

Archangel Michael

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To the angel who had redeemed me from all evil. (Geneses 48:16)
To Michael the leader among all the heavenly hosts.
To the Archangel who fought Satan and his followers until there was no
place for them in heaven any longer.
To the holy Angel who rolled the stone away from the tomb, and
announced the resurrection.
To the faithful intercessor who prays on our behalf day and night,



REMEMBER US IN FRONT OF THE THRONE OF GOD

A Glorious Name

God created the angels to serve Him, and also to serve the human beings who were created in His Image, and according to his Likeness. "He Makes his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire." (Hebrews 1:7)

The word "Michael" is a Hebrew word which means "who is like God." It seems that all angels were created holy, but after a period of probation some fell from their state of innocence, due to a deliberate self-determined rebellion against God. We do not know the time of their fall, but it is clear that it occurred before the fall of man, for Satan deceived Eve in the Garden of Eden.

"And war broke out in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought. But they did not prevail, nor was a place for them in heaven any longer." (Revelation 12:7-8)
Scripture also shows that good angels will continue in the service of God in the future age, while evil angels will have their part in the lake of fire. (Matt. 25:41)

Another encounter happened between the Archangel Michael, and the devil. "Yet, Michael the Archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" (Jude :9)

Therefore, since God gave the Archangel Michael the responsibility to defeat Satan and his evil angels, Michael ought to be present during the resurrection of the Lord, the even which crushed Satan and completed Michael's work. He had to announce the victory of the Lord over the evil powers, and his own joy to see the Devil bound by the blood of Jesus who was rising victoriously from the tomb. In other words, Michael's mission was a temporary one, until the cross of Jesus crushed Satan completely.

"And behold there was a great earthquake for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning and his clothing as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men. But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen." (Matt. 28:1-6)

The word "angel" means "messenger". Angels are created beings, described as spirits (Heb 1:14). Although without a bodily organism, they have often revealed themselves in bodily form to man. Lord Jesus said that they do not marry, and do not die (Luke 20:34 -36). They are of various ranks and endowments (Col. 1:16). The heavenly creatures can be classified into nine orders according to the following celestial hierarchy: Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominions, Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Archangels, and Angels.

The work of the angels is varied. They stand in the presence of God and worship Him (Matt. 18:10), they assist, protect, and deliver God's people (Gen. 19:11; Acts 5:19). Angels have an important place in the ministry of messenger from God to Mary and Joseph. A multitude of angels also made their appearance in connection with His birth to the shepherds. After the wilderness temptation of Jesus they ministered to Him (Matt. 4:11), an angel strengthened Him in the Garden (Luke 22:43); and angels were with Our Lord at the ascension (Acts 1:11)

Our Coptic Orthodox church who receives the pledge of the heavenly life is awaiting the mutation of human beings in the likeness of angels. The believers always chant hymns for the angels, bless them, request their prayers, set feasts in their names, especially the Archangels Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael. For our church finds a kind of heavenly joy through her feeling that she is accompanied by the angels. Origen (an Orthodox theologian) says that angels as friends of the Groom (the Christ) prepare the Church (the people of God) during the time of her espousal to meet Him personally. These are the guardian angels who protect the children, and who always see the face of the Father.

St. Athanasius states that the angels, who descended from heaven to announce the coming of Christ, went back to heaven on His ascension to announce to the heavenly creatures that they must open the doors for the King of Glory.

The following miracle about the Archangel Michael was also told by St. Athanasius:

A poor man once lived in the city of Alexandria . The man was also very lazy. His wife used to work and support him, while he spent the whole day in his bed. She used to tell him that he should get up and find a job, since they were very poor, but he always got mad, and said that he never worked and that he couldn't. She told him to pray to the Archangel Michael to help him.

Michael appeared to him and told him, "Go in the city to a certain man and ask him to lend you some gold for a period of one year. If he says that he needs a guaranty, tell him the Archangel Michael is your guarantor."

The poor man did exactly what Michael told him and borrowed the money. He traveled to a far away land where he started a business. His new venture was so successful that he made a lot of money, and became rich. When the year was over he wanted to pay up his debt, but he was very far. (There was no mail at that time.) So he put the gold in a water proof sack and went to the shore of the ocean. He called, "My intercessor and guarantor the Archangel Michael please, deliver this money to the good man who lent it to me." Then he threw the sack in the water.

The Archangel told a big fish to swallow the sack and to swim to the man's city. When it was the twelfth of the month, the feast day of Michael, the good man told his men to go fishing and prepare for the feast. His men caught only one big fish, and when they opened it, they found the sack. They took the sack and gave it to the good man, who didn't open it but kept it in a safe place.

After a few months, the poor man, who was now rich, came back to his city. His wife and his friends were very and happy and they celebrated for days. But the good man called him, and said, "Wasn't I merciful to you, and lent you the gold for the sake of the Archangel? Why then didn't you come and pay your debt?" The man told him what he did, and when they opened the sack, they found the gold in it. They both praised the Archangel Michael, and they lived to tell their story to everyone. May the

intercession and prayers of their Archangel Michael, and all the heavenly hosts be with us all. Amen

Another miracle of Archangel Michael

On this day the church celebrates the feast of the honored Archangel, Michael, the head of the hosts of heaven, who stands at all times before the great throne of God, interceding on behalf of the human race.

Joshua, the son of Nun, saw him in great glory and was frightened by him and fell on his face to the earth and said to him, "Are you for us, or for our adversaries?" So he said, "No; but as Commander of the army of the Lord... I have given Jericho into your hand ... and its king." (Joshua 5:13-15, 6:2).

The Archangel Michael was with all the saints and martyrs. He strengthened them and enabled them to endure patiently until they finished their strife.

Festivals of commemoration are held and alms offered in his name on the twelfth day of each Coptic month. An example of one of his wonders: A God-fearing man whose name was Dorotheus and his wife Theopista, held a festival of commemoration for the honored angel Michael on the twelfth day of each month. It happened that this righteous family fell on hard times and had nothing to celebrate with for the commemoration of the honored Michael. They took their clothes to sell so that they might have a feast. Michael the Archangel appeared to Dorotheus and commanded him not to sell his clothes, but to go to a sheep-master and to take from him a sheep worth one-third of a dinar. He was also to go to a fisherman and to take from him a fish worth one-third of a dinar but Dorotheus was not to slit open the fish until he came back to him. Finally, he was to go to a flour merchant and to take from him as much flour as he needed. Dorotheus did as the Angel commanded him. He invited the people, as was his custom, to the feast honoring the Archangel Michael. When he went into his storeroom looking for wine for the offering, he found that all the containers had been filled with wine and many other good things. He marvelled and was astonished. After they had finished the celebration and all the people had departed, the Archangel appeared to Dorotheus as before and commanded him to cut open the belly of the fish. He found 300 dinars of gold and three coins each is a third

of a dinar. He told him these three coins were for the sheep, the fish and the flour, and the 300 dinars were for him and his children.

God had remembered them and their oblations and had rewarded them here, in this world and in the kingdom of heaven on the last day. As Dorotheus and his wife were astonished at this matter, the Archangel Michael said to them, "I am Michael the Archangel who delivered you from all your tribulations and I have taken your oblations and alms up to God, you shall lack no good thing whatsoever in this world." They prostrated themselves before him and he disappeared and went up into heaven. This was one of the innumerable miracles of this honored Angel.