

## ANGELOLOGY (23)

**(Angelic Believer Ministry #2)** - Angels may help answer a believer's prayers. Acts 12:5-7

Now the context clearly reveals that “fervent” prayer was being made by the church. Although angels, in this dispensation, do not visibly get believers out of captivity today, there is no doubt that angels still are involved in answering prayers. We have already cited the story of John C. Paton, who, along with his wife, prayed all night and apparently angels were used to help answer the prayer.

Ruth Graham, Billy Graham's wife, is the daughter of Dr. L. Nelson Bell, who was a missionary in Shanghai, China. Dr. Bell worked at a hospital in China, but would purchase gospel tracts and portions of Scripture at a Christian bookstore and pass them out to his patients. Dr. Bell told a remarkable story that perhaps did indicate the presence of an angel.

In 1942, after the Japanese had won the war with China, one morning, at about 9 A.M. a Japanese truck armed with soldiers stopped outside the Christian bookstore. The truck was already half-filled with books it had been confiscating from other book shops. These soldiers were now going to rid this store of its Gospel literature. Dr. Bell was inside the store at the time. He said that as the soldiers were about to enter the bookstore, a neatly dressed Chinese gentleman entered the shop, whom the owner had never seen before. He was a complete stranger. Dr. Bell and the owner of the store started to pray, and the strange man came over to them and encouraged them to keep praying. For two hours the soldiers stood outside the bookstore looking in the window, seemingly unable to enter. After two hours of standing outside the bookstore they intended to destroy, the soldiers got back in their truck and drove away, never to return again. As soon as they drove away, the peaceful looking Chinese man left the store. He never bought anything, he never looked at anything and they never saw him again. Dr. Bell says that as soon as this man left, both he and the store owner had a profound sense of the same thing; they had been in the presence of an angel of God (*Ibid.*, pp. 102-103).

Undoubtedly, angels are still agents used by God in connection with answering the prayers of His people. Although we may not ever even sense their presence, angels are real and do involve themselves in answering prayers. It is not just fanciful speculation to realize that many of our prayers for people for protection or for provisions have been answered by God by using His angels. It naturally stands to reason if God uses everything He created in six days for His purposes, then using angels to help assist in answering the prayers of His people is certainly within the realm of what is biblically revealed.

**(Angelic Believer Ministry #3)** - Angels are involved in the life of every believer.

One question that is often asked concerning angels is whether or not there is such a thing as a “guardian angel”; that is one specific angel assigned to every believer. Naturally, the true answer to such a question will not be found in opinions or speculations of humans, but in the inspired revelation of God.

## ANGELOLOGY (24)

We may observe from Acts 12:15 that the early church did believe that a person did have his own special angel. We may also observe from this text that one of those who sanctioned this belief was “John Mark” (Acts 12:12). John Mark is the man who traveled with Paul on his first missionary journey and ultimately turned back, which greatly angered Paul (Acts 13:13/15:37-41).

John Mark ultimately became a close associate of Paul and Paul wanted to see him before he died (Col. 4:10; Philemon 24; II Tim. 4:11). It is this “John Mark” who wrote the gospel of Mark. The point of all of this background concerning Mark is that he was a very important minister and apparently he sanctioned or held to the belief of a personal guardian angel - one key angel assigned to every single believer. The statement made by Jesus Christ in Matthew 18:10 would certainly lead one to conclude that each person has a guardian angel, but perhaps multiple angels who monitor a person over his or her lifetime. The statement made in Hebrews 1:14 would also lead one to conclude that every believer does have ministering spirits connected to him.

