

Guardian Angels

By David Feddes

Psalm 91 talks about guardian angels, but even more so of God himself as our great guardian. When we think about angels, one of the main purposes is to think about the Lord who made them and sends them to help us. His might is more than all the angels combined, so anytime we are impressed by angels, it's a call to be even more impressed by the Lord and the king of angels. Psalm 91 says,

¹ He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. ² I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."

³ Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence. ⁴ He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. ⁵ You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, ⁶ nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday. ⁷ A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. ⁸ You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked.

⁹ If you make the Most High your dwelling—even the Lord, who is my refuge—¹⁰ then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. ¹¹ For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; ¹² they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. ¹³ You will tread upon the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent.

¹⁴ "Because he loves me," says the Lord, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. ¹⁵ He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. ¹⁶ With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation."

Guardian angels

- **Guard God's dwelling**
Eden, tabernacle, temple, throne in heaven, New Jerusalem
- **Guard God's people**
On journey through life and death

This passage speaks of guardian angels, and so do other parts of the Bible. I want to focus on two main ways in which angels are guardians: they guard God's dwelling, and they guard God's people.

The mighty spirit beings who guard God's dwelling are sometimes called the cherubim. They guard God's dwelling, whether the Garden of Eden, the tabernacle, the temple, the throne room of heaven, or the new Jerusalem. Throughout the Bible, these mighty beings are pictured as God's throne attendants and who guard against any intrusion from those who are unworthy.

The second kind of guarding is described in Psalm 91:11. God appoints his angels to guard God's people in all our ways. They guard us on our journey through life, and they even guard us on our journey through death into the presence of God.

So first we want to think about those guardians of God's dwelling, and then about guardians of God's people.

Guarding God's Dwelling

The Bible's first mention of these great guardians is not very uplifting or encouraging. They are the ones who make sure sinful humans can't get back into the **Garden of Eden**. They are the ones who make sure that humans cannot get the tree of life. Scripture says, "Yahweh God sent Adam out from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken. So he drove the man out, and placed cherubim east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming, turning sword to guard the way to the tree of life" (Genesis 3:23-24).

The Garden of Eden was God's dwelling on earth. It's where he came to walk with Adam and Eve in the cool of the day to fellowship with them. It was his temple here on earth and the source of life for Adam and Eve. They could have had life forever if they had stayed in fellowship with God and if they had taken part of the tree of life. But after they disobeyed God and sinned against him, God decreed that they could not eat of the tree of life and they could not have direct access to his presence anymore. So he posted these mighty guardians with a flaming sword turning in every direction so that no human could ever enter into that garden and take part of that tree of life unless something enormous were to change. Even then, God already had plans to send Jesus and bring humanity back into his presence and give them eternal life. But let's notice what was going on: the cherubim, these mighty beings, were there to guard God's dwelling and block sinners from access to eternal life.

Later on, we read of the cherubim in connection with the **tabernacle**. The craftsmen who made the Ark of the Covenant were told to craft cherubim on the cover of the Ark. Nobody ever saw the Ark of the Covenant once it had been made and put inside the Holy of Holies, God's dwelling place on earth. Humans were forbidden to come there unless they had some blood to bring with them. Only once a year could one person, the high priest, enter that place, and only with blood. Only the one mediator appointed by God could do that.

There were golden cherubim on the cover of the Ark, called the atonement cover or the mercy seat, and the blood was to be placed right underneath those cherubim who guarded the cover. On the curtains of the tabernacle, there were also woven images of cherubim. These pictured the spirit guardians of God's dwelling place. The Bible says, "Above the ark were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat" (Hebrews 9:5).

When Moses went into the tabernacle to hear from God, "Moses heard the voice speaking to him from above the mercy seat that was on the ark of the testimony, from between the two cherubim" (Numbers 7:89).

