



For by [Christ Jesus] all things
were created, both in the
heavens and on earth, visible
and invisible, whether thrones
or dominions or rulers or
authorities—all things have
been created through Him
and for Him.

Colossians 1:16

Regarding Angels

Ninth in a Series

Ignorance never dies, it just keeps changing its shape.

One of the saddest things to see is how angels have become associated with the likes of New Age spirituality, harmonic convergence, aroma therapy and healing crystals. Today they have been wrapped into the whole feel-good, warm fuzzies, Transcendental Meditation, peace and love, flower child nonsense—a resurgence of something that should have died a quick death in the late 1960s.

These people wouldn't recognize a *real* angel if his wings slapped them in the face.



Most modern illustrations of angels show them as female, but the Bible never mentions an angel by name, sex, or pronoun that is not male. Most pictures show them as stunningly beautiful beings—tall, slender, elf-like—but in almost every instance in Scripture where a human being is confronted by an angel, the human's first reaction is one of great fear.

And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. And his appearance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. The guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men.

Matthew 28:2-4

Mention “angel,” and the image most of us conjure is of a slight, vaporous being with a bland, insipid expression on its face. But “good” angels are not only God’s emissaries (the Greek word *aggelos* means a messenger), they are fierce warriors doing constant battle with “bad” angels—that is, those angels that followed after the high angel Satan when he fell, and made himself God’s enemy. Whenever we are in the thick of a bad situation, we would be surprised to learn how surrounded we are by God’s invisible warriors, working on our behalf.

Now when the attendant of the man of God [Elisha] had risen early and gone out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was circling the city. And his servant said to him, “Alas, my master! What shall we do?” So he answered, “Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.” Then Elisha prayed and said, “O Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.” And the Lord opened the servant’s eyes and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

2 Kings 6:15-17

Actually, the old idea of having a demon on one shoulder and an angel on the other, each tugging at us from opposing directions, is not that far from the truth. We would be stunned to see the invisible, opposing forces doing battle over, for example, government affairs in Washington, Berlin, Lon-

don, Beijing. Imagine, if we were given the awful privilege to see it, the intense battle going on in the unseen ether over Baghdad, the Gaza Strip, Libya, Syria. What a horrific blood-letting must be taking place.



Angels also have duties more personal in nature. It is improbable that every believer on earth has a private, exclusive “guardian angel” hovering nearby, at the ready at any moment. But Scripture is replete with instances in which angels were sent by God to personally minister to someone in need, or to deliver a personal message from God.

Angels are created beings—

“You alone are the Lord.
You have made the heavens,
The heaven of heavens with all their host,
The earth and all that is on it,
The seas and all that is in them.
You give life to all of them
And the heavenly host bows down before You.”

Nehemiah 9:6

—not people who have died (an infant who dies around December 25

does not become a “Christmas Angel”). As much as we might sympathize with the broken hearts of those who have just lost a loved one—especially a child—deceased humans and angels are entirely separate beings. One never becomes the other. Angels themselves do not die—

Jesus said to them, “The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; for they cannot even die anymore, because they are like angels, and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.”

Luke 20:34-36

—and are neither deity, nor part of God’s family. In fact, although they, like believers in heaven, spend much of their time worshiping Father God and the Son, they never can know the remarkable, visceral joy it is to be an actual brother or sister of Christ. They *attend to* children of God, but they can never become one.

Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?

Hebrews 1:14

While it is true that angels cannot themselves join the ranks of those redeemed by Christ’s blood, they nonetheless rejoice over every soul that does.

“In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

Luke 15:10



Because faith is so important to God’s economy for man, so is the unseen. Much of how heaven interacts with those who claim it as home takes place on an invisible plane—by faith. The Holy Spirit, our Comforter and guarantor of redemption, can be experienced, but not seen. The companionship of Christ, our Brother and Lord, can be felt on earth—even embraced—but until the day we meet Him in the air, He remains invisible. The Father, as well, cannot be seen until we are gathered around His heavenly throne— and even then we may be limited to seeing only the manifestation of His glory.

There are times when the spiritual person can be so attuned to the things of God that the invisible may seem almost tangible. It is also possible, as Scripture says, that we can entertain “angels without knowing it,” and thus should “not neglect to show hospitality to strangers.” (Hebrews 13:2)

But for the most part the ethereal plane traversed by angels both good and evil remains beyond our senses. And happily so. It is a place of frightening beauty and catastrophic warfare. It is a realm energized by far too much power and violent cataclysm for our fragile sensibilities.

At the same time the fact of its existence can be a source of profound reassurance for the believer, for it expresses God's commitment to us. On this invisible plane operate the fierce warriors that do battle for our wellbeing, our comfort, our strength—our very soul.

And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war, and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

Revelation 12:7-9



Ruth Thompson

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