

Pope Shenouda III series
10

THE ANGELS

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ALL THE PREDICATION OF SAINT MARK***

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His Holiness Pope Shenouda III
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Predication of the Evangelist St. Mark

In the Name of
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
the One God,
Amen

This pamphlet speaks to you about:
The creation of the angels as souls of light
Their number, their holiness, and their ranks
The archangel Mikhail and the archangel Gabriel
The cherubim and the seraphim
The work of the angels with God
Their work in the second coming
Their work in annunciation and in delivering messages
Their work in mercy, and their guarding
Their work in punishment
Others jobs
Satan, his origin, his fall, his work, his deception, his
end.

Pope Shenouda III

PREFACE

In this pamphlet we shall talk to you about the angels: about their being souls of light, about their holiness, their number, their power, and their ranks.

We shall mention the cherubim and the seraphim, and the rest of the ranks. Then we shall mention some examples of the divine apparitions in the name of "the angel of the Lord".

After that, we shall talk about the kinds of angels' work, their work in the service of God, in the second coming, in annunciation and delivering messages. And also their merciful deeds, their guarding, their punishment and others deeds.....

We shall end with a word about Satan as chief of the wicked angels.

*the 12th of Kiahk 1715
Feast of the archangel Mikhail
Pope Shenouda III*

SOULS OF LIGHT

Angels are souls. They were created on the first one of the six days; when God said: "Let there be light" (Gen. 1:3).

And there was light. The angels were a part of that light, according to what the angel was described as being "an angel of light" (1 Cor. 10:14). It was said likewise about their creation: "Who makes His angels spirits, His ministers a flame of fire" (Ps. 104:4).

Therefore they are beautiful heavenly souls of light

And when it was said: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1), what was meant is that He created the heavens with all that they contained, and all who were in them, these are the angels.

As an example of the illumination of the angels, it was said in the Apocalypse: "After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory" (Revelation 18:1). That one with whose glory the earth was illumined, must necessarily have been of extreme beauty, and also having magnificent power and illumination.

Also it was said about the angel of the Resurrection who rolled the stone: "His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow" (Matt. 28:3).

And in the story of the deliverance of the apostle saint Peter from prison, it was said: "Now behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him and a light shone in the prison" (Acts 12:7).

How many are the examples of the illumination of the angels!

HOLY

What is most important about the angels, is that they are pure souls who are qualified by their holiness.

Therefore we say to the Lord about them in our prayers: "Your pure angels" (in the prayer of the offerings). Also we say in the prayer of "the breaking" in the holy mass: "the holy angels". The Bible also surnames them: "the holy angels" (Matt. 25:31).

They are holy, and do not sin although they have the freedom of will.

They have passed the examination. Those of them who have succeeded were crowned with righteousness.

That reminds us of the word of the apostle saint Paul: "I have fought the good fight, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to

me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing" (2 Tim. 4: 6-8).

He who will obtain the crown of righteousness on the last Day, will live in righteousness in the eternity where there will be no sin anymore.

Thus the angels in their righteousness are distinguished from the wicked angels (the devils) who were tested and failed, and lost their righteousness.

Therefore we liken to the angels, those who arrive at the extreme righteousness as human beings.

The monks who live the life of righteousness are thus described, in their nearness to God, as being earthly angels. Thus also it was said of saint Stephanos, the first deacon, who was "full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom" and "full of faith" (Acts 6: 3,5), that "all who sat in the council, looking steadfastly at him, saw his face as the face of an angel" (Acts 6:15).

By this righteousness, they were also called: "the sons of God" (Job 1:6), "nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection" (Luke 20:36).

It was said about the righteous in the Kingdom that "they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven" (Mark 12:25).

They are in perfect purity as regards the body, and they are naturally far away from corporal intercourse, but rather there is no sex and no gender in them.

Being angels they live constantly in the life of the spirit, as spiritual beings, walking permanently in the spirit, without mixture with material things.

THEIR NUMBER

We say to the Lord in the gregorian mass "***Thousands of thousands stand before You. Ten thousands times ten thousands present their service to You***".

That is millions and tens of millions. This is rather a simple remark about their very huge number.

