

Transcript 107

Shea Houdmann

Welcome to the Got Questions podcast. This is going to be kind of Part 2 I guess of our series on the most common questions we receive about angels and demons. So if you didn't listen to part one where we just basically discussed them. What does the Bible say about angels? Do we become angels after we die? And what's the difference between human beings and angels? What's the purpose of angels? Give that one to listen because a lot of stuff we talk about today will be built on the foundation of what we covered there.

Shea Houdmann

But today's question is actually, what does the Bible say about guardian angels? Do we have guardian angels? This is a very common question received. That's a lot of people out there where the idea of guardian angels is very, very important to them. So that's the topic we're going to be covering today. Joining me is Kevin, the managing editor of Got Questions Ministries, and Jeff the administrator of Bibleref.com. So welcome gentlemen to our conversation today.

Shea Houdmann

So with the issue of Guardian angels, there's really one verse that people will primarily point to, and that's Matthew 18:10, which reads, see that you do not look on, look down on one of these little ones for I tell you that there angels in heaven always see the face of my father in heaven. So in this context, the these little ones could even either refer to those who believe in Christ or to the little children mentioned earlier in the context. So there's referring to there as an Angel that seems to be somehow connected or affiliated with the people in question here.

Shea Houdmann

So from this one verse, a lot of people will take the fact that every believer or even every person has an Angel assigned to them for primarily for protection, but also for for guidance. Now, if you're hopefully you're thinking, well that's a lot to kind of build on one verse that doesn't actually say what the purpose of these angels are, who they're assigned to, why they're assigned, and that's maybe kind of the main point of this episode is that do we deny the possibilities that are our Guardian angels? Of course not. God uses angels in many different ways. God uses angels to help protect, to reveal information, to guide, to provide for, and to minister to believers in general. Hebrews 1:14 says angels are ministering spirits sent to help those who will inherit salvation.

Shea Houdmann

So God totally absolutely could have an Angel assigned each person for these purposes, but that's not something the Bible actually explicitly teaches, so hopefully you hear that that's the main perspective we want to get to today. God uses angels according to his purposes, and some of those purposes do involve us. But whether we have a specific Angel assigned to protect us, I cannot say in good conscience that that is the clear teaching of Scripture. So Kevin, what did you find in your study on Guardian Angels?

Kevin Stone

Well, pretty much the same thing as you just mentioned is that guardian angels are a possibility, but they're not explicitly taught in scripture. Now I would love for there to be such a thing as guardian angels and I would love the idea that God has assigned a particular Angel to watch over my life, from birth to the time that I go home to heaven. I love that idea. I love that concept. I hope it's true. You know that I've got this Angel that's with me all the time. And he has saved my life I don't know how many times. And he's always watching out for me and making sure I have God's best and steering me away from the wrong things. But I can't point to scripture and say that that's absolutely true.

Kevin Stone

I want to think I would like to believe that it's true, but I don't have any clear biblical backing for that. In fact, that that passage that you just mentioned Shea, that that kind of go to passage for Guardian angels Matthew 18 in verse 10. If you look at Jesus wording there, he says that the angels are the that the angels of these little ones are always looking at something. But Jesus says they are always looking at the father, their father in heaven. And so the Angels are not looking at us in Matthew 18 and verse 10. They're looking at God. And so that's the focus of the of these angels there. God is the focus. Doesn't seem like it's us, so much. So the oversight of our lives again goes back to God. He's the sovereign. He's the one who is looking out for us, and these angels then who are always looking at God they're attentive to God.

Kevin Stone

It seems like the idea might be that they're waiting for a word from God. When God says go help, they immediately go help and then they come back and they're waiting for their next assignment. You know it could be something like that, but again, the the exact wording of the passage is that they're they're attentive to God and he is their, their focus in all of that. Doesn't seem like the focus is on humanity.

Jeff Laird

I like that you bring up the idea of the focus on humanity. I think that's one of the things that drives some of our misunderstandings when it comes to discussions about Guardian angels is it actually goes beyond the concept of just angels and it just comes down to the idea of how do we think God interacts with and cares for us? Because the idea of the Guardian Angel implies that God has assigned some spiritual being to constantly be working to keep us safe, keep us healthy, keep us out of danger, keep us from temptation. Things like that and that sort of leans towards what we would consider like a prosperity theology or a prosperity gospel attitude where God's primary concern for us in this world is that we are healthy, happy, well adjusted, successful, and that sort of thing. And that's not really the way that God interacts with us. That's not the primary thing that he's concerned with. He does care about our health. He cares about what happens to us here in world, but the idea of the Guardian Angel implies that God is explicitly concerned with those very things.

