



The Devil,
Demons,
And
Angels

A Bible Study by Ron Turnbow

The Devil, Demons, and Angels

Syllabus

Welcome to our study! I hope you look forward to our study focused on The Devil, Demons, and Angels. Perhaps you have asked such questions as “Is Satan a fallen angel?”, “What role does the devil have here in the 21st century?” “Why did demons possess people in New Testament times?”, “Are people still possessed today with demons?”, “Is demon possession the same thing as a mental illness?”, “Who are the angels?”, “Do people become angels in the afterlife?”, “What role do angels have here in the 21st century?” We will seek to answer these and many other questions regarding these spirit beings – all based on what the Bible teaches. Throughout history, much has been speculated about the nature and work of these beings. The Bible has a lot to say about these beings, their nature and operation. Popular culture and the dark imaginations of some people have speculated a lot more. May God bless us in our study of “The Devil, Demons, and Angels”!

Purpose: This Bible study is designed to investigate and understand the nature and operation of the Devil, demons, and angels. The study will focus on scriptural teachings combined with dispelling popular myths and doctrinal error about these beings.

Objectives: Our study will seek to accomplish the following objectives:

1. Understand the role, nature, and work of the Devil, Demons, and Angels
2. Explore the methods used by the Devil – Past and Present
3. Explore whether demons and angels are active in the lives of people in the 21st century

Format: Each lesson will incorporate information from the Bible, some other reference sources, as well as a handful of discussion questions. Our class sessions will center on the questions contained in this outline. We will do some reading of the related scriptures during class time as well. Obviously, our time will be best utilized if everyone reads the targeted passages, meditate on the questions asked, and come to class prepared to discuss. We will strive to keep our discussions interesting and focused on the subject/questions as outlined in this material. Should you not feel comfortable asking questions in class or if you have suggestions regarding the class in general, please feel free to email me at r.turnbow01@verizon.net or call me at 972/899-2465.

Course Outline/Schedule: The following table represents our plan for the quarter:

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Date</i>
Why a Bible Study On the Devil, Demons, and Angels	Jan 4
The Devil – His Origin and Nature	Jan 11
The Devil’s War	Jan 18
“Walking About As a Roaring Lion”	Jan 25
The Devil: Adam and Eve, Job and Peter	Feb 1
Demons – Their Origin and Nature	Feb 8
The Work of Demons	Feb 15
Do Demons Interact with Man in the 21st Century?	Feb 22
Angels – Their Origin and Nature	Mar 1
The Work of Angels	Mar 8
Do Angels Interact with Man in the 21st Century?	Mar 15
Popular Questions about Angels Discussed	Mar 22
Topic to Be Determined	Mar 29

The Devil, Demons, and Angels

Why Study about the Devil, Demons, and Angels?

We are embarking on a study into the fascinating spirit world. The Bible clearly states that God created all things. Paul wrote in Colossians 1:16, “For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and on the earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers”. “All things” includes the physical creation of matter, time, energy, space, and life. “All things” also includes the creation of spiritual beings. The spirit beings consist of the devil, demons, and angels. For most people, understanding of these beings has been polluted by images introduced by uninspired men. The Bible has plenty to say about all three. It is our goal to better understand what the Bible teaches.

There are several reasons why we are spending the next several weeks engaged in such a study:

First, Peter said in 1 Peter 4:11, “if anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God”. This includes teaching on challenging topics such as the spirit world and how spirits interact with mankind. There is an abundance of speculation and misinformation regarding the devil, demons, and angels. Some of this misinformation has its root in uninspired religious doctrine. Other sources include the entertainment industry. As the Bible chronicles, there were interactions between those in the spirit realm and living people. We should endeavor to understand what the Bible teaches about these beings and their interaction with man. At the same time, we should be able to discern erroneous teachings about them.

Second, there has been major doctrinal error introduced over the centuries. This doctrinal error is claimed to have as its source, angels. Paul said in Galatians 1:8, “But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed”. Imagine over a billion people being led astray and the source of the doctrinal error supposedly delivered by an angel. The tenets of Islam and Mormonism, to name two major ones, are said to be tied to angelic delivery of content from God. Is this possible? As prudent Bible students, we should be equipped to address how the will of God was revealed and identify false doctrine for what it is.

Third, whether we like it or not, we are engaged in an epic war for our soul. Peter said in 1 Peter 5:8, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour”. Do we spend enough time understanding our spiritual enemy? Are we equipped to engage him in battle? Do we understand how to emerge victorious over him? This study will show we can indeed defeat the devil’s goal to derail Christians from serving God. Do we understand how to accomplish that? If we don’t understand what God would have us to about the nature and operation of Satan, we will not fare well in the battle. We will study what the Bible says about his origin and his nature. The nature of the devil is best characterized as evil, being polar opposite of God’s nature. As such, the devil is engaged in warfare against God and thus against those who aspire to righteous living. Paul said in Ephesians 6:12-20, “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness”, we must understand who the enemy is and arm ourselves properly. Doing so will allow us to “withstand evil” and “quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one”.

Fourth, some people fret about the effect of demons in their life. For most, they misunderstand how demons operate today. The entertainment industry and doctrinal error regarding the operation of demons has led to many people simply misunderstanding what role demons play and how they operate. The Bible provides very clear images of the involvement of demons in New Testament times. Do demons invade people's bodies today? Have demons been locked away to where they have no impact on humanity? Both are incorrect. We will explore what the Bible says about how the devil and his dark angels work today. It is not through possession, in a New Testament sense. Rather, it is through deception and false doctrine. Are you prepared to engage in this battle for your soul?

Fifth, we will study what the Bible teaches about the angels. Angels are pictured throughout the Bible in a variety of roles, some comforting, some frightening. Angels are the messengers of God. They were created as spiritual beings. Yet, false information is widely available regarding the nature and operation of angels. Do angels still reveal God's will to mankind today? Are angels involved in the affairs of man at all anymore? Do I have a "guardian angel"? Is my beloved grandmother now an angel? The Bible has a wealth of information regarding the origin, nature, and work of angels. Uninspired writings and the entertainment industry has introduced a lot more information that is simply unsubstantiated in scripture.

As the quarter develops, you may come up with questions about the spirit world that is not covered in this material. You are encouraged to present your questions or requests for additional information to the Class Teacher.

Works consulted in the preparation of this material:

Vines Complete Expository of Old and New Testament Words. W.E. Vine.

Barnes Notes. Albert Barnes.

The Hosts of Heaven, a Biblical Study of Angels. Travis L. Quertermous.

Demonology. Raymond E. Harris.

Angels: The Ministers of Heaven. Dan Winkler

Angels and Other Created Spiritual Beings. Michael Hardin

Doctrines of Demons. Lynn A. McMillon

www.bible.ca

www.islamonline.net

www.lds.org

www.watchtower.org

The Devil, Demons, and Angels

The Devil – His Origin and Nature

Throughout the ages, mankind has sought to better understand his spiritual enemy – the devil. Some have consulted the Bible for information about him. The Bible provides a very clear picture of who the devil is and how he operates. Yet, many others have turned to speculation, fables, legends, and their own imaginations for information about the adversary. Some widely accepted stories about the origin and nature of the devil often resemble a Hollywood special effects movie. Why are we so interested in where the devil came from? The Bible identifies the devil as evil and thus enemy of God. Was he created evil or good? If he was created righteous, what happened for him to end up as the embodiment of evil? In this lesson, we shall endeavor to understand what the Bible says about the origin and nature of the Devil.

Origin of the Devil

1. God created all things (John 1:3, Col. 1:16-17, Gen. 1:1, Psalm 148:1-6).
 - a. God created the heavens and the earth.
 - i. God created physical life and matter.
 - ii. God created time, energy, and space.
 - iii. God created spiritual beings including angels, demons, and the devil.
 - b. Only God was present *before the beginning*.
 - c. The devil had a point of origin.
2. Satan sinned from the beginning (1 John 3:8).
 - a. God is completely pure with no unrighteousness whatsoever (1 John 1:5).
 - b. All God created was “good” (Gen. 1).
 - c. If God is only good, how could he create something that is not good?
 - d. Spirit beings have the same ability to choose between right and wrong as does man (Job 4:18-19, 2 Peter 2:4, Jude 6).
 - i. The devil made his choice (John 8:44).
 - ii. The spirit beings that chose unrighteousness were cast down from heaven.
 - e. We conclude that the devil, once a pure spiritual being, made his choice and he sinned – thereby separating himself from God (Rom. 6:23, Rev. 12:9).
 - f. Little is said of specifically what the devil’s sin (1 Tim. 3:6).
3. Satan became the ruler of the unrighteous and spiritual darkness (Eph. 6:10-12).

Names and references

1. “Satan” literally means “one who lies in wait” or “adversary” (Job 1:6-7).
 - a. The “sons of God” came before God, this included one named *Hasatan*.
 - b. *Hasatan*, or Satan, literally meaning “one who lies in wait” or “adversary”.
2. The word “devil” originates in the Greek as *Diablos*, meaning “slanderer” or “accuser”, and only appears in the New Testament.
3. The devil is referred to throughout scripture by a variety of names – none of them complimentary and all of them reflect the various dark aspects of his character.
 - a. Serpent or Dragon (Gen. 3:1, 2 Cor. 11:3, Rev. 12:9, Rev. 20:2).
 - b. Prince of the power of the air and the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience (Eph. 2:2).
 - c. The god of this age (2 Cor. 4:4).
 - d. Ruler of this world (John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11).
 - e. Prince, or ruler, of demons (Matt. 12:24).

- f. The wicked one and the enemy (Matt. 13:19).
 - g. Our adversary (1 Peter 5:8)
 - h. The tempter (Matt. 4:3, 1 Thes. 3:5).
 - i. A murderer and a liar and father of lies (John 8:44).
 - j. Accuser of brethren (Rev. 12:10).
4. “Devil” and/or “Satan” is referenced some 89 times in the NKJV.

