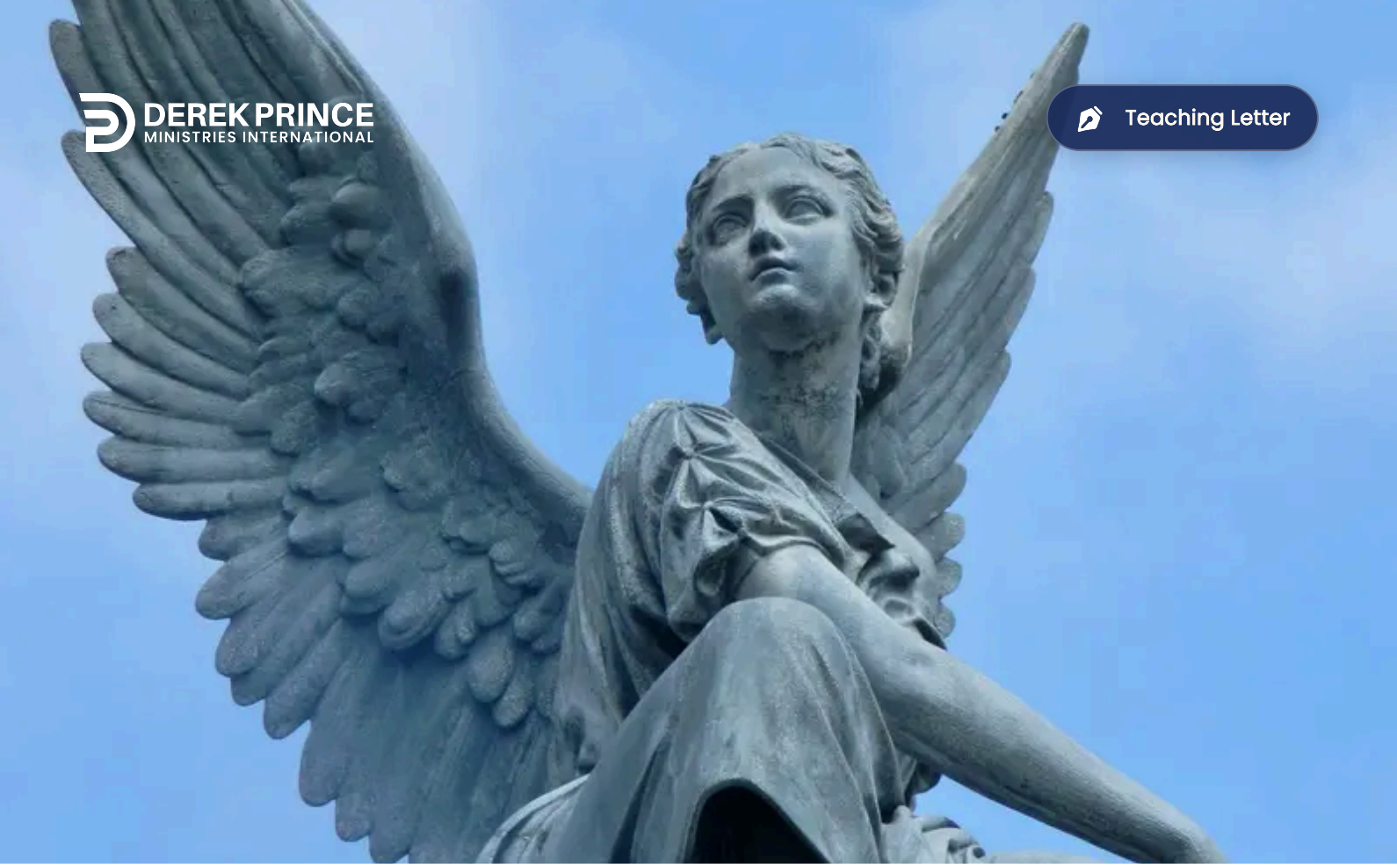


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Teaching Letter

Angelic Intervention in Human Lives



Part 1/5

Because of the Angels
By Derek Prince

In giving instructions about the conduct of worship in the New Testament church, Paul writes: "For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels" (1 Corinthians 11:10). Paul takes it for granted that when Christians meet for worship, angels will also be present and will participate.

