

Angels

by Hendrik Joubert

Angels are often portrayed as soft cuddly beings with wings. They are considered to be mild mannered, tenderhearted guardians sent from God – sweet dolphins protecting everyone from sharks. As with the Lord Jesus Christ, their image is manipulated in the thoughts of people so that they will not, and cannot treat anyone *badly*. The Lord is manipulated and abused, not only by the religious world, but also by those in the political world. They choose to know only those things the Lord said by which they seem to benefit. The condemnation of frivolous human judgment by the Lord in **Matthew 7:1: "Judge not, that you be not judged."** is abused in an attempt to escape righteous judgment according to the standard supplied by God: **"Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."** (John 7:24)

The Bible was given so the servants of God may have His standard, not only **for teaching** and for **training in righteousness**, but also **for correction** and **for reproof**. (2Timothy 3:16-17) Reproof and correction demands judgment on the part of the one reproving or correcting; however the standard should be that which God handed down to us. (Ephesians 3:1-7; Jude 3; 2Timothy 3:16-17; 2Peter 3:15-16)

When Timothy is exhorted to preach this word, **in season and out of season** (when people are ready, or not), he is warned: **For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires...** (2 Timothy 4:3) People would rather listen to what they want to hear, and anyone who disagrees is considered judgmental and negative. The Bible is the source to consult if we are to be instructed by God.

Angels may indeed bring good news, as they appear wingless in the form of men; however in the Scriptures these messengers of Jehovah are treated more reverentially and fearfully. When the birth of Samson was announced by an angel, his parents thought the sight of the representative of God meant certain death: **So Manoah said to his wife, "We will surely die, for we have seen God."** (Judges 13:22) When the angel appeared to the shepherds to tell them of the birth of Jesus, they **were terribly afraid** as the glory of **the Lord shone around them**. (Luke 2:9)

Angels may also appear to bring bad news, or even judgment itself. **When the angel stretched out his hand toward Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD relented from the calamity and said to the angel who destroyed the people, "It is enough! Now relax your hand!"...** (2

Samuel 24:16) From this incident it is clear that the angels of God do not only bring good news, but also destruction as a loving, but holy God executes His judgment. ***Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off.*** (Romans 11:22)

Generally we like to listen to those we agree with, as well as those who compliment us. In this regard God reveals through Paul: ***For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.*** (Galatians 1:10) Later in the same letter he asks those who disagree with him: ***So have I become your enemy by telling you the truth?*** (Galatians 4:16)

Eternal salvation is not an area where we can afford to make a mistake. The alarming truth is that some who seem to be angels of God are responsible for the fact that the majority will be lost. ***No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. ¹⁵ Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.*** (2 Corinthians 11:14-15)

In 26 of the 27 books of the New Testament we find warnings against false teachers, preachers, apostles, prophets and even christs. Why such urgency? False teachers ***disguise themselves as servants of righteousness***, just as ***Satan disguises himself as an angel of light***. Masquerading as servants of righteousness, they are able to lead many astray. The only way for us to be sure that we are following God's instructions is to search the Scriptures to see if what we are told is the truth. (Acts 17:11)

How many people do you know who are lost? Now think of how many consider themselves to be lost? How many funerals have you attended where the person was not said to be in a *better place*, or *at home with the Lord*? Even though a loving God saves by grace, many will not accept His grace as Jesus Christ the Son of God asks, and warns: ***"Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. ²² "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' ²³ "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'"*** (Luke 6:46; Matthew 7:21-23)