

Is there a hierarchy among personal beings?

1. Examine closely Psalm 8:3-8; 89:5-7; 148:2, Revelation 4:1-11; 5:11-14, and Hebrews 2:5-9. What is the role of angels and humans and what is their status to each other?

It appears that God's kingdom included a heavenly kingdom and an earthly kingdom. Angels were created to serve Him in the heavenly kingdom (Rev 4:1-11; 5:11-14) and human beings were created to serve Him in the earthly kingdom (Ps. 8:3-8).

Angels worship God and are thus lower in status to divine personal beings (triune nature of God) (Ps. 89:5-7; 148:2 and Rev 4:1-11; 5:11-14).

Mortal human beings are lower in status to angels. Even our incarnate Lord Jesus Christ was temporarily, in one specific aspect, lower in status than angels, specifically because He came as a man and died on the cross; angels were not subject to this limitation for mankind (Heb 2:5-9).

2. In what ways are angels superior to man? In our contemporary "spiritual" world, what temptation does this provide? See Psalm 103:20, 2 Peter 2:10-11, 2 Thessalonians 1:7, and Colossians 2:18.

Distinct and higher in order than human beings, angels were created with supernatural powers beyond mortal mankind. In part, because of this, and prevailing Greek philosophy that believed that anything physical was evil, churches in Asia Minor began to worship angels. In Colossians 2:18, Paul admonishes the churches to not let anyone beguile them!

3. Consider the following verses: Matthew 10:1, Luke 10:17-20, and Matthew 17:14-20. How does this reconcile with your understanding of the hierarchy between mortal human beings and angels?

While mortal human beings are lower in the hierarchy of personal beings than angels, *faithful* Christians are given some measure of authority over fallen angels and protection from their power. However, Jesus cautions the disciples in celebrating this power over fallen angels, and it is later that the disciples fail in their faith and lose their authority.

4. How do unfallen angels view human beings? Observe Revelation 19:10 and 22:8-9.

Holy angels see themselves as co-workers with human believers in the service of God.

5. Will this hierarchy change in the future? Examine 1 Corinthians 6:1-4.

In 1 Corinthians 6:1-4, Paul is commenting on a problem of the Corinthian church: the great number of lawsuits taking place among Christians, in the court of non-Believers, as a means to resolve personal disputes. In this short passage, Paul uses the term "do you not know" twice (in 1 Cor 6, he will use the term six times). It is a term that Paul would use to point to certain truths that would have prevented the problems of the church; they were truths that the church should have already known. In 1 Corinthians 6:3, Paul uses the term to point that Christians will judge angels.

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The term “judge” has two meanings.

1. One meaning is to condemn to punishment; however, such form of judgment is the prerogative of God as exemplified in Matthew 25:41 or Revelation 20:10 towards Satan and fallen angels.
2. A second meaning is in reference to rulership. Matthew 25:21 and Ephesians 1:18-23 refer to the future where faithful Christians will be rulers, under Christ, over different parts of God's future kingdom.

In this present age, the hierarchy appears as follows:

1. Divine personal beings (Triune God)
2. Angelic spirit personal beings
3. Human personal beings (Christian and non-Christian)

After the return of Christ and the resurrection, the hierarchy changes:

1. Divine personal beings (Triune God)
2. Glorified human personal beings (resurrected Believers)
3. Angelic spirit personal beings

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