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## Guarded by Angels

*Acts 12:1-17*

Several years ago my mother visited a Christian friend of hers who was hospitalized in the intensive care unit. Her friend had been in a serious car accident and was not expected to live. When my mother came into the room one evening, her friend said, "Mary, I'm going to be okay. An angel has been sitting at the foot of my bed all day."

**GROUP DISCUSSION.** Describe a time when you or someone you know was protected from harm in a remarkable way.

**PERSONAL REFLECTION.** How would you have responded to a person who claimed that an angel had guarded her bedside? Think of a time when you were skeptical of such a claim. Then think of a time when you were more open to that kind of spiritual intervention.

One of the most wonderful ministries of angels is their protective care over believers in Jesus Christ. Usually that care is

exercised in quiet, almost unnoticeable ways, but sometimes it can be astonishing. The apostle Peter learned to appreciate the protection of angels—on his way out of a locked prison! *Read Acts 12:1-17.*

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1. What indications can you find in the text that Peter was calm even when he was under arrest?

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2. What thoughts might have crossed Peter's mind when he was awakened by an angel (vv. 6-7)?

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3. What do the angel's actions tell you about the nature and ministry of angels (vv. 6-11)?

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4. Why did God send an angel—a personal being—to lead Peter out rather than just instantly removing him from the prison?

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5. Men and women just as faithful to God as Peter have been

arrested and have died in prison. God allowed James to be executed (v. 2) but rescued Peter. Why doesn't God *always* deliver his people?

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6. Twice we are told that the Christians were praying for Peter (vv. 5, 12). If a Christian is in danger or in trouble, should that Christian (or his friends) ask God to send an angel for deliverance or protection? Explain your answer.

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7. What strikes you as unusual about the response of the Christians who were praying when Peter appeared at the gate of Mary's house (vv. 12-17)?

How do you think Peter felt as he stood at the gate?

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8. Based on our study of angels so far, do you think all Christians have guardian angels? Why or why not?

9. These Christians obviously were not expecting God to work like he did. In what ways do we “limit” God when we ask him to work in a particular situation?

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10. How would you like for this study to expand or change your prayer life?

*Thank God for his protective care over you—particularly through his holy angels.*

**Now or Later**

Psalm 91:9-13 is a general promise to God’s people of angelic protection. Read that passage carefully. What statements in these verses indicate that you and I can claim the promises of angelic care even today?