



Conducted by
Frank Worgan

“The third verse of the hymn, *'Count your blessings'*, says *'Count your many blessings, angels will attend, help and comfort give you to your journey's end.'*

**Is there any scriptural evidence to corroborate this regarding
angels in this context?”**

So runs the question, a question, which, in essence, asks if the scriptures teach that there are *'Guardian Angels'* and I am pleased that it has been asked, because the very

existence of Angels is a subject that is rarely discussed these days.

We might be forgiven for suspecting that preachers and hearers alike are often reluctant to commit themselves where Angels are concerned.

(Note: the words for 'angel' - '*malak*' in the O.T., and '*angelos*' in the N.T. - occur 213 and 188 times respectively and both mean '*messenger*'. Whether a reference is to a human being, or to a heavenly spirit being, must be determined by the context.)

In the majority of instances, however, the words refer to a *definite and distinct order of spirit beings*, and therefore I am capitalizing the word to indicate that it is in this sense that I am using it today.)

As our question: 'Modern' theologians would not even spend time with it! One textbook used by theological students states:

"It might seem that there is little profit in attempting any discussion of the angels, those higher beings that have been traditionally recognised in Christian faith and theology. As they have usually been represented, they belong to the mythology and poetry of religion, rather than to theology . . ." (John MacQuarrie, *Principles of Christian Theology*, p.215.)

The Sadducees are certainly with us still! Acts 23:8.

Apparently, in a world as sophisticated as ours Angels simply do not fit! They appear to be an embarrassment to many people - including, I am sorry to say, even to some Christians. There are people who are willing to concede that Scriptures mention such heavenly beings, but who then suggest that, since the Lord Jesus became our Mediator, there is no longer a need for the ministry of Angels. Thus, with a stroke, Angels are taken out of circulation or have been made redundant! They belong to an age long since past and have been put into moth-balls!

Is it not strange that 'modern man' is prepared to consider the possibility of 'alien visitors' from outer space and 'U.F.O's'; is fascinated by 'The X Files' and 'Star Trek'; takes seriously so-called 'astrological forecasts' the 'occult' and 'star-signs', and is happy to discuss 'out of the body experiences' - the list is almost endless - but mention *Angels* and one instantly becomes some sort of religious freak?

But I must restrain the urge to say more on the subject and return to the question!

What DO the Scriptures reveal about Angels and their relationship to human beings? Well, there are some quite clear statements, which should help us in our search for the answer to the question.

Angels have an interest in what happens on Earth. This is a truth which runs right through the scriptures, from Genesis to the Revelation. For example:

1st In the Old Testament

Gen. 18:10 Angels brought Abraham the promise of a son;

Gen. 19:1 They warned Lot of the impending destruction of Sodom.

Gen. 32:1 They met Jacob, on his way home from his uncle Laban's territory.

Num. 20:16 Moses believed in Guardian Angels. He told the people that God '*sent an angel and brought us forth out of Egypt*'.

Dan. 6:22 Daniel believed in this ministry of Angels, because he said, "*My God has sent His Angel and has shut the lions' mouths*".

Dan. 6:28 Even Nebuchadnezzar believed in Angels! "*Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants.*"

2nd Coming over to the New Testament:

Angels were intimately involved with the Lord Himself, all through His life and

ministry.

- i) Angels foretold His birth to Mary and Joseph. Matt. 1:20.
- ii) Angels announced it to the shepherds in the fields. Luke 2:8ff.
- iii) An Angel instructed Mary and Joseph to go to Egypt. Matt. 2:13 (see also ch. 2:19).
- iv) Angels ministered to Him after His fast and temptation in the wilderness. Matt. 4:11.
- v) An angel strengthened Him in Gethsemane. Luke 22:43 a.v.
- vi) Angels stood ready - 12 legions of them! - to respond to His call, if He required them! Matt. 26:53.
- vii) An angel rolled the stone, from the mouth of the tomb. Matt. 28:2.
- viii) Angels met Mary Magdalene when she came to the tomb. John 20:11.
- ix) Angels were present at His ascension. Acts 1:10.
- x) Angels will accompany Him when He returns. II Thess. 1:7.

