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**THE  
THIEVES  
OF  
FOREVER**

## **The Angels of the Dragon**

Just as God has angels who do His will, Satan has angels who do his will. The Bible calls them evil spirits. It also calls them demons and devils.

There is no more dire reality confronting human existence than that of evil spirits. They are the unseen enemies of God and of man; they are ceaselessly at work against the will of God and against all the best interests of man. The effects of their activity are all around us today, and the Scriptures inform us that these effects are going to be multiplied many times, and at a very rapid pace, as the prophesied events of the end-time occur—events that precede the era when the returned Lord Jesus will righteously “rule all the nations with an iron scepter” and martyred believers will come to “life and reign with Christ a thousand years” on earth (Revelation 12:5; 20:4).

The fact that the flag of Israel flies over the ancient land, after nearly 2,000 years when Israel had no existence as a nation, is a miracle of history and geography and a major signpost of end-time events, many of which are to center on Israel.

A secular writer wrote a book with the intriguing title *The Rush Hour of the Gods*. Such “gods” are demons and they will, indeed, be in a rush to push their wicked programs before their time is up. Yet, there is no major area of biblical revelation that is more appallingly neglected than that telling of evil spirits.

The term *demons* is foreign to the American consciousness; remote

from the common American concepts of the nature of life and being. Yet no living person escapes the attention of demons.

Ignorance of them, just about total in the West, is becoming less and less convenient in our society, because there has been a marked step-up in demonic supernatural activity in North America in recent years. We see its effects on almost every hand, but too often we are blind to its source.

The demons depend for success in their program of disrupting and destroying human life on ignorance of who they are, what they do, and how they do it. The Bible, the accurate guide to the who and what of the supernatural, throws a searchlight of revelation into the darkness in which demons thrive and shows them up.

By the knowledge gained through the Word of God, demons may be exposed, identified, and dispossessed by men. They may also be intelligently and effectively resisted.

As the head of an organized rebellion against the government of God, Satan leads a host of angelic collaborators. It appears that they number in the millions.

The angels are a divided company. The Scriptures speak, in Matthew 25:41, of "the devil and his angels." That description came from the lips of Jesus, and by it we know that there are angels who follow Satan and are under his command.

The demons were not created as such. They had their origin among the angels of God, as Satan had. Demons are reprobate angels who follow Satan and do his will.

Some quite wonderful speculations have circulated among believers that demons are the disembodied wicked spirits of a human race that existed before Adam. The biblical evidence for this seems so thin as to be virtually invisible unless it is energetically whipped up into an imaginative froth. But I will say no more of it because of this more important fact: even if believers have different views of their origin but are agreed that they are wicked and are to be resisted and overcome by the power of the risen Lord, our approach to them and their works will be the same.

All of the angels were servants of God until Lucifer, the "son of the morning," rebelled and caused a great split among them. Most held to their loyalty to God. Others abandoned that loyalty and went after Lucifer, or Satan.

The Scriptures speak of the angels who sinned against God. The Bible says that "God did not spare the angels when they sinned, but cast them down . . . and committed them to pits of nether gloom to be kept until the judgment" (2 Peter 2:4, rsv).

Again, the Epistle of Jude tells of “the angels who did not keep their first estate but left their own habitation” (v. 6). The demons are angels who left their first estate, as Satan left his. It appears that some evil spirits were put away in confinement. Others are scripturally described as working closely with their leader.

The demons are all individual personalities and they have names. Like all spiritual beings, demons are normally invisible to man. They possess the same faculties as angels, but they have put them out to wicked ends. Every evil spirit has a will, intelligence, a personality, and a distinctive character of its own.

When these angels turned away from God and followed Satan, God turned against them. He did so because their misuse of their native capacities began to undermine the safety and tranquility of the universe.

“Evil spirits” is an accurate descriptive term for demons because they are spirits—invisible living beings—wholly devoted to doing evil.

I have quoted the Scripture that declares that “God is a *spirit*.” Angels are described as “ministering *spirits*.” As fallen angels, demons are described as “evil *spirits*.”

We are told that Satan, “the prince of the power of the air,” is “the spirit who is at work in the children of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:2, κιν). Notice that term “at work.” It speaks of direct, personal satanic activity upon and within individual human beings. Since Satan cannot be everywhere at once, much of his active work is carried out by spirits whose allegiance is to him, to whom he delegates certain assignments.

The men and women who are now engaged in conveying so many evils throughout this society are “children of disobedience” in whom and through whom Satan and his demons are “at work.” Such individuals, whether they know it or not, allow demons to use them to carry forward some of Satan’s purposes in the earth.

*The work of evil spirits is to do whatever they can to ruin people morally, spiritually, physically, and mentally.*

They seek especially, but not exclusively, to ruin human beings morally in the sexual area of life and to ruin them spiritually in the religious area of life. Both of these are critical areas in which, if a person is affected by evil spirits, the results are particularly destructive.

In either of these areas, human beings, if they turn aside from the will of God and are overcome, can be ruined not only in this life but for eternity. Satan is acutely aware that God has declared that no fornicator or adulterer or homosexual offender, no drunkard or idolater will enter heaven, unless truly and fully repentant, forgiven and cleansed. That is why he specializes in promoting or justifying just such things (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

The word *angel* literally means “messenger.” The angels are messengers of God. The demons are messengers of Satan who engage in tempting people to do what is evil and in encouraging them to believe what is not true.

The Scriptures reveal that demons have “doctrines,” or a system of spiritual teachings that they present to mankind, contrary to the truth. Demons have false doctrines of salvation, of eternal destiny, of love, of reincarnation, of self-sacrifice, of asceticism, of the way of access to God, and many others. Each of these doctrines is a lie, presented as truth. That is why the Scriptures warn us not to be “ignorant of the devil’s devices” and not to “give heed to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons” (1 Timothy 4:1, RSV).