This is the first in a series of six teaching letters called *Because of the Angels*. As an introduction, we will explore Biblical accounts of the ways that angels play a role in believers' lives.

More than once when Ruth and I were worshiping together, she heard the angels singing. We realized that we were privileged to experience a tiny part of the total worship of the universe, spanning both heaven and earth. I have heard similar testimony from other Christians.

In Hebrews 1:14, the writer says that God's angels are "all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation." The Greek phrase translated "ministering spirits" describes specifically spirits who perform priestly acts of worship. In the New Testament Church heaven and earth were blended together in worship.

Successive Angelic Rebellions

The Bible reveals a succession of angelic rebellions against God. The first—and the most significant—was the original rebellion of Lucifer (an archangel) described in Isaiah 14:12–14:

> How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like [equal to] the Most High."

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For my part, I believe that the divine Person whose position Satan aspired to was not God the Father but God the Son (revealed later in human history as Jesus of Nazareth). The conflict between these two came to its climax at the cross, where Satan apparently defeated Jesus, but, in actual fact, Jesus stripped Satan of all his weapons and left him totally defeated. "Having disarmed principalities and powers [of Satan], He [Jesus] made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it" (Colossians 2:15) i.e. on the Cross.

In Revelation 12:3–4 Satan is depicted as "a great, fiery red dragon" whose "tail drew a third of the stars of heaven." Apparently as an archangel, Lucifer (now Satan) had authority over one-third of heaven's angels, who followed him in his rebellion and were with him cast out of heaven. Satan and the angels who followed him then established a rival kingdom in "the heavenly places," (Ephesians 6:12) somewhere between the third heaven (2 Corinthians 12:2–4) (which is God's dwelling place) and the heaven visible from earth.

Although Satan's destiny has been irrevocably settled by his defeat at the Cross, final judgment on him will not be carried out until the close of the millennium. At that time Satan—together with the antichrist—will be "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. ... And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever" (Revelation 20:10).

Fallen Angels Before the Flood

A further transgression on the part of angels is described in Genesis 6:1–2:

> Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose.

Who are these "sons of God"? They are twice referred to in the book of Job.

In Job 1:6: "There was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them."

And again in Job 38:4, 7 when God asks Job: "Where were you ... when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"

Obviously, in both these passages these "sons of God" were angelic beings. Certainly there were no human beings present when God laid the foundation of the earth.

There are two passages in the New Testament which describe God's judgment on the angels who sinned in this way with human women. In Jude 6 it says: "And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own proper dwelling [heaven]—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day" (niv).

Clearly these are not the angels who participated in Satan's original rebellion, because Satan and his angels are not yet confined, but are free and active in "the heavenly places." The sin of the angels Jude refers to was that they abandoned their appointed dwelling place in heaven and came down to the plane of earth, where they cohabited with human women.

Jude then continues: "In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire" (v. 7).

Jude compares the fallen angels of Noah's day with the people of Sodom and Gomorrah because both groups were guilty of the same sin of sexual immorality and perversion.

In 2 Peter 2:4–6 the apostle likewise joins together the fallen angels of Noah's day with the people of Sodom and Gomorrah:

> For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly ....

In both cases their sin was unnatural sex. In verse 4, where the English translation says, "cast them down to hell," the Greek word used is actually *tartarus*, a word that occurs frequently in Greek literature. Tartarus has been defined as

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"a place of confinement as far below Hades as Hades is below earth."

It is amazing how long the Lord will tolerate some forms of sin in the world, but there are certain boundaries which God jealously watches over. One such boundary is that which prohibits sexual perversion, whether it is between angels and human beings or between human beings of the same sex. When that boundary is crossed, God's severest judgments will quickly follow. In one case, judgment came in the form of the flood; in the other it instantaneously wiped out the population of two entire cities.

