

Do Angels Live Forever?

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Without a doubt, the major subject in the Bible is the gospel of the Kingdom of God. It supplies the important linkage and many details of God's purposes and His plans for bringing them to pass. Most of His plans focus on human salvation, that is, God's deliverance of mankind from the horrific mess all humanity has made of His gift of life. This is good.

However, a major influence on human life is the fact that humanity shares Planet Earth with angels. The biblical truth is that some of these angels are invisible, evil enemies that we must resist if we are to overcome sin. The Bible refers to these angels as "demons."

The Bible focuses on God's dealings with men, but it ignores neither the good angels nor the demons. Hebrews 1:13-14 from the *Amplified Bible* (AMP) provides a clear overview of God's purpose for creating angels:

But to which of the angels has the Father ever said. 'Sit at My right hand [together with me in royal dignity], until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet [in triumphant conquest]?' Are not all the angels ministering spirits sent out [by God] to serve {accompany, protect} those who will inherit salvation? [Of course they are]!"

Angels are created spirit beings (Ezekiel 28:13) assigned by God to serve Him by helping those God is calling into His Kingdom. In other words, long before creating mankind, God created angels as a servant class to carry out responsibilities He assigned. This article searches out the ultimate destiny of the unrighteous angels—demons—compared to God's plans for mankind.

The first angelic being appears in Scripture in Genesis 3 as the Serpent who tempted Adam and Eve. This being was no less than the demon we know as Satan. Isaiah 14:12 identifies him as "fallen from heaven," and in Ezekiel 28:14, he is designated as "the anointed cherub who covers." II Corinthians 11:3 names him as the one who "deceived Eve." Revelation 12:9 calls him "the great dragon, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world" (also Revelation 20:2). The Bible certainly does not ignore this demon spirit.

The question of what becomes of the demons is not a burning, doctrinal issue. Our salvation is not tied to whether we know the correct answer to it. However, an Internet search will show a wide divergence of opinions about the demons' ultimate outcome. Some say they will live forever despite their sins. Others claim that they will be removed (terminated from any position of rank they hold) but not put to death, while yet others, completing the gamut, assert that sinning angels will be put to death by fire.

Angels were not created as mindless robots who mechanically carry out assignments. Rather, God created them with fine minds capable of growth and development, and He left them free to make choices regarding conduct. However, with these gifts, He also charged them with the responsibility of proving their loyalty to Him. Apparently, He placed them on earth to tend and care for it as their domain (Jude 6; II Peter 2:4). A few scriptural mentions reveal them wielding powers far greater than those of men.

This set the stage for the sins of disloyalty to their Creator by one-third of them, led by Satan, the enemy of God and also of mankind to this day (Revelation 12:4, 9). This also answers why Satan is said to be “fallen from heaven” in Isaiah 14:12. He proved his disloyalty in his misuses of his liberties. Even as Christian doctrine teaches that the sins of Adam and Eve brought about their “fall,” the fall of one-third of the angels was not from a physical height as from a tall building, but from the spiritual and moral height of innocence. Satan and his rebellious companions attempted to overthrow God’s loving rule and replace Him with themselves (Isaiah 14:13-14). God defeated them and cast them back to the earth. As a result, the earth became a place of imprisonment for them (*tartarus*, “hell”; II Peter 2:4) until God’s present purpose of creating men in His image is complete.

Unfounded Assumptions

Why is there confusion on this subject? Mainstream scholars tend to make one or more of the following unfounded assumptions, leading to a general lack of truth and clarity on the matter:

1. They assume that all “spirit,” in terms of bodily construction, is identically ever-living and impossible to destroy as is God Himself.
2. They assume that God is somehow guilty of a lack of foresight and judgment for equipping His angels with indestructible properties before testing them for loyalty to Himself and His purposes.
3. They assume that angels are not subject to the same divine principles of judgment as are men. In essence, they assume God’s judgment that “the wages of sin is death” does not apply to them.
4. They assume that the new heaven and new earth will not be of the absolutely pure, holy, and righteous quality God promises.

Do Angels Live Forever by Nature?

Luke 20:34-36 appears to provide scriptural proof that angels can never die:

And Jesus answered and said to them, “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.”

From the information given in Scripture, we have little room to doubt that angels live very long lives. The Bible contains no record of any angel ever dying, even from the war that broke out because of their rebellion. If we assume that the events of Genesis 1 begin after that climactic battle—accounting for earth’s devastation—we now are close to completing 6,000 years of human history. Angels were created before Adam and Eve, but the two humans died as a result of their sins. Sinning angels, though, live on.

