



THE SPIRIT WORLD

Facts and Fallacies

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P.O. Box 3490 • McKinney, TX 75070-8189
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New King James Version

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INTRODUCTION

Do spirit beings exist? If they do, where did they come from? Did they evolve, as many people think physical life-forms evolved? Or were they created?

What do you believe about spirit beings? There are countless theories and beliefs, and they can't all be right. How can we know what the truth is?

There is one—and only one—absolute, 100 percent reliable source that reveals the truth about spirit beings. That source is the Bible—the written revelation of the Creator of the universe.

Here's what the Bible tells us about the spirit world:

All spirit beings that exist were created by God the Father and Jesus Christ. These two infinitely powerful beings are also spirit, but They have lived eternally and were not created. In the spirit realm, They created angels—sentient beings with individual freedom of choice and with greater might than humans.

One of those angels chose to pursue an alternate way of life and rebelled against God, becoming known as Satan. One-third of the angels eventually joined him, becoming enemies of God and then of His human creation. Satan's deceitful tactics include spreading many fallacies about God and the spirit realm.

God created humans in His own image with the potential to one day actually be born into the very God family, rising above the angels. This is the true, amazing potential of *every* human being—including you!

In the pages to come, we'll explore each of these incredible truths in greater detail.

The Original Two Spirit Beings



What scripture provides the earliest snapshot in the timeline of history? Most people might say Genesis 1:1: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” But there is another passage that precedes this account. It is John 1:1: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

This brings us to the first fundamental fact about the spirit world: the existence of two distinct spirit beings who are both “God”! One is revealed in the Bible as God the Father. The One with Him is called the Word. Essentially, the term *Word* means that He is a spokesman. The Word is also described as God. Like the Father, the Word is also divine—a God being in every way. “In the beginning” both were already there, having existed for all eternity!

How God created all things

At some point, these two great spirit beings began creating all things. The Bible reveals both were involved in creating, but each had a different role. The Father is the Creator, but He created through the Word.

Notice John 1:3 in reference to the Word: “All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.” This includes the spirit world.

Just think of our own Milky Way galaxy. It is impossible to comprehend the vastness and cumulative energy of all its billions of stars and planets. Yet the Father and the Word created countless billions of galaxies besides. The Father and the Word are both unfathomably and infinitely great.

The Word became flesh

Next, we see that the Word is the One who later divested Himself of His spirit power and glory to come to earth as the human Savior, Jesus Christ.

Notice what the apostle John went on to say about Him: “He was in the world, and the world was made through Him . . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (verses 10, 14).

The apostle Paul documents that God the Father and Jesus Christ (before He became flesh) created “all things.” Paul said that he had the privilege to share “the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created *all things* through Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 3:9, emphasis added throughout). Many do not realize that Jesus was with God the Father from the beginning.

On the eve of Christ’s great sacrifice of suffering and death, He prayed to the Father. Notice His reference to His preexistence with the Father: “And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was” (John 17:5).

“To summarize, the first fundamental fact about the spirit world, there are only two spirit beings who were not created and have eternally existed: God the Father and the Word, Jesus Christ.”

Hebrews 1:2 also refers to God the Father and to the Word, who became known as the Son when He came to earth in human flesh. It tells us God “has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds.”

Before His birth, when He “became flesh and dwelt among us” as Immanuel (John 1:14; Matthew 1:23), Jesus Christ was the God who communicated with the patriarchs and prophets in the Old Testament and had hands-on dealings with Israel. For example, He was the One who led the Israelites out of Egyptian slavery. Referring to that event, the apostle Paul said, “For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ” (1 Corinthians 10:4).

A harmonious relationship

Another incredible fact about the Father and the Word is that for all eternity One has been greater than the other in terms of authority. The Father is sovereign, or supreme in authority, and the Word—Christ—has always willingly been subject to Him. They have always worked together harmoniously.

This is revealed in many scriptures. One example is in 1 Corinthians 15, where the apostle Paul writes about Christ’s future return to set up God’s Kingdom on earth and what will transpire:

“Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father . . . Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all” (verses 24, 28).

Another related scripture is John 14:28, where Jesus clearly stated, “The Father is greater than I.”

Jesus Christ is the supreme example of humility and submission. And this is the way of life He instructs us to follow.

The deep significance of *Elohim*

We see both of these spirit beings present in the Genesis 1 creation account. “Then God said, ‘Let *Us* make man in *Our* image’” (verse 26).

The Hebrew word for God in this chapter is *Elohim*. This is a plural word (denoting more than one). The reference to God being “Us” is also in Genesis 3:22 (“Behold, the man has become like one of Us”) and Genesis 11:7 (“Let Us go down and there confuse their language”).

Since there are two beings in the Godhead, the word *God* in Scripture can refer to the Father (Acts 13:33; Galatians 4:6), Jesus Christ the Son (Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1, 14; Titus 2:13), or both (Romans 8:9), depending on the context.

To study more about what the Bible says about God the Father and Jesus Christ, as well as how it describes the Holy Spirit, download our free booklet [*Getting to Know the God of the Bible*](#).

To summarize the first fundamental fact about the spirit world, there are only two spirit beings who were not created and have eternally existed: God the Father and the Word, Jesus Christ. They had no beginning. All other life-forms, including all spirit beings, were created by God.

The remainder of this booklet will focus on these created spirit beings.

The Angels



Jesus Christ's role in creating all things is revealed in Colossians 1:16: "For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and *invisible*." So, part of what God created is the *invisible* realm.

We do not know when God created the angels, but we know it was before He created the earth. When God confronted Job near the end of his ordeal, He asked, "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? . . . Who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" (Job 38:4, 6-7).

The Bible uses the word *stars* as a descriptive symbol for angels in several places. The terms *stars* and *sons of God* are used here as parallel terms for the angels. They are "sons" in the sense that each of them was created by God as a unique being. Like God's human creation, angels have intelligent minds with free moral agency (the freedom to make choices). This is an important point to keep in mind.

But when God fashioned the earth, the angels were already in existence to witness the event. They were all elated and sang and shouted for joy. We do not know how long angels had been in existence before God

created the universe and earth. Perhaps it was a short time; perhaps it was millions of years.

We also notice in this account—and elsewhere in the Bible—that God created angels to have emotions, just as we humans have. Here we see they can express joy and elation. They have joy when a sinner repents (Luke 15:10). As we will see later, at one time the angels had the capacity for greed, pride, anger, malice and all the other emotions we are familiar with.

Angels: mightier than humans

Not only have the angels existed longer than human beings, they are also greater than humans in several respects. As the apostle Peter said, angels “are greater in power and might” than humans (2 Peter 2:11). In what ways are angels greater than humans?

- **Angels are far stronger than humans.**

Consider the example of the angel who moved the heavy stone that covered the entrance of Christ’s tomb and that had been securely sealed. “And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men” (Matthew 28:2-4).

This—and other accounts in the Bible—tells us that angels can handle and move physical objects—even large objects. (Estimates are that such stones weighed 1 to 2 tons.) Notice another example in Acts 5:19, when an angel appeared to Peter and freed him from prison. “But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out.”

Of course, measuring the strength of angels in human terms is problematic. Because angels operate on a different level of existence from physical human beings, we shouldn’t default to thinking of objects as “too heavy” or “too big” for them to handle. Suffice it to say that God gave them the ability to interact with our physical world in ways that would require superhuman strength for us to replicate.

- **Angels can do supernatural things.**

During a later imprisonment, Peter was again freed by an angel: “Now behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shone in the prison; and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, ‘Arise

The Words Translated as Angel: *Malak* and *Aggelos*

It is helpful to know there are some verses in the Bible where the word *angel* refers to a human or even to Christ.

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word translated as our English word *angel* is *malak*. This word means “messenger” or “representative” (*Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Lexicon*). Context makes it evident what—or who—is meant in a particular passage.

Malak can refer to a *human* messenger, as in Job 1:14: “And a messenger [*malak*] came to Job.”

Malak sometimes refers to *Christ*, as the messenger or representative of God the Father. For example, in Genesis 31:11-13 it is clear that the “Angel” (*malak*) who spoke to Jacob was not a created angel, but the One who later came as Jesus Christ. (Some translations capitalize the word *Angel* when this is evident.)

Most often, *malak* refers to a created angel, such as the one sent to assist the prophet Elijah: “Suddenly an angel [*malak*] touched him” (1 Kings 19:5).

In the New Testament, the Greek word translated “angel” is *aggelos*. Like the Hebrew word *malak*, the Greek word *aggelos* means “messenger, envoy, one who is sent” (*Thayer’s Greek Lexicon*). *Aggelos* typically refers to a spirit angel, such as in Luke 1:19: “And the angel [*aggelos*] answered and said to him, ‘I am Gabriel.’”

quickly!’ And his chains fell off his hands. Then the angel said to him, ‘Gird yourself and tie on your sandals’; and so he did. And he said to him, ‘Put on your garment and follow me’ . . .

“When they were past the first and the second guard posts, they came to the iron gate that leads to the city, *which opened to them of its own accord*; and they went out and went down one street, and immediately the angel departed from him” (Acts 12:7-8, 10).

Another example of a supernatural act is the angels’ protection of Abraham’s nephew Lot. When the men of Sodom were trying to break into Lot’s house, the angels “struck the men who were at the doorway of the house with blindness” (Genesis 19:11).

- **Angels can be either visible or invisible to humans, at will.**

This is evident in the above three accounts. As a side note, we see that

they can also make their voices heard by humans. There are many other examples in the Bible where angels have appeared to humans and performed mighty feats.

Also, spirit beings can appear to some people while remaining invisible to others nearby. For example, Numbers 22:22-27 records the incident of a donkey seeing “the Angel of the LORD,” who was invisible to the donkey’s rider, Balaam, and his servants.

Also, 2 Kings 6:17 relates a time when the prophet Elisha was aware of a multitude of angelic beings all around him, and he asked that God would allow his servant to see them: “Then the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.”

- **Angels are immortal.**

Although only God has inherent immortality and has existed eternally, He created angels to live forever. Not comprised of physical elements, angels do not require food to sustain their life, do not experience physical maladies or degeneration, and do not die.

When explaining about the nature of humans who will be resurrected to spirit life in the future, Christ said, “The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection” (Luke 20:34-36).

His comment about those in this resurrection being “equal to the angels” refers to being given *immortality*.

But we are not to worship angels

Even though angels are mightier than humans, we are not to *worship* them. God’s Second Commandment states, “You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above . . . you shall not bow down to them” (Exodus 20:4-5).

This certainly includes angels.

Sadly, angel worship or adoration is permitted or promoted in many Christian denominations. (Ironically, almost all of these artistic portrayals are inaccurate; they do *not* match descriptions given in the Bible! See “Different types of angels” below.) Likewise, many churches and homes display pictures or figurines of angels, often serving as

reminders to pray to an angel and to seek its favor—something explicitly forbidden in the Bible.

The apostle Paul said, “Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels” (Colossians 2:18). He was addressing Jews who had subscribed to a gnostic doctrine that taught people to revere angels as intermediaries between humans and God.