Nature of the Devil

1. Devil is a spirit (Eph. 2:2, Eph. 6:10-16)
 - a. He does not possess a physical body.
 - b. He is not restricted by time or space.
 - c. His rule is over a spiritual realm of darkness. He has vast influences in the physical realm.
2. Where does the devil live?
 - a. He rules in his domain – this world (Job 1:7, John 12:30, 14:31, 16:11).
 - b. Not in Heaven (Jude 6).
 - c. Not in hell, yet (Matt. 25:41, Rev 20:10).
3. Appearance
 - a. When you think of the Devil, do you visualize a nasty looking fellow in a red suit with horns and a tail carrying a pitchfork? That image is largely the product of sensationalism and legends.
 - b. The devil changes his persona and appearance (2 Cor. 2:11, 2 Cor. 11:13-15).
 - i. He has many devices at his disposal.
 - ii. He possess the ability to change himself into whatever for happens to appeal to man.
 - iii. He may transform himself into an “angel of light”.
4. The devil is not alone in his work (Matt. 25:41, 2 Peter 2:4, Rev. 12:9, 2 Cor. 12:7).
5. Characteristics
 - a. The devil is *evil* – the arch enemy of God and man (Matt. 6:13, John 17:15, 2 Thes. 3:3, 1 John 5:18-19).
 - i. He made his choice to depart from righteousness and become evil.
 - ii. Bible refers to him as “the evil one”.
 - b. The devil is *powerful* (1 John 4:4, Rev. 12:8, Rev. 20:2).
 - i. Not “all powerful”.
 - ii. He exists and operates under subjection to God.
 - c. The devil *seeks to destroy relationships* between individuals and God (Gen. 3:1-6, Rev. 2:10, Matt. 4:1-11, 1 Thes. 2:18, 1 Tim. 5:15, 1 Peter 5:8, Job 1:6-12).
 - i. By destroy, he seeks to disrupt where relationships exist and prevent where they do not.
 - ii. Under no circumstances does the devil ever seek to help man out.
 - iii. His sole intent is to cause men to choose as he did, to choose evil over good.
 - iv. He works through temptations that appeal to each individual.
 - v. The book of Job chronicles how the devil sought to bring down Job due to his righteousness and thus, his relationship with God.
 - d. Jesus referred to the devil a “murderer” and the “father of liars” (John 8:44).

Conclusion

One may think that there is no defense against such a powerful and frightening enemy. However, as we will see in our next lesson, the devil and his angels have already lost the war with God. Jesus said in Matthew 25:41 that there is a place prepared for those are judged unworthy of

entrance into heaven. This condemnation is to a place reserved for the devil and his angels - a place of everlasting fire. We can take great comfort in knowing that the devil's power is limited. He will reside for all eternity in a place separated from the righteous. Thus, his power is limited. God protects us from that which we cannot bear (1 Corinthians 10:13). He maintains limits on Satan and how he attacks us. For that, we are deeply and eternally grateful!

Special Assignment – Research the Satan Origination Myth

Uninspired writings and sensational legends over time have talked of fall of the devil. These stories generally involve a conspiracy to overthrow God, defection of 1/3 of the host of angels, and the fall of Satan. They are based, in part, on what Isaiah says in Isaiah 14. This passage refers to “Lucifer”. What is the context of Isaiah 14? Who is “Lucifer”? What does this passage have to do with the fall of Satan? Please spend a few minutes researching these stories and compare/contrast them to what the Bible says about the subject.



Questions for your thought and consideration:

1. According to scripture, where did the devil come from?
2. Is the devil a fallen angel?
3. When did the devil come into existence?
4. What does the devil look like?
5. What does the Bible say of the devil's sin against God?
6. What is the relationship between God and the devil?
7. What does the Bible say about the power of the devil?
8. What names does the devil go by? What do these words mean?
9. Who is Lucifer in Isaiah 14:12-15?

The Devil, Demons, and Angels

The Devil's War

Thus far, we have analyzed the Bible teachings about the origin and nature of the devil, the “evil one”. The devil, or Satan, made his choice and put himself at enmity with God. Likewise, he is at war with those who seek righteousness and practice such in their lives. To further understand who the devil is and what he is capable of, it is important to examine the war that he has waged against God, with those men and women of Bible times, and now with here in the 21st century. Let us now better understand our enemy, the devil, and his war against righteousness.

Devil's War against God

1. Before man was created (Jude 6, 2 Peter 2:4).
 - a. The devil was created a sinless spiritual being.
 - b. He made the choice to separate from God through sin. He fell out of a good relationship with the Father. His sin led him to become the archenemy of God.
 - c. Although the war rages on, God has already won the war with Satan. However, the devil's goal is to inflict as much collateral damage as possible and measured in human souls.
 - d. The war with God involves the hearts of man.
2. The devil launched a war against God
 - a. Devil cast down to earth due to unrighteousness (Rev. 12:7-9).
 - b. Temptation in wilderness with Jesus (Matt. 4:1-11).
 - c. Demons cast out during ministry Jesus' ministry (Luke 10:17-20).
 - d. Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection (Col. 2:14-15, Heb 2:14-16, 1 John 3:8, Rev. 1:18).
3. Devil has already lost war.
 - a. Devil and his dark angels understand that they are condemned (Matt. 25:41, John 16:11).
 - i. "Have you come to torment us before the time" (Matt. 8:29).
 - ii. Demons believe there is one God tremble" (James 2:19).
 - iii. "You do not torment me" (Mark 5:7, Luke 8:28).
 - iv. "Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did you come to destroy us? I know who You are – the Holy One of God!" (Mark 1:24, Luke 4:34).
 - b. Devil and his angels bound
 - i. Promised in prophecy (Zech. 13:1-2).
 - ii. Jesus reiterated promise, referring to the binding of the “strong man” (Matt. 12:29, Luke 11:21-23).
 - iii. Jesus commanded the evil spirits (Mark 5:1-13).
 - iv. The 70 disciples had authority over demons (Luke 10:17).
 - v. Enemies of God will become his footstool (Acts 2:34-36, 1 Cor. 15:25-28).
 - vi. The promise fulfilled – Satan locked and sealed in the pit with a chain (Rev. 20:1-6).
 - c. Satan can no longer force us against our will or possess us (1 Cor. 10:13).
 - d. Yet, the devil inflicts as much collateral damage as possible – measured in the currency of souls (Gen. 3:1, Ezek 18:20, Rom. 3:23, Rom. 6:23).
4. Christ victorious over the devil

- a. It was prophesied that Christ would be bruised by the devil (Gen. 3:15, Isa. 53:10).
- b. Christ's victory over death won the war over the devil (Acts 2:23-24)
- c. Christ disarms the devil and triumphs over him (Col. 2:14-15).
- d. Justice against the devil, Christ prevails (John 12:31, John 16:11).

Devil's War against Man

1. The battle against mankind began with the very first man and woman (Gen. 3).
 - a. The devil *beguiled* and *tricked* Eve into eating the forbidden fruit.
 - b. He *reasoned* with her and *persuaded* her into thinking that she was going to become "like God" by using all three forms of temptation (1 John 2:15-17):
 - i. Lust of the flesh
 - ii. Lust of the eyes
 - iii. Pride of life
2. The devil's war continued with the first children – Caan and Abel (Gen. 4).
 - a. The devil *intervened* in the thinking of Caan and gave him reason to consider other things than what God had instructed.
 - b. Tempted him to *rebel* against the rule of worship that God established.
 - c. When God rejected Caan's offering, the devil gave him the option of *jealousy*.
 - d. Because of this intense jealousy, Caan *murdered* his brother.
3. The war against mankind continued throughout the Old Testament.
 - a. The devil attacked Job for his righteousness (Job 1-2).
 - i. God asked if Job had considered his blameless and upright servant
 - ii. Devil responds, "Does Job fear God for nothing?"
 - iii. God pointed out that Job maintained his integrity through the first wave of attacks by the devil.
 - iv. Devil asked that Job's physical health be removed.
 - b. The devil worked his dark persuasion with the people of Israel throughout their history.
 - i. He introduced *doubt* and *fear* into their hearts that their cherished relationship with God was not enough to fend off their enemies (Ex 14:10).
 - ii. He caught their eye and heart in moments of weakness and drew them into worshipping *idols* (Exodus 32:1, Lev 19:4, 1 Kings 12:25-30).
 - iii. He *inspired* and *provoked* David to sin (1 Chron. 21:1).
4. The war continued into the New Testament.
 - a. Devil *provoked* Herod and the religious leaders to crusade against Christ (Matt. 2:1-12, Mark 12:12, Luke 22:3).
 - b. Devil sought to *derail* the apostles (Luke 22:31-34).
 - c. Devil *filled the hearts* of the early Christians (Acts 5:1-11, Acts 7:54-60, 1 Cor. 5:1-8).
5. The devil's war continues today.
 - a. Devil has a world full of unbelievers under his control and belong to him (Matt. 4:8-10, John 14:30, 1 John 3:8-12, 1 John 5:19).
 - b. Devil opposes God by attacking the children of God (Rev. 12:10).
 - i. Devil seeks Christians to *abandon faith* and *fall away* (1 Tim. 1:18-20).
 - ii. Devil seeks Christians to *accept corrupted doctrine* (1 Tim. 4:1-4).
6. The devil suffers a loss each time a sinner repents (Acts 26:18, Col. 1:13, Luke 15:7).
7. The devil suffers defeat upon the death of a faithful Christian (1 Cor. 15:55).

Conclusion

The devil made his choice to stand against God. He chose unrighteousness over righteousness. The war that was launched against God resulted in his expulsion from the home of God. Throughout both the Old and New Testaments, the battles of the war are recorded for us to understand. Christ was victorious over the devil when he was raised from the dead. The devil and his hordes of demons were placed under restraint at that time. However, the war continues for your soul. Even though the devil has lost, he will continue his mission of attracting people to evil until the Lord returns. At that time, the war will be over and those who are able to withstand the attacks and the fiery darts of the devil (Ephesians 6:12-16).



Questions for your thought and consideration:

1. What caused the war to begin between God and the devil?
2. What is the primary goal of the devil?
3. What is the final outcome of this war against God?
4. What sealed the doom of the devil?
5. If the devil is doomed, why should we not let down our guard against his snares?
6. Why does God allow Satan to continue his evil works?
7. What are the three types of temptation (1 John 2:15-17)?
8. Why is it so important to arm yourself with the whole armor of God (Eph. 6:11-20)?
9. Explain how each piece of the armor of God can help you in the war against the devil.

The Devil, Demons, and Angels

“Walking about as a Roaring Lion”

Peter warns that we should exercise continual vigilance and watchfulness because of the methods of the devil. He says that the devil “walks about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8). In order to avoid the traps and snares laid by the evil one, we must understand how he operates. The Bible provides a wealth of information about our enemy. In our previous lesson, we studied the war of the devil against God and with man. We need to fully understand that the devil is the source of all sin (James 1:13-15). For the unbeliever, he does not have to work terribly hard to win their affections and take hold of their hearts. For those diligently serving the Lord, he works harder to ensnare them. We need to understand that the devil is powerful, cunning, and bold (2 Thes. 2:9-10). He will employ any tactic and method available to him in order to achieve his goal. The devil does not want you to serve the God of heaven and live your life accordingly. Let us examine how he goes about doing this.

