

# Angels and Demons

By Mrs. Martie Dieperink

The Bible tells us – not systematically, but if we read carefully – quite a lot about the unseen world of spirits. Most people believe that there is more between heaven and earth. There is ‘something.’ That belief is, however, rather vague. One does not know how everything fits together. The Bible, on the other hand, - and this is the reason we consult the Bible – does not use vague language, but gives us a clear and concrete picture of the unseen reality and also clear insight into the working of unseen forces in the universe. We learn that God exists, his nature, and that also angels exist, both good and evil. We learn how to discern between positive and negative forces.

## **Do angels really exist?**

In the world of the New Age credence is given to the existence of spirit guides or angels. Books have been published on personal experiences with angels. Nevertheless, some readers

may wonder whether angels really do exist. Were the people who claimed to have seen angels perhaps hallucinatory, or do they fantasize? Hallucinations are usually concerned with a clinical picture and they have a negative effect on people. They don't leave a deep impression and will not bring about a positive change in the person's life. Let us therefore examine which effect a vision of angels has on people in the Bible.

## **Examples in the bible**

There are numerous examples of experiences with angels. At all crucial events in the history of salvation they appear. Let me give two examples. In the Old Testament the patriarch Jacob had a dream at Bethel.

“Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Haran. When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of



the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep. He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. There above it stood the LORD, and he said: 'I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac.'" (Genesis 28:10-13) This dream left a deep impression on Jacob and he exclaimed: "Surely the LORD is in this place; and I was not aware of it." (Genesis 28:16) It is understandable that, at first, what happened frightened him, but he did not become depressed or passive, on the contrary, it inspired him to action and he had confidence in God. When we look at Jacob's life, we see that from this vision he received the strength to stay abroad with his uncle Laban and to work there for many years. He knew that God had a plan with his life.

### **Angels in the New Testament**

In the New Testament we read that an angel, called Gabriel, appears to Mary and announces that she is to bear a son and she is to give him the name Jesus. He would be great and would be called the Son of God. We might think that Mary had an overactive imagination, she dreamed of a famous son. But Jesus was a unique personality; that was not just a fantasy. Mary was deeply impressed by the appearance. Of course she was frightened at first, but, like Jacob, she did not become depressed or passive. Her experience made her actually happy and inspired her to speak out the Magnificat. (Luke 1:30-31;46) Both examples – and there are many others – point to the fact that these experiences have nothing to do with fantasy or hallucination, but with a genuine religious experience of the appearance of heavenly beings. Let us not detract from people who have religious experiences. But what kind of beings are angels?

### **Angels adore**

In the account of Jacob these beings are called "angels of God." They belong to God and were created by Him for His glory. Angels adore and praise God. The prophet Isaiah had an awesome vision in which he saw angels calling out: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." (Isaiah 6:3)

Angels also adore Jesus as the Saviour of the world. When Jesus is born, the angel of God ap-

pears to the shepherds: "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 Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the LORD.'" (Luke 2:9-11) Because of this great event the angels were singing: "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 favour rests.'" (Luke 2:13,14)

In the book of the Apocalypse we read how angels adore Jesus in heaven: "Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they sang: 'Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and praise!'" (Apoc. 5:11,12)

### **Angels are messengers**

Angels are messengers who convey God's message. As Moses received his calling from God in the desert, first an angel of God appeared. "There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within the bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up." (Exodus 3:2)

An angel having the appearance of a human being came to the prophet Daniel. "I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of the finest gold around his waist... He said, 'Daniel, you who are highly esteemed, consider carefully the words I am about to speak to you, and stand up, for I have now been sent to you.' And when he said this to me, I stood up trembling." (Daniel 10:5,11)

The angel Gabriel announces the birth of Christ. Two angels announce the resurrection of the crucified Lord. "On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in

clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, 'Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with us in Galilee.'" (Luke 24:1-6)

### **Ministering spirits**

Angels are ministering spirits. They served Jesus Christ during his life on earth, and they also serve those who believe. We read: "Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?" (Hebrews 1:14)

In Psalm 91 we read that they protect men: "Then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your way." (Psalm 91:10,11)

When the prophet Elijah was threatened by Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, and was not able to see a way out of the dilemma, he was helped by an angel. "Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, while he himself went a day's journey into the desert. He came to a broom tree, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. 'I have had enough, LORD,' he said. 'Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors.' Then he lie down under the tree and fell asleep. All at once an angel touched him and said, 'Get up and eat.' He looked around, and there by his head was a cake of bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again. The angel of the LORD came back a second time and touched him and said, 'Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.' So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he travelled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God." (1 Kings 19:3-8)