This expression has been taken from one of the visions of the prophet Daniel where he says about the Lord: "A thousand thousands ministered to Him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him" (Daniel 7:10). Likewise saint John the visionary said in the book of the Apocalypse: "I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" (Apoc. 5:11). The psalmist says in the psalm:

"The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of thousands" (Psalm 68:17).

What we say in the "prayer of the breaking" in the mass of saint Basilios, is enough: "the innumerable multitude of the heavenly powers". It was also said in the book of the prophet Jeremiah: "As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, nor the sand of the sea measured" (Jeremiah 33:22).

HAVING STRENGTH AND POWER

The psalmist says in the psalm about angels: "Bless the Lord, you His angels, who excel in strength, who do His word, hearing the voice of His word" (Psalm 103:20).

The angels are so strong "that the angel of the Lord went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses, all dead" (2 Kings 19:35). What strength is that?! There is no army among the strongest armies in the world who can be described in this manner.

Also the two angels who went to Sodom "struck tne men who were at the doorway of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they became weary trying to find the door" (Genesis 19:11).

When king Herod raised his heart and: [So on a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat on his throne and gave an oration to them. And the people kept shouting: "The voice of a god and not of a man!" Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him because he did not give glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and died] (Acts 12: 21-23).

We note that the angel of the Resurrection, when he came to the tomb, made a great earthquake, and rolled back the stone (Matt. 28:2).

Let us not forget also what is written in the book of the Apocalypse about the strength of the angels who had the seven trumpets, and the giant dreadful events which they made when they sounded. (Apoc. 8: 5-13).

The visionary saint John says: "I saw still another mighty angel coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud. And a rainbow was on his head, his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire. He had a little book open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, and cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roars" (Apoc. 10:1-3).

RANKS

There are ranks of angels, (or crews and groups):

Among them there are the angels (the powers or the hosts).

We say about the Lord pointing to them: "the Lord of hosts", as the prophet Micaiah likewise said: "I saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing on His right hand and His left" (2 Chron. 18:18).

And among them the archangels. They are seven.

The visionary saint John said about them in the book of the Apocalypse: "And I saw the seven angels who stand before God" (Apoc. 8:2). And he said that they are: "the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth" (Apoc. 5:6). He described them as being lamps and said: "And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God" (Apoc. 4:5), or the seven spirits of angels who are God's.

The commander of these is Mikhail, who is surnamed the "Commander of the army of the Lord" (Joshua 5:14).

THE ARCHANGEL MIKHAIL

This name of his is a Hebrew name meaning "who is like God".

He is in a general manner, the commander of the angels. The Holy Church asks for his intercession in every mass, in the hymns, prayers, and songs. His feast is monthly celebrated on the twelfth of every Coptic month, and the miracles which he has operated are mentioned. There are some books which were written about these miracles. Some families have the habit of making "the cakes of the angel" (feteer el malak) and they distribute them to their friends and loved ones, and they remember that a miracle (relatively to these cakes) happened to a certain family by means of the archangel Mikhail.

The icon of the archangel Mikhail is set up in every church, where he is dressed in a soldier's dress as "commander of the army of the Lord". He has a spear in his hand by which he pierces Satan who appears as a dragon, as it is written in the book of Revelation: "And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon". Michael triumphed in that war, and he cast the devil out of heaven (Apoc. 12: 7-9). We have chosen this icon of the archangel Michael to be the image which is printed in this pamphlet of "the Angels".....

Thus a church is built up in every monastery on the topmost of the tower, as the archangel Mikhail is considered the guardian of the monastery.

How many are the churches which are built in the name of the archangel Mikhail in cities in all the continents, as a sign of his love and intercession.

In view of the greatness of the archangel Mikhail, the proselites of the doctrinal deviation of "the witnesses of Yehovah", believe that the Lord Christ is the archangel Mikhail!! and so also believe the doctrinally deviated Adventists.

Because of the love of people for the archangel Michael, many people are called by his name, whether in the Hebrew or in the Coptic language (Mikhail), or by his name in English (Michael), or in French (Michel). They are also called by the name of "Maak" (meaning angel), or "Abdel Malak" (meaning the servant of the angel).

