

# Lesson 5

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## Angels: Armies of Darkness and Armies of Light

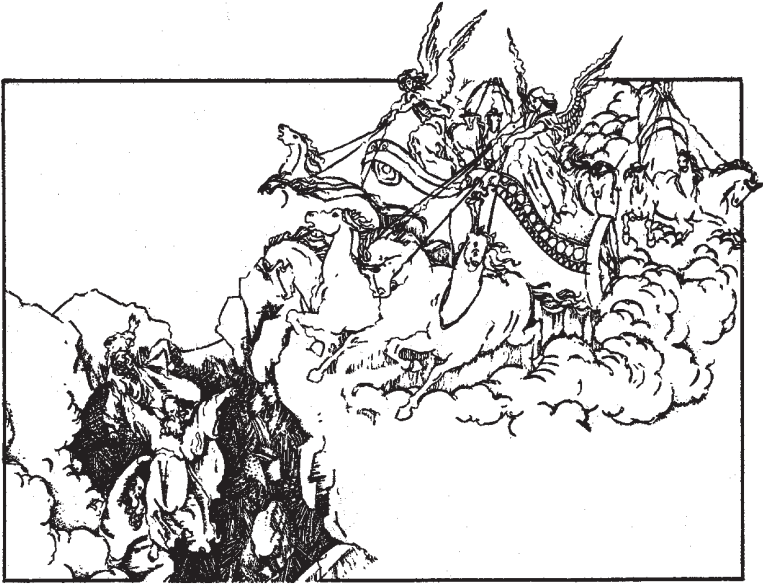
I have been awakened by the Sound of gunfire as troops of opposing armies clashed near my house. My wife and family have sought shelter as bombers flew Overhead. I have seen soldiers take food from innocent civilians. I hate war!

What should a good and wise ruler do when he is attacked by an enemy? If he truly cares for his people and the way of life they hold dear, then he *must* resist the enemy. He knows what will happen if the opposition takes over!

In a sense, this is the situation in the spiritual realm. Satan's diabolical spiritual forces seek to undermine our defenses and to kill us spiritually. We are secure as long as our trust is in God. His greater spiritual forces offer us assistance in resisting our enemy, the devil. Spiritual conflict thus forms the background against which we study angels.

In Unit I we learned about God and His sovereign rule of the universe. Now we turn to the subjects of His divine rule, angels and men, and the problem of sin. In the next three lessons, we shall see not only the cause of sin, but also its far-reaching consequences for all of the subjects of God.

As we study in this lesson about our King and the angelic forces at His disposal, I pray that you will appreciate Him more as you recognize that He is leading a host of redeemed people onward to final victory!



## **lesson outline**

- The Nature of Angels
- The Moral Character of Angels
- The Number of Angels
- The Organization and Activity of Angels

## **lesson objectives**

When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

- Describe the nature, attributes, number, organization, activities, and moral character of angels based on scriptural statements.
- Explain the origin and nature of Satan and his evil angels.
- Give scriptural evidence that the omnipotence of God guarantees the believer's final victory over the forces of evil.
- Appreciate more the help and ministry of angels.

**learning activities**

1. As background for this lesson, read Ephesians 6:10-18, 2 Peter 2:1-22, and the short Epistle of Jude.
2. Study the lesson according to the procedure given in Lesson 1. There are many Scripture references which are important to your understanding of this lesson. Be sure to read them all, and answer all study questions. Then take the self-test as usual.

**key words**

adversary	diabolical	rational
agents	disastrous	realm
assume	glorified	rebellion
celestial	impersonate	subjects
confirmed	intervention	superhuman
destiny	probation	

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**lesson development****THE NATURE OF ANGELS**

The writer to the Hebrews gives this advice: “Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it” (Hebrews 13:2).

In this reference to angels we see something of their nature, for they are extraordinary. Because they are unusual, an air of mystery surrounds them. This fact is illustrated over and over again in both Old and New Testament Scriptures.

We cannot read the Scriptures without observing that they support the existence of angels. What can we learn from the Bible about angels? What is their origin? What are their characteristics? Finding answers to these questions will help us to understand more about the purpose of angels and their

significance in our lives. Let's examine some of the facts the Bible presents regarding the origin (beginning) and characteristics of angels.

## **Their Origin**

**Objective 1.** *Complete and select statements regarding the origin and characteristics of angels.*

*What are angels?* Angels are a finite order or group of created beings who are God's messengers or ministers. They are greater in intelligence and power than man. Some angels serve God's purpose in a positive way through their holiness and by voluntarily carrying out God's will. Other angels, who have rebelled against God, are, as a result, forever separated from Him. This eternal separation from God illustrates clearly the special grace of God toward sinful man, who has been provided with salvation through Christ.

