

NO DOGS IN HEAVEN & NO GUARDIAN ANGELS WATCHING ON EARTH!!

by David Lee Burris



Life was safe, but pretty dull, thanks to his overzealous guardian angel.



Search ID: babn1362

"Don't forget to take sanitary wipes. You'll thank me later."



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"No, I'm not an angel of mercy. I'm your guardian angel. And apparently not a very good one."



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"WHERE IS HE? I WANT A WORD WITH MY GUARDIAN ANGEL."

La Vista Church of Christ

Question:

A lot of Christians say that there is such a thing as guardian angels whom God assigns to people. Is this true? I've heard many people say it has biblical evidence but wasn't sure.

Answer:

The concept of guardian angels is derived from:

"Are they [angels] not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?" ([Hebrews 1:14](#)).

"Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven" ([Matthew 18:10](#)).

However, notice that the full concept of guardian angels are not expressed here. What we find is that angels are serving God's people, but exactly what they do and how they do it is not mentioned. I often wonder if the things we referred to as God's providence -- the strange coincidences that happen that makes things work out for us -- are not at least in part carried out by angels behind the scenes. But I can't prove that is what is being meant in [Hebrews 1:18](#).

[Matthew 18:10](#) is a warning that angels are watching over the little ones and so when evil happens, angels are able to petition God directly on their behalf. Jesus is not saying the angels prevent all harm from happening; otherwise, there would be no need for the warning.

ANGEL ASSIGNMENT @BIRTH

Theological Rationale Is Catholic In Origin



Catholic Herald Illustration

NO DISASTER
CAN OVERTAKE **YOU,**

NO PLAGUE
COME NEAR YOUR TENT

HE HAS GIVEN
— HIS ANGELS —

ORDERS ABOUT **YOU,**

TO GUARD YOU WHEREVER
YOU GO.



PSALM 91:10 11

sandbox
CHRISTIAN GIF SHOP



Hebrews 1:14

Therefore,
angels are
only servants
—spirits sent
to care for
people who will
inherit
salvation.



“The Catechism of the Catholic Church states that From infancy to death human life is surrounded by the angels watchful care & intercession. [8] St. Basil states further, Beside each believer stands an angel as protector and shepherd leading him to life. [9]

Early Church fathers differed in opinion about when a guardian angel is actually assigned at birth or at baptism. Origen shows scriptural basis for both opinions. [10] While the Church leaves this question open, most of the Fathers held that all men, baptized or not, have a guardian angel. However, those who have the indelible mark of baptism and a new life in Christ require more attention, guidance and protection to ensure that they will reach heaven. The Church has taught over the centuries that every angel in heaven has one chance to become a guardian angel, from the seraphim down. The angel has to lower himself to serve his protégé on earth, but in so doing learns more about the Incarnation. Every Mass at which a human assists provides an awesome opportunity to his guardian angel, to behold the Incarnate God. Holy hours in front of the Blessed Sacrament are also delightful experiences for our protectors.

Other ways to foster a relationship with ones guardian angel includes praying to the angel to intercede for us and engaging in conversation. To this end, naming the angel may be helpful, but the angels name is inexpressible in human language. If one is to take the trouble giving his angel a moniker, it should conform with revelation. Whenever angels have appeared in Sacred Scripture in human form, it has been in male form only. Since angels have no gender, this is somewhat puzzling. However, we need to conform to public revelation.

The guardian angel simply has one task that has many facets to lead the human to the Passion and Cross. Embracing the cross is the only way human beings reach heaven. He does this mainly through pricking our conscience so we can follow the will of God. He encourages us to thank God for the many humiliations we receive daily, even when his voice is being drowned out because the fallen one is helping to stir up our pride and roars in our ears. Guardian angels do this indirectly working through the imagination and memory. A secondary role is to physically protect. We might notice this indirectly. For instance, we might not be able to locate an item, which then detains us. Only later do we learn that we would have likely been in danger had we not been detained.” – *Catholic Website*

The Basic Concept Theologically Developed

“The 20 Things Guardian Angels Do for Us”

1. Ward off demons

Sometimes we visualize moral decision-making as a debate between a bad angel whispering in one ear and a good angel speaking wisely in the other. There is a truth to this: according to St. Thomas Aquinas, one of the roles of the guardian angels is to fight off demons (*Summa Theologica*, Part 1, [Question 113](#), Articles 2-6).

2. Protect us from harm

Guardian angels generally protect us from both spiritual and physical harm, according to Aquinas (Question 113, [Article 5](#), Reply 3). This belief is rooted in Scripture. For example, [Psalm 91:11-12](#) declares, “For he commands his angels with regard to you, to guard you wherever you go. With their hands they shall support you, lest you strike your foot against a stone.”

3. Strengthen us against temptation

Guardian angels do not just ward off evil, they also strengthen us so we can do it ourselves. As St. Bernard says in [a sermon](#), “As often, therefore, as a most serious temptation is perceived to weigh upon you and an excessive trial is threatening, call to your guard, your leader, your helper in your needs, in your tribulation; cry to him and say: ‘Lord, save us; we perish!’”

4. Embolden us

St. Bernard also [says](#) that with angels such as these at our side we should have no fear. We should have the courage to live out our faith boldly and confront whatever life might throw our way. As he puts it, “Why should we fear under such guardians? Those who keep us in all our ways can neither be overcome nor be deceived, much less deceive. They are faithful; they are prudent; they are powerful; why do we tremble?”

5. Intervene miraculously to save us from trouble

Guardian angels not only ‘guard,’ they also can save us when we are already in trouble. This is illustrated by the story of Peter in [Acts 12](#), when an angel helps break the apostle out of prison. The story suggests that it is his own personal angel that has intervened (see verse 15). Of course, we cannot count on such miracles. But it’s an added comfort to know that they are possible.

6. Guard us from birth

Church Fathers once debated whether guardian angels were assigned at birth or at baptism. St. Jerome argued decisively for the former. His basis was [Matthew 18:10](#), which is a crucially important Scriptural passage that supports the existence of guardian angels. In the verse Jesus says, “See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven always look upon the face of my heavenly Father.” The reason that we get guardian angels at birth is that their aid is associated with our nature as rational beings, rather than belonging to the order of grace, according to Aquinas (Question 113, [Article 5](#), Answer).

