

Pastor Writes

Greetings to you! The theme for our morning's meditation is, 'Praise to God in union with all the hosts of heaven'. Today is also a Sunday when our WFCS are leading and participating in the service. We also mark this day in memory of Pandita Ramabai who was an active social reformer who worked for the emancipation of women. In 1889 Ramabai established the Mukti Mission in Pune as a refuge and a gospel witness for young widows, deserted and abused by their families. She also started the Sharada Sadan which also provided housing, Education, Vocational Training, for any needy groups including widows, orphans and the blind. She was also a very well learned woman and translated the bible into Marathi from the original Hebrew and Greek. Today we give thanks to God for her life. This day has also been marked as Michael and all angels day. We give thanks to God also for the angelic beings who are there to serve God's people. Michael is the archangel who fights against Satan and his forces. In the book of Revelation the ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan who leads the whole world astray was hurled to the earth along with all his angels by Michael and his angels. Angels are there to praise God and to serve his people.

In the Old Testament reading from second Kings we see that the king of Aram was at war with Israel and every time he planned to attack Israel it was already revealed to Israel because of the prophet Elisha. The king of Aram then sent an army of horses and chariots in order to capture Elisha. When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early in the morning, he saw that the whole city was surrounded by horses and chariots. He asked Elisha, what shall we do? Elisha told him, 'Don't be afraid. Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.' Elisha prayed, 'Open his eyes, Lord, so that he may see'. Then the Lord opened the servant's eyes and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. Then Elisha prayed then the Lord would strike the enemies with blindness and the Lord did so. The king of Israel asked Elisha whether he should kill them. Instead Elisha asked him to give them food and water and send them back. In this way the bands from Aram stopped raiding Israel.

In the Gospel passage the disciples came to Jesus questioning as to who would be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus called a little child to him, and placed the child among them and said, 'Truly I tell unless you change and become like little children you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.' Therefore whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus also warns people that they should not despise any of the little ones because 'their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father.' In other words angels always watch over the little children.

In all these three passages we see God is continuously sending his angels to protect his people from every attack of the evil one. In the first passage we noted that God's servant Michael and all his angels fought on God's behalf to defeat Satan and his hosts. Even though Satan has been thrown down and defeated by Christ, he still tries to accuse us and attack us. However, we can be reassured that God watches over us. In the second passage we noted that the servant of Elisha's eyes were opened to the fact that 'those who are with us are more than those who are with them.' God's protective army surrounded Elisha and the others from the king of Aram. In a similar manner God's protective care extends to all those who are his children. In the final passage from St. Matthew, Jesus reminds us of the need to take care of children and those who are new in faith because their guardian angels are always watching over them.

As we look back we praise God with all the hosts of heaven for his continuous protective care and for his faithfulness in our lives.

Shalom

Paul Swarup

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