

I.N.I.

Third Sunday of Easter  
April 18, 2010  
II Kings 6:8-17

In Christ Jesus, who is praised by Angel hosts and sends His Angels to keep watch over us, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

Have you ever looked at a picture and seen something and then were told to stare at a portion of that picture and suddenly you see a completely different figure appear. It is really quite amazing. At one time you see something and then as you look more intently something different appears.

Well that is how it is in this life when one looks at the history of this world. When one looks at it from the eyes of secular history we see one thing. But when we closely examine the world's history from another viewpoint, from God's viewpoint we see something entirely different.

And probably nowhere is that better demonstrated than in our sermon text for this morning. From our text we find that---

**Viewing life from God's perspective means having---  
OPENED EYES to see His unseen spiritual army!**

In our modern day with satellites and listening devices we have the ability to detect where people are hiding and what they are saying from miles away. But that is not how God frustrated the King of Syria's plans to destroy Israel. God used His omniscience. He knew what the King of Syria was planning and heard what he was plotting with his generals. And then in some miraculous way the Lord revealed these plans to the prophet Elisha. Every time Syria's men came to the certain place for a secret attack, the Israelites were ready. This happened more than a few times.

Of course the King of Syria naturally thought that some of his men were traitors, revealing their positions to the Israelites. He accused his officers: **"WILL YOU NOT SHOW ME WHICH OF US IS FOR THE KING OF ISRAEL?"**

But it was not man who had revealed his plots and positions, but God. Somehow his officers heard that Elisha knew of these things. They reported: **"NONE, MY LORD, O KING; BUT ELISHA, THE PROPHET WHO IS IN ISRAEL, TELLS THE KING OF ISRAEL THE WORDS THAT YOU SPEAK IN YOUR BEDROOM."**

The officers knew that they were up against a greater power than themselves. Perhaps the King knew this also, and yet in his spiritual blindness he sent his men to capture Elisha and thereby stop this from happening. How **FOOLISH!** If Elisha knew in advance the king's plans for attacking Israel, wouldn't it also seem logical that Elisha would know of the king's plans to have him captured?

But that didn't stop this unbelieving king from going out to get his man---**THEREFORE HE SENT HORSES AND CHARIOTS AND A GREAT ARMY THERE, AND THEY CAME BY NIGHT AND SURROUNDED THE CITY.**

Like a good field general, the king was not going to take any chances. Perhaps this king knew what happened some years earlier when Ahaziah, the King of Israel tried to capture Elijah, Elisha's predecessor. He sent 50 men to arrest Elijah, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them all. He sent another 50 and the same thing happened. God protected His prophet. But the King of Syria was no dummy. He didn't send 50 men, he sent so many that he completely surrounded the city in which Elisha was staying. There would be no escape. There would be so many that even God

couldn't protect and deliver His prophet. Again what folly! Man thinks that numbers make the difference, but with God whether there are 50 or 50 million against Him makes no difference at all.

But for Elisha's servant there indeed was a difference. For when he woke up early that morning and saw the hills and valleys filled with horses, chariots and soldiers he despaired. He cried out: **"ALAS, MY MASTER! WHAT SHALL WE DO?"**

He forgot how the Lord had been with His prophet in so many other inescapable situations; in so many other grim encounters; so many other dire straits. He lacked the eyes of faith to see the unseen army surrounding and protecting him and Elisha. He did not view life from God's perspective.

And isn't that so true of every one of us. Be the problem or situation big or small, life threatening or life changing—so often we first despair and cry out like this servant: "Oh, my Lord, what should I do?"

Our children become ill, or we are diagnosed with a disease and we panic. We are in danger of losing our job and fear fills our hearts. We fall behind financially and we wring our hands with worry. Troubles and trials beset us and we quickly despair. With blind eyes we too have looked at the many, many troubles and problems that surround us and we do not see God's protection and deliverance.

So God has to come to us with the same message Elisha had for his servant: **"DO NOT FEAR."** How often haven't we heard those words: "Do not be afraid? Do not fear!" Jesus said it to His disciples many, many times. The angels said it to the shepherds at Jesus' birth and to the women at the empty tomb after His resurrection. **DO NOT BE AFRAID!**

And yet our timid, fear-filled, often times spiritually blind heart looks at this world from our own perspective and then it is scary and we are filled with more fear. We are surrounded by real dangers everyday. Accidents, diseases, death, weather disasters, financial loss, government economic failure, nuclear war; terrorist attacks—the list of calamities and dangers could go on and on. From man's perspective the odds are not in our favor. And if you do get through life without cancer or some other serious illness---it's because "you were lucky!" If you were relatively free from misfortune and calamities---it's because "you got the breaks!"

