

SPIRITUAL: BEINGS, L. G.

LifeGroup PARTICIPANTS Guide

INTRODUCTION

The Bible has a large cast list for reality, including Satan, demons and angels in addition to God and humanity. Does your view of the universe have room for these characters? And what is your role in this cosmic rebellion?

Nearly every book of the Bible deals with the subject of angels and/or demons. The biblical authors and role models of our faith lived in a world that was animated with spiritual life. The way we think often changes the way we act, in complex and nuanced ways. Although it's hard to describe, if we kick spiritual beings to the curb of our Christian faith this way of thinking and believing will impact our way of living and being a Christ follower.

For this reason you might find that the study this week is more cerebral and concept-driven. This is not because we want to put the Bible under the microscope and study it just because it's interesting. It's because the subject of spiritual beings is often misunderstood both in and outside of the church. Many myths and echoed traditions float around. Or, often, we hardly give a second thought to spiritual beings at all. This week we're trying to adjust our thinking and believing so that it is in line with what Scripture presents about the subject--and this will impact the way we live out our Christian faith.

DISCUSSION

1. This week start by reading through the introduction (above) all together. It provides some important insight on where we're going this week!
2. C. S. Lewis says, "*There are two equal and opposite errors into which [human] race can fall about devils [demons]... one is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them.*"¹ Discuss the quote.

¹ C. S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*.

3. Watch the [‘Elohim’ video by The Bible Project](#). [3 mins]. Read Deuteronomy 10:17, Psalm 82:1, Psalm 136:2.
 - a. Summarize what your group has learned through this video and the passages.
 - b. Why does the Bible often refer to God as the “God of gods”?
4. Read through the Bible’s cast list for reality (Appendix A) as a group. As you do this:
 - a. Look up as many of the passages as you desire or you think your group needs.
 - b. Try to describe what you already understand about each character.
 - c. Note the questions your group might have about each character.
 - d. Imagine a reality populated by all of these characters. Discuss the following two questions.
 - i. What is challenging about expanding your view of the universe to include these characters?
 - ii. How does this “cast list” impact the way your view your role in the universe? As a Christian?
5. In the introduction we said, *“The way we think often changes the way we act, in complex and nuanced ways.”* Read Hebrews 11:1-3.
 - a. What does it look like to walk by faith and not sight alone? What is the definition according to Hebrews?
 - b. How might the Hebrews passage aid us in our struggle to make sense of spiritual beings in the Bible?
 - c. How does having a broader view of eternity and spiritual beings change how we live, pray and act here and now?
6. ***Next Level*** Spend some time discussing as a group how this “cast list” of reality populated with spiritual beings might change...
 - a. ...the way we see eternity.
 - b. ...the way we see reality.
 - c. ...the way we see God.
7. Read through Hebrews 1.
 - a. What does this passage teach us about the proper role of angels in relation to us, and to God?
 - b. What do we learn about the nature of worship?
8. As we close tonight, let’s return to the quote from earlier: *“There are two equal and opposite errors into which [human] race can fall about devils [demons]... one is to*

disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them."²

- a. How has the conversation tonight changed your understanding of spiritual beings?
- b. Work together as a group to make a statement describing this "middle ground" to which you might refer back to in the future.

PRAYER

We should not pray *to* angels, but we can pray aware that we are living *like* angels when we pray. Angels are in communion with God. Prayer is a way of entering into our eternal relationship with God in the present. Spend some time together as a group. Take some prayer requests and consider these prayer prompts as well:

- Praise God for being the greatest, ultimate and uncreated Spirit being. The first and the last.
- Pray to be obedient as the angels, carrying out God's Kingdom will on earth as it is in heaven.
- Pray to walk and live by faith and not by sight.

² C. S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*.

APPENDIX A -- THE BIBLE'S CAST LIST FOR REALITY

The City/Kingdom of God

1. **Yahweh** (the revealed name of God, the Ultimate Spirit of all and above all spiritual beings)
 - a. **Angel of the Lord?** (either a special messenger of God used in the Old Testament, or an early form of Jesus' incarnation on earth; cf. Genesis 16:7-12; Exodus 3:2)
 - b. **Jesus** (the second Person of the Trinity, still Yahweh)
 - c. **Holy Spirit** (the third Person of the Trinity, still Yahweh)
2. **Divine Council** (potentially angels, or another type of spiritual being, or just an illustration of angels ministering to God; cf. Psalm 82; Job 1)
3. **Angels & Cherubim/Seraphim** (Isaiah 6:2-7; Ezekiel 1:5-14)
4. **The New Humanity** (Revelation 7:9-17)
5. **Animals** (morally "neutral," not made in God's image but deeply important to God, they sing out the glory of God and will exist in God's eternal kingdom; cf. Psalm 148, Revelation 5:13).

The Adversaries & Accusers/The Failed Coup

6. **The Satan** (which means 'the Accuser' of humankind, quite possibly an original angel--or at least a spiritual being--who, through free will, rebelled against God out of pride; cf. Ezekiel 28:11-19; Revelation 12)³
7. **Demons** (Ephesians 6:10-12; 2 Peter 2:4-5)
8. **Rebel Humanity** (Revelation 20:15)

³ Calling "the Satan" or "the Accuser" simply "Satan" or "Lucifer" is actually a misnomer. Nowhere does the Accuser have a specific, revealed, proper name. To stay in line with Scriptural language Ryan prefers "the Enemy" or "the Accuser."