

“Spiritual Beings In The Heavenly Realms”

Any time you conduct a study on spiritual warfare the question naturally arises about what part angels and demons play in the battle. So tonight we’re going to examine a subject that has received much attention by various authors and theologians throughout the history of the church. Most Christians find themselves, at some time or another, curious about the role of angels and demons in our daily lives. By angels and demons, I mean those spiritual beings which God created higher than man, some of whom have remained obedient to God and carry out His will, and others of whom disobeyed, lost their holy condition, and now oppose and hinder His work.

In an effort to respond to questions there have been sections of the church that have spent more time emphasizing these celestial beings than the Word of God does. I find it interesting that Scripture devotes little space to telling us about celestial beings. I am convinced that there is a reason for such silence. It is not surprising then that we will not spend more than one night on this subject.

Despite the lack of information on celestial beings, the Bible does mention angels nearly 300 times (289 in NIV – not including specific references to Michael, Gabriel, or Lucifer). However, every reference to angels is incidental to some other topic. They are not treated in themselves. God’s revelation never aims at informing us regarding the nature of angels. When they are mentioned, it is always in order to inform us further about God, what He does, and how He does it.

Angel – 195 times; 16 O.T. books; 8 N.T. books (Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Job, Psalm, Isaiah, Daniel, Hosea, Zechariah, Matthew, Luke, John, Acts, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, and Revelation)

Angels – 94 times; 3 O.T. books; 16 N.T. books (Genesis, Job, Psalm, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, I Corinthians, Galatians, Colossians, II Thessalonians, I Timothy, Hebrews, I & II Peter, Jude, Revelation)

Tonight we’re going to examine *Spiritual Beings in the Heavenly Realms* using a series of questions ...

1. What Are Angels?

- “Malak” (Hebrew) – “to dispatch as a deputy”
- “Angelos” (Greek) – “a messenger, guardian, or representative”

a. Ministering Spirits

“Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?”
Hebrews 1:14 (NIV)

b. Created by God (Scripture does not explicitly state that angels were created but it is implied.)

“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.”
Colossians 1:16 (NIV)

“Spiritual Beings In The Heavenly Realms”

“Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his heavenly hosts.” Psalm 148:2 (NIV)

“Let them praise the name of the LORD, for at his command they were created ...” Psalm 148:5 (NIV)

c. Sexless – they do not marry or reproduce.

“When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.” Mark 12:25 (NIV)

d. Holy

“If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father’s glory with the holy angels.”
Mark 8:38 (NIV)

e. Elect / Chosen

“I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, to keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism.” 1 Timothy 5:21 (NIV)

Note: It is assumed that angels do not have physical or material bodies. Physical manifestations should be regarded as appearances assumed for the occasion (angelophanies).

2. What Do Angels Do?

▪ In the past, they gave us the law.

“The law was given through angels and entrusted to a mediator.” Galatians 3:19 (NIV)

“... you who have received the law that was given through angels but have not obeyed it.”
Acts 7:53 (NIV)

“For since the message spoken through angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment ...” Hebrews 2:2 (NIV)

▪ Angels spoke to Philip, Cornelius, Peter, and Paul ...

“Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, ‘Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.’” Acts 8:26 (NIV)

“One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, ‘Cornelius!’ Cornelius stared at him in fear. ‘What is it, Lord?’ he asked. The angel answered, ‘Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea.’ When the angel who spoke to him had gone, Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier who was one of his attendants.” Acts 10:3–7 (NIV)

“Spiritual Beings In The Heavenly Realms”

“He told us how he had seen an angel appear in his house and say,
‘Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter.’” Acts 11:13 (NIV)

“Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. ‘Quick, get up!’ he said, and the chains fell off Peter’s wrists. Then the angel said to him, ‘Put on your clothes and sandals.’ And Peter did so. ‘Wrap your cloak around you and follow me,’ the angel told him. Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision. They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him. Then Peter came to himself and said, ‘Now I know without a doubt that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from Herod’s clutches and from everything the Jewish people were hoping would happen.’” Acts 12:7–11 (NIV)

“Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me”
Acts 27:23 (NIV)

Today ...

a. They send messages to us to comfort, guide, guard, and provide for us.

“For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.” Psalm 91:11–12 (NIV)

b. They minister (or rescue) to believers.

