

## Guardian Angels

Angelology is the study of angels and many would do wisely to be careful to not “add to” or “take away” (*Rev 22:18-19*) from what has been revealed. In the context of this lesson it concerns angels. They are very powerful spirit beings who have served as the messengers of God and whose works would be a mystery were it not for what **has** been revealed in the Bible concerning them. The only place we should even think of looking for answers to our questions about angels, must be found in revealed scripture. If certain questions can’t be answered there, we need to leave them alone to “avoid irreverent babble” (*2 Tim 2:16*) understanding that..

**Deu 29:29** The secret things belong to the **LORD** our **God**, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.

Going to outside sources to understand angels when the Bible is the authority on them will only lead to further confusion, expanded ignorance and, more than likely, animosity within the church since such can only lead to the promotion of false teaching. But of all that could be said of angels the one thing that seems most to be misconstrued is the idea of them as ‘personal guardians’ according to a, common, yet uninformed interpretation of Mat 18:10.

**Mat 18:10** “See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in Heaven their angels always see the face of My Father Who is in Heaven.”

Hopefully this lesson will put to rest the prevailing, but false, teachings that exist on this subject. (*This and other lessons on angels can be found at [www.truthdiscovered.net/Sermon\\_Topics](http://www.truthdiscovered.net/Sermon_Topics)*) I would like to expand on this particular subject since there are those who may be newer to the faith and who may not understand it as it is taught, in truth, from the Bible’s inspired writings. If we’re going to be the people of the truth we need to avoid “someone’s own interpretation” (*2 Pet 1:20*) and let the Bible have the final say. And yes, along with any other false teaching no matter how minute we think it might be, it definitely could be a ‘salvation issue’ when we promote anything that would turn out to be a lie! There’s nothing wrong with asking questions about Bible matters but we also need to ask ourselves what our motives are. That said, in order to understand the meaning of any passage we need to understand context. In the case of Mat 18:10 we need to ask **who** it was that Jesus was speaking to, the **reason** this statement was made and of **whom** He was particularly speaking. To do that let’s begin by looking at the preceding verses that lead up to verse 10.

**Mat 18:1** **At that time** the disciples came to **Jesus**, saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

- “At that time” is referring to something that happened prior to this so we need to look at the chapter before this and the verses at the end of it.

**Mat 17:22** As they were gathering in Galilee, **Jesus** said to them, "**The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men, 23 and they will kill Him, and He will be raised on the third day.**" And they were greatly distressed.

- So “when they came to Capernaum” (v. 24) there was a discussion concerning Jesus paying taxes and the conversation then turned to a particular topic of concern His disciples, at times, would quarrel about. Their being “greatly distressed” had been forgotten rather quickly. They were more concerned with their own status than they were with Jesus’ impending sacrifice. Later, in Mat 20, it would have to do with who among His chosen 12 would be granted to sit on His right and left sides in the kingdom of Heaven that they thought, at that time, would be an earthly kingdom.

Mat 20:20 Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to Him with her sons, and kneeling before Him she asked Him for something. 21 And He said to her, "What do you want?" She said to Him, "Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at Your right hand and one at Your left, in Your kingdom."

- Both incidents happened right after Jesus told them of the fate He was about to suffer at the hands of His enemies. They were so focused on what their personal standing would be at that time, that they seemed oblivious to the sufferings Jesus announced to them that would befall Him even before such a kingdom, that they thought to be an earthly one, would come into existence. And He chastened them in both incidents by making points that should have convicted their hearts. Notice what He said after the request made by the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

Mat 20:25 But Jesus called them to Him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 26 It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, 28 even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."

- They were more interested in being served rather than serve. Jesus tried to instill in them that a life of service is more noble than a life of rule by His statement that He, as the Holy One from God, came to serve. As “the King of kings and Lord of lords” (1 Tim 6:15) Jesus became the example they were to follow by “taking on the form of a servant” (Php 2:7). Just as we can’t expect to receive anything from God unless we’ve first been willing to give our all to Him.

Act 20:35 In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

- Now let’s look at Mat 18:2-5 where it speaks of those who are the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven by Jesus taking a child and placing him in the midst of the disciples. It was a process of humiliation that they had yet to learn.

Mat 18:2 And calling to Him a child (Gk.3813- figuratively an immature Christian), He put him in the midst of them 3 and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children (same Greek word with different gloss that fits the context), you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 Whoever (speaking of those who can decipher good and evil) humbles himself like this child (new disciple) is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5 "Whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me,

*“Children are, to a great extent, destitute of ambition, pride, and haughtiness. They are characteristically humble and teachable.” Albert Barnes*

- Not that we are to remain immature in the faith either. We are to “be imitators of God, **as** beloved children” (*Eph 5:1*), since children have yet to comprehend ambition. In verse 5 the “*one such child*” is referring to the person who “*humbles himself like this little child*” in verse 4. Christ then goes on to say that whosoever would receive “*one such child...in My name receives Me.*” In *Matt. 25:37* “*the righteous will answer Him, saying, Lord, when did we see You hungry...*” The King answers in verse 40 “*as you did it to the least (Gk.1646- equivalent to 3398) of these My brothers, you did it to Me.*” So those who received a newly converted disciple of Christ received Christ, just as much as His more mature disciples. The deduction then that comes from Jesus’ words here is that the newer the Christian the greater their standing when it comes to the care God has for them and has nothing to do with a child’s personal guardian angel (*Mat 18:10*).