7. Guard all of us—including unbelievers

This conclusion follows from the above. Aquinas also makes this clear in explaining that God never leaves any of us, including sinners. As the great dogmatic theologian Ludwig Ott [explained](#), “According to the general teaching of the theologians, however, not only every baptized person, but every human being, including unbelievers, has his own special guardian angel from his birth.” Pope Benedict XVI also [taught](#) that guardian angels are “ministers of the divine care for every human being.”

8. Remind us of the dignity of persons

This follows from all that has been said before. It is particularly evident from Matthew 18:10 where Jesus instructs us not to ‘despise’ the ‘little ones’ because they have angels watching over them. (I’m particularly indebted to Protestant preacher John Piper for [pointing this out](#).) As St. Jerome [puts it](#), “The worth of souls is so great that from birth each one has an angel assigned to him for protection.”

Piper [emphasizes](#) how the presence of guardian angels should lead us to a greater respect for our fellow Christians: “Therefore don’t despise this simple, unimpressive disciple of Jesus! Let his angelic entourage remind you whose son he is.”

9. Remind us of God’s care for all

Aquinas explains how the angels operate in accordance with God’s providential plan for all men (Question 113, [Article 6](#), Answer). It follows that these angels serve as a reminder of His care for us.

10. Bring our needs to God

Akin [says](#) that guardian angels act as intercessors who bring our requests directly to God based on Jesus’ words in Matthew 18:10 about angels beholding the face of God.

11. Bring us closer to God

It follows from the above that guardian angels also aid in bringing us nearer to God. Even when God seems distant, just remember that the guardian angel assigned to you personally is at the same time beholding God directly, as the *Catholic Encyclopedia* [notes](#).

12. Move us to the good

Guardian angels also move us to the good. As Aquinas writes, “It is moreover manifest that as regards things to be done human knowledge and affection can vary and fail from good in many ways; and so it was necessary that angels should be deputed for the guardianship of men, in order to regulate them and move them to good” This includes prompting us to perform good works, according to Aquinas. (See Question 113, [Article 1](#), Answer and [Article 4](#), Objection 3.)

13. Reinforce God’s commands

According to Aquinas, one of the roles of our angelic guardians is helping us use our reason to pursue virtue. In particular, he says the angels help us in developing prudence by serving as God’s “universal instructor,” passing on God’s precepts (Question 113, [Article 1](#), Reply 2).

14. Illuminate the truth

Angels “propose the intelligible truth to men” through sensible things, according to Aquinas (Question 111, [Article 1](#), Answer). Although he does not elaborate on this point, this is a basic teaching of the Church that the material world points to invisible spiritual realities. As St. Paul says in Romans 1:20, “Ever since the creation of the world, his invisible attributes of eternal power and divinity have been able to be understood and perceived in what he has made.”

15. Strengthen our minds

A second way that angels enlighten us, Aquinas says, is by reinforcing our intellects. As he puts it, “[T]he human intellect as the inferior, is strengthened by the action of the angelic intellect” (Question 111, [Article 1](#)).

16. Communicate through our imagination

In addition to working through our senses and intellects, our guardian angels also influence us through our imaginations, according to Aquinas, who gives the example of Joseph’s dreams (Question 111, [Article 3](#), On the Contrary and Answer). But it might not be something as obvious as a dream; it could also be through more subtle means like a ‘phantasm,’ which could be defined as an image brought to the senses or the imagination (Question 111: [Article 1](#), Answer; definition adapted from the *Dictionary of Scholastic Philosophy* by Bernard Wueller, SJ).

17. Influence our wills

Angels cannot directly move the will, but, according to Aquinas, they can indirectly influence it through our senses and intellect, as stated above (Question 111, [Article 2](#) , Answer). This means that our guardian angels influence every part of our being for the better—our senses, intellect, and will.

18. Aid in our salvation

The ultimate goal of all that guardian angels do is to aid in our salvation, according to Aquinas. “Angels are sent to minister, and that efficaciously indeed, for those who shall receive the inheritance of salvation, if we consider the ultimate effect of their guardianship, which is the realizing of that inheritance,” Aquinas writes (Question 113, [Article 5](#), Reply 1). Here he is drawing from [Hebrews 1:14](#), which states, “Are they not all ministering spirits sent to serve, for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?”

19. Remind us of our ultimate goal

Inspired by Christ’s words in Matthew 18:10, St. Augustine suggests that guardian angels remind us that our ultimate goal is the beatific vision of God: “As, then, they see, so shall we also see; but not yet do we thus see. Wherefore the apostle uses the words cited a little ago, Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face. This vision is reserved as the reward of our faith; and of it the Apostle John also says, When He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. 1 John 3:2. By the face of God we are to understand His manifestation, and not a part of the body similar to that which in our bodies we call by that name” (*City of God*, [Book 22](#), Chapter 29).

20. Never leave us

Guardian angels assume their duties at our birth and maintain them up to our death. For Aquinas, this is just an extension of the broader truth that we never completely leave God’s care, even in sin and doubt: “Now it is evident that neither man, nor anything at all, is entirely withdrawn from the providence of God: for in as far as a thing participates being, so far is it subject to the providence that extends over all being. God indeed is said to forsake man, according to the ordering of His providence, but only in so far as He allows man to suffer some defect of punishment or of fault. In like manner it must be said that the angel guardian never forsakes a man entirely...” (Question 113, [Article 6](#), Answer). – *Steve Beale*



WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

The Growing Interest in Angels

By **Wayne Jackson**

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In recent times there has been a revival of interest in angels. This interest has been accelerated by certain movies and television programs. There was the old television program, "Highway to Heaven." Later came the movie "Michael," and then the popular TV series, "Touched by an Angel." Many believe that angels are appearing all around us, virtually every day. Others allege that no such creatures exist at all.

Do you believe in the tooth fairy? "No," you reply — quite emphatically. Why not? "Simply because," you declare, "there is no factual basis for believing in such a mythical character."

