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Psalm 91

“Angels on Assignment”

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In Psalm 91, we read about how God dispatches angels on our behalf – to protect us and guard us from harm. Much has been written and discussed about angels over the centuries. Many people today, including people who would not profess to be a Christian, have a fascination with angels. We even have cakes and baseball teams named after them! But exactly who are angels? What are their duties? Angels are mentioned more than 300 times in the Bible and they present sometimes as warriors and sometimes as ordinary people. In this message Pastor Gary will help us learn more about angels regarding who they are and what God has assigned them to do.

Historical Background

1. “This psalm is one of the greatest possessions of the saints.” – G. Campbell Morgan¹
2. “In the whole collection there is not a more cheering psalm...” – Charles Haddon Spurgeon²
3. Not much is known about Psalm 91 regarding the author, but it’s clear that this psalm is about God’s protection, comfort, and care.
 - a. This psalm is included among the 50 psalms that are referred to as “the orphan psalms,” because there is no background, subtitle, or author’s name listed.

¹ *Exposition of the Whole Bible* by G. Campbell Morgan – https://books.google.com/books?id=v3RMAwAAQBAJ&pg=PA255&lpg=PA255&dq=g.+campbell+morgan+-+psalm+91+one+of+the+greatest+possessions+of+the+saints&source=bl&ots=jpNzqFf4Jb&sig=ormoUfJhBCWaqdcQ7hNjO5PmawM&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewjK1_t9fbTAhXJ64MKHdwLA5cQ6AEIMTAC#v=onepage&q=g.%20campbell%20morgan%20-%20psalm%2091%20one%20of%20the%20greatest%20possessions%20of%20the%20saints&f=false

² *The Treasury of David* by Charles Haddon Spurgeon – <http://www.spurgeon.org/treasury/ps091.php>

4. The writer portrays God like a mother bird that protects its young.
 - a. [Psalm 91:4](#) - *“He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.”*
5. Jesus, when he lamented over Jerusalem, spoke of himself in the same way.
 - a. [Matthew 23:37](#) - *“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.”*
6. Pastor Gary said: “The Bible presents God as masculine... He is God the Father. But, there is this maternal, nurturing aspect to the character of God, too. Where do you think that mom’s get that? They get it from God. That is God-given... I want you to understand in the picture of how God presents in some passages, like what I’ve just read... like a mother hen [loves and protects] her little chicks... Moms... don’t undervalue your maternal, caring nature in loving and encouraging and protecting your children, because when you do that, you are actually representing Christ to them.”
7. We learn from this psalm that God dispatches angels to protect us!
 - a. [Psalm 91:11-12](#) - *“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.”*

The Description Of Angels

8. Angels are seen as being either messengers or warriors.
9. Angels are seen as being either those who worship God or those who are in rebellion against God.
10. Angels sometimes appear in splendor and sometimes they appear to people in the form of ordinary human beings.
11. Pastor Gary said: “Our idea and our concept of angels is vast, and unfortunately, there is a lot of misinformation about angels. So much so, that Mormonism and Islam are founded on erroneous understandings of angels. For example, when it comes to Mormonism, in 1823, when Joseph Smith was 17 years of age, he said that an angel appeared to him. An angel by the name of Moroni. And, by the way, [Moroni] is not mentioned in the Bible... [He said] Moroni appeared to him and told him that the ancient Hebrews occupied America at one time, and that they actually recorded on golden tablets sacred texts in ancient Egyptian

language, and that the [tablets] were hidden in the hills of New York... So, based on this vision or this appearance of an angel, so says Joseph Smith, four years later, he [said that he found] golden tablets in the hills of Palmyra, New York. No one has ever seen the golden tablets outside of Joseph Smith... And out of that he [said] that he got a special stone, called a seer stone, that had magical powers that helped him as he put it over the Egyptian language... helped him to translate it into English... Out of that came the Book of Mormon. And it was all inspired because he said that he had an encounter with this angel named Moroni... Islam [is] very similar. Mohammed, when he was four years of age - roughly 610AD - [was] spending time in a cave in Hira, which is [in] Saudi Arabia... [He was told] the angel Gabriel appeared to him. The Koran has one author [and that is] Mohammed. But Mohammed was illiterate, he could not read or write. [Mohammed said] he received a vision and he then dictated the vision to scribes who wrote it in perfect Arabic... But at first, Mohammed said that the visions he received were hallucinations... Then he said that the visions he received were actually the inspiration of jinn. Jinn [is an] Arabic [name] for demons. Other people said to him... it was the angel Gabriel who appeared to you... The angel Gabriel is mentioned in the Bible, but why is it that I say that Mormonism and Islam [are] founded on the erroneous view of angels? [It's] because Paul makes it clear in the Bible, in [Galatians 1:8](#): *'But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!'*"