The cherubim guarding the ark picture on earth what's going on also in God's heavenly dwelling: his heavenly throne is guarded by the cherubim. The earthly things were made as copies or representations of the heavenly things (Hebrews 9:23). Later the Ark was moved to the **temple** from the tabernacle. In Solomon's temple, the Holy of Holies had huge sculpted cherubim, and the Ark was placed under those. These huge cherubim had their wings touching each other. On the walls of the temple, there were also pictures of cherubim. The earthly copies of the heavenly things displayed the cherubim as the great throne attendants and guardians of God's dwelling.

There are more than 90 references to the cherubim in the Bible. For example, "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel... You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth: (Psalm 80:1). "Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth" (Isa 37:16)

The cherubim not only guarded Eden, which had been God's earthly dwelling among people, but they guarded the tabernacle and the temple. God's dwelling, whether Eden or the temple, was also the place where life was based for the people and where their life came from.

Isaiah the prophet describes a vision:

I saw Yahweh, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphim [his word for cherubim], each with six wings: with two they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another, 'Holy, holy, holy is Yahweh of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.'

"Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, Yahweh of Hosts."

Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it, he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for."

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me."

Isaiah's vision gave him a glimpse of the **throne in heaven**. This was part of his call as a prophet. Never take the writings of the biblical prophets as just some guy offering his opinion on some things. When prophets were let into the throne room of God by a vision and their lips were cleansed by him, then they were speaking and writing the very words of God. At any rate, notice that if anybody ever gets close to God's throne room, they always have a sense of being overwhelmed and devastated.

You find the same thing in the visions of Ezekiel. In Ezekiel 1 he sees four cherubim, and each one has four different faces: the face of a lion, the face of an ox, the face of a man, and the face of an eagle. In Ezekiel's vision, they each have four wings and wheels full of eyes accompanying

them. Above them is the glory of God. Again, this vision includes God's throne attendants. One thing you learn in Ezekiel's vision is that God's throne is mobile.

There were people who thought that once God's temple was built in Jerusalem, and the Holy of Holies was there, and the Ark of the Covenant was there, God was there to stay. They had it made. They were safe because God dwelt among them, and nothing could ever conquer Jerusalem or destroy it while God was there. But Ezekiel's first vision of the throne of God came while he was in exile along a river in Babylon. Jerusalem still stood, but many exiles, including Daniel and Ezekiel, had been taken away to a foreign land. He sees God's glory and his throne not in Jerusalem but where God's banished people are in Babylon.

The people back in Jerusalem are congratulating themselves on how good they are and how certain it is that they won't go into exile because they have the temple. But they are not as safe as they think, and God is not bound to the temple or the city of Jerusalem.

In Ezekiel 1, the prophet sees God's throne and the guardian cherubim hovering above the exiles in Babylon. Then in Ezekiel 10, he has a vision of God's temple in Jerusalem, and he sees the cherubim, the same living creatures he saw when he had that vision near Babylon. What he sees is terrifying because an angel comes and takes burning coals from among the fire of the cherubim and scatters it over the city of Jerusalem. Then the throne of God and the glory of God move out of the temple, and the cherubim and the holy God of Israel leave the temple and Jerusalem.

People who just followed the news about the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple might have said, "The Israelites didn't have a strong enough army. Nebuchadnezzar had a stronger force, and he got mad at Jerusalem, so he came and destroyed it." The Bible describes those events in other historical passages. But Ezekiel was shown what was happening in the unseen realm. God was fed up with the wickedness and unholiness that the Israelites were bringing right into his own temple and into his dwelling place. So the glory and the cherubim and Yahweh of hosts left the temple and the city, and scattered the fire of judgment, and the temple and Jerusalem were burned.

When we hear what the Bible says about the cherubim, we don't always get a warm, fuzzy, happy feeling. The great guardians of God's throne are sometimes also the great dispensers of God's judgment.