In addition, the Bible reveals nothing about new angels being created. Angels, then, are at least 6,000 years of age. But will sinful angels—demons, equally as old—live eternally? We will establish a few principles before returning to Jesus’ words in Luke 20:36.

We know virtually nothing about what sustains spirit life. What enables angels to live so long? Until the Noachian Flood, even humans routinely lived 900 years and more, but after the Flood, human lives were shortened dramatically. Noah's son, Shem, nonetheless lived for 600 years. Ten generations later, though, Shem's descendant, Abraham, died at age 175. Abraham's grandson, Jacob, died at 147, and his son, Joseph, died at 110. David, a man greatly beloved by God, is described as a very old man at age 70. These men were of the same family line. The Bible shows that God can lengthen or shorten lives as it pleases Him.

Jesus states in John 4:24, "God is Spirit." Angels are spirit too, but they are creations of God. Is the created spirit of angels identical to what God is? Ecclesiastes 3:21 reveals that even animals have a spirit, which is what enables them to display their characteristics. Man, though a physical creation, clearly has a spirit as well (Job 32:8). It, too, is a created spirit. Are all these spirits identical to God's?

In Scripture, God differentiates spirits. One spirit that man can receive from Him following faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, and baptism is, of course, the Holy Spirit. It is especially noteworthy because it is pure in every way. He designates it as "holy" partly because it is *different* from other spirits. The Bible shows no animal, despite having a spirit of some sort, being in any way capable of receiving this Spirit, providing evidence that all spirit is not identical.

Though humans have a spirit, they must eat food and drink water to maintain life, or they soon die. Scripture shows both God and angels eating the same kind of food a man would normally eat. God requires no food to sustain His life, but must angels routinely eat something God has made to remain alive? Regarding the manna God provided Israel in the wilderness, Psalm 78:25 reads, "Men ate *angels' food*; He sent them food to the full" (emphasis ours throughout). Is there more in this expression than meets the eye?

We cannot know precisely what accounts for the angels' longevity. Though possessing a spirit, both men and beasts die. Perhaps Hebrews 1:3 provides us with a broad overview:

... who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding [*maintaining, propelling* (AMP)] all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Though lacking a specific answer from Scripture to the question of angelic longevity, we can generally conclude that God provides life for all those involved in His purposes for as long as He determines. When He withdrew a measure of that provision from humanity following the Flood, He deemed it necessary within His purposes to shorten human lives to their present levels. We can deduce that God is also sustaining angels' lives for His purposes, though He has created them to live at a much higher level of both intellectual power and bodily health and strength than humans. We will see, however, that Scripture reveals that endless life is not guaranteed for them unless He deems it so. The sovereign God governs His creation.

Did God Err in Judgment?

God warns Adam and Eve in Genesis 2:17, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." In Romans 6:23, the apostle Paul clarifies God's meaning, writing, "For the wages of sin is death." Yet, those who believe in the false doctrine of the immortality of the human soul claim that when a person dies, his life continues but in

a different state. Some, they say, rise to heaven to enjoy life with God, while others descend to a place of eternal torment in hell, still alive and fully aware of their new environment—otherwise the torment is useless.

If this is so, can it be said that they have truly died? Continued life in another state is not death. God says humans die. Psalm 146:3-4 says, “Do not put your trust in princes, nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help. His spirit departs, he returns to his earth; in that very day his plans [thoughts] perish.” Death is defined as the permanent cessation of all vital functions in an animal or plant. But what about angels?

One-third of them sinned in their rebellion against Him. The Bible never indicates that any of them have died to this point in time. In terms of “the wages of sin,” could God have a different standard for them than He does for men? Do they continue living because He is using them for His purposes as His plan continues? Does He have a different standard because He *cannot* put them to death? Is God guilty of a misjudgment by failing to consider that some of them might commit sin, having the right from Him at their creation to make choices regarding moral behavior?

How does this last question compare with Paul’s extolling of God’s wisdom and foresight in Romans 11:33-36?

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! “For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor? Or who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid to him?” For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

We can be sure that God made no error in judgment, nor does He have differing standards for angels and mankind on the wages of sin, as we will see.

Principles of God’s Judgment

To arrive at a correct answer, we need to understand clear principles of God’s standard of judgment. To begin, Exodus 12:49 states, “*One law* shall be for the native born and for the stranger who sojourns among you.” God uses the same standard for everybody.

