

Survey of Bible Doctrine: Angels, Satan, Demons

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The Doctrine of Angels

I. The Existence of Angels

A.. The Bible assumes their existence.

1. 34 books (of 66 total) refer to angels.
2. Christ taught their existence (Matt.8:10; 24:31; 26:53 etc.).

B. The Bible describes their creation.

1. Angels were created by God (Ps.148:2,5; Col.1:16). Only God had no beginning (1 Tim.6:16).
2. Angels were created before the world and man (Job 38:6,7).
3. Angels were created holy (Ezek.28:15; Jude 6).

II. The Nature of Angels

A. Angels are personal beings.

1. They have intellect (Matt.28:5; 1 Pet.1:12).
2. They have emotions (Job 38:7; Luke 2:13; 15:10)
3. They have will (Jude 6).

B. Angels are spirit beings.

1. They exist as spirits – not with material bodies (Heb. 1:14).
 - a. An angel can be in only one place at one time (Dan.9:21-23; 10:10-14)
 - b. Although they are spirit beings, they can appear in the form of men (in dreams – Matt.1:20; in natural sight with human functions – Gen.18: 1-8; 22: 19:1; seen by some and not others – 2 Kings 6:15-17).
2. They cannot reproduce (Mark 12:25).
3. They do not die (Luke 20:36).

C. Angels have communicable attributes in a degree greater than man but less than God.

1. They have more knowledge than man (Matt.24:31; Luke 1:13-16) but less than God (Matt.24:36).
2. They have more power than man (2 Pet.2:11; acts 5:19) but less than God.

D. Angels are organized and ranked. One “archangel,” Michael is named (Jude 9). There are also “chief princes” (Dan.10:13), “seraphim” (Is.6:1-3) and “cherubim” (Gen.3:22-24).

III. The Ministries of Angels

A. They worship God. Angels are continually involved in praising God (Rev.4:6-11) through describing His attributes (Is.6:3) and singing praises (Rev.5:8,9).

B. They ministered to Christ. Angels announced His birth (Luke 1:26-33; 2:13), protected Him (Matt.2:13), strengthened Him (Matt.4:11; Luke 22:43), and explained to men His resurrection (Matt.28:6) and ascension (Acts 1:10,11).

C. They carry out God’s government. Angels are God’s servants (Ps.103:20; Heb.1:7) and messengers (Luke 1:19; 2:8-14). They can be involved in controlling nature (Rev.7:1; 16:3,8,9), nations (2 Kings 19:35), and Satan and demons (Dan.10:13,21; 12:1). They will perform future judgment for God (Matt.13:3a; Rev.15:1; 16:1-21).

D. They protect God’s people. Angels are sent to serve believers (Heb.1:14). They protect the godly (Ps.34:7; Dan.6:20,23), oppose our enemies (Ps.35:4,5) and are specifically assigned as guardians of individuals (Matt.18:10). They are God’s agents in answering prayer (Acts 12:7) even bringing physical provisions (Gen.21:17-20; 1 Kings 19:5-7).

E. They assist believers at death (Luke 16:22; Jude 9).

The Doctrine of Satan

I. The Existence of Satan

A. Seven Old Testament books and every New Testament writer refer to Satan.

B. Jesus referred to Satan (Matt.13:39; Luke 10:18; 11:18).

II. The Personality and Names of Satan

A. Personality – He has intellect (2 Cor.11:3), emotions (Rev.12:17) and will (2 Tim.2:26).

B. Names – He is called Satan, the Devil (slanderer), Lucifer (son of the morning), Beelzebub (Lord of the flies – Matt.12:24), and Belial (lawless – 2 Cor.6:15), the evil one (1 John 5:19), the tempter (1 Thess.3:5), the prince of this world (John 12:31), the god of this age (2 Cor.4:4), the prince of the power of the air (Eph.2:2), the accuser of the brethren (Rev.12:10), and angel of light (false light – 2 Cor.11:14), a serpent (Rev.12:9), and a dragon (Rev.12:3).

