**Worship Christ, Not Angels**

*by Kevin Maxey*

A large portion of our society is enamored with angels. This is nothing new. People in New Testament times were so fascinated with angels that some even started to worship them (Col. 2:18). Still today many wonder: Where do angels come from? What do they look like? What is their purpose? Can they sin? What kind of power do they have? And, do they exist and work today?

The word "angel" is found in 34 of the books in the Bible and is used for a total of 284 times. Instead of letting the latest movies, songs, and television shows answer these questions for us, let's open God's word to find the truth about angels.

**Origin of Angels**

The Scriptures explain that all angels are created by Jehovah (Psa. 148:2, 5). These divine servants are sent from God (Luke 1:19), and come down out of heaven (Rev. 20:1). Angels belong to the Lord and are accountable to Him (Gen. 24:7, 40; 2 Pet. 2:4).

**Purposes of Angels**

Jehovah uses these inspired messengers as instruments to carry out His divine will (Dan. 9:22). Some of their purposes include: speaking God's will to man (Dan. 8:16-17; Luke 1:19), delivering the Old Law (Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19), guarding the way to the tree of life (Gen. 3:24); protecting (Josh. 5:13-15), guiding (Exod. 14:19), watching (Dan. 12:1), comforting (Gen. 21:17), ministering (1 Kings 19:5; Heb. 1:14), standing in the presence of the Lord (Luke 1:19), worshipping God (Rev. 7:11), fighting princes of evil (Dan. 10:20,13), warring against Satan (Rev. 12:7f), testifying of Christ's resurrection (Luke 24:1-7; 1 Tim. 3:16), carrying righteous souls to Abraham's bosom (Luke 16:22), and serving Jesus on the judgment day (Matt. 25:31; 13:49).

**Abilities of Angels**

Angels, at times, possess natural human abilities. They can move about (Gen. 16:7), talk in the common vernacular (Gen. 16:9), eat (Gen. 18:8), sit (John 20:12), and stand (Num. 22:31). Additionally, they have supernatural abilities. For example, angels can prophesy (Gen. 18:10), smite men blind (Gen. 19:1), destroy wicked cities (Gen. 19:13; Ezek. 9), fly swiftly (Isa. 6:2; Dan. 9:21), send plagues (2 Sam. 24:16-17), strike men with deadly worms (Acts 12:23), move about invisibly (Numb. 22:22-35), destroy armies (2 Kings 19:35), and open prison doors (Acts 5:19). Angels, as God allows it, are not bound by our natural laws.

**Names of Angels**

Angels are referred to by a variety of names throughout the Scriptures. The Bible descriptively gives them designations such as the "angel of God" (Gen. 21:17), the "angel of the Lord" (Gen. 22:11), the "captain of the host of the Lord" (Josh. 5:14), "watchers" (Dan. 4:17), "mighty ones" (Psa. 29:1), "sons of the mighty" (Psa. 89:6), "holy ones" (Psa. 89:7), "angels of destruction" (Psa. 78:49), "princes" (Dan. 10:13), "seraphim" (Isa. 6:2-7), and also "cherubim" (Gen. 3:24). The Bible even personally introduces two different angels with the names of "Gabriel" (Dan. 8:15; Luke 1:19), and "Michael", who is called the "great prince" and "archangel" (Dan. 12:1; 10:13; Jude 9).

**Appearances of Angels**

Angels appeared in nighttime dreams (Gen. 28:11-12), daytime visions (Acts 10:3), and in person (Gen. 18:2-8). The Bible records that angels had both human-like and non-human-like forms. At times they took "the appearance of a man" (Dan. 8:15) so convincingly that "some have entertained angels unawares" (Heb. 13:3). They had common physical features such as hands (Dan. 12:7), and feet (Gen. 19:2). They wore clothing such as long robes (Mark 16:5), white apparel (Acts 1:10-11), and linen (Dan. 12:6-7). Their appearance attracted some men (Gen. 19:5), and terrified others (Matt. 28:4).

These heavenly messengers also had a wide variety of non-human-like forms such as a flame of fire (Exod. 3:2), a cloud pillar (Exod. 14:9), with wings (Isa. 6:2), and having a countenance like "lightning" (Matt. 28:3). Angels appeared in an assortment of forms and did not assume just one set appearance. However, contrary to popular opinion, the Scriptures never describe angels as cute halo-wearing baby archers or beautiful flying women.

**Nature of Angels**

Several facts about the nature of these messengers are described in the Bible. Some of these descriptions inform us that angels are holy (Matt. 25:31), wise (2 Sam. 14:20), strong (Psa. 103:20), not perfect (Job. 4:18), immortal (Luke 20:36), and without marriage (Matt. 22:30). Angels and humans are distinctly different beings. The Scriptures never indicate that humans become angels when they die. Though angels are glorious spiritual beings they are not to be worshipped (Rev. 22:8-9; Col. 2:18). In reference to God, angels are free moral agents. They can choose either to obey (Psa. 103:20), serve the Father, and be blessed in heaven, or disobey (Jude 6), serve the devil (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 12:9), and be cast down into hell (2 Pet. 2:4).

**Angels Do Exist Today**

Learning more about angels provides us with a deeper awe for the divine power and redemptive plan of our almighty Father. It is amazing to realize that God is so dedicated to our salvation that He created this mighty heavenly host to aid Him in His work of our redemption. Be aware that an immense spiritual world does indeed exist (Eph. 6:12), and be assured that Jehovah is still using His spiritual servants to carry out His will. We do not know exactly how, when, or where angels act today, but it is clear that they are "ministering servants sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation" (Heb. 1:14). Some today claim angels appear to them with new revelations, but Paul strongly condemns such (Gal. 1:8-9). It is very interesting and profitable to study about angels, but be extremely careful not to engage in speculation beyond what God has revealed (2 John 9; Deut. 4:2), and remember that "the secret things belong to the Lord" (Deut. 29:29).

**But Christ Is Better**

Many people in our day are more concerned about having an intimate relationship with a personal guardian angel, rather than having a faithful and obedient relationship with the Almighty Christ. Some adorn their homes with fashionable angel figurines, while refusing to adorn their hearts with the Son. Others want an angel to save them from the pitfalls of life, but want nothing to do with the Messiah who would save them from the pitfalls of sin.

Instead of focusing our attention on having a relationship with angels, the Scriptures affirm that we need to enter into a relationship with Christ through faith (John 8:24), repentance (Luke 13:3), confession (Matt. 10:32-33), baptism (Rom. 6:3-4), and keeping His word (1 John 2:3-5). Angels are not the way to life and the Father. Jesus is the way (John 14:6). Yes, angels are great, but Jesus is "so much better than the angels" (Heb. 1:4-2:9). Worship Christ, not angels (Col. 2:18).