

LESSON ESSENTIALS

GOD AND THE SPIRITUAL REALM

LESSON 6: ANGELS AND DEMONS

There is far more going on in the world than we can see. Not only is God at work in a thousand ways, but the spiritual creatures He has made are at work also.

Angels are mentioned frequently in the Bible – but you might have questions about what they are like and why they were created. Read on to learn more.

Have you ever wondered whether angels are real, and why God made them? What are demons, and should we be afraid of them? This lesson explores these ideas.

'And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear' (Luke 2:9).

Although angels often appear in the Bible, we don't really know much about them. When the good news of Jesus birth was announced to shepherds, they didn't act as if they were receiving a good message. In fact we read 'And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear' (Luke 2:9). These angels must have seemed frightening and mysterious. The demons that appear in the Bible also seem terrifying. What are these spiritual creatures, and what should our response be to them?

First, let us look at what angels are. While the physical world is populated with plants, animals and people, God also created spiritual beings, some of whom can visit this world and appear to us. These beings were created before the world and according to the Bible, they do not die like we will. Angels are the beings that are most commonly talked about in the Bible. In the Scriptures, angels appear to people clothed in white and surrounded with light. We can read in Daniel 10:5-6, 'I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a man clothed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude.'" Angels are shown in the Bible to be mighty, but they are not as mighty as God. They are called holy and sinless. Angels have rank and order, and only specific angels are called to deliver messages to God's people.

Just like God created people for a purpose, angels have a purpose as well. Angels were made first to be worshippers of God. The Bible shows them worshipping, singing, celebrating and continually praising Him. Hebrews 12:22 says that there are innumerable angels worshipping in the city of God. We are told that they celebrate sinners repenting (Luke 15:10) and that they celebrated over the birth of Jesus.

Angels are also called servants and messengers of God. Did you know that God has instructed angels to help and protect you? That is an amazing thought! We do not usually see angels around us, but they *can* take the form of a human and can intervene in the world to serve God's people. Actually, you could at some point serve them! The Scriptures instruct us not to 'neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some of entertained angels unawares' (Hebrews 13:2). Angels are under God's command, not ours, but God can cause angels to protect us physically or spiritually.

Throughout the Bible, God's angels have been deliverers of messages. Often these are messages of comfort and announcing God's plans, but sometimes these are messages of warning. God's angels are capable of fighting both physical and spiritual battles, and are positioned against Satan and his demons. One day angels will gather together the righteous, and cast the evil into the lake of fire (Matthew 13:49-50).

So knowing all this – what should our response to angels be? It is important to know first of all that we should not worship angels. They are God's creation just as we are. As mighty as they are, they do not rule over us, they are merely God's servants. When we worship God, we know that unseen angels join us. It can also be comforting to know that God's angels may protect us and can even in some situations bring us messages from God.

The other spiritual being that we need to know about are demons. Demons are former angels who chose to rebel against God, or to serve Satan instead of God. They were once perfect but have been cast out of God's presence. They are spiritual beings who are powerful and yet limited by God. They can torment or possess people but are still under God's power. We can read accounts of Jesus casting out demons in the Gospels – for instance, in Luke 4:41 we read that demons were cast out of many, and they knew that Jesus was the Son of God. They recognized the authority of Jesus over them, but they did not worship Him.

Since demons oppose God, they try to turn people away from Him. This may include promoting division and false teaching, tormenting people physically or mentally, or inhabiting people and places. They desire to hinder the spiritual progress of people and may tempt them to sin and neglect Godly worship. Demons are connected to idol worship and occult practices. Exploring these may make someone more susceptible to demonic attacks and control. In addition, allowing unrepented sin to dwell in your life or putting anything above God weakens us to Satan's or his demon's attacks.

In the world today, Christians may experience angel visitation – although it is a rare and special occurrence – as well as attacks from demons. We must remember that nothing can separate us from the love of God, and that God is ultimately victorious. Demons may possess individuals or places, but they are subject to God. In some cases, when demons possess a human, Christians may get involved in casting out demons. This is a complicated spiritual task, and requires much prayer and reliance on the Holy Spirit. If we suspect

Throughout the Bible, God's angels have been deliverers of messages.

Often these are messages of comfort and announcing God's plans, but sometimes these are messages of warning.

As you consider these things, praise God for His marvellous creation, both seen and unseen! God carries out His wonderful plan through many means, including angelic beings.

someone we know may be possessed by a demon, it would be wise to seek out someone in our faith community who may have experience in this area, such as a pastor. We need to remember that only Jesus Christ has power over demons. We do not. We need God's protection in all areas dealing with demons, but we know we can trust Him, as He is more powerful than Satan and is always taking care of us.

God created many spiritual beings. Along with angels and demons, there are other creatures we know very little about, who were created to serve and adore God. These include seraphim who fly above the throne of God and worship Him (Isaiah 6:1-7), Cherubim, who serve as guardians to protect the holy things of God (Genesis 3:24) and many other creatures mentioned in the book of Revelations. As you consider these things, praise God for His marvellous creation, both seen and unseen! God carries out His wonderful plan through many means, including angelic beings.

IN REVIEW

- People frequently are shown to fear angels in the Bible. We need not fear them – they are servants of God bring messages for our good.
- Angels are described as clothed in white, shining, and having an otherworldly appearance. When they appear to people they can take on this form or be disguised as a regular person.
- Angels are created to worship God, serve Him, which sometimes includes helping His people and delivering His messages.
- Demons are fallen angels that oppose God and try to torment humans and draw them away from God.
- God can protect us from demons, and they are obedient to God
- Putting on the armour of God, praying and resisting sin will help protect us from demons. God is ultimately victorious.

HAVE YOUR SAY

- What did you learn about angels and demons in this lesson? How can this help you?
- How does it change approach your daily life knowing that there are spiritual beings in the world that can interact with the physical world?
- How can you keep yourself out of the influence of evil spirits, and remain close to God and His angels?

All other content is © 2019 Trans World Radio Canada, and may be used in any way you like as long as you use it with the purpose of reaching the world for Christ and do not charge for the use of the material. See more license details at www.discipleshipessentials.org/licensing.

Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.