Many jews in the Old Testament were called by his name (look in the dictionary of the Holy Bible).

Our Church believes that the archange Mikhail is the angel of the Resurrection, as it came in (Matt. 28). Therefore we say in the "prayer of the breaking" at Easter: [Mikhail, the commander of the angels, came down from heaven, and rolled back the stone from the mouth of the tomb, and announced the women who carried the spices and fragrant oils saying: Christ is risen from the dead"].

It is said of him in the book of the prophet Daniel: "Michael the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people" (Dan. 12:1).

In spite of the greatness of the archangel Michael, we see his humility, as it was mentionned in the epistle of Jude: [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).

And we note that the archangel Michael is the one who came to help the archangel Gabriel, when the devil, "the prince of the kingdom of Persia", stood before him to oppose him. (Dan. 10: 11-13).

His name is mentionned in (Dan. 10:12), and in (Jude 9), and (Apocalypse 12:7).

THE ARCHANGEL GABRIEL

He is also one of the commanders of the angels. His name in Hebrew means the strength of God or the power of God. Sometimes the pronounciation of his name is Ghobrial.

He is the one who announced to the priest Zacharias that his sterile wife will give birth to a son who will be called John (Luke 1:13). He mentionned some prophecies about that son, that show the knowledge of the future by the angels, according to a manifestation to them by God;

and that he has the power to punish that great priest. He said to him: "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings. But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time" (Luke 1: 19-20).

Also he is the one who announced the Holy Virgin with the divine Incarnation from her. (Luke 1:26); and said to her; "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35).

He was not only an announcer, but was also an elucidator.

This appears in the vision of the prophet Daniel, who when he was perplexed in its explanation, the Lord said: "Gabriel, make this man understand the vision" (Dan. 8:16). And yet another time: "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand" (Dan. 9: 21-22).

That shows also the deep understanding of the angels, and the knowledge of the future which was given to them by God. In the same vision, we see that the archangel Gabriel touched him and he was strengthened, and he made him stand after lying on earth (Dan. 8:18), (Dan. 10:18).

There are other archangels, as Rafael (his feast is on the 3rd of the month of Nassye, and Sourial (his feast is on the 27th of Toobah, and three others whom the clerical custom has mentioned.

Among the angelical ranks, there are also the cherubim and the seraphim.

THE CHERUBIM AND THE SERAPHIM

The word cherubim is plural; and its singular is cherub. The word seraphim is plural; and its singular is seraph.

The word seraphim is mentioned only in the sixth chapter of the book of Isaiah. They praise God saying: "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!" Therefore the mission of this rank of angels is praise. It was said in the song of saint Antonius that he is standing in the ceremonial of praise, or in the ceremonial of praise.

The expression "full of eyes" which was said about this rank reminds us of the vast knowledge which includes every place, and that they do not see things only from one point of view; and that is what I like to describe the pastors with it, that they should be full of eyes.

The name cherubim has been cited many times in the Holy Bible.

We say about the cherubim and the seraphim in the holy mass, what is mentioned in the book of the prophet Isaiah: "each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew" (Is. 6:2).

Their covering of their faces with two wings shows their fear and veneration before the divine majesty. Their covering of their feet with two wings shows their modesty. It is a lesson for the women who walk or sit with nude, or nearly nude, legs.

We read much also about the cherubim in the book of the prophet Ezechiel.

We find a relation between them and the four unincarnated living beings who were mentioned in the book of the Apocalypse: the first is like a lion, the second is like a bull, the third is like a human being, and the fourth is like an eagle. (Apoc. 4: 6-7).

That is the same as what came about the cherubim in (Ez.1:15).

God ordered his prophet Moses to make two cherubim of gold "And the cherubim shall stretch out their wings above, covering the mercy seat with their wings" (Ex. 25: 18-26).

OTHER RANKS

Among the other ranks of the angels, there are:

The thrones, the dominions, (or the lords), the principalities, and the powers (Col. 1:16).

The lords were mentioned in the book of the prophet Zacharias. One of the lords, having seen Satan opposing the great priest Joshua, said: "The Lord rebuke, Satan! The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you!" (Zechariah 3:2). That means that this lord (one of the rank of the lords or dominions), said to Satan: "The Lord rebuke you", or God rebuke you.