The term *angels* in the original Bible languages actually means *messengers*. Sometimes the word *messenger* refers to people (a priest in Malachi 2:7), or it is used in a figurative sense of impersonal agents (the winds in Psalm 104:4). Because the word is used in different ways, we must consider the context in each case to determine which is the correct meaning. Generally, however, when the Bible speaks of angels it refers to certain spiritual and supernatural beings who are shown to be special messengers of God.

*Where did the angels come from?* The Psalmist says that together with the celestial bodies—the sun, moon, and stars—angels and all the heavenly hosts were created by God (Psalm 148:2-5). John adds a more complete statement of Christ's creative acts: "Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made" (John 1:3). Since Scripture expressly ascribes the existence of everything to the Godhead, we know that angels are created beings. The following Scriptures make this clear to us.

- 1 Complete the following statements.
  - a Colossians 1:16 declares that our Lord Jesus Christ created ..... (Angels are included.)
  - b In 1 Timothy 6:13-16 we read that God alone gives .....  
..... to everything. (Angels are included.)

We don't know exactly when angels were created, for the Bible does not reveal the time. We do know it was before the events recorded in Genesis 3, for it was at this point that Satan, an angelic being, came into focus in relation to mankind. As with all rational (thinking) created beings, angels are given immortality; that is, they will never cease to exist (Luke 20:36).

- 2 From the biblical evidence concerning the origin of angels we can conclude that they are
  - a) immortal beings who have always existed.
  - b) immortal created beings who will never cease to exist.
  - c) mortal beings like man but with superior power and wisdom.
  - d) a race of beings similar to deity.

### **Their Characteristics**

In discussing the origin of angels, we noted one characteristic: they are *created*. A number of other characteristics also come into focus as we examine the Scriptures.

Angels are *spirit beings*. Hebrews 1:14 says, "Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?" Men cannot be described as *spirits*, for they have a twofold nature: material (flesh) and immaterial (spirit). Since angels are *spirits*, we cannot regard them as having physical bodies. This is the implication of Ephesians 6:12: "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against . . . the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." This verse refers to evil angels who do the work of Satan.

Scriptures do indicate that angels have often revealed themselves in a human form (Judges 6:11-24; John 20:12), but these *unusual* appearances do not mean that they have material bodies as part of their necessary existence. Rather, they *assume*

material bodies on occasion as a means for them to communicate with human beings. Since they do not have physical bodies as part of their necessary existence, angels know nothing of growth, age, or death.

Angels are *personal beings*. They exhibit the basic aspects of personality: intellect, emotions, and will. Some insight into the *intellectual* ability of angels as viewed by people in the Old Testament is given in 2 Samuel 14:20. Luke 4:34 reveals that even evil angels possess a range of *knowledge* superior to that of man. Revelation 12:12 gives us an indication of an evil angel's capacity to express *emotion* (fury or anger). Jesus speaks of the very positive expression of feelings by holy angels (joy) in Luke 15:10. Paul refers to the capacity of the devil to trap people so that they will do his *will* (2 Timothy 2:26). These are but a few examples of many Scriptures which refer to the personal nature of angels.

Angels are *sexless*. They are not classified according to sex, although some have been given masculine names (Gabriel and Michael). The Bible says that angels neither marry nor are they given in marriage (Matthew 22:30). Since angels do not reproduce themselves, we describe them correctly as a company and not a *race*. You may have noticed that while the Scriptures refer to angels in the Old Testament as *sons of God*, never is there mention of *sons of angels* (see Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7).

As we have already noted, angels possess superhuman intelligence. Jesus' statement implies that their wisdom is extensive: "No one knows about that day or hour, *not even* the angels in heaven" (Matthew 24:36). Yet their knowledge, while superhuman, is limited. Peter, in speaking of the glories which are to come, said, "Even angels long to look into these things" (1 Peter 1:12).

A close examination of the characteristics of angels leads us to the conclusion that it is their *power* which is emphasized more than any other characteristic. Peter observes that angels are more powerful than men (2 Peter 2:11). The Psalmist refers to angels as the "mighty ones who do his (the Lord's) bidding, who obey his word" (Psalm 103:20). Paul refers to them as "his powerful angels" (2 Thessalonians 1:7).

In the case of evil angels (which we will consider later), once again *power is* the characteristic which is emphasized: “prince of this world” (John 12:31), “strong man” (Luke 11:21), “the power of darkness” (Luke 22:53, KJV), “powers of this dark world” (Ephesians 6:12), “all the power of the enemy” (Luke 10:19). When Satan was tempting Jesus, he showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world, and said, “I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to” (Luke 4:6).

