

You Asked For It! Heavenly Beings

Just before Christmas God was looking down at Earth
He observed all of the evil that was going on.
It wasn't the first time He had done this.
He decided to send an angel down to Earth to check it out.
So he called one of His best angels and sent the angel to Earth for a time.
The angel returned and reported to God.
"Yes it is bad on Earth, 95% is bad and only 5% is good."
Well, God thought for a moment and said, maybe I had better get a second opinion.
So He sent to earth a second angel to get another point of view.
He gave that angel the same assignment to survey the earth for a while.
When the second angel returned the first report was confirmed.
The Earth was in decline, 95% was bad and only 5% was good.
This really concerned God.
So He decided to email the 5% that were good.
He wanted to encourage them.
He wanted to give them a little something to help them keep going.
Do you know what that email said?
Ah, so you didn't get one either?
Aren't you glad God doesn't send out emails?
But He does send us messengers.
Aren't you glad His message of salvation and hope and encouragement is for all?
God doesn't pick and choose who is worthy of hearing the salvation message.
In the "You Asked For It" responses a sermon on Angels was requested.
Their character, Biblical accounts, their purpose, how do we relate to them?
In Greek God's messengers are called *angelion*.
Angelion is translated into angel in English.
What these messengers proclaim is *euangelion*.
Euangelion is translated gospel or good news.
From these two Greek words, *angelion* and *euangelion*, is *euangelistes*
Euangelistes is translated into evangelist or preacher of good news.
You could almost say when you feed Carlos, you are entertaining an angel.
God's messengers can be heavenly beings or they can be human beings.
They are messengers who declare God's good news of salvation for all.
They do the work of an *angelion*.
Anyone who shares the gospel is an *euangelistes*
Anyone who demonstrates the power of the gospel does the work of angelion.
To live a God-redeemed and God-transformed life is angelic.
John the Baptist was called a *euangelidzo*.
John was an evangelist who announced the ministry of Jesus.
Jesus, the long awaited and foretold Messiah, had come.
John was God's messenger, evangelist, to call people to repentance.
He came to prepare the way for Jesus.
John baptized with water.
But One who was to follow him would baptize with fire.
John, born to Elizabeth and Zechariah, did the same work as an angel.
He brought God's message of truth and salvation to the world.
God sends His messengers to the 95% who need His call to holiness.

I Heavenly Beings In Scripture

What would the Christmas story be without angels?

Mary would have had no idea how she a virgin had become pregnant.

Joseph would not have known to flee to Egypt to protect Jesus from Herod.

Shepherds would have sat the night out instead of searching for Jesus.

The wise men would have told Herod exactly where Jesus could be found.

Jesus' birth was announced by the message of *angelion*.

Jesus' life was preserved by the activity of *angelion*.

Jesus' ministry acknowledged the presence of both angels and demons.

He liberated those who were possessed by demons (Matthew 12:22-23).

"Then a demon-possessed man, who was blind and couldn't speak, was brought to Jesus. He healed the man so that he could both speak and see. The crowd was amazed and asked, "Could it be that Jesus is the Son of David, the Messiah?"

He even spoke to demons (Mt. 8:28-32).

"When Jesus arrived on the other side of the lake, in the region of the Gadarenes, two men who were possessed by demons met him. They lived in a cemetery and were so violent that no one could go through that area. They began screaming at him, "Why are you interfering with us, Son of God? Have you come here to torture us before God's appointed time?" There happened to be a large herd of pigs feeding in the distance. So the demons begged, "If you cast us out, send us into that herd of pigs."

He spoke of hell as a place prepared for the devil and his angels (Mt. 25:41).

"Then the King will turn to those on the left and say, 'Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his demons.'"

When being arrested He could have called 12,000 angels (Mt. 26:53).

"Don't you realize that I could ask my Father for thousands of angels to protect us, and he would send them instantly?"

They would have made short work of the mob of sinners.

He spoke of angels separating the righteous and the wicked (Mt. 13:49).

"That is the way it will be at the end of the world. The angels will come and separate the wicked people from the righteous,"

Angels announced Jesus' resurrection (Luke 24:23).

"They said his body was missing, and they had seen angels who told them Jesus is alive!"

Peter and the apostles were freed from prison by an angel (Acts 5:18-20).

"They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. But an angel of the Lord came at night, opened the gates of the jail, and brought them out. Then he told them, 'Go to the Temple and give the people this message of life!'"

Philip was directed by an angel to the desert to witness (Acts 8:26).

"As for Philip, an angel of the Lord said to him, 'Go south down the desert road that runs from Jerusalem to Gaza.'"

Cornelius sent for Peter because of an angel's message (Acts 10:3).

"One afternoon about three o'clock, he had a vision in which he saw an angel of God coming toward him. 'Cornelius!' the angel said. Cornelius stared at him in terror. "What is it, sir?" he asked the angel. And the angel replied, 'Your prayers and gifts to the poor have been received by God as an offering!'"

Peter followed an angel out of his prison cell (Acts 12:7-9).

"Suddenly, there was a bright light in the cell, and an angel of the Lord stood before Peter. The angel struck him on the side to awaken him and said, "Quick! Get up!" And the chains fell off his wrists. Then the angel told him, "Get dressed and put on your sandals." And he did. "Now put on your coat and follow me," the angel ordered. So Peter left the cell, following the angel. But all the time he thought it was a vision. He didn't realize it was actually happening."