1. The devil **understands you**, your strengths, your weaknesses, and your character composition.
 - a. He “goes to and fro on the earth and walks back and forth on it” (Job 1)
 - b. He carefully plots and calculates the destruction of man (1 Peter 5:8).
 - c. We see his ability to seduce in the account of Eve (Gen. 3:4-5).
 - d. Satan rules the unbelievers (Matt. 4:8, 1 John 5:19, 1 John 3:10).
 - e. He wants to occupy the heart of the believer (1 Chron. 21:1-7, Luke 22:31-32, 2 Tim. 4:10).
 - i. Satan *entered* Judas’ heart (John 13:27)
 - ii. Satan *filled* Ananias’ heart (Acts 5:3)
2. He **lies** to accomplish his goals (John 8:44).
3. He **tempts** man by making sin appealing (Matt. 4:1, John 13:2, 1 John 2:15-17).
 - a. Creates a yearning for that which is forbidden (Gen. 3).
 - b. Satan works to exert power over the believers (1 Cor. 7:5, 1 Cor. 10:13, Gal. 6:1).
 - c. Appeal of sin
 - i. Sin can bring a thrill, pleasure, or stimulation (Heb. 11:25).
 - ii. Sin leads to more sin (Prov. 5:22, Prov. 14:12, John 8:34, 2 Sam. 11).
 - iii. Sin befriends (James 4:4).
 - iv. Sin enslaves (Rom. 6:5-6).
4. He **deceives and blinds** man to the truth (2 Cor. 4:4).
 - a. He introduces questions on the trustworthiness of God’s word (Gen. 3).
 - b. He tries to prevent the gospel influence (Matt. 13:19, 1 Thes. 2:18, 1 John 4:1-6).
 - c. He distorts the gospel and sears the conscience (1 Tim. 4:1-2, 2 Cor. 11:13-15).
 - d. He is cunning (Eph. 6:11, 2 Tim. 2:26, Heb 3:13).
 - e. He creates doubt (Gen. 3:1, Rev. 2:10, 1 Thes 2:18, 1 John 4:1-6, 2 Peter 2).
 - f. He steals the word from the hearts of men and women (Luke 8:12).
5. Devil is **motivated** to (Luke 8:4-8 and 11-15):
 - a. Keep people out of the church
 - b. Keep people from letting the word develop into belief
 - c. Get Christians back into the world
 - d. Choke people with cares, riches, and pleasures of life
 - e. Disrupt and corrupt worship (John 4:24)
 - f. Distort doctrine (Matt. 15:1-9)
 - g. Cause division among brethren (1 Cor. 1:10)

Conclusion

Understanding the methods of the devil should serve to awaken the child of God into a stance of watchfulness. The devil is looking for each and every opportunity to disrupt your service unto God. However, he is not all-powerful. We are grateful that God gives us the ability to overcome our enemy. He implores us to watch and be on guard (1 Peter 5:8). If we resist the devil, he will have no choice but to flee (James 4:7-8). However, this must be a continual process. Daily, fill your heart with righteous things (Phil 4:8), arm yourself to do battle against the enemy (Eph. 6:12), and pray without ceasing (1 Thes. 5:17). If you do these things, we can indeed overcome our enemy!



Questions for your thought and consideration:

1. Why is it important to understand the methods used by the Devil?
2. How do you “keep vigilant watch” for the devil (1 Peter 5:8)?
3. What are the three classifications of sin (1 John 2:15-17)?
4. What does it mean that the devil wants to devour people?
5. What is the devil motivated to do?
6. How do you overcome the devil (Eph. 6:11, James 4:7)?
7. How does the devil work today?

The Devil, Demons, and Angels

The Devil: Adam and Eve, Job and Peter

In our study thus far, we have considered the origin, nature, and methods of the devil. In this lesson, we will “connect the dots” with three case studies – Adam and Eve, Job, and the Apostle Peter. In each of these studies, we will see how and why the devil approached these people with the opportunity to sin. From these case studies, we shall observe the nature and methods of the devil at work.

Adam and Eve

The first glimpse we have of the devil and his interaction with a person is recorded in Genesis 3. God had created the heavens, earth, all plant and animal life, and man. He placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and gave them law to live by. He instructed them to not eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil (Genesis 2:17). The penalty of disobeying this law was death. Genesis 3 introduces the devil in the form of a subtle and crafty being. As the interaction with Eve plays out, he lives up to this definition quite well. From Genesis 3, consider:

3:1 – The devil introduced doubt to Eve as to what God had said regarding the tree.

3:2-4 – Eve engaged the devil in conversation and recited the rule established by God.

3:4 – The devil then lied to Eve telling her that she would not die, but become enlightened.

3:6 – The temptation included all three forms of temptation mentioned in 1 John 2:15. Eve saw that the fruit was:

1. “Good for food” – The forbidden fruit would taste good. Satan clearly appealed to the lust of the flesh. He knew that Eve desired to eat of the fruit. He created the suggestion that the fruit would be better than all other fruit available.
2. “Pleasant to the eyes” – The fruit was delightful to look at.
3. “Desirable to make wise” – The fruit would make them wise like a god.

3:7-13 – Guilt ensues

1. Eyes were opened – no longer innocent.
2. Understood they were naked.
3. Hid from the presence of God.

3:14-5:31 – Consequences of sin

1. Devil – cursed.
 - a. Enmity between the devil and humankind.
 - b. Prophecy of what he would do unto Christ – bruise his heel.
 - c. Prophecy of what Christ would do unto him – bruise his head (fatal).
2. Man and Woman
 - a. Woman - Pain in child bearing.
 - b. Man – Cursed in working the earth.
 - c. Expelled from the Garden of Eden.
 - d. Experienced the murder of one of their children.
 - e. “...and he died”.

We learn valuable lessons from the interaction of the devil with Adam and Eve. In John 8:44, Christ calls the devil a liar. The language used to describe him in Genesis 3:1 is subtle and crafty. The devil will use temptation to ensnare people in sin. John says in 1 John 2:15-17 that we should not love the world. The warning is given. “For all that is in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – is not of the father but is of the world”.

Job

The book of Job provides perhaps the most insightful view into the interaction between God and his arch enemy, the devil. In the first chapter, the scene draws us in with great interest to how Job was targeted by the devil because of his righteousness. Beginning in Job 1, consider:

1:6 – The angels (sons of God) came before God to present themselves. Satan was among them.

1:7 – God inquired where Satan had been. The devil reported that he had been “going to and fro on the earth and walking back and forth on it.”

1:8 – God challenged Satan to consider the beautiful specimen of a man that was his servant Job.

1. Job was unique – no one else was like him.
2. Job was a blameless and upright man.
3. Job feared God and shunned evil.

1:9-11 – Satan answered with questions of his own, “Does Job fear God for nothing? Have you not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side?” He then requested that God allow the blessings that surround Job to be taken away.

1:12-22 – God granted the authority for Satan to take all. However, Satan was restricted in that he could not harm Job physically. Satan took all that Job had.

1. Satan used the Sabeans to take the donkeys, oxen, and the servants who tended them.
2. Satan used fire to burn up the sheep and the servants who tended them.
3. Satan used the Chaldeans to steal the camels and kill the servants overseeing them.
4. Satan used forces of nature to kill Job’s children.
5. Satan was unable to cause Job to sin.

2:1-3 – Again the angels came to present themselves before the Lord and Satan was there as well. Again, the Lord asked where Satan had been and if he had noticed that Job did not sin as a result of all that Satan had done unto him. God pointed out that Job was a man of integrity and faithfulness.

2:4-ff – Satan asked for God to allow the infliction of disease upon Job to further test his integrity. God authorized Satan to inflict whatever he so desired upon Job, short of taking his life.

1. Satan used disease (painful boils) as the disease of choice. This affected Job from head to foot.
2. Satan used Job’s wife to discourage him.
3. Satan used Job’s friends to introduce doubt and questions about Job’s righteousness
4. Although Job experienced the doubt and wonderings as to what he might have done to incur the losses, he never denounced God.

From the book of Job, we learn that the devil has the means to tailor temptation to each individual. In his attack on Job, he used a variety of stress related items. He used:

1. Financial stress – loss of personal wealth.
2. Emotional stress – death of sons, daughters, and servants.
3. Health stress – disease and physical health removed.
4. Marital Stress – wife not supportive when he needed her most.
5. Social stress – unfounded assumptions from his three friends that he had sinned.

Through these temptations, Job fought back and refused to reject God. In the final chapter of Job, we see that Job persevered in the contest for his soul and God rewarded him with twice as much as he had before.

Peter

The Apostle Peter had an amazing friendship with Jesus. The Gospels record how deeply Peter loved the Lord. Once, he even tried to walk on the water to meet him. Having such a close relationship with the Lord prompted Satan to tempt him. We have a specific record of Satan's interaction with Peter beginning in Luke 22:31. Following the observance of the Passover, the Lord told Peter that Satan desired to have him and would sift him as one sifts wheat. Jesus prayed for Peter that his faith would not fail him and that when Peter would return to the Lord that he might strengthen the brethren. It was just a matter of hours before the Satan began the sifting process. From Luke 22, consider:

22:34 – Satan used Peter's self confidence as the first attack. Peter boldly responded to Jesus, "Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death".

22:39-45 – Satan used sorrow and fatigue against Peter (see also Matt. 26:36-46).

22:49-51 – Satan used Peter's misunderstanding about the nature of the kingdom against him (see also Matt. 26:51-54).

22:54-61 – Satan used shock and despair against Peter. As Peter followed the Lord from a distance, he found himself in a challenging situation. He was identified as one of the Lord's followers. Yet, Peter denied any association with Christ.

Just as Jesus had stated, Satan desired to take Peter away from the Lord. Like a surgeon, Satan worked on Peter to the point that he denied Jesus three times. Remember, this was a mere few hours from the point where Peter brashly stated that he would die for the Lord. Satan used fatigue, over confidence, misunderstandings, fear, shock and despair against Peter. Luke 22:62 says that Peter went out and wept bitterly. However, though down for a bit, Peter picked himself up and resumed the work of the Lord. It was Peter who boldly preached on Pentecost in Acts 2.

Questions for your thought and consideration:



1. How does understanding 1 John 2:15-17 help you in dealing with temptation?
2. What was Satan doing in the presence of God (Job 1)?
3. Why should Satan's answer to God's question about where he had been cause us to be more diligent in our watchfulness?
4. How might stress play a role in temptation for you?
5. Discuss how attacks of the devil might serve to strengthen you (1 Peter 1:7-9)?
6. In what way can our overconfidence be an opening for temptation?
7. Discuss the phrase "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Luke 22).

The Devil, Demons, and Angels

Demons – Their Origin and Nature

Some of the most frightening savage being mentioned in the Bible are demons. People are both fascinated and terrified of them. The Old Testament does not have much to say about these beings. There is a good reason for that. Demons were not active in their direct interactions with people until New Testament times. The portrait provided of the interaction of demons with 1st century people is indeed frightening. In New Testament times, demons are described as spiritual beings that had the ability to invade and control the lives of people. The freedom of demons in New Testament times played a very specific and important role. We will discuss that in this lesson. The question obviously remains, “Do demons have the ability to possess people today?” We shall explore that question in a future lesson. Demons had the ability to interact with people the way they did during the 1st century for a very specific reason. Christ demonstrated his power over them time and time again. He granted this special power to select people in the first century for purposes of authenticating the message about Jesus and showing his superiority over the devil and his minions. In this lesson, we will endeavor to understand the origin and nature of these evil creatures.

