

Letter to a prisoner

Archangel Michael & about Angels

Seven Archangels

Nine Ranks of Angels

Prayers to Archangel Michael, Angelic Host & the Guardian Angel.

Gleanings for the Fathers about Angels.

Priest Seraphim Holland 2016

Aug 5, 2016

Dear ...:

I can explain some things about Archangel Michael, by answering your questions, and a little more besides.

Michael is a compound word. It does have part of the name of God in it, as you thought. "Elohim" is a name for God. In the Old Testament Elohim occurs over 2000 times. Elohim is first used in Gen 1:1. It is usually translated "God". "El" also means "God, or perhaps "Strong one". "El" is usually followed by a modifier – for instance - **El** Shaddai is conventionally translated as "**God** Almighty"

The name "Michael" means "Who is like God!".

It comes from the first actions as a messenger of Michael's long and holy career. By the way, the word "angel" means "messenger". The primary purpose of angels in relation to man is to bring messages to man. The first "message" recorded from Michael was not to man, but to the entire angelic host who were still in obedience to God. Lucifer (the name means "shining one") was the most beautiful and intelligent of, and the leader of the entire angelic host. He fell into pride, and desired the angels to worship him, and not God. One third of the angelic host was persuaded by him, and they rebelled against God. Michael, full of zeal, became the general of the obedient angels, and routed the disobedient angels from heaven.

These disobedient angels are now called demons. Angels and man are similar, but also different. Angels are part of the "invisible world" that was created before the visible world. We refer to them as "bodiless", which is not absolutely true. Only God is bodiless. All created things have bodies, but the bodies of angels are different from the visible world, being finer and invisible to us.

They also live in a different way related to time than we do. Man can sin, and repent. Angels made one decision, before the physical world was created, and they do not change. Demons will never repent, and good angels will never become bad. I think a good metaphor for their condition is as follows. A man can stand over a precipice as long as he wants. As long as he does not jump, he will not fall. Once he jumps, he can undo his jump, and he will continue falling until he hits the ground. The demons are continuing to fall. '

“And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, (8) And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. (9) And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.” Revelation 12:7-9

We know of seven Archangels:

1. Michael (“Who is like unto God” or “Who is equal to God?”), whom we call "Archistrategos", or "Supreme Commander of the Heavenly Hosts”
2. Gabriel (“Man of God”),
3. Raphael (“Healing of God”)ⁱ,
4. Uriel ("Fire of God")ⁱⁱ,
5. Salathiel ("Prayer to God" or “Intercessor of God”),
6. Jegudiel ("Praise of God" or “Glorifier of God”)
7. Barachiel ("Blessing of God")
8. Some add an 8th, Jeremiel (“God’s exaltation”)

St. Michael has been depicted from earliest Christian times as a commander, who holds in his right hand a spear with which he attacks Lucifer, Satan, and in his left hand a green palm branch. At the top of the spear there is a linen ribbon with a red cross. The Archangel Michael is especially considered to be the Guardian of the Orthodox Faith and a fighter against heresies.

Gabriel is the herald of the mysteries of God, especially the Incarnation of God and all other mysteries related to it. He is depicted as follows: In his right hand, he holds a lantern with a lighted taper inside, and in his left hand, a mirror of green jasper. The mirror signifies the wisdom of God as a hidden mystery.

Raphael is depicted leading Tobit (who is carrying a fish caught in the Tigris) with his right hand, and holding a physician's alabaster jar in his left hand. (Tobit 3:17, 12:15).

Uriel (III Esdras 3:1, 5:20 [II Esdras RSV]) is depicted holding a sword against the Persians in his right hand, and a fiery flame in his left.

Salathiel is depicted with his face and eyes lowered, holding his hands on his bosom in prayer.

Jegudiel is depicted bearing a golden wreath in his right hand and a triple-thonged whip in his left hand.

Barachiel is depicted holding a white rose in his hand against his breast.

Jeremiel is venerated as an inspirer and awakener of exalted thoughts that raise a man toward God (III Esdras 4:36)ⁱⁱⁱ

The Scripture refers to the angels in many places, and through piecing together various scriptures, especially from St Paul, as well as holy tradition, we know that there are at least nine ranks of the angelic hosts.