III. The Nature of Satan

- A. He is a created angelic being. He was created as part of the angelic realm (Eph.6:11,12; Ezek.24:18) and was the highest in rank of them all (Ezek.28:12-14).
- B. He is an enemy of righteousness. He is a murderer (John 8:44), a liar (John 8:44), and accuser (Rev.12:10) and our adversary (1 Pet.5:8).
- C. He is a limited creature. He is limited by God (Job.1:12). He is not God's equal (1 John 4:4). He is not omniscient, omnipotent or infinite in any way. Believers with God's help can resist him (James 4:7).

IV. The Fall of Satan

Key Passages – Ezekiel 28; Isaiah 14

A. Ezekiel 28:11-19 is a prophetic lamentation over the “King of Tyre” who is described in language that fits Satan’s fall and not a mere human king. Satan is distinguished from the human ruler of Tyre in 28:2 (“prince/ruler”) and called a “king” in 28:12 (Not even Israel’s rulers were called “King”). Though Tyre had a human “ruler”, Satan was the real “King” behind that wicked kingdom.

B. His attributes – Moral perfection (v.12) Sinless at his creation until his fall (v.15)

C. His appearance – Perfect in beauty (v.12b,13)

1. His privileges – Free access to the garden of Eden (v.12) and to God’s holy mountain (= God’s presence – v.14)
2. His rank – “Cherub” (vs.14,16)
3. His judgment –
 - a. Cast out of the mountain of God (v.16, cf. Rev12:4)
 - b. Cast to the ground (v.17)
 - c. Consumed by fire (v.18, cf. Rev.20:10)

D. Isaiah 14:12-15 also seems to describe Satan’s fall. Satan is manifest here by the king of Babylon. As in Ezekiel 28, Satan is pictured here as the real “king” behind the wicked human kingdom of Babylon.

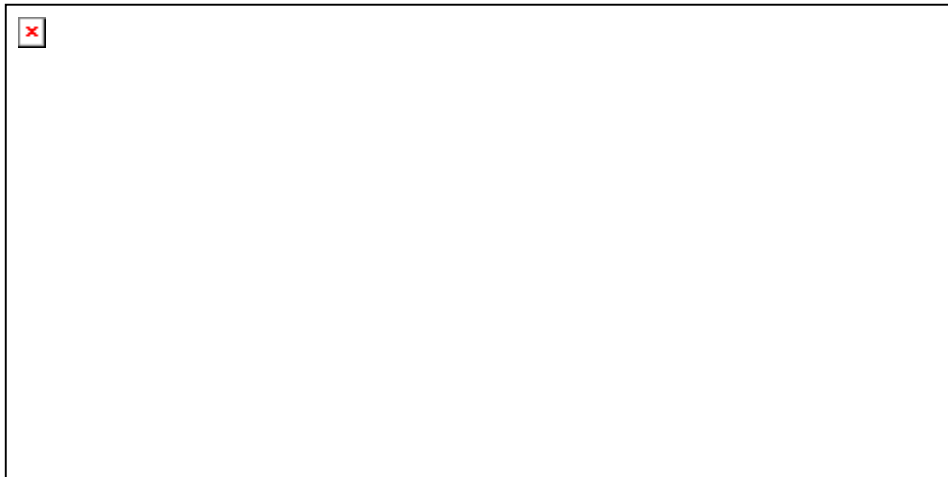
1. The imagery of a “star” and “falling from heaven” (v.12) suggests a supernatural fulfillment. “Stars” (v.12,13) are symbolic of the angelic realm elsewhere (Job 38:6,7; Rev.12:4).

2. The five “I will’s” of vss. 13 & 14 are literally true of Satan and only metaphorically true of Babylon’s king. This ultimate form of pride (“I will be like the Most High” – v.14) fits the New Testament description of Satan’s fall 1 Tim.3:6.

V. The Activity of Satan

Satan is seeking to oppose God’s plan by promoting evil in every way possible.

A. Indirect Activity – He works indirectly through the world (in which he has great freedom and power – John 12:31; 1 John 5:19) and the flesh (Gal.5:19-21). The world, the flesh and the devil are not three separate enemies of the Christian. Rather Satan works through the evil world system (1 John 2:13-15) to exploit the fleshly nature that



still wars within us (Rom.7:18; Gal.5:19-21).

