

# Angels, Satan, Demons

## *Module 2.9*

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities,  
against the cosmic powers over this present darkness,  
against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Ephesians 6:12

Often unseen, and largely discounted by the modern mind and post-modern worldview, there exists a very real and ever-present spiritual battle raging behind the perception of our senses. As a result, it can be difficult to fully understand and appreciate the role and ministry of angels, and likewise the desire and determination of demons. Nevertheless, the Bible reveals that an unseen spiritual world does exist, and within it, there are spiritual beings who are either actively serving the One True God or actively working to thwart His work.

Throughout this module we will seek to outline 1) what angels are, 2) who angels are, and 3) what angels seek to accomplish. In doing so, we will give attention to both righteous angels, and fallen or demonic angels.

### **What Angels Are:**

Angels are supernatural beings who were created by God during the six days of Creation recorded in Genesis chapters one and two. We understand angels to have been created during the week of creation because Genesis 1:1 tells us that only God was in the beginning and that He created everything. Furthermore, at the end of day six, we are told in Genesis 1:31 that God declares everything that He had made to be *very good*. Angelic spiritual beings were created righteous and without error, though like the man and woman we understand that within them existed a capacity for sin.

### **Who Angels Are:**

These created spiritual beings are biblically referred to as angels and demons. Angels being those supernatural beings who did not follow Satan in rebellion. Demons being those supernatural beings who did follow Satan in rebellion.

During some unknown amount of time after day six, and before the temptation of Adam and Eve, an angel whom we know as Satan led a group of angels in rebellion against the Lord. Though we do not have all, or even most, of the details about this event we do know that Jesus indicates that He saw the fall of Satan from heaven (Luke 10:18).

## **What Angels Seek to Accomplish:**

### 1) Righteous angels seek to serve the Lord.

Throughout the Old Testament angels are mentioned hundreds of times and appear in a variety of situations; first occurring in Genesis 19.<sup>1</sup> These angels appeared in Sodom and were invited by Lot to his home where their presence and company was sought by the “men of the city...both young and old” (Gen. 19:4). Later within this chapter, we see the angels urging Lot and his family to leave Sodom “lest [they] be swept away in the punishment of the city” (Gen. 19:15). While there is much that could be said about this scene in Genesis, and even the specific role these angels played in the destruction of Sodom, what is important for us to note here is these angelic beings are serving the Lord through their presence and actions.

Before Jesus began His public ministry, Matthew, Mark, and Luke each record that He was tempted in the wilderness for forty days. Both Matthew and Luke record that the devil, in tempting Jesus, quotes Psalm 91:11 and in so doing directly references angels as actual beings. Furthermore, both Matthew and Mark record that after the temptation of Jesus was complete, He was ministered to by angels (Matt. 4:11, Mark 1:13).

Around the events leading up to the birth of Jesus Christ, an angel of the Lord appeared to Zechariah and told him that he and his wife Elizabeth would have a son, John the Baptist. (Luke 1:11-13). Mary was visited by the angel Gabriel and was told that she was also to give birth to a son, though not by the normal process of conception that Zechariah and Elizabeth would undertake (Luke 1:26-35). Joseph was also visited by an angel when he was told to not fear to take Mary to be his wife (Matt. 1:20-21), to “rise and take the child as his mother, and flee to Egypt” (Matt. 2:13), and later to “rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel” (Matt. 2:20).

After the birth of Jesus, the shepherds were also visited by an angel who came announcing the birth of “a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11). Suddenly, there was with that angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased” (Luke 2:14).

Throughout the teaching ministry of Jesus, angels were commonly spoken of, and when Jesus was praying on the Mount of Olives, we are told in Luke 22:43 that, “there appeared to Him an angel from heaven, strengthening Him.” While we may not be able to specifically identify the fullness of the angels’ purpose, we are able to see that they function to serve and minister to the Lord, in

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<sup>1</sup> Earlier in Genesis, 16:7, the word angel is used. However, it is this author’s interpretation that this occurrence with Hagar was a theophany and that “the angel of the LORD” was actually a pre-incarnate Christ, not a created supernatural being. Similarly, the idea of *angels* may be present in Genesis 6 and captured by the phrase “sons of God”. However, a detailed, or even cursory, consideration of this phrase from Genesis 6 is outside the scope of this module.

whatever way He desires. However, angels do not *only* serve the Lord. In Hebrews 1:14 the writer asks rhetorically, “are they [angels] not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?” The implied answer to this question is, “Yes they are!” This means that angels serve and minister to the Lord by serving and ministering to those who have inherited salvation from the Lord!

What is more, the writer of Hebrews also commands his audience, and by extension us, to “not neglect showing hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” Righteous angels are still very active in carrying out service to the Lord by serving and ministering to His people, and at times do appear in bodily form!

2) Unrighteous, or fallen, angels are actively seeking to thwart the plans of God and terrorize those who have been created in His image. Their ultimate goal is to promote death, both physical and spiritual.

Outside of the many instances in the gospel where demonic activity is reported, the apostle Peter commands his audience “to be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8). Similarly, James writes, “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). Demonic angels are alive and active, being led by Satan to oppose God’s work and His people however they can.

In considering the work of Satan and his demonic host, we certainly need to know and understand that his evil work may manifest itself in demonic possession as it did for many during the ministry of Jesus, and even people today.<sup>2</sup> However, Satan also accomplishes his work of evil by disguising “himself as an angel of light” (2 Cor. 11:14), and leading people astray by false teaching through his “servants who also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness” (2 Cor. 11:15).

Nevertheless, as the apostle John writes in his first letter, “The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8). These rulers and authorities, while real and powerful, have been disarmed by the death and resurrection of Christ (Col. 2:15) and have no authority over the one who has been born again! Furthermore, the days of these foes are numbered and their destruction is certain. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15:24 that Christ will destroy every “rule and every authority and power.”

While Satan and his demonic host are still actively working today to oppose God and His people, their destruction is certain, for the grave is empty and death has been conquered. In Revelation 20, the apostle John writes about this future day. We will end this module with his words.

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<sup>2</sup> Matt.4:24, 8:16, 8:28-34, 15:21-28, 17:14-21; Mark.1:21-28, 1:32-34, 5:1-20, 7:24-30, 9:14-29; Luke 4:31-37, 8:26-39, 9:37-43 (not a complete listing).

“And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”

Revelation 20:7–10