

CTL Meeting 12-Angels and Devils

1/30/15

What is the difference between spiritual beings and material beings?

“Material” refers to anything made out of matter, is part of the natural universe and is subject to its laws. “Spiritual” refers to a form of existence outside of the material world. Humans are both material and spiritual and angels are only spiritual.

What are angels and devils?

“Angels are intellectual beings of pure spirit (i.e, without material body) created by God at the beginning of time... They have a higher dignity than man and were endowed with sanctifying grace to enable them to merit, after a period of probation, the happiness of the vision of God” (from *Apologetics and Catholic Doctrine* by Archbishop Michael Sheehan).

Devils are angels who sinned against God through some sin of pride and were cast away into Hell as a result. They were created good, but became bad due to their own choice.

How could they have rebelled against God, even when they knew God so deeply?

One idea that theologians have suggested is that the angels were given foreknowledge of God becoming man through Jesus Christ, but angels always had superiority over humanity. The fallen angels, in their pride, refused to worship Jesus, due to His “inferior” humanity, and thus fell.

Is Satan omniscient?

Satan is a creation of God’s, and is not God himself, therefore, he is not omniscient. He is vastly more powerful and knowing than any human being, but he is still limited and his power is not greater than that of some of the angels who serve God.

Does God love Satan?

Yes. Love is more of a choice than an emotion. God chooses to love all beings that he has created, including Satan.

Does God have power over Satan and the devils/demons?

Yes. God treats Satan and the fallen angels in a similar way as He treats humans who perform evil acts: He allows them to happen out of His respect for our free will, but He acts to limit the damage done by them and bring good out of evil.

How come if angels and demons/devils exist, do they seem to have no effect on the modern world?

Angels and demons/devils both have effects on this world in a variety of ways. Every human has a guardian angel, that protects us from demons and our own sinful inclinations. As we obey God’s commands, we may encounter Angels without even realizing it. “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” Hebrews 13:2

Demons can affect the modern world through spiritual possession and instigating deception. When one turns to the guidance of fallen spirits, such as “calling upon spirits”, using an ouija board, attempting to work magic, etc, they open themselves to demonic influence and deception.

Are angels humanoid? Do angels have wings?

Angels are not material beings; they are pure spirits. Thus, any physical appearance they might have is something they have taken on to communicate with people, rather than an actual body, so they have no specific appearance.

How do we know that angels exist?

Since we know there are material things and things both material and spiritual (as we are), we can logically infer the possibility of purely spiritual beings, which is confirmed by Divine Revelation. Angels are mentioned hundreds of time in Scripture, and appear throughout it in various roles: for example, bringing God's instructions to the Israelites in the Old Testament, appearing praising God in visions of Heaven (such as Revelation and Isaiah), and in the New Testament, bringing God's messages to Mary and Joseph, and the Apostles.

How do we know demons exist?

Like with angels, demons are mentioned many places in the Bible, especially in the New Testament. Two examples of this are Mark 1:21-28 and Matthew 8:28-34.

Why did God create angels?

One reason is that because Angels do not have man's shortcomings, they are able to act for God and represent him when speaking with men and women. "They bridge the huge gap between the holiness and perfection of God in heaven and the shortcomings of dying people on this planet."

Can demons interact with the physical world without possessing someone?

Yes. The exact nature and extent of this power is unclear, but they do have some power to act on material objects. However, their power is finite and they cannot do many things that only God can, such as raise someone from the dead or create a substance from nothing.

What is an exorcism and how do they work?

Depending on how the word is being used, it can mean either the act of driving off (or simply warding off) demons from people, places or things; or the means used to accomplish said goal. In the Catholic Church, an exorcism as the term is most commonly used refers to driving off demons from those who are possessed by them. You can look up the last two links in the list at the bottom for a more in-depth description of the term exorcism and what is done in preparation for, and during, exorcisms within the Catholic Church.

Selected Bibliography:

<http://www.catholic.com/quickquestions/how-could-lucifer-an-archangel-have-rebelled-against-god>

<http://www.catholic.com/video/did-satan-know-jesus-was-divine>

<http://www.catholic.com/quickquestions/angels-as-depicted-on-holy-cards-are-just-ancient superstitions-right>

http://www.tanbooks.com/doct/angels_devils.htm

<http://www.catholic.com/encyclopedia/exorcism>

<http://www.catholic.com/magazine/articles/interview-with-an-exorcist>

<http://www.catholic.com/quickquestions/did-st-francis-of-assisi-become-an-angel-after-his-death>

Do we become angels or demons/devils when we die, depending on where we go?

No. Angels are an entirely separate set of beings from people. It is impossible for a human to become an angel, or an angel to become a human being (although one might pretend to be one, or appear as one, in order to communicate with someone).

Did demons/devils and angels always exist?

No. Angels and devils are beings created by God, so they are not eternal in the way He is, having always existed. However, they are eternal in the sense that the human soul is, in that having been created, they will never cease to exist and will continue to exist for all eternity. As mentioned above, they were created before man.

Is there a hierarchy of angels?

There does seem to be, since different names and titles for angels are given in the Bible, and most theologians have seen these as corresponding to different ranks in a hierarchy. However, while there have been different proposals by theologians, there is no definite teaching on how this is structured.

Source: Apologetics and Catholic Doctrine

Are angels perfect?

They are not perfect like God is, being limited and finite beings. If they could be called perfect in any sense, those that are in Heaven with God are perfect in the sense of being sinless.

What is a guardian angel?

A Guardian Angel is an angel who accompanies a person throughout his or her life and helps him or her to resist temptation and evil, and adds his intercession to that person's prayers. Every person has their own Guardian Angel.

Source: Apologetics and Catholic Doctrine

Do angels have genders?

1. Named angels in the Bible all have "male" names: Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, and Lucifer--are artistic symbolism
2. Angels are purely spiritual and without physical bodies, so they do not have reproductive genders