

# ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS

**September 29 2021**

Daniel 10:10-14, 12:1-3

Revelation 12:7-12

Luke 10:17-20

## ***Standing...***

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

The colors are white.

There's a depiction of an angel on the front of your bulletin,  
and our hymns, our prayers, and our readings speak of angels,  
demons, and war.

It's the Feast of St. Michael and All Angels,  
where we pause to think about this whole invisible world  
that the Bible reveals to be swirling around us non-stop.

Let us pray. O Lord of hosts, we render unto You eternal praise and thanks for Your ministering spirits, who minister unto those who are and shall be heirs of salvation. Let Your Church, our country and our homes be under the protection of Your holy angels so that the enemy can make no inroad upon us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## ***Sitting***

Angels are created beings—not eternal as in the same sense that God is eternal.

They are ministers, or servants of God. But unlike us,  
they are incorporeal beings that dwell in a realm  
that our human eyes ordinarily cannot perceive.

From the Nicene Creed we have this brief confession  
that God the Father Almighty is the Creator of all things:  
*visible and invisible* (which is referring to angels).

It's those spirit beings whom we cannot see,  
but are very much a part of our world.

From our Old Testament reading, it appears in some sense that the nations of the world,  
at the time of Daniel have both angelic allies and demonic enemies...  
and there's some kind of war going on that we only get a glimpse into.

The message to Daniel is, God has not left you alone.  
 Though the angels scare the daylights out of you when they show up and are seen,  
     because of the sinfulness of man, good angels are fighting for you—  
         they are marshal beings, who are at war.  
             And that battle has been going on for ages,  
                 a battle that will continue until the culmination of all things.

Now folks, I can't make heads or tails out of human warfare,  
     so when it comes to angelic warfare,  
         I'm just glad the Lord reveals this to us and I'm even more glad  
             that these mighty beings are on our side.

In the account from Luke we have,  
 the 72 that Jesus sent out to bring good news of the kingdom, to heal and forgive.  
     They come back to Jesus and are bewildered that  
         demons are subject to them in Jesus' strong Name.  
             Jesus rejoices with the disciples—  
                 telling them that as they went forth speaking His Word,  
                     speaking His promises,  
                     driving the evil angels back and out of people's lives,  
                     He was watching the whole time.  
                     And what Jesus saw was nothing less  
                         than Satan falling out of heaven  
                             like lightning.  
                             Unable to stand  
                                 as the accuser  
                                 of the brethren anymore.  
                                 It's fascinating.

An alternate reading for today is from Matthew 18. This is how it ends...

*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. 11 For the Son of man came to save that which was lost.*

The Lord Jesus makes two assertions as He finishes His teaching about  
     being converted and becoming as little children.

The first is that,  
     *"in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."*

The second is,

*"For the Son of Man came to save that which was lost."*

The word "for" is conjunctive,

because the second sentence expands on the first.

Our Lord teaches us that in some way His coming to save the lost  
is related to the angels in heaven  
who behold the face of God the Father.

So, clearly, there is a heaven.

And God the Father is in the midst of that heaven,  
or better said, where God is, there is heaven.

And the God who fills heaven can be seen.

He has a face.

And that face,

that Beatific Vision,

that blessed countenance,

is beheld by the angels in an unending way.

So, there is a God.

There is a heaven.

And in that heaven there are angels.

As I mentioned earlier, angels are created beings,

spoken into being during the six 24-hour days of Creation.

But, not all the created angels are in heaven.

Some were cast out, our ancient foe being one of them.

For he desired, in his pride, to be like God.

But the holy angels, the sinless, heavenly angels,  
the God of heaven

*"...makes His angel spirits,  
and His ministers a flame of fire."*

This means they do God's will as He wills it,

doing so first, fast and with a happy face.

This is how my wife and I wanted our children to respond to us,  
but they never fully learned that lesson.

For when we call them...

they are rarely first,

rarely fast and

rarely came with a happy face.  
 But the angels always do,  
 because they are without sin.

And included in their work is their ministry to the little ones.  
 Angels have little ones,  
 which can also be said: the little ones have angels.

While we are children, God assigns our angels to us, as Christ tells us.  
 When we grow older and go our own way,  
 that is, walk in the ways of our calling,  
 God assigns angels to us as well (Psalm 91:11-12).  
 When we sleep, the angels watch and protect us against the devil.  
 When we die, they carry our soul to Abraham's bosom (Luke 16:22).  
 Their protection is ours throughout our lives.

