

SAFE IN GOD (Ps. 91)

This is a comforting psalm, full of encouragement and promise. While its author is not mentioned, it could possibly be David, but more probably Moses, who also wrote the preceding psalm.

The psalm can be neatly fitted under three headings, - Shelter (v.1-8), Security (v.9-13), Sufficiency (v.14-16) ... **Ps. 91:1 Shelter.** He that dwelleth in the secret place [*the covering, the hiding-place*] of the most High [*El Elyon*] shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty [*El Shaddai*] [LXX, "*He that dwells in the help of the Highest, shall sojourn under the shelter of the God of Heaven*"]. **2** I will say of the Lord [*Jehovah*], He is my refuge and my fortress: my God [*Elohim*]; in him will I trust. **3** Surely he shall deliver [*Heb, He delivers thee ... rather than the future tense, this is an ongoing deliverance, etc*] thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence [*perverse wickedness, cruel calamities*]. **4** He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler [*protection*]. **5** Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror [*gloom*] by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; **6** Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth [*wreaks havoc*] at noonday. **7** A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. **8** Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked [*how the wicked are punished*]. ... **Security.** **9** Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation [*dwelling-place, refuge*]; **10** There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. **11** For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. **12** They shall bear thee up [*carry you*] in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. **13** Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon [*serpent*] shalt thou trample under feet. ... **Sufficiency.** **14** Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver [*rescue*] him: I will set him on high [*raise him up*], because he hath known [*Heb. yada*] my name [*shem, name, glory*]. **15** He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. **16** With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.

The emphasis in our present study is to how this psalm relates to the Messiah, **Ps. 91:11** For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. **12** They shall bear thee up [*carry you*] in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

In Matthew we read, **Mt. 4:5** Then the devil taketh him [*Jesus*] up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, **6** And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. ... And in Luke we read, **Lk. 4:9** And he [*Satan*] brought him [*Jesus*] to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: **10** For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee: **11** And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Satan begins with an ‘If’ ... as *if* there was any doubt about Jesus being the Son of God. Satan’s nature would try to deny the Lord’s Sonship. He knows he’s wrong, - such is his depravity, - but it doesn’t stop him trying to refute it ... However, Satan knew Jesus was the Son of God ... and Jesus knew He was the Son of God, but, - such is Satan’s crookedness, - it didn’t prevent him from introducing the ‘if’.

So, Satan and Jesus are standing on the high pinnacle belonging to the temple in Jerusalem, and he is trying to get Jesus to jump off to prove a point. ... In this, the second of the three temptations, there are *two* sins the devil is dangling in front of Jesus. Firstly, by using the ‘if’, he is *daring* Jesus to doubt God’s Word ... to tempt Him, to test Him ... do you believe it or not?! He is goading the Author! He is trying to get the Writer of the Book to discredit His own word. The ultimate deceiver, - Satan, - is trying to entrap Jesus to facilitate deception. ... That is the devil’s first sin.

His second sin is to try and get Jesus to *presume* on God ... Jesus, You can do whatever you like, and get away with it! But ... why would Jesus think it necessary to jump off the pinnacle of the high tower to prove God? ... What kind of logic is that?! ... It would be the same if we went down to the harbour, stood at the very end of it, looked up, and prayed, “Lord, I can’t swim, but I want to prove that if I jump in You will not let me drown” ... What is the point of such a stupid action? Would God lead you to do such a silly thing? Surely not ... Then there is no reason whatsoever for Jesus to jump off a high tower. It is something only the devil would initiate for his own malicious purposes.

... The devil is quoting Scripture ... How can he go wrong when he is quoting from God’s infallible, inspired, and inerrant Word? ... From the Biblical perspective, closely examine what God actually said in Ps. 91, and how Satan quoted Him, **Mt. 4:6** for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. ... **Lk. 4:10** For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee: **11** And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Psalm 91 says, **11** For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee *in all thy ways*. **12** They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. ... Satan left out a very important phrase, *in all thy ways*. ... Jesus came to earth to do the will of His Father (**Jn. 6:38** For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me), and the will of His Father directed all His ways. ... If Jesus had jumped off that pinnacle in front of all the people in the temple area and landed on His feet without a scratch, he would have been an instant sensation, but that was not the will of His Father, for the will of His Father was that **Is. 53:2** he hath no form nor

comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. ... He wasn't to be the world's greatest stuntman ... no glamour, no attraction.