“The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.”
Psalm 34:7 (NIV)

c. They continually praise and glorify God.

“... while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?” Job 38:7 (NIV)

“Praise the LORD, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word.”
Psalm 103:20 (NIV)

“Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his heavenly hosts.” Psalm 148:2 (NIV)

“All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God ...”
Revelation 7:11 (NIV)

“When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all God’s people, on the golden altar in front of the throne. The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of God’s people, went up before God from the angel’s hand.”
Revelation 8:1–4 (NIV)

“Spiritual Beings In The Heavenly Realms”

- d. They rejoice at our conversion.

“In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.” Luke 15:10 (NIV)

- e. They carry out God’s judgment.

“That night the angel of the LORD went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning—there were all the dead bodies!” 2 Kings 19:35 (NIV)

“Then the angel of God, who had been traveling in front of Israel’s army, withdrew and went behind them. The pillar of cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them, coming between the armies of Egypt and Israel. Throughout the night the cloud brought darkness to the one side and light to the other side; so neither went near the other all night long.”
Exodus 14:19–20 (NIV)

“Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died.” Acts 12:23 (NIV)

- f. They carry followers of Jesus to the place of blessedness at their death.

“The time came when the beggar died and the angels *carried* him to Abraham’s side.”
Luke 16:22 (NIV)

3. What Abilities Do Angels Have?

- a. They can change appearance.

“Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed low to the ground ... When the men got up to leave, they looked down toward Sodom, and Abraham walked along with them to see them on their way ... The men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the LORD.” Genesis 18:2,16,22 (NIV)

“The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city. When he saw them, he got up to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground ... They called to Lot, ‘Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them’ ... But the men inside reached out and pulled Lot back into the house and shut the door ... The two men said to Lot, ‘Do you have anyone else here—sons-in-law, sons or daughters, or anyone else in the city who belongs to you? Get them out of here’ ... With the coming of dawn, the angels urged Lot, saying, ‘Hurry! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away when the city is punished’ ... When he hesitated, the men grasped his hand and the hands of his wife and of his two daughters and led them safely out of the city, for the LORD was merciful to them.” Genesis 19:1,5,10,12,15-16 (NIV)

“Spiritual Beings In The Heavenly Realms”

“Then the woman went to her husband and told him, ‘A man of God came to me. He looked like an angel of God, very awesome. I didn’t ask him where he came from, and he didn’t tell me his name.’” Judges 13:6 (NIV)

“As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.” Mark 16:5 (NIV)

“While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them.” Luke 24:4 (NIV)

b. They can travel instantly back and forth from earth to heaven.

c. They can only be in one place at one time.

d. They are not bound by our physical laws.

“Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. ‘Quick, get up!’ he said, and the chains fell off Peter’s wrists.” Acts 12:7 (NIV)

e. They are extremely strong.

“They found the stone rolled away from the tomb ...” Luke 24:2 (NIV)

f. They cannot be burned. (May have been a theophany?)

“He said, ‘Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods.’ ... Then Nebuchadnezzar said, ‘Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king’s command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God.’” Daniel 3:25, 28 (NIV)

g. They can destroy entire armies.

“That night the angel of the LORD went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning—there were all the dead bodies!” 2 Kings 19:35 (NIV)

h. They can be restrained at times. (Not much emphasis on this obscure passage.)

Daniel 10:4–14 (NIV)

i. They have intelligence and will.

“Your servant Joab did this to change the present situation. My lord has wisdom like that of an angel of God—he knows everything that happens in the land.” 2 Samuel 14:20 (NIV)

“Spiritual Beings In The Heavenly Realms”

“But he said to me, ‘Don’t do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your fellow prophets and with all who keep the words of this scroll. Worship God!’” Revelation 22:9 (NIV)

4. How Many Angels Are There?

The simple answer to this question is “more than you and I will ever need.” However, the Scriptures do give us some ideas as to the immensity of their number.

“He said: ‘The LORD came from Sinai and dawned over them from Seir; he shone forth from Mount Paran. He came with myriads of holy ones from the south, from his mountain slopes.’”
Deuteronomy 33:2 (NIV)

“The chariots of God are tens of thousands and thousands of thousands; the Lord has come from Sinai into his sanctuary.” Psalm 68:17 (NIV)

“Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?” Matthew 26:53 (NIV) (*72,000 – 6,000 per Roman legion*)

“Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.’” Luke 2:13–14 (NIV)

“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.” Revelation 5:11 (NIV)

“God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels.” 2 Thessalonians 1:6–7 (NIV)

5. What Kinds & Ranks Of Angels Are There?

Rather elaborate schemes have been worked out at times regarding the organization of the angelic hosts. There is very little definite and clear information on this subject. This is not really an area we need to emphasize because the Scriptures don’t put much emphasis on it. However, we can glean a few things from various passages.

