

### **NOTE FROM PASTOR JIMMY:**

I think it's important that we understand the ***biblical*** truth and revelation of demons and angels. I encourage you to take this lesson slowly, looking closely at each concept and scripture reference, because of the tremendous amount of misinformation we hear. Properly understanding the role of angels and demons in God's master plan will only serve to enrich your own personal spiritual life.

## **Understanding Theology in 15 Minutes A Day for 40 Days**

### **Day 12**

### **What Are Angels and Demons?**

The doctrine of angels is unusual in that it deals with beings that are part of the spiritual realm, which is beyond our powers of observation. So we are entirely dependent upon what we are told about them in Scripture, as opposed to what we can learn about them through investigation. As we have seen, even though God also dwells in the spiritual realm, there is a degree to which he has made himself known through general revelation. For angels, we only know what God has told us about them.

Another reason this doctrine is unusual is that many scientists and all naturalists deny any spiritual realm and therefore the existence of spiritual beings. At the same time, recent polls show that a large percentage of the U.S. population does believe in the existence and work of angels.

Actually the Bible talks a lot about angels—over 250 times, from the very beginning to the very end (*especially* at the end, in Revelation). What does the Bible say about these beings? Like us, they are created, but like God, they are spiritual beings without physical bodies: “Are not all angels ministering spirits?” (**Hebrews 1:14**). Paul, in a clear reference to evil angels, said, “Our struggle is not against flesh and blood” (**Ephesians 6:12**).

Apparently there are many angels. The apostle John had a glimpse into heaven and recorded, “I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand” (**Revelation 5:11**). Many biblical texts indicate they are magnificent beings, superior in some ways to humans (**2 Peter 2:11; Hebrews 2:6–7**). Yet like humans, they are finite (**Daniel 10:10–14**). They are powerful but not all-powerful. They are intelligent but not omniscient.

Their titles seem to indicate their primary responsibility. The Hebrew word *malak* and the Greek word *angelos*, though often translated “angel,” both literally mean “messenger.” So one reason God originally created them was for delivering his messages (**e.g., Daniel 10**). Other primary activities include worshiping God (**Revelation 5:8–14**), carrying out his judgments (**Revelation 8–11**), and protecting his people (**Acts 5:19; 12:7–11**).

It seems that all angels were created good and holy—they are referred to as “holy ones” in Psalm 89:5–7 and “holy angels” elsewhere—but at some point, many rebelled against God. This seems to be the point of texts like **2 Peter 2:4**, “God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell,” and **Jude 6**, “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.” These are referred to as “evil spirits” (**Luke 7:21**) and often as “demons” (**Romans 8:38; James 2:19**), especially in the Gospels (**Matthew 8:28–33; Luke 4:33–36**). Paul calls them “spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (**Ephesians 6:12**).

The most widely known demon is *Satan* (meaning “adversary,” **e.g., Zechariah 3:1**). The Hebrew word is used over fifty times in the Old Testament. The Greek term applied to him is *diabolos* (meaning “accuser” or “slanderer”; **see Matthew 4:1; Ephesians 4:27; Revelation 12:9**), from which the English word *devil* is derived. Satan leads the fallen angels who rebelled against God; he is called “the prince of demons” (**Matthew 12:24; “Beelzebub” is another title for Satan**); Jesus referred to “the devil and his angels” (**Matthew 25:41**).

Jesus referred to the result of the angelic rebellion when he said, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven” (**Luke 10:18**). Paul seems to indicate that the rebellion was due to pride (**1 Timothy 3:6**); Satan apparently wanted to be in God’s place. **Isaiah 14:12–17** and **Ezekiel 28:11–19** are two Old Testament texts that may refer to Satan and his rebellion. God declares:

*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.”*

**Isaiah 14:13–14**

*Your heart became proud  
on account of your beauty.  
So I threw you to the earth.*

**Ezekiel 28:17**

The activity of Satan and his army of fallen angels is generally to oppose God, to thwart his plans and his actions. One way this is done is essentially by trying to offer an “attractive alternative”—actually a counterfeit. Again, Satan wants to usurp heaven’s throne, to become the alternative supreme ruler. And he appeals to human desire for the same thing. He advised that Eve disregard God’s command not to eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil (**Genesis 2:17**) because “God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and *you will be like God*, knowing good and evil” (**Genesis 3:5**).

Satan’s temptations of Jesus really added up to an enticement to avoid suffering and dying as a way to receive his kingdom (**Matthew 4:8–9; Luke 4:5–7**). Paul says, “Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light ... [and] his servants also masquerade as servants of righteousness” (**2 Corinthians 11:14–15**). Satan even offers a counterfeit messiah in the person of the Antichrist (**2 Thessalonians 2:9–11**).

Regarding unbelievers, demons blind their minds to the gospel (**2 Corinthians 4:4; Luke 8:12**) and deceive them (**John 8:44; 1 Timothy 4:1**). Satan is the ruler of unbelievers and of the fallen world in general (**1 John 5:19**).

Regarding believers, demons tempt them in order to draw them into sin (**1 Corinthians 7:5; 1 Thessalonians 3:5**), to accuse them of sin in order to paralyze them with guilt (**Revelation 12:10**), and to hinder their work in serving God (**2 Corinthians 2:11; 1 Thessalonians 2:18**).

What are some lessons we should learn from all of this? Positively, Christians should be encouraged by the work of good angels on their behalf, whether or not it can be perceived. (**Read 2 Kings 6:8–23, especially v. 17!**) Negatively, with regard to Satan and demons, we should take their threat seriously—they are still dangerous. However, we should also remember that through his death and resurrection, Jesus Christ has ultimately broken their power and sealed their eventual doom (**Colossians 2:13–15; Hebrews 2:14**). They will eventually be judged and thrown into the lake of fire forever (**Revelation 20:9–10**).

For now, we are told to resist Satan (**James 4:7—note the promise: “He will flee from you”; 1 Peter 5:9**) and flee temptation (**1 Corinthians 6:18; 10:13**). God has given us the resources we need to fight against Satan and demons—God’s “armor”—but it is our responsibility to use it and take a stand against our true enemies (**Ephesians 6:13–18**). Our true confidence is that God is greater than Satan and demons, and he is on our side (**1 John 4:4**).

#### **INTERESTING FACT**

Even though angels are superior in many ways to humans, Scripture never says they bear the image of God, and, in fact, the saints (Christians) will judge angels (**1 Corinthians 6:3**).