

PART TWO

THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

God did not only create the material and visible worlds. Since His Eternal Plan was to create a Kingdom in which the citizens would participate in all the good things of His Blessed Life,¹ it is obvious that the crown of His Creation would be the intellectual beings. These beings, gifted with free will and submitting by their own free choice to their Creator, would acknowledged Him as their King and, in doing so they would become “*partakers of the Divine Nature*”² and of the Blessed Life.³

Man is obviously counted among the intellectual beings and for this reason he can be considered as the Crown of all Creation. However, man is not the only intellectual being with free will and neither is God referred to as “*God the Father of spirits.*” Nonetheless, throughout Holy Scripture it is witnessed that there is a spiritual world that consists of higher spiritual beings. Consequently, these beings are above man in moral perfection, wisdom, power and immortality. Thus Holy Scripture characterises man as being “*...lower than the Angels.*”⁴

¹ Matth. 25:34. Rom. 8:17.

² 2 Peter 1:4.

³ Cf. Plato of Moscow, *Orthodox Teaching*, pp. 99-100. Kefalas, *Catechesis*, pp. 51-56. Damalas, *Catechesis*, p. 15. Frangopoulos, *Christian Faith*, pp. 82-83. Mitsopoulos, *Themata*, p. 65.

⁴ Psalm 8:5.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE WORLD OF THE ANGELS

The Angels received their name from the Work of their Mission. They bring forth the Message of and fulfill God's Divine Will. They exist in the spiritual world, which is witnessed by Holy Scripture and the Holy Tradition of the Orthodox Church. The existence of Angels was denied by the Sadducees, Deists, Pantheists and Rationalists, but their denial is completely unfounded as proved by the fact that the oldest Books of Holy Scripture, written before the Babylonian captivity, mention the existence of Angels. The reality of such intellectual and spiritual beings cannot be proved by logic as Divine Revelation is beyond any rational conception.

We know nothing more of the beginning or the numbers of these Heavenly Hosts other than that they consist of different categories and were created by God before the creation of the visible world including the stars. Their dwelling place is neither perceptible nor material, but intellectual and spiritual since they are spirits. And although many of the Holy Fathers described them as having some kind of airy body, they are regarded as bodiless, intellectual, free beings, who are unalterable, have no need of material food or reproduction and who are immortal and therefore eternal beings.

Being Gifted with free will, Angels had the choice of progressing in Goodness or turning towards evil rebellion and consequently falling from the Holiness

received right from the beginning of their creation from nothingness. However, Angels were not created perfect but with the possibility of either remaining in a state of Holiness or to turn their nature towards evil. Holy Scripture describes the rest of the Angels' attributes as being powerful and intellectual, moving automatically towards greater knowledge than man yet contained within boundaries, since they ignored the Divine Dispensation of the Mystery of the Incarnation of the Word of God. They now know the Infinite Wisdom of God through the Church. Nonetheless, Angels completely ignore the near future as well as the secrets of man's heart that only God knows. Their numbers are beyond any human concept although they appear to be divided into different categories of Hosts. St Dionysios the Aeropagite divided them into nine Angelical Hosts of three degrees.

Their primary Work is to watch over the beauty of God's Glory and to glorify Him ceaselessly. This consists of the progression towards the Blessed Life that constantly increases as well as to the enjoyment of the Divine Majesty. Furthermore, they bring God's messages to men and call them to repentance. Each person has his own Guardian Angel and every nation and every church also has a designated Guardian Angel.

1. The Name "*Angel*" and Its Use in Holy Scripture.

The meaning of the word "*Angel*" expresses a general connotation and in some instances it signifies the Carrier of a Message (a Messenger) or the one who is

sent. In later times it signified a special Order of the Heavenly Powers and, finally, it is used to signify the whole spiritual world. This name is used to differentiate spiritual beings from human beings, to whom they are sent by God in order to serve His Will in respect of man's Salvation. It does not represent their nature or essence, but it is a name related to their function and work towards the Salvation of man.⁵ For this reason it is not a paradox that this name is also ascribed to those who are sent by the Lord, Prophets,⁶ Priests⁷ and Bishops,⁸ in order to proclaim the Will of God to the people. The name "*Angel*" is specifically used to describe the Messiah Who is referred to as the "*Angel of the Covenant*"⁹ and "*Messenger of Great Counsel*."¹⁰ Furthermore it is used to describe St John the Forerunner and Baptist who "...*shall survey the way before...*" the Lord.¹¹

In the first Book of Genesis the name "*Angel*" is mainly ascribed to spiritual beings who are invisible and bodiless. Thus "...*Cherubs and the fiery sword that turns about...*" were placed by God "...*to keep the Way of the Tree of Life*."¹² An Angel of the Lord spoke to Agar.¹³

⁵ Origen, *Against Celsus*, V, 4, in **B**, v. 10, p. 10 and 13. St. John Chrysostom, *Concerning the unintelligible*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 48, 724.