Origin of Demons

1. God created all things (John 1:3, Col. 1:16-17, Gen. 1:1, Psalm 148:1-6).
 - a. God created the heavens and the earth.
 - b. The demons had a point of origin.
 - c. Demons are angels who fell from a state of righteousness (2 Peter 2:4-9, Jude 6).
2. Just as their leader, demons made the choice to sin (2 Peter 2:4, Jude 6).
 - a. The Bible only talks of one devil but numerous demons. The devil is the leader of this group of evil spiritual beings (Matt. 25:41).
 - b. Spirit beings have the same ability to choose between right and wrong as does man (Job 4:18, John 8:44).
 - c. The only conclusion we can draw is that the demons, once a pure spiritual beings, made their choice and sinned (Luke 10:17-20, Rev. 12:9).
3. Demons are spirit beings, not human beings (Matt. 12:43-45)
 - a. Being spirits, they are not restricted to laws of physics
 - b. They were created as spirits, thus deceased humans do not become demons
4. The word “demon” comes from the Greek work *diamon* (translated “one who discriminates, or one that knows”).
 - a. Word was sometimes mistranslated to our word “devil” (Matt. 8:31)
 - b. To the pagan people of Greece, demons simply meant an inferior deity, both good and bad.
 - c. In context of the Bible, demons are neither gods nor are they good.

Instances and References:

1. Old Testament
 - a. Sacrificing to goat demons (Lev 17:7)
 - b. Sacrificing to demons (Deut 32:17)
 - c. Priests to calf demons (2 Chron. 11:15)
 - d. Sacrificing children to demons (Psalm 106:37)

2. New Testament
 - a. Two demon possessed men in the country of the Gadarenes – demons sent into the swine (Matt. 8:28-32, Mark 5:1-20, Luke 8:36-39).
 - b. The mute man possessed with a demon (Matt. 9:33).
 - c. The return of the unclean spirit (Matt. 12:43-45, Luke 11:24-26).
 - d. The Syro-Phoenician woman's possessed daughter (Matt. 15:28, Mark 7:24-30).
 - e. "Did you come to destroy us?" (Mark 1:26, Luke 4:31-37).
 - f. The epileptic boy's demon (Matt. 17:14-21, Mark 9:14-29, Luke 9:37-42).
 - g. Mary Magdalene's seven demons (Mark 16:9, Luke 8:1-3).
 - h. The 70 experienced Jesus' power over demons (Matt. 11:25-27, Luke 10:19).
 - i. The Apostles healed people possessed by demons (Acts 5:12-16).
 - j. Philip's message extracted demons (Acts 8:4-8).
 - k. Paul helps a possessed slave girl (Acts 16:16-24).
 - l. Jewish exorcists (Acts 19:11-20).
3. Some interpret these cases of demon invasions of people as nothing more than just a personification of moral evil. The Bible is very clear that they are indeed individual beings. It is clear that these were demon spirits invaded the lives of men, women, and even children.

Nature of Demons

1. The Bible describes demons as spirit beings (Matt. 12:43-45, Col. 1:16-17).
 - a. Invisible
 - b. Immortal (Matt. 25:41)
 - i. Eternal – no. Eternal meaning to have no beginning and no end.
 - ii. Immortal – yes. Demons were created and as spirits, they will not die or cease to exist.
2. Demons are powerful beings.
 - a. Demons do not have unlimited power.
 - i. God limits their power.
 - ii. Satan controls them.
 - b. Their freedom is restricted, as is that of Satan, by their own nature and the power of God (Job 1:12; 2:6-7).
 - c. Some demons are more powerful than others (Mark 9:29).
 - d. They were savage in their work
 - i. They caused deafness (Mark 9:25).
 - ii. They caused blindness (Matt. 12:22).
 - iii. They rendered their prey speechless (Matt. 9:33).
 - iv. They threw their victims into convulsions (Mark 1:26).
 - v. They brought about supernatural strength (Mark 5:4).
 - vi. Sometimes the victim would foam at the mouth (Luke 9:39).
3. Demons are identifiable individuals.
 - a. Some demons have names (Mark 5:9, Luke 8:30).
 - b. They have distinct personalities (Luke 8:27-30, Matt. 4, Luke 4).
 - c. Demons are numerous (Mark 5:9).
4. Demons are connected to Satan and his evil influence/power (Luke 10:18, Matt. 12:25-30, Matt. 25:41, Col. 2:15).
 - a. They too are evil, by choice (Luke 7:21, Luke 8:2).
 - b. Some are more evil than others (Matt. 12:45).
 - c. Demons are perverted and unclean spirits (Matt. 10:1, Mark 1:27, Mark 3:11, Mark 5:13, Mark 6:7, Luke 4:36, Luke 7:21, Eph. 6:12).
 - d. Demons are rebellious – seek to defeat the will of God (Matt. 12:26).

- i. Work towards Satan's goals.
 - ii. Seek to occupy the mind of man with evil.
- 5. Demons relationship to God
 - a. They believe in God (James 2:19).
 - b. They are subject to a higher authority (Luke 10:17, Mark 5:7, Acts 16:17).
 - c. Understand subjection. They entreated the Lord (Luke 8:32).
 - d. Demons recognized that their time on earth was limited (Matt. 8:29).
- 6. Had the ability to invade and possess people in New Testament.
 - a. Invaded and left humans and animals (Luke 11:24, Mark 5:13).
 - b. Demons were expelled by the authority of Jesus (Luke 10:17).
 - c. Some people were possessed with multiple demons (Matt. 12:43-45, Mark 16:9).
- 7. Have intellect and intelligence (Mark 5:7).
 - a. They possess knowledge (Acts 19:15).
 - b. Demons are not all-knowing. Demons are fallen angels and angels don't know everything (1 Peter 1:11-12).
 - i. There is no indication in the Bible that demons can read the thoughts of people.
 - ii. They predict human behavior.
 - c. Demons experience emotion (Matt. 9:33, Mark 5:7, Luke 8:28-32, James 2:19).
 - d. They are self-aware (Mark 5:9).
 - e. They possess a will (Matt. 8:31).
 - f. Demons can speak and communicate (Mark 1:24, Mark 5:7-12, Luke 8:28, Acts 19:15).
- 8. Demons were found in:
 - a. Desolate areas, mountains, and around the tombs (Mark 5:1-5).
 - b. Abide in *heavenly places* - in the air (Eph. 6:12).
 - c. Pits of darkness (2 Peter 2:4).
 - d. The Abyss (Luke 8:31, Rev. 10:7).
 - e. Eventually, hell (Matt. 25:41).
- 9. Unsubstantiated theories on who or what demons are:
 - a. Greek philosophy that demons are spirits of dead humans (Josephus and Alexander Campbell believed this theory).
 - b. Justin Martyr believed that demons were the monstrous offspring of angels and daughters of men (cf., Gen. 6:2-4).
 - c. Jews of Jesus' day believed that demons were enemies who inflicted people with disease and illness.
 - d. Some modern religious theories have demons being the spirits of some pre-human creatures.

Conclusion

God created the spirit beings and human beings. Demons are fallen angels, a special class of beings created by God. Humans are not demons, and demons are not human. The devil is the head of the evil spirits – those who chose unrighteousness over righteousness. During the time of Christ, the devil and his dark messengers played an important role. They were granted limited freedom to interact with people. This interaction was allowed so Christ might demonstrate his superiority and power over them. He did so magnificently. Once Christ's power was established and understood by mankind, the freedom enjoyed by the demons was again restricted. Demons now await their eternal home with their leader (Matthew 25:41).

Questions for your thought and consideration:



1. Where did demons come from?
2. Describe the character make-up of a demon.
3. Why are demons mentioned so seldom in the Old Testament?
4. Why did God allow demons so much freedom during Christ's lifetime and in the times of the apostles?
5. What was the "time" that the demons feared most?
6. In what way do demons believe in God?
7. Were the demons in New Testament times just figurative or symptoms of mental illness?
How do you know if they were real beings or not?
8. Are demons the spirits of wicked humans?

The Devil, Demons, and Angels

The Work of Demons

In our previous lesson, we explored the origin and nature of the dark messengers of Satan, the demons. We studied the role they played in New Testament times. To better understand these beings, let us understand their work.

Demonic invasion of the Gadarene man

In Mark 5 (Matthew 8 and Luke 8) we have recorded a remarkable account of a demonic invasion of a man in the land of the Gadarenes. In this account, we see Jesus easily exercising his power and authority over the multitude of demons that possessed this man. The transformation of this man from a deranged demon possessed madman to a student of the Lord is nothing short of fascinating. From Mark 5, consider:

5:1 – Jesus, having calmed the stormy Sea of Galilee, landed on the Gadarene coast.

5:2 – In the tombs there on the coastline, was a man who had an unclean spirit. This man lived there in the tombs – wearing no clothes (Luke 8:27).

5:3-5 – The demons who invaded this man gave him supernatural strength. He could break chains and no one could restrain him. Matthew’s account describes the man as “exceedingly fierce” (Matt. 8:28). The man was tormented by these spirits often crying out loud and cutting himself with stones.

5:6-7 – The demon recognized Jesus as he disembarked from the boat. He paid homage to the Lord, calling out to him with three statements/questions:

1. “What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?”
2. “Have You come here to torment us before the time?”
3. “I implore you by God that you do not torment me.”

5:8 – Jesus recognized that the man was possessed. He ordered the demon to come out of the man.

5:9-10 – Jesus then asked the demon’s name. The demon replied, “My name Legion, for we are many.” The demons begged that Jesus would not send them out of the country (according to Luke’s account, the abyss – Luke 8:31).

1. For reference purposes, a “legion” is a unit of measurement for a fighting force.
2. In the Roman army, a legion consisted of between 3000 and 6000 soldiers

5:11-13 – The demons begged that Jesus allow them to enter the nearby swine. Jesus gave permission and they entered the 2000 swine who in turn ran violently off the cliff into the sea and drowned.

5:14 – This episode was not without audience. Those who kept the swine observed what had happened and told others. When people came to see if this was true, they found the once deranged man who was possessed by Legion sitting there fully clothed at the feet of Jesus. This created fear in the multitude. Jesus’ power over Legion was unmistakable.

Demon possession of a young boy

In Matthew 17:14-21 (Mark 9:14-29, Luke 9:37-42) we are introduced to a situation where a demon had invaded and possessed a youngster. In this instance, the disciples were not successful in expelling this demon. From Matthew 17, consider:

17:14 – A man approached Jesus, recognizing him as the savior for his son. He sought the mercy of Jesus in helping his son. The boy suffered from convulsions, foaming at the mouth, gnashing

his teeth, and becoming rigid. This was obviously the effects of a demon that possessed the child. This had been going on for a while.

1. Sometimes the demon would attempt to throw the boy into the fire or the water in an effort to destroy him (Mark 9:22)

17:16 – The father of the boy had sought help from the disciples, but they were not able to help the boy

17:17 – The situation prompted a question by the Lord to his disciples, “How long shall I be with you and bear with you?”

17:18 – When they brought the boy before the Lord, the evil spirit convulsed him and forced the boy to the ground. Jesus rebuked the demon and ordered him to leave the child. Within the very same hour, the demon left the child alone. People who observed this thought the boy was killed. However, Jesus took him by the hand and he arose, demon-free.

