

“Angels Are with Us”

2 Kings 6:15-17

September 29, 2024 (Michael & All Angels’ Day)

St. Paul’s Lutheran, North Freedom

When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. “Oh, my lord, what shall we do?” the servant asked.

“Don’t be afraid,” the prophet answered. “Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.”

And Elisha prayed, “O LORD, open his eyes so he may see.” Then the LORD opened the servant’s eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. (2 Kgs. 6:15-17, NIV84)

Dear fellow believers in the triune God, the LORD of Armies:

For centuries, September 29 has been observed by the church as “St. Michael and All Angels’ Day.” Who’s Michael? Michael is an archangel, the leader of heavenly armies of angels. Revelation tells us, “Michael and his angels fought against the dragon (the devil), and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven” (Rev. 12:7,8).

Michael and all those angels still fight for us today. Today’s sermon will focus on “all angels,” the mighty, heavenly messengers who form an army to comfort and protect us. From our text we learn this comforting truth: **“Angels Are with Us.”**

Our text takes place during the time of the divided kingdom. The northern tribes of Israel were separated from the southern kingdom of Judah, and Israel was under attack from the nation just to its north—the kingdom of Aram (Syria). But the king of Aram was frustrated. Every time his army targeted a city in Israel, the army of Israel was there, ready to defend it. “Who’s been leaking my plans to the enemy?” the king raged at his war council. “Not us,” one of the officers replied. “It’s Elisha, the prophet of Israel who miraculously tells the king of Israel what you tell us in secret.” Finding out that Elisha was in Dothan, the king gave orders that the army surround Dothan overnight.

Now just imagine Elisha’s servant waking up the next morning, getting out of bed, opening the door of the house and he sees a whole army of chariots, horses, soldiers with their spears surrounding the town. It would be like waking up one morning in North Freedom, peeking out the window and seeing hundreds of Russian tanks coming down PF and I and Museum Road, and thousands of Russian soldiers marching and surrounding the town! Wouldn’t we be frightened? Elisha’s servant gasped to his master, “Oh, my lord, what shall we do?”

What shall we do as well? No, I don’t think we’ll find Russian armies or the North Korean air force targeting North Freedom or Baraboo or Reedsburg any time soon. But there are times when we feel like we’re surrounded by spiritual enemies led by the devil. We feel outnumbered in this world that more and more rejects the Bible and God himself. The pressure they put on us, the temptations that the devil lays out for us, may make us also cry out, “O Lord, what shall we do?”

“Don’t be afraid,” Elisha told his servant. “Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.” Angels are with us! These invisible, powerful creatures of heaven are a large band indeed. John in Revelation saw them in a vision of heaven, “numbering thousands upon thousands,

and ten thousand times ten thousand” (Rev. 5:11). It is true. When we count the angels on our side, “Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.”

And since angels are with us, we gain confidence that God is with us too. We sang in the hymn of the day, “If God himself be for me, I may a host defy” (CW #819 v. 1). “Host,” by the way, means “army.” God and his angels are mightier than the devil and his armies; God and his angels will protect us from all those who oppose us; God and his angels are with us to protect and comfort us now and always.

Pray that we may see this. Elijah prayed to God on behalf of his servant, “O LORD, open his eyes so he may see.” And the LORD opened the servant’s eyes to see that celestial army, “horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.” The angels were indeed with them. Now, we do not see with our eyes the army of angels that accompany us. But we see it by faith, which Hebrews 11:1 defines for us: “Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.” We are sure, we are certain, we know, because God has spoken it in his Word, the Bible.

God’s Word tells us (Psalm 34:7), “The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.” The angels surround us to deliver us. God’s Word tells us how he sends angels to protect us (Ps. 91:11,12): “He will command 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.” We treat this passage not as a way to test if God will protect us when we do some daredevil things, but as a promise that the Lord will make everything work out for our good. God especially sends these angels to his children, believers, as Hebrews calls them “ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation” (Heb. 1:14).

Angels are with us. And that means the LORD himself is with us. Many of you remember from the King James Version the phrase “the LORD of hosts.” That phrase got translated into the NIV as “LORD Almighty.” “Hosts” however actually means “armies,” referring to the heavenly armies of angels. Some newer translations like the EHV translate the phrase as “LORD of armies,” as we understand it to refer to those heavenly armies of angels.

The LORD of armies is with us. Think of when the Lord himself was born in Bethlehem. In the countryside that night an angel brought good news to shepherds: “A Savior is born! He is Christ the Lord.” Then we read, “Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests’ (Luke 2:13,14).” The vast army of angels appeared to give glory to God.

Angels are with us now to praise God, for our Savior Jesus is Immanuel: “God with us.” He proved to be our Savior by being not just with us, but for us on the cross to take our sins away. He proved to be our Savior when he rose from the dead, a declaration that he is indeed true God. Before ascending Jesus gave his disciples this assurance: “Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matt. 28:20). So no matter how many legions Satan brings to attack you, no matter how numerous opponents of God’s Word seem to be these days, just remember that Jesus has already defeated the enemy, he has crushed the foe, and he and his angels are with us to defend us from his attacks now. So do not be afraid. “Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.” Angels are with you, and their commander, the Lord Jesus, is with you—always. Amen.