

Psalm 103: 20-22 The Festival of Michael and All Angels

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

Our text for this day, the Festival of Michael and All-Angels is taken from the Introit for today,

Psalm 103

**Bless the LORD, you His angels,
Who excel in strength, who do His word,
Heeding the voice of His word.**

²¹ **Bless the LORD, all you His hosts,
You ministers of His, who do His pleasure.**

²² **Bless the LORD, all His works,
In all places of His dominion.
Bless the LORD, O my soul!**

We pray: Dear God our heavenly Father, Creator of the Angels, and all things, give us and renew in us a love for You Word. We ask in Jesus' name who is the King of angels. Amen.

My dear friends in Christ Jesus

The Christian Church has for many years considered Angels and their wondrous work on the last Sunday in September. As you are probably are aware there are two angels mentioned by name in Holy Scripture, Gabriel who we hear about in accounts, foretelling the coming of the Christ and Michael who were heard of, in the Epistle lesson a few moments ago.

It is good for us to review what God in His Word has said about angels because there are some, such as the Sadducees at the time of Christ and also in our day some who deny the existence of these wondrous beings. There are others who deviate and turn away from Holy Scripture and teach, write, and believe things in regards to angels, that are not true that are not Scriptural.

May God the Holy Spirit bless our study of His Word as we consider the theme: THE HOLY ANGELS. And may we consider in the first place (1) What the Scriptures teach concerning the Angels; and Secondly, how these teachings are profitable for our comfort and admonition.

Besides this visible universe God has created a host of invisible spirits or angels. No one who believes the Bible will undertake to question this fact. In fact, our Lord speaks of angels,

saying: **“In heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father.”** If there were no angels, if He had not created such, the Lord who is Himself the truth would be lying. That the angels were created through Jesus Christ St. Paul distinctly affirms when he writes : **“ By Him were all things created, that are in heaven , and that are in earth , visible and in visible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him , and for Him .”** (Colossians 1: 16) That the angels were created in the six days work we learn from the words of Moses, saying: **“In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is.”** (Exodus 20: 11). That comprises too, the angels of heaven, although we are not told on which of the six days they were created.

The dwelling place of the angels is in heaven, as the psalmist here says: **“The Lord has established His throne in the heavens. And His kingdom rules over all”**. The angels are those beings who surround the throne of their Maker. In their essence the angels are spirits. The epistle to the Hebrews says of them: **“Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?”** (Hebrews 1: 14) Being spirits the angels have no material bodies, as the Lord said to the disciples when He was risen from the dead : **“ Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself : handle me, and see ; for a spirit has not flesh and bones, as you see I have.”** (Luke 24: 39). Having no material bodies, the angels can neither be seen nor handled.

In fact, an angel cannot be pictured, as little as God or the soul can. The angels can however temporarily assume a bodily form, can make themselves visible and appear to men. For this there are a great many examples in the pages of the Holy Scriptures. When the disciples on Mount Olivet were gazing up to Jesus as He ascended up to heaven, suddenly **“two men stood by them in white clothes.”** Those two angels also spoke to them, for they said: **“Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up into the sky? This same Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall come back in the same way as you have seen Him go into heaven”** (Acts 1: 11).

The angels are perfectly happy creatures. They lack nothing. Pain and sorrow is unknown to them. Always beholding the face of the Father in heaven the angels are ever enjoying the highest bliss. This also implies that the angels are perfectly holy beings, else they could not stand in the presence of God ; for in the fifth Psalm it is said : “ **The foolish shall not stand in Your sight: You hate all workers of iniquity.**” (Psalm 8:5)

As Holy Scripture clearly states some angels fell away from God and were banished from God’s presence forever, but those who remained steadfast are not and never were soiled by the least sin. Of these holy beings there is a countless host. Shortly before our Savior would die, there in the Garden of Gethsemane, the Lord said unto Peter: “**Do you not realize that I could call on my Father, and at once He would provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels,**” more than seventy-two thousand. (Matthew 26:53)

When Sennacherib about 700 BC threatened to destroy Jerusalem, the Lord sent an angel to protect the city, and in one night that angel slew one hundred and eighty-five thousand men of the Assyrian army. (2 Kings 19: 35-38). The angels of the Lord are mighty protectors. Concerning the occupation of the angels two things are indicated in the Lord's words: “**Their angels do always behold the face of My Father.**” They behold the Father's face not only to see their own happiness in it, but also to know and to do His will. They are like servants always ready to do what they are told, wherefore David charges them, saying: “**Bless the Lord. You His angels, that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word**” (Psalms 103: 20).

II.

