

# Angels

## 4: MORE ABOUT ANGELS

### THE ANGEL OF THE LORD

One angel which the Bible mentions was not created. We encounter several instances in the Old Testament where the manifestation of the Son of God came to earth. How gracious of God to personally bring good news to his people. The Bible refers to the Son in these appearances as “the angel of the Lord.” Created angels are never referred to by that title, and those words never refer to Jesus as such in the New Testament.

- Sent to Hagar - Genesis 16:7-12: “*The **angel of the LORD** found Hagar near a spring in the desert; it was the spring that is beside the road to Shur. And he said, ‘Hagar, slave of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?’ ‘I’m running away from my mistress Sarai,’ she answered. Then the angel of the LORD told her, ‘Go back to your mistress and submit to her.’ The angel added, ‘**I will increase** your descendants so much that they will be too numerous to count.’” (Note the words “**I will increase . . .**”)*
- Sent to Abraham – Genesis 22:9-12: “*He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the **angel of the LORD** called out to him from heaven, ‘Abraham! Abraham!’ ‘Here I am,’ he replied. ‘Do not lay a hand on the boy,’ he said. ‘Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have **not withheld from me** your son, your only son.’” (Note the words “**not withheld from me . . .**”)*
- Manoah and his wife (Samson’s parents) - Judges 23:20-22: “*As the flame blazed up from the altar toward heaven, the **angel of the LORD** ascended in the flame. Seeing this, Manoah and his wife fell with*

*their faces to the ground. When the angel of the LORD did not show himself again to Manoah and his wife, Manoah realized that it was the angel of the LORD. ‘We are doomed to die!’ he said to his wife. ‘**We have seen God!**’”*

The appearance of the Son of God in person did much to sustain God’s people as they waited for him to keep his promise first given in Eden. The New Testament did not need to mention the angel of the Lord for the Savior had come in human form. In the Old Testament the angel of the Lord came to pious believers to assure them the Father would keep his promise. Jesus Christ came to lost sinners to assure us the Father has kept his Promise.

(Note: Might the second person of the Godhead be the one who led God’s people through the wilderness? - Exodus 23:20,21: “*See, I am sending **an angel** ahead of you to guard you along the way and to bring you to the place I have prepared. Pay attention to him and listen to what he says. Do not rebel against him; **he will not forgive** your rebellion, since **my Name is in him.**”*

In speaking to this point, 1 Corinthians 10:1-4 seems to address the Exodus reference, “*For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud [that led them through the wilderness] and that they all passed through the sea. . .they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, **and that rock was Christ.**”*)

### Discuss

*What is the beauty of knowing that throughout the Old Testament Jesus made periodic visits with his people?*

### SATAN: ANGEL OF THE BOTTOMLESS PIT (Revelation 9:11)

Second Peter 2:4 states, “*God did not spare angels when they sinned.*” It is sad that a topic as beautiful as that of the angels has been marred just as everything else in God’s once perfect creation. Genesis 1:31 announces that after the sixth day of creation, “*God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.*” Only twenty-six verses later we read, “*Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God made.*” Sometime within that twenty-six verse gap the very foundations of

heaven were shaken with a terrible battle. A revolt had taken place that would change the course of eternity. What happened?

In Luke 10:18 Jesus claims, “*I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.*” Although Scripture gives very little detail about Satan’s revolt, we can surmise certain things from a few references. As mentioned earlier, Satan’s fall took place sometime after the creation week. Following his fall, he focused his sights on Adam and Eve in an attempt to have them join him in his wickedness. Revelation 12:7-9 says, “***Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. 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.***” The reason for the battle seems to be that Satan, originally one of God’s beautiful creations, fell to the lust of arrogance and pride, and attempted to unseat Michael, or even God himself. This is strongly suggested in 1 Timothy 3:6, “*He must not be a recent convert, or **he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil.***” Isaiah 14:12-15 may also allude to this moment, “*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.*”

Although written as a lament concerning the king of Tyre, Ezekiel 28:13-17 may refer to Satan’s fall, “*You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God. . . You were 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.***”

We also notice that their fall was entirely of their own free will. Jude 6 says, “*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.*”

The Bible gives very clear evidence that Satan is real and still active today. Over 90 times the word Satan (“accuser”) and devil (slanderer) appear. Each of the New Testament books refer to Satan – who is given over 40 names to describe him. Let’s examine some of Satan’s characteristics, and as we do, remember that while here on earth, Jesus was not immune to Satan’s temptations just as we are not.