However, even though their wisdom and power are superhuman, *these characteristics of angels are limited*. It will take only one angel to bind Satan and cast him into the bottomless pit at the end of this age (Revelation 20:2-3). But before this period of confinement, Satan and his angels will fight against Michael, the archangel, and his angels. Satan will lose the war in the heavenlies and will be cast out (Revelation 12:7-9). According to Daniel 10, good and evil angels are in conflict concerning the affairs of people and nations. Neither Michael, the archangel (Jude 9), nor Satan (Job 1-2), has unlimited power.

Another evidence of the limitation of angels is seen in the fact that *they are not omnipresent*. Satan responded to God’s question concerning his activity, saying that he had been “. . . Roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it” (Job 1:7; 1 Peter 5:8). Angels of the Lord report that they “have gone throughout the earth” (Zechariah 1:11). These movements from place to place involve time and, occasionally, delays (Daniel 10:5, 12-14). This limitation accounts for the fact that spiritual battles in which God’s people are engaged often continue for extended periods of time.

Finally, we must understand that *angels are not glorified men*. The Bible distinguishes between the “thousands upon thousands of angels” and the “spirits of righteous men made perfect” in the heavenly Jerusalem (Hebrews 12:22-23). This distinction is seen also in Hebrews 2:16: “For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham’s descendants.”

In fact, man is for awhile “a little lower than the angels” (Psalm 8:4-5), but in the future man shall be higher (Hebrews 2:7). Paul says, “Do you not know that we will judge angels”

(1 Corinthians 6:3). In this act of judgment, then, we understand that those who are inferior, or of lesser importance, do not judge those who are superior.

**3** State three ways in which the characteristics of angels are limited .....

**4** Match the characteristics of angels (right) with the appropriate descriptions (left).

- |  |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| .... <b>a</b> Do not reproduce themselves or increase their number | 1) Created           |
| .... <b>b</b> May be in only one place at a time                   | 2) Spirit            |
| .... <b>c</b> Able to fulfill the will and purpose of their leader | 3) Personal          |
| .... <b>d</b> Have knowledge of the affairs of man                 | 4) Sexless           |
| .... <b>e</b> Have no bodily existence                             | 5) Intelligent       |
| .... <b>f</b> Brought into existence at a certain point in time    | 6) Powerful          |
| .... <b>g</b> Clearly distinguished in Scripture from human beings | 7) Not omnipresent   |
| .... <b>h</b> Have intellect, emotions, and will                   | 8) Not glorified men |

**THE MORAL CHARACTER OF ANGELS**

**Angels Were Created Holy**

**Objective 2.** *Choose true statements concerning the moral character of angels using Scripture as the basis.*

In previous pages we have referred both to holy angels and evil angels. Our study in this section will reveal that all angels were created holy, but some fell from their holy state, and the results of their fall have far-reaching consequences for the universe.

The Bible says very little about the original state of angels. However, we read that at the end of His creative activity, “God saw all that he had made, and it was very good” (Genesis 1:31).



Certainly this includes the perfection of angels in holiness when they were created. Yet Scripture does speak of their tragic fall. Let us consider the capability of angels for right and wrong action and their ability to recognize and conform to a standard of right conduct.

- 5** Read each Scripture reference and complete the statement.
- a** John 8:44. One of the sins which caused the devil’s fall was .....
- b** 2 Peter 2:4. God did not spare angels when they .....
- c** Jude, verse 6. Some angels did not keep their .....  
Instead, they .....
- d** 1 Timothy 3:6. One of the main causes of the devil’s fall was his sin of .....

**Angels Made a Choice**

As we have seen, all angels were created perfect. At first their affection or love was directed to their Creator, and they were inclined to do His will. While the Bible does not give us details, we believe that at this stage they had the ability either *to sin or not to sin*. Apparently they were conscious of their position and of their relationship to their Creator. They must have known, also, that their obedience or disobedience would determine their future destiny.

While the angels had the power of choice either to sin or not to sin, they were not *forced* to obey God and keep their position. Their choice was entirely voluntary. Unfortunately, we do not have the details of the events which surrounded the tragedy when part of the angelic company fell. However, Paul, by divine inspiration, implies that the devil’s failure came about because of his conceit (excessive pride) (1 Timothy 3:6).

Several portions of Scripture which refer primarily to earthly kings seem also to symbolize Satan. For example, in Ezekiel 28:12-19, the king of Tyre is said to have fallen because of

excessive pride in his beauty. This pride destroyed his ability to conduct himself in a right way or to exercise sound judgment.

The king of Babylon also was doomed to destruction because of excessive pride and ambition, according to Isaiah 14:12-15. Whether or not these examples refer symbolically to the fall of Satan, we do know that some of the angelic host, by an act of their own will, chose to leave their positions of authority and their own home (Jude 6).

It appears that the same attitude which caused the devil to sin also infected a large number of angels. Revelation 12:4 may refer to this occasion when one-third of the angels followed Satan in his rebellion against God. Regardless, we know that Satan was a spiritual master of deception (John 8:44). For Satan and all other angels who rebelled, it was a choice for self and its interests, rather than the choice for God and His interests. The result was disastrous, and judgment followed: “God did not spare the angels when they sinned” (2 Peter 2:4).

