

Why the Stories of the Virgin Birth Fit Together

Tom Davis answers the charge that the two nativity accounts in the gospels contradict each other, showing how well they complement each other by contributing details from two different perspectives.

It is December again, the time of year that western culture celebrates Christmas. Historically Christians claimed that Jesus was born on December 25 as early as the late second century.^{1} The primary biblical and historical sources for Jesus' birth are found in Matthew chapters 1 and 2, and Luke chapters 1 and 2. These chapters tell us the history of God becoming one of us through the virgin conception and birth of Jesus. The birth of Jesus is important because it is the beginning of God fulfilling his promise to send a savior to Israel. Many opponents of Christianity reject these stories as myths or fanciful stories. Their view is that these stories are made up to fulfill prophecy. They claim that these accounts are two completely different stories that are incompatible with each other.

Some Alleged Problems

One skeptic in particular, New Testament scholar Bart Ehrman, claims that "The problem is that some of the differences between Matthew and Luke are very difficult to reconcile with one another."^{2} When reading objections like this it sounds as if the early Christians were not aware that the four Gospels were not identical in the way that they told the story of the life of Jesus.

However, the early Christians were aware that each Gospel tells us about the life of Jesus from a particular point of view. When these stories are examined, they complement each

other and give a more complete account of the birth of Jesus. The end process of examining these issues and giving a complete account is called a harmony. The first harmony, the Diatessaron, was written by a Christian named Titian around A.D. 170. {3}

Ehrman raises an issue that he thinks is irreconcilable: "Where was Joseph and Mary's home town?" {4} Ehrman points out that Luke says Joseph and Mary live in Nazareth and have to travel to Bethlehem because of a census, while Matthew does not mention them living in Nazareth before the birth of Jesus. But is this really a contradiction? No! Luke tells us about the things that happened in Nazareth while Matthew chooses not to address those things.

Ehrman points out that there are wise men in Matthew, but there are shepherds in Luke. {5} But Luke tells us that the shepherds visited Jesus on the night of his birth, while Matthew says that the wise men came some time, probably more than a year, after Jesus was presented at the Temple.

Ehrman also points out that Matthew tells us Herod wants to kill Jesus, while Luke tells us Caesar wants a census taken. {6} But these are not contradictory claims. There is no reason to say that if one happened the other could not.

We have seen in a brief overview how the claim that the stories of Jesus' birth in Matthew and Luke are not compatible with one another can be resolved. But how do the stories fit together? I will summarize the narratives in Matthew and Luke, then combine the narratives to show that when they are combined they fit together to make one fuller narrative.

Matthew's Narrative (Matthew 1:18-2:23)

As I summarize the birth narrative in Matthew, who is visited by angels? Who is making the decisions? From whose perspective is the story being told? These questions help tell us who is

the possible source of the story.

Matthew begins his narrative with Joseph. Joseph and Mary were engaged to be married. In ancient Israel, engagements lasted a year. Mary is pregnant before they are married. Joseph does not want to marry Mary, but also does not want to disgrace her family. He decides to make the divorce private.

While Joseph was thinking these things over, an angel from God tells him that Mary's pregnancy is an act of God. Joseph will have a son, and the son's name will be Jesus. Jesus will save his people from their sins.

When Joseph wakes up he changes his mind and marries Mary. Joseph and Mary do not have sexual relations and she is a virgin when her son is born. They named their son Jesus as the angel instructed Joseph. Matthew tells us that Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

Later, some Magi, probably from Persia, show up looking for the one who was born King of the Jews. These Magi claim to have seen this king's star, so they came to worship him.

King Herod does not like the news that the Magi bring. He is the king and there is no room for another king. So Herod goes to the chief priests and the scribes to find out where the Christ is supposed to be born. They search the scripture and tell Herod that the Christ will be born in Bethlehem. Herod tells the Magi that the new king was born in Bethlehem. Herod asks the Magi to stop by on their way back to Persia and tell him where the new king will be found so he can go and worship him too. However, Herod wants to kill this new king, because he is the king and there will not be another king.

As the Magi are approaching Bethlehem they see the star again. The star leads them to the house where Mary, Joseph, and Jesus are staying. The Magi worship Jesus and give him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. The Magi are warned in a dream not to go back to see Herod, so they go back to Persia without

stopping in Jerusalem.

