

**Augustyn Jankowski OSB, *Aniołowie wobec Chrystusa. Chrystocentryczna angelologia Nowego Testamentu*, Tyniec Wydawnictwo Benedyktynów, 2nd ed., Kraków 2018, 237 pp.**

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Angels are pure spirits that possess reason and free will but do not have bodies. However, that is the extent of what most people know about angels. Apart from theologians and Biblical studies scholars, few know, for example, that there are nine choirs of angels, namely: *Seraphim*, *Cherubim*, *Thrones*, *Dominations*, *Virtues*, *Powers*, *Principalities*, *Archangels*, and *Angels*, nor is it widely known that the representatives of each of these choirs differ in terms of personality, nature, and talents and thus serve God and people in different ways.

I should, however, excuse ignorance in the field of angelology. One can gain in-depth knowledge about angels neither during Sunday Mass nor through religious education at school; it is not an aim of the Church's preaching. If this knowledge is not widely available and can be attained only during post-secondary studies at university faculties of theology and there is a dearth of professional literature about angels, it is unsurprising that many Catholics are simply ignorant about them.

This problem was recognized by the late Rev. Prof. Dr. Hab. Augustyn Jankowski, OSB, who in response to the expectations of Polish readers interested in angelology, not necessarily only in theological research, wrote the book: *Aniołowie wobec Chrystusa. Chrystocentryczna angelologia Nowego Testamentu* [*The Angels and Christ: The Christocentric Angelology of the New Testament*], which was published by the Tyniec Benedictine Press in 2018 (the first edition of the book appeared in 2002). It should be emphasized that in the title of the dissertation under review its author signaled that it is not a theological summa on the topic of angels (Latin: *summa de angelis*), but merely a fragmentary monogram on this topic. Thus, he emphasizes that it does not contain complete knowledge on the topic of angels, only a fragment of it, with a particular emphasis on the angels' dependence on Jesus. Father

Jankowski divided his publication into five passages, which he respectively titled: *Przedmowa* [Preface] (pp. 9–16); *Wstęp* [Introduction] (pp. 17–22); *Część I Historiozbawcza – Aniołowie w dziejach zbawienia* [Part I, Salvation History: Angels in Salvation History] (pp. 23–120); *Część II Teologiczna – Podstawy angelologii chrystocentrycznej w pismach Nowego Testamentu* [Part II, Theology: The Bases for Christocentric Angelology in the New Testament Writings] (pp. 121–214); and *Zakończenie – podsumowanie wyników całego studium* [Conclusion: A Summary of the Results of the Entire Study] (pp. 215–216). It is also worth mentioning that at the beginning of the book under review its author has included a detailed table of contents (pp. 5–8), while the conclusion features numerous glossaries; namely, a glossary of terms (pp. 217–222), a bibliography (pp. 233–235), indexes of Hebrew (p. 236) and Greek terms (p. 236), as well as an index of foreign terms (p. 237).

It is difficult to express an opinion on a book by such a distinguished scholar like Rev. Prof. Augustyn Jankowski. He was an outstanding Biblical theologian and translator of the Bible who was acclaimed both in Poland and abroad. In Poland, for example, he received an honorary doctorate from the Pontifical Academy of Theology in Krakow. Internationally, meanwhile, he was invited to collaborate with the Pontifical Biblical Commission. It is worth recalling that he authored such publications as: *Królestwo Boże w przypowieściach* [God's Kingdom in Parables], *Biblijna teologia przymierza* [The Biblical Theology of the Covenant], and *Duch Święty w Nowym Testamencie* [The Holy Spirit in the New Testament], which today are considered classics of Polish Biblical studies. Thus, in order to attempt to review a book by Rev. Augustyn Jankowski one needs courage and humility.

With regards to its literary dimension, this book was written in very communicative, simple, and graphic language. The deductions in it are transparent and logical. I should emphasize that that author uses advanced theological concepts: Polish, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic. It is also worth emphasizing that he always references Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic terms in their original spelling, using transcriptions (sometimes transliterations) placed in parentheses.

With regards to the substance of the dissertation under review, as mentioned above, its core consists of two chapters; namely, one on salvation history (pp. 23–120) and one that is theological (pp. 121–214). It is worth taking a closer look at them.