Cherubim, Seraphim, and Thrones form the highest rank,

the next rank includes **Principalities, Dominions, Authorities,**
and the latter rank includes **Powers, Archangels and Angels^{iv}.**



The "Angelic Council" An Eastern Orthodox Church icon of the "Seven Archangels." From left to right: St Jegudiel, St Gabriel, St Salathiel, St Michael, St Uriel, St Raphael, St Barachiel. Beneath the mandorla of Christ Emmanuel are representations of Cherubim (in blue) and Seraphim (in red)

Of course, we are acutely aware that all of the angelic host intercede for us, particularly our guardian angel (whom the Lord referred to^v).

You asked if Michael helps us directly when we ask for his intercession, or if he send some from the angelic host. Both are possible. We have historical events when Michael was present and intervned directly in human affairs, for many, or even just one person. He is also a commander, and has many angels who are obedient under his command.

Here is a little about the miracle at Chonae.

The Remembrance of the Miracle, worked by the Holy Archistrategos (Heavenly Hosts Leader) Michael, at Khona (IV): In Phrygia, not far from the city of Hieropolis, in a place called Kherotopos, there was a church named for the Archangel Michael, and outside the church flowed a health-curative spring.

This church was built through the zeal of a certain inhabitant of the city of Laodiceia in gratitude to God and to the holy Archistrategos Michael, who had appeared in a dream vision to this man -- the father of a mute girl, and who then had not yet been illumined by holy Baptism, and revealed to him, that his daughter would receive the gift of speech in drinking from the water of the spring.

During her drinking the girl actually did receive healing and began to speak. After this miracle, the father with his daughter and all their family were baptized, and in fervent gratitude the father built the church in honor of the holy Archistrategos Michael.

And for healing began to come to the water-spring not only Christians, but also pagans. In so doing, many of the pagans turned from their idols and were converted to the faith in Christ.

At this church of the holy Archistrategos Michael a certain pious man by the name of Archippos served over the span of 60 years as church-attendant. By his preaching and by the example of his saintly life he brought many a pagan to faith in Christ.

With the general malice of that time towards Christians, and even moreso against Archippos, who had never forsaken the church and gave example of a real servant of Christ, the pagans gave thought to destroying the church and at the same time kill Archippos.

Towards this end they made a confluence of two mountainous rushing streams and directed its combined flow against the church. Saint Archippos prayed fervently to the Archistrategos Michael to ward off the danger. Through his prayer the Archangel Michael appeared at the temple, and with a blow of his staff opened into the mountain a wide fissure and commanded to flow into it the rushing torrents of water. The temple thus remained unharmed. In beholding such an awesome miracle, the pagans fled in terror, and Archippos together with Christians gathered in church glorified God and gave thanks to the holy Archangel Michael for the help. The place where the miracle happened received the name "Khona", which means "opening" or "fissure".

You asked if an angel can still fall today, and can a fallen angel be redeemed. I answered those questions, above.

You asked about a prayer to Archangel Michael. I have a bunch. We commemorate all the angelic host on every Monday/ there are specific feast days in the church calendar for Michael and all the angelic host. We have an Akathist hymn to Michael with two beautiful prayers at the end of it. I am sure there are more prayers to be found.

Prayers to Archangel Michael, the Angelic Host and the Guardian Angel

Monday- The Bodiless Hosts Troparion, Fourth Tone: Supreme Commanders of the heavenly hosts, we unworthy ones implore you that by your supplications ye will encircle us with the shelter of the wings of your immaterial glory, and guard us who fall down before you and fervently cry: Deliver us from dangers since ye are the marshals of the hosts on high.

Kontakion, Second Tone: Supreme Commanders of God and the ministers of the Divine Glory, guides of men and leaders of the angels, ask for what is to our profit and for great mercy, since ye are the Supreme Commanders of the Bodiless Hosts.

Sep 6/19, The MIRACLE OF THE ARCHANGEL MICHAEL AT CHONAE.

Troparion of the Archangel Michael Tone 4 Michael, Prince of the armies of heaven/ thou didst overshadow the Church/ like a cloud raining waters of immortality. / Thou didst preserve it as another ark and turn rivers aside with thy spear, / to the glory of the Faith and the rejoicing of the faithful.

