

“Angels: Real or Made Up?”

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When you think about angels what do you see? Normally you see a young, short, chubby angel with a harp in their hand, a little halo around their head, and wings on their back! Angels have surged in popularity. Angel memorabilia is a major industry. You can now purchase everything from alligators to zebras with angel wings. Yes, even the kitchen sink is available with angelic faucets! There are stores that only carry angel things! Angels are obviously a topic of high interest these days!

Angels appear in books, magazines and, newspapers. They even appear on television! Because of all these thoughts on angels and how we need them to be connected to our lives, **how we define and think about angels is more shaped by society, not God’s Word.** We know about the most common angels and events we hear about every year in worship, but we don’t always investigate God’s Word very closely for more of the truth.

Society’s image of angels today dates back to the Middle Ages. Until the 8th century, only those commissioned by the church were allowed to write about or draw angels. Then the 2nd Council of Nicaea in 787 declared it lawful to depict angels in art and literature. The images that were created at that time set the standard for angels in art.

Because of angel popularity, a quiz was given to see what people really thought about angels. **69% believed in angels,** and **32% said that they had had some sort of angel experience** in their lives.

Even in the midst of all this in society, what does God’s Word say about them? The Bible talks about angels **over 300 times** all the way from Genesis to Revelation! In Genesis 3:24, after Adam and Eve sin against God, God sends an angel to protect the Tree of Life, *“He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.”*

Open to Isaiah 6. Here a number of angels appear to Isaiah in one of his visions. Verses 1-2, *“In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.”*

An angel was with the three men in the fiery furnace. In Luke, in three accounts of Jesus’ birth, an angel appeared to Zechariah in the temple, Mary at her home, and the shepherds keeping watch over their flocks. Twice, the angel identifies himself as Gabriel. Open to Luke 2. Look at the very familiar story in verses 8-14, *“And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.”*

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" God also talks about angels to John in his vision from Revelation about heaven

With God giving us so many references about angels, why don't we talk about them more? I think there are at least three reasons.

Reaction against speculation. Pastors are often guilty of dealing with questions nobody cares about, that really don't matter. Questions like: *"How many angels can sit on the head of a pin? How much time passed between the creation of angels and the fall of 1/3rd of them? Is there a guardian angel assigned to every child born?"*

None of these are addressed in the Bible, but scholars love to talk about them, and it's a turnoff to most of us who want to know, not what they think, but what God has said! I read this week that younger people, millennials, are not joining churches because all they hear are answers for questions they're not asking!

Reaction against the worship of angels. Some churches worship saints, Mary, and others, in addition to God. But since the 4th Century they've even added the worship of angels. Listen to Colossians 2:18, *"Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind."*

As a knee-jerk reaction, Bible believing churches have been guilty of backing off of the subject of angels, fearing they might be accused of giving them too much attention. Some are even guilty of backing off of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, just because some other groups have abused it to great extremes.

Reaction against paganism. Did you know that in every known pagan group in the world, believes in spirits, demons, and angels? Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, and the Indonesian and jungle tribes of the world. The pagoda styled roofs in China are that way because they believe demons who try to slide down their roof will stick themselves and not come back! Did you know that's the same concept with earrings and other piercings.

Angels are personal beings who worship and obey God. Of one thing we can be sure, angels never draw attention to themselves but give glory to God and proclaiming His message to hearers as a delivering and sustaining Word of the highest order.

Believers, look up—take courage! Angels are nearer than you think! For after all, Psalm 91 reminds you in verses 11-12, *"For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone."* What love your God has for you as His child that He so richly provides for you always!