Then comes the question for which you have been baited: Do you believe that *angels* exist? If you answer in the affirmative, you will be expected to defend your position, or else you will be viewed as one given to superstition.

Why does the Christian believe in the existence of angels when he has neither seen nor heard them? Contrary to the assertions of some religious folks, angels are *not* appearing today. We have no firsthand, empirical knowledge that they are real beings. In spite of that, our conviction relative to their existence is firmly based.

We assert our confidence in the reality of angels *because the Holy Scriptures inform us of their existence*. Our trust in the *integrity of the Bible*, grounded in a careful investigation of its claims, is the basis of our faith in the unseen realm.

What does divine revelation teach about the origin, nature, role, and destiny of angels? This is a fascinating topic upon which the Scriptures do shed some light.

The Term Defined

We should note initially that the word angel derives from a Greek term that suggests the idea of sending a message. The word can be used in a very ordinary way of one who simply brings a message, as in the case of John the Baptizer (Mt. 11:10). The Hebrew form of the term is even employed of the pre-incarnate Christ (see Mal. 3:1), though certainly Jesus was no angel in the common sense of that term — as the “Watchtower Witnesses” allege. These folks identify Jesus with Michael, the arch-angel. [For a further discussion of this, see the author’s booklet, **Jehovah’s Witnesses and the Doctrine of the Deity of Christ.**] The first chapter of Hebrews clearly refutes that notion that Jesus was a mere angel.

Ordinarily, the word angel denotes a heavenly order of beings that are *below* deity (Heb. 1:6), but *above* humanity (Heb. 2:7).

The Origin of Angels

Angels are *created* beings. Only deity possesses the intrinsic quality of eternity (cf. 1 Tim. 6:16). The psalmist wrote these words. “Praise ye Him [God], all His angels . . . let them praise the name of Jehovah; for He commanded, and they were created” (Psa. 148:2,5). Elsewhere the Scriptures affirm that God “made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their hosts . . . and the host of heaven worships You” (Neh. 9:6).

When were the angels created? In the absence of explicit testimony, a plausible conclusion would be that they were brought into existence at the commencement of the creation week. All created things came into being during the first week (Ex. 20:11), and, since the angels “shouted for joy” when the “foundations of the earth” were laid (Job 38:4,7), it is not unreasonable to conclude that they came into existence during the initial stages of Jehovah’s creative activity.

The Nature of Angels

What is the essence of angels? We do not know precisely. As indicated earlier, they possess the nature of neither deity nor humanity. Scripture does affirm that they are “spirits” (Heb. 1:14). The fact is, however, we do not know very much about the nature of a spirit. A spirit is not physical, i.e., it does not possess flesh and bones (Lk. 24:39; cf. Mt. 16:17). Thus angels do not engage in physical relationships, e.g., marriage (see Mt. 22:30). Aside from a few brief comments about angels, there is little positive information about the makeup of these heavenly creatures.

Angels are accountable to some type of heavenly law, for some of these beings sinned (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6), and sin is defined as transgression of divine law (1 Jn. 3:4). As Paul once noted, where there is no law, there can be no sin (Rom. 4:15).

When angels sin, however, the gospel plan of redemption apparently is not applicable to them. An inspired writer affirms: “For verily not to angels doth He give help, but He giveth help to the seed of Abraham” (Heb. 2:16 – ASV). Is it possible that their intimacy with God made angelic rebellion inexcusable, and thus beyond the pale of redemption? The Bible does not explain this mystery.

The Role of Angels

Angels are “ministering spirits” (Heb. 1:14) who carry out the bidding of the Creator. They worship God and serve Him (Isa. 6:2ff; Rev. 22:8,9). In ancient times they often temporarily assumed the human form, and delivered messages for Jehovah (see Lk. 1:26ff). Sometimes they functioned as protectors of the Lord’s people (Dan. 6:22; Acts 12:7).

Some scholars believe that the expression “their angels” (Mt. 18:10) may suggest the idea of guardian angels (J.W. McGarvey, **Matthew & Mark**, p. 157), but the passage is too ambiguous to lead to firm conclusions regarding this matter. It is apparent, however, that angels do have an interest in the activities of Christians (see 1 Cor. 11:10; 1 Tim. 5:21; Heb. 1:14).

When Lazarus, the beggar, died, his spirit was conveyed into the hadean realm by angels (Lk. 16:22), hence, they appear to be employed by God in the Christian experience of death. Too, the Lord indicated that at the time of the Judgment, angels will be used to gather the unfaithful out of God's kingdom (Mt. 13:41). It is significant that at the time of Christ's return, the Scriptures indicate that He will be accompanied by "all the angels" (Mt. 25:31).

The Destiny of Angels

As indicated earlier, the Bible seems to indicate that rebellious angels are beyond the means of redemption (Heb. 2:16). Peter affirmed that those angels who sinned against God were cast into hell (*tartarus* — used only here in the N.T.). Tartarus is an intermediate realm of punishment, preliminary to the final day of Judgment. In this domain, angels have been restrained in darkness unto the final day of reckoning (2 Pet. 2:4).

Similarly, Jude notes that the angels who did not remain within their assigned positions of authority, have been confined in a place of punishment with a view to the day of divine wrath (v. 6; cf. Rom. 2:5). (What does this teach about the necessity of respecting sacred authority?)

In a complimentary passage, Jesus affirmed that hell (*gehenna*) was initially prepared for "the devil and his angels" (Mt. 25:41).

Conclusion

While there obviously are many things about angels that we do not know, it is clear that these rational beings serve a useful place in the divine scheme of things. It is further apparent that much of the folklore being popularized these days by the entertainment media has no basis in reality.

As we explore how angels upheld God's people, it's useful to note that angelic protection went beyond mere physical defense. Sometimes celestial assistance assumed an almost legal, courtroom quality. Demons thrive on accusations. In the twelfth chapter of Revelation, for instance, Satan is called the "accuser of our brethren." It says that he stood before God and "accuse[d] them day and night."

Job serves as the prime example. Though Job loved God, Satan claimed his love extended only as far as God's blessings. His love was false, said Satan, who challenged God to withdraw the blessings. Do that, he said, and Job will curse his maker. God of course knew Job would remain true—and thus the central struggle of the story.