Paul writes in Romans 1:18-20 about God’s judgment of the unconverted:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead [divine nature], so that *they are without excuse*.

Ignorance of the written law is no defense. God has revealed His character and standards through His creation, which anyone can reflect upon and conclude that it must have had an awesome and loving Creator.

Another principle of judgment from Jesus is helpful:

And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself to do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he who did not know, yet committed things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few. *For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.*" (Luke 12:47-48)

God's justice is unequivocally fair. Angels knew this, as did Adam and Eve.

I Corinthians 10:13 (AMP) reveals God's mindset regarding His judgments:

No temptation [regardless of its source] has overtaken or enticed you that is not common to human experience [nor is any temptation unusual or beyond human resistance]; but God is faithful [to His word]—He is compassionate and trustworthy, and He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability [to resist], but along with the temptation He [has in the past and is now and] will [always] provide the way out as well, so that you will be able to endure it [without yielding, and will overcome temptation with joy].

Two more principles from Ezekiel should make God's standards of judgment crystal clear. Ezekiel 18:20 states:

The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.

This declaration reveals that each person, man or angel, is judged individually. Ezekiel 18:21-23 adds:

"But if a wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed, keeps all My statutes, and does what is lawful and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die. None of his transgressions which he has committed shall be remembered against him; because of the righteousness which he has done, he shall live. Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?" says the Lord God, "and not that he should turn from his ways and live?"

God's declaration informs us that forgiveness is available upon repentance. Does this apply just as equally to demons? We will revisit this below.

We can see that God does not apply random standards of judgment, whether He is judging the conduct and attitudes of men or of angels. He clearly states His standards and holds each person individually responsible in proportion to what He has gifted him with and what He expects from him in terms of the quality of his service.

Ezekiel 28:14-16 says about Satan:

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. You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you. 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.

To this day, he and his sinning companions are still alive, though their movements are restricted to the earth unless personally called to appear before God (Job 1:6). To some extent, they are free to continue deceiving and harassing mankind. The penalty for their sins has not been carried out any further than a measure of constraint. Will it ever be carried out further?

The Fear of God

Mankind is fully aware of fear. It can motivate positive change in an individual's life and help him to avoid dangerous, even fatal, consequences. But it can also be a morbidly negative factor, developing into a chronic agitation that dominates a person's attitudes and behaviors. Hebrews 2:14-15 comments on this fact of life:

Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

We might mistakenly think that, with the many advantages God created within angels beyond those given to men, no fear could dog their existence. The apostle James disagrees, writing in James 2:19, "You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble."

Jesus' encounter with a demon in Capernaum at the beginning of His ministry sharpens the edge of this angelic fear:

Now in the synagogue there was a man who had a spirit of an unclean demon. And he cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Let us alone! What do we have to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did you come to destroy us? I know You, who You are—the Holy One of God!" But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!" And when the demon had thrown him in their midst, it came out of him and did not hurt him. (Luke 4:33-35)

The demonic spirit clearly expressed his fear of being destroyed by the spiritual power of Jesus of Nazareth. Does he imply that "destroy us" means the end of the demons' existence?

Another experience Jesus had with evil spirits narrows this demonic expectation of divine reckoning to a specific time:

When He arrived at the other side in the country of the Gadarenes, two demon possessed men coming out of the tombs met Him. They were so extremely fierce and violent that no one could pass by that way. And they screamed out, "What business do we have [in common] with each other, Son of God? Have You come to torment us before the appointed time [of judgment]?" (Matthew 8:28-29 AMP)

Their words plainly state that a set time—a future day—has already been appointed for their destruction, but meanwhile, they feared He would torment them. It seems they were attempting to quell their fear by reminding Him of this and delaying any punishment.

However, this is even more intriguing considering what Jesus says in Matthew 25:41, “Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” Indeed, Ezekiel 28:16-19 portends a major disaster for the anointed cherub at some future time:

By the abundance of your trading you became filled 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, I laid you before kings, that they might gaze at you. You defiled your sanctuaries by the multitude of your iniquities, by the iniquity of your trading; therefore *I brought fire from your midst; it devoured you*, and *I turned you to ashes upon the earth* in the sight of all who saw you. All who knew you among the peoples are astonished at you; you have become a horror, and *shall be no more forever*.