In Revelation 4-5 John describes a vision that in many ways resembles the visions of Isaiah and Ezekiel. John sees a throne with someone sitting on it, and he sees 24 elders around that throne. These depict "the sons of God," the angelic rulers who are the heavenly council around God's throne. Then John sees at the center four living creatures, each with six wings, covered with eyes in front and in back. They never stop saying, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty, who was and is and is to come." In Revelation 6, these living creatures, these cherubim, call forth judgments and tribulations on the wicked of the earth.

If you study those visions closely, you'll notice similarities, but you'll also notice that they are not quite the same. For instance, in Isaiah and Revelation, the cherubim have six wings, but in

Ezekiel's vision, they only have four wings. In Ezekiel's vision, each one has the face of an ox, of a lion, of a man, and of an eagle. In John's vision in Revelation, one has the face of a lion, another the face of an ox, another the face of a man, and another is like a flying eagle.

You might say, "Well, what are they? Does each cherub have four different faces? Or do they each have just one face and have four different kinds? Does each one have six wings, or only four?"

These visions don't exactly match each other in every detail, but spiritual beings are being portrayed in visible forms. This is not photography. These are not literal descriptions of what heavenly beings look like. We are misunderstanding if we think that the cherubim are really just composite critters with a bunch of different faces. Don't get hung up on literalism when you are studying symbolic visions.

Consider a different vision. In Revelation 5 John hears Jesus described as a lion and then sees a lamb. These are portrayals of Jesus Christ. Is the Son of God a young sheep? Of course not, and he's not a lion with mane and claws either. In another sense, he's both lion and lamb, but we have to understand that human language and human pictures are being used to portray something far beyond anything that we're familiar with. If that's true of the picture of Jesus as a lion and lamb, then when you study visions of the cherubim, you're not going to always get a consistent picture.

Nothing visible or physical can picture them literally; they are spirit beings, not bodily beings like us. But the strength of an ox, the ferocity and majesty of a lion, the speed of an eagle, the intellect of a human--those are hints at what cherubim are like. They are beings who combine in themselves traits that may be separate in various kinds of bodily creatures here on earth. They are mighty, and the visions we have of them can only begin to hint at what they're really like. The visions can't fully depict their reality. Those who see the visions still haven't actually seen the real thing.

But even the visions are enough to flatten them. Isaiah thinks that he's going to collapse and be ruined. Ezekiel is sick and lying on the ground for many days before God restores his strength. When Daniel and John see visions of heavenly beings, they are stunned and fall to the ground. There is something overwhelming about the majesty of the cherubim, and the majesty of God himself is even more overwhelming.

Later in Revelation, heavenly guardians again appear. Revelation 21-22 speaks of the **New Jerusalem**, a fantastic place with streets of gold and the wonderful tree of life and a river of life. The tree of life didn't disappear forever; the tree of life makes a comeback. The garden paradise was not lost forever; paradise emerges anew. But one thing is still true: paradise is still guarded. "It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates... Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life" (Revelation 21:12, 27).

The gates of paradise are still guarded by heavenly beings, but there is a way to get in: having your name written in the Lamb's Book of Life, having Jesus' blood cleansing you, putting your faith in him. Jesus says, "To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life,

which is in the paradise of God... Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. (Revelation 2:7, 22:14) How do you overcome? By the blood of Jesus and the word of your testimony (Revelation 12:11). How do you wash your robes? By faith in Jesus' blood, and by living a righteous life with the help and power of Jesus (Revelation 19:8). Clothed in robes of righteousness, with your name written in the Lamb's Book of Life and with the blood of Jesus upon you, you can enter that city. The angelic guardians at the gates will let you in.

So what?

- Urgency of cleansing through Jesus
- Blessing of access to God's throne
- Purity and security of new creation

So what? What difference does it make to know about these mighty guardians of God's dwelling? We see the urgency of cleansing through Jesus. If angels are guarding access and nobody enters through those gates unless they have been cleansed, then it is really, really important to receive that cleansing without delay, to put your faith in Jesus Christ, to trust that your sins are put on him and that he takes the punishment away at the cross, to receive his Holy Spirit into you, to cleanse you and make you more and more like him. That is absolutely urgent because outside the gates, there's the lake of fire.