There are some expressions that are thought to refer to angels such as ...

a. Sons of the Elohim – Angels

“One day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them.” Job 1:6 (NIV)

“On another day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them to present himself before him.” Job 2:1 (NIV)

“Spiritual Beings In The Heavenly Realms”

b. Sons of Elim – Heavenly Beings

“Ascribe to the LORD, you heavenly beings, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.”
Psalm 29:1 (NIV)

“For who in the skies above can compare with the LORD? Who is like the LORD among the
heavenly beings?” Psalm 89:6 (NIV)

c. Messengers/Watchers

“In the visions I saw while lying in bed, I looked, and there before me was a holy one, a
messenger, coming down from heaven.” Daniel 4:13 (NIV)

“The decision is announced by messengers, the holy ones declare the verdict, so that the living
may know that the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone
he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of people.” Daniel 4:17 (NIV)

“Your Majesty saw a holy one, a messenger, coming down from heaven and saying, ‘Cut down
the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump, bound with iron and bronze, in the grass of the field,
while its roots remain in the ground. Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven; let him live
with the wild animals, until seven times pass by for him.’” Daniel 4:23 (NIV)

d. The Assembly

“The heavens praise your wonders, LORD, your faithfulness too,
in the assembly of the holy ones.” Psalm 89:5 (NIV)

e. The Council

“In the council of the holy ones God is greatly feared;
he is more awesome than all who surround him.” Psalm 89:7 (NIV)

Likewise, the following two passages increase our understanding ...

“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.”
Colossians 1:16 (NIV)

“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present
nor the future, nor any powers ...” Romans 8:38 (NIV)

1. Archangel – Michael (only one – ?; 1 Thessalonians does not state his name)

“But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the
chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia.”
Daniel 10:13 (NIV)

“Spiritual Beings In The Heavenly Realms”

“... first I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth. (No one supports me against them except Michael, your prince.”) Daniel 10:21 (NIV)

“At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered.”
Daniel 12:1 (NIV)

“But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not himself dare to condemn him for slander but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you!’” Jude 9 (NIV)

“Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back.” Revelation 12:7 (NIV)

“For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.”
1 Thessalonians 4:16 (NIV)

2. Angels – Gabriel (“God’s Hero”)

“And I heard a man’s voice from the Ulai calling, ‘Gabriel, tell this man the meaning of the vision.’” Daniel 8:16 (NIV)

“... while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice.” Daniel 9:21 (NIV)

“The angel said to him, ‘I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news.’” Luke 1:19 (NIV)

“In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee ...” Luke 1:26 (NIV)

Note: The seraphim and cherubim present special problems, since no statement is made regarding their relationship to angels in general. The most cautious position is simply to regard them as being among spiritual creatures designated by the general term angel. They may be angels with special functions, or they may be a special type of angel. The fact of the matter is we’re not sure.

3. Seraphim – above the throne; have six wings and can fly

“Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying.” Isaiah 6:2 (NIV)

“Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar.” Isaiah 6:6 (NIV)

“Spiritual Beings In The Heavenly Realms”

4. Cherubim (63 times in NIV text) – beside the throne; guarded the Tree of Life

“After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.” Genesis 3:24 (NIV)

“The LORD reigns, let the nations tremble; he sits enthroned between the cherubim, let the earth shake.” Psalm 99:1 (NIV)

“LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth.” Isaiah 37:16 (NIV)

Ezekiel 10:1–20 (NIV)

“Then the cherubim, with the wheels beside them, spread their wings, and the glory of the God of Israel was above them.” Ezekiel 11:22 (NIV)

There are no indications of angels appearing in female form. Nor is there explicit reference to them as winged, although Daniel 9:21 and Revelation 14:6 speak of them as flying ...

“... while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice.” Daniel 9:21 (NIV)

“Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people.” Revelation 14:6 (NIV)

Some think the cherubim and seraphim are symbolic creatures of Ezekiel 1:6 (cf. Rev. 4:8).