12. The word "angel" in Greek is angelos, which means, "messenger."
13. Angels are "ministering spirits."
 - a. [Hebrews 1:14](#) - *"Are not all ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?"*
14. Angels are not glorified human beings, and they neither marry nor reproduce like humans.
 - a. [Matthew 22:30](#) - *"At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven."*
 - b. We do not start out as angels in heaven and then come to earth to be born, and when we die we don't go to heaven and become an angel.
 - c. Human beings are distinct from angelic beings.
15. Angels are immortal but not eternal since God created them.
 - a. [Psalm 148:2, 5](#) - *"Praise him all his angels, praise him, all his heavenly hosts... Let them praise the name of the LORD, for he commanded and they were created."*

16. We know that God created angels before he created the heavens and the earth, because they were present with singing and rejoicing when he spoke the world into existence.
- Job 38:4-7** - *“Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation? Tell me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone - while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?”*
17. Angels who once rebelled against God are known as fallen angels or demons.
- Jude 6** - *“And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home - these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.”*
 - 2 Peter 2:4** - *“For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment...”*
18. All angels in the Bible are presented as being masculine.
19. The Bible doesn’t tell us how many angels exist, but it’s clear that angels are very numerous:
- Hebrews 12:22** - *“But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly...”*
 - Matthew 26:53** - *“Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions [12 x 6,000 = 72,000] of angels?”*
 - Daniel 7:10b** - *“Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand [100 million] stood before him.”*
20. Only three angels are named in the Bible:
- Gabriel is the messenger angel.
 - Michael is the archangel.
 - Lucifer is the fallen angel otherwise known as Satan.
21. There are different kinds of angels according to their differing roles, ranks, and duties:
- Seraphim ³
 - Cherubim are seen in the Bible as angels that guard sacred things. ⁴
 - Michael is the only archangel mentioned in the Bible. ⁵

³ https://www.blueletterbible.org/faq/don_stewart/don_stewart_31.cfm

⁴ https://www.blueletterbible.org/faq/don_stewart/don_stewart_30.cfm

⁵ https://www.blueletterbible.org/faq/don_stewart/don_stewart_24.cfm

22. Angels are not to be worshiped.
- [Revelation 22:8-9](#) - *"I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I had heard and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me. But he said to me, 'Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers the prophets and of all who keep the words of this book. Worship God!' "*
23. In [Genesis 18](#), we read an account of angels who came in human appearance.
24. Today, *"some people have entertained angels without knowing it."*
- [Hebrews 13:2](#) - *"Do not forget to entertain strangers, for in so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it."*

The Duties Of Angels

25. Worship God
- [Isaiah 6:1-3](#) - *"In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings 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 the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.' "*
26. Execute God's Judgment
- [2 Kings 19](#)
 - [2 Samuel 24:1-17](#)
 - [Exodus 12:1-30](#)
27. Deliver Messages To People
- [Luke 1:5-25](#)
 - [Luke 1:26-38](#)
28. Strengthen And Encourage People
- [Matthew 4:1-11](#)
 - [Acts 5:17-42](#)
 - [Acts 27:13-26](#)
29. Care For People At Time Of Death
- [Luke 16:22](#) - *"The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side..."*
 - Pastor Gary said: "I believe you can extrapolate... [that] when a Believer dies, God is true to his word that he will never leave us nor forsake us;

even dispatching angels to escort us from this life to the presence of God... So that even in death we are not alone.”

30. Protect And Guard People

- a. **Psalm 91:11-12** - *“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.”*
- b. We read in **Luke 4:9-12**, that Satan used Scripture as part of his temptation of Christ.
- c. Angels rescued Daniel when he was thrust into the lions’ den.
 - i. **Daniel 6:22**: *“My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me...”*
- d. The Bible tells us that we have guardian angels.
 - i. **Matthew 18:10b** - *“For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.”*
- e. Pastor Gary shared a remarkable example of the way angels protected and saved the lives of missionaries, Rev. John G. and Mrs. Paton, in the New Hebrides Islands, when they were in fear for their lives. ⁶
- f. **Psalm 91:14-16** - *“ ‘Because he loves me,’ says the LORD, ‘I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation.’ ”*

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read **Psalm 91** to provide the foundation for this study.
3. What are some of the indicators in this psalm that would help you see the reason why many refer to Psalm 91 as “The Soldier’s Psalm”?
4. Spend time talking about the remarks Pastor Gary made concerning Mormonism and Islam. (See #11 above)
5. Provide an overview of Pastor Gary’s comments about angels, and allow the people in your group to talk about their understanding of angels. (See #6 through #10, and #12 through #23 above)

⁶ *Angels: God’s Secret Agents* by Billy Graham. <http://walkwithgodtoday.com/2011/06/27/angels-are-they-for-real/>

6. Read and discuss the six duties of angels in Pastor Gary's outline.
7. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences about times when they witnessed the ministry of angels at the time of death. (See #29 above)
8. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences about times when they believe they were guarded/protected by angels. (See #30 above)
9. Close your time in prayer as the Holy Spirit leads.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).