Then, knowing the urgency, we need to realize what a blessing it is to have access to God's throne. Even now in prayer you can enter into the Holy of Holies. You can go directly to the throne of grace and find mercy to help you in your time of need (Hebrews 4:16). When you go to the throne of grace, you are entering the Holy of Holies. You are entering into the presence of one who is even greater than the cherubim, and he's letting you pass the cherubim and giving ear to what you say. It is a stupendous blessing to be invited to approach God's throne and to have that mighty God listening to you.

The fact that angels guard the gates of the new Jerusalem means that paradise is going to be pure, it is going to be perfect, and nothing can ever spoil it again. It is going to be secure. No enemy will be able to attack it or enter it. Eternal life cannot be spoiled or wrecked or destroyed because God himself and his guardians are going to ensure that all who enter are made perfect and that none who are imperfect ever do enter.

So it's important to realize that the cherubim, these divine guardians, are guarding the throne of God, guarding his presence, guarding the tree of life, but also granting followers of Jesus access to the tree of life. "Blessed are those who have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city."

Guarding God's people

Angelic beings guard God's dwelling, and angels guard God's people. "For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone" (Psalm 91:11-12). God himself is the great guardian

of his people in Psalm 91, but he also command his angels to guard us. That is a tremendous blessing and comfort.

Guardians during our earthly life

Many people believe they have seen an angel or are pretty sure there is a moment when an angel intervened to protect them. I'll give a couple of examples.

I remember listening to an older couple at a church that I served previously. They lived in the Netherlands during World War II. They were hiding Jewish people from Nazis. One day soldiers came to search their house. The soldiers with their guns were standing outside. My friend told me, "I saw a man off to the side. He waved his hand, and suddenly the soldiers moved on. Then the man was gone." He was convinced for the rest of his life that an angel had appeared and rescued his family and the Jews they were hiding.

I have heard from people who were in a hospital room when their loved one died. They saw someone standing in the room near the bed, and suddenly they didn't see anyone there. They were convinced that it was an angel sent from God to carry their loved one home to heaven and to give them just a glimpse of an angel to comfort them.

A well-known Bible teacher said that he's never seen guardian angels himself, but on four different occasions, different people told him that while he was speaking, they saw three angels, one larger than the other two. The story was exactly the same from four different people. He didn't claim that he had seen them himself. He just said four different people who didn't know each other told him on different occasions what they saw: three angels standing near him, one bigger than the other two.

You might say, "Yeah, there's a lot of strange stories out there." Here's something that's not a strange story: "He will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways." Whether you happen to see them, or whether somebody else happens to see them, or nobody happens to see them, this is the truth of the matter: God will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.

Here are some examples in the Bible.

Jacob's brother Esau threatens to kill him after Jacob rips Esau off. So Jacob flees. One night on his flight, he lies down and sleeps. He dreams of a ladder, a stairway reaching to heaven with the angels of God ascending and descending on it. God speaks to him and says that he's going to be with Jacob in all of his journeys and that Jacob is going to be blessed.

Later on, Jacob has served his uncle for many years. Now he has a bunch of children and has become wealthy. But he has a falling out with his uncle, and he wants to get out of there. His uncle chases him, and Jacob narrowly averts a big conflict between him and his uncle and their various followers and servants. Then Jacob keeps heading homeward, and he will have to face his brother Esau, who swore to kill him a number of years ago. "Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. When Jacob saw them he said, 'This is God's camp!'" (Genesis 32:1-

2). Soon afterward he meets Esau, and Esau has let go of his resentment. He doesn't kill Jacob; he hugs him. In reading that dramatic story, don't miss this little sentence: "Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him." Maybe those angels helped him escape his uncle's anger. Maybe those angels helped him not to get killed by his brother Esau. The angels met him. The angels whom he had seen years earlier in a dream when he first fled were with him again when he was making his return to the promised land.

