

# DAILY DOSE OF DOCTRINE

November 19 - 23, 2007



**November 19, 2007**

**Made to Work**

*“The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.”<sup>1</sup>*

Work can be something we idolize or demonize. Some ‘live to work’, giving it all of their time, energy and devotion; their identity is found in it and if they are unable to work they feel lost. Others ‘work to live’, doing the minimum to get by and finding no satisfaction in areas that of necessity occupy much of their time.

Made in the image of God, we were created to work. That labour was to have been entirely in keeping with our unique personalities and God’s purposes for us. It was to have been part of what made life fulfilling and joyful. It would have been in tune with God, others and the natural world around us.

One of the effects of the Fall was to alienate humans from their work. Work became ‘toil’<sup>2</sup> and we struggle to find satisfaction in it and keep it in balance.

In Christ, as part of the new Kingdom restoration of Creation, we see glimpses of work as it should be in the way he distributes spiritual gifts within the body of Christ.<sup>3</sup> In the work of building his Kingdom each of us has unique gifts that we are to use interdependently and faithfully.

In the next life, we may anticipate a full restoration of work as God designed it to be for us.<sup>4</sup> Heaven will probably not be an eternal cruise in the Caribbean, but a joyful balance of work, rest, relationships, etc., as God restores human life as it was meant to be.

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 2:15 (TNIV)

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 3:17-19

<sup>3</sup> 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4, Romans 12

<sup>4</sup> Isaiah 65:24

**November 20, 2007**

**Made to 'Rest'**

*"By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done."<sup>1</sup>*

The Sabbath – the day of rest – is a Creation 'thing'. Though prominent among the Ten Commandments, it goes back to the way God designed things to be in that state of perfection before the Fall.

God himself rested on the Sabbath day. He did not 'need' to rest because he was tired, because he hated his job or because doing so would improve productivity. He rested because it was 'good' to rest. It was an opportunity to savour all the glories of the things that he had done thus far; to value and celebrate and enjoy what he had made.

If God found it good to rest on the seventh day, so would we. Made in God's image, we would benefit from savouring/experiencing/enjoying his blessings: the natural world around us, the things we have accomplished, the people God has placed in our lives, etc.

Resting in this way would also put us in 'sync' with God. He 'blessed the seventh day and made it holy'. He set it apart from the ordinary things of life to be special, sacred. Instead of encountering God in sacred 'spaces', he invites us to encounter him in sacred 'time' – a holy 'time-zone' of rest.

If we seek to honour God by giving of our finances and service, but cannot rest with him, we have

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 2:2-3 (NIV)

missed a great opportunity for fellowship. We also deny something that is at the core of human life itself.  
November 21, 2007      **Creator of the Angels**

*“For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.”<sup>1</sup>*

The Bible focuses on God’s relationship with us and so does not give us details about the creation of the ‘heavenlies’ or of angels. However it does show the latter in action and gives us hints about them.

Angels, like us, are creatures made by God.<sup>2</sup> Exactly when that creation took place is unknown, but they existed as God shaped the earth.<sup>3</sup> They are not divine and they are not to be worshipped.<sup>4</sup>

While angels have a beginning, they would appear to be immortal, not subject to death.<sup>5</sup> But there is a significant debate as to whether they are purely ‘spiritual beings’. Jesus refers to them as ‘*pneumata*’, ‘spirits’ or ‘spiritual beings’<sup>6</sup>, and revealed that they are not ‘flesh and blood’<sup>7</sup>. They can also be in great numbers in a very limited space and they are usually invisible to us.<sup>8</sup> Whether they have ‘airy’ or ‘fiery’ bodies<sup>9</sup> is something we cannot confirm. Whatever their natures, they are able to appear to us and they seem to have a freer ability to move across space than we do. However their

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<sup>1</sup> Colossians 1:16 (TNIV)

<sup>2</sup> Col. 1:16; Psalm 148:2,5

<sup>3</sup> Job 38:7

<sup>4</sup> Rev. 22:8-9; Col. 2:18

<sup>5</sup> Luke 20:35-36 The Bible does not specifically indicate that only good angels are immortal. It makes the comparison that the righteous in heaven will be like them – immortal.

