

**Angelology, Satanology, Demonology:  
What the Bible Says About Angels, Satan, and Demons**

**Angels, the Servants of God (Genesis 1:1; Exodus 20: 11; Job 38:6-7)**

1. Introductory Comments

There has been a surge of interest in angels in our generation. Christians have always been interested in seeing what the Bible says about the unseen world – so much so that in 1975, Billy Graham wrote one of his most popular books, *Angels: God's Secret Agents*. It was a bestseller; but he had to come back in 1985 with a revised and expanded version of the book, because in ten years people had developed an even greater craving for information about the spirit world.

A 1993 article in *Christianity Today* magazine cited evidence that our culture is becoming fascinated with angels (almost 70% of all Americans believe in the existence of angels); but it warned that this fascination hasn't always taken religious or even healthy forms. In 1995 another major Christian publication, *Moody Monthly*, offered suggestions on how to think about angels and how to talk to people who are intrigued by invisible spirits.

So what does the Bible say?

2. What are angels like?

- They are \_\_\_\_\_
  - Intellect: They are curious about what goes on in our lives (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 1:12)
  - Emotion: They shouted with joy at the birth of Jesus (Luke 2:13-14)
  - Moral duty: They are held morally responsible for their actions (Matthew 25:41)
  
- They are \_\_\_\_\_
  - Not created for companionship, as mankind was (Genesis 1:26-27; 3:8)
  - No less self-conscious or important than we are (Psalm 8:5 with Hebrews 2:7-9)
  - Don't know what it feels like to sin or to fail (Matthew 25:31; Revelation 14:10)

3. How many angels are there? Probably \_\_\_\_\_  
(Daniel 7:10; Luke 2:13; Revelation 5:11)
4. How are angels organized? \_\_\_\_\_ style  
(Daniel 10:13; Ephesians 3:10; 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4:16)
5. What do angels do?

- They \_\_\_\_\_ us (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 1:12)

Peter talks about the tremendous gift of mercy and forgiveness and salvation that God has offered us through his Son, Jesus Christ. And this thing of mercy is a situation into which the angels long to look. It's inconceivable to an angel that anyone would ever sin against God. And so it's even more inconceivable to them that the Son of God would go to all the bother to take our guilt upon himself and to rescue us. Angels find it fascinating that God cares so much about us.

- They \_\_\_\_\_ us (Hebrews 1:14)

This is one of those places in the Bible where we crave additional information. What kinds of services do angels render for us? Is this saying that they only help us up to and including the moment when we open our hearts to the Lord Jesus Christ? Or are there guardian angels that stick with us for life? It isn't clear. The only thing that's clear is that one of the reasons that God made angels was to take care of us.

- They \_\_\_\_\_ us (Luke 15:10)

Whenever you introduce a person to the Savior and that person prays to receive Christ, you should tell them, "You know, you can't hear it or see it, but right now there's a celebration going on in heaven, in your honor. Every angel is cheering because you've just been reborn into the family of God!" It's a sign of the great importance and dignity that God gives to each of us, that his angels would break into song at those crucial moments of victory in our lives.

- They \_\_\_\_\_ us (Luke 16:22)

Here's a glimpse behind the curtain of death. We see a poor, godly man die, and his soul is ushered into Paradise by angels. I don't think the Lord Jesus would have told us such a thing just to give his story a little more color. It's another sign that all of heaven cares deeply about each one of us. When it's time to go home to the presence of Christ, they roll out the red carpet. Angels are sent to escort us to our

eternal home. They are the welcoming committee of heaven. Their ministry to Christians is probably one of the most important assignments ever given to them.