The apostle John was overwhelmed when an angel told him astonishing truths about the future: “And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, ‘See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God!’” (Revelation 19:10). A very similar scenario occurred later, in Revelation 22:8-9.

The Bible is clear that angels are never to be worshipped. It is also essential that we never pray to angels or seek their guidance. Some religions and movements, including parts of the New Age movement, will encourage people to seek help and answers from angels through cards or other methods. God does not want us to seek guidance from angels. The righteous angels take their orders directly from God and serve entirely at His behest.

Why did God create angels?

It seems God created angels to assist Him in carrying out His plans. This would have been true even before there was a universe, earth or humans. Psalm 103:20-21 shows that angels do God’s bidding. “Bless the LORD, you His angels, who excel in strength, who do His word, heeding the voice of His word. Bless the LORD, all you His hosts, you ministers of His, who do His pleasure.”

God created them on a level of existence far below Himself in power, authority and ability.

Another term we use to describe different levels of existence is *kingdoms*. For instance, there are the plant kingdom and the animal kingdom. Above the human level of existence is the angelic level, and the highest of all is the *God level of existence*.

When God created humans, angels became involved in serving God and carrying out His plan for humans. King David said, “What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him? For You have made him a little lower than the angels” (Psalm 8:4-5).

Yet God also inspired David to show this was a *temporary* arrangement. In verses 5-6 he continues, “And You have crowned him with glory and

honor. You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet.”

Hebrews 2, which quotes King David’s words, then explains the meaning of David’s statement: “You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, and set him over the works of Your hands. You have put all things in subjection under his feet” (verses 7-8).

The author of Hebrews explains in the second half of verse 8, “For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him.”

In other words, while we are human, we remain lower than the angels.

But God’s plan is for humans to one day be elevated *above* the angelic realm and have dominion over God’s *entire* creation. And that is a vast creation! That future dominion will not be turned over to angels, but to humans who have entered the God family. “For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels” (verse 5).

In Psalm 104 David refers to angels as both “spirits” and “ministers”: “[God] makes His angels spirits, His ministers a flame of fire” (verse 4).

A minister is a *servant* who serves others. So, whom do angels serve? God, of course. But as part of their service to God, they serve *humans*. Referring to angels, Hebrews 1:14 states, “Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?”

God’s plan is for humans to ultimately “inherit salvation.” The natural end of this human life is death. “Salvation” is being saved from eternal death. It is receiving from God immortal spirit life, being born by resurrection into the divine family of God. That family (currently comprised of only the Father and Jesus Christ) is above the angels. And yet those angels—even while knowing we shall one day rise above them—humbly and diligently serve us on God’s behalf.

Another difference between angels and humans is that God brought the angels into existence individually. They are not the result of marriage and reproduction. However, the human race—God’s future, spirit-born family—started with two humans and has increased as a result of reproduction. God designed the human kingdom to grow through marriage, conception, gestation, birth and growth to maturity.

Christ said, “For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven” (Matthew 22:30).

He was answering people who were trying to outsmart Him with a hypothetical story about a woman who had seven husbands in this human

life, asking whose wife she would be in the resurrection. Christ explained that, as is the case with the angels, marriages will not exist between resurrected spirit beings.

There are different types of angels

As we saw earlier, God created all things—visible and invisible—through Jesus Christ. The only spirit beings God created—as recorded in the Bible—are angels.

This brings us to a common fallacy regarding angels. When you think of a typical angel, what image comes to mind? A male figure with two wings and long hair? A female with wings? A child or baby with wings? Can you think of some popular movies that depict angels using any of these stereotypes? Can you think of songs that portray angels as women?

The biblical description of angels is *very* different from most popular concepts of angels! One misconception is that there is basically just one kind of angel. This is far from the truth; for just as God created variety throughout His vast physical creation, He also created variety in the angelic realm.

Cherubim

The very first reference to angels in the Bible is to cherubim: “So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life” (Genesis 3:24). (*Cherub* is the singular form; *cherubim* is the plural.)

The structure in the Godhead also extends into the angelic realm, and cherubim play important roles in God’s administration. Angels are closely associated with God’s throne. Both Psalms 80:1 and 99:1 state that God *dwells between* cherubim.

The functions of cherubim and their proximity to God are so important that God directed their semblance to be incorporated into the design of God’s tabernacle and temple on earth. Two cherubim were sculpted onto the Ark of the Covenant, one on each end (see Exodus 25:18-20; 37:7-8).

When the temple was constructed, two large sculptures of cherubim were situated inside the Holy of Holies. Their wings spanned the entire width of this inner room (see 1 Kings 6:23-28).

Artistic designs of cherubim were woven into the walls, curtains, inner veil and doors (see Exodus 26:1, 31; 36:8, 35; 1 Kings 6:29, 32; and 2 Chronicles 3:7-14). There are several references to cherubim in connection with God’s tabernacle—and later, temple—on earth.

God has given us a description of cherubim in Ezekiel chapters 1 and 10. In chapter 1, Ezekiel is shown four brilliant, powerful angels in action. In chapter 10, we are told they are cherubim. “This is the living creature I saw under the God of Israel by the River Chebar, and I knew they were cherubim” (verse 20).

In these two chapters, we have the remarkable description of this type of angel, and it is very different from popular depictions of a cherub!

Ezekiel saw four cherubim.

“And this was their appearance: they had the likeness of a man. Each one had four faces” (Ezekiel 1:5-6). So, besides their dominant appearance being the “likeness of a man,” they each have three other faces.

“As for the likeness of their faces, each had the face of a man; each of the four had the face of a lion on the right side, each of the four had the face of an ox on the left side, and each of the four had the face of an eagle” (verse 10).

(Notice that the spirit realm includes designs God later used in creating physical creatures. There are even many descriptions of horses in the spirit realm. See, for example, in 2 Kings 2:11; 6:15-17; Zechariah 6:1-7; and Revelation 19:11, 14.)

Each cherub also has four wings (Ezekiel 1:6). “Their wings stretched upward; two wings of each one touched

one another, and two covered their bodies” (verse 11).

The sound of these wings in motion is thunderous, “like the noise of many waters, like the voice of the Almighty, a tumult like the noise of an army; and when they stood still, they let down their wings” (verse 24). These are very powerful beings!

Each cherub also has hands like those of a man (verse 8).

“Their legs were straight, and the soles of their feet were like the soles of calves’ feet” (verse 7).

Ezekiel also mentioned another unique part of their makeup he called a “wheel.” No doubt Ezekiel found it difficult to describe these dazzling, otherworldly beings in human terms.

“There is nothing in the Bible that says angels have halos. This is another common fallacy about the appearance of angels.”

Each cherub makes use of a wheel, with another wheel inside it. These wheels have rims that are “full of eyes” and awe-inspiring in their size.

The Hebrew wording in Ezekiel 1:20-21 means that the movement of the wheels proceeds from the spirit residing in the cherub. In other words, driven by the spirit power of the cherub, his wheels move when he moves. The cherub does not turn or rotate. Instead, the orientation of his four faces remains unchanged, regardless of the direction he travels (10:11).

Also, each cherub shines brightly and is filled with power, with lightning flashing out of him (Ezekiel 1:13). They can move very rapidly, “in appearance like a flash of lightning” (verse 14).

The locomotion of the cherubim is described as being significant in multiple verses. In Psalm 18:10 David states that the Lord “rode upon a cherub, and flew; He flew upon the wings of the wind” (see also 2 Samuel 22:11). And so Christ has—at least at times—been transported by cherubim.

In connection with this, Ezekiel is shown what is apparently a more detailed description of this picture:

“The likeness of the firmament above the heads of the living creatures was like the color of an awesome crystal, stretched out over their heads” (Ezekiel 1:22).

The word *firmament* is translated from the Hebrew word *raʿîyāʾ*, which is defined by *Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Definitions* as “extended surface (solid), expanse . . . (flat) expanse . . . as base, support . . . firmament.”

Ezekiel sees a flat, expansive surface or platform, “awesome” and dazzling in appearance, just over the heads of the cherubim. Let’s continue Ezekiel’s description:

“And under the firmament their wings spread out straight . . . And above the firmament over their heads was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like a sapphire stone; on the likeness of the throne was a likeness with the appearance of a man high above it. Also from the appearance of His waist and upward I saw, as it were, the color of amber with the appearance of fire all around within it; and from the appearance of His waist and downward I saw, as it were, the appearance of fire with brightness all around. Like the appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the brightness all around it. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD” (verses 23, 26-28).

Ezekiel saw the incredible scene of the God of Israel (“the LORD”), sitting on a throne situated upon a platform, supported by cherubim. Ezekiel saw this same dazzling scene again in chapter 10, verse 1.

Many centuries earlier, Moses and other men saw the God of Israel on a similarly described throne and platform at Mount Sinai. “Then Moses went up, also Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and they saw the God of Israel. And there was under His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and it was like the very heavens in its clarity” (Exodus 24:9-10).

Seraphim

Compared to what’s said about cherubim, the descriptions of all other angel types are brief. The description of the seraphim is found only in Isaiah.

“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. . . Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar” (Isaiah 6:1-2, 6).

We are not told how many there are, but like the cherubim, they are very near God’s throne. In Isaiah’s vision, they were above God’s throne and the train of His robe.

Also they each have six wings (whereas each cherub has four), and Isaiah says they each have a face (singular) and hands.

24 elders

Before revealing details of end-time events to John, Jesus Christ showed him glimpses of His domain in heaven. In Revelation 4, John sees at least two other groups of angels identified as being close to God’s throne.

First is a group called the 24 elders. “Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads” (verse 4).

The only description we have for these “elders” is that each is dressed in white and wears a gold crown.

Four living creatures

“And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back. The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within” (verses 6-8).

These differ from the cherubim, in that each of these four angels has the dominant appearance of a single, specific creature—a lion, calf, human or eagle. Like the seraphim, they each have six wings. John saw them positioned around God's throne in heaven.

The 24 elders and the four living creatures continuously worship God. The focus of their praise is on the fact that God created everything (themselves included):

“Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: ‘You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created’” (verses 9-11).

The same scenario with the 24 elders and four living creatures is repeated in Revelation 5:8; 11:16 and 19:4.

Seven Spirits of God

When John relayed to the Church all that Christ showed him, he said in his salutation, “Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne” (Revelation 1:4).

In addition to the 24 elders and four living creatures, John also mentioned these spirits in chapter 4, verse 5: “And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.”

John mentions them again in the next chapter: “And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth” (Revelation 5:6). This verse is symbolic language for Christ (the Lamb) and seven angels who are described as having uniquely special roles.

They are positioned before God's throne. But they are described using metaphors in a way that no other angels are. John calls them both “lamps of fire” and “eyes.” In the symbolic portrayal of Christ (as a Lamb having seven horns and seven eyes), the eyes are represented as very closely associated with Christ. We learn that it is apparently these seven, who stand before God, who will blow the seven trumpets in the future (Revelation 8:2, 6).