<sup>6</sup> Matt. 8:16; 12:45; Luke 7:21, etc. Also Eph. 6:12; Heb. 1:14

<sup>7</sup> Luke 24:39

<sup>8</sup> Luke 8:30; Col. 1:16

<sup>9</sup> As suggested by Jewish and some early Christian writers.

movements would indicate that they are finite: they cannot be in two places simultaneously.  
November 22, 2007 **Angels: Rational and Free**

*“Praise him, all his angels;  
praise him, all his heavenly hosts.  
Let them praise the name of the LORD,  
for at his command they were created”<sup>1</sup>*

Like humans, angels were created as rational beings with the ability to make free moral choices.

Angels are intelligent, with the capacity to know and learn. Their knowledge is more extensive than ours, but they are not omniscient (all knowing).<sup>2</sup> Angels are more powerful than we are and they are to be treated with great respect.<sup>3</sup> Collectively, they form a host or army of mighty beings who either do the Lord’s will or seek to oppose it.<sup>4</sup>

We know very little about the original moral state of the angels or the rebellion of some of them against the rule of God.<sup>5</sup> As part of God’s ‘good’ creation, they were originally righteous, but chose to reject God’s lordship, following Lucifer<sup>6</sup> into rebellion, apparently out of pride.

Most discussions of the time and nature of the fall of the angels are based on pure speculation. Suffice it to say that the angels have the freedom to choose between good and evil. Some chose the latter. Most others, the ‘holy angels’ or ‘angels of light’, continue to dwell in the presence of God and are positive

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<sup>1</sup> Psalm 148:2,5 (TNIV)

<sup>2</sup> 2 Sam. 14:20; Matt. 24:36; Eph. 3:10; 1 Peter 1:12

<sup>3</sup> 2 Peter 2:11

<sup>4</sup> E.g. Ps. 103:20-21; Luke 11:21

<sup>5</sup> 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6

<sup>6</sup> See Isaiah 14:12 in KJV

examples for us of those who freely, zealously live to do his will.<sup>1</sup>

November 23, 2007    **Angels: Number & Ranks**

*“His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms.”<sup>2</sup>*

The Bible does not give us a ‘census’ of angelic numbers, except to indicate that they exist in the millions: *“Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders.”<sup>3</sup>*

Angels apparently exist in different classes and ranks. Cherubim are mentioned frequently. Their role appears to be that of revealing and guarding the majesty and glory of God. They were set to guard the entrance to Eden after the Fall, to watch over the mercy-seat in the Tabernacle/Temple and they bear God, like a chariot, on occasion, when he descends to earth.<sup>4</sup> Seraphim<sup>5</sup> stand as servants about the heavenly throne, singing God’s praises and waiting to do his bidding. The New Testament also speaks of various classes of angels: principalities, powers, thrones, dominions and powers.<sup>6</sup> The terms appear to refer to various ranks and responsibilities, but their exact meaning and roles is unclear.

Gabriel and Michael are the only two angels mentioned by name and appear to be of the highest ranks. Gabriel appears in roles mediating and

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Corinthians 11:14; Matthew. 6:10; 18:10

<sup>2</sup> Ephesians 3:10 (TNIV)

<sup>3</sup> Revelation 5:11 (TNIV) See Deut. 33:2; Ps. 68:17; Matt. 26:53

<sup>4</sup> Gen. 3:24; Ex. 25:18; Ps. 80:1; 2 Sam. 22:11

<sup>5</sup> Isaiah 6:2,6

<sup>6</sup> Ephesians 1:21, 3:10; Col. 1:16; 2:10; 1 Peter 3:22

interpreting special divine revelations.<sup>1</sup> The archangel Michael appears as a prince and valiant warrior, doing battle against the enemies of God.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel 8:16; 9:21; Luke 1:19, 26

<sup>2</sup> Daniel 10:13, 21, Jude 9; Revelation 12:7