

## Angels and Demons - Part 1

In recent times, it has been reported that the popularity of both Angels and Demons is on the increase. However, our only reliable source of information regarding the spirit world is the Bible. There may be people here who have had some personal experience with angels and demons, or with what they took to be angels or demons, but their encounter, whatever it is, must bow before the written Word of God. Outside of the Bible, we have no sure knowledge of angels or demons. God's word must be the touchstone of truth for every Christian.

Yet that fact shouldn't discourage you, since Bible has a great deal to say about **angels** and **demons**. After all, they are mentioned in 34 different books of the Bible - in 300 different places. You will find the first angels in **Genesis 3**, the first demons in **Deuteronomy 32**, the last demons in **Revelation 16** and the last angels in **Revelation 22**. Therefore, we have plenty of material to study. Much more than I will be able to cover in one sermon.

Turn with me to **Ephesians 6** and let's read verses 10 to 12: *"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."* (NIV) The original Greek says; *"...against the spiritual powers of wickedness in the heavenlies."* Notice, in addition to the physical realm that we see, there exists an invisible spirit realm that the Bible refers to as "the heavenlies." This invisible realm is inhabited by good 'spirit beings' called **angels** and evil 'spirit beings' called **demons**, and this invisible realm affects our world every day. *"We do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal."* (**2 Corinthians 4:18**)

**1 Corinthians 12:1** tells us not to be **ignorant** of spiritual matters. The invisible realm is something we should constantly be aware of, but we must also be knowledgeable concerning it. It would be wrong to conclude that all of life's difficulties are directly brought on us by the devil or demons. Some of our sickness, our poverty, our relationship problems are the result of our own wrong doing or poor choices. Yet, we must take seriously the words we've just read; **"spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms!"** We should never be ignorant of the very real and powerful 'unseen' **spiritual** world that surrounds us.

Today we will be examining both **angels** and **demons**. So first, let's deal with angels. Are there really angels? According to the Bible, yes! God's word speaks often of angels (about 200 times in the New Testament alone), but it explains very little about them. The most basic role that angels play is that of "delivering news from God." The word 'angel' in the New Testament simply means "**messenger**." The Bible tells us several important things about these awesome individuals, things that should encourage us as we engage in the struggle to influence the world and to do battle with the forces of darkness.

Things like:

1. Angels are spirit beings: **Are not all angels ministering spirits?** (**Hebrews 1:14**) From scripture we

learn that the angels can take on physical form and interact with the physical world, but they are “spirit beings” without bodies, as we know them.

2. Angels are mighty and powerful beings: In God’s word angels are recorded as having opened prison doors, rolled away the stone at the grave of Jesus, and even engaging in war with evil men. In the book of the Revelation, John speaks of angels who “bind Satan,” taking him into custody. God grants them the ability from time to time to even change the course of nature. **Revelation 7:1**, *“After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree.”* In **Psalm 103:20** we read, *“Praise the Lord, you angels of His, you mighty creatures who carry out His plans, listening for each of His commands.”*
3. Angels are personal beings: It is a mistake to think of these spirit beings as impersonal forces like a hurricane, an earthquake, or electricity. They are loving, joyful, intelligent beings who delight in doing the will of God and carrying out His orders in the world as they are sent to do so.
4. Angels are not gods: These beings are created; finite beings lower than God, but superior to us.
5. Angels are not the spirits of people who have died! A common misconception is that when people die, they become angels. Humans and angels are distinctly different orders in God’s creation. Nowhere in the Bible are we taught that our destiny is to become angels.
6. Angels are sent to be our allies in the struggle against sin, evil, and darkness: **Psalm 91:11-14**, *“For He will command His angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. You will tread upon the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent.”* **Hebrews 1:14**, *“Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?”* In some mysterious way, God directs His angels to be our guardians from time to time. However, the popular idea that each of us has an angel watching over him at all times, is not scriptural. If that were true, then we would be hard pressed to understand why some of us die in tragic accidents or at the hands of cruel murderers. What the Bible does teach is that God sends, in His plan and purpose, angels to guide us towards His will and to help us when we are under spiritual attack.
7. Angels obey God’s word: **Psalm 103:20** says, *“Bless the Lord, you His angels, Mighty in strength, who perform His word, obeying the voice of His word!”* They heed the voice of the Lord. When you speak out His word they listen and obey. This is how God created the angels. They do not have a choice. They cannot exercise their own free will!

### **What exactly do angels do?**

The Bible pictures angels as fulfilling 4 great roles:

1. They worship God in heaven. This is the most familiar picture of angels in the Bible. Most often when we see them, they are worshipping God. For instance, when Christ was born, the shepherds heard the heavenly host singing, *“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace goodwill toward men”* (**Luke 2:14**). All the angels praise God; some angels seem assigned to this as a permanent duty.
  
