

ly sure that no disappointments will follow a life of consecration and service.

Rev. 22:17—"he that is athirst, let him come; he that will, let him take the water of life freely." Matt. 11:28—"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Rom. 6:23—"For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Rev. 2:7—"to him that overcometh, to him will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God."

### REVIEW EXAMINATION OVER LESSON SIXTEEN

18. Q. What is meant by God's eternal purpose?
19. Q. What did God's eternal purpose necessitate?
20. Q. When did God form His eternal purpose and plan?
21. Q. What is comprehended in God's eternal plan?
22. Q. How is God's eternal purpose and plan otherwise designated in scripture?
23. Q. In whom does this eternal purpose and plan of God centralize?
24. Q. What is the ultimate objective, or end, of God's eternal purpose and plan?
25. Q. What do the scriptures teach about the consummation of God's eternal purpose and plan?
26. Q. In view of all these great truths what should we do?

### Lesson Seventeen

#### GOD'S INVISIBLE CREATION

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Scripture Reading: Heb. 1:1-14.

Scripture To Memorize: "See that ye despise not one of these little ones: for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 18:10).

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27. Q. Does God have any creation other than our visible world?
  - A. The scriptures teach that God has an invisible creation.

By invisible, we mean invisible to us. Col. 1:16—"for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible." Eph. 3:10—"the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places." Cf. Col. 2:10, 15.

28. Q. Who are the inhabitants of the invisible world?

A. The angels.

29. Q. What special reason have we for believing in the existence of angels?

A. The reason that Jesus in numerous scriptures expressly asserts their existence as a fact.

Matt. 22:30—"For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as angels in heaven."

Matt. 13:39—"the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are angels." March 8:38—"when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." Matt. 24:36

—"but of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven." Matt. 26:53—"thinkest thou that I cannot beseech my Father, and he shall even now send me more than twelve legions of angels?" These are just a few of the many texts in which Jesus expressly affirms the existence of angels as a fact. One should think seriously before taking issue with our Lord on any subject. What justification has any one for speaking of belief in angels as a "superstition?" As a matter of fact, to believe in angels requires no greater exercise of faith than to believe in atoms.

30. Q. Are the angels created beings?

A. The scriptures teach that God created them.

Col. 1:16—"for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible." Psalms 148:2, 5—"Praise ye him, all his angels; praise ye him, all his host . . . let them praise the name of Jehovah; for he commanded, and they were created." How long it was between the creation of angels and the creation of man we have no means of knowing, for the simple reason that eternity cannot be measured by our human concepts.

31. Q. What do the scriptures teach regarding angels as to their number?

**A. The scriptures teach that they are a great multitude.**

Luke 2:13—"and suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host," etc. Matt. 26:53—"twelve legions of angels," i. e., an indefinitely large number. Heb. 12:22—"to innumerable hosts of angels." Rev. 5:11—"I heard a voice of many angels round about the throne." See also Dan. 7:10.

**32. Q. What do the scriptures teach regarding angels as to their rank?**

**A. The scriptures teach that they are of a higher order than man in rank and endowment.**

They are supernatural in their attributes, but not infinite. God alone is infinite. Luke 20:36—"neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels." Psa. 103:20—"Bless Jehovah, ye his angels, that are mighty in strength, that fulfill his word, hearkening unto the voice of his word." Cf. Matt. 24:36.

**33. Q. What do the scriptures teach regarding angels as to their nature?**

**A. The scriptures teach that they are an order of celestial beings.**

(1) They are ethereal beings. Heb. 1:14—"are they not all ministering spirits?" Acts 23:8—"for the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit." (2) They are without sex distinctions. Matt. 22:30—"for in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as angels in heaven." (3) Celestial creatures cannot in the very nature of the case have the characteristics of our physical organization. It is for this reason we must lay aside our earthly bodies, and our blood which is the seat of physical or animal life, and put on spiritual (ethereal) bodies adapted to our environment in the next world, before we can be fully conformed to the image of God's Son (Rom. 8:29). Lev. 17:11—"for the life of the flesh is in the blood." 1 Cor. 15:50—"flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." 1 Cor. 15:44, 49—"if there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body . . . and as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall

also bear the image of the heavenly." (The reference in this last text is to the saints, not to the unconverted). (4) It is obvious that pictorial representations of angels which have come down to us from medieval art, in which they are represented as feminine creatures with wings, are unscriptural. Angels are invariably referred to in scripture in the masculine; furthermore, ethereal beings would have no need for wings. We must distinguish between scripture teaching and human tradition on all such subjects as this.

(5) It is equally obvious that the popular notion that angels are spirits (or souls) of the righteous dead, is also unscriptural. In Heb. 12:22-23, the "innumerable hosts of angels" are clearly distinguished from "the spirits of just men made perfect" (i. e., the righteous dead). (6) Again, the assumption that angels are creatures of the human imagination, corresponding to the demigods of the ancient mythologies, is absurd. Demigods were usually conceived of as the offspring resulting from sensualistic relations between all sorts of imaginary creatures. The gods were represented as consorting with humans, and frequently with brutes; and all sorts of fantastic creatures were supposed to have inhabited the earth as a consequence of such illicit relations. It is silly to think that the Bible writers, surrounded as they were by sensualistic and idolatrous pagan neighbors, could have imagined an order of beings purely ethereal in nature and benevolent in their ministry, as angels are represented to be in the scriptures. We therefore accept the teaching of the Bible with respect to angels and their nature and work, as divine revelation. (7) Summarizing, angels are represented in scripture as an order of ethereal beings, all of whom were probably created at one time; an order of beings without sex distinctions or qualities; an order of beings superior to man in rank and endowment, but inferior to God and subject to His government.