Salvation, which was planned to provide for the spiritual needs of man, is not available to the angels who fell. Unholy angels continue to exist in the realm of the “evil one” (Matthew 6:13, 13:9; 1 John 5:18-19). Their continued existence, which we shall discuss in the next section, is a constant warning to us of the danger of rejecting God or of neglecting the offer of grace which He extends to us.

Some angels sinned, were judged, and became part of “the devil’s angels” (Matthew 25:41). Others did not sin; they remained with the Father as His *holy angels* (Mark 8:38). Scripture does not indicate any further angelic rebellion and judgment. Thus, angels appear to be confirmed in their decisions; that is, those who chose to do the Father’s will are now forever holy, and those who chose their own interests are now forever evil.

*Holy* angels are those who have chosen to maintain their relationship to God, behold the Father in heaven (Matthew 18:10), and carry out His will (Matthew 6:10). They are regarded as angels of light (whom Satan tries to impersonate or represent—2 Corinthians 11:14).

**6** Choose whether these statements are *clearly supported*, *implied* by context or symbolic language, or *not supported at all* by Scripture.

- |   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| .... <b>a</b> The devil fell because of His conceit or excessive pride                                | 1) Clearly supported    |
| .... <b>b</b> Angels were created perfect.  | 2) Implied              |
| .... <b>c</b> One-third of the angels chose to follow Satan.  | 3) Not supported at all |
| .... <b>d</b> All fallen angels will have a chance to repent.   |                         |
| .... <b>e</b> All angels made a voluntary choice either to sin or not to sin.                         |                         |
| .... <b>f</b> God pronounced immediate judgment upon the angels who sinned.                           |                         |
| .... <b>g</b> All angels are confirmed in the decision they made either to sin or not to sin.         |                         |
| .... <b>h</b> Satan is considered an angel of light.  |                         |
| .... <b>i</b> Just as holy angels carry out the will of God, evil angels carry out the will of Satan. |                         |
| .... <b>j</b> From the moment he was created, Satan was evil.   |                         |

## THE NUMBER OF ANGELS

**Objective 3.** *Choose a statement which best summarizes biblical teaching concerning the number of angels.*

Before we look more closely at the organization and activity of both holy and unholy angels, let's find what the Bible says about how many angels there are. While Scripture does not give us a precise number of angels which exist, we know that they make up a great multitude or great number. We find these biblical references to great numbers of angels:

1. When Elisha the prophet and his servant were surrounded in the city of Dothan by a powerful Aramean army, God sent an even greater host of angels to protect His servants (2 Kings 6:14-17).

2. According to the Psalmist, “The chariots of God are tens of thousands and thousands of thousands” (Psalm 68:17).

3. In blessing Israel, Moses referred to the Lord who came with “myriads [too many to count] of holy ones” (Deuteronomy 33:2).

4. In prophetic preview, Daniel saw the Ancient of Days (God) taking the throne of judgment. Daniel describes the occasion: “Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him” (Daniel 7:10).

5. The writer to the Hebrews reminds his readers of the glorious privilege of coming to the living God, in whose presence is a joyful assembly of “thousands upon thousands of angels” (Hebrews 12:22).

6. Finally, when God gave John the beloved disciple a majestic preview of His heavenly court, John reported: “Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne” (Revelation 5:11).

From this evidence, we see that the number of angelic hosts, or holy angels, is great indeed. In addition to these, we know that Satan’s legions of evil angels also exist and that their number is great (Revelation 12:7-12).

**7** The Bible teaches what about the number of angels?

- a) Many more angels fell than remained loyal to God.
- b) Innumerable multitudes of angels, good and evil, exist.
- c) Many angels serve God; a few bad ones serve Satan.
- d) The angelic multitude is decreasing in number.

## THE ORGANIZATION AND ACTIVITY OF ANGELS

### Evidences of Organization

**Objective 4.** *Select statements which describe evidence of organized activity of holy angels.*

There are many scriptural evidences that there is an effective organization of spiritual forces to carry out specific tasks assigned to them. Some of these Scriptures are:

1. 1 Kings 22:19. The prophet Micaiah reveals something of the organization of angels: "I saw the Lord sitting on his throne with all the host of heaven standing around him on his right hand and on his left." God is enthroned with all the host (angels) of heaven around him.

2. Matthew 26:53. Jesus spoke these words to Peter: "Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?" This suggests something similar to the organization of the Roman army. It also suggests that angels are always on the alert, ready to do the bidding of the heavenly Father.

