

Angels (and spiritual reality)**Key Verses:** Hebrews 1:14**Key Idea:** I believe that angels exist and are part of an invisible spiritual reality**Key Question:** What are angels and how do they remind us of spiritual reality?**Angels**

Angels are created spiritual beings with moral judgment and high intelligence but without physical bodies. They are God's warriors and as a group are often referred to as the host (or armies) of heaven. They have not always existed; they are part of the universe God created. Ezra affirms this when he says of God, "You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host" (Neh. 9:6).

Since angels are "spirits" (Heb. 1:14), they do not have physical bodies, for a Jesus says, "A spirit does not have flesh and bones" (Luke 24:39). Therefore, angels cannot ordinarily be seen unless the Lord opens our eyes (as he did with Balaam in Numbers 22:31) or they take on bodily form to appear to us (as happened at Jesus' tomb in Matthew 28:5). Normally, though, angels are invisible as they perform their ordinary activities of guarding us in all our ways (Ps. 91:11) and joining us in our worship of God (Heb. 12:22). Angels demonstrated moral judgment when "they sinned" and were cast out of heaven (2 Peter 2:4). They demonstrate their intelligence through speaking to humans (see Matt. 28:5, for example) and singing praise to God (See Rev. 4:11, for example).

Demons

Demons are evil angels who sinned against God and who now continually work evil in the world. They are the angels whom God "did not spare...when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness" (2 Peter 2:4). But demons did not start out as evil. As part of the original creation, they were part of everything God made, that he considered "very good" (Gen. 1:31). Although the Bible does not tell us specifically when they fell, sometime between their creation and Satan's tempting of Eve to sin, these demons "did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling" (Jude 6) and were cast into hell.

Satan is the personal name of the head of the demons. He is mentioned by name in passages like 1 Chronicles 21:1, where it says "Satan stood against Israel and incited David to number Israel." Jesus speaks directly to him when tempted in the wilderness: "Be gone, Satan!" (Matt. 4:10). When the disciples tell Jesus that the demons are subject to his name, Jesus responds by saying, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven" (Luke 10:18). The Bible also uses the following names for Satan: "the devil" (Matt. 4:1), "the serpent" (Gen. 3:1), "Beelzebul" (Matt. 10:25), "the ruler of this world" (John 12:31), "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2), and "the evil one" (Matt. 13:19).

Satan was a "murderer from the beginning" and the "father of lies" (John 8:44). "The devil," 1 John 3:8 tells us, "has been sinning from the beginning." He is the originator of sin, having sinned before he "deceived Eve by his cunning" (2 Cor. 11:3). He also tried to tempt Christ to sin

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(Matt. 4:1-11), so that Jesus would fail in his mission "to destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8). Satan and his demons will try to use every type of destructive tactic to blind people "from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ" (2 Cor. 4:4). They will also use similar destructive tactics – such as temptation, doubt, lies, murder, guilt, fear, confusion, sickness, envy, pride, and slander – to hinder a Christian's witness and usefulness.

The devil and his demons are limited both in their own power and by God's control in what they can and can't do. They are kept in "eternal chains under gloomy darkness" (Jude 6). Satan himself can be successfully resisted through the authority of Christ: "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). Satan and his demons cannot know the future, for only God can declare "the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done" (Isa. 46:10). Although they may be able to observe what we do on a daily basis (and from this draw conclusions about our thoughts or our future), they cannot know for certain what we are thinking or what our future holds (see Dan. 2:27-28, where no one speaking by any other power than the God of heaven could know the king's dream).

Personal Questions

1. How are the angels like us? How are they different from us?
2. What is the primary role of angels in the world today?
3. What are some of the things that the Bible tells us about Satan? How do these things put you on guard against Satan? How do these things remove some fears you may have about Satan?

Angels (and spiritual reality) Group Study

OPEN

Why do you think people are so interested in angels today? What ideas are there in the culture about angels? Share an angel story that happened to you.

1. What would be an improper way to think about spiritual reality?
2. Read Revelation 5:11-12. How might the fact of worshiping God in the midst of thousands and thousands of angels affect your worship on earth right now?
3. Read 1 Corinthians 6:3. Why do you think God will ask his people to judge the fallen angels?
4. Read below the titles and designations of angels in the Bible. Which ones are the most helpful to you? Why? Which ones are confusing? Why?

Job 1:6 – sons of God

Psalms 89:5, 7 – holy ones

Daniel 4:13, 17 – watchers

Ephesians 1:21 – powers

Genesis 3:24 – cherubim

Isaiah 6:2-7 - seraphim

Ezekiel 1:5-14 – living beings

Jude 9 - archangel

Genesis 31:11, 13 – the angel of the Lord

2 Kings 6:17 – drivers of chariots of fire

5. What was the Sadducees opinion regarding spiritual reality? How did this effect their ideas about God's supernatural work in the world?
6. Read 2 Corinthians 11:14. What are some reasons Satan might disguise himself? (see also 1 Timothy 4:12 and Galatians 1:8)

Key Application: Angels remind us of spiritual reality

APPLICATION – Make a quick list of 5 major biblical facts about the good, the bad and the ugly (Devil) angels.

CLOSING PRAYER

– Pray for requests

- Ask God for help understanding being aware of, and appreciating spiritual reality around us.

NEXT WEEK

Key Verse: Genesis 1:26-27

Key Idea: I believe in that God created male and female in His image

Key Question: Why did God create male and female in His image (and what does that mean?)?

Study Passages

Genesis 1:26-27; 2:7-8; 5:1-2

Matthew 19:4

Mark 10:6

Psalm 8:5

James 3:9

Romans 8:29

Ephesians 4:23

1 Thess. 5:23

1 Corinthians 2:14

Personal Study Questions

1. Why were people created?
2. Define what qualities are included in - the image of God.
3. Many today would say that humans are just a higher level of animal. How would you explain the difference?
4. How does knowing you are made in God's image effect your self-image?
5. How has sin damaged the image of God in people?