

St. Michael and All Angels  
St. Luke 10:17-20; Revelation 12:7-12

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

As I was growing up, I would often wonder what it would be like to be an angel. The stories of the angelic visits and visions from the Old Testament would fill my head. Coming from the throne of God to man to relay a message. To fight on behalf of God's justice against the corruption on the earth. The visions that Ezekiel and Daniel had of the angels would often come to mind—frightening images of four-head creatures with wings and eyes in the wings, and the warriors that would contend against the princes of the Persians. To have been the angel which touched the lips of Isaiah with a coal from the incense as others are flying around the smoke-filled throne room singing God's praises was an awe-filled dream.

I often got the picture that angels had it made. They were, in my estimation, the next best thing to being God. At least, the ones who remained in the service of God had it made and were the next best thing. I'm sure I'm not alone in that assessment, as I would estimate that there are some here who have imagined or dreamed or also wondered what it would be like to be an angel.

But then, St. Peter graces us with these inspired words:

Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look. (1 Peter 1:10-12)

What things to angels long to look into? The salvation of your souls. The grace that is yours for the sake of the sufferings of Christ and His subsequent glories. That fact that God, in whose presence they fly and sing, from whose presence they brought messages to mankind, deigned to take on the flesh and blood of mankind and live and die as one of them.

The writer to the Hebrews, regarding the incarnation of the Son of God, related that, "You made him for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor..." and, "But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone." (Hebrews 2:7, 9) Scripture confirms the thought that angels are, in a manner of speaking, a higher form of life than humans. Nevertheless, it was like one of you, a man, that God lowered Himself to, skipping right past angel, in order to bring to you and to all the salvation of their souls.

So, imagine, if you would please, being an angel, and looking upon God-in-the-flesh. See Him from their point of view, as He is conceived and born and grows up and learns a trade and suffers and dies and rises again. A single word, and you would have been at the ready to do whatever God-in-the-flesh requested, and not a single time does Jesus call upon the angels to do anything for him. Yes, from time to time, they ministered to Him, such as following His temptation in the wilderness, but there is not one indication that Jesus issued an order for angelic intervention, though He did mention that He could have. (cf. Matthew 26:53) If angels are the wondering type, which seems to be the case, they would gaze upon all of this and marvel at it—that God would concern Himself over man so much that He would become one of them, live and die among them, live and die for them. "Angels long to look into these things."

In today's second reading, you heard the account of the victory of the archangel Michael over Satan and the fallen angels. You heard how the victory was and is won through the blood of the Lamb,

the Son of God, Jesus Christ. What a glorious sight it must have been, to see Satan and his angels cast out of heaven. To this Jesus referred when the 72 returned to Jesus with joy, for those same demons were subject to them, to human flesh and blood, in the name of Jesus. "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven." Michael prevailed by the blood of the Lamb. Man prevails by the blood of the Lamb. Satan and the demons are subject to man and angels in the name of Jesus, for the sake of Jesus, through the blood of Jesus, shed on the cross for your salvation, for your redemption, as your propitiation, for the forgiveness of all of your sins. "Angels long to look into these things."

And it's a good thing there is such power in Jesus' name and in His blood. It's a good thing that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus is enough to overcome the power of the devil and his minions. For that very same devil, the accuser who accused you day and night before the throne of God, is now on earth in great wrath because he knows his time is short. He's not wasting any time here among you, for he "prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." (1 Peter 5:8) That's why the angels sung of woe for the earth and those who dwell here in today's second reading. Satan fell like lightning from heaven by the blood of the Lamb and the testimony of the Word of God; now, he seeks his prey in great wrath, but He is still subject to the power of the blood of the Lamb and testimony of the Word of God.

But Jesus didn't stop there in His response to the 72. Yes, the demons were subject to the 72 in Jesus name. Yes, Satan fell like lightning from heaven. Jesus has given authority to the 72, yea, even unto you, to tread upon serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy. There is cause for great joy there. In the name of Jesus, no eternal harm can come to you through Satan's wiles.