The demons—as deliberate, conscious agents of Satan—are occupied in constant, active rebellion against God. They also engage in conflict against men and women who are truly God’s servants. They come unseen to do whatever they can to hinder or buffet such individuals, to snare them, to withstand or thwart them in carrying out God’s will. They will stoop to any trick or deceit or treachery or lie to prevent God’s will from being done on the earth as it is done in heaven.

Their work is not directed solely to men and women who belong to God. They endeavor to get all men and women to violate the will of God. Demons are particularly bent on damaging and destroying human beings—individually, in groups, or, when possible, *en masse*. They use whatever means are convenient to that end.

Taken together, demons constitute the invisible forces of evil assailing mankind today—assailing individual men and women, societies, and nations. Their activities will intensify as the great prophetic events of the end-time occur. Ignorance of who they are and what they do will become more than ever costly.

The American society, once largely free of a good many workings of evil spirits common in areas of the world where the light of God’s Word was little known, has come under massive invasion and attack by evil spirits. The attack is especially concentrated on young people, and though people see the results of it, they are often bewildered by the destructive forces now active among us.

Spiritual powers and spiritual forces, of good and evil, are at warfare today, not figuratively but literally, and that fact is reflected in many surprising, untoward, and frequently violent eruptions among men and nations.

This conflict between the will of God and the will of Satan is conducted on several levels. It is conducted on the earth, it is conducted in the atmosphere of the earth, and it is conducted in the lower heavens.

The angels who serve God and the demons who follow Satan engage in conflict. The Book of Revelation gives us a glimpse of this:

*“Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought”* (12:7, RSV). The dragon is a figurative term for “the devil and Satan,” as the next verse states.

Here are seen two companies of angels under different leaders—Michael and his angels, and Satan and his angels. Michael, an archangel, is a leader of the angels of God, while Satan leads the host of angels called demons, devils, or evil spirits.

This conflict bears upon man, for both angels and demons have to do with men and women.

The earth, and particularly the atmosphere of the earth, is under occupation by Satan and his angelic legions. That is why Satan is called “the god of this world” and “the prince of the power of the air.” Acting with him, among the demons, are other evil princes subordinate to him. They stand together in unrelenting defiance of God’s will.

There is a graphic account of this in the Book of Daniel, which tells the life of that Hebrew prophet in the court of Babylon. To Daniel was entrusted a series of prophecies concerning the whole course of Gentile world kingdoms and concerning the destiny of the Jewish people “in the latter days.” These prophecies are of momentous character and they are immensely relevant to world events today and to events that lie ahead. Because they provide a key to these events, the enemy did all that he could to oppose Daniel’s receiving God’s Word concerning them.

After Babylon fell, Daniel continued as a high government official and a prophet in the court of Persia. Chapter 10 of the Book of Daniel starts: “In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a word was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar. And the word was true and it was a great conflict. And he understood the word and had understanding of the vision.”

Because of the gravity of what he was shown, Daniel devoted three full weeks to prayer and partial fasting. In response, a remarkable thing happened. A visitor came to Daniel from heaven.

When this “man clothed in linen” appeared to him, Daniel writes, “I stood up trembling. Then he said to me, ‘Fear not, Daniel, for *from the first day* that you set your mind to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words. *The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days*; but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, so I left him there with the prince of the kingdom of Persia and came to make you understand what is to befall your people in the latter days’” (Daniel 10:11-14, RSV).

The amazing fact is that the visitor from heaven had trouble getting through! He was powerfully withstood.

Daniel's prayer was heard the *first day*, and the visitor was sent on the first day, but when he reached the atmosphere of the earth "the prince of the kingdom of Persia" arose and withstood him for twenty-one days. Victory came, but it was neither easy nor automatic. Daniel engaged in prayer and fasting that entire time.

In this passage God, angels, demons, and men are seen in related action in the conflict.

"The prince of the kingdom of Persia" who withstood the visitor was the demonic leader of the forces of spiritual darkness in Persia—the chief demon appointed by Satan to rule over Persia in the interests of Satan and against the interests of God. (There are, no doubt, prince demons over many regions or peoples in the world, inspiring and seeking to enforce particular forms of darkness designed for and imposed upon these regions—hence the extremely heathen, 10,000-gods religious practices of India, so distinct from the heavy hand of the autocratic Muslim clergy upon much of the Arab world, a religion sometimes characterized by a vengeful extremism.)

Notice that Michael, a chief prince of the angels of God, came to the side of the man from heaven. This visit to the earth created an emergency for "the rulers of the darkness of this world" and aroused them to a mighty effort to prevent the crucial visitation. Michael came and stood against the prince of the kingdom of Persia—a prince angel contending against a prince demon—and occupied him so that the heavenly visitor was free to continue on his way to Daniel. Here, in the Old Testament, we see conflict between the angels under Satan and the angels of God under Michael similar to that shown in the New Testament Book of the Revelation.

The man Daniel had a part in this conflict in his day. It was his wholehearted prayer that caused the visitor to come. "I have come because of your word," he told Daniel. His purpose was to impart vital information about the future of the world and of the Jews.

From this episode it can be seen that there is a definite interrelatedness between the work of God, angels, men, and demons. It was Daniel's prayer from the earth that stirred heaven to respond, and it was the appearing of the heavenly visitor that stirred the prince demon to oppose. This brought Michael to the scene to contend against the prince demon. There was something going on in the earth, something going on in heaven, and something going on in the atmosphere of the earth; and each bore a relation to the other events and to the central conflict.