Another picture of this comes in the form of a vision given by the prophet Zechariah. An angel showed him the high priest, Joshua. As the poor priest stood clad in filthy garments before the angel of the Lord, Satan leaned in to accuse, to say that the man was unclean, unworthy. But though the demon smeared, the angel advocated. He first rebuked the accuser and next commanded celestial attendants to provide Joshua with pure, clean garments.

If we jump back to Job, we get a similar picture of the angel-advocate, "a mediator, one of the thousand, to declare to man what is right." This angel is merciful or "gracious to him, and says [to God], 'Deliver him from going down into the Pit, I have found a ransom.'" Because the angel pleads the man's cause, God now listens when the man prays and accepts him "into his presence with joy." This role of the angels points to the ultimate advocate for God's people, Christ.

It's a powerful bit of contrast. The demons desire our demise, but the angels take wing in our defense. They guide us in righteousness and pray for us to God, asking that he be merciful and restore us. At the end of Job's story, after the great contest concluded with Job the victor, angels exulted in his victory. Said John Chrysostom, "the very theatre of angels shouted at beholding his fortitude of soul, and applauded him as he won his crown!"¹

¹ Miller, J. J. (2012). [*Lifted by angels: the presence and power of our heavenly guides and guardians*](#). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

HEDGE OF PROTECTION

A Bible Lesson

Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land.

—JOB 1:10

Place a hedge of protection around them.” I often hear this plea for supernatural support during prayer meetings. And of course, we’re not talking about a neat row of shrubbery. We want God to surround a person with His angels, like watchmen protecting a field that’s valuable because it’s ready for harvest.

Oddly enough, we’re borrowing a phrase from Satan. In the book of Job, he complained before the throne of God about God’s protection of Job.

We may never know just how often God has sheltered us with a hedge. He and His angels surround us, hide us, and shield us. He commands His angels to guard us, and so we are safe.

For You, O LORD, will bless the righteous; with favor You will surround him as *with* a shield.

—PSALM 5:12 (NKJV)

You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.

—PSALM 32:7

The LORD’s unfailing love surrounds the one who trusts in him.

—PSALM 32:10

The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.

—PSALM 34:7

You have hedged me behind and before, and laid Your hand upon me.

—PSALM 139:5 (NKJV)

Dig a Little Deeper

- How do all these “hedge” verses encourage you?
- Read Psalm 139:5–10 (or the whole chapter). What held David in awe? How close did he feel to his Maker? Why was he overflowing with praise? ²

² Kinde, C. J. (2015). [*Angels: a 90-day devotional about god's messengers*](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Zonderkidz.

Guardian Angels

by [Eric Lyons, M.Min.](#)

Though Scripture never uses the term “guardian angel,” millions of Bible believers through the centuries have professed their conviction in such a classification of angels. In the third century A.D., Origen wrote that “each one of us, even to the ‘least’ who are in the church of God” has “a good angel, an angel of the LORD, who guides, warns and governs” (p. 128). More than a century later, Jerome declared that “the worth of souls is so great that from birth each one has an angel assigned to him for his protection” (p. 209). Around that same time, Chrysostom, in his Homily on Colossians 1:15-18, remarked: “For each believer hath an Angel; since even from the beginning, every one of those that were approved had his Angel.... [T]here is a demon present also” (p. 273). In the centuries to follow, the Catholic Church popularized the concept of guardian angels even more. In 1615, for example, Pope Paul V officially added “Feast of the Guardian Angels” to the Roman calendar (“Feast...,” 2010). Later, “Guardian Angels” Catholic churches began to arise across America, from Rochester, New York to Chaska, Minnesota.

There is no doubt that millions of people around the world have been captivated by the thought of guardian angels. Though many people who identify themselves as Christians believe in the existence of this special class of angels, the only thing that ultimately matters about this subject or any other is, “What does God’s Word have to say on the matter?”

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Angel

The English word “angel” is translated from the Greek *angelos* and the Hebrew *malawk*, and literally means “messenger” (“Angel,” 1988). Sometimes in Scripture “angel” is used in reference to human messengers. For example, on one occasion the Old Testament prophet Haggai was called “the Lord’s *malawk*” (i.e., “messenger,” 1:13). On another occasion, when God spoke through the prophet Malachi, He prophesied of the coming of John the Baptizer, the forerunner of Christ, saying, “Behold, I send My messenger (Hebrew *malawk*), and he will prepare the way before Me” (3:1). Hundreds of years later, when the apostle Matthew recorded Jesus’ quotation of this scripture, he used the Greek term *angelos* (11:10). John the Baptizer was the *angelos* of God (i.e., not a heavenly being, but God’s human messenger).

Most of the time, however, the terms *malawk* and *angelos* refer to created (Psalm 148:2,5; Colossians 1:16), celestial beings who perform a variety of duties for the Creator of heaven and Earth. They are strong (Matthew 28:2), swift (Daniel 9:20-23), breathtaking (Daniel 8), ministering (Hebrews 1:14) messengers (Luke 1:26), who are concerned about the salvation of man (Luke 15:10). God’s faithful angels have done everything from ministering to the Son of God following His 40-day fast (Matthew 4:11) to contending with the devil (Jude 9), and they will play a major role at the end of time when Jesus returns to judge the world (Matthew 13:41; 25:31-32; 2 Thessalonians 1:7).

Guardian Angel

Since the term “guardian” has as its most basic meaning “one that guards” (see “Guardian,” 2010), there is a sense in which the Bible speaks very clearly on the subject: God has used angelic beings to “guard” a variety of people and places in the past. As early as Genesis chapter three, after the fall of man, God “placed cherubim [“winged angelic beings”—see “Cherubim,” 1986] at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to **guard** the way to the tree of life” (3:24, emp. added). Approximately 2,000 years later, two angels struck blind a group of Sodomites and **guarded** Lot and his household from harm (Genesis 19:9-11). When Nebuchadnezzar cast Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego into the fiery furnace, “God sent His angel and delivered His servants” (Daniel 3:28), thus **guarding** the three Hebrews from the furnace’s consuming flames. During the reign of Darius the Mede, God sent His angel to **guard** Daniel in a den of lions (Daniel 6:21-22). Centuries later, after the establishment of the church, God sent an angel to release Peter from prison, **guarding** and guiding him safely out of the prison (Acts 12:1-10). Without a doubt, Almighty God has used His marvelous angelic creation in the past to serve as a kind of guardian for His people.

