

Angels, Demons and the spiritual world

- When you hear the word *angel*, what image comes to mind? Clarence from the movie *It's A Wonderful Life*? Tess from *Touched by an Angel*?
- On the other hand, what comes to mind when you hear the words *demon* or *devil*? Hellboy from the comic book series or the movie? Various heinous creatures from *The Lord of the Rings* or *Constantine*?
- For many people, popular films, books, comic books, and other media are their only sources of information about angels and demons—if they believe in these creatures at all.
- These are inaccurate portrayals of angels and demons and lead to a lot of popular confusion surrounding the spiritual world.

Angels, Demons and the spiritual world

- We live in a spiritual world – that reality is all around us.
- Eph 6:12 **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.**
- In our study I hope to give a biblical picture of the spiritual reality that exists and how we are to make sense of all the varied misinformation we receive from the world.

Angels, Demons and the spiritual world

- Every culture in the world throughout history has developed a system of belief that assumes life after death and the existence of a spiritual realm.
- In pre-Islamic Arabia people feared the *djinn* or a demon like spirit that was adopted into Islamic mythology.
- The function of angels in Eastern religions was carried by avatāras, bodhisattvas, and other such spiritual beings who were extensions of God or the sacred. Belief in demons was and is very widespread, influencing various rituals and practices to counteract the forces that are hostile to man and nature. In Hinduism, the asuras (the Zoroastrian ahuras) are the demons who oppose the devas (the gods).

Angels, Demons and the spiritual world

- The demons of Chinese religions, the guei-shen, are manifested in all aspects of nature. Besides these nature demons there are goblins, fairies, and ghosts.
- This is similar to belief systems throughout the non-industrialized world. The spirits of nature are generally venerated in return for certain favors or to ward off catastrophes. Ancestor gods abound, and thus the ghosts of the dead must be placated, often with the performance of elaborate rites.
- All of this is evidence that on some level, even in our fallen state, we are aware that there is another reality that co-exists with ours.

Angels, Demons and the spiritual world

- There seems to be an unending fascination with the subject in pop culture with the continued popularity of shows like Supernatural and Ghost Hunters and movies like Paranormal.
- Many people claim to have experienced, or regularly experience, interaction with the spiritual realm. This is not only through mediums and spiritists but many Christians make the same claim.
- Some people claim that Jesus appeared to them. Have you ever encountered anyone who claimed to have received a direct revelation from the risen Christ? If so, how did that person describe their experience?

Angels, Demons and the spiritual world

- Mystical experiences emphasize what theologians call immediate revelation, or revelation that does not come through means. Means refer to those things which God uses as instruments to reveal and present Himself to us.
- For example, both God's Word and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper are means because God uses them to reveal His will and to be present with His people.
- Read John 14:23–24; 1 Corinthians 11:23–26; and 1 John 4:9–10.
- Mystical experiences seek God in a direct or immediate way apart from the use of Word or Sacrament.

Angels, Demons and the spiritual world

- We must acknowledge that, because of our sin, God is unapproachable apart from mediation or means. God is holy, He dwells in “unapproachable light” (1 Timothy 6:16).
- A person cannot approach God apart from the mediating work of Jesus Christ (John 14:6; Romans 5:10). Even though there is a temptation in each one of us to make personal experience our basis for knowing God, we should resist such temptation. God provides His Word and Sacraments as ways of “experiencing” Him.

Angels, Demons and the spiritual world

- Looking for truth in experience, or from within, is dangerous. The Word tells us, “the heart is deceitful above all things” (Jeremiah 17:9).
- If we rely on our own hearts and opinions as a normative source for truth, we will rely on a shaky and faulty foundation. But, if we look to the Word as an objective standard for truth, we will have a firm and solid foundation (John 17:17).
- So we will look to the Word of God for the sure and certain foundation of our spiritual understanding though people will point to their experiences of the spirit world we can only trust God’s word.

Angels, Demons and the spiritual world

- Jesus' coming was foretold by angels; His conception, birth, and resurrection were announced by them. He received angelic ministrations after His desert temptation and following His garden agony.
- He frequently encountered demon-possessed persons whom He released from satanic activity and control. Jesus preached about angels and demons. The apostles also encountered both angels and demons in their ministries.
- Frequently, the Bible records angels assuming bodily (corporeal) form, taking on the appearance of human men to deliver a special message from God.
- Angels and demons are not hard to find in the biblical record.

Angels and Demons

- Where did these beings come from and what's their purpose?
- We know that angels were created because the Bible says: Gen 1:1 **In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.**
- That means before the creation of the heavens and the earth there was nothing.
- We don't believe, based on what we see in Scripture, that the angels were part of an earlier creation or assisted in the creation of the earth.

Angels, Demons and the spiritual world

- Read John 1:1–5 and Genesis 2:2–3.
- Although the Bible mentions angels in almost three hundred passages, no passage tells us about their creation. Nevertheless, what can we conclude about the creation of angels from these two verses?
- Read Psalm 148. What can we learn about the creation of angels from this great hymn of praise?
- Read Colossians 1:15–17 and Nehemiah 9:6. What additional information do these verses provide about the creation and activity of the angels?

Angels, Demons and the spiritual world

- The OT creation accounts make no explicit reference to origin of angels. On basis of Gn 2:1–3 and Ex 20:11 Christian interpreters have concluded that the angels were created at an unspecified time in the 6 days of creation.
- Gen 2:1-3 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

Angels, Demons and the spiritual world

- **Exo 20:11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.**
- Therefore, angels are like us in this sense they are created beings they are not eternal.
- Notice we haven't talked about the creation of demons, why?
- Next week we'll see what Scripture reveal about the actions and functions of angels in heaven and here on earth.