"The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them" (Psalm 34:7). The prophet Elisha and his servant are in the town of Dothan. Enemy troops come and surround the city, and they are there for one purpose: to capture Elisha. Elisha's assistant is in a panic. Elisha says, "Why are you worried? Those with us are more than those with them." Elisha prayed, "Open his eyes, Lord, so that he may see." Then the Lord opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha" (2 Kings 6:17). Guarded by the angelic armies, Elisha goes out, and suddenly the enemy army can't see where they are or where they are going. Elisha leads them right into the city of Samaria, where they're surrounded by the entire army of Israel. Rather than kill them, Elisha gives the enemy soldiers a meal and sends them home.

Three young men were thrown into a blazing fiery furnace by King Nebuchadnezzar because they wouldn't bow down and worship the big idol that he had set up. Nebuchadnezzar looked into the fire and exclaimed, "Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire? ... Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods" (Daniel 3:24-25). Either it was Christ himself coming in a pre-incarnate state to be with those three men, or it was an angel of God. We only know that Nebuchadnezzar saw somebody who looked to him like a son of gods or the Son of God. Angels are sometimes called "sons of God" in Scripture, and of course the Son of God, eternal and divine, is Christ. Again, God protects people facing great danger, either by sending an angel or with his own almighty hand.

Daniel refused to stop praying when the king issued a decree to do so, so Daniel was thrown into the lion's den. He spent all night in that den of lions. The king felt bad about it because he liked Daniel, but once he had made that stupid decree, he followed through on it. The king came to the lion's den the next morning and cried, "Daniel, was your God able to save you?" Daniel replied, "My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me" (Daniel 6:22). It's not that the lions weren't hungry. Right after Daniel was taken out of the den, his enemies were thrown in. The lions recovered their appetite immediately and tore those evil men to pieces. Only the presence of God's angel had prevented the lions from devouring Daniel.

There's a wonderful story in Acts 12. Peter has been arrested and put in prison by Herod. Peter is sleeping, with one hand chained to one guard, and the other hand chained to another guard. Two more guards are watching the gate of the prison. An angel comes to Peter, and light fills the cell that he's in. Peter thinks he's having a dream. The angel hits him in the ribs and says, "Quick, get up!" The chains fall off. Peter walks toward the door, and that locked door flies open. The outer gate of the prison opens up. Peter gets out into the street. The cool breeze hits him. He finally realizes, "I'm not dreaming. I'm really free." Peter said, "Now I know without a doubt that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches" (Acts 4:11). He walks to a house

where he knows the Christians typically gather. Sure enough, they are there and have been praying for Peter. He knocks on the door. Rhoda comes to the door, and she hears Peter's voice. But she's so excited that she forgets to let him in. Instead, she runs back and exclaims, "Peter is at the door!" What do they say? "It must be his angel." It couldn't be Peter; he couldn't possibly have escaped. They could believe Peter's angel was at the door, but they couldn't believe that Peter himself was at the door, rescued by a guardian angel. They've been praying for Peter in this prayer meeting, but they don't believe it when the prayer is actually answered. Finally, they go to the door and open it. Sure enough, it's Peter, rescued by an angel.

There's a sobering aftermath to that story. King Herod, the man who tried to kill Peter, went to give a speech to those of a neighboring land. They desperately needed the king to sell them grain and other products, and they knew they needed to please him. Herod entered the stadium to give his big speech. The historian Josephus says that when Herod entered that stadium, he had put on a specially made robe with silver woven into it. He entered at the exact time when the sun would hit the robe and make the silver shine from him. Herod does Hollywood! His silver-woven robe is glittering, and he starts his speech. The crowd shouts, "It is the voice of a god and not of a man." That's what Herod wanted, and that's what he got. The Bible says, "Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died" (Acts 12:23). If you're inclined to distrust the Bible, keep in mind that a non-Christian Jewish historian described the exact same thing: Herod gave this speech, was praised as a god, and perished in agony. An angel of the Lord struck him down.