6. What should we do about angels?

- Don't \_\_\_\_\_ them  
(Revelation 19:10)

Some people get the idea that God is so high and unapproachable that it would be impossible ever to get through to him directly. So they try to access some lesser being who will act like an emissary between God and us. But that's not biblical. In John's vision of the throne room of God, he so overwhelmed by the whole scene that he spontaneously falls down on his knees before the angel who has shown him these things. But the angel quickly says, "Don't do that! I am your fellow-servant. Worship only God!" It's not appropriate to worship angels, or to give them the thought and attention and respect which we're supposed to reserve only for the Lord. On the other hand, it is certain that evil angels have convinced unsuspecting people to bow down to them, knowing that, if a human being can be convinced to worship one of God's creatures, it will take worship away from the Lord.

- Do \_\_\_\_\_ to them  
(1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11:10)

Angels are watching us all the time. They are interested in what we do. They are fascinated by the spiritual warfare that goes on in our hearts, and indeed, they are often personally involved in that battle.

Angels are amazed that their Master, their Creator, their Commander-in-Chief, would love sinful human beings so much that he would leave the glories of heaven to come down here and to die for us. They must be even more amazed when we acknowledge the love and the sacrifice of God's Son and the fact that we went to the cross for our sins, and then we turn around and commit those same offenses against our beloved Savior time after time. The angels must be shocked that we could continue to grieve the God who loves us so.

There are certain things we ought to do for no other reason than that God tells us to do them; and the angels watch to see if we'll comply. In 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11, we are told that women in the public assembly of the church should cover their heads when called upon to lead mixed adults in prayer or in Bible study. Why? "Because of the angels." Because angels, like human beings, watch to see if God's people will do what God says.

Just as we have been called to be witnesses to our neighbors – to tell them whenever we get a chance that the Son of God has rescued us and changed us – so we are called to witness to a host of unseen warriors who watch us, assist us, are about us, and stand ready to escort us into the presence of Christ.

### **Satan, the Enemy of God**

#### 1. Introductory Comments

The Old Testament refers to the devil only six or seven times, and a couple of those references are ambiguous. But every writer in the New Testament speaks of him at least once, and in fact our Lord Jesus Christ mentions Satan 24 times. We know that the devil is more than just the personification of evil; he is a person, a spirit, a created being of the highest order. He is called the evil one, the tempter, the prince of this world, the god of this age, the prince of the power of the air, the accuser of the brethren, the deceiver of the world, the prince of demons, the father of lies, the serpent, the dragon, the fallen star, the roaring lion. He is characterized as a liar and a murderer.

#### 2. How did he become evil? \_\_\_\_\_ (Isaiah 14:12? Ezekiel 28:12-19? 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 3:6)

If God came to the end of his creative work and surveyed all that he had made and pronounced everything “very good,” at what point did this creature we all “Satan” become evil?

Isaiah 14 might give us some clues. The prophet delivers a message to the king of Babylon, but it’s almost as though he’s talking to another person *behind* the king. It doesn’t actually say that this is a description of what happened to Satan, but it gives us a good idea of what might have happened.

In Ezekiel 28, the prophet is talking about the king of Tyre. Again, there is no clear reference to Satan; but it seems compatible with the nature of Satan’s fall.

1<sup>st</sup> Timothy warns us not to put a new Christian in a position of church leadership, “lest he become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil.” How did this being called Satan become evil? Pride! He was new, he was intelligent, he was powerful, he was beautiful. He was housed in the Garden of Eden. Then God created man; and suddenly this perfect angelic creature became enraged and jealous, and it

occurred to him to attempt to dethrone God and take the Creator's place. In the split-second it took him to entertain that thought, he became twisted and evil and fallen.

3. Is his power limited or unlimited? \_\_\_\_\_  
(James 4:7)

“Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” Now, he might come back. And resisting him isn't always as easy as it sounds. But James 4:7 gives us hope. It tells us that we Christians can thwart Satan's attacks.

Some people think the devil is eternal and all-powerful, a sort of “dark side of the Force,” the evil counterpart of God. But Satan has probably only been around a couple of days longer than the human race. He is old, and he is crafty. He is surrounded by an army of spies and co-conspirators. He's been taking notes on each of us since the moment we were born. He knows what tempts us; but he really doesn't know what we're thinking. Only God knows that. So Satan regularly underestimates the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. He can do a lot of damage, but he can't do everything. His power is limited.