Imagine that—we who were lost,  
 we who the Son of Man came to save,  
 currently enjoy the ministry of the angels.  
 It's a mark of our salvation, one of the many good gifts,  
 given to us, by the God who has saved us.

This truth of course, is the foundation for our evening and morning prayer,  
*"...let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me."*  
 Luther was mindful for this need for protection and  
 mindful of the means which God provides that protection.  
 So he wisely planted this consciousness of angels  
 inside little Lutheran boys and girls with these prayers  
 teaching to stop and remember  
 we've got angels watching over us.

St. Paul writes that those angels, the holy angels,  
 are around and among us in the Divine Service.

When we gather to hear the Word of God and receive Christ,  
 Christ preached, and Christ in bread and wine, the angels are with us,  
 because their Lord is with us—with us now.  
 Thus, here we receive a little taste of heaven.  
 And we confess this to be true as we you hear,

*"Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify Your Holy Name, evermore praising Thee and saying "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth, heaven and earth are full of Your glory."*

Tonight, as we gather, we hear and make that same confession,  
and we partake of that same glory,  
the holy angels are as much a part of our worship  
as the total number of us gathered here tonight,  
even though they aren't included in our  
weekly attendance figures.

And among that heavenly host, among the holy angels,  
there with the cherubim and seraphim,  
there are two angels named, "archangels"—  
that being Gabriel and Michael.  
The Apocrypha adds a third angel to the rank of archangel,  
that being Raphael.

The name Gabriel in Hebrew means "mighty man of God."  
It is only fitting that the highest angel came to announce the greatest of all messages,  
namely, the conception of God the Son in the womb of the Virgin.

The name Michael in Hebrew means "Who is like unto God?"  
His name is a question.  
A question is answered as the Archangel Michael  
brought divine strength to the Daniel in captivity—  
He was the One like the Son of Man  
whom Daniel calls "Lord,"  
who said "Peace to you" and loosed the prophet's lips.

That question is answered as the archangel disputes with the devil  
over the body of Moses and is victorious simply by saying,  
"The Lord rebuke you."

That question is answered again as St. John reveals the war in heaven  
in the book of Revelation, where Michael and his angels fought with the dragon,  
and the dragon and his angels fought.  
No one is like unto God. Thus, the devil and his angels  
could not prevail. They were cast to earth,  
which is still the realm of the dragon.

Then that loud celestial voice proclaimed victory:

*"Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony."*

So, in the victory of Michael the power of Christ comes.

Who is like unto God? No one but God Himself.

And it is He, God Himself, that shed His Blood,  
which overcomes sin,  
death and the devil.

It is Christ, God Himself,

whose shed Blood brings salvation

through the Word of the heavenly testimony,

given through Apostles and Evangelists to us as the Holy Scripture,  
of which Christ is center.

Who is like unto God? No one, but God alone.

As we heard earlier, God has a face.

He has arms and legs and hands and fingers.

He came down from heaven to be made Man,

to take on the flesh of the Virgin at the archangel's announcement.

He came down from heaven to win the final victory  
over the one who was cast down from heaven.

And it is He that shed the precious Blood of the Lamb by which you are redeemed.

He bore your offenses, though neither His foot nor His eye nor His hand sinned.

He was without sin. And yet He became sin for you.

The millstone of your sin was around His neck.

He was drowned in the depths of His Passion,  
His suffering, and His death.

God with hands and feet and eyes was cut off and cast away.

Cut off from the living,

and cast away into the garden tomb.

He was cut off and cast away that you not be cast into hell fire,  
but rather that you enter into life – life eternal,  
by the Blood of Christ.

For He who came down from heaven took up His life again,  
and ascended into heaven,  
where the holy angels always see His face.

Beloved, the Blood of the Lamb by which sin, death and the devil are conquered  
comes to you this night.

The Son of Man who came to save that which was lost  
comes to you to save you.

He comes not with heavenly horses and chariots of fire,  
but with bread and wine.

So, take and eat, take and drink, dear Christian.

Christ is here for you.

The holy angels are with you, and they rejoice,  
for the Lord of the angels is your Meal.

***Standing...***

And now may the peace of God which passes all understanding, guard your hearts and  
minds through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.