

## **St. Michael and All Angels: September 26, 2021**

### **“Rejoice in This...”**

Grace, Mercy, and Peace be unto you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen. Jesus said, *“I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”*<sup>1</sup>

When the 72 came back, they were ecstatic. They had been first-hand witnesses to works of God that peer behind the curtain of this visible world. Like many prophets of the Old Testament, they were given the authority by God to not only speak God’s word, but also to do miraculous signs. They were given a behind the scenes look at the interaction of the visible and the invisible world. While they were excited, they were in danger; they were vulnerable to relying on their own works and thus at risk to putting faith in themselves, not in Jesus.

If you’ve ever had to work “behind the scenes,” then you know how much work goes into making something happen. For those who aren’t behind the scenes, there is an ignorance and (almost) lack of appreciation for the finished product. Things just get taken for granted. They just “magically happen.” Many don’t see the work that goes into weddings or funerals. Many parents don’t know all the work that goes into teaching a room full of kids; nor do many teachers know the work that goes into being faithful parents in the world today. Consumers often don’t know or appreciate the work done in the customer service industry, they simply just want their food, or service, done promptly and with a smile.

This Sunday is a day in the Church Year where we pause to give thanks to God for all the “behind the scenes” work of His holy angels. Whether you want to admit it or not, we truly don’t understand all the work that goes into protecting and caring for us. That’s not to say that God needs any help. He’s God. He’s almighty and all-powerful. We do hear of our Lord commissioning His angelic army to constantly watch over us, fight for us, protect us, and care for us.

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<sup>1</sup> Luke 10:18–20



Before we go too far, we must be careful when we read the word angel in the Scriptures. The word angel is not translated, it is a transliteration of the Greek word. The word itself means messenger. Angels are messengers. Angels don't have physical bodies like we do; but, God does describe some angels in various forms.

We get a glimpse of this in the Old Testament lesson, where Daniel is told about God's archangel Michael coming to help Him battle and repel the evil angels, or messengers, or princes who had come to Persia in an attempt to thwart God's good plan for His beloved Israel. If you remember, Israel had been in captivity in Babylon for decades, taken captive by the Babylonian, King Nebuchadnezzar. This was all part of God's good plan. The Israelites had rebelled against God. They had lost their way, and refused to repent. God sent in Nebuchadnezzar in order to discipline His rebellious children and call them to repentance.

Fifty years later, King Cyrus is now in charge of Babylon. King Cyrus is the one who will decree that the Israelites are now free to return to Israel. Again, this is all part of God's good plan. Do you think that the devil and his evil minions are just going to sit back and let it all happen? As God Himself says in Revelation: "The devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!" Recognizing that God's plan for the Messiah is to get Israel out of Babylon and back into the Promised Land, the devil and his minions do all they can to obstruct and overthrow. But notice how they go about their evil business. They can't win with Israel, so they try a different way. They try to come in through the back door of the pagan government. They teach and spread all kinds of wicked messages, working on the kings and powerful people of Babylon in attempts to get the government to do their evil bidding. They wanted to prevent the Israelites from returning to Israel.

The people were in danger of despair and were at risk to rely and trust in their own strength, their own cunning, their own works to save. This is why God fights. It is confessed in the very name, as Israel means God fights. Daniel is given a peek behind the scenes. Archangel Michael comes to help fight these wicked angels. He comes to fight the good fight in obedience to his Lord, and on behalf of God's beloved children. Michael is also called the "great prince," the archangel who has charge over God's faithful. That includes Israel, the 72, and you. This is not simply in an individual sense; this concerns entire peoples, all nations.



Is it possible for whole groups of people be tempted to evil? Can entire nations and governments work evil against God and His people? I don't want you take this down a governmental conspiracy road, and you must not confuse evil with, "I don't like so-and-so because they're jerks, or they have different policies, or terrible haircuts."

It is not hard to see the evil that has been normalized and accepted over the past decades. What kinds of messages are being sent and promoted in the breakdown of families, the misuse of the body, the neglect of the Word of God, the attack on possessions and reputations? Platforms for public office are built on many wicked agendas, and no one hardly bats an eye anymore. Many just simply vote for it and move on, because, "Well, its normal and what are you going to do about it?"

As Christians, the temptation is not just to see the evil. Your temptation is to run into the ditch on the other side. Seeing behind the curtain, hearing the voice of God speak to the reality of your baptism, his death for you on the cross to defeat sin and pay your wage of death preached in your ears, delivered and proclaimed to you through the Holy Supper upon this altar, these things are wonderful gifts that create and sustain faith. The temptation becomes to forget them. It is tempting to think, "Yeah, these things are great and all, but I want results. I want something that I can do. I want to feel like I'm doing something." Do you hear the logic behind this thought? It pushes the reality of faith and the very works of God behind your own works. It places hope and strength in what you do, not in what God is doing.

Jesus says, to you and the 72, ***"I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you."***<sup>2</sup> You are given the authority, by the Word of God, to tread on the head of the old evil foe. Jesus crushed his head in the dust by the work of the cross, and you are given that same word. You are baptized. You don't just have a dead, dry, dusty life. You are reborn in the family of God. You are regenerated in the blood of the Lamb of God Himself. His Word is in your heart and on your tongue, dancing with life. In the face of death, you have life.

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<sup>2</sup> Luke 10:18-20



In the midst of every temptation, you have the promise of heavenly victory and peace with God. While the world and the sinful flesh love barbs and jabs, stings and blows, you have the power and promise of God Himself; if death cannot hurt you, what can those blows and barbs actually accomplish?

