

Angel Worship and the First Commandment

■ Angels are in the movies, on cards, everywhere—at least the popular conception of angels are. But what does the Bible really say about how we should think about angels?

by Joe Camerata

“Stars are the windows of heaven, where angels peek through,” says a “cute” old song.

Some time ago I received an E-mail saying, “When you find a penny, an angel has tossed it to the ground when you’re frowning to give you a smile.” At the end of the message it said, “I hope that you feel as lucky as I do, as I am so very fortunate to be graced with angels such as you in my life.”

some truth but also many misconceptions in these.

What Are Angels?

What is an angel? When we review the Bible we see four main words used to describe angels. In *The New Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* we find the words *cherubim* (Strong’s Hebrew [H] number 3742) or *seraphim* (H8314) refer to powerful winged creatures that do God’s bidding. Also in the Old Testament the word *malak* (H4397) appears about 195 times and most often is translated as “angel or messenger.” In the New Testament we primarily see the word *angelos* (Greek 32), which also is primarily translated as “angel.” Some of the purposes of angels are to proclaim key events, provide protection and enforce God’s wrath.

Generally, throughout the Bible when the word *angel* occurs, the

Some people have a near obsession or near worship of angels. Angels are real, but one must be cautious about giving the credit to angels when the real credit for miracles and answered prayers should go to God!

Angel worship has been around a long time. Colossians 2:18 (KJV) states: “Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind” (see also verse 8).

As Christians we adhere to the Commandments and should be reminded of the First Commandment: “You shall have no other gods before Me” (Exodus 20:3).

The apostle John records this caution about bowing down to or giving more credit to angels (or anyone) than is due: “And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, ‘See that you do not do that!

all evil, but is all too often a blend of good and evil. There is often a dark side to the “cute” and “comical” of the world.

Each of us needs to beware of deception that can come in many forms, for our adversaries are powerful.

People perceive Satan as a funny caricature with a pitchfork or as an ugly, fearsome-looking creature. Most images we have are from art and Hollywood. Yet the Bible says Satan appears as an angel of light to deceive (2 Corinthians 11:14).

In the book of Daniel we see a great struggle between good and evil in the spirit realm. In Daniel 10:12-14 (New Living Bible) it says, “Then he said, ‘Don’t be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day you began to pray for understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your request has been heard in heaven. I have come in answer to your prayer. But for twenty-one days the spirit prince of the kingdom of Persia blocked my way. Then Michael, one of the archangels, came to help me, and I left him there with the spirit prince of the kingdom of Persia. Now I am here to explain what will happen to your people in the future, for this vision concerns a time yet to come.’”

Man—a Special Creation

God created angels and sometimes they are referred to as sons of God, but what about man? Does a man become an angel? The answer is a resounding, No!

At this time we barely comprehend our future glory (1 Corinthians 13:12). We have been made a little lower than the angels, but will be changed in the twinkling of an eye at the resurrection and will truly be made glorified sons of God (Hebrews 2:6-8; 1 John 3:2; 1 Corinthians 15:50-52).

Angels Bring God’s Wrath and Protection

Angels are messengers. Angels are used to announce great events such as the pronouncement to

rounding them. But Elisha knew God’s protection was already there, saying, “‘Do not fear, for those who

are with us are more than those who are with them.’ And Elisha prayed, and said, ‘LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.’ Then the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.” Then the Syrian army was struck with blindness and sent back toward Samaria without capturing Elisha.

Each one of us can call upon God and pray to God for protection through His Spirit and His ministering angels. We have a promise from God in Psalm 91:10-11, “No evil shall befall you, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling; for He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways.”

Many of us have our personal stories to tell about how we feel God sent angels to deliver us from dangerous situations. These were situations where someone inadvertently got into trouble. We would never want to foolishly do something just to tempt or test God (Matthew 4:7).

The Truth About Angels

God created angels as ministering spirits, but some rebelled at the behest of Satan. However, most remained loyal. God’s angels truly bring protection, announcements of great events and warnings before enforcing God’s wrath. They are powerful beings who do God’s bidding and are never to be worshipped.

The truth about angels has been twisted and distorted into a confusing assortment of fables and myths. People have wanted their senses titillated and they like to hear smooth things that lack true spiritual substance.

So often there is a constant barrage of falsehood that even true Christians must guard their thoughts, actions and beliefs. God alone is worthy of worship (Isaiah 37:16)!

Do not let anyone take your crown through false religion, philosophy or the inordinate esteem or worship of angels.

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Joseph and Mary concerning the birth of Christ. God also warns and punishes the nations using angels throughout the book of Revelation.

God also uses angels to give protection. In 2 Kings 6:15-17 we read that the servant of Elisha was terribly afraid of the Syrian army sur-

Idolatry, carelessness, neglect and disobedience to God’s commands can prevent us from entering the Kingdom of God (Revelation 22:14-15). **UN**

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This too would be viewed as cute by many, and most realize that the fact that it is cute does not mean it is true. Still, too many people carelessly base their beliefs on what they’ve always heard or what sounds good.

If you explore the subject of angels in literature and on the Internet, most of what you find is based on fables, myths and popular suppositions (1 Timothy 1:4).

We hear stories about guardian angels, angels of protection in time of war and people being helped by angels.

There are movies like *Angels in the Outfield* or *Michael* or TV’s *Touched by an Angel*. There are collectible angels, angel booklets and sand pictures of angels. There is

angel has the appearance of a man. In addition, there are only three angels mentioned by name: Michael, Gabriel and Lucifer. This is unlike the world’s concept that angels appear as women or cute winged babies. Actually, the Bible indicates angels have no gender (Matthew 22:30).

More Credit Than Due

Many people want to give angels credit. It is as if people want their own little cherub, baby cupid or powerful angel with wings to lift them from adversity or to do their own bidding in personal affairs. They often do this without ever calling on God for help. Some people look to angels almost as their own personal geniuses.

I am your fellow servant . . .” (Revelation 19:10, see also Revelation 22:8-9).

Gnosticism teaches that angels are necessary intermediaries between God and man. This false teaching claims that knowing about angels enables “one to gain blessings in this life and attain the level of divine in the next” (*Holman Bible Dictionary*).

Let us never forget that Christ alone is our mediator before God (1 Timothy 2:5).

We Are in Spiritual Warfare

As Christians, we know we are in a spiritual warfare and our battle is not against flesh and blood, as the apostle Paul warned (Ephesians 6:12). Deception is never blatantly