

Outline

Angels and Demons: Angels Among Us

One of the first blockbusters of the summer is based on the wildly popular Dan Brown novel, *Angels and Demons*, the prequel to the controversial *The DaVinci Code*. While I don't want to get into the spiritual implications of the movie or the book, it did spark some questions and ideas in my heart and in the heart of those I have talked to. While the movie is more a statement about mystery and intrigue and the formation of the Catholic Church, it caused many of us to think about its title and the existence of unseen forces of good and evil. Are there really such things as Angels and Demons? Is there an unseen spiritual world where a battle for my soul and spirit rages quite unknown to me? Am I constantly the focus of that battle with angels looking out for me and saving me from unseen disaster and demons swirling about trying to trip me up and destroy me?

These are all good questions that need to be considered. And believe me, I have considered them for much of my life. From my mom threatening my boyish impishness with the statement that "God is going to get you for that." - to the old statement and excuse that people have used to justify their behavior, "The Devil made me do it," there is much speculation about the spiritual world.

Why should we take a look at this and wonder about evil? We need to be aware of good and evil and forces of light and darkness, for we need to know what is in our control in this life and what is not as we make our decisions. We need to know how to best battle for the best life we can have now and that means knowing the truth of the spiritual world. So, with that in mind, we will take a few weeks to explore the myths and the truths of Angels and Demons and the Spiritual warfare for our souls.

And today, I would like to tackle the first issue in this question of Angels and Demons – Angels. Are there such beings and if there are, what relationship do they have to me? How should any fact that angels might exist affect me in any way? I can honestly tell you that I am unaware of any encounter that I have had with angels in my life. I do not offer that as proof of anything – only to say that I am not aware of any encounter with an angel. But the Bible is full of references of Angels existing and interfering in the lives of humans, some stories well known and others not so well known:

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests." Luke 2:8-14 NIV

Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty." Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for." Isaiah 6:1-6 NIV

And there are many other occurrences of angels in the Bible, which provide solid biblical support for the existence of angels.

Biblical Support for Angels

◇ Angels are mentioned 108 times in the Old Testament and 165 times in the New Testament

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- ◇ Cursed Adam and Eve driven from Garden by angel - Genesis 3
- ◇ Two angels sent to Abraham informing of Sodom and Gomorrah destruction - Genesis 19
- ◇ Angels going up and down a stairway to Heaven appear to Jacob in a dream - Genesis 28
- ◇ An angel calls Gideon to be judge of Israel - Judges 6
- ◇ Angel tells Mary that she will father God's Son as a virgin - Luke 2
- ◇ Angel reassures Joseph Mary his fiancé was pregnant with God's Son - Matthew 1
- ◇ Angels minister to Jesus after His 40 day fast and battle with devil - Matthew 4
- ◇ Angel frees Peter from jail and tells him to return to preaching - Acts 12
- ◇ Angel named Michael fights Satan in heavens and defeats him hurling him to earth - Revelation 12

Angels are all over the Bible and I could relate tons more stories from the Bible for you as support of them. However, other than the accounts of angels interacting in the lives of men, there is not much else that the Bible says about angels. We can make vague assumptions about their origins and their tasks and their functions, but the Bible is not definitive about the idea of angels or their role in the lives of us as humans.

For example, a question that I have always had and that many others have is this: Is there really such a thing as a guardian angel? Modern thought and much of ancient thought has speculated on the idea that every person has their own personal guardian angel that looks out for them and helps them in the tricky situations of life, saving them from near disaster and life-threatening danger. That is a really cool and comforting thought, but the question is – is it true? Does the world really look like this? **Insert Guardian Angel Commercial** - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qf5-9SbnKXM>

If we have a guardian angel that protects us, why do so many good people die anyway from car accidents and tragic occurrences? Do they just go to sleep on the job or get distracted? Really. The logic just does not seem to be there.

And what about all those occurrences in the Bible where angels were talking to people like Gideon, or Mary, or Joseph, and the many other people in the Bible. Are angels still talking to people today and, if so, wouldn't that make great fodder for Oprah or Dr. Phil or TMZ?

Why isn't the Bible just a little more clear on what we should think about angels or what their role is in our lives? I mean we could clear up all the questions and the trouble. Are angels little chubby babies flying around and looking out for us (where did that one come from – not one chubby baby angel in the Bible – not one baby angel in the Bible)? Do angels have wings? It would appear that some do as we saw in the passage from Isaiah earlier. But then many other passages in the Bible seem to have angels appearing as regular humans like the two visitors that walked up to Abraham's tent:

The LORD appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day. Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed low to the ground. Genesis 18:1,2 NIV

Other passages in the Bible make angels appear superhuman and powerful:

When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses

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and chariots had surrounded the city. "Oh, my lord, what shall we do?" the servant asked. "Don't be afraid," the prophet answered. "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them." And Elisha prayed, "O LORD, open his eyes so he may see." Then the LORD opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. II Kings 6:15-17 NIV

Then there are other passages that talk about how angels interact with humans and are very aware of us, even though we may not realize they exist.

Cheering us on!

In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents. Luke 15:10 NIV

Specific Guidance

... There was a man named Cornelius... He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, "Cornelius!"... "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter." Acts 10:1- 5 NIV

Specific Protection

Daniel answered, "O king, live forever! My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, O king." Daniel 6:22 NIV

However, even though those are really cool moments, with the exception of the first one where it says that the angels rejoice over the repentance of even one sinner, none of these nor any of the other passages about angels that I have inundated you with today are specific principles about the role of angels with humans. They are all specific occurrences of angels obeying God's direction in specific situations. Which leads us right to where our thoughts about angels need to be directed. Here is exactly what you should think about the idea of angels in your life and it comes straight from the mafia:

Fahgeddaboudit!

That's right! It is really not that important. The Bible does not get specific about the role of angels in your life because it is not that important for us to know. Do we have a guardian angel? I don't know. Should I be waiting on an angel to give me a message from God like Mary and Joseph and Gideon? I don't know. I guess if God wants to give me a message through an angel then He can very well do that and I might know it and I might not. That's His choice. I guess the better question is, do I need an angel to protect me and do I need an angel to give me a message from God? And that is an easy answer as well:

You Gotta Be Kidding Me!

I don't need an angel to protect me or to give me a message from God. Pretty cocky, huh? Pretty heady stuff for a bum like me to say, huh? You betcha! And I say it with a great deal of pride. 'Cuz I come from a pretty good family. As a matter of fact I have a pretty good Father who looks out for me just fine. And if you don't believe me, watch out, He just might whack ya! Just kidding – maybe.

You see, I have the full trust and faith that God is my Father and that He is absolutely all-powerful:

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Ah, Sovereign LORD, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you. Jeremiah 32:17 NIV

But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, with men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible. Matthew 19:26 KJV

And the reason that I do not need an angel to tell me what God wants, is that I have two things none of those people who angels talked to in the Bible had in their possession to the fullest extent that I do:

The written, personal published Word of God

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path. Psalm 119:105 NIV

The possession of my mind and spirit by the Holy Spirit of God

Jesus replied, "All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." John 14:25-27 NIV

I am certain there are angels among us. However, I am just as certain that their business is their business and they are about God's business. I don't need to worry about them. And because I have such a loving and faithful God who desires a relationship with me as a perfect Father, I do not need to worry the control of my life into their limited hands. Whatever is the fate of my life, God is in control of it. He promises that He knows my future and that He has it planned out. I need only to put my trust in Him and seek Him with all my heart.

As the band plays this last song about God's love for us, why not use this time to meditate on God, not His Messengers the angels, and commit to Him to trust His love and His will for your life?

Let's pray.

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