“... but each of them had four faces and four wings.” Ezekiel 1:6 (NIV)

“Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under its wings. Day and night they never stop saying: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty,’ who was, and is, and is to come.” Revelation 4:8 (NIV)

So we cannot say for sure that angels as a whole are winged. At best, it is inferred. As for the rest of this list, we don’t know anything about them ...

5. Principalities

6. Authorities

7. Powers

8. Thrones

9. Might

10. Dominion

“Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” Ephesians 6:11–12 (NIV)

“The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 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.” Colossians 1:15–16 (NIV)

6. Do We Have Guardian Angels?

This idea was part of popular Jewish belief at the time of Christ and has carried over in some Christian thinking. Two Biblical texts are cited as evidence of guardian angels. These verses seem to indicate that angels are specially assigned to individuals. However, it should be noted that elsewhere in the Bible we read that not just one, but many angels accompanied, protected, and provided for believers. The reply to Rhoda reflects the Jewish tradition that a guardian angel resembles the person to whom he is assigned. But a report indicating that certain disciples believed in guardian angels does not make it true or authoritative. Some Christians still had mistaken or confused beliefs on various subjects. In the absence of definite didactic material, it must be concluded that there is *insufficient evidence* for the concept of guardian angels.

“See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.” Matthew 18:10 (NIV)

“‘You’re out of your mind,’ they told her. When she kept insisting that it was so, they said, ‘It must be his angel.’” Acts 12:15 (NIV)

7. Who Is The Enemy, What Are Demons, And Where Did They Come From?

- Satan = Adversary
- Devil (32 times in the New Testament)
- Lucifer (Morning Star)

“How you have fallen from heaven, morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.’ But you are brought down to the realm of the dead, to the depths of the pit.” Isaiah 14:12–15 (NIV)

- Anointed Cherub

The following passage is directly related to a prophecy against the king of Tyre and so some would argue that it has nothing to do with satan. However, it seems likely that the references to his being a “cherub” and present in “Eden, the garden of God” mean that either the author was applying truths about satan to the King of Tyre or describing satan who is represented in this instance by the King of Tyre. In either case it is possible directly or indirectly to learn something of satan himself.

“Son of man, take up a lament concerning the king of Tyre and say to him: ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: ‘You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: carnelian, chrysolite and emerald, topaz, onyx and jasper, lapis lazuli, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared. You were

“Spiritual Beings In The Heavenly Realms”

anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings. By your many sins and dishonest trade you have desecrated your sanctuaries. So I made a fire come out from you, and it consumed you, and I reduced you to ashes on the ground in the sight of all who were watching. All the nations who knew you are appalled at you; you have come to a horrible end and will be no more.”

Ezekiel 28:12–19 (NIV)

- Liar & Father of Lies

“You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.” John 8:44 (NIV)

- Accuser of the Brethren

“Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Messiah. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.”

Revelation 12:10 (NIV)

- The Enemy

“Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.” 1 Peter 5:8 (NIV)

- Serpent & Dragon

“Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, ‘Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”

Genesis 3:1 (NIV)

“The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.”

Revelation 12:9 (NIV)

“He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.” Revelation 20:2 (NIV)

- Abaddon (Apollyon in the Greek) & Destroyer

“They had as king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon and in Greek is Apollyon (that is, Destroyer).” Revelation 9:11 (NIV)

“Spiritual Beings In The Heavenly Realms”

- The Star (Angel) of the Abyss

“The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss.” Revelation 9:1 (NIV)

- The god of This Age

“The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” 2 Corinthians 4:4 (NIV)

- The Prince of Demons

“But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, ‘It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons.’” Matthew 12:24 (NIV)

- The Ruler of the Kingdom of the Air

“... in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.”
Ephesians 2:2 (NIV)

- The Ruler of Darkness

“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” Ephesians 6:12 (NIV)

- The Tempter

“The tempter came to him and said, ‘If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.’” Matthew 4:3 (NIV)

- The Evil One

“When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path.”
Matthew 13:19 (NIV)

- Belial

“What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?” 2 Corinthians 6:15 (NIV)

- Beelzebub

“But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, ‘It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons.’” Matthew 12:24 (NIV)

“Spiritual Beings In The Heavenly Realms”

- Murderer from the Beginning

“You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.” John 8:44 (NIV)

The Bible has little to say about how evil angels came to have their current moral character, and even less about their origin. We may derive something about their origin by noting what is said about their moral character. There are two closely related passages which inform us regarding the fall of the evil angels ...

