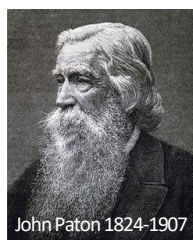


Introduction When we think of things that have life, we consider humans, animals and God himself, but there is another category, usually unseen, spiritual beings. They are angels and demons. The existence of such beings is dismissed in modern secular thought, but the Bible is clear they exist. In fact, angels are mentioned more in the NT than either 'sin' or 'love', both key concepts. They are mentioned from Genesis to Revelation. They live in the invisible supernatural world. Some have called angels 'God's secret agents', who conduct missions, God's SAS!

These beings have not always existed, they were created at some point. Nehemiah 9:6, Psalm 148: 2,5. They were created sometime before the creation of the Earth. Genesis 2:1, Exodus 20:11

Angels overview The English word simply means 'messenger'. Hebrews says they are ministering spirits Hebrews 1:14. Angels today are a popular idea. An Ipsos poll found 46% of Brits believed in angels. Angel merchandise is a big seller, from ornaments to costumes. People who even reject the Christian message, embrace the idea of angels. In reality they are powerful beings, working on



John Paton 1824-1907

our behalf Hebrews 1:14. You may even have met one Hebrews 13:2. The missionary John Paton, serving God in the New Hebrides in the Pacific Ocean, tells of remarkable protection from angels. So, they can take on a human form, and in the Bible that is always masculine, although modern portrayal is always feminine. The idea of angels as women or infants ("Ah the little cherub") being angelic grew out of Greek or Roman mythology. People do not become angels when they die, they are separate and distinct from us.

Questions

Why is the idea of angels, so popular?

What are angels? *"Angels are created, spiritual beings with moral judgement and high intelligence, but without physical bodies"* - Wayne Gruden. The work of angels is unseen by ourselves, but can be seen when required. 2 Kings 6:16-22. They can appear in the most glorious form. John who received the vision in Revelation was so overcome with the angels splendour he began to worship the angel but was corrected. Revelation 19:9-10. They have great power Psalm 103:20. Although angels always appear in the Bible in masculine form we know nothing on their actual gender, but we know they do not marry. Matthew 20:30. Angels are not omnipresent, so are restricted to being at one place at a time.

What do angels do? To serve God, and conduct his business.

1. They praise and worship God. Isaiah 6:3,
2. They can bring answers to prayer. Acts 12:5-10
3. They can bring judgement. Isaiah 37:36, Matthew 16:27
4. Angels give strength and support. Luke 22:43
5. Give messages and direction. Acts 8:26



The Bible says angels can protect us, but does not say, we each have a specific 'Guardian Angel'.

Types of angels Daniel 7:10 tells us there are a huge number of angels, but they are not all the same. Some angels have more power than others. So there is ranking among the angels. There are different types of angels with unique roles: cherubim (Cherubs were given the task of guarding Eden Genesis 3:24), and seraphim (Seraphs worshipped Isaiah 6:2-7), for example. In the Bible, there are named archangels, Michael the archangel is listed as being the chief of angels. The other named angel in Scripture, Gabriel, was tasked with delivering important messages to Daniel, Zechariah, and Mary. Daniel 8:15-26, Luke 1:11-17, 2:26-32

The Devil was once a high ranking angel (Lucifer) that rebelled against God Ezekiel 28, Isaiah 14:11-23 Luke 10:18 We would love more information, but God has revealed all we need to know. He is not equal to God, he is not all powerful, all knowing. He can disguise himself as good, an angel of light. 2 Corinthians 11:13-15. The Devil (Satan) is the father of lies John 8:44.

Demons are angels that have fallen from God, led by Lucifer. Jude 6, Matthew 24:41 They try and hinder the work of God. 1 Thessalonians 2:18. We are in a spiritual battle. Ephesians 6:12 There are some named demons/spirits e.g. Jezebel Many suggest that a third of the angels became demons with Satan based on Revelation 12:3-9

Knowing how the Devil and his demons operate. 2 Corinthians 2 v11

1. Blinds minds of unbelievers. 2 Corinthians 4 v4
2. Temptation through our thought process, using our weak areas e.g. pride, sex, love of money, fears. 2 Cor 11 v 3
The first temptation of man and of Jesus was unbelief, to doubt God's word. The Devil will go from tempter to accuser, so guilt will leave us inactive. The Devil condemns, while the Spirit convicts.
3. Getting at us when we're tired, weak and at a low point e.g. Jesus tempted in wilderness.
4. Getting us to believe lies John 8 v 44 Garden of Eden He loves false teaching/prophecy 1 John 4 v1-4
5. Obstacles in our way 1 Thessalonians 2 v18
6. The Devil does misuse scripture Matthew 4 He hates God's Word and will try and pluck it from our heart Mark 4 v1-9 and v15
7. The Devil hates an active Church, and tries to split churches, create discontent, especially against the leadership Numbers 16 v1-7 Acts 6 v 1
8. The Devil can do 'signs and wonders' 2 Thess 2 v9 Exodus 7 v11 There are counterfeit version of the 'Gifts'.
9. The Devil can cause illness and disease Acts 10 v 38 But not all illness comes directly from him
10. He can masquerade as light 2 Corinthians 11 v13-15, Matthew 7 v15, Acts 20 v30
11. Above all — To rob God of his rightful place in our lives, to fool us into thinking we can manage without him, and we are equal with God.

Questions

How do you stand firm against the Devil's attacks?

Possession and oppression

Possession refers to when a demon/s can control a person and what they do, from inside a person. e.g. Luke 8 v30 Mark 1 v23 A Christian cannot be possessed by a demon.

Oppression refers to when the Devil exercises control/influence from outside a person e.g. 2 Timothy 2 v26 uses word captive Acts 10 v38. Typically when an area of weakness gives a 'foothold' to the enemy, so .e.g. Act 5 v3

Warnings

Christians need to stay away from things that allow the demonic sphere gain a foothold in trying to get us to sin and fall under their influence. Keep well away from astrology, seances, ghost hunting etc, even films in this area. The evil realm has the ability to do supernatural things, that would deceive people into believing they are not really demonic.



What should our understanding of the unseen realm mean to us?

1. Don't be unduly obsessed with the unseen spiritual realm, keep our eyes on God he alone is above all.

"There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them." — C. S. Lewis

2. Remember that evil and demonic activity is real, and pray for protection. Matthew 6:13, Luke 22:31-32
3. Remember God will be victorious, but until the final end, we are in a spiritual battle right now.

Questions

Questions and comments

Next time - Five controversial issues