**A Concise Doctrine of Angels – Kevin DeYoung**

Angels are more important in the Bible than we often realize. By one count, there are seventeen books in the Old Testament that reference angels and seventeen books in the New Testament that reference angels, with 273 total references. Let’s look at several things angels are and then several things angels do.

***First, what are angels?***

**1.** Angels are created beings accountable to their Creator. Some angels fell; we call them demons. Those that didn’t, we call angels. The present reality of “good” angels and “bad” angels appears to be fixed in that we do not hear of further defections nor of the possibility of redemption.

**2.** The nature of an angel is spirit. Augustine made the point that “angel” is their office, spirit is their nature. Angels are personal spirits who sometimes appear in bodily forms (cf. Heb. 13:1).

**3.** Angels are intelligent creatures. They speak and act, although they are not made in the image of God. In fact, angels will be judged by believers (1 Cor. 6:3). They are not superhuman as much as they are suprahuman (beyond human beings).

**4.** Angels have personal names. We know two of those names: Gabriel and Michael. The Apocrypha mentions five others: Raphael, Sariel, Uriel, Raguel, and Remiel (note: the suffix el is short for Elohim, or God).

**5.** There are different kinds of angels. Michael is called an archangel in Jude 9. He fights against the devil in Revelation 12:7. Gabriel is the other named angel and is traditionally considered another archangel. Cherubim and seraphim are sometimes called “throne room angels” because they are associated with guarding God’s presence in the tabernacle and in the temple.

6. Angels are more glorious than human beings in some ways (Ps. 8:5), but their glory should not be exaggerated. Angels are wise and powerful, but they are neither omniscient nor omnipotent.

***Second, what do angels do?***

Here we can also make six points. **(1)** Angels are guardians. They guard Eden, the ark, and God’s people. **(2)** Angels are bridges between two worlds. Think of Jacob’s ladder or Jesus’s word about seeing the angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man. **(3)** Angels are intermediaries, like at the giving of the law (Gal. 3:19). **(4)** Angels are messengers. That’s what the word means in Hebrew and in Greek. Angels bring messages to Joseph, to Mary, and to Paul. They interpret divine messages for Daniel. **(5)** Angels are patrol officers. They walk the earth (Zech. 1) and serve as agents of divine justice (2 Sam. 24; Acts 12:2). **(6)** Angels are servants. They guide God’s people (Acts 8:26) and care for God’s people (1 Kings 19:5–6). They also ministered to Christ. Angels attended Jesus at every key moment of his life and ministry: they were there at his conception, his birth, his temptation in the wilderness, his trial in the garden, and at the empty tomb.

If one danger is to make angels (role players in the Bible) into the stars of the show, the other danger is that we ignore angels altogether, smiling at their part in the Christmas pageant each year, but other than that hardly thinking about them. This too would be a mistake.