This situation obviously concerned the disciples. They asked Jesus to explain why they were unable to expel this particular demon. Jesus used the occasion to teach a powerful lesson on belief and the power of faith. He concluded by saying “This kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting”. Jesus’ power over the demon was obvious.

Philip expelled unclean spirits

In Acts 8:5, we find Philip going to Samaria to preach the gospel. There were multitudes of people who assembled to hear Philip and see the miracles that he worked. In Acts 8:17, we see that people with unclean spirits were brought before Philip. These spirits caused their host to cry out with loud voices. Philip healed them by the power of Christ.

The result of Philip’s overpowering the evil spirits was that of joy. People were happy and joyous that this was accomplished.

Paul expelled evil spirits

We read that Paul also had the ability to command evil spirits in the name and by the authority of Jesus. In Acts 16, we are introduced to a slave girl who was possessed with a “spirit of divination”. The passage says this girl made a lot of money for her master by way of fortune telling. From Acts 16, consider:

16:17 – The girl followed Paul and Silas around proclaiming their teaching the way of salvation. This went on for many days.

16:18 – The situation finally annoyed Paul enough and he ordered the spirit to leave the girl. He invoked the name of Jesus in the process of expelling the spirit. The very same hour, the spirit was gone.

16:19 – The masters of the girl were very unhappy that their slave was freed from the spirit. They demanded punishment for Paul and Silas.

There was, however, no question as to the power that Paul and Silas had over the spirit.

The sons of Sceva could not remove evil spirits

Acts 19 opens with the commentary that God worked special miracles by the hands of Paul. Paul worked by the authority of Jesus. Others attempted to do likewise, without the authority. They were not so successful in their endeavors. From Acts 19, consider:

19:13 – We are told of certain vagabond Jews who claimed to and pretended to have the power to expel evil spirits. The term “exorcist”, used in the KJV and NKJV, simply means they tried to use incantations and charms to expel these spirits. They tried to invoke the authority of Jesus.

19:15 – When the seven sons of Sceva tried to expel an evil spirit, the evil spirit said he recognized Jesus and Paul, but did not recognize these men.

19:16 – Unsuccessful in expelling the demon, the possessed man jumped on the seven sons of Sceva and overpowered them. The account says they were ran out of the house naked and wounded.

19:17 – This became known to the people and they recognized that there was only one authority over the evil spirits, the authority of Jesus.

Demon expulsion was recognized as something not connected to incantations, charms, or magic. Those who once believed this kind of thing brought a large number of their books together and burned them. The word of the Lord spread!

The work of demons

As we have seen, demons were very active in New Testament times. They had direct interactions with various people for the express purpose of exercising their power. However, the power of Christ was superior. Besides the invasion of people and controlling their lives from the inside, demons also exerted external influences over people.

1. They are deceitful with false doctrines (1 Tim. 4:1-3).
2. They are involved in carrying out Satan's plan (2 Cor. 11: 15).
3. They promote idolatry (1 Cor. 10:19-20, Lev 17:7, Deut. 32:17).
4. They try to hinder belief (Eph. 6:10-12).
5. They promote selfishness and division in the church (James 3:13-16)

Conclusion

Upon receiving freedom to oppress man, the New Testament talks of how demons affected men, women, boys, and girls (Matthew 4:24, Luke 8:2, Luke 9:29, Mark 7:25). In their invasion of people, they brought on insanity and severe behaviors. This must have been a terrifying thing to behold. However, it is important to keep in mind that these evil spirits were granted special freedom for a specific purpose. Their purpose was instrumental in the confirmation of Christ's authority over all things created and the establishment of His kingdom. Jesus clearly demonstrated his power over these spirit beings. He didn't need incantations or charms, he simply spoke and the demons obeyed his voice. They recognized who he was and immediately obeyed his commands. People saw this and developed belief in Jesus as the Son of God.



Questions for your thought and consideration:

1. Provide a summary of the work that demons performed. How is this instrumental to the establishment of the authority of Jesus?
2. What did the Gadarene demons mean by their question, “Have you come here to torment us before the time”?
3. Why were the demons concerned about being expelled out of the man? Where were they to go? Were they concerned about being expelled out of the country of the Gadarenes?
4. Did the demons that possessed the Gadarene man have any power whatsoever against the command of Jesus?
5. By whose authority did Philip expel the unclean spirits (Acts 8)?
6. Why were the sons of Sceva overpowered and unable to expel the demon (Acts 19)?

The Devil, Demons, and Angels

Do Demons Interact with Man in the 21st Century?

As studied in our prior lesson, the demons were active in the realm of humankind during the time of Christ. They interacted with men, women, and children in a frightening way. It is very important to understand that their freedom in the 1st century was granted that Christ might demonstrate his superiority and preeminence over these spirits. People have wondered about demon interaction with mankind in times following the 1st century. The subject of demon possession captures the interest of just about everyone. This interest is compounded and confused with speculation and popular culture, including William P Blatty's book, *The Exorcist*. Blatty's book was originally published in 1971 and developed into a movie in 1973. Blatty's story involves a twelve year old girl who was possessed by a demon. She began to have extreme variations in her behavior. Her demon prompted her to have torturous convulsions and gave her telekinetic powers, or the ability to move objects without touching them. In the story, Psychiatrists were called to evaluate her. Meanwhile, her physical appearance and voice became monstrously ugly. Finally, a Catholic priest was summoned to perform an exorcism. The exorcism failed. The storyline continues with this priest pleading with the demon to leave the girl and possess his body. When the spirit complies, the priest jumps out of a window and dies. His dying words included a plea for forgiveness. This tale is one of fantasy and conjecture that based very little on what the Bible says. Yet, this is how most people come to understand demons and their workings. In this lesson, we shall explore what the Bible teaches on modern day demon possessions and interactions with man.

Before we address the question about present day demon possession, let's review why demons possessed people in the 1st century. As noted earlier in this study, demons were granted this freedom so that Christ might demonstrate his superiority over them.

1. Christ showed the world that he was in fact superior by simply speaking a command to the demons and they had no choice but to obey him (Matt. 8:16, Mark 1:25, Mark 5:13, and Mark 9:25).
2. Nowhere in scripture do we see Jesus ever performing an exorcism (defined as a ritual used to expel an evil spirit), or any kind of incantation or charm in dealing with the demons. He simply spoke and they obeyed.
3. Demons and the devil were placed under restraint as the purpose for their freedom was fulfilled.
 - a. Jesus' power is preeminent over the devil and evil spirits (Luke 11:20).
 - b. Jesus' power invoked by 70 (Luke 10:17) and Paul (Acts 16:18, Acts 19:11-16).
 - c. Demon possessions faded during the 1st century as Jesus' authority was confirmed (1 Cor. 12-14)

In order to understand the various positions held on demon possession in the 21st century, let's explore an abbreviated history of the doctrines and writings on this subject over the centuries.

1. Early Christian penmen had something to say about demons. They generally believed that involuntary demon possession no longer occurred. However, voluntary possession was a possibility in their thinking.
 - a. AD 96 –Clement wrote in his *Clementine Homilies* (Homily IX)
 - i. Chapter 9 – How demons get power over men. Demons "...are admitted into your bodies by your own hands; and lying hid there for a long time, they become blended with your souls."

- ii. Chapter 10 – How they are to be expelled. “Being spirits, and having desires after meats and drinks, and sexual pleasures, but not being able to partake of these by reason of their being spirits, ...they enter into the bodies of men, ... that they may obtain the thing that they wish...” The expulsion of demons is therefore linked to this carnal desire of the spirit. “Hence, in order to the putting of demons to flight, the most useful help is abstinence, and fasting, and suffering of affliction.”
 - b. AD 160 – Tertullian wrote in his *Apology* (Vol. XXII)
 - i. Of the demon who attached itself to Socrates from his childhood. This demon turned him away from that which was good.
 - ii. That “Their great business is the ruin of mankind. So, from the very first, spiritual wickedness sought our destruction. They inflict, accordingly, upon our bodies diseases and other grievous calamities, while by violent assaults they hurry the soul into sudden and extraordinary excesses.”
 - iii. He summarized that “demons and angels breathe into the soul and rouse up its corruptions with furious passions and vile excesses...”
 - c. AD 185 – Origen wrote in *Contra Celsus* (Vol. VII, Chapter 30)
 - i. A warning against eating food offered to idols as this opened a pathway for demon possession.
 - ii. Origen believed that blood and the odor of blood was the food of demons.
 - iii. Christians have nothing to fear regarding demons as they are protected by the supreme God.
- 2. During the medieval times (between the 5th and 15th centuries), people generally believed that the Devil and his demons were allowed to test people with hardships – similar to the story of Job. Most religious theories held that there were two ways one might become possessed.
 - a. Demon pass directly into an individual, or
 - b. Someone closely associated with the devil would provide a means of access – this being a witch or wizard.
 - i. Thus, when someone demonstrated convulsions (modern day diagnosis of epilepsy) or perhaps livestock deaths or failed crops, people would start looking for a witch. This practice continued for centuries – up to the point of the Salem Witch Trials in this country.
 - ii. This medieval view of demonology still exists today among a good number of people. Some believe that God permits the devil to test people the way that Job was tested.
- 3. Modern religious error in demon doctrine.
 - a. Mormons (www.lds.org):
 - i. “In the same month in which the Church was organized, Newell Knight was possessed by an evil spirit. So severe and agonizing were the circumstances that the afflicted believer’s ‘visage was distorted, and his limbs were twisted out of shape in a frightful manner’, and ‘he was caught up from the floor and tossed about the room’. The Prophet ‘rebuked the evil spirit in the name of Jesus Christ and commanded him to depart.’ Brother Knight then ‘saw the evil spirit leave him and vanish from his sight.’ Then all was peace.” ...Jesus in Cana of Galilee performed his first miracle by turning water into wine. Joseph [Smith] performed his in Colesville, New York, when the priesthood of God bade the demon from hell to depart from an ill-gotten habitat.”
 - ii. Believe demons are linked to temptation. “...demons which can stalk our lives, destroy our dreams, smother out joys, and detour our journey toward

the celestial kingdom of God. A list of demons is lengthy... the Demon of Greed; the Demon of Dishonesty; the Demon of Debt; the Demon of Doubt, the Demon of Drugs, and those twin Demons of Immodesty and Immorality...”.

