

## BASIC DOCTRINE – THE FUNDAMENTALS

### PART 10: ANGELS, THE DEVIL, AND DEMONS

There is a world beyond the physical world we live in. There is a state of existence beyond the five senses. Scripture makes it clear that there is another world not only existing along side our natural world but is in large part playing an important role in how this natural world functions.

Christians refer to this realm as the spiritual world. This is a dimension of the supernatural--not the superstitious--and is in one way more real and lasting than the world of our senses. But is God the only one who occupies that world?

Ancient mythologies have always spoken of personal mystical beings of great power and abilities that function in and out of the realm of the spirit and at times visit the earth. Scripture calls these beings angles and demons.

Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary defines an angel as: "A member of an order of heavenly beings who are superior to man in power and intelligence."

Angels, like the rest of creation, are themselves created beings.

Ps 148:2-5 says: *Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts! Praise Him, sun and moon; Praise Him, all you stars of light! Praise Him, you heavens*

*of heavens, And you waters above the heavens! Let them praise the name of the Lord , For He commanded and they were created.*

Angels are spiritual beings without physical bodies, which is why Jesus says: *a spirit does not have flesh and bones (Luke 24:39).*

Angels were created with great power and knowledge which enables them operate in both the spiritual and the material world doing the work of God that comes directly from the throne of God.

The two angels sent to bring judgment upon the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and rescue Lot said to him: *Have you anyone else here? Son-in-law, your sons, your daughters, and whomever you have in the city — take them out of this place! For we will destroy this place, because the outcry against them has grown great before the face of the Lord, and the Lord has sent us to destroy it.* (Gen 19:12-13)

But one of their primary activities is to minister to God in worship and praise.

*All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, Thanksgiving and honor and power and might, Be to our God forever and ever. Amen."* (Rev 7:11-12)

Angels were also created to serve in ministry to man.

*Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation? (Heb 1:14).*

They deliver heavenly messages from the court of God. This activity can be seen in the very word “angel” itself. *Malak* in Hebrew and *angelos* in Greek (which are the words our English translators are working with in the Old and New Testaments respectively) both mean “a messenger.”

There also appears to be a hierarchy or rank within the order of angels, for the Bible speaks of archangels: *For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. (1 Thess 4:16).*

The angel Michael, who is called an archangel in Jude 9, is identified as a chief prince who leads the warfare against Satan. Michael is also mentioned by John in his prophecy: *And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; (Rev 12:7).*

Many believe that all angels or spiritual entities are for our good and benefit, but Scripture does not permit us to hold such a view. God’s Word clearly indicates

that there are angels who have fallen into rebellion against God. Such beings are not given the power to repent (the offer of the gospel message is never made to them), so they are in perpetual war against God and His chosen people.

The apostle Peter writes of such angels when he says: *For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment (2 Peter 2:4)*

Jude also writes: *And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day; (Jude 6)*

Of all of the fallen angels none is more powerful than Satan. The Bible describes Satan (who is also called the Devil) as an angel (Job. 1:6), an evil, malignant being (John. 17:15), head and chief of the world of darkness, and our foremost adversary (I Pet. 5:8). He is also portrayed as a murderer and a liar (John. 8:22), the Father of Lies (John. 8:44), a deceiver and the accuser of the brethren (Rev. 12:9-10). Of all of God's fallen creatures, he appears to be the most powerful and cunning.

Although Scripture warns us of Satan's person and activities, the exact degree of his power and origin is still a mystery. Some commentators think that there is information about Satan in the prophetic writings of Isaiah and Ezekiel. In Isaiah

14 we read of the King of Babylon and in Ezekiel 28 we read of the King of Tyrus, both of whom, despite their high rank, were cast down because of pride.

*“that you will take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say:…Your pomp is brought down to Sheol, And the sound of your stringed instruments; The maggot is spread under you, And worms cover you.’ “How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground,… For you have said in your heart:’ I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.’ Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit” (Isa. 14:3-15).*

*“Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, “Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “You were the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. ..The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes Was prepared for you on the day you were created…You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, Till iniquity was found in you… “Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor; I cast you to the ground, I laid you before kings, That they might gaze at you ” (Eze. 28:11-17).*

Although the above verses are most obviously and directly about earthly kings with earthly dominions, some believe that these proclamations refer also to Satan himself, the chief architect of sin and the power behind all evil. This reading is based on the fact that at times in Scripture God will speak to a spiritual power behind a person through the person himself. A good illustration of this can be found the Gospel of Matthew:

*From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!" But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men." (Matt 16:21-23)*

In rebuking Peter, Jesus is actually speaking to the instigator of Peter's thoughts and motivations, Satan, who wants to keep Christ from following the will of His Father.

