

**God With Us**

## A Study of Matthew: "Going After the One"

## Matthew 18:10-14

"See that you do not despise on of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my father who is in heaven." (Matthew 18:10)

**I. Everyone Matters to God**

- a. The temptation for the *spiritually serious* is to look down on half-hearted Christians. Do you remember the parable of the soils? Half-hearted represented the first three soils.
- b. "Little ones" are the *weak Christians* not non-Christians. Why should we care about half-in and half-out Christians?
- c. Jesus emphasized that it is not a group that is important, but every single "one" is to be respected.
- d. Why do some stray from the community of faith?
- e. To "despise" is the opposite of "welcome" (v.5). We should not despise who the Lord respects or we run the risk of being *Prodigal son's* older brother.
- f. Where is verse 11 (*For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost*)?
  1. *Textual criticism* has determined that verse 11 should not exist in Matthew 18 since it does not appear in the oldest and best manuscripts. There are 24,633 N.T. Greek manuscripts.
  2. The Bible is very accurate and unique! The Bible is 99.8% accurate and no doctrines are affected.
  3. There is no other ancient book in existence with so many copies and with so little error.

**II. The Angels Have Charge Over You**

- a. Those who might easily be despised on earth are represented in heaven by angels who have privileged access to God.
- b. Jesus is speaking to His disciples, those who would become leaders in the community, about relationships within His church. Do not the count out the ones who wander!
- c. We see that angels have special ministry on earth among God's people. *Their angels always see the face of My Father.* (Read Psalm 91:11; Heb 1:14)
- d. Angels are messengers of God. The word "their" conveys the idea of possession.
- e. These *personally assigned angels* are constantly in touch with the Father (*His face*) in heaven.
- f. Heb 1:14 talks of angels "serving" God's people, but without specifying any individual connection.

**III. Practical Application of the Text**

- a. This parable presents a unique image to demonstrate that God will search for us when we stray outside the fold. The one stray believer is as important as the 99 faithful members.
- b. The narrative instructs the church that if one member of our faith community is in spiritual danger, action must be taken to "win" them back.
- c. The value of the "one sheep" should remind us how important it is for us to guard our relations with other members of His kingdom.
- d. Has the Church unwittingly worked against the Lord to bring back wandering sheep?
- e. If the Father has searched for the sheep, and the angels guard the *straying ones* of the kingdom, then we should do our part to protect and warn them.
- f. Lost sheep ministry: visitation; *Stephen* ministry; Family ministry; Care, Small, and Cell groups; Congregational Care.