From their description as “eyes,” it appears they have a special responsibility in being dispatched around the earth as observers for Christ. Zechariah 4:10 adds information to this role: “For these seven rejoice to see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. They are the eyes of the LORD, which scan to and fro throughout the whole earth.” (The time setting in this passage is the rebuilding of the temple.)

Though the Bible is clear God has the power to see all things Himself, He still chooses to use these angels to observe what is happening on earth and report back to Him.

Many more angels

In addition to the specially named types or groups of angels, the Bible mentions many more angels. How many?

When Jesus Christ was being arrested prior to His crucifixion, He said, “Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?” (Matthew 26:53). A Roman legion was 6,000, so 12 legions would be 72,000.

That’s quite a lot—but other passages reveal far greater numbers. Daniel, watching as “the Ancient of Days was seated” on His throne, noted that “a thousand thousands ministered to Him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him” (Daniel 7:9-10). In other words, more than 100 million.

Removing any doubt this number is referring to angels, the apostle John was shown similar numbers. “Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands” (Revelation 5:11). This again translates to 100 million plus.

Likewise, Hebrews 12:22 calls the number of angels innumerable: “But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels.”

Appearance in the physical world

When angels appear to humans, the Bible generally describes them as looking like men.

Notice, for example, the angel seen at Christ’s tomb after His resurrection. “And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, ‘Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was

crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him. But go, tell His disciples—and Peter—that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you” (Mark 16:5-7).

We also see that God has sent angels to communicate specific messages to humans.

When Christ ascended from earth back to heaven, Luke recorded, “And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, *two men* stood by them in white apparel” (Acts 1:10). In addition to their appearance as men, sometimes their clean white attire is mentioned. They represent God, and they represent Him well.

But notice that there is nothing in the Bible that says angels have halos. This is another common fallacy about the appearance of angels. (The halo came about in ancient depictions of *pagan* deities, especially in connection with the sun god.)

Hebrews 13:2 makes it clear that when angels are sent to interact with humans, their appearance is often that of a normal human: “Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels.”

Although angels can appear as human, remember that they are “greater in power and might” than people (2 Peter 2:11). And as we learned earlier, their purpose is to serve God and, in so doing, humans God is working with in this age.

Psalms 91:10-12 shows that God sends His angels to intervene for His people. “No evil shall befall you, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling; for He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways. In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.”

This promise applied both to the nation—if they would be obedient to God—and to individuals who were faithful to God’s covenant.

There are also clear indications that God has sent angels to intervene at critical moments in world events. He has a plan and timetable for bringing His Kingdom to earth, and His angels will assist as needed in world affairs to keep God’s plan on track.

“Of the three angels named in the Bible, one is declared as having ‘fallen,’ and two have not.”

Only three angels are mentioned by name

Despite popular lore claiming to know the names of numerous angels, the Bible reveals the names of only three angels. They are:

- **Gabriel**

Gabriel was sent to the prophet Daniel. “Suddenly there stood before me one having the appearance of a man. And I heard a man’s voice between the banks of the Ulai, who called, and said, ‘Gabriel, make this man understand the vision’” (Daniel 8:15-16; see also 9:21).

It is sometimes conjectured that Gabriel may also be an archangel, but the Bible doesn’t explicitly say so.

Gabriel was also commissioned to deliver an important message to John the Baptist’s father, Zacharias: “And the angel answered and said to him, ‘I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you’” (Luke 1:19). Later he was sent to Mary (verses 26-38).

- **Michael**

Jude 1:9 refers to Michael as “the archangel.” Archangel literally means chief angel. In Daniel 10:13, Michael is called “one of the chief princes.” The word *prince* here means one who has rule over others, such as a captain, general or governor. This verse indicates that Michael is not the *only* archangel or chief prince in God’s angelic realm. He is the only one *named*.

Paul mentioned an archangel in connection with the future return of Jesus Christ. “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel” (1 Thessalonians 4:16). Paul here simply says “*an* archangel” and does not give a name.

Jude 1:9 is a remarkable, behind-the-scenes glimpse into the invisible spirit world: “Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you!’”

What is this about?

After viewing the Promised Land from atop a mountain, Moses died, and God buried him in a valley, but kept the location of his grave undisclosed (Deuteronomy 34:5-7). Satan apparently had other plans. (What exactly those plans might have been is unclear, but the grave could have easily become an object or location for false worship.) Michael was dispatched to confront Satan, but in doing so, Michael did not say, “*I* rebuke you.” He appealed to God Himself to rebuke Satan.

In Daniel 10:20-21, an angel informed Daniel that Michael was the only other angel who was assisting him in fighting powerful spirit forces. The angel told Daniel, “No one upholds me against these, except Michael your prince.”

Daniel 12:1 also identifies Michael as having a special role during the future time of great trouble near the end of this age: “At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time.” It appears Michael will be involved in safeguarding God’s people during this future, worst-ever time in human history.

Some erroneously equate Michael with Jesus Christ, considering them to be one and the same. As we saw in Chapter 1, Christ is eternally *God*, along with the Father, “without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life” (Hebrews 7:3). The angel Michael is one of the many spirit beings whom God *created*.

- **Lucifer**

The only other name of an angel in the Bible is found in Isaiah 14:12: “How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!”

The Hebrew word *Heylel*, translated as the Latin “Lucifer,” means “light-bearer,” “shining one” or “morning star.” This was his *original* descriptive name. But his character later *changed*. Of the three angels named in the Bible, one is declared as having “fallen,” and two have not.

The Angels Who Sinned



e will now look at the spirit beings who were once a harmonious part of the original angelic realm, but later chose a different path.

Prior to creating the earth, God created the angelic realm.

And within that realm, God created a great variety of spirit beings with differing degrees of power and authority. Initially, *all* of them were in harmony with God; they all sang together and shouted for joy when God created the earth (Job 38:7).

We see in Jude 1:6 that God gave them a “domain” and an “abode” (or, as the King James Version says, an “estate” and a “habitation”). It seems at least some of them were given the earth as their domain.

Ezekiel 28:13 shows Lucifer with God in the Garden of Eden.

Other than these brief references, details of the angels’ activities on earth are not recorded. What is recorded is the tragic choice some of them made. What went wrong in the once peaceful, harmonious world of the holy angels?

It began with Lucifer

The change started with one angel, Lucifer, who was a cherub (see the previous chapter).

It helps to consider the background of the passage containing the above references. Ezekiel chapters 26-28 are an indictment by God against the nation of Tyre and a warning of its downfall. Within this prophecy, God turns the spotlight onto the ultimate power behind corrupt Tyre—*Satan*.

In Ezekiel 28:2, the *human* leader is called “the *prince* of Tyre.” Then in verse 12, God addresses a different being, whom He calls “the *king* of Tyre,” a being whose attributes belong to no mere *human*. God first describes Lucifer’s original state:

“Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes [literally “settings and sockets” for the gemstones] was prepared for you on the day you were created. You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones”’ (Ezekiel 28:12-14).

Originally, Lucifer was perfect and wise. God adorned him with precious gems and called him “the anointed cherub who covers.” As a cherub, Lucifer had responsibilities close to God’s throne and very high in His government. “Anointed” indicates consecration for special responsibility, and “covers” seems to refer to a role particularly close to God. While he had these responsibilities in heaven, the Bible also places him on earth at various times.

How could such a stunning spirit being—with the prospect of an eternal, happy future with God—later become the epitome of evil? The answer lies in the fact that God created angels with *free moral agency*, which He also later gave human beings. God didn’t intend angels or humans to be like programmed robots. Rather, God endowed each individual with the ability to reason and the *freedom* to make choices.

Just think: Lucifer and all the other angels had literally everything going for them—a perfect environment, perfect health, perfect government and immortality. And there was no external temptation to resist God’s way.

But at some point, it occurred to Lucifer that there was an alternative to God’s way. It all began with a thought.

As God said to Lucifer, “You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you” (Ezekiel 28:15).

The original impetus that convinced Lucifer to depart from God's laws and way of life is not revealed. But as he questioned God's wisdom and will, he began to pridefully believe he knew and could do better. His nature eventually changed to embrace the way of pride, self-centeredness, greed, destruction and violence. He apparently felt he deserved more than God had given him and determined that the end justified the means required to obtain it.

Notice the next two verses in Ezekiel 28: "By the abundance of your trading you became filled with violence within, and you sinned; therefore I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain of God; and I destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the fiery stones. Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor; I cast you to the ground" (verses 16-17).

More information about Lucifer's departure from God is found in Isaiah 14, which also describes how God cast him down:

"How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground" (verse 12).

Before that, apparently Lucifer had been on the earth: "For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High'" (verses 13-14).

Lucifer determined to ascend (from his abode and rule on earth) up to God's throne in heaven to overthrow and replace God! Not only did he desire God's authority, he also desired to be worshipped as God—a desire he continues to have (Matthew 4:9).

There is no contradiction between wording showing Lucifer in heaven and also on the earth. As a spirit being, he could have traveled between heaven and earth. And in his role as a cherub, he no doubt had an official place in heaven, along with his responsibilities on earth.

His plan to depose God failed miserably, of course, and God cast him back down to the earth. Christ told His disciples that He was there when it happened. "And He said to them, 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven'" (Luke 10:18).

Christ called him Satan. This is a descriptive name, meaning *adversary* or *enemy*. His nature had changed. He went from being a "light-bearer" in perfect harmony with God to being an adversary of God. God changed his name to reflect this change in his inner nature.

Many angels joined Satan—becoming demons

But Satan was not alone in his plan to replace God. Tragically, he was able to persuade many other angels to agree with his alternative way of life and to join him in opposing God.

We have no way of knowing how long this took. But we *do* know that Satan became an effective deceiver. Did he conduct a whisper campaign, convincing first one angel, then another, that God was not the noble sovereign they thought He was? Did he speak openly against God, twisting facts to suit his purpose? Either way, the disillusionment spread through the angelic ranks. Eventually, Lucifer appears to have persuaded one-third of all the angels to join with him.

Christ reveals this in Revelation 12, where He portrays Satan as a dragon (verse 3) and then says, “His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth” (verse 4). In other words, when Satan was cast back down to the earth, he was not alone; a third of the angels (symbolized here as “stars”) were cast down with him.

In verses 7-9, these fallen angels are referred to as Satan’s angels: “And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and *the dragon and his angels* fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”

Satan here is also called “the Devil.” And the angels with him have become known as “demons” and are referred to as such many times in the New Testament.

Do Satan and the demons dwell in a fiery “hell”?

If Satan and the other angels who sinned were cast down to the earth, why do so many people believe their domain is some fiery underworld, called “hell”? This is another fallacy, which is based on nonbiblical lore and a misunderstanding of several scriptures. According to the Bible, Satan and demons were cast out of heaven, down to *earth*.

Many scriptures show this reality. For example, Job 1:6-7 says, “Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. And the LORD said to Satan, ‘From where do you come?’ So Satan answered the LORD and said, ‘From going to and fro *on the earth*, and from walking back and forth on it.’” (See also Job 2:1-2.)

We see here that, though cast out of heaven, Satan has sometimes been permitted access to God's throne. In this case, he reported to God that his activities had been *on* the earth (not in some underworld, or other world inferno).

