

Question: What does the phrase “worshiping angels” mean, as mentioned in Colossians 2:18?

Colossians 2:18 (NIV):

“Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you. Such a person also goes into great detail about what they have seen; they are puffed up with idle notions by their unspiritual mind.”

When the Gentile believers first received the gospel, they were transitioning directly from paganism into Christianity. Their understanding of the spiritual realm was often limited or confused, especially regarding the role and nature of angels. This lack of foundation sometimes led to errors in worship.

The Bible clearly distinguishes the unique divinity of Christ from created beings such as angels. Angels are ministering spirits sent by God to serve His people

(Hebrews 1:14, ESV: “Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?”).

They are powerful and holy but remain creatures created beings unlike Jesus Christ, who is God incarnate.

In Colossae, some believers began to mistake angelic ministry for divine status, assuming angels shared Christ’s authority and worthiness of worship. This led to the dangerous practice of worshiping angels, which Paul warns against. Worship belongs to God alone (Exodus 20:3-5).

A parallel example is found in the book of Revelation. The Apostle John, while receiving visions on Patmos, attempted to worship an angel who delivered God’s message. The angel immediately corrected him, saying:

Revelation 22:8-9 (NIV):

“I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. When I had heard and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me. But he said to me, ‘Don’t do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your fellow prophets and with all who keep the words of this scroll. Worship God!’”

This correction underscores the biblical principle that worship is reserved for God alone.

- Worshiping angels undermines the unique supremacy and sufficiency of Christ as Lord and Savior.
- Prayers and devotion must be directed to God through Jesus Christ (John 14:6).
- Angelic beings, while honored as God’s servants, are not objects of worship.
- The error of angel worship echoes pagan practices and can easily infiltrate the church if believers lack sound doctrine.

Some modern traditions, like certain Catholic practices involving prayers to guardian angels, can blur this line. While it’s biblical to recognize angels’ protective roles, Scripture teaches that all prayers and worship should be directed to God alone, through Christ.

Paul's admonition serves as a timeless warning, especially for prophetic ministries that receive messages through angelic beings. These messengers must never be conflated with God Himself. As Hebrews 1:6 (ESV) states:

"And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, 'Let all God's angels worship him.'"

This verse affirms that angels worship Christ, highlighting His unique divine status

The phrase "worshiping angels" in Colossians 2:18 refers to a serious theological error where believers mistakenly give to angels the honor and worship due to God alone. This error arises from misunderstanding the distinct nature and role of angels versus Christ. Scripture consistently teaches that worship belongs solely to God, and even angels themselves worship Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Shalom

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