3. Luke 2:8-14. The angelic messenger who appeared to the shepherds and announced the birth of Jesus was joined suddenly by "a great company of the heavenly host." Together the special messenger and the special angelic choir raised an anthem of praise to God. The individual angel and the choir obviously responded to the will of the Father and carried out their respective assignments.

4. Revelation 19:10-14. John's vision of a triumphant army of angels at the coming of the Lord also reveals precision, order, organization, authority, and purpose: "The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean."

You may have noticed that the Scriptures cited concern the organization of holy angels. Later in the lesson, we'll see that the forces of evil are organized also. Moreover, they are organized to oppose God.

### *Organized Activity of Holy Angels*

Since we are dealing with two distinct groups of angels, the holy and the unholy or evil, we shall first examine the work of holy angels. As we discover the work they do, we shall understand more about how they are organized to do this work.

*Angels worship God.* Among the pictures of holy angels revealed in Scripture are those of angels standing in the presence of God, worshipping Him (Psalm 103:20; 148:2; Isaiah 6:1-7). They lift their voices in mighty anthems of praise, because He is worthy of the praise of His creatures. They worship God for what He is, what He has provided, and for the means He has used in accomplishing redemption. (Compare Revelation 5:9-12 with 5:13-14.)

Holy angels rejoice in the mighty creative acts of God in nature (Job 38:7) and in the beautiful miracle He works as He transforms sinners and brings them into His family (Luke 15:10). Heaven is unveiled as a glorious temple in which the angels appear as the *heavenly congregation*. There they worship and praise God, in whose presence they remain (Matthew 18:10).

*Angels are ministering spirits.* Not only do angels worship God and rejoice in His being and works, but they also carry out His will (Psalm 103:20). As ministering spirits, angels are sent to serve those who will inherit salvation (Hebrews 1:14). Notice how this angelic service was provided in both Old and New Testament times:

1. Paul, as a prisoner in very dangerous circumstances, was *encouraged* by an angel (Acts 27:23-24).
2. Philip was *directed in ministry* by an angel (Acts 8:26).
3. Cornelius was *assisted* in his search for a more satisfying place in God by an angel (Acts 10:3-7).
4. Peter was miraculously *delivered* by an angel (Acts 12:7-10).
5. Jesus, on at least two recorded occasions, was *strengthened* by angels (Matthew 4:11; Luke 22:43).
6. Elisha was *protected* from a powerful Syrian army by a host of holy angels (2 Kings 6:8-23).

7. David acknowledged, after his escape from Abimelech (1 Samuel 21:10–22:1) that he had been *protected and delivered* by angels (see Psalm 34:7).

*Angels are agents of judgment.* In carrying out God’s will, angels have also been agents of judgment, punishing God’s enemies. One example of this is found in 2 Kings 19:35: “That night the angel of the Lord went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the Assyrian camp.” Also, in Acts 12:23 we read: “Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died.”

Many other Scriptures refer to the work of angels as agents of God’s Providence, agents of His judgment both past and in the future, and as special forces accompanying the Lord at His coming.

- 8** Holy angels are involved in which of these activities? They:
- a) worship and praise God and do His will.
  - b) serve the redeemed of the earth as ministering spirits.
  - c) convict men of sin and lead them to repentance.
  - d) protect, deliver, direct, encourage, and strengthen God’s people.
  - e) act as agents of judgment, punishing God’s enemies.

*Angels appear to have influence in the affairs of nations.* Daniel 10:13 and 20 reveals that evil princedoms exist over nations and that they are opposed by holy angels. From these references and from Daniel 10:21–11:1 we conclude that angels do appear to be entrusted with the affairs of nations. By comparing these references in Daniel with Ephesians 1:21; 6:12; and Colossians 1:16; 2:15, we see that spiritual battles go on at all times in the heavenly realms. These battles are staged by the forces of evil to entrap the minds and affections of men and women—in effect, their eternal souls.

On occasion, it appears that the conflict is so intense that the *archangel* himself is engaged in it. *Michael*, who is called the

archangel in Jude 9, is the *leader* of the holy angels. He is also referred to as the prince of the nation of Israel, and his task appears to include protecting and prospering the nation (Daniel 10:13, 21; 12:1). He will raise his voice in exaltation as the events of the Lord's coming begin to take place (1 Thessalonians 4:16).

Only two angels are mentioned by name in the Scriptures: *Michael*, the archangel, and *Gabriel*, who is revealed as a special messenger (Daniel 8:16; 9:21; Luke 1:19, 26). Many other unnamed messenger angels also serve the Lord in this capacity.