Some have perpetuated the fallacy of Satan and demons now inhabiting a fiery place by using 2 Peter 2:4: "God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to *hell* and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment."

In the New Testament, several different Greek words have been translated into the single English word *hell* (thus adding to confusion).

The Greek word in 2 Peter 2:4 is *tartaroo* and appears in only this verse. It refers to a condition of restraint (see our article "[What Is Hell?](#)"). That place, for now, is the earth. The expression *chains of darkness* refers to the boundaries or constraints God has placed upon them, until their future time of final judgment and sentencing.

Though Satan and his demons have the freedom to influence and deceive, God restrains them from creating havoc that would circumvent His ultimate plan. For instance, if they could, Satan and the demons would revel in destroying all human life by a single global disaster. However, God clearly places limits on their activities and the extent to which they can physically harm human beings.

What does Satan look like?

The popular image of Satan is another common fallacy. In fact, the portrayal of his appearance has changed over the centuries. He's been described as having blue, green, black or red skin; having the form of a goat, snake, dragon, bat or human; having horns; being either winged or wingless, with a pointed or barbed tail; having human hands, webbed hands or talons, human feet or hooves, a beard or no beard; having a staff or a pitchfork—and many other variants.

But the Bible informs us that Satan was created as a cherub, which was described in detail in Chapter 2. His description as a serpent or dragon in Scripture isn't necessarily what he looks like, but is symbolic of his character.

So where did the popular portrayals of Satan (and demons) come from? As with many other religious subjects, people have borrowed ideas from mythology, paganism and even bits and pieces of the Bible and then combined them into an image that fits the thinking of the day.

Some of the imagery has been borrowed from biblical references. For example, in the Garden of Eden, Satan appeared as a physical creature—a serpent—to speak to Adam and Eve. But notice it was after Satan’s success in eliciting the humans’ defiance of God that God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life” (Genesis 3:14). Because of this account, the serpent has been used as a metaphor for Satan.

Another metaphor for Satan is a dragon. This term is used in the New Testament in a symbolic sense. The first reference is Revelation 12:3: “And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads.” This same image is referred to seven more times in chapter 12 alone. The comparison of Satan to a dragon shows him to be a vicious monster intent on destruction.

In Revelation 13:2, an end-time empire is similarly called a “beast,” with characteristics of different animals. The verse points to Satan, who is again referred to in similar symbolic language: “The dragon gave him [the beast] his power, his throne, and great authority.”

The portrayal of Satan with a tail may have been borrowed from Revelation 12:4, which says, “His [the dragon’s] tail drew a third of the stars of heaven.”

There are various explanations for the origin of the current portrayal of Satan with a pitchfork. The idea has no biblical basis. But one of the more dominant theories traces the origin to the Middle Ages, when denizens of the underworld were pictured with a pitchfork.

Why does God allow Satan and demons to be on earth alongside humans?

The answer is part of the great plan God has for humans to one day become spirit-born members of His divine family. In order for that plan to succeed, humans need to overcome.

Christ provided a perfect example of this, as He told His disciples shortly before His death: “In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). And as He said in Revelation 3:21, “To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.”

As humans, we must learn to overcome a number of things. Among them is Satan and this world, which he currently rules.

During His human lifetime, Christ overcame Satan. Perhaps the most famous example is in Luke 4:1-13, when Christ was fasting for 40 days, and Satan repeatedly tried to tempt Christ to compromise and sin.

Notice something remarkable in verses 5-6: “Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, ‘All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.’” Satan was right—at this time, the kingdoms of this world *are* under his authority.

Christ overcame Satan and will replace him as king of the earth at His return. Likewise, we must overcome Satan—by obeying God and rejecting the temptations of Satan’s world—in order to join Christ in His future Kingdom. The process of overcoming produces the vital component of righteous *character*.

It’s easy to *say* we will always obey God—especially when everything is going our way and there are no trials or temptations to compromise our loyalty to God. We have the opportunity to prove our faithfulness to God when our allegiance to Him is tested.

An example of this is when God tested Abraham, in regard to his beloved son, Isaac. “Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham” (Genesis 22:1). As we read in the account that follows, Abraham complied with everything God instructed. God’s response is in verse 12: “Now I know that you fear God.”

God learns about *us* when He observes our daily choices in a world that tempts us to compromise His law. In order to develop godly character, we must also actively *reject* every alternative way we are confronted with.

“Today’s Christianity is a divided religion, composed of hundreds of varying denominations with contradicting doctrines and practices. This confusion is the result of the deceptive work of Satan, not God.”

One-third of the angels chose to *accept* Lucifer's alternative way and are now trying to persuade us to do likewise.

A common misconception is that God is in a desperate (and seemingly failing) struggle to defeat Satan. The truth is that the kingdoms (or civilizations) of this world *are* Satan's to do with and give as he wishes. He *is* this world's current ruler—a role God (temporarily) allows.

The first humans, Adam and Eve, had the opportunity to reject Satan's deceptive words and prove their loyalty to God. But instead, they heeded Satan, and therefore God drove them out of the Garden of Eden (see Genesis 3).

Ever since that fateful day, the human race in general has been cut off from God and the tree of life (Genesis 3:24). Though God never relinquishes His authority, He has allowed Satan to temporarily be the “god of this age” (2 Corinthians 4:3-4).

“Know your enemy”: How do Satan and the demons operate?

For now, Satan has a “kingdom” (Matthew 12:26; Luke 11:18). Revelation 2:13 shows he has a throne on earth. He oversees a governmental structure, directing the fallen angels under him.

We need to be aware of Satan's activities and methods. As the apostle Paul warned, “Lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices” (2 Corinthians 2:11).

Essentially, Satan and the demons' efforts here on earth involve their mutiny against God and their goal of thwarting His plan to bring humans into His divine family.

A popular portrayal of Satan is that of a mischievous imp. But, in reality, Satan is a powerful enemy of God and the ultimate source of violence, despair, hatred, sorrow, agony and every ugly and miserable thing that proceeds from his mind. He opposes God and everything God values. He is the world's archenemy, actively waging warfare against God and His plan.

Consider some major strategies Satan employs in his warfare:

1. Satan uses plausible-sounding deception.

Satan is the ultimate master of deception. He certainly employed it to persuade other angels that God (who is 100 percent perfect) is wrong, and he is right.

Notice what Christ said about Satan: “When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it” (John 8:44).

Satan now employs this extremely effective device against humans. In fact, it has been so successful that he has deceived “the whole world” (Revelation 12:9).

Satan has convinced millions today that God does not exist. They are confident that their intelligent minds have reached this conclusion correctly, despite the fact that evidence for the Creator is abundantly evident in the creation (Romans 1:20-22).

However, Satan isn't limited to deceiving people to reject God's existence. He deceives others to believe false ideas about God.

Think back to Satan's first encounter with Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3). He employed “craftiness” (2 Corinthians 11:3). The account shows that Satan cleverly made God's instructions look flawed, while appearing to have the reasonable and good information himself. He didn't try to convince Eve that God didn't exist, but instead subtly convinced her that God was lying and holding back knowledge from her.

He has continued to deceive people with false ideas about God through the angels under him (demons) and through humans he uses to propagate deception.

We see this in Old Testament times, when Satan and his demons played a major part in turning the ancient kingdoms of Judah and Israel to worship other gods. In the books of Kings, Chronicles and many of the prophets, we see Israel and Judah worshipping foreign gods, such as Baal, mentioned dozens of times in the Bible. At times they even offered their children to the god Molech. By such idolatry, God said, they actually were sacrificing to demons (Deuteronomy 32:17).

And we see this in New Testament times. Paul warned: “For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if *his ministers* also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness” (2 Corinthians 11:14-15).

As of this writing, about 85 percent of the world's population identifies with some religion, including Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. God says that this “whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one” (1 John 5:19). That affects both the atheists and the religious, including many who profess the most popular religion: Christianity.

Today's Christianity is a divided religion, composed of hundreds of varying denominations with contradicting doctrines and practices. This confusion is the result of the deceptive work of Satan, not God (1 Corinthians 14:33).

Satan has presented a Jesus Christ who is very *different* from the Christ revealed in the Bible. Effectively, he has promoted a false Christ. Most of Christianity has been centered on this false concept of Christ and false ideas of what He taught about God's law.

Not many decades after Christ founded His Church, "another Jesus" was already being promoted. "For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!" (2 Corinthians 11:4).

This different Jesus, spirit and gospel gained traction and became the *popular* Christianity much of the world knows today.

Notice the first sign of the end that Christ gave in Matthew 24:4-5: "Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many."

How does Satan implement this tactic of plausible-sounding deception so effectively?

- **He broadcasts to humans.**

As the apostle Paul told members of God's Church, "You once walked according to the course of this world, according to the *prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works* in the sons of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:2).

The metaphor of broadcasting is one we can relate to in our modern age. Satan projects his attitudes of selfishness, greed, pride, hatred, violence, rage, etc. The apostle Paul also stated that the god of this world (Satan) has *blinded the minds* of the people of the world (2 Corinthians 4:4).

- **He empowers people to perform miracles.**

As we have already seen, God created angels with powers and abilities superior to people. It would seem higher-ranking angels were endowed with greater powers than lower-ranking angels. The cherubs were evidently created with great powers. Even after Lucifer sinned, he still had the powers God had originally given him.

Humans are deeply impressed by supernatural phenomena. Many thronged after Christ because of His miracles. However, Satan uses this proclivity to convince people that his miracle-working human agents are credible.

One example of this was during the time of Moses. God commanded Aaron to cast his rod down before Pharaoh, after which God caused it

to miraculously transform into a serpent. But after seeing that miracle, “Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers; so the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. For every man threw down his rod, and they became serpents” (Exodus 7:11-12).

The Egyptians were able to replicate the miracle through their connection to the demonic realm. However, interestingly, the serpent created through God’s power was able to easily consume the other serpents (verse 12).

Another example from New Testament times was Simon, whom the apostle Peter confronted. “But there was a certain man called Simon, who previously practiced sorcery in the city and astonished the people . . . to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, ‘This man is the great power of God.’ And they heeded him because he had astonished them with his sorceries for a long time” (Acts 8:9-11).

Simon’s message was deceitful heresy. God was not the source of the signs he performed. See more in our online article “[Simon the Sorcerer](#).”

Another example was a fortune teller the apostle Paul encountered in Acts 16:16-19: “A certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling.”

Paul commanded the demon to leave the girl. “But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas.” The demon had been obviously successful in foretelling future events.

A future example is the coming “false prophet” foretold in the book of Revelation. This miracle-working human will be given astonishing abilities by Satan. His miracles will convince many humans that he speaks for God, and that people should worship the beast. (For more information, see our online article “[The Man of Sin and the Mark of the Beast](#).”)

Revelation 13:11 likens this future miracle-working leader to a beast with the *appearance* of a lamb (that is, appearing to represent Christ, the true Lamb), but with a *message* of the dragon (Satan). “He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do” (verses 13-14).

