

GOD'S ANGELS ARE SENT TO GUARD HIS PEOPLE
Psalm 91:9-12

TEXT: *If you make the Most High your dwelling-- even the LORD, who is my refuge-- then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. For 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.*

In Jesus' name, my fellow redeemed:

We are all familiar with the meaning of the word "angel." It means, "messenger." In the Revelation, Jesus had John write a letter "to the "angel" of each of seven congregations existing at that time. It's often understood that the "angel" to whom each letter was written was the congregations' respective messengers, or as we would say today, their "pastor."

But Scripture also reveals that God created a countless number of spirit beings it calls "angels." Scripture reveals that soon after their creation a powerful angel, along with many that followed him, disobeyed God and was cast from the Lord's presence. These would be the Devil and his "angels" or demons. Scripture also tells us in abundant clarity that the Devil, also called "Satan" has but one objective to get back at God. All Satan can do to hurt God is to destroy what God loves above all His creation: man. It's that simple. God's incomprehensible love for mankind moved Him to send Jesus, His only-begotten Son to suffer and die for the sins of all mankind, and Satan's effort is to destroy any faith that any human might have in what God has done to save us.

So in addition to God's angels being His messengers, they also are assigned the task to protect us from Satan and his evil angels. That is God's promise: *If you make the Most High your dwelling-- even the LORD, who is my refuge-- then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. For 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.*

Who or what are the angels? Sometime during the 6 twenty-four hour days of creation, God created spirit beings called "angels." The word "angel" means, "messenger." While the Bible doesn't tell us all that our curiosity would love to know, it does speak of different classes of angels, naming three in particular: seraphs, cherubs and at least one "Archangel" named Michael.

The Bible also informs us that very soon after the creation, an angel led a rebellion of some kind against God. He is called Satan and the Devil. Satan and the angels that followed him were cast from God's presence, are consigned to an eternal future in a place of torment called "hell." The Bible says: *...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 And yet for what time remains on this earth until the Judgment Day, roam the earth, as Peter warns: *Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.* 1 Pe 5 The devil is powerful, but not almighty or omnipresent like God. He must prowl around in his search for souls. That's the ONLY thing he can do to hurt God, to steal what God loves most: human souls. If God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son to redeem us, how it must pain God to have Satan destroy faith in this truth!

Concerning Satan and all the fallen angels, Scripture says: God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment... 2 Pe 2 However, God's great love for mankind is revealed in the amazing fact that not only did God provide a Savior for all mankind, He sent His only begotten Son to be that Savior! God did not send angels to do this work, for they also are only creatures who can stand or fall before God based upon their own merit. But when mankind fell, God's incomprehensible grace moved Him to save us Himself with one act of righteousness: the blood of the Man Jesus, whose blood is the blood of God, and the righteousness of the God Man Jesus whose righteous life is the righteousness of God that is credited to all who believe. By faith in this promise we are saved!

Peter writes: ***Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, ... Even angels long to look into these things.*** 1 Pe 1 God's angels long to look into these things, that is, to study and to hear the Gospel of our salvation. They are here today also in the presence of our Lord Jesus, in awe of His grace that moved Him to save us who sinned! They must wonder about such an amazing grace that moves the Lord to guard and keep us even while we have just spent another week of committing sins before their faces! Yet they are commanded by God to guard and keep us! By God's command that faithfully protect us even while we stubbornly and willfully behave as lustful, covetous, greedy and mean children! They do not join us this morning with a list of what they saw and heard as we lived our lives as weak sinners. God does not allow them to accuse us, as Peter writes: ***...even angels, although they are stronger and more powerful, do not bring slanderous accusations against such beings in the presence of the Lord.*** 2 Pe 2 They cannot accuse any of us of what they have witnessed as they carry out their duties to protect us because standing before God pleading Christ's blood and righteousness we stand before Him and all His angels as God's Holy Christian Church; His Communion of Saints!

The work of God's angels sent to guard and to protect us is to work to keep us ***in all your ways...*** That is, in the way of faith in Jesus.

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul reminds us of what we and God's angels are up against in being kept in the way of salvation: ***...our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.*** Eph 6. More dangerous than all this world's terrorism and threats of war is the invisible battle between Satan and his forces and the Lord's Church. I terrorist can blow up my body and my soul goes to heaven. Satan can destroy my faith with an ounce of false doctrine and I will spend eternity, both body and soul in hell. Jesus warns: ***Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in hell.*** Mt 10 It is the Ministry of the Gospel, the preaching and teaching of Jesus Christ and Him crucified, the sacraments of baptism by which the Holy Spirit creates faith and the Lord's Supper through which Jesus Himself strengthens us that God's angels work to help us preserve. These are the means by which the Most High comes to us to make His dwelling. And Psalm 91 declares: ***If you make the Most High your dwelling-- even the LORD, who is my refuge-- then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. For 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.***

The bloodiest battle of the American War Between the States was at Sharpsburg, Maryland, also known as Antietam. In one single day, over 23,000 men were killed and wounded. Photographs of the aftermath of the battle graphically reveal the sad carnage of this one-day bloody battle from a war that lasted 4 years.

In Revelation 12 there is a painting, a snapshot, of a war that's being waged for over the last 2000 years: *And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down-that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.* Re 12 This word painting condenses all of New Testament Church History, including all of us here today, into one grand portrayal of the victory that is ours through God and His holy angels led by the archangel, Michael. Most Bible scholars believe that this Michael actually portrays Jesus Himself who leads His angelic army in the defeat of Satan and his evil angels. The name Michael means, "Who Is Like God?"

This word-painting straight from the last Book of the Bible explains why the Psalm writer makes this bold declaration: *If you make the Most High your dwelling-- even the LORD, who is my refuge-- then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. For 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 praise God and thank Him for His salvation and the protection that is ours even through His Holy angels! Amen.