Guardians on the flight to Heaven

When we hear of people being rescued by guardian angels, we might wonder, "What about those who didn't get rescued?" James did not get rescued from jail; Herod killed him right before he arrested Peter. An angel rescued Peter in the story we've just heard, but later on, Peter was again locked up in a jail, and he was executed by being crucified upside down. In fact, all the apostles died terrible deaths except for John, who died in exile in his old age. What about them? Where are the guardian angels when people aren't protected from dying?

Not only do angels guard you throughout life and keep you from harm, but they also guard you in death. Jesus made that very clear in his story of the rich man and Lazarus. When Lazarus died, the angels carried him to Abraham's side, to the realm of the blessed (Luke 16:22). Lazarus had lived a miserable life with illness and a lot of poverty and suffering, but the angels escorted him to heaven.

Think for a moment about a man who never died: Elijah. The Bible says, "Suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared ... and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind" (2 Kings 2:11). Heavenly beings whisked Elijah out of this world and into another world. In one sense, that's an exception. That's not how most of us leave this world; we die. Elijah and Enoch are the only two people that we know of who went to heaven without experiencing death. So in one sense, Elijah's journey to heaven is an exception, but in another sense, it's what happens to everybody who belongs to Jesus Christ. God sends the chariots of fire, he sends his angels, and they take you to be with him. If you have someone who died in the Lord, then this is the truth about them: the angels were there to welcome and escort them. Maybe you didn't see them in the hospital, or

maybe a few of you did. But whether or not you see them, they are there, and they take God's people to the realm of the blessed. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Psalm 116:15).

It's a tremendous blessing and comfort that God sends his angels to be our guardians. Those of us with young kids realize what a blessing that is, because sometimes we have kids who make guardian angels work overtime. When our kids are getting into dangerous situations, we parents can get anxious, but it is a great comfort to know that we're not the only ones who are looking out for their safety. The guardian angels are on duty.

When we ourselves are facing challenging circumstances, let's not be so anxious. Instead, let's talk to God about it, and experience the peace of God that surpasses understanding. We're sheltered by the wings of the angels, and we're sheltered by far greater wings: we rest in the shadow of the Almighty; under his wings we find refuge (Psalm 91:1, 4). We have God to guard us, and we have his angels to guard us.

So what?

- Urgency of cleansing through Jesus
- Blessing of access to God's throne
- Purity and security of new creation
- Safe amid dangers and attacks
- Safe journey beyond death
- Awe and thanks to King of angels

Guardian angels guard God's dwelling and access to the tree of life. They also guard God's people as we go through life and on our journey through death. So what?

I've already pointed out the urgency of cleansing through Jesus, the blessing of access to God's throne, and the purity and security of the new creation. Those are important implications of angels guarding God's dwelling and the gates to heaven.

But it's also hugely important to be aware that the guardians angels are guarding God's people right here and right now. We're safe amid dangers and attacks.

This doesn't mean that we should go doing stupid things or taking foolish risks. The verse that we're focusing on today was quoted by none other than the devil himself. He took Jesus to the highest point of the temple and said, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. For it is written: 'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'" Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test'"(Matthew 4:6). So you need to know the whole Bible and apply it rightly. You don't just say, "The angels are going to guard me no matter how stupid and wicked I am." No, don't tempt the Lord your God by taking needless risks.

As we think of the "so what" of guardian angels, we are safe amid dangers and attacks, and we're especially safe from "the destruction of the wicked." Psalm 91 talks about various dangers and

afflictions and plagues and attacks that can come upon you, but then it says, "You will only observe the destruction of the wicked." It seems to be talking about angels unleashing God's judgment, which the angels will do at the end of the world. Angels protect us from many things, but especially from the destruction of the wicked.

