

ReGroup 3/12/23

Eternity: Angels and Demons, Part 1

We've covered all the major topics - Time vs Eternity, Heaven vs Hell, but there is so much in and around these subjects that we could still talk about. Our original plan was to spend this week hearing each others' questions and seeking to sort through all the information we've covered over the last few weeks, but we are going to dedicate two future small group sessions to reviewing and reflecting all that we have learned across this series. Please **submit your questions** either **in-person** or to **RisenChurchNC@gmail.com**.

In our conversations and discussions about Heaven and Hell we mostly focused on what they are like and how we fit into God's Eternal plans. Along the way and over the course of our readings, we've heard many references to Angels and Demons. Since we haven't given specific attention to these eternal creatures, it seemed like it would be beneficial for us to spend a dedicated lesson on them, to see what the Bible has to say about them. In this first part, we'll focus on Angels.

The Lord of Hosts

One of the Names of God used often in the Old Testament is "the Lord of Hosts". It is used often to express God's care for the world and readiness to protect His people. Read **Psalm 24:1, 7-10** and you'll notice how this Name for God is associated with encouragement and instilling confidence in us.

"The Lord of Hosts" can also be translated **"The Lord of Angel Armies"**, so "hosts" refers to the thousands of angelic creatures that God has at His side and is ready to deploy to do His bidding at any time.

With this name for God, we get the idea that angels play a key role in God's interactivity with the world and us all. We need elevate them to a higher role than they naturally deserve nor become obsessed with detecting angels among us or spotting them in the world around us. However, it is good to know and heartwarming to remember that God has a special task-force assigned to do His bidding. When we reach our limits, we shouldn't be surprised to hear that God will send Heaven's armies out to work on our behalf.

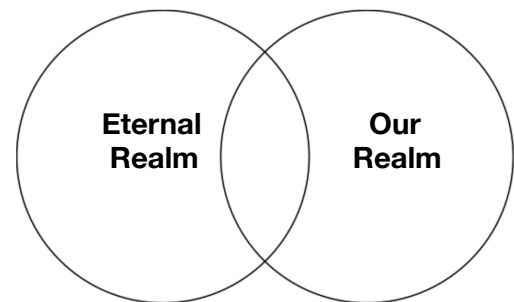
There are dozens of verses we could look at, but take a look at these few to get an idea of how angels are an extension of God's sovereign care of us: **Psalm 34:7**, **Psalm 91:11**, and **Hebrews 1:14**.

The Bible makes it clear that Angels are not to be worshipped or celebrated - that glory goes to Jesus alone. But, part of our worship to God involves an awareness of and an appreciation for how He takes care of us. Knowing about Angels is a key part of giving God His full due.

What are your thoughts about this basic introduction to Angels? You've heard of the saying "Angels among us" - This is true, they are certainly among us. We may never see them, but we can trust that God is at work in unseen and unknown ways that correlate to our safety and well-being.

You'll recall our conversation about Eternity and how Eternity is a separate realm from ours. As difficult and abstract as this may be, it's important that we consider the following points when pondering this age-old question, "*Are there angels among us?*"

The Eternal Realm and our reality which exists in time are two different planes of existence. The image that will help us understand this is that rather than Eternity existing within our reality, it really exists alongside of. Consider an image we're all familiar with: *A Venn Diagram*



Sometimes there is overlap - but not all the time or most of the time. There are a few examples in the Scriptures where Angels were visible to people, but almost always the people responded in fear and awe. This didn't happen because the angels were scary, but because they were literally encountering a crossover between our reality and God's. On that note, we should always have this same sense of reverence, because what looks plain and ordinary to us, is actually Holy to God. Read **Exodus 3:1-5**, **Acts 5:17-21**, and **Hebrews 13:2**.

More often than not, we don't experience these crossover moments - but that doesn't mean that God is not still at work in closer proximity than we may realize. There are a few powerful examples where God opens His people's eyes and lets them see what is going on "behind the scenes", see **2 Kings 6:15-17** and **Luke 2:8-14**.

In short, God is always by our side whether we can tell or not. We shouldn't think it strange or be surprised if and when something happens that we cannot explain. If we experience similar supernatural circumstances, may we share it without end. However, even if we don't and can't explain how He works things out, we *still* proclaim that God is with us. Jesus' promise to us wasn't that we'd always see with our eyes, but that we'd always know in our hearts and have confidence in our spirits, see **Matthew 28:20** and **John 14:18-29**.

What is an Angel?

Angels is really shorthand for *Angelic Beings*. The celestial creatures that we often call angels, are actually given different names in the Bible. Angel, on the other hand, refers to what these different creatures *do* or to *their office*. "Angel" literally means "*messenger*", as in these creatures serve as messengers of God. Even those who remain in Heaven, their behavior still sends a message, as in they communicate the glorious worth of God.

In the Bible we find different names given to the various angelic beings:

- 1) Seraphim - Angels that constantly praise the Lord and declare His worth - **Isaiah 6:1-3**
- 2) Cherubim - Also called "Living Creatures" - Guardians of God's Throne/Glory - **Genesis 3:24, Ezekiel 1:4-14, 10:1-8, Revelation 4:6-9**
- 3) Watchers - Angels that communicate through dreams and visions, revealing something that needs to be done or that will come soon - **Daniel 4:13-18**

By the days of the New Testament, "Angel" had basically been accepted by the Jews as a catch-all title for any Heavenly Being which represented God in Heaven and heralded messages from Him. **Before moving on, spend a few minutes discussing angels and the similarities/differences in these different kinds.**

Mysteries and More

The Bible also refers to "*dominions, thrones, rulers, authorities, and principalities*" as being angelic or heavenly beings. The idea here is the behind every earthly power is a celestial one. Every kingdom and nation that has ever or will ever exist does has a sole purpose in advancing God's wholistic plans for the universe, which are all about establishing His Kingdom. **Ephesians 3:10** alludes to this makeup of the universe, but not much else is offered to us. Nonetheless, we know that there is much going on than meets the eye concerning the rise and fall of nations and kingdoms.

In Daniel, we get a little insight into this when one of these creatures comes to him in a dream and tells him about the behind the scene, cosmic struggle. This suggests that some of these celestial creatures are not angels, but are demons. Read **Daniel 10:10-14, 18-21**.

The Michael mentioned here is most likely Michael the Archangel, which is often associated with Israel and protecting the nation of God's people. Are angles assigned to each nation and do they battle for the soul of a nation? We don't really know, but this allows us to look behind the curtain and get an idea that God is much more sovereign over everything than we may realize.

Next week, we will discuss the flip-side of this discussion and talk about demons and the roles they play in our world. May the promise of God's protection encourage and embolden us this week to seize each day without fear, full of peace.