Consider, however, the way in which the term “guardian angel” is most often used in the 21st century. *Merriam-Webster* defines “guardian angel” as “an angel believed to have special care of a **particular individual**” (2010, emp. added). According to *Encyclopedia.com*, a “guardian angel” is “a spirit that is believed to watch over and protect a **person** or place” (2010, emp. added). Popularly speaking, if a person googles the phrase “My guardian angel saved/helped,” he will discover thousands of articles or posts where people avow that their personal guardian angels have saved them from certain death, or helped them escape some serious calamity.

Although religionists have defined guardian angels in a variety of ways in the past (cf. Origen, Jerome, Chrysostom), since Catholics claim these angels “are a development of Catholic doctrine and piety based on Scripture” (see “Feast...,” 2010), it is appropriate to consider how they define these angels. According to AmericanCatholic.org, a guardian angel is “**an angel** assigned to guide and nurture **each human being**” (“Feast...,” emp. added). In the 47th volume of the *Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, Pie-Raymond Regamey summarized Catholicism’s teachings on the matter, particularly regarding who has a guardian angel:

Whatever school of philosophy we may follow, an understanding of the work of the guardian angel...in its place in the whole order of creation, implies that every man has the benefit of his aid, not only the faithful, and has it from the first moment of independent life, from birth.... The worst sinners have this faithful and kindly friend (1960, 47:92-93).

GUARDING THE WICKED?

Although God certainly “makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust” (Matthew 5:45), no passage of Scripture teaches that every person who has ever lived, whether good or evil, had/has a guardian angel assigned to him from birth. No Bible verse suggests that every man, even “the worst sinners” (Regamey, p. 93), “has an angel assigned to him for his protection” (Jerome, p. 209) and “the benefit of his aid” (Regamey, p. 92). Are we to think that Pharaoh and Herod had guardian angels when they butchered myriads of innocent children (Exodus 1:15-22; Matthew 2:16-18)? [The Bible says nothing about giving any wicked Pharaoh a guardian angel, but God did harden Pharaoh’s heart (Exodus 9:12,34; 10:1,20,27; 11:10; 14:8; cf. [Butt and Miller](#)) and send “**angels of destruction**” against him and his fellow Egyptians (Psalm 78:49, emp. added). Likewise,

Scripture is silent regarding Herod's protective angel. However, "an angel of the LORD" did warn **Joseph** in a dream, saying, "Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him" (Matthew 2:13.) And what about the wicked Jezebel, who "massacred the prophets of the LORD" (1 Kings 18:4), or the multi-million-man-murderer Hitler? Are we to think that God provided each of them with a special angel to "benefit" and "aid" him/her? The very thought is absurd, not to mention foreign to Scripture.

Are we to believe that God allows the wicked to have guardian angels, but He does not hear (to respond to) their prayers? Throughout the Old and New Testaments, Bible writers repeatedly stressed that rebellious, sinful individuals should not expect to have God answer their prayers in a positive way. "The effective, fervent prayer of a **righteous** man avails much" (James 5:16, emp. added), because "the eyes of the LORD are on the **righteous**, and his ears are open to **their** prayers; but the face of the LORD is against those who do evil" (1 Peter 3:12, emp. added; cf. Psalm 34:16; Proverbs 15:29). The psalmist testified: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear" (66:18). The prophet Isaiah wrote: "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear" (Isaiah 59:1-2, emp. added). In light of the fact that God will not even hear (to respond to) the rebellious, how could one ever conclude that "the worst sinners" have a "faithful" guardian angel (Regamey, p. 93)?

MIRACLES AND GUARDIAN ANGELS

The Bible clearly teaches that God has worked all manner of miracles in the past, and has the **potential** to work them at any moment (e.g., at any second Jesus could miraculously "descend from heaven with a shout with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise"—1 Thessalonians 4:16). Wondrous miracles wrought by God and His messengers spatter the biblical text. God miraculously created the Universe and everything in it (Genesis 1). He sent ten plagues upon the Egyptians (Exodus 7-12), parted the Red Sea (Exodus 14), and caused water to come from a rock twice during Israel's 40 years of wandering in the wilderness (Exodus 17; Numbers 20). In the days of Elijah and Elisha, as well as in the first century, God occasionally raised the dead (1 Kings 17:17-24; 2 Kings 4:8-37; Acts 20:7-12). During the time of Christ, God worked all manner of miracles, displaying His infinite power—over nature, disease, demon, and death. God also used angels occasionally in the past to work a variety of wonders: from striking Lot's attackers with blindness to setting Peter free from prison (Genesis 19:9-11; Acts 12:7,10). Thus, every Bible-believing Christian must acknowledge that God has worked an array of miracles in the past, and has the power and potential to work them at any time. However, simply because God has the ability to work miracles at any moment, and simply because He has used angels to work a variety of miracles in the past, does not mean that He has chosen to work miraculously in this present age.

The fact of the matter is, the kinds of verifiable miracles recorded in Scripture are not occurring in this day and age. Neither man nor angel has been miraculously restoring shriveled hands in the midst of their enemies (Luke 6:6-10) or supernaturally reattaching severed ears (Luke 22:51). God has chosen to use neither preacher nor "guardian angel" to miraculously cure congenital blindness (John 9:1-7). What's more, no one today is being raised from the dead (John 11:43). Once again, **this is not a "God-power" issue; it is a "God-purpose" issue**. God has chosen to cease working miracles (i.e., He has chosen to stop working outside His laws of nature) during this time period because the purpose of miracles has been fulfilled.

Unlike magicians, who perform amusing tricks for entertainment purposes, Scripture teaches that miracles happened in Bible times for a very specific purpose: **to confirm the Word**.