Nov 8 SYNAXIS OF THE HOLY ARCHANGELS MICHAEL AND GABRIEL AND ALL THE BODILESS POWERS

Another Troparion of the Angels Tone 1 Let us praise Cherubim, Seraphim, Thrones, Powers, Authorities and Principalities, / Dominions, Archangels and Angels, / for they are the Bodiless ministers of the Unoriginate Trinity/ and revealers of incomprehensible mysteries. / Glory to Him Who has given you being; glory to Him Who has given you light;/ glory to Him Who is praised by you in thrice-holy hymns.

Kontakion of the Angels Tone 2 Supreme Leaders of God's armies and ministers of the divine glory, / princes of the bodiless Angels and guides of men, / ask what is good for us and great mercy, / as Supreme Leaders of the Bodiless Hosts.

A Prayer to Archangel Michael, the Mighty Warrior O Lord God, Great and Eternal King! Send, O Lord, Thy Archangel Michael to help Thy servant (*name*), and to deliver me from all my enemies, visible and invisible.

O Archangel Michael, angel of the Lord and vanquisher of demons! Suppress all my combatants, make them meek as sheep, and disperse them like dust before the wind.

O great Michael, Archangel of the Lord, six-winged high prince, leader of the heavenly host, the Cherubim and the Seraphim!

O kind Archangel Michael, be my helper in all offenses, sorrows and woes, in the desert, at the crossroads, be a safe haven on rivers and seas.

Deliver me, O great Archangel Michael, from all the temptations of the demons, when they hear me, thy sinful servant (*name*), praying to thee, and calling upon thee, and entreating thy holy name: hasten to assist me and heed my prayer.

O great Archangel Michael! Vanquish all my opponents by the power of the Holy and Life-giving Heavenly Cross of the Lord, by the prayers of the Most-holy Theotokos and the holy apostles, the holy prophet of God Elias, Saint Nicholas the wonder worker, Saint Andrew the fool-for-Christ, the holy great martyrs Nikitas and Eustace, the venerable fathers and holy hierarchs, martyrs, and all the heavenly host. Amen.

Akathist prayer to Archangel Michael O Holy and Great Archangel of God Michael, who standest, as the first of the Angels, before the ineffable and super-substantial Trinity; who art placed as a watcher and keeper over

the human race; who hast with thine armies crushed the head of the proud Lucifer in the heavens and brought forever to shame his wickedness and treachery on earth!

To thee we have recourse in faith, and thee we entreat with love: be thou an indestructible shield and firm rampart for the holy Church and the Orthodox Christians, guarding them by the lightning power of thy sword from all enemies visible and invisible.

Be thou a guardian Angel, a wise counsellor and companion of the Christian people, bringing them enlightenment, strength, joy, peace and consolation.

Be thou a leader and a companion in battle to those who strive for the Orthodox Faith, so that all who fight against us may know that God and His Holy Angels are with us.

Forsake us not, O Archangel of God, with thy help and protection, who today glorify thy holy name: for behold, even if we are have sinned greatly, nevertheless we would not perish in our misdeeds, but rather turn to the Lord and be enlivened by Him unto good works.

Illumine our minds with the light of God, which ever shineth on thy lightning-like brow, that we may come to understand what the good and perfect will of God for us is, and know all that we must do, and all that we must despise and shun.

Strengthen, by the Lord's grace, our weak will and infirm intention, so that, confirmed in the law of the Lord, we may cease to be cast about by worldly thoughts and lusts of the flesh, or like thoughtless children to be drawn by the perishing glamour of this world, lest by corruptible and earthly things we foolishly forget the eternal and the heavenly.

And above all these things, ask for us from on high the spirit of true repentance, unfeigned sorrow before God, and contrition for our sins, so that we may spend the days that remain of this passing life, not in pleasing ourselves and serving our passions, but rather in effacing the evils we have committed, by the tears of faith and heartfelt contrition, by striving for purity and the holy works of mercy.

And when the time of our demise shall approach, and of our liberation from this body of clay, leave us not, O Archangel of God, without defense against the spirits of evil under heaven, who surround us to close off the ascent on high for human souls; so that, guarded by thee, without stumbling we may attain unto those glorious habitations of Paradise, where there is neither sadness nor sighing, but life without end, and may be granted to see the light-filled Face of our all-good Lord and Master, falling with tears at His feet, crying out in joy and gladness:

Glory to Thee, our most dear Redeemer, Who for Thy great love toward us unworthy ones hast seen fit to send Thine Angel as a minister of our salvation. Amen.

Another prayer from the Akathist: O holy Archangel Michael, luminous and awesome captain of the heavenly King!