This same individual is also called “the lawless one” in 2 Thessalonians 2:9: “The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with *all power, signs, and lying wonders*.”

Between now and the time this false prophet will display such powers, there will be an increase in Satan’s deceptive efforts. “But evil men and

impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived” (2 Timothy 3:13).

Revelation 16:14 also prophesies demonic activity that will occur in the future: “For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world.”

The key takeaway is that Satan and his demons can cause their human servants to perform impressive miracles. But it’s imperative that we never allow the impressive nature of any feat to cause us to follow or listen to human beings who aren’t faithful to God and His way.

The ultimate test of any religious leader or teacher is found in Isaiah 8:20: “To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”

When it comes to choosing whom we listen to and follow, truth must *always* trump miracles.

2. Satan targets God’s saints.

As we saw earlier, God’s plan is for humans to be temporarily lower than the angels for the purpose of learning obedience to God before entering the immortal spirit realm as part of His family. Therefore, all who follow Christ’s lead represent a threat to Satan and his demons.

God’s Word informs us, “All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12). Persecution entails targeting or pursuing someone with intent to harass or inflict cruelty.

We see an example of Satan’s intent to target God’s servants in Luke 22:31. Shortly before Christ was arrested, He alerted Simon Peter to Satan’s request. “And the Lord said, ‘Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you.’” Although Jesus seemed to single out Peter, the Greek word for “you” is plural—Satan asked for all the apostles.

Recall how, with God’s permission, Satan was allowed to intensely attack Job. The account shows how Satan had first singled Job out, to accuse him before God and gain permission to attack him.

Although not every difficulty we encounter is directly caused by Satan, God does allow him to assault God’s people with various hardships. For example, in a letter from Christ to His Church, He told them, “Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison . . . Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life” (Revelation 2:10).

We see in Revelation 12:10 that this is what Satan is constantly doing.

The context is shortly before Christ's return to earth, but it reveals what Satan has been routinely doing. "Now . . . the *accuser of our brethren*, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down."

Satan also combines deception and persecution, attempting to eliminate as many of God's saints as possible. As Christ warned His disciples, "The time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service" (John 16:2).

Satan entices God's saints to willfully sin and lose their salvation. One example is that of a husband and wife in the early New Testament Church. Wanting to impress others, both lied about doing a generous deed. God inspired the apostle Peter to discern their deception.

"But Peter said, 'Ananias, why has *Satan filled your heart to lie* to the Holy Spirit?'" (Acts 5:3). In this case, Satan succeeded in bringing about the outcome he wished, because these members did not *resist* his promptings of pride and lying.

3. Satan and demons can appear in deceptive forms.

God's holy angels never appear in order to frighten, terrorize, harass or harm people or to amuse themselves. Whenever they appear, it is only to diligently fulfill their mission from God.

Demons, however, have entirely different motives. When they appear to humans, it is to deceive, confuse, entice to sin, frighten, terrorize, etc.

One historical example is when King Saul went to consult a spirit medium (or witch). The account is found in 1 Samuel 28. Having departed from God, Saul turned to the dark spirit world for advice. He asked the medium to summon the deceased prophet Samuel. During the séance, a being who claimed to be the prophet Samuel appeared to the medium. (Deceased humans are actually fully *dead* and have no consciousness or ability to communicate. See Ecclesiastes 9:10, for example.)

The being who appeared was a demon, obliging the medium's appeal to the dark spirit world and impersonating Samuel in a form that would resemble Samuel. The demon portrayed this deceptive image to the medium, who in turn described to Saul what she was seeing. And the demon accurately foretold what he knew would happen to King Saul for rejecting God.

It is evident that Christ's apostles were familiar with the concept of ghostly apparitions. Notice their reaction when Jesus approached in the night darkness, walking on the water: "And when the disciples saw Him

walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, ‘It is a ghost!’ And they cried out for fear” (Matthew 14:26).

The Greek word translated as “ghost” is *phantasma*, which connotes the idea of a phantom or other ghostly spirit form.

Reports of and interest in ghosts have continued through the centuries.

They appear in centuries-old plays and in modern-day TV shows, and eyewitness reports persist from people who claim to have seen, photographed and communicated with ghosts.

Additionally, through the centuries there have been persistent accounts of people both firmly believing in and witnessing humanlike creatures of various shapes and sizes, and possessing sentient intelligence. Some are described as harmless or even charming, but more often the accounts describe beings that are mischievous, hostile, cruel, vengeful or dangerous.

Among the most prevalent beliefs—spanning many centuries—are those of fairies, elves, leprechauns, gnomes, goblins, trolls, pixies, sylphs, elementals and others. Many of these are considered types under the broader category of fairy.

People who have interacted with the spirit realm adamantly affirm that there are real entities such as these. It is not our purpose to identify which accounts were genuine and which were exaggerations or fictitious legends. What we do know is that the demonic world is real, that demons are deceitful and lawless by nature, and that they can somehow project various appearances.

This quote from Britannica.com’s article “Fairy” provides a little more background:

“While the term *fairy* goes back only to the Middle Ages in Europe, analogues to these beings in varying forms appear in both written and oral literature, from the Sanskrit *gandharva* (semidivine celestial musicians) to the nymphs of Greek mythology and Homer, the jinni of Arabic mythology, and similar folk characters of the Samoans, of the Arctic peoples, and of other indigenous Americans. The common modern depiction of fairies in children’s stories represents a bowdlerization of what was once a serious and even sinister folkloric tradition. The fairies of the past were feared as dangerous and powerful beings who were sometimes friendly to humans but could also be cruel or mischievous.”

What About UFOs (or UAPs)?

What about the reports of unexplained phenomena? Interest in unidentified flying objects (UFOs), also called unidentified aerial phenomena (UAPs), has increased dramatically in recent years, with more attention given to the subject by today's media.

Some of the explanations extant for UFOs include natural meteorological phenomena, advanced technology developed by some nation on earth, optical illusions, dirt on a lens and fabricated hoaxes. However, the most intriguing claim is that they are extraterrestrial spacecraft.

It is because of this very popular and persistent claim that one might ask a couple of questions:

1. Could there be advanced civilizations on other planets?
2. Could spirit beings have anything to do with UFOs?

The Bible teaches that all life was created by God, both physical and spirit beings. Since Bible believers recognize that life did not evolve on earth or anywhere else in God's creation, it is understandable that they might wonder if demonic spirits could possibly have any involvement in some unexplainable aerial phenomena.

We know that the angels—including the angels that sinned—are greater in power and might than humans and are capable of appearing to humans. We also know that Satan and demons have hurtful and destructive motives, can manipulate physical objects, and can inhabit physical beings. It is the awareness of these facts that engenders speculation about whether there is any connection between some UFO observations and the spirit world.

Knowing that Satan and demons are capable of demonstrating astonishing and supernatural manifestations to humans, we would conclude that it is certainly possible that they might display aerial phenomena of various sorts.

But are they doing so? We must honestly answer that we simply do not know. We do know that in the end time there will be a great increase in signs and wonders performed by Satan

and demons. And we know that we need to be on guard against being deceived by any impressive signs and stay focused on God's Kingdom and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33).

In a somewhat similar vein, many today also wonder about other much-debated phenomena, such as crop circles and animal mutilations. These involve mysterious events for which explanations range from human hoaxes to supernatural causes. We don't need to find the answer for all news items like these.

Could demons be involved in any of these events? While demons are certainly capable of acting upon physical objects, animals and materials in these—and a myriad of other—ways, it is fruitless to speculate about which specific events they are involved in.

It is interesting to consider that in the future—when Jesus Christ returns to earth—many humans will *fight* against a spirit being coming to the earth from outer space (Revelation 19:19). But they will actually be fighting against Jesus Christ.

Be Vigilant— Stay Out of Danger!



As part of a prophecy describing the end of this evil age, Revelation 12:12 informs us, “Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.” We should therefore expect Satan and demons to become more active in the days ahead.

The very next verse shows Satan intensifying his persecution of God’s Church (symbolized here by a woman), as part of his final, desperate attempt to thwart God’s plan. “Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman.” Verse 17 also says, “And the dragon was *enraged* with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

But while God’s saints will recognize Satan’s deception, others will continue to be deceived and will be *seeking* and even worshipping demons! “But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not *worship demons*” (Revelation 9:20).

How can this be? In the end times, Satan will increase his efforts to deceive, using signs and wonders, and to attract humans in various ways.

There are basic things we can do to have protection from the dangers many other people will fall prey to. God's law instructs us to strictly avoid a number of specific practices connected to the spirit world.

The most comprehensive list of these forbidden practices is found in Deuteronomy 18.

Many today believe the prohibitions described in this passage are obsolete, unwarranted concerns for our modern society. Nothing could be further from the truth. For millennia, these practices have been used to contact the dark spirit realm, and demons often respond.

These practices are becoming increasingly popular. Pagan, Wiccan and occult clubs are prevalent in colleges and other social communities. The Internet has made these materials more accessible than ever before. And bookstores often contain entire sections of books on these practices.

Christians should never participate in demonic practices and should, in fact, stay far away from them. One doesn't need to become an expert in any of these things in order to avoid them.

Forbidden practices in Deuteronomy 18:9-14

"When you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall *not* learn to follow the abominations of those nations.

"There shall not be found among you anyone who *makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire*, or one who practices *witchcraft*, or a *soothsayer*, or one who *interprets omens*, or a *sorcerer*, or one who *conjures spells*, or a *medium*, or a *spiritist*, or one who *calls up the dead*.

"For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you. You shall be blameless before the LORD your God. For these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners; but as for you, the LORD your God has not appointed such for you."

1. *Anyone who makes his son or his daughter to pass through the fire:*

One who practices child sacrifice, a human sacrifice to idols. God loves children and holds parents responsible for protecting them from the evils of abortion, violence and abuse. He also expects parents to teach their children about the dangers of the spirit world.

2. *One who practices witchcraft (or divination):* One who seeks to discover hidden (occult) knowledge and foretell future events by

invoking contact with spirit beings or through use of lots, crystal balls, tarot cards or angel cards, tea leaf reading, palm reading, channeling, etc. Included in this today would be Ouija boards, fortune tellers, Wicca, “white” or “good” witches, psychics and black magic.