An Angel appears to Joseph in a dream and tells him that Herod wants to kill Jesus, and that he needs to go to Egypt to escape Herod. Joseph wakes up and takes Mary and Jesus to Egypt.

Herod realizes that the Magi went back to Persia without telling him where the new king was born. Herod is furious! He sends soldiers into Bethlehem with orders to kill every boy under the age of two.

Joseph, Mary, and Jesus live in Egypt until Herod dies. Then, an angel appears to Joseph in a dream and tells him to return to Israel. Joseph wants to return to Judea, but he is afraid the new ruler, Archelaus, will kill Jesus so he moves to Nazareth.

Notice that in Matthew the narrative focuses on Joseph's role in the events surrounding Jesus' birth. Matthew 1 gives Jesus' genealogy through Joseph's lineage. The narrative begins with Joseph having to decide whether he should divorce Mary, or continue with their engagement and marriage. Joseph is visited by an angel in his dreams three times. This focus on Joseph suggests that this narrative is told from Joseph's point of view. Next I will summarize Luke's narrative.

Luke's Narrative (Luke 1:5-2:52)

As we did with Matthew, ask, who is the main character in the story? Who does the story focus on?

Zechariah, a priest faithful to God, had no children because his wife, Elizabeth, could not have children. Zechariah was selected to enter the sanctuary of the Temple to burn incense when the angel Gabriel appeared to him. Gabriel tells Zechariah that Elizabeth will become pregnant and they will have a son who is to be named John. Zachariah is skeptical, so Gabriel makes him unable to speak. As Gabriel said, Elizabeth

becomes pregnant.

Six months later Gabriel is sent to Nazareth to visit a virgin, Mary. Mary is engaged to Joseph. Gabriel tells Mary that she has found favor with God and she will conceive and have a boy who is to be named Jesus. Mary does not understand how this can be. Gabriel explains that it is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Mary goes to visit Elizabeth, who happens to be Mary's cousin. When Mary arrives John, who is not yet born, recognizes that Mary's child, Jesus, is the coming Messiah. Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit and recognizes that Mary's child will be blessed.

Elizabeth gives birth to John. After John was circumcised her neighbors and relatives wanted to name the child after Zechariah. Elizabeth tells them the child is to be named John. This causes an argument among the people because he has no ancestor named John. Zechariah regains his speech and ends the discussion by proclaiming that his son's name is John. This amazes the people and news of this spread throughout Judea.

Mary is back in Nazareth when Caesar calls for a census. Joseph, her husband, is from the lineage of David, who is from Bethlehem. This means that Joseph and Mary have to travel to Bethlehem for the census. While they are there, Mary gives birth to Jesus. Mary wraps Jesus in blankets and lays him in a manger because there is no room in the guest room.

There were shepherds in the area who were watching over their flocks of sheep. Suddenly an angel from God appeared to them. This frightened the shepherds. The Angel told them not to be afraid. He brought them good news, the Messiah was born in Bethlehem. Then a group of angels appeared proclaiming, "Glory to God in the highest heaven and peace on earth to people he favored."

When the angels leave, the shepherds decide to go to Bethlehem

to see the child. When they arrive, they find Mary, Joseph, and the baby in a manger just like the angels told them they would. The shepherds tell Joseph and Mary about the visit of the angels and what they said about the child. The shepherds leave praising God. Mary continues to think about these things.

After eight days Joseph and Mary take Jesus to the Temple to be circumcised. While at the Temple Joseph and Mary are approached by Simeon, who has been told by the Holy Spirit that he would see the Messiah before he died. Simeon shares this with Mary and Joseph, telling them that Jesus would be a light to the Gentiles and would bring glory to Israel. Then Anna, a prophetess, comes to see Jesus in the Temple. Anna thanks God and tells the people about Jesus.

After all the requirements of the law were fulfilled, Mary and Joseph return to Nazareth.

Notice that in Luke, the angels appear to Mary. Luke includes Mary's journey to visit Elizabeth, and that John and Jesus are relatives on Mary's side of the family. The genealogy in Luke 3 goes through Heli, who is Mary's father. Luke's account of the birth of Jesus seems to come from Mary's perspective.

