

Alton Baptist Church e-Service 9th August 2020

God's angels are awesome

Welcome to another of our e-Services and we hope you will be greatly blessed, as I have been during the preparation, in the way our Lord leads and guides us all.

To-day's topic: under the banner of "Do not be afraid" we look at "God's angels are awesome".

Opening Prayer

O Lord we ask you to lead us with open minds and hearts as we look at your scriptures whilst in our homes and yet connected together by not only our manmade internet but your everlasting interconnection through The Holy Spirit that predates our modern technology. That we will know of your presence and for your angels to look after us. That we have the health and strength and desire to meet virtually together.

Our first hymn is acknowledging the way your hand guides us.

1st hymn

Thy hand, O God, has guided

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KmMQTcyLvRc>

Reading for today

Daniel 10: 5 – 19 *Daniel's vision of a man*

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⁵ I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen,

⁷ I, Daniel, was the only one who saw the vision; those who were with me did not see it, but such terror overwhelmed them that they fled and hid themselves.

⁸ So I was left alone, gazing at this great vision; I had no strength left, my face turned deathly pale and I was helpless. ⁹ Then I heard him speaking, and as I listened to him, I fell into a deep sleep, my face to the ground.

¹⁰ A hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. ¹¹ He said, 'Daniel, you who are highly esteemed, carefully consider the words I am about to speak to you, and stand up, for I have now been sent to you.' And when he said this to me, I stood up trembling.

¹² Then he continued, **Do not be afraid**, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your

God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. ¹³ But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. ¹⁴ Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come.'

¹⁵ While he was saying this to me, I bowed with my face towards the ground and was speechless. ¹⁶ Then one who looked like a man touched my lips, and I opened my mouth and began to speak. I said to the one standing before me, 'I am overcome with anguish because of the vision, my lord, and I feel very weak. ¹⁷ How can I, your servant, talk with you, my lord? My strength is gone, and I can hardly breathe.'

¹⁸ **Again the one who looked like a man touched me and gave me strength.** ¹⁹ **'Do not be afraid, you who are highly esteemed,' he said. 'Peace! Be strong now; be strong.'**

When he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, 'Speak, my lord, since you have given me strength.'

Our second hymn is a reminder to listen for Jesus speaking to guide us

2nd hymn

Master, speak! Thy servant heareth,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=miWHJKLnh7Y&list=RDmiWHJKLnh7Y>

In this reading from Psalms we see confirmation of Angels who will do the guarding and ensure we do not stumble. Again, a longish reading; it is full of promises of how the faithful will be protected and looked after.

Psalm 91

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.'

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 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 honour him.

¹⁶ With long life I will satisfy him
and show him my salvation.'

Intercessory Prayers

We should pray for Lebanon and in particular, Beirut; that was devastated in the explosion. For supplies, food soon runs out (we all know the feeling and we were not devastated by an explosion!), water and the usual essential services. Hospitals overwhelmed (again we can have empathy with them). {[We in the HSE were constantly facing unsafe storage of chemicals; the story of our life.] (You would be mistaken if you thought our courts were always on our side! 99% agreed with us.)}

Barnabas Fund has written asking for prayers for the bereaved and relief for the survivors.

We know three people so affected. Our next-door neighbours Angie (Methodist Church) and Dick's son Simon and family, (his wife, Kam (Sri Lankan) and Maya their daughter) live in central Beirut. Their flat's windows' glass has all been blown out and window frames damaged. (Know the feeling - V2 damage 3.16 am 18 December 1944, South Woodford.) They are shocked but so called unharmed. He has and works for International Aid Agencies and their offices have been destroyed; being near the warehouse. None of the staff were killed.

Talking about hospitals being overwhelmed. We need to pray for those in our country who have not sought help or have had delayed treatment due to covid19 that their treatment will now be forthcoming. One medic predicted more deaths from untreated non-Covid19 causes than from

Covid19; because hospitals virtually stopped treating non-covid19 cases. Pray also for a clear policy on this.

Notices

Robin and I will tomorrow be completing a 15-page Risk Assessment in preparation of our meeting together in God's Sanctuary.

Our third hymn is a reminder of hearing the voice of Jesus speaking to us.

