

Sermon for the Feast of St. Michael & All Angels

'I shall declare the decree, "Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the nations for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.'"

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So it is written in the second Psalm. The poetry of God.

Such seems cruel in our world, where peace has been wrought by the force of American power and the threat of nuclear deterrence. But such peace is just that; a peace forged by the throttling of the world with the potential of ungodly and unimaginable bloodshed.

Such threats have forced a violent world into a peaceful world, yet only by force. For this world remains a place governed by men, and governed by men's sin; the sin born of the fall; the fall born of Satan; Satan, the god of this world.

It is hard for us to read such poetry in Bible, for it seems mean, and we think of ourselves as kind, civilized, living in a kind world, for weapons of mass destruction have a way of keeping everyone at their best manners; an armed society is a polite society; and an armed world is a diplomatic world. But whether it is massacre in Ukraine, or murder in the streets of any American city, we are made to realize, Satan is the god of this earth.

This is a fallen place, filled with fallen men. If only one would *break it with a rod of iron*.

In the Middle Ages, when the Church was besieged by the Turk in the south, and the Golden Hord, the Mongol, in the East, there was a belief that a Christian kingdom, long forgotten, in the midst of Asia, was ruled by a Christian minister, known only as Prester John. Prester meaning priest. John meaning *'the grace of*

God.'

In Christendom's darkest hour, when all had seemed lost, when the pagan Mongol would enslave the masses in Europe, and the Turk would crush the fleets of Italy, and the armies of the Europe, then, salvation would come. It would come from the East; Prester John, the grace of God himself; he would come, to deliver the Old World from the bloodlust of the idolatrous Mongols, and from the fanaticism of the zealous Turks.

Such a savior would never come, for such a king never existed. And rightfully so, for it is written, '*put not your trust in princes.*'

Satan is the god of this world. A fallen angel, rebellious, and born of envy; seeking to overthrow man, the image of God, and in opposing God's image, opposing Almighty God himself. In this world, his world, there is no salvation to be found, among powers and princes, politicians and social programs.

Who then shall oppose the devil, the Leviathan, who inhabits the heart of every sinner, and infects the will of all the powerful? You cannot, for you have his forked tongue in your ear; nor shall your government, it is but power over men, power wielded by those who desire it, those who desire it because they are frail, like you and like me; frail because they too bend the knee to the prince of this world. It is not their fault. They have no choice; and why? Because they are like you, and like me; children of the world. The world *that must be broken*.

If a strong man spoil a house, he remains, unless a stronger man there enters in to bind him.

This day I tell you of the stronger man, the Christ, born of the virgin, the Holy Mother Mary. Now He has come into this world; and now will He free His people of all oppression, of sin, death, and of the devil; this barbarian tyrant. He has come to take what is rightly His, every Christian soul. The Lord has come, and bearing the cross in His left hand as an emblem, and a sword in His right, He has come to free us from slavery to the powers of this world, He has come to give us life. The one true king has returned.

Today we celebrate the Feast of St. Michael and All Angels, for Our Lord does not come alone. He has come with a great army, to drive off the heathen gods, those made of stone and wood that would enslave us, objects of our imagination which

we then enthrall ourselves to. This, today we celebrate, this army of God, which watches over us day by day, which protects the citizens of the kingdom of heaven with eternal vigilance. We give thanks to the Lord, God Almighty, as we see His host surround us, St. Michael, his spear, which pierces the breast of demons.

It pierces the breast of demons, because it must pierce the hearts of men, for Satan does not reign in capitals of great nations, nor in the seats of media personalities, nor in the fame of stars. He reigns in the heart of every mortal, you and me, the image of God, yet fallen.

Today we celebrated a baptism. A priest pouring water, by the grace of God. This is nothing less than an act of war against the prince of the power of the air.

It is no easy thing to be a Christian. It is no easy thing to be baptized. All it is, is to join the great war of Christ against all that is wicked, not in faceless others, but in our own selves. Christ has forgiven us of the guilt of sin, now He guides us in destroying sin's evil. This is the meaning of what we say when *we renounce the devil, and all his works, and all his ways*. We have abandoned the kingdom of Hell, for the *kingdom of heaven is at hand*.

Now the angels join us in this combat, for love of us. And for this reason we start our days and end our days, *our going in and going out*, in the same way, *'let your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me.'*

The Lord indeed will break the nations. Yet He only breaks that He place it back together, like setting a bone; for even the world 'religion' simply means 'the joining back together.' And this, the second Psalm tells us He will do, that the first Psalm might be fulfilled:

'For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.'

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Preached by Pastor Fields

Sermon Texts: Daniel 10:10-14, 12:1-3; Revelation 12:7-12; Luke 10:17-20.