Similar Sins in Our Day

The Bible clearly indicates that intercourse between angels and human women did not permanently cease at the time of the flood. "The Nephilim were on the earth in those days —and also afterward—when the sons of God went to the daughters of men and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown" (Genesis 6:4, niv)

The Hebrew word *nephilim* is directly derived from the Hebrew verb *naphal*, which means "to fall." Nephilim, therefore, are fallen ones—that is, fallen angels. There were nephilim on the earth "in those days" (at the time of the flood)—and also afterwards (after the flood).

Those who were born in this later period out of this unnatural union were called heroes. Greek mythology abounds with descriptions of such heroes. They were born when beings whom the Greeks called gods had intercourse with human women. These gods were supernaturally powerful beings who came down from a higher plane of existence. The Bible calls them *nephilim*. They were, in fact, fallen angels.

To give but a few examples, Zeus (the "father" of the gods) was said to have taken the form of a swan and united with a woman called Leda, who bore him three children. On another occasion, in the form of a bull, Zeus had intercourse with Europa, who also bore him three sons. Another "god"—Poseidon, the god of the ocean—united with a human woman and she bore him a son called Theseus, who became one of the most famous of the Greek *heroes*.

Many other examples could be added. These myths are like a cracked mirror, giving a distorted representation of events which are accurately summed up in Genesis 6:4.

As in the Days of Noah

In Luke 17:26 Jesus warns us: "And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man." In other words, conditions that marked the days of Noah will again characterize the period just before the present age closes.

In Noah's day "the earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence" (Genesis 6:11). Certainly both of these features are being manifestly reproduced before our eyes today: moral corruption and continually escalating violence.

In Noah's day, too, humanity was invaded by angels from a higher plane who made human women the objects of their lust. Today, once again, the media are replete with reports of "visitors from outer space." Sometimes these are attested by vivid eyewitness accounts.

We can write these accounts off as fabrications, but this does not explain their increasing frequency. Another explanation suggested by Scripture is that conditions from the days of Noah are being reproduced. Fallen angels are again at work on planet earth.

A Timely Word from Paul

If the above interpretation of Scripture is correct, it imparts a fresh urgency to Paul's warnings given in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16. Paul did not view the Church as a little group of people tucked away on their own in some religious building. Rather he viewed the church as part of a vast, action-packed drama spanning both earth and heaven. Participation in their meetings was not limited to human beings but could also include angels, both good and evil.

In particular, Paul warned that human women participating in the worship of the church needed to be aware of the possible presence of both good and evil angels. Their appropriate response was to have a suitable covering on their heads. In this way, they affirmed that they were under the authority that Christ has vested in His Church. They also paid due respect to the good angels who might be present and at the same time protected themselves against impure spiritual influences that might proceed from evil angels.

The instructions concerning worship which Paul gives in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 can be summed up in one word: *reverence.*

"Where Is My Reverence?"

In the time of Malachi the Lord charged His people with insincerity in their worship. They were very religious, yet they were irreverent. In Malachi 1:6 the Lord says:

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> A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am the Father, where is My honor? And if I am a Master, where is My reverence?

Then in Malachi 1:14 He concludes:

> For I am a great King ... and My name is to be feared among the nations.

In almost all cultures there are certain rules of conduct which govern the way people relate to their king. We call these rules *protocol*.

Like an earthly king, the Lord, too, has His *protocol*. Some of the requirements of heaven's protocol are stated in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16. They remind us that Christians in their worship are not just a little isolated group on their own. On the contrary, Paul says, "we have been made a spectacle to the world [the universe], both to angels and to men" (1 Corinthians 4:9). We have seen that the "angels" include both good and evil angels.

As a token of our respect for the Lord, and also in our own best interests, we need to study and to follow the requirements of heaven's protocol.

The theme of my next letter will be *Warfare In Heavenly Places*.

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