Before the New Testament was written, when the apostles and prophets were preaching the Gospel, Mark 16:20 indicates that God worked with them by “confirming the word through the accompanying of signs.” The message that the first-century apostles and prophets preached could be shown to be true by the various miracles that God worked through them (Hebrews 2:3-4). When a God-inspired speaker stepped forward to declare God’s Word, God confirmed His Word by having the speaker perform a miracle to show that he was from God (cf. Exodus 5-12; Acts 8:5-12). The miracle showed the hearers that God was behind the speaker’s remarks. Miracles **authenticated** the spoken word as being God’s Word (cf. John 3:2). Like the essential scaffolding on the sides of incomplete apartment buildings, miracles were once necessary to “complete” (confirm) the revelations of God. However, as with the scaffolding that is needless (and, in fact, is very out of place) on a finished apartment building, once God’s Word was completely revealed and confirmed (cf. 2 Peter 1:3), miracles became unnecessary. [For a thorough study of God’s cessation of miracles in modern times, see Dave [Miller’s](#) 2003 article titled, “Modern-Day Miracles, Tongue-Speaking, and Holy Spirit Baptism: A Refutation.”]

Although many guardian-angel advocates insist that their alleged angels have performed various miraculous feats, neither earthly reality nor the heavenly Scriptures confirm their stories. The kinds of verifiable miracles Jesus, the apostles, and the prophets, and even various angels have worked (e.g., Genesis 19:11; Daniel 3:19-29), are not being duplicated today. Furthermore, the Scriptures insist that those things that were incomplete and partial (miraculous gifts) would be replaced by the total and complete (i.e., the fully revealed Word of God; 1 Corinthians 13:8-10; James 1:25; see [Miller](#), 2003).

ANGELS AND THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD

To say that God has not chosen to work miraculously today is not equivalent to denying God’s activity on Earth. From Genesis through Revelation, the Bible clearly teaches God works providentially (through natural means) in the lives of His people. The LORD was with Joseph during his enslavement in Potiphar’s house (Genesis 39:2,3), his imprisonment (39:20,23), and his role as a powerful ruler in Egypt (45:5-9). Though it was Joseph’s brothers who had sold him into slavery and Pharaoh who had appointed him second in command of all of Egypt, Joseph understood that, ultimately, God was behind it all. By working providentially (within natural laws) in the life of Joseph, “**God...made**” him “lord of all Egypt” (Genesis 45:9, emp. added).

God’s providential care for His people did not stop with Joseph, Esther, or Elijah (1 Kings 18:41-46). God continues to care for (1 Peter 5:7), help (Hebrews 13:5-6; 1 Corinthians 10:13), and discipline His children (Hebrews 12:3-11). God answers the prayers of the humble-hearted, working providentially in the lives of His people (Matthew 6:25-33). As Paul proclaimed: “We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28). Simply because God is not working **miraculously** through man or angel to give sight to the blind, raise the dead, etc., does not mean that God is inactive in the affairs of mankind (see Jackson, n.d.).

God is not passively sitting on the sidelines while the wicked “god of this age” (i.e., Satan; 2 Corinthians 4:4) and his **rebellious angels** work “in the sons of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:2; Matthew 25:41; Revelation 12:7,9). If “the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8), attempting to trick and deceive mankind (Ephesians 6:11; 1 Timothy 3:7), rest assured that God’s good angelic creation also plays an important role on Earth, even during this non-miraculous age. The New Testament does not specifically detail how God uses angels in His providential care of the world and His people, but one thing is certain: He does use them.

Not only are angels merely interested in the salvation of men (Luke 15:10) and involved in the spiritual realm transporting the souls of the dead into paradise (Luke 16:22), they also work in God's overall providential care of His people as "ministering spirits." In the context of exalting Christ above God's angelic heavenly hosts, the writer of Hebrews rhetorically asked: "But to which of the **angels** has He ever said: 'Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool'? Are **they** not all **ministering spirits sent forth to minister** for those who will inherit salvation?" (1:13-14, emp. added). Although far inferior to Christ, angels are special celestial beings whom God uses to "minister" (Greek *diakonian*) or "serve" (RSV, NIV) His people. What's more, considering the present tense form of the participle "being sent forth," God's people have every reason to believe that God is **continually** sending out His angels "as human needs correspond to His divine will" (Jackson, 2000; Dods, 2002, 4:258). Even though no particulars are given in this passage, we can rightly conclude that God uses angels to positively affect the lives of His people. Angels are actively working as God's ministering spirits. Still, there is no evidence in Scripture that each child of God, much less every heathen, has his or her own guardian angel, and especially not one who is performing miraculous feats on his or her behalf.

GUARDIAN ANGEL "PROOF TEXTS"

Psalm 34:7

In the midst of a beautiful passage of Scripture in which the psalmist repeatedly acknowledges and extols the LORD for His wondrous care, guidance, and protection, he testifies that "[t]he angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them" (34:7). Was the psalmist here referring to man's guardian angel? Was he teaching the doctrine of guardian angels as modern religionists often define the term?

First of all, as is frequently the case in the Old Testament, the expression "the angel of the LORD" in this passage likely refers to the preincarnate Christ (cf. Genesis 16:11-13; Judges 13:3-23; Exodus 23:20-21; 1 Corinthians 10:1-4; see Myers, 1978, pp. 59-79; see also Quertermous, 2002, pp. 200-220). It is God, not created angelic beings (Psalm 34:7), Whom the Bible states time and again that man is to "fear" and worship (Psalm 33:18; 67:7; 85:9; Ecclesiastes 12:13). Thus, if it is the case that the eternal Word (John 1:1-5) is meant in this passage, then Psalm 34:7 obviously is not referring to one or more "guardian angels" (as the term is popularly defined in the 21st century). Today, Jesus certainly dwells with His church (Matthew 18:20; 28:20) and strengthens those who fear Him (Philippians 4:13), but He is not what most people are referring to when they speak of their "guardian angel."

Second, even if "the angel of the LORD" in this passage does not refer to the preincarnate Christ (which is difficult to imagine given that man is to "fear Him"), "guardian angel" advocates still cannot find proof of their doctrine here. This verse does not teach that **each** person on the planet has **an angel** assigned **to him** to deliver him from harm. Rather, one angel ("the angel of the LORD") looks after a **plurality** of God's faithful children (as is evident by the use of the plural pronouns "those" and "them").

