

About Your Guardian Angel ...

A lot of people—both inside and outside the church—take comfort in knowing they have a guardian angel watching over them. Nice thought, isn't it—but is it true? Do we each have our own guardian angel watching out for us?

The idea that we each individually have a guardian angel is more tied to folklore. Sure, some early Christians writings (not a part of Scripture) teach that each person has two angels, a good one and a bad one, but my theology has got to be grounded in God's Word first and foremost.

Some might take offense that I relegated belief in guardian angels to folklore. *THE BIBLE MENTIONS GUARDIAN ANGELS, DOESN'T IT?!*

Well ... maybe, maybe not.

Two passages are often quoted in support of guardian angels.

1. Old Testament

"For he will give his angels orders concerning you, to protect you in all your ways. They will support you with their hands so that you will not strike your foot against a stone" (Ps. 91:11-12).

Even Satan quoted this psalm to Jesus in an attempt to get Him to prove He was the Messiah (Matt. 4:5-6). Of course, Jesus didn't take the bait because He didn't need to prove Himself nor did He need to put His Father to the test.

But what does this passage tell us about angels? Nothing other than God is watching over us, and He directs His angels in what they are to do. The full passage in Psalm 91 uses imagery to reflect God's overall care.

2. New Testament

"See to it that you don't despise one of these little ones, because I tell you that in heaven their angels continually view the face of my Father in heaven" (Matt. 18:10).

Jesus spoke these words as the disciple asked about greatness. "So who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" (v. 1). He used a child to teach them about greatness and the childlike humility needed to enter the kingdom of heaven. Jesus was teaching on the "greatness" of His children, those with childlike faith and humility. He taught on the value God places on His children by telling the parable of a lost sheep.

Right in the middle of this teaching, Jesus said, "See to it that you don't despise one of these little ones, because I tell you that in heaven their angels continually view the face of my Father in heaven." Some scholars contend that, because of the context, Jesus wasn't talking about physical children but the children of God, those who express childlike faith in Him.

But whether this passage is talking about believers or literal children, it doesn't tell us what these angels do other than "view the face of my Father in heaven." Beyond this, we know that the angels are "ministering spirits sent out to serve those who are going to inherit salvation" (Heb. 1:14).

Now if you hold firmly to the idea you have a guardian angel assigned to you, I'm not going to try to dissuade you from your belief. I'm just offering my understanding based on Scripture alone. God's Word doesn't tell us a whole lot.

And there's a good reason for that. Our focus should not be on angels, but on Jesus. First century Jewish people put a lot of stock in angels. *A lot*. So much so that when the writer of Hebrews argued for the supremacy of Jesus over everything else, he began with the matter of angels. The whole of Hebrews 1 deals with this.

"The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact expression of his nature, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. **So he became superior to the angels, just as the name he inherited is more excellent than theirs**" (Heb. 1:3-4).

Many people in culture are fascinated with the idea of angels. I wish they were more fascinated with Jesus. And God's angels would agree. They are God's messengers and, as noted earlier "ministering spirits sent out to serve those who are going to inherit salvation?" (v. 14). Their focus is on Jesus—and our should be too.

Any and all angelic work is not simply because there is an angelic being constantly hovering you but because God Himself directed that messenger to serve you. The glory goes to God, not to an angel. When the apostle John was so moved by what he heard and saw in his vision, he fell down to worship at the feet of the angel showing him all these things. But the angel responded, "Don't do that! I am a fellow servant with you, your brothers the prophets, and those who keep the words of this book. Worship God!" (Rev. 22:9).

Pray to God, not to an angel. Thank God, not an angel, for His care and protection. All actions and ministering spirits come at the direction of God. To Him be the glory.