Combining the Stories

Finally I will place the two stories together to make one story. Do the transitions from Luke to Matthew, or from Matthew to Luke, flow smoothly? Are there any contradictions or irreconcilable differences?

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be counted in the census. While they are there, Mary gives birth to Jesus. Mary wraps Jesus in blankets and lays him in a manger because there is no room in the guest room.

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When we combine both narratives we can see that we have two narratives that are told from two different perspectives. These differing perspectives lead to an emphasis on different details. When the accounts are harmonized we can see that these details are not contradictory, they are complementary. The narratives fit nicely together, like the pieces of a puzzle, to make a more complete larger picture of the events surrounding the birth of Jesus.

Conclusion

God became one of us. God did what he promised he would do in the Old Testament. The conception and birth of Jesus is the beginning of the defeat of death and sin. Jesus' birth is directly tied to His death and resurrection. The power of sin, death, and Satan is broken. This is the reason that Christians celebrate this event every year. As the angels said, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to people he favors." (Luke 2:14 SCB)

Notes

1. "The traditional date for the birth of Christ from as early as Hippolytus (ca. A.D. 165-235) has been December 25th." Hoehner, Harold W. *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977), 25.
2. Ehrman, Bart. *Jesus: The Apocalyptic Prophet of the New Millennium*. (New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 1999), 36.
3. Thomas, Robert, L. *A Harmony of the Gospels with Explanations and Essays*. (San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers, 1978), 269.
4. Ehrman, 37.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.

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Are Ghosts Real?

The morning program on a Dallas radio station recently featured a story about one of the show personalities going to a "ghost hunt" at a supposedly haunted hospital. The staffer

came back with video of a flashlight turning on and off by itself. She went as a skeptic but came back as a believer.

In ghosts.

She offered her perspective: we all go to heaven or hell, but some people get delayed on their way to their final destination. The discussion opened a stream of callers eager to share their “knowledge” about ghosts, such as the woman who has slept in cemeteries to learn about spirits. “Sometimes children don’t know they’ve died,” she assured the radio audience.

Are ghosts real? How should we think about ghost hunting and anecdotes of people seeing disembodied spirits? My grandmother reported that she had seen her late husband walking through the living room years after he died; what do we do with stories like that?

It really doesn’t matter how we feel or what we think—the only thing that matters is what God has revealed to us about the spirit world. And there is no room in a biblical worldview for the spirits of dead people wandering around, stirring up mischief or playing with flashlights.

The Bible says that “It is appointed for men to die once, and after this comes judgment” (Hebrews 9:27). That means heaven or hell. The apostle Paul wrote that for the believer in Christ, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8). In chilling language, Deuteronomy 18 forbids any kind of dabbling with the occult, which the pagans already living in the Promised Land indulged in, and which God absolutely prohibited:

“When you enter the land which the LORD your God gives you, you shall not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations.

There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination,

one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer,
or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead.
For whoever does these things is detestable to the LORD; and because of these detestable things the LORD your God will drive them out before you.” (vv. 9-12)

Ghost-hunting is seeking occult encounters, which is the domain of evil spirits, and God warns us to stay far away from all of it.

But people, lots of people, have reported seeing *something*. How should we interpret seeing those who have died, and inanimate objects moving of their own accord? I would suggest that this is all the work of demons, evil angels who have rebelled against God. God’s word tells us they masquerade as something other than what they are; Satan disguises himself as an angel of light, and his servants disguise themselves as servants of righteousness (2 Corinthians 11:14-15). Devils lie and deceive. It makes sense that they would deceive people by appearing as ghosts and impersonating dead people. Whether they terrorize the living through fear or just distract us from what is true and good, it’s all the work of God’s enemy.

We not only live in a fallen world, we live in a war zone where we walk around as targets of the enemy, whether we recognize it or not. Paul wrote that we struggle against the powers of this dark work and against spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places (Ephesians 6:12). Part of that spiritual war is the strategy of terrorism or distracting us by things like counterfeit ghosts and the movement of physical objects by unseen but real spirit beings who can manipulate the physical world.

When I think about the radio listeners who called in to offer their “knowledge” about ghosts, I found myself thinking about the critical-thinking [“Killer Questions”](#) that we ought always

be using as a filter for what we read, see and hear. Especially “Where do you get your information?” and “How do you know that’s true?” Someone who sleeps in a cemetery to gain information about the spirit world may well be receiving information from “the other side,” but how accurate and trustworthy is it? Why should she believe everything the spirits are telling her? What kind of spirits are feeding her “facts” about how things work in the spirit realm?

