

Let's pray.

*Father in heaven, look down from above  
Bless Mommy and Daddy and all whom I love  
Let angels watch over my slumber and when  
The morning is breaking, awake me. Amen.*

A fabulous bedtime prayer for little ones. Children, if you're scared of the dark or scared of what's under your bed you should know what God says in Psalm 91. HE COMMANDS HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU. Is that a fabulous prayer for grownups? You aren't as scared of bedtime as you used to be, but you also need to know that HE COMMANDS HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU.

As you hug your loved one before surgery, you're thankful for doctors, and you're glad that he commands his angels concerning you. When you merge into traffic at 75 mph, you're glad he commands his angels concerning you. As you worry about the world your grandchildren will inherit, you're glad he commands his angels concerning you.

There's no monster under your bed, but this world is a scary place. And you have a reason to NOT be afraid. Please read with me. **"He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.'** (Ps. 91:1-2) To anyone here who wears a bullet proof vest, God says, **"You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day."** (Ps. 91:5) We call heart disease the silent killer. Yet God says, **"Nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness."** (Ps. 91:6) The opioid epidemic, depression, suicide, these are no secrets! Yet God says, **"nor the plague that destroys at mid-day."** It's true that bad things happen to Christians, but it's also true that **"He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart."** (Ps. 91:4).

One of the ways God protects you is in Psalm 91:11. Read with me. **"He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you in all your ways."** If you're going to face bullets and diseases and death you don't need this guy. [Picture of cupid.] Thankfully, that's not how the Bible describes angels. You don't need "Angels in the Outfield." That's now how the Bible describes angels. You don't need one of your dead relatives to come back and put a hand on your shoulder. Thankfully, that's not how the Bible describes angels.

Here's how the Bible describes angels.

- They were created by God, they were very good!
- They are invisible spirits who don't normally have a body. (Hebrews 1:14).
- Sometimes they appear as terrifying winged creatures (Isaiah 6:2), other times they look like human beings. (Hebrews 13:2)

- But they are NOT human beings. They are way stronger than us. For example, **“The LORD sent an angel, who annihilated all the fighting men and the commanders and officers in the camp of the Assyrian king.”** (2 Chronicles 32:21).
- But God doesn’t have just one angel. Remember what we read in Revelation? **“Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand.”** (Revelation 5:11)

Angels are God’s army of super-soldiers and get this: HE COMMANDS HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU! An angel could catch a stray bullet like it’s a pop fly. An angel could guide the hand of a heart surgeon more precisely than any technology. An angel could direct traffic better than any police officer, and because God loves you, they do!

But here’s the problem. Angel’s aren’t enough. God’s army can keep you safe from bad guys and diseases. But the world is scarier than it looks. There are things scarier than arrows flying by day and bullets in the street, scarier than disease and scarier than drunk drivers. Read with me the words of the Apostle Paul, **“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.”** (Ephesians 6:12)

*Spiritual* forces of evil—are you thinking what I’m thinking? The devil and his demons. They want to destroy you. And the devil is all over Psalm 91.

- ✓ Psalm 91 mentions angels, and the devil was created as an angel. That means he’s as powerful as that angel who destroyed the whole army.
- ✓ Psalm 91 talks about a cobra and a great serpent. At the beginning of the world the devil came to Adam and Eve as a snake. He did worse than bite them. He tried to kill their trust in God. He asked, **“Did God really say you should not eat from the tree? You will not surely die.”** (Genesis 3:1-4) He lied. He always lies. And the scariest thing: they believed him. Do you?
- ✓ Psalm 91 talks about a fowler’s snare. A bird hunter puts bird seed in a net and when the bird takes the bait, WHAM! He’s caught! The devil is a patient hunter. He makes a lie look like just what you need and then he waits for hours, days, years, decades. He waits for you to love this lie more than you love Jesus. Then, WHAM! Could he catch you?
- ✓ Psalm 91 talks about a lion. St. Peter wrote, **“Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”** (1 Peter 5:8) Could he eat you?

