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.”

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 books and sand pictures of angels. There is 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.

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

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

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