

Angelic Thrills & Chills

People seem always to be fascinated with the thrill of sensation. If that thrill can come in the form of spiritual sensation, it is even more gratifying. Many today are compulsively drawn to the emotional high of mystical experience and the reality of angels tends to fall into that category. What does the Bible teach about angelic presence? We turn our thoughts to this curious and revealing subject in today's Templates of Truth.

One of the issues that Paul dealt with in his letter to the church at Colossae is one that is still prevalent today – *Let no one keep defrauding you...by delighting in...the worship of angels* (Colossians 2:18a). The believers at Colossae were being courted by false teachers who sought to lure them into supernatural, mystical experiences that heightened their spiritual awareness and provided them a sense of spiritual superiority. Putting confident authority in dreams & visions, and passionately pursuing the presence & power of angels were among those things Paul identified as originating from a *fleshly mind* and are a manifestation of *fleshly indulgence* (Colossians 2:18b, 23b). It has always been the ploy of Satan to keep our minds focused on the ecstatic and sensational because it distracts us from investing our attention toward solid Biblical doctrine.

No serious student of the Bible would question the reality and activity of divine angels. The thing we often fail to remember is that *Satan disguises himself as an angel of light* (II Corinthians 11:14). Many cults and religions today lead their followers to love, pray to, worship and call upon their “guardian angel” for health, wealth, protection, guidance and deliverance, using Scriptural references to angelic activity to justify their teachings and belief. How do you know if the angelic presence in your life is of heavenly or demonic origin? Just because it looks Biblical, divine, holy and religiously sanctioned doesn't necessarily guarantee it is not satanic! The devil's disguises can be dramatically convincing. To discern the difference, consider these truths:

First, an angel of God will always acknowledge and point to Jesus as being the Christ, the Son of the living God – *every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God, and that is the spirit of the antichrist* (I John 4:2-3). Any message or messenger that downplays or denies the authority of Jesus Christ as the second person in the Godhead, is not one sent from God. Only a demonic spirit would question the deity of Christ.

Second, an angel of God will never accept worship from anyone, but will always direct worship, adoration and appeal toward God. Twice in his Revelation vision, John fell in worship at the feet of an angle, and both times suffered the angel's rebuke – *do not do that...worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy* (Revelation 19:10, 22:9). The word of God never instructs the believer to love, worship or pray to an angel. It does tell us to love, worship, and pray to God, for God declares, *I will never share my glory with another* (Isaiah 42:8).

Third, an angel of God does not show up as the result of a chant or invocation. Angels only act at the will and command of God. Luke specified in his Gospel – *the angel Gabriel was sent from God* (Luke 1:26). It is amazing how many true believers today are lured into false teaching by books written with detailed instructions on how to contact their guardian angel. The Bible has never established a criteria or precedence for contacting angels. Even on the cross, Jesus acknowledged this authority as being that only of the Father – *do you not think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?* (Matthew 26:53). God’s angels do not answer when you call. They respond only to God. If anyone claims of such a successful contact, it is undoubtedly a demonic being, disguising itself as an angel of God, no matter what miraculous good came from it.

Finally, an angel of God will never provide instruction or guidance that deviates in any way from the Word of God – the Bible. Paul declared – *(if) an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed* (Galatians 1:8). When a person senses an angelic message that contradicts the truth & teaching of Scripture, it is not a holy angel of God, it is a demon from hell! Satan often quotes Scripture, but it is always slightly varied, distorted and taken out of context for purposes to deceive. Only a believer who studies enough to allow the Word of God to dwell richly within him will be able to discern the difference.

To put all of this into a more proper perspective, what would you rather have – the wisdom, guidance & protection of an angel, or the wisdom, guidance & protection of God? Heavenly angels are neither omnipresent, omniscient nor omnipotent, but God is. If it serves His will and purpose to send His messenger to you in some way that is a sovereign act of God. However, through the indwelling presence of His angel – the Holy Spirit – we already have the full power & authority of God working in us, through us and for us. When you have that, why do you think you must also, of necessity, need an angel?

That’s today’s Templates of Truth. This is your Bible teacher, Rick Smith, reminding you to attend church this Sunday for Bible study and worship, pray for one another, and always strive to abide in Christ. Until next time, have a blessed and glorious day in the Lord Jesus.