Some say that this applies to some human king from the past. Yet, how many human kings are addressed as a “covering cherub” who was in “the midst of the fiery stones” and walked within “the mountain [nation] of God”? This angelic being is to be destroyed, and as the prophecy specifically states, it will be destruction by fire.

The Hebrew term translated “destroyed” is *abad* (*Strong’s* #6). *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* states, “Basically, *abad* represents the disappearance of someone or something. In its strongest sense the word means ‘to die or to cease to exist.’” In Ezekiel 28:18, God prophesies that He will turn the cherub Satan “to ashes upon the earth,” which certainly implies complete destruction.

A few other Old Testament verses will show this sense. Numbers 16:33 reads, “So they and all those with them went down alive into the pit; the earth closed over them, and they perished [*abad*] from among the assembly.” They were buried alive and disappeared. Deuteronomy 4:26 adds, forecasting Israel’s demise as a nation, “I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that you will soon utterly perish [*abad*] from the land which you cross over the Jordan to possess; you will not prolong your days in it, but will be utterly destroyed.”

“Destroy” and “Torment” in the New Testament

The term “destroy” also appears in the New Testament in the context of a demon speaking to Jesus:

Now in the synagogue there was a man who had a spirit of an unclean demon. And he cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know You, who You are—the Holy One of God.” (Luke 4:33-34)

The Greek term underlying “destroy” is *appolumi* (*Strong’s* #622). *Vine’s* defines it as, “signifies ‘to destroy utterly’; in the middle voice, ‘to perish.’ The idea is not extinction but ruin, loss, not of being, but of well-being.”

Behind “torment” is the Greek word *basanizo* (*Strong’s* #928). It appears in relation to demons in Matthew 8:6, Mark 5:7, and Luke 8:28, all three recording the same event. In each case, the context indicates torture without the implication of death. Neither of these Greek terms, then, as used in Scripture, can be used dogmatically to prove death for angelic beings.

However, our search is far from over. If a man sins and does not repent, he dies ultimately in the Lake of Fire. Yet, if an angel sins, it appears—at this point—that his only penalty is the torment of being restrained with the knowledge of what he has lost. He lives on like a prisoner in jail with no hope of parole.

Scripturally, though, this does not balance the scales of justice because the Bible clearly states that the wages of sin not repented of is death (Romans 6:23). God says unambiguously, “The soul who sins shall die” (Ezekiel 18:4, 20). An angel is a soul too, that is, a living being with the liberty to make choices about moral conduct. Biblically, “soul” is not restricted to humans but simply indicates a breathing creature, which includes animals. Animals, however, do not make moral choices.

God’s Word reveals much more about the completion of the purpose He is working out, His attitude toward sin, sins’ effects, and what He has prophesied regarding the purity of His Kingdom that will be established when He completes the purpose He is now working out.

The Costliest Payment for Sin

The costliest payment for sin has a distinct purpose far beyond just providing an acceptable sacrifice for it. God frequently names people and things what they are, calling Satan, not only the enemy, but more specifically identifying him by what he does. In Revelation 9:11, Satan, the king of the bottomless pit, receives the Hebrew name “Abaddon” and the Greek name “Apollyon,” both of which mean “destroyer.” There is no destroyer greater than Satan, and one thing he destroys is life. Jesus says about him in John 8:44, “He was a murderer from the beginning.” Will he reap exactly what he sows?

Satan personifies sin. Sin is what he himself continuously does or plans to do, and sin is what he deceives, persuades, and inspires others to do. Sin destroys anything that is life-giving, beautiful, beneficial, peaceful, and good. Most tragically of all, it destroys relationships—one’s relationship with God and relationships with other humans. Sin destroys trust, and relationships require trust to promote peace and endure.

Genesis 1:1 begins the Bible by describing the chaotic results of the sins of angels. It pictures the earth as lifeless. Genesis 3 records the tragic beginning of Adam’s and Eve’s sins. Jesus warns in Matthew 24:22 that, because of its sins, mankind is headed in the same direction as before the Flood unless God intervenes by sending His Son. Sin is like a roaring forest fire, destroying everything in its path. Reconciliation is the only viable solution to preserve relationships being destroyed by sin.

Reconciliation is supremely important to this issue. Jesus Christ is the means of reconciliation, healing the breach created by mankind’s sins against God. In His death, never has so huge a price been paid for such worthless stock as we are. Mankind is filled with sin, having defiled every beautiful thing God has so freely given. None of us can claim innocence; we have all contributed to the defilement and resulting separation from God.