3rd hymn

I heard the voice of Jesus say

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XUVCpF8-VuE>

Let us look at His word. What do these readings have to say to us? One we must never be afraid of God's actions and Two He has our best interests at heart. Many of us can give testimony to this.

On Thursday past, ten of us ABCers were able to meet in Jo and my garden where we were blessed with a gorgeous sunny afternoon; the earlier rain had gone. Graham led us in a short study in which he reminded us of how God looks after us. How appropriate as that is what we are focussing on today. More precisely at the way His angels are used. We often do not recognise "Angels Unawares" as they look after us and guide us on our walk with our Lord. They come in different guises.

I agree with Robin's title for today that "God's ANGELS" are AWESOME, they certainly are! They are always all around us. Perhaps, we can witness to their presence, but perhaps not. That maybe because you have not recognised them. In my life angels have been there at each of life's road junctions, directing the way to take. Perhaps a railway analogy might be better as it is the signalman/woman moving the points who directs the path of the train; not the driver. Perhaps at another time I might be able to speak in greater detail about the following events in my life to illustrate how great is God's timing and action. I have highlighted in red each time an angel **A** guided.

My parents in 1951 were about to buy a house in Harrow, but on the night before signing, solicitor **A** friends at a dinner dissuaded them from doing so; and the next week a house became available in Hayes as a colleague **A** was moving. Once there and I had passed the 13+ exam I obtained a place at Southall Technical School, **A** one of the few very functional Techs. At the end of which the Headmaster **A** showed me a list of engineering firms and I chose where I wanted to work. No interview - just turn up on start day. [How many people have ever been so blessed?! I was

assured a job for life of my choosing. Unbelievable in today's uncertain world.] After qualifying I became a designer **A**. The firm decided to move to Andover, and on the day before they signed the contract to move, the firm **A** next door announced they were moving. So that site was examined and when found unsuitable, we went to Essex. Where after one year they made all but two of us redundant! **A** Another guardian angel. The church we attended appointed me as their rep on the local Community Association Council **A** and at my second meeting I was handed an application form to be their Secretary and Warden of the Centre; **A** which job I obtained. [Why was I chosen?! No other candidates. We had been in town only a few weeks and I had barely spoken at the meetings or to those who ran the Association.] I went from sitting in the back row to the top place at the next meeting! As a result of the two jobs and other work I was able to join the Civil Service **A** as I described in my previous eService, and on promotion to their Basingstoke office. In a six-month window whilst the CS trialled a new system of payment for moving made Alton **A** the preferred town. So, we were able to provide within a few months Camberley with a GB Captain and we were able to ensure ABC's continuance.

Of course, the sceptics would argue that the above is just life's chance behaviour and we could all tell a similar story, after all I am doing it from hindsight and that is easy to fit the angels into my life. Well perhaps so, but our reading does talk about angels looking after us and there are 96 mentions of the word angel in the bible plus all the others stories such as our one in Daniel when that word is not used but clearly the person is an angel. God's word clearly makes clear Angels exist and their purpose; so, our lives cannot be devoid of them. That would make God a deceiver for promising one thing and then not providing.

We must trust our angels to lead us on the path our Lord would have us walk and not to be afraid. Of course, we have a free choice to go our own way, but as with my life God through His angels have clearly guided by showing me and Jo the way forward.

Of course, my story seems a charmed life and you will no doubt be raging at God for all the problems he has apparently thrown in your way. Some of the junctures I have described have been ruptures in our life and a way we would not have chosen.

All three of my jobs were walks into the unknown and in each I have been able to demonstrate hopefully a Christian life and principles. At one time in the early 70's our Factory Inspectorate Division of some 50 inspectors comprised an unbelievable 30% practising Christians! That is another story! How has our life been shaped and guided by God's Angels? Do not be afraid; but trust!

Our final hymn is to remind us that Jesus and the Holy Trinity are our Shepherd.

4th Hymn

The Lord is my shepherd

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pN4tPkX0MG0>

Closing Prayer

We thank you that we have been able to look and be encouraged on our walk with you and we now ask a blessing on us that you will keep and guide our path in the coming days. That we will recognise your guardian angels looking over us.