Before the fearsome Judgment set me free, that I may repent of my sins; deliver my soul from the snares of the pursuers and lead it to God Who created it, Who sitteth upon the cherubim, and do thou earnestly pray in its behalf, that by thy mediation He may send it to a place of rest.

O dread captain of the hosts of heaven, intercessor for all at the throne of Christ the Master, steadfast protector of all men and wise warrior, mighty general of the heavenly King, have mercy on me, a sinner, who am in need of thine assistance; protect me from all enemies, visible and invisible, and, still more, fortify me against the

fear of death and the vexation of the devils; and make me worthy to stand unashamed before our Creator at the hour of His dread and righteous Judgment.

O most holy and great Michael, supreme commander, disdain me not, a sinner, who entreat thee for thy help and aid in this world and in that which is to come, but vouchsafe me there to glorify with thee the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, unto the ages. Amen of ages. Amen."

Prayer to the Holy Guardian Angel: Holy Angel of Christ, I fall down and pray to thee, my holy Guardian, given me from holy Baptism for the protection of my sinful body and soul. By my laziness and bad habits, I have angered thy most pure light, and have driven thee away from me by all my shameful deeds, lies, slander, envy, condemnation, scorn, disobedience, hatred of brother, grudges, avarice, adultery, anger, meanness, greed, gluttony, drunkenness, loquacity, negative and evil thoughts, proud ways, having self-will in all the desires of the flesh. O my evil will, which even the dumb animals do not follow! How canst thou look at me or approach me! With what eyes, O Angel of Christ, wilt thou look at me so badly snared in vile deeds?

How can I ask forgiveness for my bitter, evil and wicked deeds, into which I fall every day and night, and every hour?

But falling down, I pray to thee, O my holy Guardian: pity me, thy sinful and unworthy servant (Name). Be my helper and protector against my wicked enemy, by thy holy prayers, and make me a partaker of the Kingdom of God with all the Saints, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen. (From the supplicatory canon to the Guardian Angel, in the Prayer book)

If you feel sweetness or compunction at some word of your prayer, dwell on it; for then our guardian angel is praying with us. St. John Climacus, "The Ladder of Divine Ascent," (Boston: Holy Transfiguration Monastery, 1978), Step28: On Holy and Blessed Prayer, the Mother of Virtues, and on the Attitude of Mind and Body in Prayer)

In the presence of an invisible spirit, the body becomes afraid; but in the presence of an angel, the soul of the humble is filled with joy. Therefore, when we recognize the presence from the effect, let us quickly hasten to prayer, for our good guardian has come to pray with us. St. John Climacus, "The Ladder of Divine Ascent," (Boston: Holy Transfiguration Monastery, 1978), STEP 21: On Unmanly and Puerile Cowardice

The angel who is always near us is by nothing so distressed and made indignant as when, without being constrained by some necessity, we deprive ourselves of the ministration of the Holy Mysteries and of reception of Holy Communion, which grants remission of sins. For at that hour the priest offers up the sacrifice of the Body of Him Who gives us life, and the Holy Spirit descends and consecrates the Body and Blood and grants remission to creation. The Cherubim, the Seraphim, and the angels stand with great awe, fear, and joy. They rejoice over the Holy Mysteries while experiencing inexpressible astonishment. The angel who is always by us is consoled, because he also partakes in that dread spectacle and is not deprived of that perfect intercourse. s.

Isaac the Syrian

When you close the doors to your dwelling and are alone you should know that there is present with you the angel whom God has appointed for each man...This angel, who is sleepless and cannot be deceived, is always present with you; he sees all things and is not hindered by darkness. You should know, too, that with him is God, who is in every place; for there is no place and nothing material in which God is not, since He is greater than all things and holds all men in His hand. St. Antony the Great (On the Character of Men no. 62)

Demons often transform themselves into angels of light and take the form of martyrs, and make it appear to us during sleep that we are in communication with them. Then, when we wake up, they plunge us into unholy joy and conceit. But you can detect their deceit by this very fact. For angels reveal torments, judgments and separations; and when we wake up we find that we are trembling and sad. As soon as we begin to believe the demons in dreams, then they make sport of us when we are awake too. He who believes in dreams is completely inexperienced. 'But he who distrusts all dreams is a wise man. Only believe dreams that warn you of torments and judgments. But if despair afflicts you, then such dreams are also from demons. St. John Climacus, The Ladder of Divine Ascent