I am grateful for the trustworthiness and reliability of God’s word that tells me how to think about ghost-hunting and ghost-busters. It’s about messing with demons pretending to be something other than what they are. (In my angel article [Angels: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly](#), I call them “ugly angels”) That’s why He forbids us to dabble with anything dark and occult. He wants to protect us because He’s a good, good Father.

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Don’t Wish Me Luck

Dec. 6, 2011

A Christian high school in the Chicago area displayed a disturbing message for one of their teams on their marquee: “Good luck in the State Finals!” I knew they were wishing them well, but unwittingly, the message writer had bought into an unbiblical worldview.

There is no such thing as luck!

The concept of luck is an animistic belief, which is the core of folk religion worldwide: a belief in the unseen world that is populated by various kinds of spirits such as the spirits of the dead (ghosts) and nature spirits, as well as unseen supernatural forces: fate, the “evil eye,” magic, witchcraft, impersonal energy forces (“chi”) . . . and luck.

People think of good luck as a supernatural force that has to be attracted, or coaxed (“Come on, double sixes!”), or somehow manipulated to work for us. And bad luck is an unseen negative force that we need to protect ourselves from. So people put their trust in sacred or magical objects and actions in hope of manipulating this supposed force of luck.

When I was young, I wore a “miraculous medal” on my watch, a charm that I believed would keep me safe. I see rosaries hanging from rear view mirrors for the same purpose. Then there are magic/sacred items thought to bring luck: a rabbit’s foot, a horseshoe, a four-leaf clover. Lots of people scheduled weddings and other events on November 11 of this year (11-11-11) in the belief it would bring them luck. (One woman on the Dr. Phil show was planning to marry for the eleventh time on 11-11-11 because she thought it would bring her luck after ten bad marriages! Wisely, Dr. Phil told her she didn’t need luck, she needed pre-marriage counseling.)

The idea of luck as a force to be wielded, much like “The Force” in Star Wars, plays no part in a biblical view of life and reality. But lots of people believe in it anyway, because the majority of people, including Christians, do not think biblically. They are captive to the false ideas of the surrounding culture, one of which is animism.

[Animism](#) is a degradation of a true understanding of reality, which has been revealed by God in His word: that God has created things we can see, which are temporal, and things we can’t see, which are eternal (2 Cor. 4:18). The unseen spiritual dimension contains both good and evil spirits—angels

and demons—as well as the souls of people who have died and now exist either in heaven or in hell. They do not wander around looking for rest. The evil spirits—demons—do have limited power, mainly lies, schemes and deceptions. But God's power is always greater.

If you're looking for favor and blessing, don't hope for luck. Look to the God of grace. He is the source of favor and blessing. And His power is the strongest in the universe, which is why trustful dependence on Him is the best way to tap into that power. Not trying to manipulate it—but asking for it in humility and trust.

Which is why I say, don't wish me luck. It doesn't exist.

Ask for God's blessing instead.

This blog post originally appeared at
blogs.bible.org/tapestry/sue_bohlin/dont_wish_meLuck

Funeral Myths

I went to a friend's funeral yesterday where I heard a number of things to add to my running mental list of "funeral myths." With the ever-increasing degree of Bible Illiteracy, combined with the growing number of believers who are "cultural captives," more conformed to the culture than to Christ (please see my earlier blog ["Are You a Pickle?"](#)), it's not surprising that people would have unbiblical beliefs about death, heaven, and God.

Several songs were played at my friend's funeral. One is called "Borrowed Angels," which started like this:

They shine a little brighter, they feel a little more
They touch your life in ways no one has ever done before
They love a little stronger, they live to give their best
They make our lives so blest, so why do they go so soon?
The ones with souls so beautiful
I heard someone say—

There must be Borrowed Angels, here in this life
They come along, into this world, and make this world bright
But they can't stay forever
Cause they're heaven sent
And sometimes, heaven needs them back again

No, people are not “borrowed angels.” God created the angels before He created mankind. We are very different from angels; they were created to serve God and serve us, and we are created to be drawn into and enjoy the love, fellowship, joy and delight of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They made us in Their image (Genesis 1:26), which elevates us above angels. People and angels are two different kinds of creation, and one does not become the other.