3. ***Soothsayer (or observer of times)***: One who attempts to tell the future by interpreting occurrences, such as the position or motion of stars, planets, eclipses, clouds, etc. Included is prohibition of astrology, horoscopes, numerology and palm reading.
4. ***One who interprets omens (or enchanter)***: One who practices magic, casts spells or practices divination by observing birds in flight or the entrails (organs) of animals.
5. ***Sorcerer (or witch)***: One who practices magic, often by means of drugs or potions, intended to bring about events, healings, etc. by supernatural help. It can be either “black” or “white” magic (both are of Satan). This isn’t a reference to entertainment “magic,” such as seeming to make something disappear or sleight of hand, but to demonic presence and activity. Beware of Wicca, shamanism and shamans, levitation, psychokinesis, casting spells, séances, full-moon ceremonies, etc.
6. ***One who conjures spells (or charmer)***: One who puts a spell upon someone, affects events by the use of magic, or chants a magical verse or formula. An object or piece of jewelry may be used for such magical purposes, such as tying knots for divination. Beware of occult rituals and symbols, talismans, crystals, reciting magical chants or spells, amulets, etc.
7. ***Medium (or consulter with familiar spirits)***: One who requests revelation from a divining spirit (from a demon, Python spirit, etc.). Beware of channeling, spiritism, mediums, ascended masters, invisible spirit friends, Ouija boards, automatic writing, séances, divining rods, etc.
8. ***Spiritist (or wizard)***: Either the masculine of witch or a student of the occult (supposedly “wise”). A male witch, sorcerer, magician, conjurer; one who uses magic to have control over another person. Also, someone who uses magic or magic potions to change natural events. Beware of sorcery, chanting mantras, astral travel, clairvoyance, etc.
9. ***One who calls up the dead (or necromancer)***: One who claims to speak with those who have died. If contact is made, it could be communication with a demon masquerading as the deceased person. Beware of channeling, mediums, spiritism, Ouija boards, sorcery, voodoo, etc.

Involvement in these activities is not harmless interest in historical customs. They are practices that, if not repented of, will cause a person to forfeit *salvation*—eternal life in God’s Kingdom. Galatians 5 plainly declares that “sorcery” is one of the “works of the flesh” and states that “those who practice such things will *not* inherit the kingdom of God” (verses 20-21).

What should we steer clear of today?

In conjunction with the warnings listed above, there are a number of areas to steer clear of in today’s world.

Parents need to be very discerning and wise in what they allow their children to watch or read, and in explaining truth to their children. Out of love and concern, parents have a responsibility to *protect* their children from the dangers of the cunning, appealing, dark spirit world.

The list below illustrates how *broad* the available arenas of the dark spirit world have become. Within this list are some general activities to avoid:

- Movies and books glorifying, celebrating or making light of any of the forbidden practices of Deuteronomy 18.
- Horror movies, games and books (featuring themes that are demonic, sadistic, evil, brutal, etc.).
- Paranormal parlor games. These have become very popular today. (Many parents are unaware that they are being played even at slumber parties.) Some of these games include “Light as a feather, stiff as a board,” horror-themed board games, Ouija boards, table levitation, table-turning and others.
- Role-playing games (RPGs) emphasizing violence, horror or any of the forbidden practices of Deuteronomy 18.
- Haunted houses. Some haunted houses are clearly staged for attention or commercial gain. Others, however, are real. Demons seek to inhabit some place or person. There are many accounts of people witnessing events and sounds in houses—or other places—where nonhuman entities are clearly active. Real or not, Christians should steer clear of anything attempting to replicate an environment of demonic influence.
- Black magic. This is: “1. Magic practiced for evil purposes or in league with supposed evil spirits; witchcraft. 2. Magic derived from evil forces, as distinct from good or benign forces; or magic performed with the intention of doing

harm. 3. The belief in magical spells that harness occult forces or evil spirits to produce unnatural effects in the world” (*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 5th Edition).

- Voodoo rituals and religion. Voodoo is a religion “practised in the Caribbean [especially Haiti] and the southern [United States], combining elements of Roman Catholic ritual with traditional African magical and religious rites, and characterized by sorcery and spirit possession” (Oxfordreference.com). Voodoo is not just myth or superstition. It is one of the many conventions the dark spirit world recognizes and often cooperates with.
- Eastern religious practices. Anciently, Israel was warned about embracing “eastern ways” (Isaiah 2:6). In recent years, many ideas and practices of Eastern religions—particularly Hinduism, Buddhism and Taoism—have found their way to the West. Specific Eastern ideas that have become integrated into people’s spirituality and thought include karma, spiritual energy fields, yoga, various meditation and mindfulness techniques, Reiki, crystal healing, chakras, hypnosis and recitation of mantras.

Never seek contact with any spirit but God!

Christ told us to pray to the Father (Matthew 6:6, 9; Colossians 1:3). We should not be seeking contact or experience with any other spirit beings. New Age practices, for example, involve efforts to “get in touch” with the spirit realm. (Most New Age practices are actually very old, with roots in ancient paganism.)

As stated earlier, sometimes these movements try to sugarcoat their practices in Christianity by seeking guidance from righteous angels, like Michael or Gabriel. But Christians should never seek communication or guidance from any being other than God the Father through Jesus Christ.

For millennia, people have known there is a real spirit world and have tried to contact it through various means. The holy, righteous angels do not answer humans’ summons. They serve God’s saints and only at His behest. Demons, however, are often willing to oblige human efforts to connect with them, hear them and see their impressive abilities. Below are several areas to be aware of.

The artist's muse

Through the ages, some people have willingly turned to demons for assistance in their personal life or occupation. Anciently, poets, playwrights and musicians would seek a spirit—called a *muse*—and even pray for it and to it.

While the term *muse* is not used as commonly today, many artists have sought the same inspiration or assistance from the spirit realm. In interviews and biographies, they have related how something—or someone—came to their mind and assisted them in ways that they admit were beyond their personal capacity.

Perhaps this is where a spirit literally becomes a “*familiar spirit*.” God commands, “Give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after them, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God” (Leviticus 19:31).

There are two different concepts taught regarding inspiration. One is for artists to allow themselves to tap into their innate creativity, and of course, this can be fine. But the other is to open themselves to the inspiration of outside spirits, elementals, mind of nature, etc.

The Bible instructs us to have nothing to do with that realm. “I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord’s table and of the table of demons” (1 Corinthians 10:20-21).

Unrestrained religious displays

There are some religious groups that encourage participants to relinquish their mental and emotional constraints in order to become “slain in the Spirit” (in which participants often fall uncontrollably to the floor) or utter incomprehensible sounds. In a religious context the spontaneous uttering of sounds is called glossolalia. Britannica.com defines it:

“**Glossolalia**, also called **speaking in tongues**, (from Greek *glōssa*, ‘tongue,’ and *lalia*, ‘talking’), utterances approximating words and speech, usually produced during states of intense religious experience. The vocal organs of the speaker are affected; the tongue moves, in many cases without the conscious control of the speaker; and generally unintelligible speech pours forth. Speakers and witnesses may interpret the phenomenon as possession by a supernatural entity, conversation with divine beings, or the channeling of a divine proclamation or inspiration . . . Glossolalia occurred among adherents of various ancient religions, including some of the ancient Greek religions.”

Nothing in the Bible endorses any such displays. When a person voluntarily relinquishes his or her emotional defenses of self-control, demons can take advantage of his or her vulnerable mental state to influence or possess that person, even if only temporarily.

The Bible tells us that true servants of God will always have control of themselves: “The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets” (1 Corinthians 14:32). A true minister of God will always have control of his mental state, especially when he’s teaching God’s Word, and will also lead people to maintain control of their minds.

(For the true meaning of speaking in tongues, see our online articles [“What Is Speaking in Tongues?”](#) and [“Is Being ‘Slain in the Spirit’ Biblical?”](#))

What about demon possession and rebuking?

Some have seen or heard demons or demon-produced phenomena. In other cases, demons have pestered people or incited them to act or speak in uncharacteristic or destructive ways.

Some, however, have been actually *possessed* by a demon. This is when a demon enters and takes control of a human, so that the victim no longer has control of his or her body or mind. As we see from biblical accounts and modern-day anecdotal evidence, the demon will often use the person’s voice to speak what the demon wants to say.

In some cases, more than one demon enters the person, and when they speak through a human host, their different personalities are often apparent. Some are angry and hostile, some are always lying, some are despondent and morose, some are frivolous, some are sinister, some are silly, and some are deranged and wild. Sometimes one demon will be speaking through the human, when another interrupts him.

The different personalities witnessed by other people make it appear that the human host or victim has a split personality. But we should be careful not to equate all mental illness with demon influence. See our online article [“What Christians Need to Understand About Mental Health.”](#)

To understand demon possession, we should look to the Bible.

Mark 5:2-5 relates the account of a man possessed by demons, who were making him cry out and cut himself with stones. Let’s first notice the *strength* of the demons as exhibited through the man.

“And when He [Christ] had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who had his

dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him, not even with chains, because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him” (verses 2-4).

“We should not seek a relationship with a ‘familiar spirit.’ We should not delve into occult materials. These are self-destructive personal choices.”

Imagine the power required to break iron chains and shackles!

In Mark 9:17-22, a demon inhabiting a child made him mute, threw him down on the ground and into fire and water, and made him foam at the mouth, grind his teeth and suffer convulsions.

Mark 1:34 says Christ “healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out *many demons*.”

Why were there so many people afflicted with demons in Christ’s day? (References to demons appear over 70 times in the Gospel accounts.)

The Son of God had arrived on earth, in human flesh, to redeem humans and prepare for the replacement of Satan and the demons. Therefore, the stakes were enormously high. We can imagine Satan would summon all the assistance of his realm possible to try to wreak havoc and attempt to disrupt God’s plan.

The biblical accounts indicate demons desire to *inhabit* something. As we saw in Mark 5, Christ met a man possessed by *many* demons. The parallel account in Matthew 8:28-32 mentions there was a second demon-possessed man there as well. The demons caused the men to live naked, in tombs and in the wilderness, seizing them and forcing them to cut themselves with sharp stones.

The demons requested that if Christ was going to cast them out, He would permit them to enter a local herd of about 2,000 swine. Upon leaving the men, the demons entered the swine and proceeded to drown them violently in the sea.

This shows the desire of demons to inhabit someone, or something, as well as their violent and destructive nature. The New Testament indicates

that demons who have inhabited a human “home” do not want to leave and will not unless forced to do so.

Obviously, Jesus Christ has the power and authority to make demons leave a victim at His command. (As James 2:19 says, “Even the demons believe—and tremble!”) Christ Himself cast demons out of many people. But He also conferred authority to His appointed representatives to cast out demons. “Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases” (Luke 9:1).

On one occasion, Christ “appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go . . .

“Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, ‘Lord, even the demons are subject to us *in Your name*’” (Luke 10:1, 17).

Christ’s representatives were given the authority to command demons to leave, by doing so *in His name*—in other words, in His place, or by His authority.

After the time period of the Gospels, the indication is that the incidence of such affliction was never as prolific as it was when Christ was conducting His ministry. And subsequent accounts—to this day—have been relatively rare. Nonetheless, it does occur, and as the end of the age nears, it is possible there will be a spike in cases of demon possession and other related disturbances. It is our personal responsibility to do what we can to avoid these issues in our lives.

For example, we should not seek a relationship with a “familiar spirit.” We should not delve into occult materials. These are self-destructive personal choices that some people are making—and they must correct and *want* to change.

Also notice what Christ said in Matthew 12:43-45:

“When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. Then he says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation.”

We should apply Christ’s words here to emphasize the importance of guarding our mental and spiritual house at all times, in order to avoid ever ending up being troubled by an unclean spirit in the first place.

Safeguard your house!

