



Angels: A History

David Albert Jones

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What are angels? Where were they first encountered? Can we distinguish angels from gods, faeries, ghosts, and aliens? And why do they remain so popular?

In this introduction to the history of angels, David Albert Jones outlines some of the more prominent stories and speculations about angels in Judaism, Islam, Christianity and post-Christian spiritualities. He reflects on the way angels are portrayed in art, whether as young men in the Hebrew Scriptures, androgynous winged creatures of the pre-Raphaelites, or the masculine statue of the Angel of the North. He also considers angels in films such as Wim Wenders' *Wings of Desire*, and Frank Capra's *It's a Wonderful Life*, as well as angels in literature.

From the idea of the angel as a messenger, through to the image of angels sent to protect and help those in need, this is an examination of the implications of angels. It asks why people find the idea of them so attractive, helpful or consoling, and why they remain so powerful in modern culture. In this thought-provoking introduction, Jones considers the view that reflecting on angels can teach us something about human existence. Whether or not we believe that they exist in their own right, angels can still illuminate our thoughts.

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