Reconciliation began some 2,000 years ago with the death of Jesus as the perfect and priceless sacrifice that the Father accepted for the sins we have committed. He suffered the wages of our sins—death—in our behalf, but this payment applies only to those who wholeheartedly express their faith in His sacrifice and repent of their sins. Repentant sinners resolve not to live as they did before, when sin suffused their way of life. Repentant individuals give their lives over to Christ to use as He wills, becoming living sacrifices (Romans 12:1-2). This combination initiates a new process of creation in the lives of those who accept this challenge.

New Creation Has Begun Within the Church

Paul gives an overview of the new creation in II Corinthians 5:16-21:

Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away: behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us; we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

God places those who believe Christ, repent, are baptized, and receive His Holy Spirit into the church. They continue in the process of being formed as a new creation in Christ, transforming into the character image of our sinless Savior.

This new creation does not apply to sinning angels. There is not a single reference in the Bible that Jesus paid the penalty for their sins. Not one scripture hints that even one demon has ever repented. No verse claims that any demon believes in the atoning death of Christ as payment for their sins.

This convincingly implies that God never developed a means for their forgiveness other than repentance. It could also indicate that their characters are so set by hatred and self-centeredness that repentance is impossible. They hate God and His children with a savage vengeance and would kill us in the blink of an eye except for God's wall of protection surrounding us.

Of keen interest in this context is the term “new” in verse 17. Paul had his choice of either of two words, *kainos* or *neos*, but he chose the one best suited to God's purpose here. He chose *kainos*, indicating newness in the sense of fresh existence. *Neos* means newness in the sense of renovation, for example, repairing something that already exists. In this context, God is describing a transformation in the inner man from carnality to spiritual thought and conduct. The new creation is not merely a repair job of the old, existing, carnal nature. It is a complete change to a nature, a heart, that had not been there before conversion.

The apostle nudges our thoughts to a parallel incident, when God created Adam in Genesis 1. Adam was an entity who did not exist before God acted. In this creation described in II Corinthians 5, though, God is not exercising His divine powers by creating an entirely new person, but He is fashioning a new heart, a new nature, that will produce righteousness, in contrast to the old nature that produced self-centered sin.

One by one, God is calling people out of Satan's worldly system and creating a Family Kingdom described in multiple locations throughout His Word. We have all borne the physical and character image of the sinner Adam; we are now being created in the spiritual image of the holy, righteous, and sinless Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 15:48-49). But know this: The new creation does not end with the spiritual creation of the sons of God. It carries on to include even a New Heaven and a New Earth.

No End to the Process Begun

The new creation begun by God with repentant and converted human beings is just the beginning of a massive creation that will surely follow because God has willed it as part of His plan (Isaiah 55:11). His Word provides an idea of what it entails, alerting God's children of the new creation that has begun in them and will expand indefinitely.

Isaiah 42:9 reads, "Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them." Isaiah 65:17 adds, "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind." The prophet chose to use the Hebrew word *hadash* ("new"; *Strong's* 2319) that, as *kainos* in New Testament Greek, indicates "that which did not exist before."

Isaiah 9:7 clinches the never-ending expansion of God's purpose:

Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end. Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

Isaiah 66:22-23 contains even more exciting news:

"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. And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come before Me," says the Lord.

These verses not only indicate an everlasting Kingdom, but also that, since all flesh is coming before Him each Sabbath, no wickedness will be happening. Perhaps Daniel 9:24 shows this more conclusively:

Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.

The angel says that our Savior came to end sin, make reconciliation, and usher in everlasting righteousness! What an awesome future God has planned for His Family. The time is coming when no unrighteousness in any form, including angelic sins, exists in God's New Heaven and New Earth!

No Unrighteousness in Any Form

As we saw, Isaiah 65:17 provides us with a succinct but clear view of a breathtaking circumstance lying ahead: "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind." God says of Himself in Isaiah 43:25, "I will not remember your sins."

A world is coming in which *not even the memory of sins or of sinners* exists! How can that be? This wonderful era will begin when God purges sin and unrepentant sinners from existence. The time is coming when sin never even comes to mind, and nothing will be happening to remind anyone of it.

We will review some familiar scriptures that speak of the times just ahead:

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which 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. (II Peter 3:9-10)

God has already begun His purging. The evidence is in Christ's death and resurrection and in the existence of converted people and the church. He is continuing to work to bring these parts of His plan to completion. Consider two things regarding this passage: First, it is necessary for all—including sinning angels—to come to repentance. Second, all the sinful works done on earth are to be burned up, which includes the works of sinning angels as well. They are not excused as God purges the entire earth of sin's contamination.