- He is condemned – John 16:11: “*The prince of this world **now stands condemned.***”
- He is under God’s control – Job 1:12: “*The LORD said to Satan, ‘Very well, then, everything he has is in your power, **but on the man himself do not lay a finger.**’*”
- He roams the earth – 1 Peter 5:8: “*Your enemy the devil **prowl**s around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.*”
- He is cunning – Ephesians 6:11: “*Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s **schemes.***”
- He can harm us physically – 2 Corinthians 12:7: “*Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given **a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.***”
- He has the world in his grip - “*We know that we are children of God, and that **the whole world is under the control of the evil one.***”
- He can harm our souls – Acts 5:3: “*Then Peter said, ‘Ananias, how is it that **Satan has so filled your heart** that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?’*”

- He promotes unbelief – 2 Corinthians 4:4: “*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.*”
- He spreads false doctrine – Matthew 13:25: “*While everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away.*”
- He is a liar and a murderer – John 8:44: “*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.*”
- He will flee with God on our side – James 4:7: “*Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*”

First John 3:8 tells us, “*The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work.*” Jesus assures us that he will always be the victor as mentioned in John 14:30, “*The prince of this world is coming. He has no hold over me.*”

#### **Discuss**

**Why is it wrong to say, “The opposite of God is Satan?”**

**Why would Satan want people to be fooled into thinking there is no such thing as the devil and demons?**

**What are some symbols used today to represent Satan?**

## **SATAN’S DEMONS**

First Timothy 4:1 warns us, “*The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.*” Satan is not alone. When he fell from heaven he took with him an army of followers who were likewise cast out. Matthew 25:41 says, “*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.’*” The Bible calls them demons, evil spirits, unclean spirits,

seducing spirits, fallen angels, and the devil’s angels. These evil beings continually tempt and even inhabit the lives of people. Mary Magdalene had seven demons cast out of her. Jesus cast numerous demons from the man who called himself Legion. They can cleverly lead God’s people astray because they know who God is and how to twist his words as we see in James 2:9, “*You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.*”

(Note that during Jesus’ ministry, there was a very high level of demonic activity, so much that the disciples were given the power to cast them out. Luke 9:1 says, “*When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases.*” However that power was only theirs for a short time.)

The Bible gives us some characteristics of the demons.

- They know about Jesus - Mark 1:23,24 – “*Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit cried out, ‘What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!’*”
- They experience emotions - James 2:19: “. . . *even the demons believe that—and shudder.*”
- They are powerful – Acts 19:16: “*Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding.*” And Mark 5:3: “*This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain.*”

It is shocking to realize that today there are some people who take part in the worship of Satan. It is also sad that the Halloween holiday has reached such popularity. We see it filled with costumes and yard decorations that glorify Satan and his demons. Satan is not an object of fun and entertainment, and we should not allow our children to become complacent regarding the one who holds the power to lure people into his deadly kingdom.

The final victory over Satan will still be ours. On the Day of Judgment we will stand with Jesus Christ at his heavenly throne, and with him,

have the opportunity to pass final judgment on the devil and his evil followers. First Corinthians 6:3 says, “Do you not know that **we will judge angels?** How much more the things of this life!”