The child of God, the believer in Christ on the other hand looks at life from God's perspective. There is no luck in this world! There is no blind fate to which we are all prisoners! No! There is a loving, heavenly Father who takes care of us day after day like a shepherd takes care of His little lambs; gently guiding and leading us; protecting and providing for us. And many times unknown to us He uses His unseen army of angels.

Elisha said: **"DO NOT FEAR, FOR THOSE WHO ARE WITH US ARE MORE THAN THOSE WHO ARE WITH THEM. LORD, I PRAY, OPEN HIS EYES THAT HE MAY SEE."** And in answer to his prayer the Lord opened the eyes of the servant so that he could see what normally cannot be seen. **"AND HE SAW. AND BEHOLD, THE MOUNTAIN WAS FULL OF HORSES AND CHARIOTS OF FIRE ALL AROUND ELISHA."**

What a marvelous sight that must have been! Imagine the wide eyes of this young servant as suddenly these spiritual creatures, unseen to mortal's eyes, were seen by him.

The Scriptures are filled with references to these spiritual messengers and servants of God. Angels appeared to Abraham, to Jacob, rescued Lot and his family from Sodom and Gomorrah. In Psalm 34:7 we read: **THE ANGEL OF THE LORD ENCAMPS ALL AROUND THOSE WHO FEAR HIM, AND DELIVERS THEM.** In Psalm 91:11-12 we are told: **FOR HE SHALL GIVE HIS ANGELS CHARGE OVER YOU, TO KEEP YOU IN ALL YOUR WAYS. IN THEIR HANDS THEY SHALL BEAR YOU UP, LEST YOU DASH YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.**

Daniel was protected by angels in the lion's den. An angel directed Mary & Joseph on their flight into Egypt. In our second Scripture reading from Acts we hear of an angel setting Peter free from prison and a few chapters earlier an angel did the same thing opening the doors of the prison and releasing several of the apostles from jail.

In Matthew 18:10 Jesus tells us: **"TAKE HEED THAT YOU DO NOT DESPISE ONE OF THESE LITTLE ONES, FOR I SAY TO YOU THAT IN HEAVEN THEIR ANGELS ALWAYS SEE THE FACE OF MY FATHER WHO IS IN HEAVEN."**

In Hebrews we are told that angels are ministering spirits (servants of God) sent to serve those who will inherit salvation (the believers in Christ). The angels rejoice over every sinner that repents and is brought to saving faith in Jesus. The angels were at most of the chief events in God's Kingdom—announcing the conception of Jesus; announcing the birth of Jesus; proclaiming His resurrection at the empty tomb; proclaiming His glorious return at His ascension; and they shall return with the glorified Christ on the last great Day of Judgment.

What about us? Can we look back at our lives and see God's active presence in protecting us with His unseen army? Or have we passed those situations off as lucky breaks, close calls, chance happenings, or fate? One man wrote: **The clearer sight we have of the power of heaven, the less we fear the calamities of this earth!**

We should indeed thank our heavenly Father for sending His angels to protect, defend and provide for our welfare. This they do everyday of our lives without any recognition or fanfare, without our even knowing it. May we view our life from God's perspective!

But we should never give to angels spiritual worship. We are not to pray to them or honor them as we do God; for they remain created beings—spiritual, unseen beings.

In Rev. 22 we hear them tell the Apostle John who had fallen down before them in worship: **"SEE THAT YOU DO NOT DO THAT. FOR I AM YOUR FELLOW SERVANT, AND OF YOUR BRETHREN THE PROPHETS, AND OF THOSE WHO KEEP THE WORDS OF THIS BOOK. WORSHIP GOD."**

How often we fret, we worry, we despair!

As we still bask in the glorious news of two weeks ago, the Good News of a risen Lord and Savior, a Savior who shed His blood and died for us and now lives again--we can replace all worries, fears, doubt and despair with confident joy and rejoicing in our resurrected Lord and Savior who has saved us from sin, death and the devil. Heaven is ours! Eternal life is secured to us!

But also in our everyday life our ever-living Savior sends His holy angels to watch over us and protect us from all harm and danger. May our eyes of faith remain open to see our Father's goodness; His forgiving love through our Savior, and His protective unseen army of powerful angels watching over us.

Amen.