Diagram: Norm Geisler

B. Direct Activity – He works directly by deception, temptation, attack and possession.

1. In Christ’s ministry

- a. He tempted Christ (Matt.4:1-11).
- b. He attempted to thwart Christ’s work (John 8:44; Matt.16:23; Luke 22:31).
- c. He possessed Judas to accomplish the betrayal (John 13:27).

2. In unbelievers

- a. He blinds their minds to hinder their understanding of the gospel (2 Cor.4:4).
- b. When the gospel is heard or understood, he tries to hinder its effect (Luke 8:12).

- c. He uses persecution (Rev.2:10) and false religions (Rev.2:13) to hinder the effect of the gospel.
- 3. In believers
 - a. He tempts believers (to pride – 1 Chron.21:1-8; to materialism – John 2:15; James 5:1-7; to immorality – 1 Cor.7:5; to lie – Acts 5:3; to discouragement – 1 Pet.5:6-10; to be unforgiving – 2 Cor.2:10,11 etc.).
 - b. He hinders the ministries of believers (1 Thess.2:18; Rev.2:10).
 - c. He promotes false teaching among believers (1 John 4:1-4).
 - d. He promotes anger, bitterness and division (Eph.4:26,27; 2 Cor.2:5-11). Note: See the supplement – “Satanic Activity and Spiritual Warfare” for more information on how Satan and his demons work and how we must respond.

The Doctrine of Demons

I. The Existence and Nature of Demons

A. Their Creation – God created demons as part of the angelic realm originally (Col.1:16).

B. Their Fall –

1. The evidence – It is clear that Satan has a following of like beings (“Prince of the demons” – Matt.12:24; the Devil and his angels – Matt.25:41). Demons are described throughout the Scriptures (Dan.10:10-20; Matt.10:1; Eph.6:12).
2. The time – At the fall of Satan, many angels followed him in that rebellion (demons are fallen angels). A third of the angelic host seem to have fallen with Satan (Rev.12:4 – the imagery of Satan as a “dragon” and angels/demons as “stars”).

C. Their Nature –

1. Demons are by nature the same kind of spirit beings as angels. They are personal, intelligent beings.
2. Demons are morally wicked (“unclean spirits” – Matt.10:1; “evil” – Luke 7:21; “wickedness/darkness” – Eph.6:12).
 - a. They are deceitful (1 Tim.4:1-3; 2 Cor.11:13-15).
 - b. They are immoral (Gen.6:4; Jude 6,7).
3. Demons are invisible but also able to appear (Satan – Zech.3:1; Matt.4:9,10; Demons – Rev.9:7-10; 16:13-16).
4. Demons have great intelligence. They knew Christ’s identity and power (Mark 1:14,34; 5:6,7). They know their own future judgment (Matt.8:28,29). They can attempt to predict the future (Acts 16:16). They’re knowledge is not infinite. They learned it through thousands of years of experience and observation.
5. Demons have great strength (Mark 5:3; Acts 19:16; Rev.9:1-11).

II. The Activity of Demons

Demons are involved in carrying out Satan’s evil plans (2 Cor.11:15). What Satan is said to be doing (see above) is their work directly.

A. Demons promote idolatry (Lev.17:7; Deut.32:17; Ps.106:36-38). This activity is blatant in primitive cultures.

B. Demons are active in hindering the spiritual progress of believers every way they can (see Satan’s activities). They are deliberate and organized in these attempts (Eph.6:10-12).

C. Demons promote false teaching (1 Tim.4:1).

D. Demons can possess and afflict people (see supplement).

1. They cause physical ailments (dumbness – Matt.9:32,33; blindness – Matt.12:22; convulsions – Matt.17:15-18; Mark 9:20; self-injury – Mark 5:5; 9:22).
2. They cause mental disorders (withdrawal, nudity, filth, irrational behavior – Luke 8:27-29; suicidal mania – Mark 9:22).
3. They inflict problems upon believers as well, if allowed by God (Job’s troubles – Job 2:7-9; Paul’s “thorn in the flesh: - 2 Cor.17:7).

E. Demons promote selfishness and division in the church (James 3:13-16).

Recommended Reading and References

Fred Dickason, *Angels, Elect and Evil*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1975.

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