Revelation 20:11-15; 21:1 records this for our understanding:

Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. 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. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. *And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.* And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.

Are the names of the Destroyer and his constantly sinning demon companions written in the God's Book of Life? Of course not. Revelation 20:10 affirms this: "The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are [were cast]. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever." The Scriptures reveal that it is impossible for God to lie (Hebrews 6:18). Yes, Satan and his demons are to be burned up in the Lake of Fire prepared for them, as Jesus states in Matthew 25:41. According to God's law, death is what they have earned for their sins.

We should understand that, biblically, *forever* does not always mean "everlasting." It sometimes indicates "as long as conditions exist." For instance, the Old Covenant sacrifices were instituted forever. The book of Hebrews, however, shows that they are clearly no longer required for the sons of God. "Forever" lasted only until Christ died for our sins. Ezekiel 44 suggests that they will be revived in the future for a brief time, but when the Lake of Fire occurs, they will no longer be needed for a relationship with God (II Peter 3:10).

II Peter 3:13 makes an encouraging statement immediately following Peter's statements about the Lake of Fire: "Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in

which righteousness dwells.” A dwelling is where a person or family lives. In the New Heaven and New Earth, *only* righteousness dwells in them.

Does this mean “except for the unrepentant demons who continue living on despite the Lake of Fire because God cannot exterminate their existence because He mistakenly created them of imperishable spirit”? No! They are not there because they were burned up in the everlasting fire. Not one iota of sin—not even the remembrance of sin!—will exist in those living where only righteousness dwells. The unrepentant demons will be completely purged from the New Heaven and New Earth, and only holiness will remain. By the way, “new” in II Peter 3:13 and in Revelation 21:1 is *kainos*, the same word Paul uses in II Corinthians 5:17, meaning “something that did not exist before.” Since there will be no unrighteousness in any form in the world to come, Satan and his fellow demon spirits must be totally annihilated.

But what about Luke 20:36, where Jesus says of angels, “nor can they die anymore”? The only answer that squares with the rest of Scripture is that Jesus is referring only to righteous angels. They indeed do not die. Demons, though, will pay for their sins with death like every other unrepentant being.

Revelation 21:2-8 gives us this encouragement:

Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; and 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.” And He said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. 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.”

Jesus says that Satan “was a murderer from the beginning” and “is a liar and the father of it” (John 8: 44). Is this passage in Revelation 21 wrong because the unrepentant, unbelieving, lying, and murderous demons will still be alive? There is no contradiction. They will have been burned up in the Lake of Fire.

Conclusions

1. The Bible clearly shows that not all spirits are identical. To assume that an angel is immortal just because it is composed of spirit is a false assumption. An angel’s bodily composition of created spirit is no guarantee of eternal life. In each case in which the term “spirit” is used, it must be defined accurately to be understood correctly. Only God’s Holy Spirit stands above and apart from all others.
2. God was not lacking in wisdom when He created the angels of spirit. They continue living at God’s discretion and for His purposes, and if He desires, He can destroy them

through fire, as the prophecies show. Because God will put an end to all sin and unrighteousness before the New Jerusalem descends, unrepentant demons will not live beyond the Lake of Fire. God's wisdom in creating them as He did is justified.

3. Angels are subject to the same principles of divine judgment as are human beings; "the wages of sin is death" for angels just as surely as it is for men and women. God declares, "I am the Lord, I do not change" (Malachi 3:6). Regarding judgment, the biblical standard is that the greater the gifts, the sterner the judgment. Because angels were gifted more than mankind—even being able to see Him and live in His presence—the standards of judgment will be more stringently carried out.

4. The prophecies describing the level of righteousness in the New Heaven and New Earth allow no room for any sin at all—not even in anyone's memory. Scripture speaks of righteousness so pure that even the leftover garbage of living beings—including defiled angels—will be burned in the Lake of Fire. Nothing will mar the pure moral and spiritual environment of the New Heaven and the New Earth.

God hates sin because it destroys the beauty and purity of His creations, including those resurrected into His Family Kingdom. There will be nothing, absolutely nothing, that will destroy loving relationships in the New Heaven and the New Earth! Satan and his fellow demon spirits will not live through the Lake of Fire.