

discipleship essentials

Essentials for Christian Living
Leader's Guide

GOD AND THE SPIRITUAL REALM

LESSON 6: ANGELS AND DEMONS

INTRODUCTION

This module is a powerful set of lessons on the spiritual realm. Lessons specifically deal with the reality of spiritual forces that are in opposition to God. This should fuel our prayer and renew our passion for evangelism. It deals with the origin of evil, the end punishment of Satan, the reality of spiritual warfare and strongholds in our everyday lives, the armor that God has provided us with, God's great battle plan against Satan, God's ultimate control over all things and the supernatural ways in which God communicates with his people through dreams.

INTENDED AUDIENCE

The intended audience for Essentials for Christian Living are 1) new Christians who require knowledge of Christian living or 2) those who have been Christians for some time and would like a refresher course on the basic principles of our faith, based on the Word of God. These lessons will be helpful to those who find themselves teaching and discipling others and want to be reminded of foundational aspects of Christianity. These lessons assume the participant has made a decision to follow Jesus and wants to explore Christianity further.

The Leader's Guide is intended to help you as a leader in your preparation. These lesson outlines may be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials found online at www.discipleshipessentials.org.

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.

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.



GOD AND THE SPIRITUAL REALM

LESSON 6: ANGELS AND DEMONS

PURPOSE

The purpose of this lesson is to understand the nature of the beings that inhabit the spiritual realm, angels as well as demons, and to look at what purpose they serve in the world.

LEADER'S NOTE

All around us are invisible beings carrying out the work of their masters. Angels belong to God and do His will on this earth, while demons belong to their ruler, Satan. Some Christians have fallen into error by worshipping these spiritual beings, by praying to them, by calling on them for help, by giving them orders, or by putting them on equal standing with Jesus. It is important to have a right understanding of what angels are and what they are not. This lesson will help sort out truth from error. In addition, it is good to properly understand what demons are and what their purpose in the world is. We can rejoice that God loves us enough to send angels to serve and protect us, and that our powerful God commands armies of these special messengers! Look for errors in your participants' thinking and focus on those points. There is much material in this lesson, and it is important to support each idea with scripture.

INTRODUCTION

Select two or three of the following questions.

- ❖ What do you understand about angels? Who are they, and what can they do?
- ❖ What do you think your response would be if an angel appeared to you?
- ❖ Are you afraid of demons or evil spirits in the world? Why or why not?
- ❖ Do you think people around you think too much or too little about the beings of the spiritual realm?

STUDY

TEACH

- ❖ **What are Angels?** There is more going on around us than we can view with our own eyes. The physical world is populated with plants and animals and people – the things that God has created. However, the reality is that there is a spiritual world also that is filled with beings we know very little about. Are angels real? The Biblical answer is 'yes'! About half the books of the Bible mention angels, and Jesus Christ Himself taught about their existence. The word 'angel' means messenger, which gives us a clue about their purpose. So what can we learn about angels from the Bible?



- Angels are spiritual beings created by God (Psalm 148:2,5, Colossians 1:16).
 - Angels were created before the physical world (Job 38:4-7), and were present at the creation of the world and the creation of man.
 - They do not die, they are spiritual beings who do not have an end (Luke 20:36).
 - They do not have physical bodies, reproduce or inhabit places in the physical world, but they are able to eat and drink (Mark 12:25, Psalm 78:23-25).
 - Angels can take a form we can see. We are told they appear in white, shining, wearing golden bands with a face like the sun. Other words used in the Bible to describe their appearance are : clothed in light, rainbows, fire, cloud or lightning (Daniel 10: 5-6, John 20:12, Acts 1:10, Luke 24:4, Revelations 5:6, Revelations 10:1-3, Judges 13:6).
 - They are powerful, but they are limited in their power. They cannot be everywhere at once. There are limits to their knowledge (Matthew 24:35-36).
 - Angels are holy and sinless by choice, but fallen angels (demons) will be judged by God' people (1 Corinthians 6:2-3).
 - Angels differ in class, calling and rank. In addition they can appear like military units or groupings in order to execute the will of God. There are heavenly rulers, princes, authorities, and archangels. Sometimes angels appear in a large group or 'host', or like a mighty army (Jude 1:9, Matthew 26:53, Ephesians 3:10, Ephesians 1:21).
 - There are other spiritual creatures mentioned in the Bible who may be angels, or who may be a different type of spiritual creature. They include Seraphim (Isaiah 6:1-7) who fly above the throne of God and continually worship Him, Cherubim (Genesis 3:24) who serve as guardians to protect the holy things of God, and the Four Living Creatures (Revelations 4:6-10) who praise God around His throne.
- ❖ **What Were Angels Created For?** We have examined in other lessons the purpose of mankind. It is only natural to wonder why angels were created, and what purpose they serve. Let us look at a few important tasks that angels have been given in the Bible.
- **God's Messengers:** First, it is important to note that in the original biblical languages, the word angel means 'messenger'. It would appear that one purpose of angels is to bring messages to God's people, especially regarding salvation. Consider these messages delivered by angels:
 - Announcing the birth of Jesus(Luke 2:8-18)
 - Declaring Jesus' resurrection (Matthew 28:2-7)
 - Directing people to hear about salvation (Acts 8:26-40)
 - Bringing comfort to believers (Acts 27:20-26)
 - Bringing warning to turn away from sin (Genesis 19:1-29)
 - **God's Warriors:** In addition to bearing messages of hope or warning, angels are tasked with carrying out God's judgement or warring with evil.