Jeff Laird

One of the things that's confusing to me about the idea of Guardian angels is what it implies about God's interaction when things don't go exactly the way that we would prefer, they go. So in other words. If God has assigned us an Angel and that Angel specific job is to keep me safe, that's my guardian Angel,

then what does that mean if I do get into a car accident, or if somebody robs me or something else like that happens. Does that mean that the Guardian Angel is defective? Does it mean that the Guardian Angel doesn't have enough power? Does it mean that I did something to push the Guardian Angel away? Does it mean that God deliberately told the Guardian Angel stop, don't do anything. Let this happen.

Jeff Laird

So there's not really anything in the Guardian Angel concept that simplifies our understanding of God. It doesn't do anything really but complicate it because it adds another layer of deliberate action. Where if something happens in my life that's not great. Now I've got that added idea of saying, well, how come my guardian Angel didn't do something about it? And because Scripture does not give us some explicit statement that those guardian angels are there, it's much more clean, clear cut for us to understand why things that are, quote on quote, random can happen to us because God does allow us to live in a world with cause and effect where we can make choices.

Jeff Laird

I also think it's interesting for me that one of the temptations that Satan used against Jesus was sort of an extreme version of the Guardian Angel's idea. One of the things that Satan brought up to Jesus was, he said, take yourself up to the top of a tall building and jump off. Because Scripture says that he will send his guardians, his angels to protect you. You know, and that's not the way most people consider the Guardian Angel concept to work. I don't know of many people who believe that guardian angels will protect you from yourself, but it's interesting that one of the temptations that Satan used and that Jesus rejected was this idea that God is absolutely obligated to provide you with some certain level of protection and no matter what happens, he's going to use angelic forces to be able to enforce that.

Jeff Laird

So I think the idea is interesting. It's comforting to think about, but not only do we not see anything in Scripture that says that that's the case, we also see a lot of concerns, a lot of problems that the Guardian Angel concept causes and most of those don't really make our our sense of our relationship with God simpler, easier, more clear. They actually make them more complicated because they add this extra layer that Scripture doesn't really try to add.

Shea Houdmann

Now Jeff, you raise a really good point and related to that, I've heard a lot of people argue over the years against the idea of Guardian angels based on, well, why do I need a finite Angel protecting me when I have God protecting me? And obviously there is some truth to that, but at the same time, God doesn't need angels to deliver messages for him and clearly in Scripture he occasionally does that. God is perfectly capable of delivering the message himself through many, many ways.

Shea Houdmann

So God uses angels according to his purposes, and they're not not in the sense that he needs them to do that, but because he has a purpose for them. Is like God does not need humanity either, he's he's self sufficient. He is entirely perfectly, eternally satisfied in himself, but God chooses to use his creation in certain ways, some of which don't understand, don't understand, or make sense to us.

Shea Houdmann

So if God wants to send an Angel for protection, which, I think there is with the spiritual warfare that's going on, I would be very grateful for having an Angel engaging in that battle for me or with me, so I don't want to discount the importance of angels should God choose to use them in that way.

Shea Houdmann

But at the same time, and the Scripture definitely does not present what you were talking about, the idea that angels are protect us from making bad decisions or from rescuing us from our consequences, that sort of thing. Angels are definitely not there for us to test. Well, I'm going to jump off this building to see if angels will rescue me. Well, pretty sure how that's going to end up for you and it's not going to be pretty. But yeah, it's it's the whole concept is interesting. And yes, God does protect and you just protect us in miraculous ways sometimes. I am convinced that sometimes God uses angels for those purposes, but not in the sense that there's a particular Angel watching over our every movement, always protecting us from what's going on around us. 'cause that's definitely not what scripture says.

Kevin Stone

Are you saying Shea that I cannot just go out and be as stupid as I want to be and just trust the angels to bail me out every time?

