

## *Philosophical Proof For The Existence Of Angels: Part 2*

I've previously argued for the existence of angels in the form of a philosophical 'proof' (argument). In this post, I want to bring some new/more arguments for the existence of angels and respond to an objection. My aim in this paper is to give many independent arguments and then combine them into a cumulative case argument (main argument). The main argument is *not* meant to be demonstrative/deductive like a mathematical proof or moral argument: it is meant to be inductive or 'probabilistic'. This is not incompatible with certain sub-arguments or steps of the argument being deductive or logical.

### **Terminology**

Angels: finite beings that are incorporeal, immaterial, intellect, pure spirit, spaceless, good, powerful, etc.

God: the 'Being' that is all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-good.

### **Formal Statement of The Arguments**

I. Probably, if God exists, then:

- a.
  1. God is a creator
  2. Probably, if God is a creator, then God would create angels
  3. Therefore, probably, God would create angels
- b.
  1. God is an infinite spiritual messenger
  2. If God is an infinite spiritual messenger, then there exist, finite spiritual messengers,
  3. Therefore, there exist finite spiritual messengers
- c.
  1. God is all-loving
  2. If God is all-loving, then God would create angels
  3. Therefore, God would create angels
- d.
  1. God would create all things that are logically possible
  2. Angels are things that are logically possible
  3. Therefore, God would create angels

- e.
  1. God is mission-oriented
  2. If (1), then angels exist
  3. Therefore, angels exist
- f.
  1. God is all-creative
  2. If God is all-creative, then angels exist
  3. Therefore, angels exist
- g.
  1. God is a God of order
  2. If God is a God of order, then angels exist
  3. Therefore, angels exist
- h.
  1. God is relational and provident
  2. If God is relational and provident, then angels exist
  3. Therefore, angels exist
- i.
  1. If an infinite spirit (God) exists, then angels existing is the simplest explanation
  2. If an infinite spirit exists, then angels (finite spirits) existing is not an ad hoc explanation
  3. If an infinite spirit exists, then angels existing is a fitting explanation
  4. If an infinite spirit exists, then angels existing is explanatorily powerful
  5. If an infinite spirit exists, then angels existing does not lack explanatory scope
  6. If an infinite spirit exists, then angels existing is plausible
  7. If an infinite spirit exists, then angels existing fits with our background knowledge
  8. Therefore, (via abduction) if an infinite spirit exists, then angels existing is a better explanation than the explanation of angels not existing.

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Combining the arguments (into the main argument), we (finally) conclude:

II. Therefore, probably, if God exists, then angels exist

### **Informal Statement of The Arguments**

I want to elaborate more on the arguments. Merely formally listing the arguments should *not* be taken out of context (lest someone attack strawmen). One can only be so formal. For even more context (e.g. definitions, the core argument, objections, etc.), see my previous paper.

With regards to (a), it is plausible to suppose that God is a creator. At the very least, it's not implausible. Theists have traditionally held that God would be a creator because the world

exists *and* they have independent reasons to think that God exists. The second premise of the argument is noting that God creating angels is plausible, even if it is not guaranteed or even if it's not 99% likely. God is a creator, so why would we be surprised that God would create angels? With regards to (b), God is a messenger. God seeks clarity with his creatures since God is the creator. If one seeks clarity with creatures, as an all-good/all-powerful being, then God won't leave creatures in the dark. God will send messages to God's creatures. Given that God would play this role, we would expect there to be other beings to fill that role as well. Why? Because God is all-good and all-loving. God wants to share with creatures, so God wants to share the role of messenger with creatures.

For (c), if God is all-good, then God is all-loving. If God is all-loving, then God is always open to a personal relationship with any finite creature. If God is always open to a personal relationship with any finite creature, then the finite creature in question exists. Angels are one such creature that exists. If angels are such a creature, then God would create such a creature. The finite creature would exist because it needs to exist for there to be a relationship. What (d) is referring to is God's tendencies as a creator. We would expect God to create many things, even all things. The only constraint is 'logical possibility, which would entail that God can't create things like 'square circles' or 'married bachelors'. Given that God is all-powerful and maximally perfect, wouldn't God create all things that are logically possible? Given this, the existence of angels just follows. One might worry about logically possible evil things, but angels aren't evil.

(e) means that God is mission-oriented. Why? Because God is 'mission'. The reason is that God is all-generous. Because God is all-generous and all-fair, God would want to do the best for creatures. And doing the best for creatures allows, for example, for the possibility of an

afterlife (if not other plans from God). Given this and given that God desires to share, God would create angels to participate in such plans.

To see why (f) is true, consider the concept of God. If God exists, God is perfect. If God is perfect, then God has all perfections. If God has all perfections, then God is all-creative. If God is all-creative, then God is the creator of all. If God is the creator of all, then God is the creator of angels. If God is the creator of angels, then angels exist. The reason that an all-creative God would create angels is because that's more creative than not creating angels. It's more creative to create angels along with humans and animals, rather than just settle with humans and animals.

