

IX.3. Lambs to Rams: 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. Angels 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* unto the LORD our God: but those *things which are* revealed *belong* unto 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 Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in Heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in Heaven.

Hopefully this lesson will put to rest the prevailing, but false, teachings that exist on this subject. We need 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 the same time** came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven? (*Emp. added*)

"At the same 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 And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: 23 And they shall kill Him, and the third day He shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry.

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 20:20-21; Act 1:6*).

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 were soon to befall Him. This was 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 *unto Him*, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. 26 But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; 27 And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: 28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.

They were more interested in being served rather than to serve. Jesus tried to instill in them that a life of service is nobler 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). Unless we’re first willing to give our all to Him we can’t expect to receive anything from God.

Act 20:35 I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He 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 Jesus called a little child (*Gk.3813-figuratively an immature Christian*) unto Him, and set him in the midst of them, 3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children (*same*

*Greek word with different gloss that fits the context), ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven. :4 Whosoever (speaking of those who can decipher good and evil) therefore shall humble himself as **this** little child (new disciple), the **same** is greatest in the kingdom of Heaven. 5 And whoso shall receive one such little child in My name receiveth Me. (Emp. added)*

“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*). (Emp. added)

Mat 18:6 But whoso shall offend one of these little (*Gk.3398- small [in dignity]: -least*) ones **which believe** (*Gk.4100- to entrust [especially one’s spiritual well-being to Christ]*) **in Me**, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and *that* he were drowned in the depth of the sea. (Emp. added)

Since it would be easier to teach false doctrine to a newly converted disciple, 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 “good and evil” (*Gen 3*). So when Jesus referenced this particular “little one” He was not referring to a child but a young person or an adult whose 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 apple pie.*) In the context then, Jesus is speaking of a relatively new disciple since belief requires the 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. Quartermous

Mat 19:14 But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto Me: for of such is 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 Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in Heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father which 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 Roman 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 hath sent His Angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before Him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.

"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 Who maketh his angels (*Heb 1:7*) spirits; 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 Then the king of Syria warred against Israel, and took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place *shall be* my camp. 9 And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are come down. 10 And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice. 11 Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not shew me which of us *is* for the king of Israel? 12 And one of his servants said, None, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet that *is* in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber. 13 And he said, Go and spy where he *is*, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, *he is* in Dothan. 14 Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about. 15 And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? 16 And he answered, Fear not: for they that *be* with us *are* more than they that *be* with them. 17 And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray Thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain *was* full of horses and chariots of fire round about 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 certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: 20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, 21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 And it

came to pass, that the beggar died, and was **carried by the angels** into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; 23 And in hell (*Hades*) he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. (*Emp. added*)

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 But to which of the angels said He at any time, Sit on My right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? 14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to **minister** (*present tense*) for them who shall be heirs of salvation? (*Emp. added*)

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 armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

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 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. 14 Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for *many* days.

"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, 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 said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia

shall come. 21 But I will shew thee that which is noted in the Scripture of truth: and *there* is none that **holdeth with me in these things**, but Michael your prince. (*Emp. added*)

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.

Rev 20:10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet *are*, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Using past tense phrasing such as "was cast" in any prophesy from God is a sign of it being inevitable, as though it had already happened (*known as 'prophetic perfect'*). 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, believe not every spirit (*Gk.4151- vital principle [synonym-opinion]*), but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are 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 we 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 is one thing we can be sure of as long as we remain faithful to Him in all things.

Heb 13:5 ...for He hath said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." 6 So we can boldly say, "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

IX.3. Questions

1. What do we need to know before truly understanding the meaning of any passage? a) book, chapter and verse; b) context; c) how to use an interlinear.
2. Why was Jesus frustrated with His disciples when He told them of His impending death? a) they were more interested in being served than in serving; b) they thought He was only joking; c) they were sleeping.
3. In the context of Mat 18, what was the "child" Jesus was referring to? a) a toddler; b) a newly converted Christian; c) an infant.

4. Why did Jesus note the punishment that would befall the one who caused one of the “little ones” to fall? a) it would be easier to teach them false doctrine; b) He loved them more than those who would influence them to do wrong; c) they couldn’t be taught.
5. True or false: The Bible says nothing about “guardian angels”. Explain. a) false: the Bible several places mentions them; b) true: they are only mentioned metaphorically; c) true: they are not charged with a one-on-one assignment.
6. What service do angels provide to Christians when we die? a) they usher the saint into Heaven; b) they usher the saint into Purgatory; c) they usher the saint into Paradise.
7. Who, in Daniel 10, is the “prince of Persia”? a) a Persian monarch; b) a spirit being; c) the next in line to the Persian throne.
8. Will faith keep a Christian from suffering? a) no; b) yes; c) possibly.