God has been described as the Lords of the lords (Apoc. 19:6), in relation to this rank; and also the Lord of anyone who has the surname of lord.

THE ANGEL OF THE LORD

The Lord appeared many times in the Old Testament in the form of an angel, and with the name "the angel of the Lord". There are many examples of that. Among them:

His apparition to the prophet Moses in the bush:

The third chapter of the book of the Exode tells about the prophet Moses that "the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed. Then Moses said: "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn". So when the Lord saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said: "Moses, Moses!" And he said: "Here I am". Then He said: "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground. Moreover He said: "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God." (Exode 3:2-6).

Here God appeared in the form of the angel of the Lord and said to Moses: "I am the God of your father".

His appearance to Joshua, the son of Nun:

He appeared to Joshua in the form of a man who stood opposite him with his sword drawn in his hand. When Joshua asked him who was he? He replied: "as Commander of the army of the Lord I have now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him: "What does my Lord say to His servant?" Then the Commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua: "Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy. And Joshua did so" (Joshua 5: 12-15).

Here the Lord appeared in the form of the archangel Michael.....

His appearance to Manoah and his wife:

The wife of Manoah "was barren and had no children. And the Angel of the Lord appeared to the woman" and announed to her that she will conceive and bear a son, who is Samsun; and that "the child shall be a Nazirite to God". "So the woman came and told her husband, saying: "A Man of God came to me, and His countenance was like the countenance of the Angel of God, very awesome, but I did not ask Him where He was from, and He did not tell me His name" (Judges 13: 2:6); and the Angel of God came to the woman again and her husband was with her. "Then Manoah said to the Angel of the Lord: "What is your name?" And the Angel of the Lord said to him: "Why do you ask My name, seeing it is wonderful?" (Judges 13:18). We note that it was said in the book of Isaiah about the Lord in His Incarnation: "And His name will be called Wonderful" (Isaiah 9:6).

And when Manoah presented an offering, [it happened as the flame went up toward heaven from the altar, the Angel of the Lord ascended in

the flame of the altar! When Manoah and his wife saw this, they fell on their faces to the ground And Manoah said to his wife: "***We shall surely die, because we have seen God!*** But his wife said to him: "If the Lord had desired to kill us, He would not have accepted a burnt offering and a grain offering from our hands"] (Judges 13: 2023).

THE WORK OF THE ANGELS

Angels have work to do as regards God, and as regards men.

As regards God, they execute His will, in all swiftness and without discussion.

They do not use their own thinking in the scrutiny of this will, as men do!! But rather the psalm says about them: "who do His word, heeding the voice of His word" (Ps. 103:20). Therefore we pray in the Lord Prayer saying to the Lord: "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven", or as it is completely and rapidly executed in heaven by means of Your angels, let it be so done on earth.....

Therefore God sends them for the ministry to help people toward salvation; as the Bible says: "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?" (Heb. 1:14).

Therefore some pastors who minister to the execution of the will of God, and the care of His children, are surnamed "angels".

Thus we see that the Lord sent messages by the hands of his servant the visionary John to the seven churches in Asia, to the angel of the church of Ephesus, to the angel of the church of Smyrna, to the angel of the church of Pergamos, etc..... that is: He has sent to the pastors of these churches.

It was likewise said about saint John the Baptist that he is the angel who will prepare the way before the Lord (Mark 1:2), (Mal. 3:1).

The angels have likewise their work in praising God, as we have said about the seraphim.

So they work in praise and in ministry.....

ANGELS IN THE SECOND COMING

They will accompany the Lord in His second coming, and they will have work to do:

As it has been said: "For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works" (Matt. 16:27). And also: "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then he will sit on the throne of

His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another" (Matt. 25: 31:32).

They will be present in the Judgement, and the Lord will charge them with some work:

In the parable of the wheat and the tares, the Lord described them as "the reapers". He said: "Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire" (Matt. 13: 39-42).

The general resurrection will begin with trumpets and the angels' voices.

The apostle says about that: "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first" (1 Thess. 4:16). He said also: "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible" (1 Cor. 15:52).