- o Angels are often depicted with swords in the Bible (Numbers 22:31, 1 Chronicles 21:16).
 - o Angels are powerful and execute the will of God, including defeating mighty human armies (2 Chronicles 32:21, 2 Kings 19:35-36).
 - o Angels will fight and are fighting against Satan and demons (Revelation 12:7).
 - o Angels carry out tasks, and will one day gather the righteous together and throw the evil into the lake of fire (Matthew 13:49-50).
- **God's Worshipers:** Angels exist to worship God. Some angels continually praise God and never cease! They inhabit heaven and the city of God and perpetually worship Him there (Hebrews 12:22).
- o All the holy angels worship God (Psalms 148:2, Revelation 5:11-12).
 - o They celebrated the birth of Jesus (Luke 2:8-15).
 - o Angels celebrate sinners repenting (Luke 15:10).
- **God's Servants:** The incredible truth is that angels are sent to serve those who belong to God; they protect, watch over and minister to them. It is not clear in the Bible if individuals have a specific guardian angel, but angels are tasked with watching over God's children.
- o Angels served Hagar (Genesis 21:14-19), and Elijah (1 Kings 19:3-8).
 - o Angels are sent to help us, though we may not see them (Hebrews 1:14, Psalm 34:7, Psalm 91:9-11). Angels are under God's command, not ours. We cannot ask angels to come to us. They are sent as God wills and desires.
 - o Angels are especially tasked with guarding children (Matthew 18:10).
 - o We may be visited by an angel and be unaware that this has happened (Hebrews 13:2).
- ❖ **What Should Our Response to Angels Be?** We frequently see people cowering in fear before angels in the Bible, as they are such powerful and supernatural creatures! Throughout the history of the church people have erroneously worshipped angels as beings that deserve praise. It is important to know what our response to angels should be!
- **Jesus is superior to the Angels:** The writer of the book of Hebrews was writing to a church that fell into the error of elevating angels. The writer demonstrates that Jesus Christ is God's Son, equal with God, and therefore more important than the angels. (Hebrews 1:4-14)
- **We will be Superior to Angels:** We are for now "a little lower than the angels", but this is a temporary position because during the millennium we will rule with Christ who is above them (Hebrews 2:6-7, Revelation 20:6).
- **We must Worship Only God:** Only God is worthy of worship, not His creation. We, along with angels, worship God! Our response if an angel ever visited us might be one of fear, awe or joy, but we must not worship him (Colossians 2:18).



- ❖ **What are Demons?** The other beings that inhabit the spiritual realm are referred to as demons. From what we know from Biblical accounts, these are angels who were created perfect by God but who chose to disobey Him. They were cast out of God's presence and now work to destroy God's creation tempting it to sin. Satan, the ruler of the demons, is described in Revelation 12:9 as the deceiver of the whole world.
 - **Demons recognize the authority of Jesus but do not obey Him** (Luke 4:41, James 2:19).
 - **Demons are powerful and may inhabit people or places.** They cause destruction, illness, temptation to sin and deception (Matthew 9:32, Luke 9:37-43, James 3:15). In some instances sickness may be caused by demons, but more often by declining health.
 - **Demons can affect our spiritual state as well as our physical state.** Demons cannot separate us from the love of God (Romans 8:38), and cannot fully possess that which is already inhabited by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19). However, demons may torment believers, especially those who are not being filled with the Holy Spirit, and are organized in their attempt to hinder the spiritual progress of believers (Ephesians 6:10-12).
 - **Demons promote division and false teaching.** Within the Church, demons can cause us to be selfish and combative against one another (James 3:13-16). They also promote false teaching (1 Timothy 4:1) against which we must be on guard.
 - **Demons are connected to idol worship and the occult.** Taking part in idol worship, evil rituals,, or practicing the occult will open a person up to demonic attacks and control. In addition, allowing unrepented sin to dwell in your life, or placing wealth or power above serving God, may contribute to demonic activity (Deuteronomy 32:17, Psalm 106:37, 1 Corinthians 10:20).
- ❖ **Angels and Demons in the World Today:** God is doing great things in this world, and some He chooses to accomplish through His angelic messengers. God may choose to send a message to individual people through angels, directing them to where they can hear the Gospel. Angels may appear in a dream to give a warning, or to identify an individual as chosen by God.
 - In the same way, Satan is at work in the world causing evil and strife. Demons are sent to torment people and cause destruction. Demons may possess individuals or places, but they are subject to God. Only Jesus Christ has power over demons. We do not. We are instructed to put on the armour of God in order to stand against the attacks of the evil spirits, knowing that God can send an army of angels to protect us!
 - As Christians, we must not only be aware of the schemes of Satan and his demons, but resist him (James 4:7). If we do, he will flee from us as we submit to God. Read Ephesians 6:10-18 as a reminder that we must deliberately put on the whole armour of God.



DISCUSSION

- ❖ What did you learn about angels in this lesson that was new to you? What common misconceptions about angels do people have that are not found in the Bible?
- ❖ How does it change the way you approach your daily life knowing that there are spiritual beings in the world that can interact with the physical world?
- ❖ Have you ever received a visit from an angel, or do you know anyone who has? What were the details of this encounter? How did it impact your faith?
- ❖ Have you encountered anyone who has been possessed by a demon? What was the result?
- ❖ What should be our response if we believe someone is possessed by a demon?
- ❖ How can you keep yourself out of the grip of evil spirits, and remain close to God and His holy angels?

PRAYER

Close the lesson in prayer. Thank God for His creation of angels who worship Him and serve God's people. Thank Him that He is holy and powerful, and that no evil spirit can snatch us out of our Father's hand. Thank God that He has created us to serve Him alongside the angels and that He has mighty plans for this world.