

Origin of the Heavenly Host

By Jeremy Lucas

Introduction

If indeed you are reading this in season, many have begun to wrap presents, relax by the fireplace, and prepare for the chilly season that's upon us (albeit not for those of us in Florida). The story of Christ's birth, the shepherds, the wise men, and two humble parents will be read from every pulpit in one way or another. Perhaps you'll hear a fresh perspective of Christmas or maybe you'll hear the same story given through a new voice. In either case, it would be an honor if you might sit for a little while and give consideration to what I'm about to suggest. So go grab that egg nog, that apple cider, that hot chocolate, or a traditional cup of coffee and prepare for a relatively lengthy study into the Christmas Story that may indeed be a first (you may want to print it out and read it in parts).

Part One: The Theoretical Creation of Angels

Recently I came across a discussion in which the participants were asking themselves about the absent story of the angels. They knew that Revelation spoke about their fall, that Ezekiel spoke about Lucifer, and that something big happened at some point in heaven. The vague passages in reference are these:

Something "big" happened:

"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels," Revelation 12:7

Lucifer's Story:

"Thou [wast] perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee." Ezekiel 28:15-17

The Fall in Revelation:

"And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born." Revelation 12:4

"And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." Revelation 12:9

We can probably all safely say that these are commonly accepted truths among most in Christianity. And it all culminates around this unknown "war in heaven." For it is at the conclusion of this war that Satan is cast out into the earth and his angels with him. So we then ask ourselves, when did the war happen? And even more foundational... when were the angels created so as to imply the potential for a war? There are several theories.

Theory #1: The Gap Theory

Some have said reasonably that there is potential for two earths to have been formed between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness [was] upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Genesis 1:1-2

The idea, of course, being that the earth was created, but that it became (was) void of life. Equally, that because darkness was upon face of the deep, light had been darkened (as we know God is Light). It wouldn't exactly make sense that God create something dark if the only thing possible for reflection is light, correct? This is where the famed Gap Theory comes from in many circles. I have tended to lean in this direction on certain points, but it always falls back to circumstantial and theoretical.

Theory #2: Flight of the Fifth Day

Some have said that quite possibly, angels were created on the day that fowls were able to fly over the earth.

"And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl [that] may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven." Genesis 1:20

This fifth day would indicate and suggest that nothing could fly beforehand and thus, angels would fit into the category of fowls. I find this quite a stretch seeing as angels were always able to do much more and represent much more than just flight.

Theory #3: They Saw It All

Some have gone as far as to say that the angels were there before it all. Essentially, that they saw every day of creation unfold.

"Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" Job 38:4-7

Keeping in tune with the passage in Job, this theory actually makes quite a bit of sense, but only if we were to assume that the "laying of earth's foundations" was day one. If we suppose that the laying of earth's foundations took place over the course of several days, then it is quite possible for these "morning stars" to have sung during the course of the laying... not preceding any first motion of God's hand. What makes this notion improbable is the very point of God's message to Job... that he was not there during the creation of the world (the entire process).

If you survey a number of scholars and Biblical students, you'll find that many have a theory, but most ascribe to something that has been passed down when they asked the question themselves. For if they ask the question, "When were angels created," the recipients of the question generally hate to leave the answer unknown. Why not give the best educated guess, right? Certainly.

Part Two: The Biblical Model of an Angel

What I propose now is going to be quite different and quite possibly more unexpected than anything you saw above (and some of the above are very odd). We all wonder about these things from time to time, but then resign ourselves to the age old conclusion, "Guess I'll ask God when I see Him." Yet, sometimes the most profoundly complicated things that we often denote as impossible to understand end up being the most plain truths that we simply couldn't see before. Eternity is a great example. When you try to conceive of it within the ticking clock you live in, how can you fathom its depth? But when you recognize that eternity is outside of physical property of time, how much more does your mind open? Quite a bit.

"For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ." II Corinthians 2:16

Believe it or not, we have access through the very Word of God to nearly every mystery we've ever wanted to understand but didn't. Sometimes the secrets that seem so mysterious remain locked no matter how hard we search. Sometimes it is outside our ability to unlock them. Yet sometimes... a mystery, when made plain, unlocks other mysteries that seemed so elusive.

Let's return to the question of angelic origin.

Biblically speaking...

When you think of a pastor, how quickly do you think of a shepherd?

When you think of your body, how quickly do you think of a temple?

When you think of the Word, how quickly do you think of a sword?

When you think of God's People, how quickly do you think of sheep?

Each of these terms that come to mind are often connected immediately to our present condition. We think of a pastor and we envision someone we know. We think of our body and we think of our health. We think of the Word and we think of our leather-bound Bible. It takes a moment for us to draw

parallels that Scripture draws for us in many cases. All of us would agree that a pastor is a shepherd. All of us would agree that the body is a temple. All of us would agree that the Word is a Sword. But why do we agree so quickly?