Even before the resurrection, during the last events which will precede the resurrection, the Apocalypse has shown the role of the angels and of the trumpets (Apoc. 7-10).

We mention the following points about their work as regards men:

THE ANNUNCIATION

They carry good news for human beings, according to the commandment of the Lord to them. There are many examples of that, and we mention from them:

God sent his angel Gabriel to the priest Zacharias to announce to him that his wife Elisabeth will give birth to his son whose name is John, who will be a Nazirite to the Lord, and he "will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb" (Luke 1: 13:15).

The same angel Gabriel was sent to the Holy Virgin Mary to announce to her that the Holy Spirit will come upon her, and she will conceive and give birth to a Son and will call Him Jesus, and "that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God" (Luke 1: 26-35).

Likewise an angel appeared in a vision to Joseph and announced him the birth of Christ. (Matt. 1: 20-23).

And an angel announced the shepherds saying: "there is born to you this day in the city of David, a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 1: 11). Then he appeared with [a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"] (Matt. 2: 9-14).

DELIVERING MESSAGES

God has many times sent an angel to deliver a message.

For example: "an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying: "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him" (Matt. 2:13).

"Now when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying: "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead" (Matt. 2: 19-20).

So, it is possible for an angel to deliver a message during awakeness or during a dream.

MERCY, ASSISTANCE, AND PROTECTION

Very often times angels are called the angels of mercy, because of their pity toward human beings, and their offering to them whatever assistance they need, whether to individuals or to groups, as it was said about the mercy of the Lord toward the afflicted:

"In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His Presence saved them" (Isaiah 63:9).

Also: "The Angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them" (Ps. 34:7).

So, they rescue, deliver, save, and stand with human beings during afflictions. The Lord says also about the work of the angels: "For He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways. In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone" (Ps. 91: 11-12).

The idea of the guarding angel arose from all these points.

It is not necessary that every individual needs an angel to guard him. A single angel is able to guard a whole city. And it is possible that God charges an angel to guard a certain person.

When the patriarch Jacob wanted to bless the two sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Menasse, he remembered the angel who accompanied him and guarded him, and said:

"The Angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads" (Gen. 48:16).

Here, the Angel saves, and also blesses.

PUNISHMENT

As it was said that the angels are angels of mercy, likewise God may send them for punishment. They execute His will whether for mercy or for punishment

Let us not forget that the first angel who was mentioned in the Bible, was for punishment, for God when He chased Adam from the paradise, "He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life" (Gen. 3:24).

Likewise we have mentioned in the talk about the strength and power of the angels, some examples of punishment, as striking the Sodomites with blindness (Gen. 19), striking Sennacherib's army (2 Kings), and as raising the sword against Jerusalem for destruction (2 Sam.), and as striking king Herod because he did not give praise to God (Acts 12), and as the angels who have the trumpets in the book of the Apocalypse (Apoc. 7-10).

OTHER JOBS

We read in the story of the rich man and Lazarus that the rich man died and was buried. But the poor Lazarus "died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom" (Luke 19:42).

That does not mean that the angels carry all the souls of the dead, but only the souls of the righteous. Satan takes hold of the souls of the wicked and brings them down with him into hell.

We remark that in Christianity, there is no angel of death named Azrael who captures the souls of the dead. This name absolutely does not exist among the names of the angels.

The angels carry our prayers to God.

It was mentioned in the book of the Apocalypse thus: "Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand" (Apoc. 8: 3-4).

That is inaccordance also with what was mentioned in (Apoc. 8:5).

Some people see a spiritual meditation in the ladder on which "the angels of God were ascending and descending" (Gen. 28:12): that the angels ascend to God with the prayers of people, and that they descend from Him carrying what the people need.....

The angels pity the sinners whom they see, and they ask forgiveness for them.

That is evident in a wonderful way from the story of the seraphim with the prophet Isaiah: When Isaiah said: "Woe is me, for I am undone! because I am a man of unclean lips" (Is. 6:5), the heart of the angels did not bear that, and "Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth with it, and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips, your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged" (Is. 6: 6-7).