Herod received a death blow at the hands of an angel (Acts 12:23).

"Instantly, an angel of the Lord struck Herod with a sickness, because he accepted the people's worship instead of giving the glory to God. So he was consumed with worms and died."

Paul was sent a message of safety by an angel (Acts 27:23).

"For last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me, and he said, 'Don't be afraid, Paul, for you will surely stand trial before Caesar! What's more, God in his goodness has granted safety to everyone sailing with you.'"

Scriptural evidence is overwhelming about the reality of angels.

II Heavenly Beings Today

Angels are acknowledged today although in more fanciful and often dangerous ways.

Movies like "Angels in the Outfield", "City of Angels", "Michael", "Legion", "Meet Joe Black", "Dogma" have all warped the perception of angels.

Angels adorn the tops of Christmas trees.

People collect angels and put them on display.

This is all done innocently.

But something else has developed over the last 20 years.

Angels have become objects of worship.

The Scriptures warn against this as a form of paganism.

Angels are not the only spiritual beings that interact with people.

"And the angel said to me, 'Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb.' And he added, 'These are true words that come from God.' Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said, 'No, don't worship me. I am a servant of God, just like you and your brothers and sisters who testify about their faith in Jesus. Worship only God! For the essence of prophecy is to give a clear witness for Jesus.'" (Revelation 19:9-10)

The New Age movement has taken angles to a whole new dimension.

New Age teaches that angels can be channeled into our lives.

New Age angels can be consulted for direction and power.

That is totally not Scriptural.

In Scripture God's people never attempt to make contact with an angel.

The angels focused on by New Age is a celestial web of deceit.

New Age angels are demons.

They are the fallen angels who followed Lucifer in rebellion.

Angels are a tool toward spiritual enlightenment.

Another tool of the New Age Movement is the "cherubic crystal."

It is activated in meditation and charged by the Cherubim.

The crystal attracts Cherubim angels into your life.

In the Bible, the angels appear unexpectedly and startle the human spectator.

Angels in the Bible caught the subjects of their visits off guard.

The shepherds weren't channeling and expecting an angel to appear.

They were terrified.

Rising with the New Age movement is the 20th Century rise of Wicca.

Their sacred writing is *The Book of Shadows*.

Wiccans are encouraged to read and reinterpret these writings to suit their life.

There is no absolute truth in Wicca.

"The Book of Shadows is ... a personal cookbook of spells that have worked for the owner. I am giving you mine to copy to get you started: as you gain experience discard those spells that don't work for you and substitute those that you have thought of yourselves." (Gerald Gardner to his followers)

In Wicca everything can be a god or goddess.

It is as pagan as the New Age and is basically sun and moon worship.

Angels are thrown in that can be summoned and called upon.

Try to keep your mind alert but peaceful. Now make a point to personally invite the spirit of the angels to enter your heart. You may simply say 'angels, I invite you into my heart and into my life.' Focus on the areas you require guidance in. Make up your mind that you will receive whatever guidance it is you're seeking. Believing this will help you to receive it. Just be patient and let it happen. Remember that angels are gentle spirits. You must listen carefully for their

quiet, inner voice. Let your heart and mind go with the spirit and allow their gentle presence and that quiet, inner voice to speak to you. You may feel a sense of peace and clarity, a quiet energy, and sometimes a chilly or warm tingling coming over you. This all depends on how much you are able to let go.

One Wiccan writer on the Cyber Witchcraft website comments.

"Having been raised loosely Christian, I love the fact that Wicca in general does not acknowledge Satan as a Deity however seeing the use of Christian angels brings about some confusion for me. If ... you acknowledge these beings from the Christian pantheon and call upon them are you not acknowledging all deities from that same pantheon? In particular Satan?"

As Christians we should be concerned.

Any teaching that elevates Satan to Deity is not Christian.

Our Scripture today gives a true look at the devil.

Satan is no deity.

Jesus refused to worship him.

Satan was not worthy of worship.

Only God the Creator is worthy of worship.

In our Scripture we see the devil departing from Jesus.

He left and waited for a more opportune time to tempt Jesus.

The devil, demons or angels are not a constant presence.

That is why all the occult distortions have to channel or séance.

Jesus is only One we can count on to be with us constantly.

We never need to invite Jesus into our midst.

Where we are He also is.

Only Jesus can promise, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

"Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Mt. 28:20).

Yes Satan is a prowling lion looking to devour us.

But we do not need to live in constant fear of his presence.

When we resist him he will flee from us (James 4:7).

"So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

The passage also refers to the protection that angels are capable of giving.

And the angels came and ministered to Him.

The devil in his temptation referred to the power of angels.

They are given the responsibility of guarding.

Jesus knew the strength of angels could be trusted.

But He did not rely on their presence to save Him.

He relied on the authority of His Father.

He refused to live recklessly thinking He would be bailed out.

Guardian angels are no excuse for living the way we want to live.

They are not a safety net.

They never take matters into their own hands.

And they never receive honour or glory.

Something happened earlier this year to some dear friends of our family.

Their experience left no doubt in my mind of the reality of guardian angels.

The following pictures reveal how they were protected.

But my friends would be the last people to give the glory to an angel.

All the praise and glory goes to their Heavenly Father.

They sustained massive injuries but are alive today.

And their recovery was months shorter than anticipated once they lived.

Revelation 5:12, 13b

Closing Song - God of Wonders