

“St. Michael and All Angels”

Today the Church celebrates the Feast of St. Michael and All Angels. Just the mention of angels gets most people’s attention – and to be honest, we don’t spend a lot of time talking (and teaching) about angels. So, let’s hear what God has to say about angels – and learn what this has to do with us – with our life, and our salvation.

Angels are a part of God’s invisible creation – created sometime in the six days of creation. They are holy, powerful, mighty, and numerous. Appearances of angels are rare – and cause one to be “sorely afraid.”

Although all the angels, created by God, were declared by Him to be “very good” – one of the prominent angels, Satan, together with many other angels who followed him – rebelled against the Lord.

Jesus tells us in John 8:44 that Satan “was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.” And so Jesus Himself says that “hell” or “the eternal fire” is “prepared for the devil and his angels.” (Matthew 25:41)

Jude writes: “And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home – these He has kept in darkness bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day” (Jude 6). Peter writes that: “God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment” (2 Peter 2:4).

And today you heard these words from Revelation: “But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows his time is short!” Indeed, the Day will come when the devil will be thrown into the fires of hell for all eternity. “His time is short” – so he makes the best of it!

The devil is real, and powerful, and in full-blown panic mode. You who are baptized into Christ Jesus are his sworn enemy – the target of his attacks. Christ redeemed you – the devil and all his works and all his ways are renounced – and Satan hates that!

He wants nothing more than to take you down – to take your body and soul down to hell to spend eternity with him. And so he attacks, but in a way that you might not expect. His chief weapon is his word (mimicking God Himself) – but the devil’s word is full of deceit.

“Look at what you’ve done,” he says. “Listen to the words that come from your mouth. Do you want me to tell people what’s going through your mind? And you call yourself a Christian. Look at all the people you’ve hurt over the years – especially those you claim to love. You say you’ve meant well, but your best intentions have ruined lives.”

And he doesn’t ease up. “Your sin is unforgivable. Jesus may forgive sinners, but not sinners like you. His death on the cross isn’t for you. His promises are not for you.”

“Do you really think God loves you – cares for you? He’s the liar. Just look around. No one acts like they’re forgiven. And if God really cares – why is there so much sickness, and suicides, and abuse, and hurricanes and wars and swindlers and cheats?” “Christianity is fake. It’s a waste of time. It’s time to give it up. Come, follow me,” the devil says.

That’s the war that rages all around you, whether you realize it, or not. So, how is it that you, a child of God, is to fight against Satan and all his evil angels? God tells you, this morning, speaking His word into your ears: “And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony” – by the Gospel, that proclaims that Jesus alone is the Savior of sinners – including you!

You are covered in the blood of the Lamb. The divine blood of Jesus covers and cleanses you from all sin – no matter how bad you think it is, no matter how evil the devil says it is, no matter how much harm it has inflicted. The blood of Jesus – shed on the cross – covers you, cleanses you, and enlivens you – just as He promises in His Supper.

The devil may constantly throw your sin in your face – but his accusations carry no weight before God. Why? Because he has been cast out of heaven’s court. Thrown out – by MICHA-EL (whose name means “the One who is like God”) – by Jesus, the Christ!

Jesus waged war against Satan as He suffered and died on the cross for you – and He won! He rose from the dead to show you that your sin is gone. And He ascends into heaven – throws Satan down – so that He alone has the Father’s ear, and declares, “you are forgiven.”

In Jesus’ blood “the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come.”

Angels are literally “messengers.” God sends His messenger Gabriel to preach the Gospel to Mary: “You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; His kingdom will never end” (Lk 1:1-33).

The angel of the Lord declares to the shepherds: “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord.” And the multitude of angels sang: “Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men on whom His favor rests.” And at the tomb, the joyous good news: “He is not here. He has risen” (Lk 2:10-11; 2:14; 24:6).

Today, the Lord’s pastor-messengers proclaim that same Gospel. Jesus, the Son of God, took on human flesh and died for sinners. Such preaching attacks the devil, forces him to flee – protecting you from his satanic attacks.

His “time is short” – so he doesn’t give up. He prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour (1 Pt. 5:8). And so the Lord sends His angels to protect you – just as He protected Israel, and Elijah – Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego – Daniel in the Lion’s den – the apostles, and Peter in jail – and all His beloved children.

In this time, we rejoice in the salvation given by Jesus who conquered Satan “for you.” Christ’s victory is your victory. You are covered with His purifying and life-giving blood. He gives you to drink of it – to proclaim that Christ’s death IS “for you.”

In this victory you live – protected by the angels – hearing the Gospel of your salvation in Christ – and living in Him by faith, even unto life everlasting. Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, guards your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.