Which brings me to another myth I heard yesterday: that Valerie is now “our guardian angel.” While this may be a comforting thought to those gripped by loss, no she's not. She's enjoying unhindered, face-to-face worship of Jesus and fellowship with those who now live in heaven.

Do we have guardian angels? The Bible doesn't give a definitive answer on that, although the Lord Jesus did say, “See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven” (Matthew 18:10). And Psalm 91:11 promises, “For He will command His angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways” (from my article [Angels: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly](#) at Probe.org).

At yesterday's funeral, people stood up to make comments about

our friend. One distraught lady concluded her remarks with an angry, "God, You'd better take good care of her." My heart went out to her, not just because of her grief but because she doesn't know that God is good and doesn't need to be cajoled, much less threatened, into caring for His beloved daughter. Sometimes people get angry with God for taking someone home earlier than they want, and the anger comes from a sense of betrayal—as if God doesn't have the right to determine the length of a person's life. Yet Psalm 139:16 says, "All the days ordained for me were written in Your book before one of them came to be." None of us lives a single day more, or less, than God had determined before He even created us. *A loving God is in control*—and that extends to the days of our birth and our death.

The man who conducted the funeral told a story about how they used to keep a little girl in their family in line by threatening that Valerie would get after her with her spanking switch. "Well now Valerie's not here," he told us, "so we tell the little girl, "Valerie's got her spanking switch with her in heaven and when you get up there she's gonna bust your butt."

Uh, no.

Romans 8:1 says, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Valerie's not busting any butts in heaven, and part of the good news is that God isn't either!

When my aunt died, someone tucked a deck of cards under her hands in her casket because Aunt Maggi loved to play cards and they were sure she was having a great time up in heaven playing pinochle with her brothers. When my mother died, several relatives comforted each other by laughing about how Mom had finally joined the great heavenly card party. This is another myth about heaven, that it's a lot like our human activities on earth, only better. People who believe this myth

usually have no concept of the greatness and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, or they wouldn't be willing to settle for images of unending card games and fishing and bowling tournaments.

What funeral myths have *you* come across?

This blog post originally appeared at
blogs.bible.org/engage/sue_bohlin/funeral_myths
on April 12, 2011.

“How Can I Have a Better Relationship With Angels?”

Dear Sir / Madam,

I live in Ghana [West Africa] and am a Christian who is seriously looking for a possible and better way to strenghtening my relationships with the Angels. I actually want to have a physical angelic encounter, even though I might have had a spiritual expereince, however, I wish that my physical encounter with the Angel will enable them act swiftly when I call upon them.

May I also know why is it that sometimes when we call the Angels in times of trouble they do not appear? Please do help me to have an encounter and also to have their swift response.

Dear _____,

Thanks for your letter. I want to strongly discourage you from attempting to contact angels. As a Christian, you should seek to strengthen and develop your relationship with the Lord—not

with angels. The Bible nowhere tells us to seek to contact angels, and indeed, seeking such contacts may lead you to actually contact demons. If God wants to send an angelic messenger your way, He is fully able to do so. You do not need to seek contact with angels. Work on developing your relationship with the Lord through daily Bible reading, prayer, fellowship with other Christians who love and follow the Lord, etc. The Lord is fully able to meet all your needs as you look to Him and trust in Him. You shouldn't busy yourself with trying to contact angels. If God wanted us to do such things, He would have told us to do so in the Bible. But He did not. He wants us to seek Him alone. Remember, Satan can masquerade as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14). Seeking to contact angels could lead to demonic deception. And believe me, you don't want to get involved with demons! So please, for your own spiritual well-being, focus your spiritual energies on developing your relationship with the One who created the angels—the Lord God almighty.

For more information on angels from the Probe website, please use the Search function at Probe.org to search the term "angels."

I hope this advice is helpful and well-received.