Psalm 91:9-13

In Psalm 91, the inspired poet says of the one who puts his trust in God,

Because you have made the LORD, who is my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place, no evil shall befall you, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling; for He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways. In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone. You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra, the young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot (9-13).

This passage, which Satan once misapplied when tempting Jesus (Matthew 4:6; Luke 4:10-11), certainly is encouraging to the faithful child of God. It describes in general terms God's protection of His people under the Old Law; but it does not say that **each** child of God (and certainly not every person who has ever lived) has his own "guardian angel." The psalmist noted that God would give a **plurality** of angels the responsibility of keeping one that trusts in him. During the age of miracles, this certainly could have included God using His angels to work various supernatural feats (e.g., striking the enemies of righteousness with blindness in Genesis 19:11). Though the age of genuine biblical miracles has ended (see Miller, 2003), this scripture can still be comforting to the Christian in the same manner in which Hebrews 1:14 is: God sends forth His angels to minister to the saints, providentially taking care of His people.

One other important detail to remember when reading the psalms (including especially Psalm 91) is the inspired penmen's use of figures of speech, particularly hyperbolism. As in Psalm 58:3, where the psalmist intentionally exaggerated the wickedness of mankind by referring to them as going "astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies," in Psalm 91, the writer hyperbolically stresses God's protection of His people. Not that God is incapable of keeping his people from harm, but as Travis Quertermous noted, to press the psalmist's reference to treading upon snakes and lions literally "would be an obvious absurdity, not to mention forcing a contradiction with other Bible passages wherein God's faithful saints suffered great persecution. It must be remembered that the Psalms are poetry and thus abound with figurative language. It is a terrible exegetical blunder to unduly literalize it" (2002, p. 261).

Acts 12:15

After God sent an angel miraculously to release and guide him from prison, Peter traveled to the house of Mary, John Mark's mother, where "many were gathered together praying" (Acts 12:11). When he arrived at the door of the gate and knocked, a girl named Rhoda "recognized Peter's voice," and "because of her gladness she did not open the gate, but ran in and announced that Peter stood before the gate" (12:14). What was the group's response? They said to Rhoda, "You are beside yourself!" When she insisted, they said, "**It is his angel**" (12:15, emp. added).

Does this passage prove, as some believe, that "humans have guardian angels" ("Angels...", n.d.)? As "[i]nteresting as this passage is," Peter Davids rightly concluded, "it simply witnesses to the beliefs of the Christians in that house. The author of Acts **reports** rather than **endorses** their views" (Kaiser, et al., 1996, p. 527, emp. added). As Lenksi remarked, Luke, the inspired writer of Acts, "does not state a Scriptural doctrine but only the superstitious ideas of those who were alarmed by Rhoda's report" (Lenski, 1943, p. 692). Even the scholarly J.W. McGarvey, who endorsed to some extent the idea of "guardian angels" (1875, p. 157), admitted in his commentary on Acts that those meeting at Mary's house "undoubtedly had allusion to the popular superstition of their day, that a man's guardian angel sometimes assumed his form" (1872, p. 139). [NOTE: It is also possible, as the studious Guy. N. Woods remarked, that those in Mary's house, "[c]ertain...that he [Peter—EL] did not escape death at the hands of the murderous Herod...simply understood that his spirit, separated from his body" and "had come to them" (1991, 106[9]:18).]

An angel of God most certainly worked a great miracle in Judea on this occasion. For the second time, Luke records that an angel set Peter free from prison (cf. Acts 5:19). No Bible-believing Christian would ever deny such wondrous acts that God worked through His angelic creation, nor should any child of God ever deny that He is working providentially through them today (Hebrews 1:14). But, nothing in Acts 12 indicates that God has given each person (or even each Christian) a "guardian angel" to protect him from harm. Furthermore, a lesson can be learned from this text regarding Who should receive the glory

for the extraordinary works God's angels perform. When Peter finally spoke to those gathered at Mary's house, he "declared to them how **the LORD** had brought him out of the prison" (Acts 12:17, emp. added). Notice that nothing is said here about Peter giving a discourse about a "guardian angel." And he certainly did not rename Jesus' church "the church of the Guardian Angels," or insist on starting a yearly feast in honor of guardian angels (cf. Roman Catholic's "Feast of the Guardian Angels"). Luke simply records that Peter wanted his brethren to know what "the LORD" had done. Given that even God's good angelic creation will not accept worship from mankind, but insist that they are fellow servants (Revelation 19:10; 22:9), it is wise for Christians simply to acknowledge God for His wonderful care in our lives, even if such help is being carried out by His faithful angelic servants.

Matthew 18:10

More than any other passage of Scripture, guardian-angel advocates point to Matthew 18:10 as their "proof" of guardian angels. On page 88 of his otherwise helpful book, *A Study of Angels* (1978), Edward P. Myers succinctly stated: "Children have guardian angels." He then referenced only "Matthew 18:10" as the Bible passage that supposedly proves the doctrine. Though Peter Davids questioned the doctrine and popular definition of guardian angels, he noted: "Matthew [18:10—EL] makes the only clear reference to 'guardian' angels" (Kaiser, et al., 1996, p. 527). And, according to AmericanCatholic.org, "Jesus' words in Matthew 18:10 best support the belief [of guardian angels—EL]" ("Feast....," 2010).

So what exactly did Jesus say in Matthew 18:10? In the midst of warning His disciples not to offend "little ones who believe in Me" (18:1-9), Jesus taught them to "[t]ake heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven **their angels** always see the face of My Father who is in heaven" (18:10, emp. added). Since Jesus spoke of "their angels," allegedly He was implying that children (or "believers"—18:6) have "guardian angels."