We don't need to fear demons. However, we must be doing our part to avoid trouble. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

There are habits that make one more vulnerable or open to unwelcome demonic activity or possession. Ephesians 4:27 calls it giving "place to the devil"—in other words, behavior that gives Satan and demons an opportunity or open door to single us out as easy prey. The safeguards against danger are likewise habits—good, healthy habits.

Here are fundamental habits that we must follow to keep our mental and spiritual "house" in order:

1. Have nothing to do with *any* of the prohibited practices listed in Deuteronomy 18.
2. Pray regularly for protection! Among the points Christ listed for us to include in our prayers is to petition God's protection from "the evil one" (Matthew 6:13). Recalling the biblical examples we've seen earlier, we should always realize that in Satan's world, we are completely dependent on God's protection for our survival and our welfare.
3. Let go of anger quickly. Ephesians 4:26 advises, "'Be angry, and do not sin': do not let the sun go down on your wrath." This means there is a time to be angry for the right reason (as even Christ was at times), but it should not be in selfishness, revenge or lack of self-control. And any anger should be addressed and let go of quickly. Unbridled anger often escalates into rage, which is extremely dangerous, and is like a "welcome" sign to Satan or demons.
4. Avoid *resentment* and *bitterness* at all costs! "Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice [hatred]" (Ephesians 4:31). Bitterness is a poison that will destroy the one harboring it. Notice what Hebrews 12:14-15 instructs: "Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord . . . lest *any root of bitterness* springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled." There are cases where a person's demon possession was preceded by a bout of rage or bitterness.
5. Develop the habit of focusing and thinking more on biblical and spiritually uplifting things (Philippians 4:8). Most people

give little regard to deciding what to think about. It does take some effort to deliberately control our thoughts. We need God's help to bring "every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:4-5). Satan is not looking for victims who are physically weak as much as for those whose *minds* are undisciplined and easier to influence or possess.

6. Avoid any practice that creates an open space for a demon to inhabit. This can include unbiblical forms of meditation that encourage a person to clear his or her mind of active thoughts or to allow thoughts to enter and leave the mind outside of the person's active control. It can also include hypnotism. We must fill our mind with God's Word, not leave it empty (Matthew 12:43-44).
7. Consider the *music* you listen to. Music is a powerful medium that can stir emotions and affect our mental state. A biblical example showing the effect of music is that of King Saul and his young successor, David. In departing from obeying God, Saul began being troubled by a demon spirit. "But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a *distressing spirit* from the LORD troubled him" (1 Samuel 16:14). "From the LORD" means God allowed this spirit to trouble Saul, as one of the consequences of his prideful departure from God.

Young David, a skillful musician, was summoned. Notice the effect his calming music had: "And so it was, whenever the spirit from God was upon Saul, that David would take a harp and play it with his hand. Then Saul would become refreshed and well, *and the distressing spirit would depart from him*" (verse 23).

8. Resist the devil and draw near to God. Remember James 4:7-8: "Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you." How do you "resist the devil"? By following the steps listed above. How do you "draw near to God"? By developing the habit of regular prayer, Bible study, biblical meditation, occasional fasting and spiritual fellowship. Learn more in our free book [*Five Tools for Spiritual Growth*](#).

On one occasion, Christ said that there were extra requirements for casting out particularly strong, stubborn

demons: “So He said to them, ‘This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting’” (Mark 9:29).

The spiritual influence we should seek: God’s Holy Spirit

While we should avoid the evil spiritual realm, there is a spiritual influence God wants us to seek and be led by.

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God” (Romans 8:14).

Earlier in the chapter, Paul made this comparison: “For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God” (verses 6-8).

The Bible contrasts two mindsets: the normal, human one (the fleshly, carnal mind) and the one led by the Spirit of God (the spiritual mind, verse 9). Thus, having the Holy Spirit dwelling in us and leading us is a prerequisite for pleasing God.

Leading up to the passage in Romans 8, the apostle Paul explained his own experience with the two mindsets. As challenging as he shows the process of change to be in Romans 7, Paul makes it clear that Jesus Christ will deliver us (verse 25) and that as a result of the change we will become beloved “children of God” (8:16-17).

In Acts 2:38 the apostle Peter summarized the process God has set for us to follow to receive His Spirit: “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Study more in our online article [“How Do You Know You Have the Holy Spirit?”](#)

What should you do if troubled by a demon?

Some people have been visited or terrorized by demons. Such encounters have often included inexplicable footsteps, voices or other noises in one’s home, moving objects, lights or other items turning on or off by themselves, sudden foul odors, sudden changes in room temperature, visible appearances, etc.

In some of these episodes, people also feel the presence of a dark being.

Anytime you experience any of the above unnatural occurrences, you should immediately *pray* to God, that *He* would rebuke any evil spirit that

is present. Because we do not have authority over demons (only God and Christ do), we should cry out to God and beseech Him to quickly rebuke any such spirit and stop it from troubling us further. We can also call for Christ's ordained ministers to rebuke evil spirits.

Additionally, it would be wise to quickly get your Bible and begin reading God's Word. Reading positive words from Christ (for example, Matthew 5-7) helps to focus our mind on God's wavelength. Demons are more attracted by a mind focused on negative, angry, vengeful, destructive or lawless thoughts. We should also pray for God to help us control our thoughts and to think on more positive, godly subjects.

Resistance to evil spirits is key. This means appealing wholeheartedly to God and truly wanting nothing to do with the demonic presence or realm. Remember again the promise in James 4:7-8: "Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you." This certainly applies in our prayers to God for deliverance from any troubling evil spirit.

If we have invited demonic trouble by sinful actions, thoughts or involvement in any of the forbidden practices mentioned earlier, we should wholeheartedly repent of such to God. God listens to prayers of repentance and is eager to help us when we cry out to Him.

Humans to Become Children of God



his present age is near its end. The deceptive and destructive reign of its ruler, Satan, has once again led the human race down a path of self-destruction. But this time God won't flood the world to start over (see Genesis 6:5, 13; 9:11).

However, God will intervene before it's too late. "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved" (Matthew 24:21-22; for details of how this age will come to its end, see our online article "[When Will the World End?](#)").

The Bible teaches us that, beginning with the return of Christ, there will be a series of three resurrections.

It begins with "firstfruits" and the first resurrection

The *first* resurrection marks the beginning of when humans will be changed into immortal spirit beings—members of the divine family of God.

Actually, Christ was the first of these firsts. As the apostle Paul explains in 1 Corinthians 15:20-23, "But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has

become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep [died]. For since by man [Adam] came death, by Man [Christ] also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming."

Paul goes on to explain that God's saints who are still alive when Christ returns will likewise be *changed* into spirit at that time. "Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep [die], but we shall all be *changed*—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be *changed*" (verses 51-52).

Paul also gives the sequence of events in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17: "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air."

God's servants don't go to heaven. Instead, Christ will come down from heaven to the *earth*. The resurrected saints will first meet Him in the clouds, and from there, Christ will go to the Mount of Olives (where He left the earth from when He returned to heaven; see Acts 1:9-12; Zechariah 14:3-4). This is also where He will defeat the armies gathered to fight against Him (Revelation 19:19).

Satan will be bound so he can't deceive people for a thousand years (Revelation 20:2-3).

Then Christ—with His spirit-composed saints—will begin ruling on the *earth*. In addition to immortality, the reward of the saints will include the privilege of reigning with Christ!

Notice Revelation 20:6, especially the second part of the verse: "Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."

Why do humans die?

God intentionally created humans to have limited life spans. Unlike angels, humans were designed to be very short-lived; we are fashioned literally out of elements of the earth.

"And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being" (Genesis

2:7). God informed the first humans, “For dust you are, and to dust you shall return” (Genesis 3:19).

That would be the end for every human, for everyone has violated God’s law. “For the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). What a human reaps for having sinned (violating God’s law)—even just once—is not eternal life in some place of punishment. It is *death*. God has never canceled any of His perfect laws, nor has He changed this death penalty for breaking His law.

But in God’s great plan, Jesus Christ, the One through whom God created all things and whose life is worth infinitely more than the sum total of the human race, became a human in order to die, thus paying the death penalty for any human who repents.

Repentance—which includes embracing God and His law—is required in order to have this payment applied. God also requires baptism. (For more information about this process of conversion, see our free booklet [Change Your Life](#).)

When God’s terms are met, then the rest of Romans 6:23 comes into play: “But the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” We can never *earn* eternal life, but God is willing to grant it to those who desire to live forever on His terms. Lucifer and a third of the angels were not willing to continue embracing God’s terms. God will not bring others into His family who will make the same choice as Satan and his demons.

Humans to be elevated above angels

Living forever means living as a *spirit being*. God made humans to be temporarily lower than the angels, but God’s plan is for humans to one day be above angels. The first to rise from this human state to a spirit, glorified state above angels was Jesus Christ Himself when He was resurrected and then returned to heaven.

Remember the levels of existence, or kingdoms, mentioned in Chapter 2? First, there is the animal kingdom (including all physical creatures other than humans). Above this is the human level of existence. Above this is the angelic level of existence. And above the angels is God’s level of existence. We can also think of these as families or realms.

So, if God’s plan is for humans to ascend above the angelic realm, what is that realm? It is the God family! Since the beginning of His human creation, God’s plan has been for humans to one day enter into His own divine, spirit-composed God family! Recall how God created every

life-form to reproduce “according to its kind” in Genesis 1. The pinnacle of God’s creation was humanity, made in God’s image, according to God’s likeness—made to be like God (Genesis 1:26-27).

The ultimate fulfillment of this begins with the resurrection of God’s saints, or “firstfruits” (James 1:18; Revelation 14:4), at Christ’s return. Pointing to that resurrection, the apostle John said to God’s Church, “Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is” (1 John 3:2).

A human embryo is already its parents’ child—by virtue of the seed of conception by the parents—before it is ever born into the human family. But only after birth is the unique appearance of that child seen. In the same way, God’s human firstfruits are already His children—by virtue of the seed of begetting by God’s Spirit—before they are born into the God family. But, as John said, “It has not yet been revealed what we shall be,” because we are not yet *born* into the God family.

When Christ is “revealed” (when He *returns* to earth and “every eye will see Him,” as Revelation 1:7 says), then the first resurrection takes place, and that resurrection is to divine, immortal, spirit life in the God family. Then—being “like Him”—we will see Him in His *full* glory!

When Christ returns, He will reign over the earth for 1,000 years. Although little is mentioned in the Bible about those living into or born during this Millennium, the books of the Bible will be opened to them. The veil that hid God’s way of life and purpose from mankind will have been taken away (2 Corinthians 3:16). In His own time, God will elevate those who are faithful to also become spirit-born children of God.

Then Satan will be released for a short period of time (as we will see in the next chapter) before being banished for the rest of eternity.

The second resurrection

The next major event in God’s plan will be the resurrection back to *physical* life for the rest of the human race. In this world under Satan’s reign, the vast majority of people from all human history have never had the opportunity to fully understand God’s truth or receive salvation. The fact that some are “firstfruits” implies a much larger harvest to follow.

Revelation 20:5 says, “But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished.” This is a parenthetical statement, within the context of the *first* resurrection mentioned in the previous verse.