In the *part* of the book devoted to issues related to salvation history (pp. 23–120), Rev. Prof. Jankowski first presents the Old Testament teaching on angels. In these analyses, he underlines that the most crucial term

describing an angel in the Old Testament is the noun מַלְאָךְ (*malach*); that its Aramaic equivalent is the noun עִיר (*ir*), which refers to someone who watches, a guardian and angel; and, finally, that its Greek equivalent is the noun ἄγγελος (*angelos*). He also adds that sporadically the noun קְדוֹשׁ (*kadosh*), which means saint, is a correlate of the concept מַלְאָךְ (*malach*). Analyzing the terminology used to describe angels in the Old Testament, Rev. Jankowski also demonstrates that the angels that resisted Satan's (Hebrew: שָׂטָן *satan*; Greek: διάβολος *diabolos*) temptation and remained faithful to God are at certain points in the Bible called Yahweh's army. Thus, they are described using such Hebrew terms as: אַבְרִים (*abbirim*), גִּבּוֹרִים (*gibborim*), and רָמִים (*ramim*); the first of these defines potentates, the second signifies heroes, and the last refers to celestial powers. The author of the book under review also mentions that the Biblical authors call the most important of them Seraphim (Hebrew: שְׂרָפִים *serafim*) and Cherubim (Hebrew: כְּרוּבִים *kerubim*). He also mentions that the only names of angels noted by Biblical authors are רַפָּאֵל (*Rafael*), meaning Raphael<sup>1</sup> ("God heals"), גַּבְרִיאֵל (*Gabriel*), describing Gabriel ("God is my strength"); and, finally, מִיכָאֵל (*Mikael*), which describes Michael ("Who is like God?").

In the part of the book devoted to issues related to salvation history (pp. 23–120), Rev. Prof. Jankowski also traces the role of angels in Jesus' life and in the vocation of the Church. They were present in Jesus' life because the angel Gabriel prophesied Jesus' birth (Luke 1:26–38), while other angels watched over His safe coming to the world (Matthew 1:18–23; 2:13–15, 19–23), participated in His naming (Luke 2:21), and, finally, told the shepherds the joyous news of His birth (Luke 2:8–20). Next, Father Jankowski mentions that the angels accompanied Jesus when He was tempted in the desert (Mark 1:12; Matthew 4:1–11). One of them consoled Him during His passion in Gethsemane (Luke 22:43) and, finally, after Jesus' resurrection the angels were the first to tell the women the good news that He is alive when they had come to the empty tomb (Matthew 28:1–8; Mark 16:1–8; Luke 24:1–11, 23; John 20:11–13). Meanwhile, the angels play a role in the vocation of the Church because Father Jankowski mentions that they had diverse duties with regards to the Mystical Body of Jesus; namely, they looked over the safe development of the young Church, occasionally even helped Jesus' disciples to escape prison (Acts 5:17–21; 12:7–11), and,

1 The name Raphael appears only in the Book of Tobit. This book was not recognized by Palestinian Jews and therefore it was not included in the canon of the Hebrew Bible. Thanks to the fact that it was recognized by the Jewish Diaspora, which consequently included it in the canon of the Greek Septuagint, Raphael's name is widely known today, while that of the Archangel Raphael is universally venerated.

finally, gave the Christians orders and explained to them God's will, being a kind of angelic translator (Latin: *angelus Interpres*): Acts 8:26–29; 27:23–24.

In the theological section (pp. 121–214) of this publication, Father Jankowski analyzes the development of New Testament angelology. In his analysis, the author demonstrates that the New Testament teaching on angels evolved from Jesus' time (28–30) up until the time of the compilation of the New Testament (51–120). He also shows that some references to Angels in the New Testament reach to Jesus' *Sitz im Leben*, while others to the *Sitz im Leben* of the young Church. Father Jankowski proves that those that reach to Jesus' "life environment" have been recorded in the texts of the Gospel; for example: "Whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this faithless and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38); "And then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in the clouds' with great power and glory, and then he will send out the angels and gather [His] elect from the four winds, from the end of the earth to the end of the sky" (Mark 13:26–27). He also demonstrates that references to angels that reach the "life environment" of the young Church are first the result of the reflection of the first Christian theologians and, second, mostly but not exclusively appear in the *Corpus Paulinum*; for example: "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For in Him were created all things in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things were created through him and for him" (Colossians 1:15–16); "Who was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed to the Gentiles, believed in throughout the world, taken up in glory" (1 Timothy 3:16). At the end of this part of the book (pp. 121–214), Father Augustyn also demonstrates that right before the end of the world the angels will be the heralds and executors of God's rage (Revelation 14:14–20). It is they who pass judgment on the world, after which it will end (Revelation 21:1).

This synthetic presentation of the book under review demonstrates its great worth. I highly recommend reading the dissertation *Aniołowie wobec Chrystusa. Chrystocentryczna angelologia Nowego Testamentu* by Rev. Prof. Augustyn Jankowski, OSB. It is useful to specialists and lay readers; theologians and Biblical scholars; and students of theology as well as ordinary people who are passionate about the Bible. It will enrich the academic knowledge of the first group and deepen the knowledge of those who are only learning about angels, be it individually systematically at faculties of theology or through private readings of the Bible and works of theology.