An examination of the Scriptures will easily extend this list.

In Matt. 18:10, the Lord Himself warns against despising (*treating badly, or harming*) 'little ones' who believe in Him (v6), '*For I say to you, their Angels always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven*'. The plain meaning of His statement is that there are heavenly beings to whom is entrusted the special duty of the care and guardianship of believers.

I might add that those words, '*for I say to you,*' are tremendously significant, because that is the formula used by the Lord, when He introduced new truth or illuminated truth not previously understood. (Compare **Luke 15:7,10**, and note, also, that he uses the same formula no less than seven times in **Matt. 5**).

Angels are interested in the conversion of sinners.

Luke 15:7,10 reveal that '*there is joy among the angels of God*', when the lost is found and when the sinner repents.

In the next chapter, **Luke 16**, Jesus tells us that, when he died, Lazarus '*was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom*' - another example of Angelic involvement with the faithful.

They have an interest in the faithful preaching of the Gospel.

In 1 Tim. 5:21, the young evangelist, Timothy, is urged to exercise his ministry with care, '*in the sight of God, and Christ Jesus and the elect angels*'.

An angel directed Philip the evangelist, to meet the 'Ethiopian' **Acts 8;26**.

And Cornelius was told by an angel to '*send to Joppa for Peter*.' **Acts 10:5**.

Angels will be the Lord's agents at the time of the Judgement.

Matt. 13:41, '*The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evil-doers . . .*'

In the Church, Angels are concerned with the Woman's subjection to the Man. **1 Cor. 11:9-10**. Notice the phrase '*because of the angels*'. It means that her acceptance of the divine order, constitutes an example to the angels.

Heb. 1:14 reveals their ministry to be two-fold.

They are '*ministering spirits = ('liturgical' or worshipping spirit), sent forth to serve for the sake of those who are to obtain salvation.*'

The word '*leitourgika*', rendered '*ministering*' or '*worshipping*', speaks of their service to God Himself. The word '*diakonia*' which is rendered '*to serve*', describes the nature of their service to believers. They are to serve those who inherit salvation - and that means you and me!

1. Satan certainly believes in them!

When trying to tempt Jesus to dramatically cast himself from the pinnacle of the Temple, as recorded in **Matt. 4:5-6**, Satan quoted **Psa. 91:11**, '*For he will give his angels charge of you, to guard you in all your ways, lest you dash your foot against a stone!*'

2. Peter believed in them! Acts 12:11. Having been released from prison Peter said, '*Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me . . .!*'

3. Paul believed in them! Acts 27:23. During the storm, on his voyage to Rome, he said, '*This night there stood by me an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship . . .!*'

4. In fact, ALL the apostles must have believed in them! Acts 5:19. After having been arrested by the Sanhedrim, '*An angel of the Lord opened the prison door and brought them out!*'

Conclusion

Do I believe in Guardian Angels? Yes! Emphatically!

And if you ask if I can recognize a 'Guardian Angel', I answer, No! But that does not constitute a problem for me. After, all, on several of the occasions to which I have already referred - (e.g. Abraham in the O.T. and Peter in the N.T.) - *they* did not recognize them either! In any case, the recognition of God's children is the job of the Angels, since he is to minister for those who inherit salvation.

It is not necessary for *me* to be able to recognise *him*, but he is commissioned to recognise *me*!

How do the Angels go about their work? That is for *them* to know. *We* are to have faith in our heavenly Father's promised care for His people.

(Questions to: Frank Worgan, 5 Gryfebank Way, Houston,
Renfrewshire, PA6 7NZ Scotland. E-mail: fworgan.freeseve.co.uk)