But the scariest thing is not when Psalm 91 talks about the devil. It’s when the devil talks about Psalm 91. He loves to take God’s promise and uses it to tempt us. One time **“the devil took [Jesus] to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written:**

**“He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.”** (Matthew 4:5-6). He’s a liar! He says to you, “He will command his angels concerning you, so go ahead, have still another drink. Go ahead, those laws about texting and driving are silly. Go ahead indulge yourself with that woman who is not your wife. No one will get hurt. Remember, he will command his angels concerning you.” He lies. And the scariest part: we believe him.

*Though devils all the world should fill, all eager to devour us.  
We tremble not, we fear no ill, they shall not overpower us.*

Make no mistake, this world is scarier than it appears! There are thousands of super-soldier, serpent-lions who hate you, but we are NOT afraid! Why not?

*With might of ours can naught be done; Soon were our loss effected,  
But for us fights the valiant one, Whom God himself elected.  
You ask who is this?*

Well it’s not an angel! As strong as they are, we have a champion even fiercer!

*Jesus Christ it is, The almighty Lord.  
And there’s no other God; He holds the field forever.*

Do you remember how he did it? When the devil quoted Psalm 91 and tempted Jesus to jump off the temple, Jesus didn’t give an inch! He quoted God’s word right back at Satan. **“It is written, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test!’”** We might believe that liar, but, Jesus, all his trust in God. The devil is scary, but he’s no match for your Savior!

Jesus’ followers learned all about that in the gospel for today. Remember when they said to Jesus, **“Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.”** Jesus said, **“I saw Satan fall like lightning from the sky.”** (Luke 10: 17-18). What did Jesus see? He saw that on top of the temple when he whooped the devil. He saw every day when he resisted temptation. But most of all Jesus saw himself on the cross. With his perfect life and with his death on the cross, Jesus nullified every victory Satan has won over you. Jesus took the consequences for all our failures and he gave us victory over Satan.

Let’s read this together. **“Surely he will save you from the fowler’s snare.”** (Psalm 91:3) Can you picture Jesus ripping open the net? Let’s read. **“You will tread upon the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent.”** (Psalm 91:13) Can you see him pulverizing your predators? Jesus did what no angel could do. **“The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work.”** (1 John 3:8).

There’s a picture like this in your bulletin. That’s St. Michael on top and the devil getting crushed. That’s described in Revelation 12. In the picture St. Michael is defeating the devil with a spear. But do you know what weapon he uses in Revelation 12? Here’s

a direct quote: **“They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb”** (Revelation 12:11). If you are a child coloring in your bulletin, or if you’re taking notes, draw a droplet on the end of Michael’s weapon. That’s your reminder that there is one thing the devil can’t stand—the blood of Jesus. **“The blood of Jesus purifies us from all sin.”** (1 John 1:7)

Do you wonder what the angels think of all that? They’re obsessed with Jesus!

- In the Old Testament the prophet Isaiah sees angels and he says, **“I am ruined! I am a man of unclean lips!”** **“Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, ‘See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.’”** (Isaiah 6). Angels are obsessed with Jesus taking away our sins.
- Right before Christmas, Joseph saw angels. What did they say? **“She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”** (Matthew 1) Angels are obsessed with Jesus saving us from our sins.
- When Jesus rises from the dead, his friends meet angels who say, **“I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said.”** (Matthew 28) Angels are obsessed with Jesus.

Guess what they talk about at Christmas. Jesus. At ascension? Jesus. What are they singing about in heaven? **“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!”** (Revelation 5:12) Angels are obsessed with Jesus.

So they don’t want us to be obsessed with them. Don’t worship angels. Don’t pray to angels. Be like angels. Be obsessed with Jesus.

*Father in heaven, look down from above  
Bless Mommy and Daddy and all whom I love  
Let angels watch over my slumber and when  
The morning is breaking, awake me. Amen.*

Today is a good day for little kids and grown ups to remember that he commands his angels concerning you. But Jesus saved you from the devil. Every day is a good day to remember that.

Would you pray with me?

*I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ your dear Son, that you have graciously kept me this day. Forgive me all my sins, and graciously keep me this night. Into your hands I commend my body and soul and all things. Let your holy angel be with me, that the wicked foe may have no power over me.  
Amen.*