4. What should I do about Satan?

- Don't \_\_\_\_\_ to him  
(Ephesians 4:26-27; 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 3:6)

Our sin nature often leads us to say and do things offensive to God. Satan's forces perceive our rebellion and attempt to capitalize on it. Ephesians 4 tells us that might happen if we don't hold our anger in check. “Do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity.” If we have a problem controlling our temper or letting go of bitterness, it's almost like we're hanging out a sign that says, “Attention, Satan! This person is available for further sin! Come and get him!” And he will!

The 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy passage suggests that, if we put a new or immature or weak Christian into a church leadership position, we are setting him up for the same sin that brought down Lucifer. It would be like sitting our children down in front of pornography and saying, “Here, children: Look at this but don't get any bad ideas!”

One of the tricks of growing in our faith is to learn to recognize the voice of Satan. We must ask God to help us discern when the devil is trying to tempt us to do something that we know is wrong. When we are depressed and we feel like giving up; when we're tempted and we can't think of any reason why we should stop;

when the commands of God seem harsh and unreasonable and irrelevant – that’s the devil talking. He is speaking through a voice that sounds so logical and so sympathetic and so harmless that we begin to wonder why God is being so mean to us.

If we listen, as Eve listened, we will sin. When Satan tugs at our hearts, we must ask God to drown out that voice with the voice of truth.

- Do \_\_\_\_\_ him  
(1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5:8-9; 1<sup>st</sup> John 4:4)

Taken together, these two passages imply that, by ourselves, we are no match for the devil. He’s too crafty. He’s too experienced. He fights dirty. And yet, inside every Christian heart there is a home where the Spirit of God dwells. The all-powerful Spirit of God is infinitely capable of handling anything the devil throws at us. Our attachment to the Lord, our faith, is a rock-solid fortress beyond which the evil cannot penetrate.

The tragedy for Christians is that we live inside this impenetrable wall of spiritual power, and yet we keep leaving the gate open. Sometimes, all the devil has to do is walk in. He’ll do that when we get overconfident or lethargic or distracted. He’ll get inside, and he’ll hurt us. He hates us, because we belong to Christ and he hates everything that belongs to Christ. He knows that his days are numbered, and he knows that he can’t win in a fair fight against the Lord. So he lobbs flaming arrows over the wall again and again, until we are overcome by arrogance or discouragement. Then he merely taps on the gate and walks in.

Satan may be a powerful enemy, but the Word says that he is already defeated.

It is impossible to know with certainty why the almighty God – who had a perfect plan for the universe, and who sovereignly controls everything in that universe – permitted Satan to rebel and to do so much damage to the human race. In a sense, the entire world is watching to see how Satan’s rebellion will turn out. When, at the end of time, all of humankind and all of angel-kind watch solemnly as Satan is cast down into the eternal Lake of Fire to be tormented forever and ever for his sins, then all will know that God and only God is the sovereign Lord of all things.

**Demons, the Rebels Against God**

## 1. Introductory Comments

One question that has always intrigued Bible scholars is, “When did the demons become demons?” As we said before, it is obvious that at the end of six days of creation everything in the universe was good; nothing was evil; because God looked at everything he had made, and behold, it was very good. What went wrong, and when? It’s probably safe to assume that there was no such thing as a demon until sometime after the sixth day of creation.

## 2. How did they become demons? By \_\_\_\_\_

It is dangerous to speculate, but one plausible theory suggests that, immediately after Lucifer declared war on God, a number of angels decided to join the rebellion. We don’t know why. We don’t know how many, although it may have been as many as 1/3 of all angelic beings (Revelation 8:12 with 9:1 and 9:11).

Apparently some of these fallen angels were worse than others. There are a couple of references in the New Testament that certain demons committed sins so horrible that God now keeps them locked away in an invisible prison (2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 2:4; Jude 6). Most of the demons roam freely, or at least as freely as the Lord will allow them. Remember that the Holy Spirit restrains evil. Within God’s divine plan, there is a temporary allowance for a certain amount of sin to exist, which God will judge at the end of time.