With (g), an all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-good God would have to be a God of order. Given this, God's creation would be orderly. If God's creation is orderly, then it is not orderly if creation doesn't include angels. Therefore, God would create angels—thus angels exist. It's more orderly for God to create spirits like him but finite spirits: the alternative is messy and raises more questions. And given that God is all-just and all-fair, we would expect God to give angels a chance to exist.

(h) reports God looking out for his creation. God cares about creating, but this is not just to be understood in terms of being a benefactor because God is also relational. Given this, God would create angels (and if God creates angels, angels exist). Why? Because just as humans take care of animals, we are led to postulate that there are spiritual creatures that take care of humans.

(i) is an abductive or inference to the best explanation (IBE) argument. The reason I say that angels existing is a simple explanation, (on the assumption that God exists) is that that seems to require the fewest assumptions. Why would God create things like rocks, plants, animals, and humans, but not angels as well? That doesn't make any sense. The default position is that God

would continue to “keep” on creating. Given that God exists, the existence of angels is not ad hoc at all. In fact what would be ad hoc is to say that, for some mysterious reason, God couldn’t create angels or very likely wouldn’t.

### The Inference

As long as the probability of each conclusion isn’t overwhelmingly low, then combining them (i.e. ‘main argument’) will render a (final) conclusion that is not unlikely. Even if the (final) conclusion doesn’t give us a probability that is greater or equal to 50%, we could still have a significant conclusion. For example, suppose that the conclusion renders the existence of angels a probability between 25%-33%. That is quite high. Even atheists and skeptics can accept that if God exists, then angels likely exist. Before looking at the arguments, the notion of God creating angels is not intrinsically unlikely: it seems very likely. If we can’t assign a precise probability or range (or any probability), we can invoke the principle of indifference: God either creates angels or God doesn’t create angels, which means the probability is 50%; however, that’s assuming we use the principle.

Before looking at the data, I can’t see how we can assign a probability of below 20% that, if God exists, God would create angels (thus, if God exists, then angels exist). On the other hand, the probability is perhaps much higher—as high as something like 85%. That combined with the data, I can’t see how we get a final probability below 50.01%. And in my estimation, that is being incredibly generous. This includes the argument from the previous paper, Aquinas’ arguments for angels, and other arguments (see Peter S. Williams, for example). All of this fits with the *a posteriori* evidence from an authority, experience, and tradition. Most people that have believed in God have also believed in angels because there doesn’t seem to be anything implausible, and it’s not as if it is something that is a big stumbling block (if a problem at all).

Perhaps it doesn't seem implausible because it isn't implausible to think that God would create angels!

Whether God exists is beyond the scope of this paper. If one thinks God doesn't exist, then that gives them indirect reasons to think that angels do not exist; however, that is not inconsistent with also thinking that if God were to exist, then angels exist. This also applies if one thinks there are indirect challenges to the existence of angels from other sources as well. A direct evidential challenge would claim that if God exists, then God would likely not create angels. Why think that? I don't know. I haven't seen a case made for that, yet; however, that is not to claim that there are no such direct evidential arguments.

### **Objection**

*“The ‘angels of the philosophers’ are not the ‘angels of the Bible or Quran’.”*

This objection needs to be made more clear. It's one thing to say that philosophizing can't get us to everything described (about) angels in the Bible or Quran. It's another thing to say that the angels of philosophy are inconsistent with what the Bible or Quran says about angels. Why think a thing like that? Also, if philosophy gets to the existence of angels that are finite, spiritual, immaterial, intelligent, spaceless, powerful, knowledgeable, good, etc... then how is that any different from what is described in the Bible or Quran? What more do you want? Perhaps one will argue that we have the same angels in essence (and a 'demonstration' of their existence), but we don't know anything about their *role* with humans and God. But from what has already been said, including my previous arguments for angels, we can already conclude/see that angels would be involved in the affairs of humans and relate to God, so the objection is false and *ignores* the arguments. But even if the objection weren't false, we can still argue that it's plausible that angels would not be closed to helping humans and serving God, given what angels are. And

given God's role, we would see what the role of angels would be. God as all-powerful and all-good would be (have the role) of being a warrior, healer, prayer listener/answerer, etc. Thus, if angels exist, we would expect angels to exemplify these roles as well (as was argued with the role of messengers earlier in the paper).

Secondly, even if we granted this objection, what follows? Why does it matter? Why is it relevant? Just because one hasn't demonstrated 'ABC', does not mean that one hasn't demonstrated 'AB'; that would be like saying that if one hasn't demonstrated that the Christian God exists, then one hasn't demonstrated that any God exists—which is just a non-sequitur. Would the existence of philosophical angels render the existence of biblical angels implausible? Not obviously. If anything the former would render the latter more likely than it would be otherwise, which is evidence. And if anything, the former would render the latter extremely likely. If philosophical angels exist, wouldn't the simplest/best explanation be that Biblical angels also exist?

## **Bibliography**

St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (1948), U.S.A: Christian Classics.

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