*The Bible gives limited evidence concerning other orders of holy angels:*

1. *Cherubim* (Genesis 3:24; 2 Kings 19:15; Ezekiel 10:1-22; 28:14-16). Cherubim are guardians of the throne of God. They also guarded the entrance to the Garden of Eden.
2. *Seraphim* (Isaiah 6:2, 6). Seraphim appear to be leaders in the worship of God. Their primary concern is the holiness and purification of the redeemed for acceptable worship and service.
3. *Watchmen* (Daniel 4:13, 17). They are apparently assigned to observe specific activities. They are faithful in their duties and are seen in this context bringing God's message to man.
4. *Living creatures* (Revelation 4:6-9; 6:1-7; 15:7). These angelic beings appear to be different from seraphim, cherubim, and ordinary angels. They appear to worship God, to direct His judgment, and to be active about His throne.

All in all, this body of holy angels serves God effectively and is ever ready to carry out His purposes for His people.



**9** Match each name or classification (right) with its description (left).

- |  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| .... <b>a</b> Special messengers who are assigned to observe specific activities                             | 1) Michael          |
| .... <b>b</b> A special angelic messenger  | 2) Gabriel          |
| .... <b>c</b> Angels who are guardians of God's throne   | 3) Holy angels      |
| .... <b>d</b> Those who are busy about God's throne and who direct some judgments                            | 4) Cherubim         |
| .... <b>e</b> General company of those who behold God's face, worship Him, and stand ready to do His bidding | 5) Seraphim         |
| .... <b>f</b> Angelic beings concerned especially with holiness in God's presence and acceptable worship     | 6) Watchmen         |
| .... <b>g</b> The special prince of the nation of Israel   | 7) Living creatures |

### Scope of Holy Angelic Activity

Before leaving the subject of the activities of holy angels, we should mention several conclusions we draw from Scripture concerning the *scope* or *extent* of their activities.

First, holy angels are ministers of God's special providence in the affairs of His people and the church. Hebrews 1:7 states: "He makes his angels winds, his servants flames of fire" (see also Psalm 104:4). In other words, God uses angels as His messengers not in His ordinary operation, but in special displays of power related to His law (Deuteronomy 33:2; Acts 7:53; Galatians 3:19; and Hebrews 2:2). The *intervention* or involvement of angels in the normal course of human affairs appears to be occasional and exceptional. Angels do not

intervene by their own decision, but only as commanded by God. They do not come between God and His people.

Second, the power of angels, which is dependent upon and comes from God, appears to be employed in accordance with the laws of the spiritual and natural world. Unlike God, angels cannot create, act without another's authority (God's), search the heart, or change the laws of nature. They cannot influence the human mind directly, for this is the work of the Holy Spirit. Angels, plainly, work within limits.

Third, Scriptures indicate that angelic appearances generally precede and accompany important new turning points in the unfolding of God's plan. For example, we see angelic activity at the time of these events:

- At creation (Job 38:7)
- When the Law was given (Galatians 3:19)
- Just before and at the birth of Christ (Luke 1:11, 26; 2:13)
- During Jesus' temptation in the wilderness and in Gethsemane (Matthew 4:11; Luke 22:43)
- At the resurrection (Matthew 28:2)
- At the ascension (Acts 1:10-11)
- During the end-time activities before the second coming of Christ (see many references to the activity of angels in the book of Revelation and Matthew 25:31)

**10** Circle the letter preceding each completion that describes an activity of holy angels. They

- a** intervene between God and His people.
- b** are special ministers of God's providence.
- c** displayed special power when the Law was given.
- d** were present at Creation.
- e** are instrumental in influencing man's mind.
- f** are responsible for directly tempting man.
- g** are involved especially in important turning points in God's plan of salvation.
- h** overrule laws of the spiritual and natural world.

## Organized Activity of Unholy Angels

**Objective 5.** *Choose correct statements concerning the activity and fate of unholy angels and their leader.*

Just as the Bible indicates that God has His throne and attendants, so does it reveal that in the realm of spiritual darkness the devil has his organization. Someone has wryly observed that Satan is the “ape” (or “mimic”) of God. Satan has a throne (Revelation 2:13). He is referred to in Scripture as “the prince of this world” (John 14:30; 16:11) and “the ruler of the kingdom of the air” (Ephesians 2:2). He is the head of an evil organization. The Bible says that he has his angels (Matthew 25:41) and that they oppose God (Revelation 12:7-9).

Further evidences of this evil organization are referred to in Paul’s epistles. In Colossians 1:16 he refers to “thrones or powers or rulers or authorities” Ephesians 6:12 tells of “rulers. . . authorities. . . powers of this dark world. . . the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” These are the same “powers and authorities” which Christ overruled through the cross (Colossians 2:15). In each of these references we see evidence of organization by rank based on levels of authority. This evil organization is set in rebellion against the Lord Jesus Christ, and these various elements of satanic power stand in opposition to God and His people. We learn much about unholy angels by examining their leader.

