

Angels, In Season and Out

by Daniel Borchers

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Angels we have heard on high, Hi-Fi, record, cassette and compact CD. Within our culture, angels have made cameo appearances and taken center stage in music, movies, television shows, and stage productions. The Yuletide season always offers a veritable explosion of angel stories clothed in Christmas.

But angels are not limited to Christmas.

We are all well acquainted with the ubiquitous Clarence of Frank Capra's *It's a Wonderful Life*. Clarence is not alone and Christmas is not an only child. *Forever Darling* cast James Mason as a guardian angel, just one example of Hollywood's remembrance of things spiritual.

CBS's *Touched by An Angel* touches the lives of millions of viewers each week. Unlike its predecessor, the much-beloved *Highway to Heaven*, both its stars portray angels. Like *Highway*, these two gifted and gift-giving actresses become engaged in the lives of ordinary people, giving hope, encouragement, reassurance, and guidance to those in need.

The weekly messages presented by these messengers are simple, yet profound. For those wary of "eternal truths," these messengers from God impart timeless truths which *are* relevant for *any* age. They are necessary reminders for a people who have forgotten God – or forgotten the importance of His involvement and intervention in the affairs of man.

Foremost among the themes presented each Saturday is the reassurance that there is a God actively involved in our lives, one who loves each and every one of us. *Touched by An Angel* is not a shallow feel-good show. Rather, it explores the complex and often controversial issues of our day in simple but substantive ways. We are reminded on a weekly basis of the relevance of eternal truths and the simplicity that exists in Christ.

One emotionally-charged show dealt with racism and hatred. Others have taken on personal responsibility, forgiveness, mercy, judgment, open-mindedness, and fidelity. Each week we are brought face to face with life and death, good and evil, right and wrong. In the process we learn how to better live our lives and not to fear death.

One of the outstanding aspects of this show is its proclivity to demonstrate the impact each of us has upon others, that we can *all* make a difference. This Capra-esque parable was integral to *It's a Wonderful Life*. No man is an island and no one is beyond hope of redemption.

Within a demonstrably materialistic culture, *Angels* reminds us of the *immaterial*, rather – the *spiritual* – those things which are really most material in our lives. This inspiring and uplifting program is a welcome addition to the television medium, and, undoubtedly a weekly highlight for its devoted fans.

With *Angels* being one of the most popular programs on CBS, perhaps the networks will take the hint and schedule similar family-friendly, traditional values-oriented shows. In the meantime, let's you and I partake of this wonderful fare (while we can), and praise God for an oasis within the desert of the Hollywood landscape.

Addendum

This column was written shortly after first becoming acquainted with *Touched by An Angel*. While many of the spiritual and ideological messages are mixed at best, beneficial aspects of the show remain. *TBAA* presents a *positive* view of God and religion with some sound biblical messages about God, love, truth. Viewers must be alert and astute to discern the differences between the good and bad messages.