

Research on Angels

The question was raised last week about why our mental images of angels that we've gotten from the art world differs so greatly from the Biblical description and when this change took place.

We had a few theories that sounded good, but a little online research, however, shows that we were wrong.

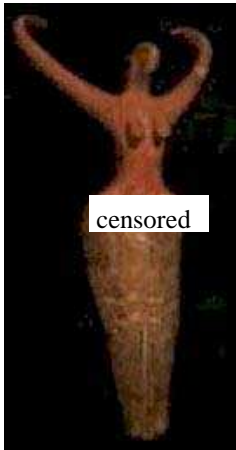
Our image of angels from the world of art has very little to do with the Bible or its descriptions of angels.

Instead, our mental image of angels comes from the painters and sculptors of all disciplines from the days of the Italian Renaissance to our own day, beginning about 1500. (so much for the Dutch and their chubby models)

These artists of the Renaissance were not influenced by the descriptions of the Bible and they were not influenced by Hebrew art because the Jews were prohibited from making such graven images

These artists, like the early Christian artists of the Eastern Orthodox (Byzantine) Church, were influenced by the classic Greek and Roman winged goddesses, who were influenced by the Egyptians and their art featuring a winged dancing woman goddess that they were drawing and sculpting some 4000 years before the time of Abraham.

(Incidentally, the Assyrians' and Babylonians' depictions of angels usually reflected male angels)



Egyptian Dancing Goddess, which was a combination of a woman and a bird



This Goddess eventually became the Goddess Isis, which was a dominate Egyptian god until 600 A.D.

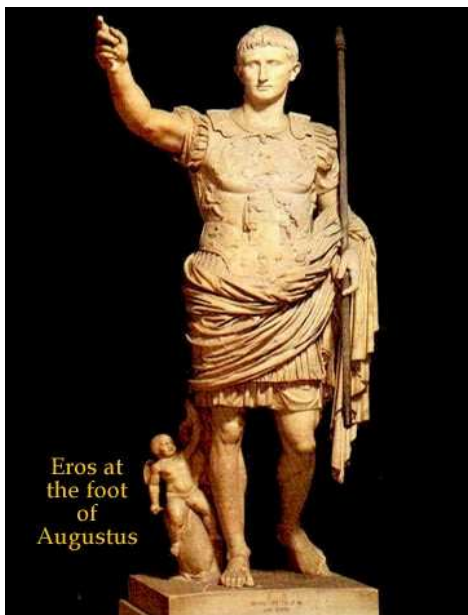
The Greeks' contact with Egypt brought them into contact with the Isis image, which they adapted into their goddess Nike





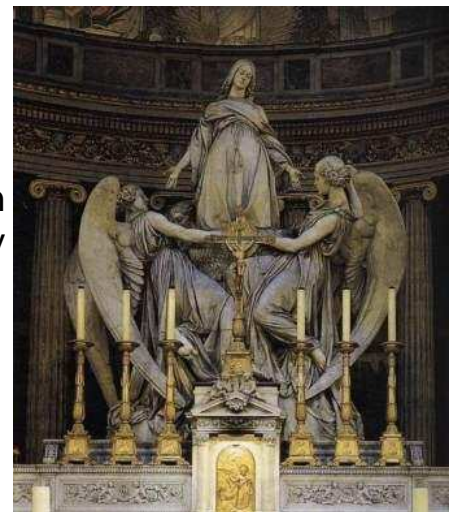
Isis had a son named Eros. The Romans adapted these into the goddess Victory and her son Cupid.

Victory became adopted as the standard image of an angel in the Byzantine Church, hence angels became women first in the early 300-400's and then during the re-discovery of Greek and Roman art in the Renaissance.

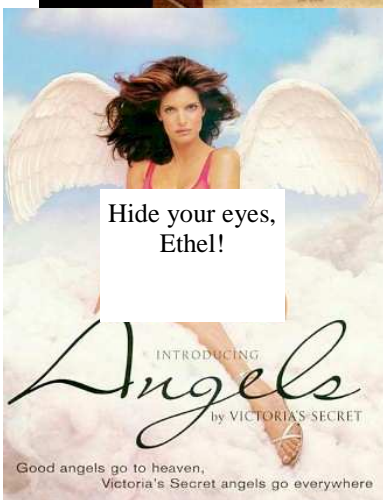


Victory's son, Cupid or Eros (the baby dude with the arrows flying around this month) became the model of the cherubim in the same way. Hence, our mental images of angels have little to do with their reality, the Bible or any experience we may have had with them (usually unawares), and far more with the art we've seen all our lives that was itself based on Egyptian, Greek and Roman art.

The Ascension of the Virgin Mary



Victoria's Secrets Bloomer-Selling Angel



a strong and mascu-



One of the few more Biblically authentic paintings of line angel