Scripture is full of models. On occasion, those models are, in actuality, the very object that is being referred. In fact, sometimes we see dual terms being used in the same passage interchangeably so as to indicate that they are the same thing when we speak.

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost [which is] in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" I Corinthians 6:19

"And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things." Mark 6:34

Interchangeable terms.

What of the angels, then? Is there a point in all this?

"The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches." Revelation 1:20

In the final chapter of Scripture, we see another interchangeable term. The "stars" are the "angels."

Often we imagine every angel as though they were consistently formed as men with feet, fingers, toes, heartbeats, and hunger pains. Why do we see them in this way? Because they have taken on human form within the Scripture. We know angels to be very "human" in their manner on earth. But what of their creation? Were they created as a form of human beings... just better? Were they created as a being of higher intelligence... only destined to fall with no hope? Again, what of their creation?

Let's first look at some clear Biblical references we have to the stars in relationship to angels.

"When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" Job 38:7

"For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:" Isaiah 14:13

Most of us would concede that Lucifer was indeed "brightness" of light based on the passage in Ezekiel quoted earlier in this article. What assures us that he was bright beyond that passage?

"Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light." Psalm 148:3

That's the essence of the star. But even more unique, the purpose of the star is to light up the night.

"The moon and stars to rule by night: for his mercy [endureth] for ever." Psalm 136:9

Part Three: The Origin of Angels

All of this so far has been to lead into the origin of such a creation.

Day Four:

"And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: [he made] the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that [it was] good. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day." Genesis 1:16-19

On day four, the stars are created. To do what? To rule over the night. That the light of the night continues to reflect the greater light of the day.

But what's fascinating about this, of course, is that on day four, God saw that the creation of the stars was good. The stars were created to "give light upon the earth." The point, of course, is that initially, every star was set in its place in heaven.

"When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;" Psalm 8:3

"He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by [their] names." Psalm 147:4

Every star ordained in its place and called by name.

"When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" Job 38:7

If you can imagine... a time when the stars sang TOGETHER.

Both past and present astronomers who have studied the stars can often be found as saying that the appearance and brightness of certain stars will fade at random. As though certain stars that once shone bright are now as black as night. Without form. Without light. What is the ultimate end of the stars that we read in Scripture?

"And when I shall put thee out, I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light." Ezekiel 32:7

First of all, God has the ability and control over the stars to give and take away their ability to contain light. They themselves are not the light, for it is not in them.

"Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." Jude 1:13

It is the "wandering stars" that have a reservation. For them, the reservation is with blackness forever. Never shining light again. Meaning what? That even now, those "wandering stars" still reflect light so as to provide the illusion that they are as pure as the other stars they accompany. Yet the truth remains...

"Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in his sight." Job 25:5

Have you ever just stopped long enough to imagine the stars in the sky? Scripture says that they are as the sand of the sea. Abraham is told to look up into the heavens and behold the stars as a comparison to the descendants he will bear. Many, many, many. Beyond what can be counted, in fact. So the stars are innumerable... are the angels as well?

"But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels," Hebrews 12:22

Indeed they are beyond measurable number.

Perhaps you ask yourself, "But what is the point? So the angels are the stars?" Would you potentially step back and ask that question again? Am I saying that the angels ARE the stars?

Think about that for a second. What do you know angels to be beyond the earth? On earth they are as men (having our form). In the heavens, what form do they have? This is the question most valuable.

In Jacob's dream, he saw the following:

"And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it." Genesis 28:12

Jacob was not seeing this in actuality, he was seeing this in a dream. What kind of a ladder would give access to the stars (if indeed we agree that the angels are stars)? The three major Egyptian Pyramids at Giza are aligned to the three stars in Orion's belt. Orion, having a name, and being a Biblical star... is of considerable mention.

"Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south." Job 9:9

"Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?" Job 38:31

"[Seek him] that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The LORD [is] his name:" Amos 5:8

Orion, as we see here is a powerful star, if not one of the most powerful. Access to and from the earth via a "ladder" would not be absurd. But I digress.

The notion of the ladder is its own discussion for another time. What's important right now is to consider each star as having a name, having an ordained purpose, and having a certain brightness given by God who can giveth and taketh away. Thus we arrive at Christmas. If you've made it with me this far, then perhaps you'll come on board for the last stretch.

Part Four: A Christmas Night.

Join me, if you will, in Luke 2:8-16.

"And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night." Luke 2:8

The dark of "night." Shepherds keeping an eye out over their flock. Stillness. What do you imagine is above them without even reading further? The stars, correct? Generally silent and merely lighting up the night as they have been ordained. The idea that they would speak... unlikely.