In the New Testament the apostle Peter was freed from the prison by an angel. "The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. 'Quick, get up!' he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists. Then the

angel said to him, 'Put on your clothes and sandals.' And Peter did so. 'Wrap your cloak around you and follow me,' the angel told him. Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was going was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision. They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him. Then Peter came to himself and said, 'Now I know without a doubt that the Lord send his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were anticipating.'" (Acts 12:6-11)

### **Guardian Angel**

The following account makes mention of belief in a personal guardian angel: "When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying. Peter knocked at the outer entrance, and a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer the door. When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed she ran back without opening it and exclaimed, 'Peter is at the door!' 'You're out of your mind,' they told her. When she kept insisting that it was so they said, 'It must be his angel.'" (Acts 12:12-15)

So we see that angels help us in difficult situations. Many people in these times also have received help from angels. Let me give an example. The well-known preacher in India, Sadhu Sundar Singh (born in 1889) had the following experience in Tibet. In a certain village he had tried to get his message across but in vain; people refused to listen to him. Because of their threatening attitude he had to retreat to a cave. At night the inhabitants, armed with clubs and stones, went to his hiding place in order to kill him. Then suddenly they shrank back, frightened and shouted to him from a distance: "Tell us, who is that man in that shining garment beside you and who are the others around you?" Sundar Singh answered that he was alone, but the men stuck to their assertion... Angels of God had saved his life.

### **Fighting Angels**

There are also fighting angels. Michael is the best-known fighting angel. When a battle is rag-

ing on earth, we mostly don't realise that a fierce battle is going on in the heavenly realms: a battle between God with his angels and Satan with his demons. As the apostle John received his revelation on the island of Patmos and the heaven was opened, he witnessed a fierce battle in heaven. "And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down – that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him." (Apocalypse 12:7-9)

In the Old Testament we read that an angel assisted king Hezekiah, when he was attacked by Sennacherib, king of Assyria. "King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz cried out in prayer to heaven about this. And the LORD sent an angel, who annihilated all the fighting men and the leaders and officers in the camp of the Assyrian king. So he withdrew to his own land in disgrace. And when he went into the temple of his god, some of his sons cut him down with the sword." (2 Chronicles 32:20-21)

#### **Do evil spirits also exist?**

New Age people tell us that they communicate with angels who convey messages and they maintain they have special spirit guides. Princess Irene has a spirit guide, called Zoro. Do people in the New Age also have good angels at their side to help them? It is necessary to ask this question because, according to the Bible, there are evil spirits who come to us as angels of light. Therefore, we must know very clearly which spirits we contact. People in the New Age also admit that negative entities exist. However, when it comes to their own spirit guides they are not critical at all; they believe them to be good spirits. They do not question whether a devil exists. They maintain that there is no devil or fallen angel who rules over evil spirits; also that belief in a devil is only a primitive superstition from ancient times. I too had brushed aside the belief in a devil and hell. God was love.

According to "A Course in Miracles" Satan would be a projection of our own fears. This is a strange argument. At one time a serial rapist was operating near Utrecht in the Netherlands

and out of fear of this man women in this area did not dare to go out cycling alone when it was dark. Is the serial rapist therefore a projection of the women's fear and does it nullify his existence? Usually we have fear of something that does exist and threatens us. If Satan exists, one has good reason to fear him. But does he exist?

I was surprised to read in a book written by the Mother, the guru in India, that a depression comes straight from the devil. Also others in the New Age movement like David Spangler write about the devil, called by him Lucifer. He writes: "The light that reveals to us the path to Christ comes from Lucifer... the great initiator ... Lucifer comes to give us the final ... Lucifer initiation ... that many people in the days ahead will be facing, for it is an invitation into the New Age.

Christ is the same force as Lucifer ... Lucifer prepares man for the experience of Christhood ... Lucifer works within each of us to bring us to wholeness as we move into the New Age."<sup>1</sup>

#### **Existence of Satan**

Just like Satanists who openly adore Satan, he believes that Lucifer, the devil, is a good spirit. But why do we face so much misery in the world? Isn't it only understandable if we take the existence of Satan as an evil spirit into consideration? Sometimes you hear people saying: "How can we believe in God after Auschwitz? It is, however, more correct to pose another question to them: "How can you not yet believe in Satan after Auschwitz? Satan invents such cruelties. At least this is what the Bible teaches us.

Not only the existence of Satan and his demons explains things we do not otherwise understand, but as many people have experienced God somehow or other, so many others have gained experiences of Satan and his demons. We have to take these experiences seriously. A lot of people who have entered the paranormal world have heard voices. In psychiatry, the hearing of voices is often brushed aside as a tingling in the brain or a fantasy, which, of course, can sometimes happen. But in most cases we do not do justice to the people themselves. Often they are affected by these voices, which seem to come from outside, and they suffer terribly as a consequence. There is no way that they invent these tortures themselves. They want to get rid of it, but they do not know how. Drugs can only par-

tially subdue this phenomenon. The most plausible explanation to this phenomenon is that people are affected by evil spirits. From olden times people – also people in the Bible – have believed that evil spirits exist and that they can affect people in a negative way. Especially people who are involved in praying for people who are bound and possessed have to cope with manifestations of evil spirits and Satan himself. Being experienced in this field, he cannot but admit: Satan does exist. Let us see what the Bible tells us about this evil being.

but it is to the sense of oneness in the New Age, which regards one and all, basically, as divine. This sense of oneness is idealistic, but not realistic, because the existence of Satan is a reality.