## 3. What do demons do?

- They \_\_\_\_\_ Satan  
(Ephesians 6:11-12)

There is a sense in which the individual Christian is engaged in a battle with Satan (Matthew 13:38-39; Luke 8:12; Ephesians 4:27; 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 3:6; 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 2:26; James 4:7; 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5:8).<sup>1</sup>

However, the Ephesians 6 passage indicates that our enemy includes “the rulers, the powers, the world forces of darkness, the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.” Satan functions as a general, with a whole army of demons to send against us.

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<sup>11</sup> This does not excuse any human being from taking personal responsibility for his/her own sin. “The devil made me do it” is not a legitimate defense against God’s judgment and chastening for sin. This will be explored in greater detail in the next section, “Hamartiology: The Doctrine of Sin.”

- They \_\_\_\_\_ humans  
(Mark 5:15; 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 4:1-3; Matthew 12:45)

Demons can cause mental disorders, as they did with the man in Mark 5, who lived naked in a cemetery and would attack anyone who walked by. Demons made him do that. 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy says that demons are responsible for some of the outlandish cults and heresies rampant in our world today. Matthew 12:45 tells us that the demons can actually live inside a human being.

People talk about the difference between demon “oppression” and demon “possession,” as if being a Christian protects from one but not the other. But apparently there isn’t much difference. To the degree that a believer permits a demon to guide his thinking or his actions, to that degree the believer is under demonic control.

Genesis chapter 6 describes what many commentators see as a worst-case scenario. In the early centuries of this world, demon activity was so rampant that human thought was consumed with evil. “The Lord saw that every intent of the thoughts of man’s heart was only evil continually.” Because the wickedness had so completely taken over, God resolved to wipe out the entire human race except for one family, the family of Noah.

- They \_\_\_\_\_ governments  
(Daniel 10:13; Ephesians 6:12)

Note Daniel’s fascinating conversation with an angel. The messenger from heaven said, “Three weeks ago when you started praying for the deliverance of Israel, God immediately dispatched me to tell you how your prayer would be answered. But I was sidetracked along the way when the *prince of the kingdom of Persia* came out and withstood me. I had to call for backup, and God sent *Michael your prince* to help me, just in the nick of time because the *prince of Greece* is about to come.”

Apparently, in the military organization of the devil, there is a high-ranking demon in charge of each nation – a demon whose function is to carry out Satan’s purposes for that nation and to oppose anything that God tries to accomplish within its borders. In Daniel’s case, a man of God prayed persistently for three weeks about a matter of national in international spiritual significance. God heard that prayer. In keeping with his usual procedure, God sent angels to answer the prayer.

We may speculate regarding what might have happened if Daniel had stopped praying after a couple of days. What might have happened if Daniel had assumed that a week of prayer is enough prayer? What would happen in Ephesians 6, if we stopped wrestling with those principalities and powers of darkness? This may help to explain why our prayers sometimes don't get answered right away. It may also explain why some of us never seem to get the things we request of God. Perhaps it is because we give up on God just before his messengers are about to break through with the answer.

- They \_\_\_\_\_ the Church  
(1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 4:1; James 3:13-16)

They undermine the Church with deceit and with false doctrine. They do it by injecting an atmosphere of tension into church life. We must realize that when there is jealousy and selfishness and pride in the church, it is likely the work of demons.

#### 4. What should we do about demons?

- Don't \_\_\_\_\_ them  
(Matthew 12:43-45)

Never underestimate the power of a demon. We cannot see them or hear them, but they exist. They have saturated this world-system with their evil, and they are determined to destroy everything that God loves. Their powers are limited, but they can still inflict great damage. If a Christian senses that he has won a battle against the influence of demons, and if he feels that he has swept those demons from his life, he must remain alert. The demons will attempt to return. If those demons observe that the Christian has cleaned up his life through personal effort and determination, but hasn't given the credit or the control of his life to the Holy Spirit, those demons will simply move back in. This time they will bring reinforcements, and the spiritual condition of that believer will be worse than before.