Do not be surprised if you fall every day and do not surrender. Stand your ground bravely. And you may be sure that your guardian angel will respect your endurance. A fresh, warm wound is easier to heal than those that are old, neglected, and festering, and that need extensive treatment, surgery, bandaging, and cauterization. Long neglect can render many of the incurable. However, all things are possible with God. St. John Climacus, The Ladder of Divine Ascent, 5

Do not the angels differ from us in this respect, that they do not want so many things as we do? Therefore, the less we need, the more we are on our way to them; the more we need, the more we sink down to this perishable life. St. John Chrysostom

Even if an angel should indeed appear to you, do not receive him but humiliate yourself, saying, 'I am not worthy to see an angel, for I am a sinner.' St. Clement of Rome

Since angels and souls are incorporeal beings, they are not in a particular place, yet neither are they everywhere. They do not sustain all things, but themselves depend on Him Who sustains them. Hence they, too, are in Him Who sustains and embraces all things, and they are appropriately delimited by Him. The soul, since it sustains the body with which it is created, is everywhere in the body, although not in the sense of being located in a place or encompassed, but it itself sustains, encompasses and quickens the body, by virtue of the fact that it is in God's image. St. Gregory Palamas, Philokalia, Vol. IV

There are three things that impel us towards what is holy: natural instincts, angelic powers and probity of intention. Natural instincts impel us when, for example, we do to others what we would wish them to do to us (cf. Luke 6:31), or when we see someone suffering deprivation or in need and naturally feel compassion. Angelic powers impel us when, being ourselves impelled to something worthwhile, we find we are providentially helped and guided. We are impelled by probity of intention when, discriminating between good and evil, we choose the good. St. Maximos the Confessor (Second Century on Love no. 32)

When Abba Agathon went down to the city to sell some of his baskets and to procure a little bread, he found near the market place an old, poor cripple. "For the love of God, Abba," the cripple began to plead on seeing the Saint, "don't you, too, leave this poor wretch unaided. Bring me near to you."

Abba Agathon picked the man up and sat him next to him in the place where he had set up his baskets to sell them. "How much money did you make, Abba?" the cripple would ask each time that the Elder sold a basket. "Such and such," the Elder would tell him. "That's good enough," the cripple finally said. "Won't you buy me a little pie, Abba? That would be good of you, since I have not eaten since last evening." "With pleasure," the Saint told him, immediately fulfilling the cripple's request. Shortly thereafter, the cripple requested some fruit. And then some sweet. Thus, for each basket that was sold, the Saint spent the proceeds, until, thanks to his patronage, all of the baskets and money were gone, without his having kept even two pennies for himself. More importantly, he did this all with great eagerness, even though he knew that he would thus go perhaps two weeks without any bread for himself. Since he had sold his last basket, the Saint got ready to leave the marketplace. "So you're going?" the cripple asked him. "Yes, I have completed all of my work." "Uh, do me the favor of taking me as far as the crossroads, and you can leave for the desert from there," the strange old man again pleadingly said. The good Agathon took the cripple on his back and carried him to the place where he wanted to go, though with great difficulty, since he was exhausted from his day's work. As soon as he reached the crossroads and started to put down his living burden, he heard a sweet voice say to him: "May you be blessed, Agathon, by God, both on earth and in Heaven. "The Saint raised up his eyes to see who it was who had spoken with him. The would-be old man had completely disappeared, since he was an Angel sent by God to test the Saint's love. The Desert Fathers

See http://www.orthodox.net/gleanings/guardian_angel.html

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ⁱ Raphael figures prominently in the OT book “Tobit”.

ⁱⁱ “And the angel that was sent unto me, whose name was Uriel, gave me an answer...” (2Esdr 4:1)

ⁱⁱⁱ http://www.spc.rs/eng/holy_archangel_michael_and_all_bodiless_powers_heaven

^{iv} Angels, Archangels, Cherubim and Seraphim are referred to many times in the Scriptures. Here are references to the other 5 ranks not as commonly mentioned:

“For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be **thrones**, or **dominions**, or **principalities**, or **powers**: all things were created by him, and for him:” (Col 1:16)

“Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and **authorities** and powers being made subject unto him.” (1 Pet 3:22)

^v “Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.” (Mat 18:10)