You don't always see it. The work of God is not always recognized. The focus for you is not on the scorpions, the serpents, the wicked world, the evil foe, or the sinful flesh; instead, ***"rejoice that your names are written in heaven."***<sup>3</sup>

God saves and delivers. You are his beloved children. We must not take all this persistent and increasing evil to mean that God is somehow losing the fight. He's not. He's in total control and working all things for the good of those who love Him. Just because we don't always see what is happening behind the scenes, doesn't mean that work isn't being done. Elijah couldn't see the work God was doing in Babylon in raising up Nebuchadnezzar, which would not being a good time for Israel. Yet, in the midst of that wicked and oppressive kingdom, Daniel would live and through his witness, that kingdom would repent through the decree of its king. The disciples couldn't see the work of God as Jesus was hanged on the cross, His death on public display for the world to see His shame; yet, through that death your debt of sin is paid. No one sees the planting of faith and the drowning of sin when water is poured over a baptismal candidate; yet, through that simple work, even an infant is brought into the blessed family of God, and declared to be a heir of the gifts given by Jesus by His death and resurrection.

As bad and evil as things are nowadays, as hard the devil, the world, and the sinful flesh try to wrench you away from faith, from hope, and from love, they have no ground upon which to stand. Even if all our daily bread should be taken away, we still have our faith in Christ. No matter how bad and evil things may get, "for us fights the valiant One, whom God Himself elected....and take they our life, goods, fame, child, and wife, though these all be gone, the victory has been won. The kingdom ours remaineth."

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<sup>3</sup> Luke 10:18-20

Brothers and sisters in Christ, while the world rages, take heart. You have that peace that the world cannot give, even now. While we pray, "Come Lord Jesus," we right now live in the assurance of faith. We live trusting, not in what we see, but in what we hear. We trust in God's Word that declares victoriously, "It is finished." We trust and hold fast to His promise that He is with us always, even to the end of the age. We trust and hold fast to His promise that He has put His name on us and made us His own, placing His name upon our heads and hearts, marking us as redeemed by Christ the crucified. We rejoice not that we can overcome temptations or silence the naysayers with the Word of God, we rejoice because our names are written in His Book of Life.

Even while the world rages and the sinful nature doubts, brothers and sisters in Christ, today, we feast. The devil has been defeated. Heaven is yours. The supper of forgiveness stands ready for you. Jesus is here, soon with His body and blood, crucified and risen. Here you feast with angels, archangels, and the whole company of heaven. Here we gather in festal, holy joy as Jesus brings heaven to earth, feeding us and nourishing us. Here we receive forgiveness of all our sins. On top of that, we are reminded of wonderful promises. As we eat his body, we know that our bodies too are important and have been joined with Christ in the resurrection. As we drink His blood, we know that our life is now eternal in Him.

In the midst of our enemies, sin, death, and the devil, we join the angelic choir and all of heaven with our voices, "Holy, holy, holy; Lord God of Sabaoth (which mean hosts/angelic armies)! Heaven and earth are full of your glory! Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna!" Amen.

May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.



**Prayer of the Church**  
**St. Michael and All Angels (Observed)**  
**26 September 2021**

O God our Father, fill us with Your Spirit; that we might put away all pride, humble ourselves, turn and become like children before You. Give us hearts to trust and depend on You for all our needs; and may we rejoice not that the spirits have been subjected to us through Your Word, but rather that we rejoice that our names are written in heaven. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God our Father, while we don't always see the work You are doing behind the scenes, You have blessed us to see some of Your work through Your servants on earth; in Your mercy bless and defend all pastors in Christ, grant that they would preach the pure Law and Gospel of Your Son, Jesus Christ; grant that their proclamation would go forth with power unto the salvation of all who hear and believe. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God our Father, we know that Satan and his minions long to assail Your children. As we await the day of our Lord's return, keep us steadfast in the faith and shield us with Your Word of truth, that we may withstand all their assaults. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God our Father, You have placed authorities over us for our peace and safety. Remember our president; legislators; judges; and all those who make, administer and judge our laws. Grant them wisdom and a desire to seek Your will. Guard all those who serve in our emergency services and armed forces. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Loving Father, we give thanks that in Holy Baptism we receive forgiveness of sins, deliverance from death and the devil, and eternal salvation, bless those who celebrate baptismal anniversaries this week, especially, *Kistie, Rylee, and Hutch*, grant that by Your Word and Spirit they may faithfully keep the covenant into which they have been called, boldly confess their Savior, and finally share with all Your saints the joys of eternal life; Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord God, Heavenly Father, we give thanks for the joy and blessings that You have granted *David and Sandy* during the years of their marriage. Assist them always by Your grace that with true fidelity and steadfast love they may ever honor and keep their marriage vows, grow in love towards You and for each other, and come at last to the eternal joys that You have promised; Lord in Your mercy; **hear our prayer.**

O God our Father, remember in mercy all those who call upon You in their need [*especially Carmen, Susan, Zoey, Donna, Floyd, Tricia, David Teggatz, Mark, Joyce, and those we name in our hearts.*] Let Your holy angels be with them, that the wicked foe would have no power over them. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God our Father, Your Son has told us to receive His true body and blood for the forgiveness of our sins. Grant that we would come to the holy altar in humility and need, receiving this blessed Sacrament with thanksgiving. Strengthen us through the same, as we return to our homes and contend against the devil, the world and our own sinful flesh. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God our Father, we give You thanks for all who have gone before us in the faith and now rest from their labors. Keep us in holy communion with them, that our ears would join theirs in listening to the heavenly choir of angels sing Your praises on the Last Day. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**