2. They serve as messengers for God. An angel is a messenger for the Almighty. **Genesis 28** tells of Jacob’s amazing dream of a staircase reaching from earth to heaven with the angels of God descending and ascending on it. That dream demonstrates the close connection that exists between heaven and earth. We don’t ordinarily see that staircase, but it’s always there and the angels constantly go back and forth. I believe the angels ascend to heaven with our prayers in their hands and come back to earth with God’s answer for His children.
  
3. They war against satan and his demons. We see this most clearly in the book of Revelation, but you have glimpses of it in other places in the Bible, most notably Daniel 10. In that passage, a heavenly being was hindered from coming to Daniel because he was in a battle. He was contending with the “prince of Persia,” evidently a demon who had strong influence over the government of Persia. But then Michael the archangel intervened and the demon was defeated. **Revelation 12:7** paints a dramatic picture of an event yet future to us: *“There was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back.”* The next verse tells us that Satan was defeated and his army expelled from heaven once and for all. Please note a crucial fact. Whenever angels and demons go to war, the angels of God always win because God is greater than Satan.
  
4. They offer special protection to God’s people. **Psalm 34:7** says, *“The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.”* There are many cases of miraculous angelic deliverance in the Bible. For instance, when Lot was attacked in Sodom, the two angels struck the unruly mob with blindness. When Daniel was thrown in the lion’s den, an angel closed the mouth of the lions so they would not harm him. When Peter was thrown in jail in Acts 12, an angel came to set him free.

### **What purpose do angels serve?**

They are “ministering spirits.” Therefore, they have an angelic ministry, and this ministry has 10 specific functions:

- **Angels bring God’s word** (a message). (Matthew 1:20; 2:13,19; Luke 1:19,26-27).
- **Angels release revelation, dreams, and understanding.** (Dan. 8: 15-19; Rev. 1:1).
- **Angels give guidance and direction.** (Acts 8:26; Gen. 24:7).
- **Angels bring deliverance.** (Isaiah 37:36; 2 Kings 19:35).
- **Angels provide protection.** They guard little children, have charge over and protect believers, ‘camp’ around those who fear God. (Matt. 18:10; Ps. 34:7; 91:11-12).
- **Angels impart strength.** (Matthew 4:11; Luke 22:42; Dan. 10:16).
- **Angels release God’s healing.** (John chapter 5).

- **Angels minister to God through praise and worship.** (Luke 2:14; Rev. 5:11-12).
- **Angels conduct war.** (Gen. 32:1-2; Dan. 10:13; Rev. 12:7).
- **Angels release God's judgments.** (Genesis 19:11; Exodus 12:21-23; Rev. 16:17).

Here are some Bible accounts of angelic ministry:

### 1. Elisha

God was revealing the plans of the enemy King of Syria to Elisha, who passed that intel on to the King of Israel. When the King of Syria found out about this, he sent his horses, chariots and a great army to Dothan to kill Elisha. When Elisha's servant saw that the city was surrounded, he woke up the prophet and said, "Alas, my master, what shall we do?" So he answered, "Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." And the servant said, "What's that then! No more pizza for you before bed!" *And Elisha prayed, and said, "Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." Then the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.*" This was a vision of the Lord's heavenly army. (**2 Kings 6:8-17**).

### 2. Daniel

Daniel was praying and fasting for three weeks, and he had a great vision of a powerful warrior angel. *...And he said to me, "O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you." While he was speaking this word to me, I stood trembling. Then he said to me, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me."* (**Daniel 10:11-13**). There are angels and demons (evil spirit beings) at war.

### 3. Job

The book of Job gives us a glimpse into the invisible realm and we see how Satan was responsible for Job's troubles – the loss of his children, possessions, and health. (**Job 1-2**) Here we see that both God and Satan have plans for us! Jesus said, *"The thief (Satan) comes to steal, kill and destroy. I have come to bring you abundant life."* (**John 10:10**). God has a hope for your future; the devil only plots evil. Jesus loves you and wants to bless your life; satan hates you and wants to destroy your life!

We need to be aware of the **angels** in our lives. When we worship we join with angels in worship. Therefore, it's not wrong to ask the Father to grant us angelic presence as we deal with specific dangers. So be encouraged. Rejoice and give thanks. We have the Word of God on our side and the Holy Spirit living within. We're on the winning side. The **angels** of God are watching over us. They lead us to the throne of God where we can join them in praising our wonderful Saviour; who defeated Satan by His death on the cross and disarmed every demon by His victorious resurrection from the dead. Wherever we go now, we can walk on victory ground because Jesus Christ has won the battle! Hallelujah!