- iii. Believe demon possession is connected to mental illness, “Some blame their problem [of mental illness] on demonic possession. While there is no doubt that such has occurred, let us take care not to give the devil credit for everything that goes on in the world!”
- b. Jehovah’s Witnesses (www.watchtower.org):
 - i. Believe that witchcraft and other occult practices will link an individual to demon possession.
 - ii. Watchtower publications provide instructions on how to deal with demons and demonized objects, by shunning omens and “voices”, rejecting modern “demonized” music, and resisting wicked spirits.” (The Watchtower 1963, 1974, and 1983)
- c. Catholics (www.catholic.org and www.newadvent.org):
 - i. “Man is in various ways subject to the influence of evil spirits. Or original sin he brought himself into ‘captivity under the power of him who thence had the empire of death, that is to say, the Devil’ ...But the influence of the demon, as we know him from Scripture and the history of the Church, goes further still. He may attack man’s body from without (obsession), or assume control of it from within (possession). As we gather from the Fathers and the theologians, the soul itself can never be ‘possessed’ nor deprived of liberty, through its ordinary control over the members of the body may be hindered by the obsessing spirit”.
 - ii. Catholic doctrine recognizes four symptoms of demon possession:
 - 1. Speaking in a language not previously known
 - 2. Having supernatural strength
 - 3. Having knowledge of future events
 - 4. Extreme behavior swings – spasms, and tantrums
- d. Islam (www.islamonline.net):
 - i. Islam uses the term “jinn” to reference spirit beings that co-exist along with mankind. Evil jinns (shayatin), or devils, and Iblis (Satan), king of the devils, is their leader. Iblis was the first jinn who disobeyed Allah.
 - ii. “Jinn were made from the light of flame of fire where man is made from clay.”
 - iii. “A Muslim has to believe in the jinn. They are mentioned in the Qur’an and Hadith. In many instances, they share with us many of our roles and actions. However it is noticeable nowadays that many people, when they feel anything wrong with themselves, interpret that as a matter of possession by jinn...Then a Muslim’s best cure, protection, and immunity against the harm of jinn is by practicing Islam, reading the Qur’an...”
 - iv. “There is agreement among the Sunni Muslims that jinn can dwell in the bodies of humans...”
 - v. “Saying *Bismillah* before entering one’s home, eating or drinking... will keep Satan from entering the house or partaking with a person in his food, drink... Similarly, mentioning the name of Allah before entering the toilet or taking off one’s clothes will prevent the jinn from seeing a person in a state of undress or harming him. The Prophet says: ‘To put a barrier that will prevent the jinn from seeing the ‘awrah of the sons of Adam, let any one of you say *Bismillah* when entering the toilet.’”

- vi. “Strength of faith and religion in general will also prevent jinn from harming a person, so much so that if they were to fight, the one who has faith would win.”

That brings us to the primary question of this lesson. *Can and do demons still possess people in the 21st century?* Demon possession is defined as the control of a person so that actions are influenced by an evil spirit. The answer is simply no they do not. Let’s explore the Bible on this subject:

1. Demon possession was restricted to New Testament times for the express purpose of confirming Jesus’ authority and authenticating his message.
2. The possessions faded away during the first century (Acts 19:11-17).
3. In New Testament times, the possessions we read about were involuntary. If that were to still occur today, there are problems reconciling the promise of God.
 - a. God has promised to protect us against that which we cannot overcome (1 Cor. 10:13).
 - b. Such an involuntary invasion would violate God’s promise.
4. There is no indication of any demon invasions beyond the time of the apostles. What evidence is there to support the notion that possessions no longer occur?
 - a. The binding of Satan and his dark angels was prophesied and fulfilled:
 - i. Prophesied (Psalm 72:9, Zech. 13:1-2, Luke 11:21-23).
 - ii. Demonstrated by Jesus (Mark 5).
 - iii. Demonstrated by a select group people granted power over evil spirits. The seventy and the apostles (Mark 16:15-16, Luke 10:17-18).
 - iv. Cessation of spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12-14).
 - b. Christ bound Satan and demons / angels
 - i. Jesus’ mission was to “destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8).
 - ii. Jesus was unsuccessfully tempted in all points as we are (Heb. 4:15).
 - iii. Jesus was to “bind the strong man” (Matt. 12:29).
 - iv. When he ascended he led captive a host of captives (Eph. 4:8).

Having proven that the demons no longer have the power to possess people, let’s explore one additional question of great importance. *Are demons still active today?*

1. The answer to that question is yes they are.
2. Although restrained, both the devil and his dark angels are in the business of winning souls to their dark realm of unrighteousness.
3. This does not involve demonic possessions.
4. Rather, they formulate temptation and deceive with false doctrines
 - a. Satan and his demons work today through deception (2 Cor. 11:13-14, 2 Thes. 2:9-10).
 - b. We are to be on guard for “seducing spirits” (1 Tim. 4:1).
 - c. We are to test all spirits to see if they are evil or from God (1 John 4:1).
 - d. Thus we should fear the influence of demons – not the possession of them.
5. Yet, there is great hope written about in the New Testament:
 - a. We have the capability to “resist” (James 4:7).
 - b. We are encouraged to watch and guard (1 Peter 5:8).

Conclusion

The devil and his demons do not have the ability to possess us as they did in New Testament times. They do, however, take great delight in seeing people go along with unrepented sin. As Christians, we should be always on the look-out for temptation and snares laid by the devil. The warning of 1 Peter 5:8 still holds true today. We also need to keep ourselves aware of the

devices used by these workers of darkness. 2 Corinthians 2:11 warns against ignorance of Satan's devices. As a matter of suggestion, Christians should avoid sin and all forms of unrighteousness. This includes dabbling in various forms of witchcraft and the occult. We must always remember what is said of God in 1 John 1:5, "God is light and in him is no darkness at all". For everything we do, we must ask ourselves, "Will this take me to the light of God or the darkness of the devil?"



Questions for your thought and consideration:

1. What was the purpose for demon invasions or possessions of people in the 1st century?
2. Is witchcraft and wizardry connected to the dark work of Satan and his demons?
3. How do we know that demon possession was put under restraint in the 1st century?
4. Do demons possess people today, even when they invite the demons in?
5. What do we need to fear about demons today?
6. Summarize how you can overcome the power of Satan and demons.
7. What is our great hope written about in James 4 and Eph. 6?

The Devil, Demons, and Angels

Angels – Their Origin and Nature

Some of the most fascinating and intriguing beings in the Bible are angels. The Bible mentions the angels some 300 times. From these mentions, we gain an insight into the origin, nature and work of these beings. Some people view angels as these feminine creatures, soft and feathery with wings and halos. Others view them as childlike beings resembling “Cupid”. These views are largely due to uninspired writings and religious traditions of men. The Bible describes angels in quite different terms. The term angel (Hebrew word “*mal’ak*” and Greek word “*angelos*”) means “one dispatched or one sent to deliver a message”. They are pictured as fascinating beings residing in Heaven and performing their duties at the command of God. They have different appearances and features than man does. Yet, on occasion, they take on the form of men in the performance of their duties. In our next lesson, we will focus on the work of angels. In this lesson, we will focus on the origin and nature of the angels, as presented in the Bible.

Origin of Angels:

1. Angels were created by God (Gen. 1:1, Col. 1:16, Psalm 148:1-5, Job 38:1-7, Exodus 20:11).
2. He created them a little higher than man (Psalm 8:4-5).
3. They were created to glorify and honor God (Rev. 4:11, Psalm 103:19-21).
4. They were created, but will not die (Matt. 22:30, Luke 20:34-36).
 - a. Eternal – no. Eternal meaning no beginning and no end.
 - b. Immortal – yes. They will not suffer physical death as they have no physical body to die and be separated from (Luke 20:36, Heb. 2:9-16).

Nature of Angels

1. Angels are spirit beings, not human beings (Psalm 104:1-4, Heb. 1:7).
 - a. They are spirits (Heb 1:13-14).
 - b. They make up a separate class of beings from deity and humanity (Psalm 8:4-5, Luke 20:36).
 - c. They have no flesh or bones (Luke 24:39).
 - d. Angels can assume whatever form God chooses for them (2 Kings 6:16-17, Ezekiel 1:5-14, 10:12, Rev. 10:1-3).
 - e. They do not marry (Matt. 22:29-32, Luke 20:35-37).
 - f. Angels are always referred to in the masculine form, not feminine. Actually they are genderless as they are spirits.
 - g. Angels are innumerable (Heb. 12:22, Matt. 26:53, Rev. 5:11).
2. Appearance of angels.
 - a. Spirits are invisible, unless they reveal themselves to man (Col. 1:16).
 - i. Visited Abraham and Lot and appeared as men (Gen. 18 – 19).
 - ii. Revealed to Balaam’s donkey and then to Balaam (Num. 22:21-37).
 - iii. Revealed as chariots of fire (2 Kings 6:17).
 - iv. Appearance like lightning and brilliant white clothing (Matt. 28:3).
 - b. Sometimes appear as large and ominous beings (Rev. 10:1).
 - c. Sometimes a bit frightening in appearance (Num. 22:31, 1 Chron. 21:16, Dan. 10:10, Luke 1:12, Luke 1:29, Luke 2:9, Matt. 28:4).

3. Powerful
 - a. Angels have the power of choice (see prior lessons).
 - b. They have supernatural power, they are “mighty” (2 Thes. 1:7, Psalm 103:20, Matt. 28:2-4, Dan. 6:22, 2 Peter 2:11).
 - c. Power sometimes referenced by their numbers – they are referred to as the “heavenly host” (Heb. 12:22, Rev. 5:11)
 - d. They have power through knowledge (Dan. 9:22-23).
4. Ability to communicate.
 - a. The language of angels (1 Cor. 13).
 - b. Angels sing and shout (Job 38:7, Job 1:6, Job 2:1).
 - c. They communicate with humans (Acts 2:1-11, 1 Cor. 14:10-11, Matt. 1:18-20).
 - d. They communicate through dreams (Matt. 1:20-24, Matt. 2:19-20).
 - e. Appeared to people (Exodus 3:2, Luke 2:8-9, Acts 7:30-35).
5. Angels experience emotions.
 - a. Joy (Job 38:7, Luke 2:10-14, Luke 15:10).
 - b. Pride (1 Tim. 3:6, 2 Peter 2:4).
6. Angels have religious expressions.
 - a. With regards to Jesus (Luke 2:10-14, Matt. 4:11, Luke 22:43, Matt. 28:1-6, Heb. 1).
 - b. God was seen by angels (1 Tim. 3:16).
 - c. Angels desire to see the gospel’s effect on people (1 Peter 1:12).
 - d. They are holy (Matt. 25:31).
 - e. They worship (Luke 2:14, Rev. 5:11-14).
 - f. If they sin, there is no redemption for them (2 Peter 2:4, Jude 6, Gal. 1:8, 1 Tim. 3:6, Luke 12:48, Heb. 2:16-17).
 - g. People must not worship angels (Col. 2:18, Rev. 19:10).
7. Angels play a significant role in second coming of the Lord.
 - a. They will be revealed along with the Lord – in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who know not God (2 Thes. 1:7-8).
 - b. Son of Man will send forth his angels for purposes of casting the lawless ones into the furnace of fire (Matt. 13:41-50).
 - c. Separate righteous from sinners and enforce judgment (Matt. 13:39-42, Matt. 13:47-50).