"Though devils all the world should fill, / All eager to devour us. / We tremble not, we fear no ill, / They shall not overpower us. / This world's prince may still / Scowl fierce as he will, / He can harm us none, / He's judged; the deed is done; / One little word can fell him." Firm in faith, there is nothing that Satan or his devils can do to harm you. Firm in faith, you can resist and beat down Satan and his devils underfoot, to trample upon his serpents and scorpions, as it were. Firm in faith, the victory of Michael is your victory, and the devil will never be successful in His accusations against you. The blood of the Lamb and the testimony of the Word of God are your victory. For this, there is great cause for rejoicing.

But are you firm in faith? Well, there is the chink in your armor. There are times of wavering faith, to be certain. Doubts come and go. "Does God really care?" "Is God really present?" "Does God really know what my suffering is like?" The angels, who long to look into these things, would tell you that He does, in all three cases. "See Jesus," they would say, "who is God-in-the-flesh, God who is your brother, who suffered and died for you under the wrath of the Father for the sins of the world. Yes, He really cares—He sent His only-begotten Son to die for you. Yes, He is really present—He still comes to you in Word and Sacrament and whenever two or three are gathered in His name. Yes, He really knows what your suffering is like—He suffered and died as a criminal, bearing the weight of *all* sins and infirmities to the cross."

The irony is such chinks in the armor manifest themselves in rejoicing too much, you could say, in the authority to tread on snakes and scorpions and all the power of the enemy. Such authority can have the consequence of puffing one up to seek visible achievements. It's an arrogant pride and theology of success that Satan can use to attack you and thwart the true ministry of the Word and Sacrament to and even from you.<sup>1</sup> He prowls like a hungry lion and devours those whose pride and arrogance place them above God and His Word such that when those visible achievements aren't there or don't seem to be there, then the devil has you in his snare.

That's why Jesus said, "[D]o not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." There is a greater gift here than the authority to conquer Satan and his devils, not the least of which because they are already conquered by the blood of the

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1 I borrow some verbiage from Dr. Arthur A. Just, Jr.'s [Concordia Commentary](#) on St. Luke.

Lamb; recall the hymn verse recited earlier—"He's judged, the deed is done," it is finished! So, if you're trampling snakes and scorpions and all the power of the enemy under foot, it's because they are already conquered. So, rejoice, sure, but rejoice all the more that your names are written in heaven.

This is sure and certain. Your names are written in God's Book of Life in heaven, inked in the blood of Christ shed on the cross. They are there with the names of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, with Peter and James and John, with Paul and Silas and Barnabas, with Timothy and Titus and Philemon, and all the chosen people of old, and even those of more recent blessed memory. Praise God that you are clothed in a robe washed white in the blood of the Lamb.

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners (cf. 1 Timothy 1:15); Christ Jesus came into the world to save you! In the waters of Holy Baptism, you were washed and sanctified, claimed as a dear son of God and heir with Christ of heavenly glory; there in the font (or one like it) you were washed and your robes made clean in the blood of the Lamb. As you come to this table and receive a morsel of bread and a sip of wine and they are for you the very body and blood of Jesus Christ given and shed for you; and as one given faith in these words, "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins," they are for you the medicine of immortality.

These all proclaim to you the care and concern of God for you, the presence of God to save and redeem you, the suffering that God-in-the-flesh endured for you so that you would not have to. And for it all, your name is written in God's Book of Life. "Angels long to look into these things."

I and others may have dreamed of what it was like to be an angel. It appears to be a glorious existence, and I suppose there is a bit of envy knowing that they now and always stand in the presence of God. But God did not lower Himself to be in the presence of sinful angels, but in the presence of sinful man, that He might save and redeem them—that He might save and redeem you. This He has accomplished—Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again. "Angels long to look into these things."

Knowing this, and the glory to be revealed when Christ returns, I suppose it's better—or will be better in eternity—to be a man than an angel. Angels are now in the presence of the divine, singing His praises, but as a man redeemed of God, reconciled to Him by the blood of Christ, your name is written in the book of life, and you will share in His glory, feast with Him at the eternal banquet, because you are forgiven for all of your sins. "Angels long to look into *these* things."

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.