**(Angelic Believer Ministry #4)** - Angels are involved in protecting and giving encouragement to a believer in times of great distress, when that believer is doing the work and will of God. Acts 27:23-24

During this dispensation we would expect that angels would particularly be involved in protecting believers and directing them to passages in God’s Word or principles in God’s Word or to the people of God’s Word so that supernatural comfort and encouragement could be experienced in times of great distress. In the case of the Apostle Paul, an angel was used by God to bring him specific revelatory information about the will of God. Although we do not receive anymore revelatory information, it would stand to reason that angels could be involved in directing certain events and circumstances to help protect and encourage a believer in accomplishing God’s will. For the most part, this encouragement would come from the Word of God. It stands to reason that there could be times when angels would intervene in a very special way to protect or comfort a servant of God. We cite two examples:

Pastor George Gardiner, former pastor of Calvary Church in Grand Rapids and author of the book *Corinthian Catastrophe*, told a story one evening at church of which he had personal knowledge. A minister and his wife decided one afternoon to take a drive in an old automobile that had been restored. The “on-off” switch was located on the passenger side of the car, so to start the car, one had to reach clear across the front dash board and then hit the starter button, which was located near the steering column. As the two were driving in the country, his wife fell sound asleep. He approached a railroad crossing, looked both ways and pushed on the gas. The car was dead. He hit the starter button and nothing happened. At precisely this moment a train, which he had not seen, came roaring through, which shook up the husband to the point that he woke up his wife. He was very thankful the car had stalled. When he looked to discover why the car stalled, he found that the “on-off” switch had been turned off. The man who was sharing this story with Pastor Gardiner said: “Pastor Gardiner, that switch cannot turn itself off because it is hard for me to turn on and off. It was not turned off by my wife because she was sound asleep. It was not turned off by me because I couldn’t reach it. What I want to know is who turned off that switch? Pastor Gardiner said “an angel of God.”

## ANGELOLOGY (25)

Years ago, I was teaching a course on angelology and a woman who was taking the course, Emily Petig, who had been a faithful missionary, told me this story. In the summer of 1986, she agreed to work at a Bible camp in Canada for the entire summer. This woman was a faithful servant of God, very sound in doctrine and mind. She was traveling to the camp and came to a stop sign. All of a sudden, someone knocked on her back window. She immediately hit her brakes and turned to see who was knocking on her window. When she turned, no one was there, but when she turned back around to go again, a car traveling at a very high rate of speed went through the intersection. Emily told me she bowed her head right there and thanked God for the angel who had knocked on her window.

When we are serving God, doing His will and work and are obeying His Word, we may be certain that we are being carefully ministered to by His angels. No believer will ever be under more care than when he is doing the will of God in obedience to the Word of God.

**(Angelic Believer Ministry #5)** - Angels seem to have a special ministry to a believer at death. Luke 16:22

The Bible is very clear to point out that any believer who is privileged to go into the presence of the Lord does so in the presence of angels- I Thessalonians 4:16; Revelation 22:8. We may conclude that angels play a key role in ushering a believer into the presence of God at death.

We do have a graphic account of Stephen's in Acts 7:54-60. In this account, there was not testimony of a visible appearance of angels, but there was immediate sight of the glory of God and of Jesus Christ (Acts 7:55). We may assume that the process of getting a believer's spirit to heaven is aided by angelic work. We know that to be "absent from the body is to be present with the Lord" (II Cor. 5:8). Although angels may be used in the process of getting us into the presence of the Lord, it is the Lord who will be our immediate focal point at our death. In fact, Dr. Chafer was so caught up with this thought that he wrote: "Luke 16:22 asserts that angels transported at death a soul into another sphere; whether this is always the case is pure conjecture" (Vol. 2, p. 24). What Dr. Chafer knew for certain was at the moment of death, the believer is immediately in the presence of the Lord. It is possible that the Lord, Himself, ushers the believer into His own presence. But based on God's revealed Word in Luke 16:22, we may say that a conjecture that assumes angels are used to help in this process is well-founded and biblically based. It is also not beyond the realm of biblical revelation to assume that if the believer was a faithful believer, Jesus Christ actually stands up to honor that believer home (Acts 7:56).

Years ago, I had the privilege of being alone in a hospital room very early in the morning with a dear believer just moments after the medical staff told me she had died. There is no question that I had the sense of a very sacred presence. It was so overwhelming that I literally bowed my head. The husband walked into the room and saw me with my head bowed and I suggested that he stand silent for there was something very solemn taking place. This presence lasted less than five minutes and then it was gone. My belief is we were in the presence of holy angels and other ministers have confirmed that they have had similar experiences.