Secondly this morning we want to consider, “*How this doctrine or teaching of angels is profitable for our Comfort and Admonition*”. We must not think that this doctrine of the holy angels could be of no benefit unto us. God has told us of His revelation, “**All Scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.**” (2 Timothy 3: 16) The doctrine of the angels is peculiarly useful for reproof and comfort. But here

it is well to be remembered that this doctrine, as well as all other teachings of the Scriptures, may be misapplied.

The angels are not gods, neither are they mediators between God and us. We must not worship the angels, neither must we in any way call upon them to make intercession for us. We are told in the book of Revelation, when John fell down to worship the angel who had showed him great things, the angel refused to be worshipped by him, saying “Do not **do it! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers, who have the testimony about Jesus. Worship God.**” (Revelation 19: 10). The angels do not want to be worshipped by us.

Neither should we expect revelations from the angels. There have been some who claimed that angels appeared to them and gave them instructions and commands. These were either themselves deceivers, or they were deceived by the artfulness of Satan, or the hallucination of their own senses. In the days of the Old Testament God did frequently send His angels to bear messages to men, but since the book of His revelation is completed, God does no more send His angels for this purpose.

In His Word God has laid down all those things which He wanted us to know , and even though an angel would come to teach us we should not hear him for St. Paul writes : “ **Though we, or an angel from heaven , preach any other gospel to you than that which we have preached to you, a curse on him.**” (Galatians 1: 8). We are to search the Holy Scriptures and from them to learn the will of our God, and we are not to expect angelic apparitions or further revelations.

On the other hand, that which is revealed unto us concerning the angels must awaken our admiration, and constrain us to fall down and to adore the greatness, the mercy of our God.

Yes, Great is our God and greatly to be praised. “**Marvelous,**” exclaims David, “**are Your works; and that my soul knows right well.**” (Psalm 139: 14). This great God looks down upon us sinful mortals with loving compassion , and a conclusive proof of His kindness toward us, is

the fact that He sends these glorious beings, the holy angels from His dwelling place on high to encamp round about us and our children .

Holy Scripture evidently implies that children have their guardian angels. Certainly, a very comforting truth. Where is the mother who could sufficiently guard her little ones? But God cares for them, placing His angels guard over them to protect them in danger and to preserve them from mishaps. This fact is not to create or promote neglectfulness in parents; for nowhere in the Bible do we read that the angels protect the wicked and their children.

But to Christian parents it is a godly comfort to know that their little ones under the guardianship of the heavenly hosts. And not only they, we also who are daily surrounded by manifold evils and dangers, dangers of which we ourselves are often not conscious and against which we could never protect ourselves. But we have the promise of the 91st Psalm: **“If you make the Most High your shelter, ^{evil} will not overtake you. Disaster will not come near your tent. Yes, he will give a command to his angels concerning you, to guard you in all your ways. They will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.**
(v9-12)

If we are walking in the fear of God and avoiding evil, the angels are round about us, and surely these messengers of the Lord are a better protection than a body- guard of armed men, as numerous examples in the Holy Scriptures demonstrate.

Now as the angels of heaven are not the companions of those who are not heirs of salvation. If we walk in the ways which the Lord has commanded us not to go, we do not have His promise that the angels shall bear us up in their hands. The angels of God are grieved to see people walk in sin, and they stand against those who rebel against the Lord. Here the Lord tells us that the angels are the companions of children and in a preceding verse He says : **“ Unless you are turned and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of**

heaven” (Matthew 18:3). If we turn unto the Lord and become as little children , if we receive His Word in simple faith as children does the word of their mother, if we follow Him in all simplicity and humility wherever He leads ,as little children follow their father, then His angels are our companions and they form a fiery wall around us to protect and keep us.

Likewise, the Scriptures declare that there is joy with the angels of heaven over one sinner that repents. (Luke 15:7) If you have sinned, turn away from it, repent of it and imitate the Roman centurion Cornelius who we hear about in the book of Acts. (Acts 10:1-32). When an angel directed him to send for the apostle Peter, and Peter came and told him the Word of Jesus, Cornelius received it with faith and joy and obtained the gift of the Holy Spirit, then certainly the angels of the Lord were encamped round about him .

Yes, hear the Word of Christ, receive it with meekness and cling to Him as penitent sinners who have no other refuge save His Cross, and the angels will be your friends. And if you will let Him guide you, and walk in His ways, His angels will abide with you, and when you die, they will carry your soul into Abraham 's bosom. Daily let each of us offer up this petition to our God: Let Your holy angel be with me that the wicked foe may have no power over me. Amen. Amen.