The first resurrection will occur when the saints rise to eternal spirit life at Christ's return to earth. After 1,000 years, the rest of humanity will be resurrected. Thus, it is the *second* resurrection. In this resurrection, multiple billions of humans will all have the chance to learn God's law and embrace it and be offered forgiveness and the gift of eternal life.

Verses 11-12 of this chapter tell us more about the second resurrection. "Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it . . . And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books."

Here we see a resurrection back to life—a life that will then be under judgment. We are informed in Hebrews 9:27, "And as it is appointed for

men to die once, but after this the judgment." For the vast majority of humans, the second resurrection will be their day of judgment.

The Book of Life is also opened during this period, in order to begin adding names to it, as all those humans begin learning and practicing God's truth in their new life.

In Matthew 11:22-24 and 12:41-42, Jesus showed that people from different time periods would be raised back to life concurrently.

Inhabitants of the cities of Tyre, Sidon, Sodom and Nineveh are all mentioned as one day standing in judgment before God (and alongside Christ's contemporaries).

This second resurrection is described graphically in Ezekiel 37, where God showed the prophet a vision of what that resurrection will be like. While humans from all races, nations and periods of history will be resurrected at that time, God showed Ezekiel just one nation (Israel) and one location. Yet even the house of Israel, with its long history, will likely number into the billions. This is the famous "valley of dry bones"

“God’s plan is for humans to be born into the divine God family and then to ultimately have dominion over God’s entire creation for eternity.”

prophecy. (If you haven't before, take the time to read this detailed prophecy for yourself.)

Again, this is a resurrection to *physical* life. "Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but there was no breath in them. Also He said to me, 'Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, "Thus says the Lord God: 'Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live''" (verses 8-9). Notice that these newly resurrected bodies require "breath" (air) to live.

"Then you shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves" (verse 13). They—and billions of other humans—did not truly know God in their lifetime in this world. They *will* learn all about Him in the second resurrection.

Furthermore—and very importantly—they will have the opportunity to have the Spirit of God imparted to them, just as the firstfruits had. "I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken it and performed it" (verse 14).

All people will have a complete chance to become spirit-born members of God's family.

The third resurrection and lake of fire

Christ will reign on earth through the Millennium and on through the second resurrection and Great White Throne Judgment period. All those resurrected humans who choose to live God's way will have their names written in the Book of Life, which means they will be given immortal, spirit life in the family of God.

But some will choose to reject God's laws and way of life. And there are some who have already had the opportunity in this life, but knowingly, willfully rejected God and His truth.

Revelation 20:14-15 reveals the next step: "Then Death and Hades [the Greek word for the grave] were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second [permanent] death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire."

Revelation 21:8 says, "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

The incorrigibly sinful obviously do not rise in the first resurrection. The second resurrection is for those who have not had their chance at salvation in their first life. Humans who had their chance in this life—and lost it, by ultimately rejecting God—will not rise in either the first or second resurrection. Therefore, there is a final—or third—resurrection in which those people will rise and subsequently have their lives formally, and permanently, terminated.

Hebrews 10:26-27 alludes to this resurrection: “For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.”

The lake of fire will ultimately engulf the entire earth. As 2 Peter 3:7 says, “But the heavens and the earth . . . are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.” Verse 10 describes it: “The heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.”

Those who ultimately reject God will be burned up. The Bible does not teach that they will live forever in some ever-burning hell. For more understanding about what the Bible really teaches about hell and heaven and the mortality of man, see our free booklet *The Last Enemy: What Really Happens After Death?*

God's ultimate plan for humans

But the earth is not to remain a smoldering orb in the future. God is going to replace the earth and the heavens. On this beautiful new earth, God's Kingdom will be planted for the rest of eternity, and a brand-new capital city will be established upon it.

Jerusalem was the capital of God's covenant nation, Israel. In the Millennium, and through the Great White Throne Judgment period, Jerusalem will be the capital of the earth and the residence of Jesus Christ, the King of the world (see Isaiah 2:3, for example.) And the capital of the new earth will again be Jerusalem.

But it will be an amazing capital, *far* more amazing than anything the earth has ever seen. Its measurements, described in Revelation 21, translate into approximately 1,500 miles in each direction—width, length and height! Such an enormous edifice will be the capital of not only the earth, but all God's creation, including the heavens. And it will also be God's *home*.

“Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband”

(Revelation 21:2). Verses 9-27 of this chapter describe this incredible city. (For more information, see our online article "[New Jerusalem](#).") Verse 12 says that 12 angels will be stationed at the 12 gates to the city, again showing that angels will remain active in God's service.

And then, the Father Himself will dwell on earth with the spirit-born members of His divine family! "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God" (verse 3).

Romans 8 contains a prophecy of what the future holds. God's incredible plan for humans—and the whole creation—is summarized by the apostle Paul:

"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (verse 18). Daniel 12:2-3 echoes this truth: "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever."

The apostle Paul continues in Romans 8: "For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body" (verses 19-23).

Paul is reminding Church members that the physical creation is—by design—*temporary*. It is "winding down," gradually decaying, following the physical law of entropy. Left alone, stars would continue to burn out and the universe would eventually contain only cold, dark galaxies, full of decaying planets.

Its future is bleak; thus, the metaphor of groaning and laboring with birth pangs. This expression means that the creation is anticipating deliverance from its current state—that something will renew it. Indeed, God will make it all brand-new! Consider these prophecies:

- "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth" (Isaiah 65:17).
- "'For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me,' says the LORD, 'so shall your descendants and your name remain'" (Isaiah 66:22).

- “Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells” (2 Peter 3:13).
- “Then He who sat on the throne said, ‘Behold, I make all things new’” (Revelation 21:5).

And this renewed, never-decaying, never-dying creation will be inherited by God’s spirit-born family members. Remember what Hebrews 2:6-8 said, in explaining King David’s prophetic words about humans one day having all God’s creation put in subjection under them. Again, God’s plan is for humans to be born into the divine God family and then to ultimately have dominion over God’s *entire* creation for eternity. And it is a *very* vast creation!

Looking forward to that time, Revelation 21:4-5 contains some of the most encouraging words in the entire Bible: “And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. Then He who sat on the throne said, ‘Behold, I make all things new.’ And He said to me, ‘Write, for these words are true and faithful.’”

The Future of Angels and Fallen Angels



What is the fate of Satan and the demons? After Christ returns, Satan and the demons will be banished, unable to harm or influence humans for 1,000 years. In Revelation 20:1-3 the place of Satan's imprisonment is called the "bottomless pit" or "abyss" (New Revised Standard Version) or "pit" (New International Version), a place of restraint so that they cannot roam the earth, wreak havoc or deceive humans.

This future binding of Satan is portrayed by one of God's annual holy days. Leviticus 16:15-22 describes a ceremony on the Day of Atonement. Two goats were involved—one representing Christ, and the other, Satan. The goat representing Christ was slain (as, indeed, Christ was slain). The goat representing Satan remained alive, but was forcefully taken out to the wilderness, away from people. (See our online article "[The Day of Atonement: Removing the Enemy, Reconciling All to God.](#)")

The fate of this second goat foreshadowed what will happen to Satan after Christ returns:

"He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the

bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while” (Revelation 20:2-3).

This is described in verses 7-8:

“Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth.”

After Satan’s (and the demons’) release and renewed efforts to thwart God’s plan, “the devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet *are*” (verse 10). The word *are*, appearing in some Bibles, should instead say “were cast,” as these two humans—the beast and false prophet—will be cast into a fire and burned up at the *beginning* of the Millennium, as shown in Revelation 19:20.

Christ also pointed to the post-Millennium fire as the means by which all unrepentant humans will eventually meet their second—or permanent—death. “Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels’” (Matthew 25:41).

The devil and his angels are spirit and will not die. This fire is not their final fate. At some point, God will banish them to the eternal fate of their judgment. This is what is meant by the rest of verse 10 in Revelation 20: “And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.” Jude 1:6, 13 and 2 Peter 2:17 allude to their eternal fate to live in the “blackness of darkness forever.”

Recall the episode in Matthew 8 of the two men possessed with many demons. They had cried out to Christ, “What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?” (verse 29). They did not say, “Have you come here to *kill* us before the time?” As previously explained, angels, including those that sinned, were created immortal and will not die (as Christ also made clear in Luke 20:35-36).

Their ultimate punishment will be spending eternity in a condition of imprisonment and irrelevance—unable to influence anyone.

The future of the holy angels

In the final years of this age, the holy angels will play crucial roles in prophesied events to occur prior to Christ’s return to the earth. Their tasks will include administering plagues and sounding the seven trumpets. You can read about these events in Revelation chapters 6-16.

Jesus Christ will *return* to earth to save His creation and to take over rulership of the earth. “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory” (Matthew 25:31).

Just think about this fantastic procession of Christ and those millions of angels approaching the earth! Revelation 19:14 also describes this momentous event: “And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.”

The angels will then assist Christ with various details of ushering in God’s government over the earth. One of those tasks will be gathering together His faithful saints. “And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (Matthew 24:31).

This brings us back to one of the primary reasons God created angels. Recall that Hebrews 1:14, in referring to angels, states, “Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?” Even knowing that we shall one day be made higher than them, those angels humbly and diligently serve us now on God’s behalf.

It is incredible to think about these angels who have been dispatched by God to serve us. They saw when we were born, watched us through the years as we grew up, and will continue serving after we die. And they have been doing this for generation after generation, century after century. They will no doubt *rejoice* when they see the humans whom they have served resurrected back to life.

Angels will no doubt *continue* serving those divine, spirit-born members of God’s family in various ways for eternity.

Conclusion

The spirit world—the *true* spirit world—is more fascinating than words can describe. God the Father and Jesus Christ created *everything* (apart from Themselves) that exists. In the spirit realm, these two eternally living, infinitely powerful beings created angels—sentient beings with individual freedom of choice and greater might than humans.

One of the angels (Lucifer) chose to pursue an alternate way of life and rebelled against God. One-third of the angels eventually joined him, becoming enemies of God and then enemies of His human creation. Satan’s deceitful tactics include perpetrating many fallacies about God and the spirit realm.

God created humans in His own image, with the potential to one day be born into the very family of God, rising above the angels. This is the true, amazing potential of *every* human being, including you!

What is the formula for entering God’s family? “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).

Repenting involves ceasing to break God’s laws, which have never been abolished. (The idea that God’s laws are abolished is another example of Satan’s deceitful messages, designed to encourage humans to disobey God as he did. Study more of what the Bible teaches about God’s law in our online article “[Jesus and the Law](#).”)

True repentance is followed by water baptism and the receiving of God’s Spirit as a down payment on eternal life. The change to spirit will first be experienced by God’s firstfruits of this age at the return of Jesus Christ to the earth. This is the time frame of Christ’s promise in Revelation 22:12: “And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.”

After Christ’s return, *all* humans will have the opportunity for salvation—eternal life in the family of God. Then, a prophecy given through King David in Psalm 16:11 will become reality for everyone in God’s eternal family: “You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”

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