King Solomon wrote, **Prov. 3:6** In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. ... But those were the words Satan omitted to say, 'in all thy ways' ... and where the Lord does not lead us, we dare not wander or stray.

The devil is infamous for perverting and polluting God's Word, - he does it today and he has caused a host of great deceptions, many of them religious and spiritual. Jesus, though, is the example of how we must *use* God's Word, - and *not abuse* it, - for it **II Tim. 3:16** is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: **17** That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. It is **Ps. 119:105** a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. ... If we would stray from God's Word, we would inevitably stray from God. When we trust His Word though, it becomes as a shelter, and we are securely safe in His all-sufficient care and keeping ... and, therefore, *these* two verses are the great promise to the believer, **Ps. 91:11** For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. **12** They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Addendum. Do we have guardian angels?

- **Mt. 18:10** Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones [*children, v.2-5*]; for I say unto you [*emphatic*], That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.
- An angel protected Daniel in the den of lions (**Dan. 6:20-23**, **22** My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me)
- Angels protected Elisha, **II Kings 6:13** And he said, Go and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, he is in Dothan. **14** Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about. **15** And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? **16** And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. **17** And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.
- Angels reveal information, **Acts 1:11** And there appeared unto him [*Zacharias*] an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. **12** And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. **13** But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias ... **Acts 7:52** Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: **53** Who have received the law by the disposition of [*being delivered*] angels, and have not kept it.

- Angels guide, **Mt. 1:19** Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. **20** But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife ... **Acts 8:26** And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.
- Angels provide for, **Gen. 21:17** And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is. **18** Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation. **19** And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink ... **I Kings 19:5** And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat. **6** And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. **7** And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee.
- Angels minister to believers, **Heb. 1:14** Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

Those are some of the well-known examples in Scripture, *but* does each Christian have an angel? ... In the Old Testament, the nation of Israel had the archangel (Michael) assigned to it (Dan. 10:21; 12:1), but Scripture nowhere specifically states an angel is *permanently* “assigned” to an individual.

Mt. 18:10 Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. This seems to suggest believers are served by angels in general in that these angels are pictured as *always* watching the face of God so as to hear His command to them to help a believer when it is needed, - they are at His ‘beck and call’ to minister to the Christian. The angels in this passage do not seem to be guarding a person, - or specific people, - on a long-term capacity, so much as being attentive to the Father in heaven. That makes more sense because we need to be careful we don’t make the angels into something like the Roman Catholic ‘saints’ who are asked to ‘watch over and pray’ for us. ... In other words, since only God is omniscient and sees every believer at every moment, *He* alone knows when one of us needs the intervention of an angel, and He sends one for that occasion. Since they are continually seeing His face, the angels are at His disposal to help one of His “little ones” [‘*little ones/children*’ can also be a reference for believers, e.g. **Jn. 13:33** Little children, yet a little while I am with you ... **Gal. 4:19** My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you ... **I Jn. 2:1,12,13,18,28; 3:7,18; 4:4** My little children/].

Alexander Peden was one of the Covenanters leading a secret meeting, a conventicle in the outlying countryside. Suddenly, one of the watchmen shouted to him, "The soldiers are coming!" Immediately, he fell on his knees and cried out in prayer, "O Lord, cover old Sandy and his flock with the shadow of Thy wing". Then a thick mist came down and blanketed them from view, and the soldiers continued on their way, not having seen or found God's people.

Scripture does not emphatically teach, - one way or the other, - each believer has a guardian angel, but God *does* use angels in ministering to us. ... Since we have an omniscient, omnipotent, all-loving God present with us all the time, does it really matter whether or not there is a finite guardian angel protecting us?