



[Rev. Steven S. Billings](#)

**Sermon for Saint Michael & All Angels**

September 29, 2024

## Battle of Heaven and Earth

### Revelation 12:7–12

*<sup>7</sup>Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, <sup>8</sup>but he was defeated and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. <sup>9</sup>And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. <sup>10</sup>And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. <sup>11</sup>And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. <sup>12</sup>Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!”*

"Woe to you, O earth & sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows the time is short!" "Woe to the world for temptations to sin! . . . woe to the one by whom the temptation comes!" (Mat. 18:7)

Such woes cause us to pause and to ponder the gravity of these words. “Woe” signals danger. And there is great danger mentioned in today’s text. The death Satan wants for you is the eternal one – the one that lasts forever – the eternal death of hell.

But what of the battle Michael and his angels won? By this defeat, the devil was cast from heaven, without a claim to anything in God's kingdom. But that snake didn't fall straight to hell; instead, he fell to earth, where that wily serpent suckered Adam and Eve in the garden. And, since causing the fall of all humanity, this world became Satan's pryncedom. Here, his woes abound, death and despair reign, and he accuses us, saying that we deserve hell, too. And you know what? We do.

You may wonder, “Why does the devil pick on me so much? Why is he constantly attacking me?” The devil is on the attack against you because you’ve been baptized. You notice, he never bothers with atheists, heathens, and others who don't belong to God. But you’ve been named with God's own name. At your baptism, God claimed you as His very own dear child. But this has marked you in Satan's sights. It's placed a target on your back for him to aim at. And because you sin, his accusations tend to hit home.

But, because of your baptism, you have a protection against the devil's assaults! You were redeemed by Christ the crucified at the font! You now belong to God because of the



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ransom price Jesus paid for you in His crucifixion. Satan cannot snatch you from God's almighty hand, which is Jesus! At the name of the Triune God, into which you were baptized, the devil is exorcized from your midst, having been defeated by Jesus at the cross. When Satan brings to mind your unworthiness to be God's child, trying to get you to jump out of God's hand, say,

"Satan, hear this proclamation:  
I am baptized into Christ;  
drop your ugly accusation,  
I am not so soon enticed!"  
(LSB 594:3a)

Satan accuses you because, quite frankly, he has plenty of material to work with; you and I have been guilty of many sins. The devil is the prosecuting attorney in the divine courtroom, indicting you for the various crimes you've committed against the Law of God. You haven't loved God with your whole heart. You haven't loved your neighbors as much as you've loved yourself. And no, it's not just you; he indicts all of us brothers and sisters in Christ. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. You have no defense of your own. You're as guilty as I am. We deserve the woes of hell.

But, you see, we have an unlikely Witness who comes to our defense. It's your own Lawyer, your defense attorney, bought and paid for by the great Judge Himself, your Father in heaven, and it is Jesus Christ, His Son, who advocates for you by His own testimony. He takes the stand and declares, "Though you've done the crime, I've already done your time!" Satan is stunned. At Calvary, Jesus enacted a blessed exchange for you. He took your sins as His burden, bearing them in His own body on that tree, and suffering there the curse of hell in your stead. In trade, He gives you His own righteousness, credited to your account freely, by grace through faith, so that, in His death, you now live!

The devil attacks the Church for the same reason he attacked Jesus – because the Church is the Body of Christ. The ruler of angels, who is the likeness of God Himself, kicked that nasty dragon out of heaven long ago, and Satan ever since has sought his revenge. He tried to kill Jesus soon after He was born, then entered Judas to betray Him, and since Jesus ascended, Satan has attacked the Church.

But your confidence remains in Christ. For He has gained for you the salvation, power, and kingdom of God. Today, He feeds you with His very body given for you in death, and gives you His blood shed at Calvary for you to drink. You are what you eat, they say. As believers in Christ, you are blessed to be forgiven in this sacrament. And you know that where there is the forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation. Satan is conquered through the blood of the Lamb – Jesus Christ.



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The great battle of heaven and earth has been fought, beloved, but it wasn't the one between Michael and Satan; it was the one Jesus fought for us upon the cross. At the cross, Jesus kept that age-old promise to Eve that her Seed would strike the death-blow upon the head of the ancient serpent. Through Christ's victory, you may now rejoice, because, as much as Satan and his angels were cast out of heaven, heaven has been opened for you. It is now your home, for you are in Christ, who is seated at the right hand of the Father, making intercession for you, and keeping you connected to God, now and always, through His most gracious Word and Sacrament. Thanks be to God! In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen