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## *The Armies of Heaven and the Eyes of Faith*

*March 1, 2019*

**Sermon Text:** 2 Kings 6:17

**Scripture Reading:** 2 Kings 6

Col 3:2-4 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. (3) For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. (4) When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

This morning, I want to call your attention to this matter of setting our minds on things that are above, not upon things that are on earth. It is this thing that John calls not loving the world, because it is passing away, and what Paul elsewhere calls “loving His appearing.”

As you watch the world, follow the news, listen to the wicked spouting off and often apparently winning the day, you can become discouraged. We have lived through long years when just about any time a critical case came before the supreme court, the ruling was going to favor the wicked. You grow to expect it. And it is still happening many times now.

But the Lord frequently reminds us in Scripture that all is not as it appears. He tells us things like this:

Psa 2:4 He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision.

And,

2Ki 6:17 Then Elisha prayed and said, "O LORD, please open his eyes that he may see." So the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

These things become increasingly real and encouraging to us as we grow older. We live our lives here, at least during the first half or so (as if we know exactly how long we are going to live!) pretty much of the mindset that the end of our earthly life is a long way off. But eventually that changes and we realize that even if we live out our days without getting taken out by some car wreck or terminal illness, we aren't going to go on here forever. And the thoughts, therefore, of any thinking person, are going to be driven to consider – what comes next?

Col 3:2-4 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. (3) For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. (4) When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Let me show you one way that we can do what Paul is talking about here – *set our minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.* Mindset. An interesting term. What is your mindset?

*“A person's way of thinking. The inclination of one's thoughts.”*

This world? Or on things above where Christ is?

Consider one theme of Scripture that repeatedly shows us things that are “above.” Things that we must see by with the eyes of faith. Things that the natural man cannot see.

Here was Elisha in a city called Dothan in Israel. The king of Syria was after him because Elisha kept tipping off the King of Israel about the schemes and movements of Syria, their enemy. So the King of Syria comes to Dothan and surrounds it with a huge army:

2Ki 6:14-15 So he sent there horses and chariots and a great army, and they came by night and surrounded the city. (15) When the servant of the man of God rose early in the morning and went out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was all around the city. And the servant said, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?"

The servant saw, but he only saw one part of the picture. And this then is when Elisha replies to him:

2Ki 6:16-17 He said, "Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." (17) Then Elisha prayed and said, "O LORD, please open his eyes that he may see." So the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around

Elisha.

Elisha's servant's eyes were opened so that he saw the armies of heaven. That is what we want to consider this morning. **The armies of heaven**, so that we understand *those who are with us are more than those who are with them*. This is an example of how we set our minds on things above, not on things on earth.

Here are some more statements on the very same subject by people who knew about the armies of heaven:

Psa 27:1-3 Of David. The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? (2) When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh, my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall. (3) Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident.

Psa 34:7 The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them.

Psa 91:9-11 Because you have made the LORD your dwelling place-- the Most High, who is my refuge-- (10) no evil shall be allowed to befall you, no plague come near your tent. (11) For he will command his angels

concerning you to guard you in all your ways.

And we see it once more in Jesus' statement:

Mat 26:47-53 While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. (48) Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I will kiss is the man; seize him." (49) And he came up to Jesus at once and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" And he kissed him. (50) Jesus said to him, "Friend, do what you came to do." Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized him.

(51) And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. (52) Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. (53) Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, **and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?**

A legion in the Roman army was 3,000 to 6,000 soldiers so, 36-72+k. But this army of heaven that Jesus speaks of does not consist of Roman soldiers. No. Each soldier in the army of heaven

is *an angel*. Consider what just a couple of these angels can do:

Gen 19:11-16 And they struck with blindness the men who were at the entrance of the house, both small and great, so that they wore themselves out groping for the door. (12) Then the men said to Lot, "Have you anyone else here? Sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone you have in the city, bring them out of the place. (13) For we are about to destroy this place, because the outcry against its people has become great before the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it." (14) So Lot went out and said to his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters, "Up! Get out of this place, for the LORD is about to destroy the city." But he seemed to his sons-in-law to be jesting. (15) As morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, "Up! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be swept away in the punishment of the city." (16) But he lingered. So the men seized him and his wife and his two daughters by the hand, the LORD being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city.

So the Lord's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was effected through just two angels. Just two.

Heb 1:13-14 And to which of the

angels has he ever said, "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet"? (14) Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve **for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?**

Now, there is in fact a Day coming when the armies of heaven will appear. And there will be far more than only 12 legions. Here it is, given by the Apostle John:

Rev 19:11-14 Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. (12) His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. (13) He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. (14) **And the armies of heaven**, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses.

Here is another account of that very same Day, this time described for us by Paul:

2Th 1:5-10 This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering-- (6) since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction

those who afflict you, (7) and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, **when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels (8) in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.** (9) They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, (10) when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.

As we are learning in the Sunday School class, to pray for the return of Christ is to pray an imprecatory prayer! It is to pray that the Lord would come and judge the wicked with His vast angelic army.

The Bible gives us glimpses into heaven, and many times these glimpses are of the armies of heaven. Here is still another account that gives us a bit of an idea about the power of these legions:

Mat 28:2-4 And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. (3) His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. (4)

And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men.

This army, you see, *is for us*. In fact its very existence is to render aid to Christ's people. It is real, but like the present nature of the kingdom of God, it is hidden from natural sight. One day that will all change.

Rev 6:14-17 The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. (15) Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, (16) calling to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, (17) for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"

To see and believe these things is to learn what Elisha's servant learned:

"Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them."

This then, seeing the armies of heaven, is just one example of what Paul describes as "setting our minds on things above." I was thinking about this quite a lot this last week. All I

have ever known in the 68 years of my life is *this present world*. I believe the promises of the Lord, but when we walk by faith, we don't walk by sight. I have never seen with my eyes or touched with my hands or heard with my ears the kingdom of God directly. What have I seen? –

- This present body
- My parents
- The houses I lived in
- The friends I grew up with
- The things I like to do

Just like you. But as those of you in particular who are in the later years of your life will affirm, *all of those things and people are passing away*. I am passing away. And as the years go by I am finding it increasingly important to set my mind on things above where my true life is hidden with Christ. It's hidden right now from sight:

- My resurrection body
- The vast territory and mansion Christ has given to me
- My real family
- Christ Himself
- The New Earth
- My true and real *life*

Hidden, but nevertheless real. Out of sight like the armies of heaven, but definitely there, ready in the flash of an eye to be revealed to every eye.

Think on these things. Set your mind on these things.

Luther said it:

Let goods and kindred go,  
This mortal life also,  
The body they may kill,  
God's truth abideth still,  
His kingdom is forever.