If Satan is the one who is ultimately being addressed in the passages from Isaiah and Ezekiel, then we can surmise that in the hierarchy of God's created beings, Satan ranked supreme, he was an archangel. It appears that he was created with great beauty and power and was given the honor of glorifying God through

worship and song. Unfortunately at some point, he took on the attitudes of self-will and self-centeredness and rebelled against God. He allowed himself to be filled with the aspiration of becoming like the Most High and establishing a rule of his own. In his rebellion he may have grasped for the Throne of God or at least for a realm where his will and authority would be autonomous and free from the authority of God.

Whether these passages are about Satan or not, we do know that he is Prince and head of the angels who rebelled against God in Heaven (Rev. 12: 7-9), and his main desire is to abort the work of God and wreak havoc on humanity through any means allotted to him (1 Thess. 2:18). We also know from the Bible that there was a war in heaven which resulted in Satan being removed and cast out (Rev. 12) along with a host of other heavenly beings (fallen angels or demons) that are now under his command. At present he continues to instigate rebellion against God and the church (Rev. 12:17).

We can also surmise from God's Word that even though Satan was stripped of authority for his treason and cast from heaven, with no hope of returning, he was allowed to maintain a great deal of his power (Rom. 11:29). It also seems that in spite of his defeat and expulsion, he retains his unrepentant, self-centered nature along with the desire for a kingdom under his personal rule.

But Satan is not alone. Along with the fallen angels there are his minions known as demons who afflict mankind with sickness, mental and emotional disease, crime and other kinds of suffering. This isn't to say that all physical and mental problems are caused by a direct spiritual attack but only that such problems can be the result of such an attack.

Smith's Bible Dictionary defines demons as spiritual beings, at enmity with God, that have the power to afflict man not only with disease but spiritual impurity as well, as indicated by the frequent Scriptural epithet "unclean". As with Satan there also seems to be a mystery as to the origin of demons.

Many hold to the idea that demons are fallen angels, but some believe that they are a distinct form of spiritual being. Those who hold the view that we should make distinction between fallen angels and demons put a lot of weight on those portions of Scripture in which the writer distinguishes divisions of power, authority and tasks. On this view fallen angels are active in the higher world powers and political activity (the Prince of Persia in Daniel 10, for example) while demons are involved in a more direct way with human activity. However, those who do not believe in a distinction between fallen angels and demons point to those portions of Scripture where Satan is obviously involved in a direct way with human activity, which is why Peter warns all believers to watch out for him because he is like a lion ready to pounce (1 Peter 5:8 and the story of Job).

In summary, what can we say then about this dark spiritual realm and its inhabitants?

The Kingdom of Darkness and its forces are engaged in warfare against God and His Kingdom. All human beings find themselves caught up in that war whether they like it or not. One is either serving in the Kingdom of Light or in the Kingdom of darkness. There is no neutrality. Those who think they can be neutral, or those who do not believe in the spiritual world as described by Scripture, are merely being used by Satan for his purposes. In this war there are beings of great power such as the angels that are for us and beings such as the fallen angels and demons, directed by Satan, who are against us and want to do us harm. But there is good news.

Regardless of his power, and those in league with him, Satan is still limited in what he can do because he is under God's control as attested in the book of Job where we see that Satan had to obtain God's permission in order to assault Job and his family.

*Then the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?" So Satan answered the Lord and said, "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? You have blessed the work of his hands,*

*and his possessions have increased in the land. But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!" And the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person." (Job 1:8-12)*

We must always rejoice that Christ has given us victory over the forces of darkness through His atoning work at Calvary. It was at the cross that the powers of darkness were defeated.

*And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. (Col 2:13-15)*

Because of what Christ has done for us in His life, death, and resurrection, and because of what Christ is doing for us right now at the right hand of God, we have authority over the forces of darkness. Jesus said that, *"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth* (Matt 28:18) and because believers are now, as Paul says, in Christ (Rom 6:11) and seated with Him in Heavenly Places (Eph 1:11), so too we can experience and exercise authority through Christ in His name.

In this battle against the forces of evil, we have been given weapons of spiritual warfare in order to engage and win victory over these evil powers which are against our souls, bodies and the Kingdom of our Lord. These weapons are ones of spiritual power (2 Cor 10:4-6) and spiritual armor (Eph 6:11-18) and commands from God to resist the Devil by staying alert to his cunning, schemes and temptations against us.

*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. (1 Peter 5:8-9)*

*For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. (2 Cor 11:13-14)*

We can fight and gain victory because our Lord is Lord of Lords and King of Kings. He is Lord God Almighty, the source of our authority and power.

*So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation,*

*and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.*

*(Rev 12:9-1)*

(For further study in Spiritual Warfare see Bread of Life School of the Bible: Level Four Authority of the Believer and Deliverance by Dr Phillip L. Wiley)