

Adult Sunday School Class

Objective: Increase understanding of the process of being perfected in the faith.

Opening Prayer: Thank you Father, we pause now to acknowledge your presence..... I thank you that you always hear me. That you never leave me or forsake me and that you are an ever present help. I ask for a special anointing on this lesson plan and the time we will spend together today. Bless both speaker and listener. Open our hearts to receive a fresh revelation from your Spirit. I bind forces that would hinder and welcome the Holy Spirit as our teacher today. In Jesus name!

Read: Hebrews 2 and re-read Hebrews 1:14

Statement: I wanted to begin today with a review of the ministry of angels from chapter 1:14.

Q – Would someone please read verse 14 from chapter 1 and tell us what it means to you?

- What is your vision of what this statement really means?
- I interpret it to mean that one of the duties and responsibilities of the angels is to:
 - Protect,
 - Support &
 - Serve Christians.
- How would you describe the support and protection intended by that statement?
 - Will we be exempt from crisis and disappointment?
 - Will we escape trouble and persecution?
 - How and when will angels intervene in our lives?

Q – Do you recall any scriptural examples of angelic support for believers? - Let's review some.

- Acts 5:17) Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. 18) They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. 19) But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out. 20) “Go, stand in the temple courts,” he said, “and tell the people all about this new life.” 21) At daybreak they entered the temple courts, as they had been told, and began to teach the people. When the high priest and his associates arrived, they called together the Sanhedrin—the full assembly of the elders of Israel—and sent to the jail for the apostles. 22) But on arriving at the jail, the officers did not find them there. So they went back and reported, 23) “We found the jail securely locked, with the guards standing at the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside.” 24) On hearing this report, the captain of the temple guard and the chief priests were at a loss, wondering what this might lead to.....40) His speech persuaded them. They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.
- Acts 12:1) It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. 2) He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. 3) When he saw that this met with approval among the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also..... 6) The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance. 7) Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. “Quick, get up!” he said, and the chains fell off Peter’s wrists. 8) Then the angel said to him, “Put on your clothes and sandals.” And Peter did so. “Wrap your cloak around you and follow me,” the angel told him. 9) Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision. 10) They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him.

- Daniel 6:16) So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions' den. The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!" 17) A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that Daniel's situation might not be changed. 18) Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him. And he could not sleep. 19) At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions' den. 20) When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?" 21) Daniel answered, "May the king live forever! 22) My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight.
- Acts 8: 26) Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." 27) So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means "queen of the Ethiopians"). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, 28) and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. 29) The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it." 30) Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked. 31) "How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. 32) This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading: "He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. 33) In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth." 34) The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?" 35) Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. 36) As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?" 37) Some manuscripts include here *Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." The eunuch answered, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."* 38) And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. 39) When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. 40) Philip, however, appeared at Azotus (approximately 40 miles away) and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.

Q – In addition to these examples are there other scriptural reference to the duties and responsibilities of angels?

- There are, allow me to share a few of my favorites:

- Psalms 91:9) If you say, "The LORD is my refuge," and you make the Most High your dwelling, 10) no harm will overtake 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 on 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 on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. 16) With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation.
- Psalms 103: 20) Praise the LORD, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word. (Some translations say who obey the voice of his word.)

Statement: Allow me to ask a series of questions without discussing the implications or answering at this time.

Q – If the angel delivered Peter from prison in such a miraculous way, why was James and for that matter, John the Baptist, allowed to be killed with the sword while prisoners? - Defer answering.

Q – If the angel delivered the apostles from prison why is it that they were allowed to be flogged? - Defer.

Q – Why was Phillip transported by the angel of the Lord while others, including Paul, were required to use the available transportation of the day? - Defer answering.

Q – If an angel delivered Peter from prison, why wasn't Paul delivered from prison? - Defer answering.

Q – What are the qualifications or requirements for the kind of angelic protection and support mentioned in Psalms 91? - 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. - Defer answering.

Q – What does psalms 103:20 really mean to born-again believers when it says “mighty angels obey the voice of His word” ? - Defer answering.