“For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them in chains of darkness to be held for judgment ...” 2 Peter 2:4 (NIV)

“And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their proper dwelling—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.” Jude 6 (NIV)

The question naturally arises from these verses as to how the evil angels are able to carry on their work even though they are in gloomy dungeons awaiting judgment. It must be concluded that fallen angels have sufficient freedom to carry on their evil activities though cast into their dungeons.

See 2 Peter 2:10–22 (NLT) – they are a description of the continued sinful activity of the people who are being kept under punishment. The language is the same there as in 2 Peter 2:4.

Demons, then, are angels created by God and thus were originally good; but they sinned and thus became evil. Just when this rebellion took place is uncertain, but it must have occurred between the time when God completed the creation and pronounced it all “very good,” and the temptation and fall of man.

8. How Many Demons Are There And What Do They Do?

We don’t know for sure but according to Revelation 5:11, John “saw and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand.” If you multiply that out it is 101 million. According to Revelation 12:4 satan took a third of the angels with him. There may be billions of angels but suffice it to say that satan is leading a large host of demons.

From Scripture we see that they are satan’s subjects that carry out his work in the world. His desire is to thwart the power, the presence, and the plan of God. He is smart, crafty, and cunning. He deserves our respect. We don’t have to be afraid of him but he is a celestial being. They are involved in ...

“Spiritual Beings In The Heavenly Realms”

- a. Temptation
- b. Deception
- c. Opposition of Spiritual Progress

“For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.” Ephesians 6:12 (NLT)

- d. Inflicting Disease (not all illness is attributed to possession)

- Muteness

“One of the men in the crowd spoke up and said, ‘Teacher, I brought my son so you could heal him. He is possessed by an evil spirit that won’t let him talk.’” Mark 9:17 (NLT)

- Deafness

“When Jesus saw that the crowd of onlookers was growing, he rebuked the evil spirit. ‘Listen, you spirit that makes this boy unable to hear and speak,’ he said. ‘I command you to come out of this child and never enter him again!’” Mark 9:25 (NLT)

- Blindness

“Then a demon-possessed man, who was blind and couldn’t speak, was brought to Jesus. He healed the man so that he could both speak and see.” Matthew 12:22 (NLT)

- Convulsions

“At that, the evil spirit screamed, threw the man into a convulsion, and then came out of him.” Mark 1:26 (NLT)

“So they brought the boy. But when the evil spirit saw Jesus, it threw the child into a violent convulsion, and he fell to the ground, writhing and foaming at the mouth.” Mark 9:20 (NLT)

“An evil spirit keeps seizing him, making him scream. It throws him into convulsions so that he foams at the mouth. It batters him and hardly ever leaves him alone.” Luke 9:39 (NLT)

- Paralysis / Lameness

“Many evil spirits were cast out, screaming as they left their victims. And many who had been paralyzed or lame were healed.” Acts 8:7 (NLT)

“Spiritual Beings In The Heavenly Realms”

9. What Is The Destiny of Demons?

- Battle of Armageddon

“Then I saw heaven opened, and a white horse was standing there. Its rider was named Faithful and True, for he judges fairly and wages a righteous war. His eyes were like flames of fire, and on his head were many crowns. A name was written on him that no one understood except himself. He wore a robe dipped in blood, and his title was the Word of God. The armies of heaven, dressed in the finest of pure white linen, followed him on white horses. From his mouth came a sharp sword to strike down the nations. He will rule them with an iron rod. He will release the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty, like juice flowing from a winepress. On his robe at his thigh was written this title: King of all kings and Lord of all lords. Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, shouting to the vultures flying high in the sky: ‘Come! Gather together for the great banquet God has prepared. Come and eat the flesh of kings, generals, and strong warriors; of horses and their riders; and of all humanity, both free and slave, small and great.’

