

## “Spiritual Warfare 10: Theology Of Angels & Demons”

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, I & II Samuel, I & II Kings, I & II Chronicles, Job, Psalm, Isaiah, Daniel, Hosea, Zechariah, Matthew, Luke, John, Acts, I & II 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 angelology and demonology using a series of questions ...

### **I. What Are Angels?**

“Malak” (Hebrew) – “to dispatch as a deputy”

“Angelos” (Greek) – “a messenger, guardian, or representative”

- a) Ministering Spirits (Hebrews 1:14)
- b) Created by God (Colossians 1:16; Scripture does not explicitly state that angels were created but it is implied – cf. Ps. 148:2,5)
- c) Sexless – they do not marry or reproduce. (Mark 12:25)
- d) Holy (Mark 8:38)
- e) Elect (or chosen) (I Timothy 5:21)

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

## II. What Do Angels Do?

In the past, they gave us the law (“... The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator.” Gal. 3:19; Acts 7:53; Heb. 2:2). Angels spoke to Philip (Acts 8:26); Cornelius (Acts 10:3-7); Peter (Acts 11:13; 12:7-11); and Paul (Acts 27:23). Today ...

- a) They send messages to us to comfort, guide, guard, and provide for us. (Psalm 91:11,12)

“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.”

- b) They minister (or rescue) to believers. (Psalm 34:7)

“The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.”

- c) They continually praise and glorify God. (Job 38:7; Ps. 103:20; 148:2; Rev. 7:11; 8:1-4)

- d) They rejoice at our conversion. (Luke 15:10)

“In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

- e) They carry out God’s judgment. (II Kings 19:35; Exo. 14:19-20; Acts 12:23)

- f) They carry believers to the place of blessedness at their death. (Luke 16:22)

“The time came when the beggar died and the *angels* carried him to Abraham's side.”

## III. What Abilities Do Angels Have?

- a) They can change appearance (Gen. 18:2,16,22; 19:1,5,10,12,15,16; Jud. 13:6; Mk. 16:5; Lk. 24:4).

- 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 (Acts 12:7).

“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.”

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- e) They are extremely strong (Luke 24:2).

“They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them.”

- f) They cannot be burned (Daniel 3:25,28). (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!’”

- g) They can destroy entire armies (II Kings 19:35).

“That night the angel of the LORD went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning--there were all the dead bodies!”

- h) They can be restrained at times (Daniel 10:4-14). (Not much emphasis on this obscure passage.)

On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river, the Tigris, I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of the finest gold around his waist. His body was like chrysolite, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude. Then I heard him speaking, and as I listened to him, I fell into a deep sleep, my face to the ground. A hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. He said, "Daniel, you who are highly esteemed, consider carefully the words I am about to speak to you, and stand up, for I have now been sent to you." And when he said this to me, I stood up trembling. Then he continued, "Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. 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. Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come."

- i) They have intelligence and will (II Sam. 14:20; Rev. 22:9).

### **IV. 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.

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*Read:* Deuteronomy 33:2

"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."

*Read:* Psalm 68:17

"The chariots of God are tens of thousands and thousands of thousands; the Lord has come from Sinai into his sanctuary."

*Read:* Matthew 26:53

"Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?" (72,000 – 6,000 per Roman legion)

*Read:* Luke 2:13,14

"Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.'"

*Read:* Revelation 5:11

"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."

*Read:* II Thessalonians 1:7

"... This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels."

### **V. 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 "sons of the Elohim" (Job 1:6; 2:1), "sons of Elim" (Ps. 29:1; 89:6), "watchers" (Dan. 4:13,17,23), "the council" (Ps. 89:7), and "the assembly" (Ps. 89:5). Likewise, the following two passages increase our understanding ...

*Read:* Colossians 1:16

"For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him."

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*Read:* Romans 8:38

“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

### 1) Archangel – Michael (only one-?) (Dan. 10:13; 10:21; 12:1; Jude 9; Rev. 12:7; I Thess. 4:16 does not state his name)

Dan. 10:13 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.

Dan. 10:20 So he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? Soon I will return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I go, the prince of Greece will come; <sup>21</sup> but first I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth. (No one supports me against them except *Michael*, your prince. <sup>1</sup> And in the first year of Darius the Mede, I took my stand to support and protect him.)

Dan. 12:1 "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.

Jude <sup>9</sup> But even the archangel *Michael*, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"

REV 12:7 And there was war in heaven. *Michael* and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. <sup>8</sup> But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. <sup>9</sup> 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.

### 2) Angels – Gabriel (“God’s Hero”) (Daniel 8:16; 9:21; Luke 1:19,26)

Dan. 8:16 And I heard a man's voice from the Ulai calling, "*Gabriel*, tell this man the meaning of the vision."

Dan. 9:21 ... 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.

LK 1:19 The angel answered, "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.

LK 1:26 In the sixth month, God sent the angel *Gabriel* to Nazareth, a town in Galilee ...

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*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 (Isaiah 6:2,6)

Above him were *seraphs*, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." ... Then one of the *seraphs* flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for."

4) Cherubim (63 times in NIV text) – beside the throne; guarded the Tree of Life (Genesis 3:24; Psalm 99:1; Isaiah 37:16; Ezekiel 10:1-20; 11:22)

Gen. 3:24 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.

Psalms 99:1 The LORD reigns, let the nations tremble; he sits enthroned between the *cherubim*, let the earth shake.

Isa. 37:16 "O LORD Almighty, God of Israel, enthroned between the *cherubim*, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth.

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

### **VI. 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.

*Read:* Matthew 18:10

“See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.”

*Read:* Acts 12:15

"You're out of your mind," they told her. When she kept insisting that it was so, they said, "It must be his angel."

### **VII. What Are Demons and Where Did They Come From?**

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 ...

*Read:* II Peter 2:4

“For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment ...”

*Read:* Jude 6

“And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home--these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.”

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 II Peter 2:10-22 – 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 verse 4.)

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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.

### **VII. What Do Demons Do?**

From Scripture we see that they are satan’s subjects that carry out his work in the world. They are involved in ...

- 1) Temptation
- 2) Deception
- 3) Inflicting Disease (not all illness is attributed to possession)
  - Dumbness (Mark 9:17)
  - Deafness (Mark 9:25)
  - Blindness (Matthew 12:22)
  - Convulsions (Mark 1:26; 9:20; Luke 9:39)
  - Paralysis (Acts 8:7)
  - Lameness
- 4) Opposition of Spiritual Progress (Eph. 6:12)

### **VIII. What Is The Destiny of Demons?**

- 1) Battle of Armageddon (Rev. 19:11-20:3)
- 2) Lake of Fire (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:7,10)

### **IX. What Are The Benefits From A Study on Angels and Demons?**

- 1) It is a comfort and an encouragement to realize that there are powerful and numerous unseen agents available to help us in our need.
- 2) 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.
- 3) 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.”

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- 4) Knowledge about demons can help alert us to danger and give us insight into the enemy's schemes.
- 5) 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 man in many of their abilities and qualities, they are part of the class of created and thus finite beings.