Satan was created as a high-ranking angel with power and majesty. That he is a good angel according to Satanists and those of the New Age is only a half-truth. The Bible teaches that he, being arrogant, revolted against God and so he became the devil. His fall was due to his haughtiness. A false spirit can be recognized by his ar-



### **Satan**

According to the Bible one of the highest angels, called Lucifer in the tradition of the Church, was created as a good angel. According to the late professor H. van Praag, a Dutch parapsychologist, the existence of Satan is alien to the biblical tradition since it acknowledges only one God. We are not allowed to turn the evil into a 'counter-god.' Indeed, he is not a 'counter-god.' He is a created being, an angel. The Bible does not have a dualistic vision like the Persian religion in which a good and an evil god are opposed to each other. Acknowledging the existence of Satan is not alien to biblical thinking,

rogance. After his fall he took a great number of the angels with him and he also tried to ensnare men. The story of the fall, which is only found in the Bible, in Genesis 3, explains how all misery came into the world.

Buddha was burdened with the suffering of the world and therefore could not believe in a Creator. The ancient problem is how we can reconcile God's love and omnipotence with the suffering we see around us. But Buddha could not see the problem in its true perspective because he was not aware of the event of the fall and so he offered man a solution without God. He

could not explain the cause of the misery, but invented the solution to negate the evil within by extinguishing all desires and to accept that the soul simply does not exist. Then there is also no ego that could suffer pain.

### **Negate the evil**

In the Hindu philosophy you also have to negate the evil by thinking that earthly life is an illusion and that you are divine. The soul is divine and eternal and does not suffer. This is a beautiful philosophy, but it does not stop a man being downhearted. If we are locked up in a prison, we can imagine that the prison is an illusion, but we are not yet released from that prison.

Islam has chosen for resignation: what happens to me is the holy will of Allah.

Thanks to the biblical account of the fall, we get a totally different perspective on the problem as to why all misery came into the world: man listened to the devil. We read: "Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God really say, You must not eat from any tree in the garden?' The woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.' 'You will not surely die,' the serpent said to the woman. 'For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'" (Genesis 3:1-5)

Satan approached Eve with a beautiful promise: you shall not die, you shall be like God. In the New Age we get the same beautiful promise: you shall reach a higher divine consciousness. Because Adam and Eve listened to the snake, the speaking voice of Satan, man came under his dominion. When God created man, He gave dominion over the world to Adam and his wife (Genesis 1:28). But when they obeyed Satan, they forfeited their governorship to Satan. Satan became 'the ruler of this world' (John 14:30). A ruler is a high official who is subordinate to the king or emperor. God has remained the real LORD, but through the fall Satan is granted access to this world. Therefore one blames God for things Satan does. One wonders why God permits all these things. Why doesn't He intervene?

God is love and He does not want our suffering, but He permits things because we have allowed Satan to enter this world and have chosen evil and God respects our freewill.

### **Man under Satan's thumb**

Because the world has come under the influence of the Evil one, we can no longer say, "Paranormal capacities are gifts that belong to creation, therefore they are all right." Unfortunately, we can also contact evil powers and forces at the present time through our paranormal antenna.

As man has come under Satan's thumb, God did not leave it at that but offered a solution: He has given mankind a Saviour. In these days demons know Jesus Christ better than many people who believe that Jesus is only a man. When Jesus approached a possessed person, the demons started to cry: "When he arrived at the other side in the region of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men coming from the tombs met him. They were so violent that no one could pass that way. 'What do you want with us, Son of God?' they shouted. 'Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?'" (Matthew 8:28-29)

Jesus has freed mankind from Satan's slavery through his crucifixion. Therefore Satan hates his crucifixion and he will always try to discredit or falsify the gospel of salvation through Christ's crucifixion. On Golgotha Jesus overcame Satan and dethroned the evil powers. That does not mean, however, that Satan cannot affect the world any longer. He is not yet bound. We could compare him with a person who is found guilty of a crime, but is still able to go around freely before he is sentenced. We live in an interim period, in which Satan can still exert his power. Now more than ever he is extremely active because he knows his time will soon come to an end.

"Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short." (Apoc. 12:12)

**I David Spangler. Reflections of the Christ, Scotland: Findhorn, 1977, pp. 40-44.**