Matthew 18:10 certainly indicates that there is a special relationship between God's heavenly host and "these little ones." And, "[i]n some sense...the angels do belong to the 'little ones' under discussion" (Quertermous, 2002, p. 263). One needs to keep in mind, however, that angels were by no means the main emphasis of Jesus' lesson. In context,

Jesus was speaking to those who were filled with ambition and desire for prominence which leads to a total disregard for children of the poor and deprived of society. Thus **Christ's intent was to let those of ambitious bent know that the high lofty angels of glory are always concerned with the welfare of the young children**, as well as the humble hearted poor of society (Turner, 1989, p. 76, emp. added).

Certainly, if **the angels of God** are concerned about the welfare of children and the humble-hearted, as well as those who are young in the faith (cf. 18:6—"little ones who believe"), Jesus' **apostles** needed to be as well (and less concerned about "who...is greatest in the kingdom of heaven"—18:1). This is the lesson to be learned from Matthew 18:1-14, and not the popular doctrine that each person has an angel on Earth guiding and guarding him from harm.

But, even if one were to ignore the overall context of Matthew 18 in an attempt to force the popular "guardian-angel" slant on verse 10, still the plural possessive pronoun "their" angels scarcely supports the idea that God assigns one angel for each and every child or believer on Earth. As R.C.H. Lenski noted, God "often assigns individual angels for special duties" (1943 p. 692; cf. Hebrews 1:14), but that does not mean that each person has his or her own angel. Furthermore, "It should be observed that these angels are **in heaven**, not upon earth

providing human protection” constantly (Chouinard, 1997, p. 326, emp. added). If they are in heaven, they are not continuously guarding “their people” on Earth, as angels are not omnipresent, and must go from place to place (e.g., Daniel 9:20-23).

Finally, although AmericanCatholic.org insists that “Jesus’ words in Matthew 18:10 best support the belief [of guardian angels—EL],” even they were forced to admit: “The concept of an angel assigned to guide and nurture each human being is **a development of Catholic doctrine and piety** based on Scripture **but not directly drawn from it**” (“Feast...,” 2010). Such an admission speaks volumes about the soundness of the guardian-angel doctrine.

CONCLUSION

Rather than be infatuated with whether or not each person on Earth (or each Christian) has his or her own guardian angel; rather than conjure up all sorts of reasons why we might like the idea of a guardian angel; rather than celebrate a “Feast of the Guardian Angels” or call ourselves “Guardian Angels Churches,” etc., Christians simply need to accept by faith what the Bible unequivocally does say about these spiritual servants of God (Revelation 19:10): they are interested in our activities and well-being (Luke 15:10; 1 Corinthians 11:10), and are continually working on our behalf “as human needs correspond to His divine will” (Jackson, 2000).

Discovering that the Bible writers were silent regarding whether each human or believer has his or her own special guardian angel should not be a disheartening revelation. For, as Travis Quertermous concluded, the Bible “promises not the protection of a single angel, but **many of them**” (2002, p. 261, emp. added; cf. 2 Kings 6:16-17). Should it not be “much more comforting to know that God sends many angels to look out for me rather than just one when such is in harmony with His will (cf. Heb. 1:14)” (Quertermous, p. 261)?

Finally, although there certainly is a time and place to acknowledge and discuss the wonderful works that the angels of God are performing (keeping in mind that few particulars are given in Scripture), more than anything, God’s people need to focus and meditate on **God’s** greatness, and not the wonderful ways of God’s angelic creation. They exist in the spiritual realm because **God made them** (Psalm 148:1-5). They minister to us because **God sends them** (Hebrews 1:14). They will have a part in the Second Coming because **God will bring them** (Matthew 13:40-43,49-51; 25:31-32). As thankful as we should be for what angels have done throughout history for God’s people, we should be driven to our knees in thanksgiving for Who God is and what He has done and continues to do for His people.

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Angels **escort us individually** [Luke 16: 22] to the throne of grace, and they are involved in a more collective endeavor. Jesus spoke of the angels coming with him at the end. The angels will appear at a trumpet's blast and gather God's people "from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." When this day will arrive, no one knows, not even the angels, but they will have an active and decisive part to play.

Jesus gave us the picture of a harvest and the angels as reapers. When the harvest is at last ripe, the angels are charged with separating the wheat from the weeds, the children of God from the followers of the Devil. "The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous," said Jesus, adding the ominous warning, "and throw them [the evil] into the furnace of fire." This fire, we are told elsewhere, was "prepared for the devil and his angels" but will torment those who refused to serve Christ. Paul painted the same image in his letters to the Thessalonians.¹⁵

Those who love and confess Christ, Christ loves and confesses before God and the angels; but those who are ashamed of him or turn their backs, Christ denies before God and the angels. Angels serve in this regard as **witnesses to our lives**, something Paul indicated, validating the judgments of God. Could it be that the Old Testament law demanding that facts be established by two or more witnesses reflects this deep-seated order in the cosmos, a primary function of the angels in whose presence we live out our lives? Recall that the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah were known to God and validated by his angels. They testify to our good and also to our evil, for they, like God, have seen it all. They are "watchers" in more than name.

This judgment is part of Christ repaying us according to our deeds, which he affirms he will do at the end. Scripture uses the pastoral image of the shepherd separating sheep and goats.

This great judgment includes not only us but also the angels. "Let no one be deceived," Ignatius reminded the Smyrneans. "Judgment is prepared even for the heavenly beings, for the glory of the angels, and for the rulers both visible and invisible." Those angels that stayed loyal to their Creator will rejoice, while those that turned with Satan and worked evil will be judged and even tormented in the fire prepared for them.

Amazingly, Paul told the Corinthians that Christians will participate in judging the world and that we will join the judgment of angels. Theodoret of Cyrus commented, "By angels he means demons, for they were angels once upon a time." For what could we judge them? Theodoret speculated, "The saints will condemn them because, though clad in a body, they had care for the divine, whereas those creatures, though naturally bodiless, adopted evil ways."²¹ In other words, whereas people have the distractions from worship and obedience that come with physicality and bodily passions, such as weariness, lust, and hunger, the angels have no such impediments.³

³ Miller, J. J. (2012). [*Lifted by angels: the presence and power of our heavenly guides and guardians*](#). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.



JUST SO,
I TELL YOU,
THERE IS JOY
BEFORE THE
ANGELS OF GOD
OVER ONE SINNER WHO REPENTS.

LUKE 15:10