**Notes for Next Sunday**

St. Michael and All Angels Sunday

**The Point of this Week’s Readings**

Old Testament (Daniel 10:10-14, 12:1-3). As in previous visions, Daniel is touched, strengthened, and given the ability to understand by the one speaking with him. Here Daniel is touched by a heavenly being (angel) sent by God. The divine man’s greeting, “do not be afraid” (10:12), serves as a comforting benediction and absolution that was often spoken by God and his angels to believers. The *Prince of the Persian kingdom* is a spiritual being, perhaps a fallen angel, who contended for Persia. Enter Michael. Michael is called “one of the chief princes” (10:13), the equivalent of “archangel” (Jude 9). Thus it is possible that in addition to Michael himself, other angels under his command (Rev 12:7) were posted at the Persian court. After a brief delay the evil force is vanquished. Michael protects all God’s children whose names are written in the book of life because of their faith which has been worked in their hearts by God.

Epistle (Revelation 12:7-12). The warfare in heaven must be interpreted as a spiritual struggle in which the dragon (devil) attempts to displace the Christ Child, the victorious Lamb who was slain, in order to establish himself again in the presence of God as the prince of the angels and as the one who has dominion over humanity on earth, and specifically as the one who has the authority to stand before God and accuse people for their sins. The war and expulsion described in Revelation 12 happened as a result of Christ’s victory and elevation. Not only is Satan judged, because of Christ’s triumphant return to his heavenly Father’s throne, Satan is now expelled and banished forever from God’s presence. And finally, at the End when Christ returns, Satan and all his fellow evil spirits will be cast forever into hell, the lake of fire (Rev 20:10; cf. 2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6). (CC)

Gospel (Matthew 18:1-11). In the previous readings the angel Michael is depicted as the protector of God’s people. Here Jesus is proclaiming that the greatest in the reign of heaven is the one who is, in fact, in a condition of lowly powerlessness and who willingly acknowledges his own emptiness and utter inability in spiritual things. The message is clear: the littlest ones must not be despised, because God Himself treasures and values them! Believers can be certain that angels keep watch over them (Ps 91:10–11). This text is the basis for the depictions of “guardian angels” common in art. (TLSB)

*For more in-depth commentary on each reading, read the notes found after each text below.*

OLD TESTAMENT – Daniel 10:10-14. 12:1-3

**10 A hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees.  11 He said, “Daniel, you who are highly esteemed, consider carefully the words I am about to speak to you, and stand up, for I have now been sent to you.” And when he said this to me, I stood up trembling. 12 Then he continued, “Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them.  13 But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia.  14 Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come.”**

*10:13* This particular demon took up his position over Persia to attempt to foil God’s plans involving this nation. The NT describes the demonic possession of certain individuals, and declares that worship of pagan gods and idols really is demon worship (1 Cor 10:20–21), but this passage shows that a demon can gain a position of influence over an entire pagan nation or people. This is also one of the clearest portrayals in Scripture of opposition by the devil and his evil angels to God, his holy angels, and his salvific purpose, which ultimately is to redeem all people through his Son, Jesus Christ. (CC)

*12:1* Michael was charged to care for Israel but this reference may include “new Israel,” the Church. (TLSB)

*12:3 those who are wise.* With so much coming at a person at all at once it is difficult to always make wise decisions. One way to help the decision-making process is to be in the Word constantly.

*12:3 will shine like brightness of the heavens.*  They will live in the glory of heaven getting their light from Christ.

EPISTLE – Revelation 12:7-12

**.﻿7﻿ And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. ﻿8﻿ But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. ﻿9﻿ 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. ﻿10﻿ Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. ﻿11﻿ They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. ﻿12﻿ Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short.**

*12:8 the dragon and his angels*. Satan and his demonic cohorts. (TLSB)

*12:9* *dragon was hurled … to the earth.* Not the original casting of Satan out of heaven, but his final exclusion—an explanation of his intense hostility against God’s people in the last days (vv. 12–17). (CSB)

*12:12 rejoice you heavens.* The “great voice” (Rev 12:10) then calls upon the very “heavens” themselves and all “those who dwell in them” to “break out in celebration” (12:12)! At various times the heavens were invoked to hear and to testify to God’s words and promises. Now they praise God for the fulfillment of those words and promises. The angels are invited to rejoice with the elders and all the people of God. Though the angels are not the recipients of the saving victory of Christ, they, nevertheless, celebrate with the followers of the Lamb (cf. Rev 5:11–14). They also celebrate because their Lord, the Christ of God, has returned triumphantly to claim his rightful seat at God’s right in the council of angels. (CC p. 338)

*12:12 his time is short.*† The period of final, intense hostility of Satan toward the people of God (cf. 20:3). While Satan has lost his power to accuse, he has not yet been cast into the lake of sulfur (20:10). (CSB)

Until his final banishment in hell (20:10), the devil will spare no effort in attacking the faithful (cf 12:17). As he nears the end of his run, the devil’s attacks will become increasingly furious (cf 20:7–10). (TLSB)

GOSPEL – Matthew 18:1-11

**At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” ﻿2﻿ He called a little child and had him stand among them. ﻿3﻿ And he said: “I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. ﻿4﻿ Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. ﻿5﻿ “And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. ﻿6﻿ But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. ﻿7﻿ “Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to sin! Such things must come, but woe to the man through whom they come! ﻿8﻿ If your hand or your foot causes you to sin cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. ﻿9﻿ And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.**

*18:1* The disciples seem to have had a recurring dispute about who was the greatest (20:21; Lk 22:24). Jesus used their question as the occasion for His fourth major discourse, in which He taught how Christians should act toward one another. (TLSB)

*18:6 causes…to sin.* Prompting a fellow believer to sin through tempting words or bad examples. (TLSB) It includes adults who are weak in their faith life.

*18:6* *large millstone.* Lit. “a millstone of a donkey,” i.e., a millstone turned by a donkey—far larger and heavier than the small millstones (24:41) used by women each morning in their homes. (CSB) Such a person would be better off if he died a violent death before becoming guilty of such a sin. It would be better to be destroyed bodily than to be guilty of destroying a child spiritually. (PBC)

*18:8-9 hand or foot causes you to sin.* Before you cripple or blind yourself, however, realize that no member of your body can be responsible for causing you to sin. The problem is how you use your body. Jesus is not teaching self-mutilation, for even a blind man can lust. The point is that we should deal as drastically with sin as necessary.”

*18:10 see the face*. Angels have direct access to our Father in heaven, who cares greatly for each of His little ones. (TLSB)