Then I saw the beast and the kings of the world and their armies gathered together to fight against the one sitting on the horse and his army. And the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who did mighty miracles on behalf of the beast—miracles that deceived all who had accepted the mark of the beast and who worshiped his statue. Both the beast and his false prophet were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. Their entire army was killed by the sharp sword that came from the mouth of the one riding the white horse. And the vultures all gorged themselves on the dead bodies. Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven with the key to the bottomless pit and a heavy chain in his hand. He seized the dragon—that old serpent, who is the devil, Satan—and bound him in chains for a thousand years. The angel threw him into the bottomless pit, which he then shut and locked so Satan could not deceive the nations anymore until the thousand years were finished. Afterward he must be released for a little while.” Revelation 19:11–20:3 (NLT)

- Lake of Fire

“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’” Matthew 25:41 (NIV)

“When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison ... And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”
Revelation 20:7,10 (NIV)

Note the warnings we receive from 2 Peter 2:10-12 and Jude 8-10 (*heap abuse = slander*) ...

“This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the flesh and despise authority. Bold and arrogant, *they are not afraid to heap abuse on celestial beings*; yet even angels, although they are stronger and more powerful, do not heap abuse on such beings when bringing judgment on them from the Lord. But these people blaspheme in matters they do not understand. They are like unreasoning animals, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like animals they too will perish.” 2 Peter 2:10–12 (NIV)

“Spiritual Beings In The Heavenly Realms”

“In the very same way, on the strength of their dreams these ungodly people pollute their own bodies, reject authority and *heap abuse on celestial beings*. But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not himself dare to condemn him for slander but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you!’ Yet these people slander whatever they do not understand, and the very things they do understand by instinct—as irrational animals do—will destroy them.” Jude 8–10 (NIV)

We would be wise not to run the devil down. To call him a liar and the father of lies is not slander, it is fact. It is a mark of false teachers when they run the devil down or slander celestial beings.

10. What are the benefits from a study on *Spiritual Beings in the Heavenly Realms*?

- It is a comfort and an encouragement to realize that there are powerful and numerous unseen agents available to help us in our need.
- The angels’ praise and service of God give us an example of how we are to conduct ourselves now, and what our activity will be in eternity.
- It should sober us to realize that even angels who were close to God succumbed to temptation and fell. This is a reminder to “take heed, lest we fall.”
- Knowledge about demons can help alert us to danger and give us insight into the enemy’s schemes.
- We can know that our enemy has definite limits and therefore we can resist him successfully. We know that his ultimate defeat is certain.

Conclusion:

It is absolutely critical that we do not exalt angels or give them worship. Hebrews 1:5-2:9 sets forth for us that Christ is superior to the angels. Although He was made for a little time a little lower than the angels, He is in every way superior to them. They are not in the same class or category with the Deity. They do not act on independent initiative. Although superior to us in many of their abilities and qualities, they are part of the class of created and thus finite beings.

Q & A

Takeaways?

Let’s Pray!

“Spiritual Beings In The Heavenly Realms”

Binding & Loosing

There is NO Biblical precedent for binding and loosing. It is not taught anywhere in Scripture.

“Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”“ Matthew 16:17–19 (NIV)

“Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” Matthew 18:18 (NIV)

The tense of both of these passages is future perfect passive, so a more accurate translation would be ...

“And whatever you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven and whatever you loose on earth will have been loosed in heaven.”

What it is talking about there is not that we do something and heaven aligns with our activity. Rather, it is us aligning with heaven. Whether it’s in an area of church discipline or if you’re talking about raising up the church and the church’s authority, Jesus is telling us that what we start to do will have already been ordered in heaven.

In neither one of these passages are we talking about evil spirits. There are no references to demons. Neither of these passages are meant to teach us about spiritual warfare. Also notice that it says “whatever” you bind, not “whoever” you bind. If it were demons or angels that are to be bound or loosed there would be a pronoun there because they are persons. It doesn’t have anything to do with spiritual warfare. Rather, it deals with the church’s authority.

In chapter 16, Peter is being authorized in advance to build the kingdom of God according to God’s plan. In other words, it was like Jesus was saying ...

“Peter, I’m going to build my church through you and Peter I’m going to lead you and guide you and I know that it’s going to be scary and I know that it’s not going to be easy but just as you spoke by the Spirit you can be sure that as you build My church I’ll be leading you so that whatever you permit in the church will already have been permitted in heaven and whatever you forbid in the church will have already been forbidden in heaven. Peter, I’m going to lead you and I’m going to guide you.”