- Do \_\_\_\_\_ them  
(James 4:7)

If it's possible to resist the devil himself, then it must be possible to resist a mere demon. If a Christian is suffering from a mysterious physical problem and there's no medical explanation for it, and it threatens to sideline the believer from doing something useful for the Lord, and if the Christian is tempted just to give in and allow the pain to rule his life, he must resist. Remember what the Lord said to the

Apostle Paul when he was suffering great pain. “My grace is sufficient for you” (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 12:9). In our weakness, God will display his strength.

If we can't seem to get a handle on our emotions, and fear or worry or depression or anger appear to be paralyzing us and rendering us useless to God, we must resist. Remember what it says in Philippians 4:6-7: “Don't worry about anything, but pray about everything; and the peace of God will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”

If something evil seems to have taken over our government or our church or our home or our heart, we must resist! Just as God wants us to be at peace, the devil and his angels want us to be miserable. But remember what James 1 says: “Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.”

We must now allow demons to rob us of our joy in the Lord! We must not allow the demons to sabotage what the Spirit of God is accomplish in our church. We must now allow the demons to get the upper hand in our government without blanketing those government officials with fervent prayer. We must not roll over and let the enemy win. We must resist!

## 5. Concluding Thoughts

When the Lord Jesus appeared to the Apostle John on the Isle of Patmos, inspiring him to write the Book of Revelation, he included a message to a small group of suffering Christians in a place called Smyrna. He said in Revelation 2:8, “The One called the First and the Last, the one who was dead and has come to life, says this, ‘I know about your troubles and your poverty (but don't forget how rich you really are in the Lord). And I know the slanderous things that others are saying about you. Don't be afraid of what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, and you'll be tested; you'll experience days and days of tribulation. But be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.’”

In the instant when Lucifer had his first evil thought – in the ensuing rebellion, when millions upon millions of God's beautiful, angelic servants decided to follow Lucifer and became twisted and evil along with him – in the beginning, before Adam and Eve were tempted, before sin poisoned the human race and tainted the universe – back before all of the violence and all of the lust and all of the selfishness and all of the ungodliness – why didn't God put a stop to it? Why didn't God annihilate the demons? Why didn't God kill the devil? If God is indeed the sovereign and almighty Lord of the universe, if God exercises complete control over everything in the world,

if God is manipulating every event in history so that everything will culminate in his own wise, eternal, perfect plan – why is there a Satan? Why are there demons? Why does evil exist? Why do we sin?

These are tough questions with complicated answers. But we don't need to know everything that's going on in the mind of God in order to function on this planet. We only need to know three things: God the heavenly Father has told us the difference between right and wrong. God's Son has done for us at the cross the only thing that could make us right. And God the Holy Spirit is the only one who can give us victory in this unseen war.

### **Recommended Reading**

Barnhouse, Donald Grey. *The Invisible War*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1965.

Graham, Billy. *Angels: God's Secret Agents*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975.

Lewis, C. S. *The Screwtape Letters*. New York, NY: Macmillan, 1967.

Lovett, C. S. *Dealing with the Devil*. Baldwin Park, CA: Personal Christianity, 1967.

Rhodes, Ron. *Angels Among Us*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1994.

Schneider, Bernard. *The World of Unseen Spirits*. Winona Lake, IN: BHM Books, 1975.

Unger, Merrill. *Biblical Demonology*. Wheaton, IL: Scripture Press, 1952.

### **Assignments for the Next Module – 2/4/17 -- “Hamartiology: The Doctrine of Sin”**

1. Read Grudem's *Systematic Theology*, chapter 24.
2. Outline the chapter.
3. Identify any difficult or controversial issues raised in the chapter.
4. From the material in the assigned chapter, identify one issue that you would like to pursue for further study sometime.