### *Their Leader*

Unholy angels oppose God and try to defeat His will. We see evidence of this in the names given to their leader:

1. He is called *Satan*, which means *adversary* or *opponent*. He is primarily the adversary of *God*. He is also the adversary of *man* (Zechariah 3:1; Matthew 13:39; 1 Peter 5:8).

2. He is called the *devil*, which means *slanderer* (one who makes false charges against someone). He accuses God to man (Genesis 3:1-4) and man to God (Job 1:9, 16; Revelation 12:10).

3. Since he *entices* (tempts) man to sin, he is called the *tempter*. His method is to present the most logical excuses for sin, as well as the supposedly great advantages to be gained by it (Matthew 4:3; 1 Thessalonians 3:5).

Since he is limited and is not all-powerful, all-knowing, or everywhere-present, the devil uses different means to oppose God. Obviously, he can't attack God directly; therefore, he attacks man, the crown of God's creation, in various ways:

- He lies (John 8:44; 2 Corinthians 11:3)
- He tempts (Matthew 4:1)
- He steals (Matthew 13:19)
- He torments (2 Corinthians 12:7)
- He hinders (1 Thessalonians 2:18)
- He sifts (separates, screens) (Luke 22:31)
- He impersonates (pretends to be something he is not) in order to deceive (2 Corinthians 11:14)
- He accuses (Revelation 12:10)
- He afflicts with disease (Luke 13:16)
- He possesses (John 13:27)
- He kills and devours (John 8:44; 1 Peter 5:8)

Satan, as we have seen, controls many other evil angels, who may have joined with him at the time that he rebelled against God. It appears that he was permitted to keep the authority he was given at his creation. The unholy angels, who chose to follow him instead of keeping their positions of authority and God-given home (Jude 6), and remaining faithful to their Creator, are confirmed in their rebellion. They have given full devotion to their leader who deceived them, and they willingly lend their services to help him achieve his wicked purposes.

**11** Match the term or name (right) with its description (left).

- |        |   |               |
|--------|---|---------------|
| .... a | The object of the devil's attacks; his way of getting back at God | 1) Satan      |
| .... b | One of the devil's coworkers in the battle directed against God   | 2) Devil      |
| .... c | Gives the idea of <i>adversary</i> , or one who opposes           | 3) Tempter    |
| .... d | Name applied to one who entices another to sin                    | 4) Man        |
| .... e | Name applied to one who slanders another                          | 5) Evil angel |

*Their Activity*

Unholy angels oppose God, His people, and His program as a militant (fighting) part of Satan's kingdom of darkness (Matthew 25:41; Ephesians 6:12; Revelation 12:7-12). Some attempt has been made to distinguish between unholy angelic spirits and demons; however, there is no evidence that they are not one and the same thing.

Angels try to separate the people of God from Him (Romans 8:38). They oppose holy angels (Daniel 10:12–11:1), afflict people with physical and mental illness (Matthew 9:33; 12:22; Mark 5:1-16; Luke 9:37-42), spread false doctrine (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12; 1 Timothy 4:1), and possess people and even animals (Matthew 4:24; Mark 5:8-14; Luke 8:2; Acts 8:7; 16:16).

Occasionally God uses unholy angels, in spite of themselves, to accomplish His purposes of punishing the ungodly (Psalm 78:49; 1 Kings 22:23) and of chastening or disciplining the good (Job 1 and 2; 1 Corinthians 5:5).

*Their fate*

Unholy angels serve to illustrate what will happen to those who are morally evil. The following Scriptural evidence describes their fate:

- Demons who had possessed two men shouted at Jesus, “Have you come to torture us before the appointed time?” (Matthew 8:29).
- Jesus spoke of “Eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41).
- Paul tells us, “The lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow . . . and destroy by the splendor of his coming” (2 Thessalonians 2:8).
- James says, “The demons believe . . . and shudder” (James 2:19).
- John says, “The devil has gone down to you . . . ! He is filled with fury, because . . . this time is short” (Revelation 12:12).
- John says finally, “They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Revelation 20:10).

**12** Read the Scriptures and complete the statements.

- a** 2 Peter 2:4. God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to ..... putting them into ..... to be held for .....
- b** Jude 6. Angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home are ..... bound with everlasting chains for .....
- c** Psalm 78:49. To carry out His judgment, God used a band of .....
- d** Matthew 8:16; Mark 9:25-26. Evil spirits ..... people.
- e** Luke 13:10-16. Evil spirits can .....
- f** Revelation 12:7- 12; Ephesians 6:12. The place of activity for Satan and the unholy angels is both .....

From our study of the activity and fate of evil angels we can draw some important conclusions:

1. We must not be misled concerning the devil’s method, and permit him to outwit us (2 Corinthians 2:11). We must not allow him to gain a foothold in our lives (Ephesians 4:27). Rather, we should be prepared to resist him, using the full armor of God (James 4:7; Ephesians 6:10-18).