Not only do angels keep us safe amid dangers and attacks, but they provide a safe journey beyond death. We're all going to have to take that journey unless Jesus comes first. Some of us have lost dear ones who have taken that journey, but it is a comfort to remember that it's a journey with excellent, angelic escorts and safe arrival. When somebody goes on a journey and you're not going to see them for a while, you may shed a few tears. If you have kids who go off to college somewhere else, or who join the military and go halfway around the world, you may shed a few tears, but it's a great comfort to know that you're going to see them again. So it is with death. We might shed some tears when a dear one goes to the other side of death, even if we know they're accompanied by angels, even if we know they are happy with Jesus. We miss them so we cry, but we don't grieve as those who have no hope because we're going to see them again.

A final "so what" is awe and thanks to the King of angels. When I think of the cherubim, when I think of the guardians, when I read of these mighty supernatural beings in the Bible, it expands my spirit, it expands my mind. I hope it expands yours too. For many of us, that is what we need most. We don't just need little practical pointers on how to do better. We need to grow! We need to get bigger in our capacity to be amazed, to be awestruck by who God is, by the many creatures he has made, and to have a sense of wonder. Holy, holy, holy is Yahweh of hosts! How great he is! How wonderful he is to welcome us into his throne room and to invite us to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

Guardian Angels
Slide Contents
By David Feddes

Psalm 91

¹ He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. ² I will say of the Lord, “He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.”

³ Surely he will save you from the fowler’s snare and from the deadly pestilence. ⁴ He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. ⁵ You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, ⁶ nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday. ⁷ A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. ⁸ You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked.

⁹ If you make the Most High your dwelling—even the Lord, who is my refuge—¹⁰ then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. ¹¹ For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; ¹² they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. ¹³ You will tread upon the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent.

¹⁴ “Because he loves me,” says the Lord, “I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. ¹⁵ He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. ¹⁶ With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation.”

Guardian angels

- **Guard God’s dwelling**
Eden, tabernacle, temple, throne in heaven, New Jerusalem
- **Guard God’s people**
On journey through life and death

Cherubim

Yahweh God sent Adam out from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken. So he drove the man out, and placed cherubim east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming, turning sword to guard the way to the tree of life. (Genesis 3:23-24)

Above the ark were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. (Hebrews 9:5)

Moses heard the voice speaking to him from above the mercy seat that was on the ark of the testimony, from between the two cherubim. (Numbers 7:89)

Throne guards

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel... You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth. (Psalm 80:1)

Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. (Isa 37:16)

Seraphim (Isaiah 6), Cherubim (Ezekiel 1), Living Creatures (Revelation 4-5)

Guards at entrances of New Jerusalem: It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates... Nothing impure will ever enter it. (Rev 21)

Tree of life

To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God... Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. (Revelation 2:7, 22:14)

So what?

- Urgency of cleansing through Jesus
- Blessing of access to God's throne
- Purity and security of new creation

Guardian angels

- **Guard God's dwelling**
Eden, tabernacle, temple, throne in heaven, New Jerusalem
- **Guard God's people**
On journey through life and death

Guardian angels

For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. (Psalm 91:11-12)

God's camp

Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. When Jacob saw them he said, "This is God's camp!" (Gen 32:1-2)

The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them. (Psalm 34:7)

Guardians during our earthly life

Elisha prayed, "Open his eyes, Lord, so that he may see." Then the Lord opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. (2 Kings 6:17)

"Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire? ... Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods." (Daniel 3:24-25)

Daniel said, "My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me." (Daniel 6:22)

Peter said, "Now I know without a doubt that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches." (Acts 4:11)

Guardians on flight to Heaven

The beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. (Luke 16:22)

Suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind. (2 Kings 2:11)

Guardian angels

- **Guard God's dwelling**
Eden, tabernacle, temple, throne in heaven, New Jerusalem
- **Guard God's people**
On journey through life and death

So what?

- Urgency of cleansing through Jesus
- Blessing of access to God's throne
- Purity and security of new creation
- Safe amid dangers and attacks
- Safe journey beyond death
- Awe and thanks to King of angels