Organization and Categories of Angels

1. Organization of angels
 - a. Archangel “chief angel” (1 Thes 4:16, Jude 9).
 - b. Some are elect angels (1 Tim. 5:21).
 - c. No other biblical reference to their hierarchy.
2. Cherubim, or Cherub (possibly “to till” or enforcer of God’s judgment)
 - a. Guardian placed at the entrance of Eden (Gen. 3:24).
 - b. Image of them placed atop the Ark (Exodus 25:19, 1 Sam. 4:4).
 - c. David’s song spoke of Cherubim (2 Sam. 22, Psalm 18).
 - d. Statues of them in the Holy of Holies (1 Kings 6:24-27, 2 Chron. 3:10-13).
 - e. Ezekiel’s vision included Cherub (Ezekiel 1:40-26, Ezekiel 10:1-22).
3. Seraphim (“burning ones” God’s messenger of purification).
 - a. Seraphim described by Isaiah (Isaiah 6:2-6).
 - b. Only reference in the Bible.
4. *Sons of God* sometimes refer to as the “heavenly ones”.
 - a. Sons of God came to present themselves before God (Job 1).

The Devil, Demons, and Angels

The Work of Angels

There are multiple instances where the activities of angels are recorded for us. As we begin the lesson to better understand the works of angels, let us consider three specific instances. First, consider the interaction of an angel with Balaam and his donkey in Numbers 22. Consider:

22:22 – An angel appeared unto Balaam’s donkey but not Balaam

22:24 – An angel appeared again unto Balaam’s donkey

22:26 – An angel appeared the third time to Balaam’s donkey

22:31 – Balaam’s eyes were opened and he saw the angel standing with his sword drawn

22:32 – The angel asked why Balaam struck his donkey

22:33 – The angel said that if it were not for the donkey, Balaam would have been killed

22:35 – The angel instructed Balaam what to do next regarding Balak

Secondly, consider the interactions with Abraham and Lot. In Genesis 19, the scripture provides very interesting insights into the work performed by these visitors from God. Consider:

18:2 – Appeared as three men unto Abraham

18:5 – Willing to accept Abraham’s hospitality

18:10 – Prophesied that Sarah would give birth to the son of promise

18:20 – Prophesied about the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah

18:23 – Discussed with Abraham about any righteous people in the wicked cities

19:2 – Lot visited by two angels who appeared in the form of men

19:11 – Struck the wicked men of Sodom with blindness

19:13 – Warned of forthcoming destruction of the wicked cities

19:15 – Urged Lot and family to flee before the destruction

19:16 – Took Lot by the hand to get him out of the city

Another fascinating account of angels having direct contact with a person is in 1 Kings 19.

Following the awesome display of God’s power at Mt. Carmel and the execution of the prophets of Baal, Elijah himself received a death threat from the wicked Queen Jezebel. Upon Elijah hearing of the threat on his life, he began to feel very much alone and fled for his life. During his flight, an angel had contact with him. Consider:

19:5 – An angel suddenly touched him and instructed him to get up and eat

19:7 – An angel returned, touched him again, and instructed him to get up and eat

In our previous lesson, we studied the origin and nature of angels. It has been said that to best understand the angels one must seek to understand their work.

1. They **worship God**.
 - a. They Praise God (Psalm 148:2).
 - b. Angels stand in the presence of God (1 Kings 22:19).
 - c. They fall on their faces before God’s throne and worship (Rev. 7:11-12).
2. They **delivered messages** from God (agents in the revelation of God’s will to man).
 - a. Angel of the Lord appeared to Moses (Exodus 3:2).
 - b. Put the law into effect (Acts 7:53, Gal. 3:19).
 - c. Told Balaam what to do (Num. 22:35).
 - d. Delivered news to Abraham and Lot (Gen. 18-19).
 - e. Angel of the Lord informed Manoah and his wife that they would have a son and how he should be raised (Judges 13).

- f. They gave instructions to Elijah (1 Kings 19:5-7, 2 Kings 1:3-15).
 - g. Gabriel helped Daniel understand the vision (Dan. 8:15, Dan. 9:20-27).
 - h. Announced the coming of Christ (Matt. 1:18-25, Luke 1:11-25).
 - i. Announced Christ's resurrection (Matt. 28:5-6, Luke 24:1-10).
 - j. Announced the second coming (Acts 1:9-11).
 - k. Opened prison doors and instructed Peter (Acts 5:17-20, Acts 12:5-8).
 - l. Instructed Philip concerning the Ethiopian Nobleman (Acts 8:26-29).
 - m. Instructed Cornelius to call for Peter (Acts 10).
 - n. Instructed Paul regarding the storm (Acts 27:13-25).
 - o. Enlightened John (Rev. 1:1).
 - p. Will announce the end of the world (1 Thes. 4:16, 2 Peter 3:10-12, Matt. 25:31, Matt. 13:41-42, 2 Thes. 1:7-8).
3. They **minister**.
- a. Instructed Elijah to eat and drink before his journey (1 Kings 19:5-7).
 - b. Angels minister to Christ (Matt. 4:11, Luke 22:43).
 - c. Angels are involved in confession (Luke 12:8-9).
 - d. Angels are ministering spirits for those who will inherit salvation (Heb. 1:14).
4. They **destroy** at the command of God.
- a. Angels were involved in destruction in Egypt (Psalm 78:43-51).
 - b. Killing disobedient and rebellious Israelites (2 Sam 24:15-17, 1 Chron. 21:15).
 - c. Involved in the killing of 186,000 Assyrians (2 Kings 19:35-36, 2 Chron. 32:21, Isaiah 37:36).
 - d. Struck King Herod with a deadly case of worms (Acts 12:23).
5. They **protect**.
- a. Angel of the Lord offered protection to Hagar (Gen. 16:7).
 - b. Angels led Lot and his family out of Sodom prior to the destruction (Gen. 19:16).
 - c. Angel of the Lord protected Isaac (Gen. 27:11).
 - d. Angels protected the Israelites while in transit to Mt Sinai (Exodus 14:19).
 - e. Angels protected the Israelites as they took Promised Land (Exodus 23:20-24).
 - f. Angel encouraged Elijah to eat and drink (1 Kings 19:5).
 - g. Angels protect those who fear God (Psalm 91:11, Psalm 34:7).
 - h. Angels guarded Daniel in the lion's den (Dan. 6:18-23).
 - i. Angels protected Jesus (Matt. 2:12-13, Mark 1:13, Luke 22:43).
 - j. Angels looked after the apostles (Acts 5:19, Acts 12:7-8).
 - k. Angels stood by and protected Paul (Acts 27:21-24).
6. They **watch** over the church.
- a. Guardian of the church (Matt. 18:10, Heb 1:14).
 - b. Christians are not alone (1 Cor. 4:9).
 - c. Angels watch over the assembly of saints (1 Cor. 11:10).
 - d. Observes the manifold wisdom of God in the church (Eph. 3:10).
 - e. Watch over the purity of the church (1 Tim. 5:21).
 - f. Experience joy when one sinner repents (Luke 15:7).
 - g. Involved in confession (Luke 12:8-9).
7. Angels **carried souls** to be with God.
- a. Elijah (2 Kings 2:11).
 - b. Lazarus (Luke 16:22).
 - c. Heirs of salvation (James 1:26, Heb 1:7-14, Psalm 18:10).
8. Role on Judgment Day
- a. Will accompany the Lord (Matt. 16:27, Matt. 25:31)
 - b. Do not know when the second coming will occur (Matt. 24:36, Mark 13:32)
 - c. Serve as reapers (Matt. 13:39-42)

- d. Gather Christ's elect (Matt. 24:31)
- e. Separate righteous from sinners and enforce judgment (Matt. 13:39-42, Matt. 13:47-50)

Conclusion

When we consider all of the references to angels in the Bible, it is amazing what they were involved in. The very word *angel* carries the connotation of "one sent forth" or a "messenger". We see from scripture that the work of angels includes worship, delivering or revealing messages from God, minister, destroy, protect, and watch. One very interesting function they played in Bible times was the interaction with men upon their death. We will cover that aspect of them plus more in the next lesson.



Questions for your thought and consideration:

1. Why did the angel appear to Balaam's donkey yet remained unseen by Balaam?
2. What did the angel say to Balaam?
3. What kind of messages did angels deliver in Bible times? Give at least two examples.
4. In what ways did angels protect people in Bible times?
5. How do angels watch over the church?
6. What function do angels play when righteous people die?

The Devil, Demons, and Angels

Do Angels Interact with Man in the 21st Century?

In our previous lessons, we explored the origin and nature of angels. We also studied the work of angels. The question for our consideration in this lesson involves angelic activities today. Are angels active today in the lives of men and women? We will look at this question from two vantage points. First, in Bible times, angels were active in the revelation of God's word to mankind. Do they still perform that work today? Second, angels have always been active in the providence of God. Are they still active in that regard? There are a lot of misconceptions about angels. This misinformation has come about through the centuries of speculation and during our lifetime with many religious doctrines and the entertainment industry. Before we address what the Bible says about angelic functions during our time, let's take a brief look at religious history regarding the doctrine of angels. Bear in mind that these writers were not inspired and the doctrines they taught were not always in harmony with the Bible.

1. 200 BC – Judas Maccabeus wrote in 2 Maccabees 11
 - a. Maccabeus and the people prayed that the Lord send an angel to save Israel
 - b. He continues to mention the “heavenly ally”, a horseman clothed in white and brandishing weapons of gold.
 - c. With the angel's help, they killed 11,000 of the enemy.
2. John Calvin wrote in *Christian Institutes* (pg 196). “But the point on which the Scriptures specially insist is that which tends most to our comfort, and to the confirmation of our faith, namely, that angels are the ministers and dispensers of the divine bounty towards us. Accordingly, we are told how they watch for our safety, how they undertake our defense, direct our path, and take heed that no evil befalls us.”
3. John Wesley wrote in his *Sermon on Good Angels* (pg 408). “And who can hurt us while we have armies of angels, and the God of angels, on our side?”
4. Tobit 3:16-17 talks of the angel Raphael being sent to protect people. “At that very moment, the prayers of both of them were heard in the glorious presence of God. So Raphael was sent to heal both of them: Tobit, by removing the white films from his eyes, so the he might see God's light with his eyes; and Sarah, daughter of Raguel, by giving her in marriage to Tobias son of Tobit, and by setting her free from the wicked demon Asmodeus.”
5. Tobit 12:18-21 talks of Raphael as one of the “seven angels what have special status”.
6. 1 Enoch 53:6 identifies Raphael as one of the four angels that will throw Satan and his angels into the furnace of blazing fire.
7. 1 Enoch 20:1-7 identifies six angels by name:
 - a. Uriel – presides over fear and dismay
 - b. Raphael – presides over the spirits of men
 - c. Raguel – inflicts punishment on the world
 - d. Michael – presides over human virtue and commander of the nations
 - e. Sarakiel – presides over the spirits of children of sinful men
 - f. Gabriel – presides over the Cherubim

Now, let's explore two questions about whether angels are still active today. First, do angels continue to reveal God's will to mankind today?