*Mat 18:6* but whoever causes one of these little ones (*Gk.3398- small [in dignity]: -least*) **who believe** (*Gk.4100- to entrust [especially one’s spiritual well-being to Christ]*) **in Me** to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.

- Since it would be easier to teach false doctrine to a newly converted Christian, Jesus noted the punishment that would befall such a false teacher. Contrary to certain doctrines that teach “original sin” (*the belief that we are all born sinful and without innocence*) children are not held accountable until they reach an age in which they understand right and wrong. So when Jesus referenced this particular “*little one*” He was not referring to a child but young person or an adult who’s new found faith mimicked that of an innocent child. Belief here is a “synecdoche”. It is a part of the pie that represents the whole pie. (*If you eat a slice of apple pie you know it to be a piece that represents the rest of the pie.*) In the context then, Jesus is speaking of a relatively new disciple since belief requires other acts in order to be saved. And there are other scriptures that refer to disciples as (*little*) children. (*Mk. 10:24; Jn. 13:33; 21:5; Rom. 8:16-17; Heb. 2:13; 1 Pet 1:14; 1 Jn. 2:1, 12, 13, 18, 28; 3 Jn. 4*)

*“However, in light of Matt. 19:14, it is also true that actual children are themselves citizens of Heaven’s kingdom.” (The Hosts of Heaven- Travis L. Quertermous)*

*Mat 19:14* but Jesus said, “**Let the little children come to Me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.**”

- In other words, infants, toddlers and children who don’t know “good and evil” (*Gen 3:5*) are bound for an eternal home in Heaven if they die in such innocence. This is not, of course, the group that Jesus was referring to in *Mat 18:10*.

*Mat 18:10* “**See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in Heaven their angels always see the face of My Father Who is in Heaven.**”

- Since we've already established that the "*little ones*" in this passage are "*young*" disciples we must now look at the doctrine of "*guardian angels*" which states that, under Catholic teaching, everyone has one. Other denominations hold this false teaching but not in the same way.

*"In using the phrase 'their angels', Jesus implies that angels are charged with the welfare of Christians. In this case, He refers to little ones who believe in Christ, presumably new or vulnerable Christians, comparable in their trust to little children. He does not use the term 'guardian angels' nor does He say there is a one-to-one assignment of an angel for each person or that an angel appears in human form to rescue that person from danger or to deliver him or her from distress by a miraculous act."*

John Parker

- If such was the case there would have been no martyrs. With that said, what **do** angels do even today, or were they only to serve in past Biblical times in a miraculous capacity?

#### Old Testament 'Guardians' of God's People

- One such incident where angels were sent to protect a servant of God was in Dan 6.

**Dan 6:22** My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before Him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm."

*"Daniel does not say whether the angel was visible or not, but it is rather to be presumed that he was, as in this way it would be more certainly known to him that he owed his deliverance to the intervention of an angel, and as this would be to him a manifest token of the favor and protection of God."*

Albert Barnes

- Obviously the Old Testament is filled with incidents where angels came to the rescue of God's people in one form or another. After all...

**Psa 104:4** He makes His messengers (*angels according to-Heb 1:7*) winds, His ministers a flaming fire.

*"They have no material form unless they temporarily assume one". TLQ*

- An Old Testament example of this is found in 2 Kings.

**2Ki 6:8** Once when the king of Syria was warring against Israel, he took counsel with his servants, saying, "At such and such a place shall be my camp." **9** But the man of God sent word to the king of Israel, "Beware that you do not pass this place, for the Syrians are going down there." **10** And the king of Israel sent to the place about which the man of God told him. Thus he used to warn him, so that he saved himself there more than once or twice. **11** And the mind of the king of Syria was greatly troubled because of this thing, and he called his servants and said to them, "Will you not show me who of us is for the king of Israel?" **12** And one of his servants said, "None, my lord, O king; but

Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom." 13 And he said, "Go and see where he is, that I may send and seize him." It was told him, "Behold, he is in Dothan." 14 So he sent there horses and chariots and a great army, and they came by night and surrounded the city. 15 When the servant of the man of God rose early in the morning and went out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was all around the city. And the servant said, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" 16 He said, "Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." 17 Then Elisha prayed and said, "O LORD, please open his eyes that he may see." So the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

- Thus it can be said in truth that angels could appear in whatever form God chose in order to protect His people in the O.T. Another service they performed (*and perform*) is comforting the faithful dead into the spirit's home.

