 91:9-10 states, 'If you make the Most High your dwelling – even the Lord, who is my refuge – then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent, for He will command his angels concerning you to guard all your ways.' We may find that difficult to believe, but there it is in the Bible. And many examples of this are also there.

Good Angels

- All messages delivered from God to humans.
- The Good Angels still have 2 more functions. First, we are told that they execute God's judgments on God's enemies. What a great chapter Acts 12 is. It was an angel that delivered Peter from prison: "Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him When they had walked the length of the street, suddenly the angel left him . . . now I know without a doubt that the Lord sent His angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches", said Peter.
- Then in the same chapter further on, we read: "and immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died."
- This brings us to their final work, which is this: the good angels, we are told, function at the final judgment and we need to go to Matthew 13 to discover what Jesus said.

Good Angels

- In the parable of the Tares (Weeds) Jesus says in verse 49: “This is how it will be at the end of the age. The one of heaven’s angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”
- Again in Matthew 24:30: “at that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather His elect from the four winds from one end of the heavens to the other.”
- I hope you will agree that to ignore the Doctrine of the Good Angels will be our loss. Again you may not fully understand all this but remember Good Angels are ministering spirits of God, appointed and sent to minister to us, the heirs of heaven.