

St. Michael and All Angels  
“Saved and Protected by the Triune God” Matthew 18:10-11  
September 29, 2024  
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Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for this festival Sunday of St. Michael and All Angels is from our Gospel reading, Matthew 18:10-11.

**“Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven. 11 For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.”**

**So far our text.**

Are angels real? As they say in Minnesota “You betcha”. Our text and many other verses in the Bible tell us of the special role of God’s angels. We just confessed in the Nicene Creed these words:

*“I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.”*

Invisible describes the angels. They are spirit beings, but sometimes take a visible form according to God’s purposes like when Gabriel visited Mary and Zacharias, when the angels sang to the shepherds, when they ministered to Jesus at His temptation, when they announced His resurrection, when they came after Jesus’ ascension, when Peter was freed by an angel in jail and other examples.

When were they created? Well Job 38 tells us that they sang for joy when the foundations of the world were laid. So, God created them already on day 1. And yet, some of these angels were rebellious and fell being led by Satan. Sometime after day 6, for all that God created was very good, they fell. And Satan tempted Adam and Eve with his sin of pride and mankind fell into sin. Listen to Isaiah 14 as God tells of the evil of Lucifer.

**““How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!  
How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations!  
13 For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven,**

**I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.'**

The evil angels were defeated and thrown out of heaven, led by St. Michael the arch angel, as we know from Revelation 12 as we heard in our epistle reading.

**"7 And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, 8 but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. 9 So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."**

By what power was Satan defeated? The next verse tells, doesn't it?

**10 Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "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 how do we, the brethren, overcome the accuser of our sins? Again, the next verse tells us.

**11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. 12 Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them!**

And the heavens and rejoice with mankind that salvation has come to us! So, right before we receive the sacrament of the altar for the remission of our sins which ends all accusation by the devil, we will hear in the preface to the Sanctus:

*"The cherubim and seraphim sing Your praise, and with them we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:"*

And then we will sing together the beautiful Sanctus:

*"Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth; heav'n and earth are full of Your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed, blessed, blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest."*

The Lord Jesus, the Holy One, the Lord of the Sabbath, the Blessed One, the One who came to save riding on a donkey to His death, Hosanna! Jesus has come! He died on the cross and rose again! And conquered all evil by His victory over sin! So Paul exclaims in 1 Corinthians 15:

**“56 The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

And so an angel was there in the empty tomb to proclaim Good News to those who came to anoint a dead body.

**“5 And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed.6 But he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him.”**

Yes, a special role of angels is to be messengers of God’s saving work in Jesus. That’s what angel means- “messenger of God”.

So, the angel Gabriel told Mary in Luke 1 **“And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. 32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. 33 And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”**

And when Jesus was born, an angel proclaimed the Good News to the shepherds:

**“Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. 11 For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.” (Luke 2:10-12)**

There is no need to fear. God has given us a Savior who defeats the devil, the world and all sin, true God and true Man – Jesus Christ! And the heavens broke forth in song as many other angels sang:

**“Glory to God in the highest,  
And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!”**

**“For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.”** And He did once and for all by His death and glorious resurrection! There is peace on earth through the blood of Jesus.

The message of the angels is peace. Peace be with you as we eat the very body and drink the very blood of Jesus who brought peace with God by forgiving all our sins. This body and this blood is given and shed for you personally.

It is given and shed for you so that you may be strengthened as you fight the devil who is still active like roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. The evil angel, the devil, knows his time is short as we heard in our epistle reading and comes with great wrath to deceive believers. He tries his hardest to cause spiritual unrest and doubt where there is peace.

**“Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.”**

So Paul tells us believers in Ephesians 6 to put on the whole armor of God. Use the means of grace of His Word and Sacraments!

**“10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the [b]wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”**

And with us fights, protects and defends the good angels of God.

As we heard in Psalm 91, **“For He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways. 12 In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.”**

Against the devil and the world is our ongoing battle as our Gospel reading tells us.

**“6 “But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the**

**depth of the sea. 7 Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!”**

But standing with us against the world are God’s good angels. **“I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven.”**

They always do God’s good will for they see His face constantly and therefore can do no other than protect us according to God’s good will.

We remember how Peter was persecuted and put in jail by Herod Agrippa who had just martyred James the son of Zebedee. An angel came to Peter in Acts 12 and released him and walked him out of the gates. When Peter came to Mary the mother of John’s home, Rhoda answered the door recognizing Peter’s voice and she told the others who were praying. They didn’t believe her and said “It’s his angel”. Yes, they believed that Peter had a protector angel. But after much insisting Peter was let in and he told them how an angel had freed him. And later an angel struck Herod Agrippa down after he claimed to be the voice of god and he was eaten by worms.

Yes, God created powerful good angels who have cast out the devil from heaven and continue to defend us and remind us of the Gospel message of salvation of which they were joyous messengers! And when a person repents and believes in Jesus, indeed there is much rejoicing in heaven.

**Luke 15:10**

**“Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”**

With the angels and all the saints in heaven and on earth, we give all glory to our Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit for our salvation and glorious entrance into heaven by the blood of Jesus. And when at last our short life is ended, like Lazarus, our souls will be carried to heaven by His angels, awaiting the day when Christ returns with all His angels.

**“31 “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.” Matthew 25:31  
Amen.**

**“And this peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)**