Kevin Stone

Oh, that's kind of disappointing, but no, we there's there's, there's so many things that have built up around the Guardian Angel concept that are are superstitious and just downright unbiblical sometimes. I got on a website earlier today that was, uh, it's a very popular religious website and they had an article on there, several articles about Guardian angels, but the one that I was reading particularly was how to know that your guardian Angel is nearby. How do you know that you know he's he's interacting with you and it gave a list of things. One of them was that you start having messages? You just have this feeling in your heart and the article actually said to trust your intuition. You know, follow your heart kind of thing, well, you know what? That is a guaranteed opening to be led astray. If you're just going to follow your heart. Scripture warns us against that kind of thing. And trusting your own intuition can be a dangerous thing, but also on this list where things happening in threes, you know. And then seeing the number 11, we have an article about that on our website about, you know, is the number 11 an angelic number? Well, the answer is no, it's not, but there's this belief out there that it is. Seeing a white feather. You know that that's how you know that your guardian Angel is nearby and that he's involved in your life. So look for the white feathers. Also, hearing a song that really speaks to you at that moment, and then seeing orbs. Now we've got an article on Orbs on our website as well, and that's that's a kind of superstitious stuff that gets kind of creepy in my book. But that was on the list of here of you know, evidence of guardian angels being around.

Kevin Stone

And then I got on a Catholic site on on the Internet here this morning as well and they have the feast day set aside for guardian angels, October the 2nd every year is their feast day for Guardian angels. And then this web. This particular website also had a list of prayers that you can pray to your guardian Angel. And anything like that just puts up red flags for me right away because as believers we

pray to God, we pray to the father in the name of the son, in the power of the spirit. We do not pray to anything or anyone else, including our Guardian angels. But this website had a whole bunch of prayers that you could say to them, and that's the kind of thing that I want to stay away from. As a pastor, I tell my congregation to steer clear of that kind of thing.

Kevin Stone

I got on a new age website today as well. And of course, they're all about angels and the Guardian angels and this website was telling how you could find out the name of your guardian Angel just based on your Zodiac sign. So if you know when you were born you can find out the name of your guardian Angel. And what was really interesting to me though was that same information that I found on this new age website was also repeated on a major news website and I thought they were supposed to be about news, but here they had this article about your Zodiac signs or horoscope and how you can know the name of your guardian Angel. There is just so much superstition and extra biblical stuff that we just don't find in scripture and then unbiblical stuff that's of surrounding this concept of guardian angels. We have to be wary, we have to be discerning, and we want to stick with what the Scripture actually says.

Jeff Laird

That's where the danger comes in is that when we start adding one thing that's not biblical and we stick to it, when we let that put down roots, and we were talking before about how there's implications if this, this idea of a specifically assigned Guardian Angel, one spiritual being whose job from God is to look out for me, if I'm going to hold to that then I have to add a whole bunch of other different assumptions and attitudes and ideas into my spirituality. And things like you're talking about Kevin, that's some of the things that come along with that was how do I integrate this into my spiritual life? What does that mean? And the problem there is not that those additional things are themselves illogical or irrational.

Jeff Laird

The problem is that they're tied to something that Scripture doesn't actually teach us. That's why the danger for me in Guardian angels is not that they are impossible. Like we've said it, it's nothing in scripture indicates to us that there is no possible way that God could do this. God certainly could assign individual entities for those purposes. He could choose to do that, and he could control them according to his sovereignty. To say this is when you're going to step in this is when you're going to step back, I suppose. But then you start adding these different layers and you get into concerns just like you were talking about Kevin, where now we're starting to add superstition, magic.

Jeff Laird

It's concerning to hear about people talking about saying prayers to their guardian Angel. That I think crosses a line between just mistakes and getting into something that I do think becomes flatly illogical and contrary. I can respect a person who believes in the concept of guardian angels and I can see where a person could believe that and see that even if I don't agree with it. Once you start to get to something like praying to your guardian Angel, I think not only do we have questions of idolatry and things like that, you also have the question saying, why would I need to pray to my guardian Angel? My guardian Angel is literally assigned to do nothing but watch me and communicate the things I need to know. And I know everything. To say something like you can speak to your guardian Angel would make

sense, but prayer to a guardian Angel starts to sound now like magic. Now we're using incantations. Now we're using things like that and this is again where the danger comes in.

Jeff Laird

There are many things that are possible in Scripture and there's nothing that says God can't use angels in this way. But we need to be careful that if we get an idea in our head and we want to defend that idea, we can start multiplying exponentially these unbiblical ideas and then it really does start to have a serious and detrimental effect on our understanding and our concept of what faith means and how we interact with God.

Shea Houdmann

Exactly, and he's looking revelation, there are two instances where when an Angel appeared to John he bowed down before the Angel and begins to almost worshipped Angel and Angel says stop, I'm his servant, just like you, worship God. And right if we were to have guardian angels, again this that's an if statement. And any sort of worship or prayer to that Angel was occurring. The Angel would be absolutely no, not we need to be focusing your attention on God. He is the one who sent to me. He was the one who created me so to him be all the glory, not me as a finite Angel sent to send to help you. Your praise, your worship, your attention, your prayers need to be sent to the creator to whom we both serve.