Luk 16:19 "There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. 20 And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, 21 who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried, 23 and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side.

- Even though Luke wrote this after Jesus ascended back to Heaven, while on earth Jesus lived under the Old Covenant and thus spoke of Lazarus who also lived and died under the same. But have things changed concerning the work angels perform and are they still employed in service to God's people today?

### New Testament 'Guardians' of God's People

Heb 1:13 And to which of the angels has He ever said, "Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet"? 14 Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve (*present tense*) for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?

- Since this is a N.T. passage that implies that angels are **still** at work with reference to serving Christians, what exactly is that service since we've already noted that the saints don't each have a personal guardian angel?

Eph 6:11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

- The spiritual battles we fight we don't fight alone. We've been blessed with the spiritual weaponry needed in order to win such battles. As David refused to wear Saul's armor because he had "not tested" it (1 Sam 17:40) neither are we able to

battle the spiritual forces of evil if we don't have at least a basic understanding of "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (*Eph 6:17*). And if we don't "test [ourselves]" we might "fail to meet the test" (*2 Cor 13:5*). Of course the only way to do that is to be in Bible studies as often as possible. Have you ever witnessed where in certain Bible studies there have been, and will be, those in attendance who will taunt whoever leads them out of pride and vanity so as to boast a higher knowledge of scripture? This is one form of influence that is guided by forces we don't understand, that exist behind the scenes in the spiritual realm that we cannot see. And sadly, those who are doing the taunting don't realize they are being influenced by such an evil force. Daniel was conflicted by such an event as he fasted and prayed for his "heart to understand" when he "humbled [himself] before God" (*Dan 10:12*). An angel appeared to him with a message of what was going on behind the scenes in the spirit realm that would affect the kingdoms of the earth shortly thereafter. (*And they are still at work, affecting political authorities today.*)

**Dan 10:13** The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes (*same archangel Michael of Jude 9*), came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia, 14 and came to make you understand what is to happen to your people in the latter days. For the vision is for days yet to come."

"Princes ... of Persia" here "were not human monarchs". (TLQ) Just as Michael is here referred to as "the chief prince" and is a spirit being, "the prince of Persia" (*v. 20*) also would have been of the spirit realm but, in the context, he would have been an evil influence on the human king of Persia. Just like the prince of Persia so also "the prince of Greece", an evil, spiritual influence on the kings of Greece.

**Dan 10:20** Then he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? But now I will return to fight against the prince of Persia; and when I go out, behold, the prince of Greece will come. 21 But I will tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth: there is none who contends by my side against these except Michael, your prince.

The "princes and kings of Persia" were "but a momentary hindrance (*21 days*)" until Michael arrived and "Satan's demons were defeated"...who "were obviously trying to tempt the rulers of those nations to do that which was evil". (TLQ)

- The only way to "put to silence the ignorance of foolish people" (*1 Pet 2:15*) is to work more toward substituting our own ignorance with a better knowledge of scripture. These influences have existed since Satan tempted Eve and will exist until Christ returns at the judgment. Then...

**Rev 20:10** ... the devil who had deceived them [will be] thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet [will be], and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

- Using past tense phrasing such as "were thrown" in any prophesy from God is a sign of it being inevitable, as though it had already happened. Our eternal souls depend on what we believe to be true according to His word and not according to a mere mortal's opinion.

1Jn 4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit (*Gk.4151- vital principle [synonym-opinion]*), but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.

- Any and everything we believe in the faith, must be backed up with a substantial amount of proof unless we aren't interested in our own soul's destiny. Evil influences abound. And the only way we can rise above them is with a deeper knowledge of scripture. When we aren't interested in Bible study or furthering our understanding of the Holy Writ, we give Satan another victory and our eternal fate is thus sealed. Do each of us then have our own personal guardian angel? No. But that's not to say we aren't guarded by God's protective hand as long as we remain faithful to His cause either. Will our faith keep us from ever experiencing the results of someone else's evil practices? No. But it will protect us from an eternity in torment. Having God on our side will not save us from having to suffer as a result of another's wickedness nor will it keep us from suffering from repercussions of the ills of others that come our way. But there's one thing we can be sure of as long as we remain faithful to Him in all things. As He said...

Heb 13:5 ..."I will never leave you nor forsake you." 6 So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"

- Is the Lord your helper? Or do you have fear of the unknown in your life?

1Jn 4:18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.

- So if you wish to be "perfected in love" we can assist you to that end. Please let us help you find that "perfect love" which can only be found in faithful obedience to our Lord's command to hear His word, believe it, repent of past sins acknowledging Jesus as the Son of God and have your sins washed away in baptism. At which point "there [will be] joy before the angels of God" in Heaven (*Lk 15:10*).

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