Shalom in Christ,
Michael Gleghorn, Probe Ministries

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"You Are Deluded and I Feel

Sorry for You"

Sue, your work (I was just on your web page: www.probe.org/angels-the-good-the-bad-and-the-ugly/) sounds like that of your so called "Bad" or "Ugly" angels. Helping people who want to leave homosexuality—you scare them to? What I've read here I'm afraid to say is almost complete utter bollocks. I laugh in your face and hope you do something worthwhile someday. I think the words in other religions are equally as valid as your "Holier than thou" book. Hey check out any books by Aleister Crowley and also: *Jesus Lived in India* by Holger Kersten. The Bible—Xeroxed for thousands of years, translated several times, usually (ie. King James) not very well. You are deluded, and I feel sorry for you. (only a little!) ☐ Hey! Do the world a favor—lighten up and stop bible bashing.

Hello _____,

Have you ever gone to a restaurant and looked at a menu? You might have found items on the menu you weren't interested in. My husband, for example, really dislikes fish and won't ever order it. But no one in the restaurant tries to force the fish down his throat.

I understand that you think what I have written, and where I choose to devote my time, is utter foolishness to you, and that is your right. But it is available to those who are looking for wisdom and information from a Christian world view, and that is why I have it on the website.

You have a lot of opinions but not much in the way of supporting evidence. I, on the other hand, am such a convinced Christian because I have investigated the evidence, which you might find compelling if you ever approached it with an open mind.

Should you get to the point where you find your beliefs aren't

consistent with reality, and your life isn't working for you.
. . bookmark our website. There is truth and light here for
those who seek it. For those who don't—nobody's forcing them
to eat fish when what they want is tofu.

Cheerily,

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Can You Recommend Good Literature on Angels?”

I was intrigued to read your website article on angels. I myself have been studying the occurrences of Angels in history and would like to know if you can recommend any literature from the Church, or recommended by the Church on such matters.

I have to admit though that I have come to the philosophy, after a bad dream/visitation by an evil, guttural sounding, disembodied voice telling me that my books would not help me, and at the time they were all references to the New Age fallacy and how to spot the lies, that we need to know more about the New Age cults so that we can not only test our own faith, but see how stupid most of these New Ager's ideas are.

I read one book that said Jesus was really a spaceman and another that Angels were Aliens, but I didn't take any notice, leading me to realise that if you want to live in a world of stories rather than in truth you will never be saved no matter who tries to help.

The other main worry that is filling my life at the moment is that the Churches are starting to follow the new age ways as

well. Is this the end of popular religion as we know it?

Thanks SO much for your note.

I have to admit though that I have come to the philosophy, after a bad dream/visitation by an evil, guttural sounding, disembodied voice telling me that my books would not help me, and at the time they were all references to the new age fallacy and how to spot the lies,

Oh man!! What exceptional evidence that demons are intrinsically involved in this whole issue and behind much of the angel mania!! I'm sorry you had to go through that. I don't know if anyone has ever given you any direction on dealing with that kind of visitation, but if it ever happens again, God has given us powerful supernatural tools for fighting spiritual warfare. In case you haven't heard of this, I'll go ahead and share; if it's old news, just hit delete! :::::smile:::::

If you have trusted Christ as your savior, you have the authority to speak to demons (out loud) and say, "The blood of Jesus protects me, and in Jesus' name you have to leave!" I personally know this is effective. God's weapons are, indeed, powerful for pulling down strongholds (2 Cor 10:4).

that we need to know more about the New Age cults so that we can not only test our own faith, but see how stupid most of these New Ager's ideas are.

Amen, and amen!!!

The other main worry that is filling my life at he moment is that the Churches are starting to follow the new age ways as well. Is this the end of popular religion as we know it?

There have always been attacks on the orthodoxy of the truth

throughout the history of the church. That's why Peter was so concerned about identifying and rejecting false teachers. No, it's not the end of popular religion as we know it, because God will always preserve His church and His truth. But you're right to be concerned about the movement of some churches toward New Age garbage; for instance, churches who teach "A Course in Miracles," which was channeled by a demon!

would like to know if you can recommend any literature from the Church, or recommended by the Church on such matters.

Yes. Billy Graham's book *Angels* is a classic. Another excellent book is *Angels: Elect and Evil* by C. Fred Dickason. There may be more good ones that have come out in the past several years, but I know these two for sure.

I hope this helps, and the Lord bless you and keep you.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

"Since Angels Aren't Christians, Why Should They Follow Christ?"