Kevin Stone

We do have that passage that you mentioned Shea at the beginning and Hebrews chapter one that says that the Angels are ministers to those who are inheriting eternal life. So they they do serve us, God uses them in some ways to serve and bless us. But we're just not sure exactly what that is and what those ways are. We always need to honor Christ. Just goes back to that in Ephesians chapter one. We read this verses 20 and 21. God has raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked not only in the present age, but also in the one to come.

Kevin Stone

And there are many other such passages that just lift up the Lord Jesus Christ. He's our focus. He's the object of our worship. And angels are servants of God, but they are nothing compared to Christ, and we keep our eyes on him the author and finisher of our Faith.

Jeff Laird

It's another reason it's important for us to focus on things that Scripture actually tells us and not get too far afield, and things that are behind the scenes, if anything, because of the things that that leads to. We can see have a mirror image to some of the guardian Angel things when we talk about things like deliverance ministries where we want to assign the name of a particular demon to every temptation, every malady, every sickness, as if every single thing that happens to us is driven directly by the influence of some spiritual entity. And that distracts us not only from Christ. It distracts us from the responsibility that we have in order to interact with our maker the way he has asked us to do that, and I think that's that's the biggest danger of something like a guardian Angel idea is as good as the concept is. It can provide that distraction. It can, it can make us put some secondary concept or idea that we're

thinking about and focusing on instead of maintaining our attitude of I need to be focused on the leading of the Holy Spirit, what God has asked me to do. Just like we wouldn't want to do the same thing with every malady in my life. Blaming it on some malevolent demon, or some spirit, we need to recognize my relationship with Christ is what comes first.

Jeff Laird

If there's something going on with Guardian Angels, apparently we don't need to know as much about it, so we can kind of leave that to the behind the scenes and leave that to God's will and leave that to how he wants to handle it. I don't have to know all of those details.

Shea Houdmann

Exactly as I mentioned before, this is sort of Part 2 in our series on angels and in part one we talked fairly extensively about the idea of entertaining angels unaware, verse in Hebrews. So obviously we believe in according to Hebrews 1:14 that angels are ministering spirits sent to minister to those who will inherit salvation. So the idea of God sending angels to help us is entirely scriptural. You see it throughout scripture, angels do God's bidding, and whatever he assigns them to they do. And sometimes that does involve us. So can God send an Angel to protect us? Of course he can. Can God know a situation we're going to face for which we, the assistance of an Angel? The guidance, the help, whatever would be necessary? Absolutely. And God does sometimes send angels, but to say that there is one particular Angel who's assigned to us. That's the part that's not scriptural.

Shea Houdmann

Again, I'm not saying it's impossible. I don't think any of us would say it's impossible that there is a specific Angel assigned to us. But that's going beyond what Scripture actually teaches. Does God use angels to protect us sometimes? Yes he does. Is there always one particular Angel assigned to us? I can't find that in Scripture and I don't know that it really matters. If if God wants an Angel to be involved in our protection, he's perfectly capable of doing so. There does not need to be one continually assigned to us in order for God to provide angelic protection or guidance or for whatever we would possibly need the help of an Angel for.

Shea Houdmann

So to me, that's kind of the core we call it a problem I have with the Guardian Angel concept is that one, it's not explicitly taught in Scripture, and two, it's not necessary for there to be an Angel continually watching over us, but I'm not going to deny it. I'm not going to reject the possibility of it. I just don't find the concept to be explicitly clear in Scripture.

Shea Houdmann

So in our conversation I hope you hear that, that angels are wonderful, amazing creatures. Every time an Angel appears to someone results in either fear or overwhelming desire to get on your knees and bow before this amazing creature of God that is appeared to you. So I don't want to deny the power the awesomeness of angels, including the possibility, the reality that they do protect us, guide us, help us at times, but the idea of again, one particular Angel always assigned to us, that's not in Scripture, and that's not something we need to really be basing our relationship with God or walk with Christ on.

There's so much more in Scripture about relying on God, trusting in God, obeying God. Our relationship is primarily with him, not with the angels he's created.

Shea Houdmann

So this has been the Got Questions podcast on the question what does the Bible say about Guardian angels? Hope you found our conversation encouraging helpful. And most importantly, Scriptural. Got questions? The Bible has answers. We'll help you find them.