"And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid." Luke 2:9

The glory of the Lord "shone" around them. The light became so bright that they were afraid. Why? Because it was night. And if the light of the Lord were to shine at its fullest, it would no longer be as night. Stars are not generally THE light in the heavens and as such, they can only tend to be so bright. On this occasion, the light was unusually strong. What's more, the light was no longer distant, but "shone around them."

So they were afraid.

"And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." Luke 2:10

Right now we typically envision our storybook images of an angel with wings fluttering and perhaps hovering several yards above the earth. And while that is entirely possible, what if once again, we are referring to an interchangeably termed star that is speaking out of the ordinary? An angel, yes, but also a star.

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this [shall be] a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." Luke 2:11-12

The traditional view of verse 12 suggests that the "sign" is a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes. Again, while that is entirely possible, what of the alternative sign? A star as bright as the one now speaking... a star that will stand above the location of the child? Was there not a star above Bethlehem?

Verse 16 will give us reason to accept the "swaddling clothes" sign moreso, but it is still quite a retooled version of what the shepherds would have seen that night.

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Luke 2:13-14

A multitude of the heavenly host. The "heavenly host" is so often associated with something that men tend to worship and become fascinated by. Let's turn to the Old Testament for a moment.

"And they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made them molten images, [even] two calves, and made a grove, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal." II Kings 17:16

"For he built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel; and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them." II Kings 21:3

"And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD." II Kings 21:5

What was it that men in that day worshipped? The stars. Unsure?

"And he put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven." II Kings 23:5

Here we see mention of the sun, the moon, the planets... what's missing? What do we always see in the rest of Scripture when the sun and moon are mentioned? The stars. Thus we have the host of heaven being equivalent to the stars.

"As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured: so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me." Jeremiah 33:22

Sound familiar? The host of heaven cannot be numbered. Neither can the stars. Equal? I'd say so.

As a quick side note... If the host of heaven was not to be worshipped and the host of heaven are the stars, what would we make of the following no-no by our Apostle Paul?

"Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind," Colossians 2:18

Let's return to Luke:

"And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger." Luke 2:15-16

The angels were "gone away" into heaven. At which point they become what? Something different than they already are? Another form? I suggest that they did not simply disappear, but fell back into their place in the heavens. That they became as the stars once again.

Everything has a place and a position both in heaven and on earth.

"And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." Jude 1:6

The first estate is their home. Their habitation. They must maintain their position. But for your consideration, let me ask this as well. If you are a star, what is the worst punishment that you could receive?

Utter darkness. Especially a darkness that will never give way to light. For without access to light, you would have nothing to reflect.

Conclusion

As you finish your drink, your cider, or your coffee, I end on the following notions to consider.

The angels were indeed created. Thus, we have a Biblical responsibility to consider when they were created. We can safely say that the angels are the stars and as such, they were created on the Fourth Day.

The stars were created to rule the night. Not initially ordained as a means of serving the darkness, but rather, that their light would reflect the greater light and protect the earth from being without light during the night. Truly a counted privilege for some of them.

At one time, all the stars sang together in one accord. United. With 1/3 of them desiring to be as bright as the source... they no longer sang in unity. Those that were removed from their heavenly position were sent to earth with characteristics of their heavenly condition, but no longer being the embodiment of a star.

The stars are as immeasurable and innumerable as the sand on the seashore and as Abraham's descendants.

The ability of a star to shine is dependant upon the source. God controls the brightness of each star.

In the Christmas Story, what's significant about the angelic appearance is that it happened at night when a "star" can shine the brightest. The story suggests a likely shifting between the form of a star and the form of an angel. Same creation? Absolutely. Same characteristics? Absolutely. Just different forms.

The evaluation of angels from a Biblical standpoint is not equivalent to the worship of angels as practiced within Old Testament Scriptures. We often hear the notion that if you "think too much" about the angels, you're crossing a line. The danger isn't in studying what Scripture says about them... the danger is in beginning to worship them more than their Creator. Hopefully you've seen in this study that they are indeed quite dependant upon the greater light and have no such significance that would earn our worship.

No "Christmas Example" thus far has been given without the already known potential for error. Parts 1-3 were given that the reader might begin to look over other areas of Scripture where stars and angels are mentioned to draw their own applicable assessment. Christmas itself has several Biblical examples with which to evaluate. Any effort on the part of a reader to bring forward other stories of similar merit would be welcome.

We could dig much, much further into the manner of the stars and their earthly counterparts, but as this is Christmas, look at your Christmas tree for a moment. Of the two most popular items to put at the top, which did you chose? An angel or a star?