Why would angels follow the teachings of Christ if they are the creations and servants of God, besides the angels are not Christian but Jewish in nature. The letters "-el" at the end of their names (such as Gabriel, Uriel) is actually the Hebrew name for God. In his original name Gabri-el is actually Hebrew for "messenger of God." Angels are not Christianity's creations nor their guardians, if anything they have more ties

to Judaism.

Jesus Christ IS God, the second Person of the three-Personed God. Who is one God, in three Persons. [It's beyond me to understand, but then, who wants a God we can fully understand?]

So, angels follow the teachings of Christ because He has always been God and He was the one who created them in the first place; He existed in heaven before He took on a human body and came to earth.

I don't make a distinction between Christianity's Jewish roots and its Christian fruit because it's all one story. There IS no Christianity without Judaism; it's the first part and the foundation of our history.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“How Does This Angel Thing Work?”

You mentioned two angels, Raphael and Uriel in this book of Epochs or something like that—why wasn't it included in the Holy Bible? They were not included in the King James version nor the Roman Catholic kind?

Could you pray to St. Michael to protect you or do you have to pray to Jesus Christ first to have St. Michael look after you?

How does this work?

You mentioned two angels, Raphael and Uriel in this book of

Epochs or something like that—why wasn't it included in the Holy Bible?

Because the names Raphael and Uriel were names made up by some people some time ago; they are not real angel names of real angels, like Gabriel and Michael are. The Book of Enoch wasn't included in the Bible because it was not inspired by God the way all the other books were; it is a piece of fiction written by a human with no input from God.

Could you pray to St. Michael to protect you or do you have to pray to Jesus Christ first to have St. Michael look after you?

Scripture instructs us to pray ONLY to God, not to angels or saints. That's because He wants our focus on HIM, not on angels or believers who now live in heaven. Jesus died for you—Michael the archangel didn't. (He is never called a saint in the Bible, by the way; only people are saints, which means "holy ones," and refers to those who have placed their trust in Jesus because He died in our place on the cross and paid the penalty of our sin.)

How does this work?

I want to honor you for your seeking heart and for your curiosity about spiritual truth. May I invite you to read a wonderful article on our website about how to have a personal relationship with God? It's full of very helpful details that I think you'll enjoy. Click here: [The Most Important Decision of Your Life](#)

The Lord bless you and keep you!

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“What Do You Think About Headcoverings for Christian Women?”

Sue,

I am intrigued by this article “Should a Christian Woman Wear a Headcovering?” by Daniel Botkin (enclosed by mail and also available online [here](#)) about headcoverings, and it makes sense to me, but I would really like your input as a woman.

I read the headcoverings article with a huge smile across my heart. Its an excellent article! . . . And I couldn't agree more.

Before I go further, though, let me first state that Probe does not have an official position on this issue; my answer is about me and my response to this issue. For six years or so I struggled with the plain command of scripture [*1 Cor 11:10 Therefore the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels.*] and finally gave in. I just could not get around the phrase “because of the angels,” which has absolutely nothing to do with cultural- and time-bound practices. So, about a year ago, I started wearing hats to church. Recently, I purchased a couple of scarves which I also use as a headcovering in worship and for public prayer.

It's been interesting the strong response I've received from men, who absolutely love to see a woman in a hat, even though they usually don't know it's not a fashion statement for me. They just know something strikes them as very, very right about it. What startled me was the effect on ME: I have so enjoyed feeling so feminine! I have also enjoyed experiencing

the peace that is the fruit of obedience.

I started out wearing lace doilies or some other kind of headgear when I was in Catholic grade school. In the 60s and 70s, there was a wholesale dropping of the headcovering in almost all Western churches (with the rise of feminist thought, and I think they are related). I never even thought about how quickly 1900 years of church history were overturned in a mere decade until I couldn't come up with a single good reason to disobey scripture.

So there you have it! Thanks for sharing the great article with me!

Sue Bohlin

Hi Sue!!

Your response was such a blessing and encouragement to my wife and me! Thank you so much for taking the time to read it and respond. Because of your response actually, my wife went out and bought a couple of scarves today! ☺ Well thank you for your faithfulness and may the Lord continue to guide you in His word and in His love.

See Also:

- ["Do the Bible's Statements on Head Coverings Apply Today?"](#)
 - [Sue Bohlin's Blog Post: "Why I'm the Lady in the Hat"](#)