2. We should not speak lightly of the devil (Jude 8,9) nor underestimate the degree to which he is committed to destroy the believer’s spiritual life. On the other hand, we should never forget that Jesus defeated Satan at the cross (Hebrews 2:14) and that we live by faith on the basis of that victory!

3. The power of Satan and his unholy angels is limited in time and extent by the permissive will of God. They are *not* all-powerful, all-knowing, or everywhere-present.

4. We must not attribute disease and natural disasters to the devil and his angels unless this is specifically revealed. Their power for evil is real but limited.

5. Although they are opposed to God, He compels them to serve His purposes. While God uses their evil intent to accomplish His purposes, He *will* at the appointed time carry out His judgment and punishment upon them.

6. The power of evil spirits over man is not independent of the human will. Wicked spirits cannot exercise their power without at least initial consent of the human will. This means that the believer can resist their power through prayer and faith in God! We have this sure promise from God's Word: "You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them [evil spirits], because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

**13** Circle the letter preceding each **TRUE** statement.

- a** We see evidence of Satan's purpose in the names given to him.
- b** Because he can't attack God directly, the devil attacks man to get back at God.
- c** The devil was created to be the leader of the evil angels that rebelled against God.
- d** Unholy angels were created evil by the act of God.
- e** Evil angels are unlimited and can therefore work against anyone at any time.
- f** God may use evil angels, in spite of themselves, in His purpose to punish the ungodly or chasten good people.
- g** Some evil angels are bound until their judgment, while others are free to carry out the will of the devil.
- h** Satan and his evil angels are limited in time and extent by the permissive will of God.
- i** The believer is fully equipped to resist the devil and his forces and is commanded to do so, according to Scripture.
- j** The devil can't possess believers against their will.

**self-test**

TRUE-FALSE. Place an **F** in front of the statements that are false and **T** in front of the statements that are true.

- . . . . **1** Angels are created, spiritual beings.
- . . . . **2** All angels were created holy.
- . . . . **3** Angels can be called either a company or a race.
- . . . . **4** The angelic host shows evidence of organization which seems to be based on its tasks or assignments.
- . . . . **5** The angels who left their positions of authority and abandoned their own home did this by their own choice.
- . . . . **6** Angels have personality and superhuman intelligence and power.
- . . . . **7** Most angels are omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent.
- . . . . **8** The Bible implies that Satan's fall was a result of his conceit or pride.
- . . . . **9** Evidence is given to support the existence of an archangel, cherubim, seraphim, and many angels who have no special title.
- . . . . **10** Satan's power is limited in time and extent by the permissive will of God.
- . . . . **11** The Bible implies that at least half of the angels made the choice to follow Satan and therefore fell with him.
- . . . . **12** The devil can tempt us to fall, but he cannot make us fall.
- . . . . **13** People can be possessed by a demon against their will even if they resist him.
- . . . . **14** The Bible reveals that there is such a great multitude of angels that they make up an innumerable host.



... **15** The term *angels* means “messengers” and describes a major task of angels.

**answers to study questions**

- 7** b) innumerable multitudes of angels, good and evil, exist.
- 1** a) all things, visible, invisible.  
b) life.
- 8** a), b), d), and e) are activities of holy angels.
- 2** b) immortal created beings who will never cease to exist.
- 9** a) 6) Watchmen.  
b) 2) Gabriel.  
c) 4) Cherubim.  
d) 7) Living creatures.  
e) 3) Holy angels.  
f) 5) Seraphim.  
g) 1) Michael.
- 3** They are not all-knowing, all-powerful, and everywhere-present.
- 10** b), c), d), and g) are activities of holy angels.
- 4** a) 4) Sexless.  
b) 7) Not omnipresent.  
c) 6) Powerful.  
d) 5) Intelligent.  
e) 2) Spirit.  
f) 1) Created.  
g) 8) Not glorified men.  
h) 3) Personal.
- 11** a) 4) Man.  
b) 5) Evil angel.  
c) 1) Satan.  
d) 3) Tempter.  
e) 2) Devil.
- 5** a) not holding to the truth.

- b** sinned.
  - c** positions of authority; abandoned their own home.
  - d** conceit (that is, excessive pride).
- 12 a** hell, gloomy dungeons, judgment.
- b** kept in darkness; judgment.
  - c** destroying angels.
  - d** possess people.
  - e** cripple people.
  - f** heavenly realms and earth.
- 6 a** 2) Implied.
- b** 1) Clearly supported.
  - c** 2) Implied.
  - d** 3) Not supported at all.
  - e** 2) Implied.
  - f** 1) Clearly supported.
  - g** 1) Clearly supported.
  - h** 3) Not supported at all.
  - i** 1) Clearly supported.
  - j** 3) Not supported at all.
- 13** c), d), and e) are false. The remainder are true.