

Fallen Angels. Number Four

The Bible tells us that not all angels remained faithful to God. There was a revolt in heaven and many angels entered the service of the devil, who was perhaps the mightiest of them all. (Matt. 25:41; 2 Cor. 12:7; Rev. 9:11;12:7) The apostle Peter warned his readers that God did not spare angels when they sinned "but sent them to hell." (2 Pet. 2:4) And in Jude 6 we read that rebel angels are "bound with everlasting chains for judgement on the great Day."

The rest of the angels remained perfect; and because they were in the presence of the devil before his fall into sin, they know his demonic power better than any human being.

Worship by Angels.

The calling of angels is the worship of God. God's command is clear. "Praise the Lord, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word." (Ps. 103:20) At the dawn of creation they joined in praising God as they witnessed His mighty work. After God had completed it the "stars sang together and the angels shouted for joy." (Job 38:7) The angels glorified God with song before mankind was created and they sang again when Jesus Christ, God's Son, came to earth. And the angels' song in Revelation 14 prophecies a future where the singing and music making of the angels will never stop. They will sing the victory song, celebrating the triumph of the Lamb of God over all His enemies. (Rev. 5:9-13)

The angels are worshippers. They have a definite role in the liturgy of heaven. "Let all God's angels worship him."

(Heb.1:6) The angels give glory to God. They focus on His blazing majesty and His pure holiness. Their liturgy shows human worshippers that they should never be over-familiar with God. With all the attempts to make church services seeker friendly, the worship of our Creator, the all together Holy One, tends to be dumbed down. But we worship the same awesome God as the angels. We even worship with them as we come together as Gods people in our church services. Thomas Torrance comments:

The sharp relevance of this angelic ministry to Christian spirituality is evident in the rebuke it implies for any idea of uncontrolled experimenting in the worship of God and for any over-familiarity in addressing the Lord Jesus Christ, both of which are only too common today Before the transcendent holiness of the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and before the ineffable mystery of atonement through the blood of Christ the

incarnate Son of God, we cannot but fall down in utter awe and adoration, in unrestrained wonder and praise. It is surely thus that the liturgy of the church on earth corresponds to the liturgy of the general assembly and church of the first born in heaven. (Hebr.12:23)

Thee, mighty God, heavenly King, we magnify and praise. With angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven, we worship and adore Thy glorious name, evermore praising Thee and saying: Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts, heaven and earth and full of thy glory; Glory be to Thee, O Lord Most High.

Worship of Angels.

What is our relationship to angels in our liturgy? History testifies that the belief in their intercessory prayers soon led to the adoration of angels. Col. 2:18 teaches that the worship of angels had already infiltrated the early church.

Calvin comments that Paul had a great struggle with certain persons who so elevated angels that they well-nigh degraded Christ to the same level. Hence he urges with great solicitude in the letter to the Colossians that not only is Christ to be preferred before all angels but that he is the author of all good things that they have (Co1. 1:16,20).

The practice of angel worship was difficult to root out. The early Church Fathers still had to combat the belief that there were spiritual intermediaries through whom it was necessary to pass before reaching God. But at the same time they had to acknowledge belief in angels lest Christians appear to be atheists. In folk Catholicism some form of angel worship is still known. And in our age of misguided spirituality New Agers give angels the attention and adoration apart from God. But the Bible is abundantly clear in its condemnation of angel worship. When the exiled apostle John saw the glorious appearance of an angel and heard him speak, he fell at his feet to worship him. But the angel said to him, "Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." (Rev. 19:10)

Johan D. Tangelder