**34. Q. What do the scriptures teach regarding angels as to their office and work?**

**A. The scriptures teach that they are the ministers of God's providence.**

(1) Heb. 1:14—"are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit

salvation?" Luke 15:7—"there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth," etc. (2) Concerning little children, Jesus said: "See that ye despise not one of these little ones: for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 18:10). Does He not expressly teach in this statement that little children have their guardian angels? (3) Again, we are told that angels have ever been interested in the unfolding of God's plan of redemption for man, and the events connected therewith. 1 Pet. 1:10-12, "concerning which salvation the prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; search what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them. To whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto you, did they minister these things, which now have been announced unto you through them that preached the gospel unto you by the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven; which things angels desire to look into." (4) Angels, we are told, will play a leading role in the final judgment of nations and in the renovation of our earth. Matt. 13:39—"the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are angels." Matt. 25:31—"But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory." Mark 8:38—"when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." 2 Thess. 1:7—"at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire," etc. (5) Instances of angelic ministrations are frequent in scripture, as, for example, in the following connections: Hagar, Gen. 16:7; Abraham, Gen. 18:2, 22:11-18; Lot, Gen. 19:1-17; Jacob, Gen. 28:12; 32:1; Moses, Exo. 3:2, Gal. 3:19; the children of Israel, Exo. 14:19, Judg. 2:1; Balaam, Num. 22:31; Joshua, Josh. 5:15; Gideon, Judg. 6:11-12; Manoah, Judg. 13:2-21; David, 2 Sam. 24:16; Elijah, 1 Kings 19:5; Elisha, 2 Kings 6:17; Daniel, Dan. 6:22, 7:10; Zechariah, Zech. 2:3; the annunciation to Joseph, Matt. 1:20; Zacharias, Luke 1:11-20; the annunciation to Mary, Luke 1:26-38; the protection of the Child

Jesus, Matt. 2:13-20; the shepherds, Luke 2:8-15; the temptation of Jesus, Matt. 4:11; the women at the sepulchre, Matt. 28:2-5; the disciples at the Ascension of Jesus, Acts 1:9-11; Peter and John, Acts 5:19; Philip, Acts 8:26; the deliverance of Peter from prison, Acts 12:6-9; Cornelius, Acts 10:3; Paul, Acts 27:23-24; John, Rev. 1:1, 5:2, etc. (Many authorities believe that the "angel of Jehovah" frequently mentioned in the Old Testament scriptures was the Word of God Himself in pre-incarnate manifestations, or theophanies. See Micah 5:2, 1Cor. 10:1-4).

**35. Q. In what moral state were the angels when God created them?**

**A. The scriptures teach that they were all good and happy and endowed with many supernatural gifts.**

**36. Q. What, then, did God do through the angels?**

**A. He inaugurated His moral system through them.**

By moral system, as previously explained, we mean His government, purpose and plan with respect to personal beings, or those who are endowed with free will. That the angels have free will, the same as man, is evident from the scriptures.

**37. Q. Of what value to us is belief in the angels and their ministry?**

**A. It serves to liberate our minds from bondage to the things of flesh and sense.**

(1) Things of flesh and sense are to a large extent illusive and transitory. As Rabbi Hillel Silver says, in his *Religion in a Changing World*, the scientific concepts of "matter, energy, time, space, the atom, etc., are not truth, but only artifices of thought, convenient summaries, not realities." The only realities in this changing world, he rightly contends are "the reality of God, the reality of personality, the reality of truth, beauty and goodness." Reality is found only in the realm of spirit. (2) Therefore we should constantly "look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen," as we make our earthly pilgrimage; "for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4:18). A

realization of the fact that there is an invisible world, inhabited by celestial beings who minister God's providence and who are personally interested in our spiritual welfare as children of God, should help us mightily to resist "the tyranny of things." What is needed most in our day and age is simple, childlike faith and trust with respect to "the revealed things" of God. Deut. 29:29.

### REVIEW EXAMINATION OVER LESSON SEVENTEEN

27. Q. Does God have any creation other than our visible world?
28. Q. Who are the inhabitants of the invisible world?
29. Q. What special reason have we for believing in the existence of angels?
30. Q. Are the angels created beings?
31. Q. What do the scriptures teach regarding angels as to their number?
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33. Q. What do the scriptures teach regarding angels as to their nature?
34. Q. What do the scriptures teach regarding angels as to their office and work?
35. Q. In what moral state were the angels when God created them?
36. Q. What, then, did God do through the angels?
37. Q. Of what value to us is belief in the angels and their ministry?

### Lesson Eighteen

#### THE NATURE OF SIN

Scripture reading: 1 John 3:1-12.

Scripture To Memorize: "Every one that doeth sin doeth also lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4). "To him therefore that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (Jas. 4:17).

38. Q. What is sin?
- A. Sin is transgression of the law of God.