Believe me, when I had read this expression, I was very amazed! and I said to myself: "Here is a seraph giving an absolution to Isaiah in the presence of God!" Then I said again: but rather he notifies him with the forgiveness of God, because of his knowledge of the divine will. Likewise he who confesses his sins takes the absolution from God at the hands of the priest.....

The pity of one of the seraphim toward Isaiah, and his wiping of his lips with a flaming coal from the altar, is a symbol of some earthly angels among the monks who praise God in the manner of the seraphim, and the ministry may sometimes compel them to wipe the lips of certain people with a flaming coal from the altar.

SATAN

God did not create him as a devil. But he was one of the cherubim; and having fallen down, he became a devil or a stubborn contestor of God.

God said about him: "You were the anointed cherub who covers" (Ez. 28:14, 16).

He said about his qualities: "You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty I established you; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you" (Ezekiel 28: 12, 14-15). It is the tragedy of failure!

Thus were his high rank and his glorious qualities, till he fell.

This cherub (Satan) fell by means of pride.

The story of his fall is mentioned in the book of the prophet Isaiah. The Scriptures say about him: "For you have said in your heart: "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High" (Is. 14: 13-14). And it was said of him in the book of the

prophet Ezekiel: "Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor" (Ez. 28:17).

With the fall of Satan, he made many other angels fall with him.

These have become among his forces and hosts. They have become devils like him, opposing God. The Scriptures have surnamed them: "spiritual hosts of wickedness" (Eph. 6:12). Among them were "rulers and principalities".

But the Scriptures did not mention that anyone of the rank of the thrones fell, because they symbolise the divine presence, nor from the rank of the seraphim, because they represent the praise of God and the divine love, from their name which means "the powerful with fire", or "the flaming with love".

With the fall of Satan, he lost his place in heaven and descended to earth.

The book of the Apocalypse says about that: "And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world, he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (Apoc. 12: 7-9). The archangel Michael confronted him with an army of righteous angels, and he conquered him, and threw him out of heaven, together with his wicked angels.

With the fall of these angels, who are souls, they were surnamed the "unclean spirits" (Matt. 10:1), or "the evil spirits" (Acts 19:12), and sometimes the "deceiving spirits" (1 Tim. 4:1).

Although the devils, with their fall, have lost their purity, nevertheless they have not lost their nature as angels with the strength which they possess.

The strength of the devil appeared for instance, in his test of the just Job. He was able to bring down fire from heaven, and it "burned up the sheep and the servants" (Job 1:16). He was able to raise up "a great wind" which "came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people," and they were dead. (Job 1: 16,19).

The devil was able also to strike Job "with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. And he took for himself a potsherd with which to scrape himself" (Job 2; 7-8).

Likewise a devil withstood Gabriel twenty-one days, while he was going to deliver the prophet Daniel, and he delayed him till "Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help" him:" (Dan. 10:12-13).

The devils of the country of the Gadarenes (Legion) were able to enter the swine, and they drowned them into the sea" (Luke 8:33).

Likewise their strength appears in witchcraft, and their support of the sorcerers.

Satan works also in deceiving and cheating.

As the apostle saint Paul said: "for Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light": (2 Cor. 11:14).

He has in this domain numerous stories with the saints: for example, once he appeared to a father of the desert and said to him: "I am the archangel Gabriel, and I was sent to you". Then the saint humbly replied to him: "May be you have been sent to another one and you have lost your way. As for me, I am a sinner and do not deserve that an angel appears to me".

To have more information, you can read our book: "The wars of the devils".

The Lord said about Satan that "he is a liar and the father of it" (John 8:44).

The devils have done many other actions, and they have killed many people. Therefore the Lord gave to his disciples "power over unclean spirits, to cast them out (Matt. 10:1). The Lord gave us, in spite of the strength of the devil, "the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy" (Luke 10:19).

In the book of the biography of saint Antonios (which was written by saint Athanassius), there is a long sermon which he said about the weakness of the devils.

The most dangerous action which Satan will do, is his support for the Anti-Christ who will cause the general "falling away" at the end of time. That is about which the apostle saint Paul said: "The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan; with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish", "whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming" (2 Thess. 2: 8-10).

As to the end of Satan, it is "the lake of fire and brimstone".

The book of the Apocalypse says about that: "The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever" (Apocalypse 20:10).