

San Juan Church of Christ

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What Does God's Word Say About... Origin of Angels and Satan

Angels were created by God (Col. 1:16) and are spiritual in nature. God does not create anything evil, therefore the purpose for angels was to accomplish GOOD and not evil. They were created before God formed the earth and the physical world that mankind requires to exist. When God spoke to Job, He asked "Where were you [Job] when I laid the foundation of the earth?" Three verses later God told Job that while He was creating this physical realm "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy;" (Job 38:4-7). These verses indicate that angels were present, and were not evil, at the creation of the earth as they "shouted with joy" over the creation. In the Old Testament, "the sons of God" were angels who were obedient to God. "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them." (Job 1:6). Satan assembles here in the presence of God among the sons of God. That Satan would come into God's presence with the sons of God suggests that Satan was a peer of theirs. That is, Satan had once been one of the sons of God until he became proud and disobedient to God.

However, in the New Testament, obedient children of God are always referred to as "sons of God," (Gal. 3:26, 4:6-7). Angels are referred to either as ministering spirits sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation (Heb. 2:14) or in Satan's case, he and his demons are always called the enemy of all righteousness (Acts 13:10).

Apparently angels, before the creation of the earth, called "morning stars," had not yet "fallen." The apostle John wrote, "I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth." (Rev. 9:1) referring to Satan and his demons' expulsion from heaven. John described this process, "and there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon [Satan] ...and the great dragon was thrown down [to earth] ...and Satan who deceives the whole world... and his angels were thrown down with him." (Rev. 12:7-9). We know it was Satan, in the form of a serpent, who deceived Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, and began his evil work (Gen. 3:4-7; John 8:44).

Angels were created with free will and have the ability to choose whether or not they would obey God. It seems that pride may have caused Satan's fall as Paul wrote when installing new elders in the church, that the elders should not be "a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into condemnation incurred by the devil," (1 Tim 3:6). This verse indicates that Satan had a problem with humility. Satan and his demons chose to be disobedient to God, and disobedience is always evil, just as humans can also choose disobedience and do evil things.

When speaking to mankind, the writer of Hebrews said, "every transgression and disobedience will receive a just penalty, how will we [mankind] escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" (Heb. 2:2-3) "For He did not subject to angels the world to come [the plan of salvation for mankind] ...For assuredly He does not give help to angels [salvation]," (Heb. 2:5, 16). God respects His creation enough to allow His created beings to choose for themselves who they will serve. This applies to His angels and to mankind.

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