Let us take comfort and strength from the words of Romans 8:38,39, “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.**”

### Discuss

**What are your thoughts on the “dumbing down” of society regarding the devil and demons?**

**Why is it important to know and teach we must NEVER remove our armor?**

**Why should we be more concerned about things we cannot see than things we can?**

**What are some ways people can invite demons into their lives?**

## WAYS TO FIGHT AGAINST SATAN AND HIS DEMONS

We are thankful that God did not leave us powerless against the evil forces. His Word provides guidance for his people.

- God provides armor – Ephesians 6:11-17: “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. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

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

- Resist the devil – James 4:7: “**Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.**”

- Do not give Satan a chance – Ephesians 4:27: “Do not give the devil a foothold.”

- Be aware of his schemes – 2 Corinthians 2:10,11: “I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, in order that Satan might not outwit us. For **we are not unaware of his schemes.**”

- Let the Word of God live in you – 1 John 2:14: “I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and **the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one.**”

## PERSONAL ENCOUNTERS

(Angelophany)

An interesting account was written by Corrie ten Boom recalling her entrance into the Nazi concentration camp at Ravensbruck where incoming prisoners were being searched. Corrie was hiding a Bible under her dress. “It did bulge out obviously through my dress, but I prayed, ‘Lord, cause now Thine angels to surround me; and let them not be transparent today, for the guards must not see me.’ I felt perfectly at ease. Calmly I passed the guards.

Everyone was checked, from the front, the sides, and the back. Not a bulge escaped the eyes of the guard. The woman just in front of me had hidden a woolen vest under her dress; it was taken from her. They let me pass, for they did not see me. Betsie, right behind me, was searched.”

A second group of guards searched them, but again Corrie was not seen. I knew they would not see me, for the angels were still surrounding me. I was not even surprised when they passed me by; but within me rose the jubilant cry, ‘O Lord, if Thou dost so answer prayer, I can face even Ravensbruck unafraid.’”

Hebrews 13:2 says, “Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.” Do you know of someone, or have you been personally visited by an angel? Many authors and even Hollywood have profited from the notion of angels interacting with people. In order to determine

the legitimacy of such claims, we do well to apply the words of 1 John 4:1, “*Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.*” We do know that the Bible includes many accounts of angels manifested as men. However, if we look closely, they all shared things in common. Each visit was connected to faith in Christ for the sake of the Gospel. These angels ministered to God’s children for their own welfare. Any claim of contact with a good angel by a non-Christian tells us something is amiss. And anytime a spirit is not connected with the Word of God and its assurance of forgiveness and salvation in Christ, a red warning flag goes up.

Angels have also revealed themselves to people in dreams. We know of Jacob’s dream where he saw angels on the stairway to heaven. But certainly the record-holder would have to be Joseph as we find in Matthew. First he was told by an angel in a dream to willingly take Mary as his wife. Second, he was told by an angel in a dream to take Mary and Jesus and flee to Egypt. The third dream by an angel told Joseph to return to Israel with his family. And although the word “angel” is not mentioned in the fourth instance, it is implied when Scripture says Joseph was warned in a fourth dream to return to Nazareth.

We don’t need to see or meet angels to know they are with us. Perhaps God intentionally keeps them hidden from our eyes so we may more fully focus our full attention on him. God assures us they are. God sends his angels when he wants, and tells them what they need to know to care for us. The Christian who says in humble faith he or she has seen a good angel may very well have done so. If an angel speaks God’s message of grace to a sinner when facing death, what a blessing from God. If a child of God believes an angel has helped him or her out of trouble or rescued him or her from danger, we cannot discount the experience.

We must never forget that our protection and preservation in faith lie in the Word of God alone. When God’s holy angels take care of us, they do so for the sake of the Word.

***Discuss***

***What have you learned from this study?***



Martin Luther’s Morning and Evening Prayers are wonderful ways to begin and end the day.

#### **MORNING**

*I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let your holy angel be with me, that the wicked foe may have no power over me. Amen.*

#### **EVENING**

*I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let your holy angel be with me, that the wicked foe may have no power over me. Amen.*