1. As pointed out in this study, the angels participated in delivering messages from God to man.
2. God's message to man is complete (1 Cor. 13:10, 2 Peter 1:3, 2 Tim. 3:16-17, 2 Tim. 4:1-4, Jude 3)
3. No angelic revelations from God for 2000 years. No need for them. We already have God's word.
4. Specific false teaching regarding angelic deliverance of new doctrine to man.
 - a. Mormons (1823 AD) – Believe that the angel Moroni instructed Joseph Smith regarding the golden plates, containing the “everlasting gospel” as delivered to the ancient inhabitants of North America. (www.lds.org)
 - b. Jehovah's Witnesses – Believe that angels continue to direct the revelation of God to the Watchtower. Angels also direct them in their door-to-door preaching activities. (www.watchtower.org)
 - c. Catholic – Believe modern day revelations are made to man through angels by suggesting things to the imagination of man. Catholics also believe in praying to guardian angels. (www.catholic.org)
 - d. Islam (610 AD) – Believe that the angel Gabriel delivered the *Qur'an* to Mohammed (www.islamonline.net)
 - e. Considering these interesting, but unfounded claims regarding angels, we are reminded of what Paul said, “But if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.” (Gal 1:8)

Are angels still active in the providence of God? Providence is defined as the “foresight” or “forethought” of God. God has established his design, plans, and his will. Providence is the ongoing activity necessary to preserve and fulfill those designs.

1. Providence in action
 - a. God used miracles to accomplish his will. (1 Cor. 13:8-13, James 1:25)
 - b. God uses the laws of nature to accomplish his plans (Exodus 7-11).
2. How angels were involved in providence during Bible times:
 - a. Guided Abraham's servant in finding a bride for Isaac (Genesis 24).
 - b. Led Lot and his family out of harm's way (Gen. 19).
 - c. Gabriel led Daniel in understanding the vision (Dan. 9).
 - d. Led the Israelites to the land of promise (Exodus 14, 20, 33).
 - e. Protected Jesus from Herod's order to destroy all newborn boys (Matt. 2).
 - f. Instructed Philip regarding the Ethiopian (Acts 8).
 - g. Suggested Cornelius to send for Peter to further instruction what he was supposed to do (Acts 10).
3. God uses angels to further his will. (Heb 1:7-14)
 - a. Angels are “ministering spirits” – to minister is to render service. In his notes on Hebrews, Albert Barnes notes, “A ‘ministering spirit’ is one that is employed to execute the will of God”
 - b. Angels are “sent out” – no end is mentioned to the services rendered.
 - c. “for those who will inherit salvation” – Christians.
 - d. No scriptural indication that angels are no longer involved in ministering to mankind.
 - e. Angels are involved in the providence of God, just not through miraculous ways. Angels operate within the laws of nature.
 - f. Specific information of the ministering services rendered by angels is not provided. We can, however, conclude that they may be involved in the following:
 - i. Goodness and mercy always available (Psalm 23:6-7).
 - ii. Allows us to focus on taking care of spiritual matters (Matt. 6:26-33).

- iii. Watches that we are not tempted beyond our capabilities (1 Cor. 10:13).
- iv. God does not promise absolution from all pain (2 Cor. 12:7-10, Psalm 91:11-12, 1 Peter 1:6).
- v. Interested in the spiritual well being of people (1 Peter 1:12, Luke 15:10, Matt. 18:10).
- vi. Attend to the dying righteous (Luke 16:22).

Conclusion

Throughout the Bible, God used angels in a variety of ways to guide and protect his people. Some of these interactions involved the miraculous. There is no longer a need for angels to deliver new revelation from God. We have his fully revealed will. Hebrews 1:14 is a comforting passage. It says that the angels are about the business to “minister to those who will inherit salvation.” Although we may not know specifically what all this entails, it should nonetheless give us comfort!



Questions for your thought and consideration:

1. Do angels still deliver messages from God today? How do you know this?
2. Do angels still deliver new messages or revelations from God today?
3. Will we ever be equal to the angels (2 Peter 2:11, Luke 20:36, Rev. 22:9)?
4. Do we become angels when we die (Matt. 22:30, Luke 16:19-31)?
5. Are angels members of the Lord’s body, the church? What function do they have regarding the church?
6. Does the Bible teach that a person has a specific “guardian angel” assigned to them?
7. Is there a difference between the miraculous care of God and his providential care? Give an example of each.
8. How are angels involved in fulfilling their responsibilities (Heb 1:14)?

The Devil, Demons, and Angels

Popular Questions about Angels

We have studied the origin, nature, and work of the angels. They are indeed fascinating beings. As we wrap up our study, let us now focus on a handful of interesting questions regarding the heavenly host.

(Note: The following discussions are borrowed from the works of Travis L. Quattermous in his book *The Hosts of Heaven*, and Dan Winkler from his workbook *Angels: The Ministers of Heaven*.)

Who is the “Angel of the Lord”?

There was a specific angel that is talked of in the Old Testament. The “Angel of the Lord” is mentioned several times throughout the Old Testament. Who is this angel and what is significant about him that he is referred to using the proper noun? The “Angel of the Lord” appeared and interacted with those mentioned in these passages:

1. Hagar, as she fled from the harshness of Sarai (Gen. 16:7-11).
2. Abraham, when he was about to take Isaac’s life on the altar (Gen. 22:11-16).
3. Moses, in the fire of the burning bush (Exodus 3:2, Acts 7:30, 35, 38, 53).
4. Israelites, as they journeyed in the wilderness (Exodus 14:19-20, Exodus 23:20-23).
5. Balaam, as he rode out to see Balak (Num. 22:22-35).
6. Joshua – It is thought that the “Commander of the Army of the Lord” is the same as the “Angel of the Lord” that visited Joshua (Joshua 5:13-15).
7. Nation of Israel, to deal with Israel’s disobedience (Judges 2:1-4).
8. Gideon, with instructions to save Israel (Judges 6:11-22).
9. Manoah and his wife, regarding the conception and birth of Samson (Judges 13:3-21).
10. David, as a destroyer for the sin of the census (1 Chron. 21:1-27).
11. Zechariah, with words of comfort and visions (Zech. 1:7-11, 3:1-6, 12:8).

It is believed that the angel who appeared in the fiery furnace along with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego was also the “Angel of the Lord”. However, he is referred to in this account as the “Son of God”. Nebuchadnezzar was astonished to see this fourth man in the fire. (Dan 3:23-28).

In most of the accounts listed above, the Angel of the Lord spoke in the first person on behalf of God. In addition to the passages above, Isaiah referred to the “Angel of His Presence” that serves in an intercessory capacity (Is 63:9). If we connect this passage to what Paul wrote to Timothy, we understand that Christ is the one mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5, see also Heb. 9:23-28).

Do references to the Angel of the Lord actually refer to Jesus? It is likely that such is the case.

Who are the *sons of God* in Genesis 6?

In Genesis 6, we are told that “the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose...There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.”

This is one of the most challenging passages in the Bible and has resulted in a variety of interpretations throughout the centuries.

Who were these “sons of God”? There are three possible options:

1. Marriage between the descendents of Seth and those of Cain
2. Marriage between people of different socio-economic classes
3. Marriage between angels and human women

The choice is really between two options:

1. Marriage between human men and human women
2. Marriage between angels and human women

The 3rd century BC Septuagint rendered the “sons of God” as the “angels of God”. The recorded discussion regarding this matter dates back to approximately 200BC. Josephus, the Jewish historian, also weighed in on the matter and sided with option 2. The driving argument in support of option 2 is the similar terminology found in Job 1 and 2. The argument is that the giants were produced from these unnatural unions. Bear in mind that neither the Septuagint translators nor Josephus were inspired writers. The Hebrew word for angel, *mal'ak*, was not part of the original Hebrew text. Can angels reproduce with humans? We have no evidence that any such thing is possible. Some cite the miraculous conception of Jesus. That was not the union of an angel with a human woman. Remember, angels do not marry (Matthew 22:30-32). It is most likely that the giants who were referenced, were simply the “mighty men of old, men of renown”

Is there an *angel of death*?

All major religions reference an angel who has been assigned the grim responsibility of gathering in souls, the Angel of Death. Judaism, from the 400 years of silence – the inter-testament period, and Islam both reference an angel named Azarel. Azarel was believed to have an assistant named Sammael. These angels, according to Judaism and Islam, have the duty of separating souls from the physical body of people. They also believe that they were the executioners when the firstborn of the Egyptians were taken during the 10th plague.

Exodus 12:23 references the Lord and the destroyer were involved in this process. Psalm 78:49-51 also talks to the plagues that were sent on the Egyptians and the “angels of destruction” was sent among them...And destroyed all the firstborn in Egypt”.

The Old Testament also refers to a number of instances where angel(s) were involved in the process of death:

1. Balaam came dangerously close to a fatal encounter with the Angel who appeared first to his donkey. Angel was standing in the road with sword drawn. If it were not for his donkey, the angel would have killed Balaam (Numbers 22:31-33).
2. The angel known as the Commander of the Army of the Lord was seen by Joshua (Joshua 5:13).
3. Following his sin of taking the census, David saw “the angel of the Lord standing between earth and heaven, having in his hand a drawn sword stretched out over Jerusalem” (1 Chron. 21:16)

In the New Testament, there are three references to angel(s) who are involved in the process of death:

1. Lazarus’ soul was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom (Luke 16:22).
2. At various points in Israel’s history, God used the “destroyer” to punish them (1 Cor. 10:10)

3. Moses, by faith, kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood on the doorposts, so that “he who destroyed the firstborn” would pass over them (Heb. 11:27-28).

Although it is clear that God uses angels in the process of death, evidence is lacking that there is one specific angel with this duty assigned.

What is meant by *entertain angels unawares* in Hebrews 13:2?

Hebrews 13:1-3 reads, “Let brotherly love continue. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by doing so some have unwittingly entertained angels. Remember the prisoners as if chained with them – those who are mistreated – since you yourselves are in the body also.”

Most people look at this passage and wonder just who the angels are that are being entertained. In order to better understand this passage, it must be taken in context. In verse 1, the Hebrew writer says simply “Let brotherly love continue”. The brethren referenced in this passage consist of both the known and unknown men and women who are fellow Christians. In verse 3, the context includes those who are imprisoned for the cause of Christ and those who are mistreated for His cause. Care, concern, and hospitality are all involved in the continuance of brotherly love. Remember when Abraham and Lot entertained men who were actually angels? Abraham and Lot were unable to discern that these visitors were indeed angels. But they were.

Does this passage imply that angels might happen along in the 1st or 21st centuries? It is not likely that this is the conclusion sought in the exhortation. Notice that the tense of the exhortation – it is in the past tense, “some *have* entertained”. The passage does not say that “you *will* entertain”. We must also question as to why angels would appear to us if that is what the Hebrew writer had in mind. The will of the Lord has been revealed. Thus, we have no need for additional “messages” coming from God. Then again, God may choose to send messengers to test us to see if we are loving individuals.