Q – How do we put this whole subject of angelic support into perspective? - Defer answering.

Q – Who and what determines **if**, **when** and **how** angelic interventions occur?

- God does, in His infinite wisdom and the absolute justice with which He rules over the affairs of this world.
- He alone determines when and if angelic intervention is appropriate.
- His will, His plan and His purposes for the lives of the individuals mentioned are the answers to the angelic intervention questions asked above.
- Paul said we see dimly, as looking through a dark glass but God's vision is without limitation.
- It encompasses all of this life and also includes all of eternity.
- Divine or angelic assistance is not always visible & we may not be aware of it. (2 Kings 6:8-23)

Q – Again, what are the qualifications or requirements for the kind of angelic protection and support mentioned in Psalms 91?

- Verse 1) Whoever 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.
- Verse 9) If you say, “The LORD is my refuge,” and you make the Most High your dwelling, 10) no harm will overtake you, no disaster will come near your tent.
- The scripture doesn't say because He's with you there will not be any trouble.
- It says He is an ever-present help in time of trouble.
- His presence will limit the harm and minimize the effects of disaster.
- You can find rest and know His peace in the midst of the “storms” of this life.
- The short answer to this question of angelic protection is to have a basic faith in God!
- When His disciples were astonished by the fig tree being withered by what Jesus said, He replied “Have faith in God!
- Angelic protection and the presence of God are available to all who believe.
- Angels respond to His bidding and the “voice” of His word.

Q – What does it mean to dwell in the shelter of the Most High?

- It means to rest in His loving and protective care regardless of your current circumstances.
- He does know where you are and perhaps more importantly, why you are there.
- The scripture says he is aware of every sparrow that falls.
 - Matthew 10:29) Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care.
 - Luke 12:6) Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God.
- 7) Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

Q – I don't want to put you on a guilt trip however the answer to these questions can make a real difference in your life in general and your outlook in your current situation.

- Are you dwelling in the shelter of His protection?
- Is the Lord your refuge and dwelling place?
- Do you believe He is an ever-present help in trouble?

- Are you in control or is He in charge of the “storms of life” that surround you?
- If God has not forgotten one sparrow does He not know every detail of your concern?
- I would assert He does and wants to demonstrate His constant care for you and yours.

Q – Again, what does psalms 103:20 really mean to born-again believers?

- It means when we truly believe God's word the things that come out of our mouth will align with it.
- Then we will know that angelic forces are in operation upholding or standing behind the things He has promised to us.
- Are you expressing frustration about the problems you face or does His peace abide in your heart regardless of circumstances?
- Are you worried about the future or are you resting in His promises even though you can't see a viable solution to your situation?
- Are you growing impatient with the progress you're making or trusting in His constant care?
- Do you question the wisdom of the solutions He sends your way, be it doctors, lawyers, managers or Indian chiefs? :-))
- God is with you, He'll never leave you or forsake you and **His word is true!**
- Isaiah 55:8) “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD. 9) “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. 10) As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, 11) so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

Q – What is it that you believe concerning (chapter 2:3b) This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. [To which] 4) God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

- We are saved by God's grace, it has nothing to do with who we are or our good behaviors.
- To all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. (John 1:12)
- We are His children and the sheep of His pasture.
- We can do nothing to make God love us any more or for that matter, any less.
- He cares for you!
- He loves us and is always acting in our best interests.
- He never leaves us or forsakes us and is an ever present help in time of trouble, even when we can't seem to sense His presence or understand the reasons for our circumstances.
- He knows right where “we live”, He knows the thoughts and intent of our hearts.
- God is fair and just, in the most absolute form of these two concepts.
- Who among us can say,
 - God didn't treat us right or
 - Handle our situation correctly or that
 - He could have done a better job?
- Who can say God owes me or is indebted to me?
- God honors our faith.
- The scripture says for without faith it's impossible to please God.

Q - How shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation?

- We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away or
- Allow the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches to choke the word and cause it to be unfruitful in our lives.