In chapter 18 the context is similar. The idea is that when you go into a situation regarding church discipline and you don’t want to discipline someone. If someone misbehaves then you are to go to them one-on-one and if there is not repentance then you take one or two others. If there is still no change in behavior then you take the matter to the church. If there is still no repentance then you are to remove them from the church. You are to treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector. The fact of the matter is that no one wants to do that.

“Spiritual Beings In The Heavenly Realms”

In the church today we are hesitant to do that. Where is the love in that? The issue is this: Are you going to follow the Scripture or not? If you follow the Scripture and discipline the brother or sister it will open them up to the Spirit’s working in their life and bring them back ultimately to restoration. The goal of this passage is not to be punitive but rather to restore. It’s no fun and it’s scary. But we can know that whatever is done here on earth has already been done in heaven. If you move someone out of the church then you can know that you’re lining the church up with what has already been decreed in heaven.

In this next passage Jesus is being accused of doing His works through demon power ...

“Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man’s house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can plunder his house.” Matthew 12:29 (NIV)

What Jesus is talking about in this verse is His ministry to the world. He is affirming here that through His ministry and ultimately through His death He will have bound the strong man and we know that it’s true because of Colossians 2:15 ...

“And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.” Colossians 2:15 (NIV)

At Calvary, Jesus bound satan. The beautiful and wonderful news is that at Calvary satan was bound once and for all. At Calvary his power was limited. At Calvary sin’s power was broken. So now people in the world are not bound, they are blind. Paul says ...

“The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” 2 Corinthians 4:4 (NIV)

So we can see that there is no directive to bind satan or demons. That doesn’t mean that we can’t cast a demon out of someone. You can move demons out of people. Clearly Scripture teaches that. But it does not give us the power or the authority or the prescription ever to bind satan or rebuke him. We don’t have that directive from the Word of God.

There is not one instance in Scripture where you see the Apostles bind a spirit over a region or geographical area. You never see Jesus bind the spirit of religion in Jerusalem. You never see Him bind the spirit of unbelief in Bethsaida. You never see Paul bind the spirit of idolatry in Ephesus or the spirit of lust in Corinth. The reason they didn’t do it was because it does little good. It wasn’t something they did. God has not told us not to bind or to rebuke the enemy. That’s the reason Paul didn’t give it any attention in this passage of Scripture. If we can bind satan then why don’t we do it once and for all?

“In order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me.”
2 Corinthians 12:7–8 (NIV)

We don’t know for sure what Paul’s thorn was. It is possible it was an individual that was personally persecuting him or perhaps a direct demonic attack. Notice that Paul knew the source.

“Spiritual Beings In The Heavenly Realms”

It wasn't trivial to him. In fact, the word thorn there could be better translated a “stake” so that Paul was impaled on it. Notice that Paul knows it was a demon and he was right but he didn't bind satan, he didn't take authority over him. He didn't spend any time talking to satan. Rather, he talked to the one who could do something about it – God! We shouldn't waste our time talking to the enemy when we could be talking to Almighty God!

It's a good thing that we can't bind satan at our will because if we could we would run the risk of getting in the way of what God wants to do in our lives. God is so powerful that He is able to use a rebellious being like satan when he tries to destroy our lives. He uses those times of trial to develop our Christian character. And if we could bind satan then God's work would be frustrated in our lives. See what Paul says, “To keep me from becoming conceited...” Paul was a man whom God had to keep humble. He needed to keep Paul reliant upon Him.

Paul had a great ministry in Thessalonica. He was only there three weeks but during his time there a church was born that was one of the most dynamic churches under his ministry. He was run out of town and had to go to Corinth. The ministry was much harder there and he wanted to return to Thessalonica.

“But, brothers and sisters, when we were orphaned by being separated from you for a short time (in person, not in thought), out of our intense longing we made every effort to see you. For we wanted to come to you—certainly I, Paul, did, again and again—but Satan blocked our way.”

1 Thessalonians 2:17–18 (NIV)

“Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith.” 1 Thessalonians 3:10 (NIV)

Did Paul try to bind satan? Did he try and rebuke the enemy? No! When Paul had a problem he went straight to God. Why? Because only God can change the situation. Not even Jesus, when attacked by satan, bound him. Rather, He came back at him with “It is written ...” Jesus used a part of the armor that Paul talks about in Ephesians 6 – the Sword of the Spirit (God's Word).