⁶ Hagg. 1:13..

⁷ Malach. 2:7.

⁸ Rev. 1:20; 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14.

⁹ Malach. 3:1-3.

¹⁰ Is. 9:6.

¹¹ Malach. 3:1. Matth. 3:3; 11:10. Mark 1:2. Luke 3:4. John 1:23. Is. 40:3-5.

¹² Gen. 3:25.

¹³ Gen. 16:7-12.

Angels visited and saved Lot.¹⁴ An Angel of the Lord prevented Abraham from offering Isaac as a sacrifice to God.¹⁵ Angels of God appeared to Abraham at Mamre, ascending and descending upon the Ladder that Jacob beheld in his dream at Charrhan.¹⁶ Angels appeared to the Prophets Elias, Zechariah, Isaiah, Ezekiel and Daniel.¹⁷ An Angel of the Lord appeared in the furnace at Babylon to protect the children Sedrach, Misach and Abdenago.¹⁸ Sometimes their names are mentioned as being “*Archangel Michael*”¹⁹ “*...Gabriel*”²⁰ and “*...Raphael*.”²¹ In the New Testament there are many verses in which Angels of the Lord are mentioned.²²

Among the numerous references to the existence and Work of Angels, we particularly note the words of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Who cautioned us to “*Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in Heaven their Angels always see the Face of My Father Who is in Heaven.*”²³ At the Second Coming of the Son of God, Christ will come “*...in His Glory...*” accompanied by “*...all the Holy Angels with Him.*”²⁴ The

¹⁴ Gen. 19:1-22..

¹⁵ Gen. 22:11.

¹⁶ Gen. 28:12.

¹⁷ 1 Samuel (1 Kings) 1:3-15. Zach. 1:9; 6:4-8. Is. 6:2-3; 11:2. Jez. 1:4-18. Daniel 7:10.

¹⁸ Daniel 3:25.

¹⁹ Joshua 5:13-16. Daniel 10:13, 21; 12:1. Judah 9. Rev. 12:7.

²⁰ Daniel 8:16; 9:21. Luke 1:19.

²¹ Tobit 12:15.

²² Matth. 1:20. Luke 1:26; 2:9, 13. Acts 12:7-11; 27:23; 10:3-7, 22, 30; 27:23.

²³ Matth. 18:10.

²⁴ Matth. 25:31. Mark 13:27.

Angels always rejoice when a sinner repents.²⁵ Furthermore, they have no need of reproduction because “...*in the Resurrection..*” men “..*neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like Angels of God in Heaven.*”²⁶

St Paul in many of his Epistles wrote of Angels, as did St John the Apostle and Evangelist, especially in his Book of Revelation. Generally speaking however, only Nehemiah and Esther, out of all the Books of the Old Testament, and only the Epistles of St John and St James of the New Testament do not mention Angels.

2. The Apostolic Fathers and Ecclesiastical Scholars Witness to Angels’ Existence

The Holy Fathers and ecclesiastical Scholars of the Orthodox Church refer not only to the existence of Angels, but also to their creation by God.

St Ignatius the Theophoros who is one of the Apostolic Fathers, referred to Angels in his writings.²⁷

The Shepherd of Hermas characterised Angels as being “..*Holy Angels of God who were created first of*

²⁵ Luke 15:7, 10.

²⁶ Matth. 22:30.

²⁷ St. Ignatius, *To Trallians*, 5, 2 and *To Smyrnaeans*, 6, 1; in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, pp. 99 and 112.

all..”²⁸ and that “...there are two Angels with man: one of Righteousness and one of wickedness.”²⁹

Also the Apologists Athenagoras, Tatianos and Theophilos of Antioch and especially St. Justin the Philosopher and Martyr³⁰ referred to the belief of Angels.

Tertullian mentioned “...spiritual essences, which have thin bodies...”³¹ while St Irenaeos expressed his belief of seven Hosts of Angels.³²

3. Those who Deny the Existence of Angels

The existence of Angels was denied in antiquity by the Sadducees who declared “...there is no Resurrection and no Angel or spirit...”³³ while the Deists refused to acknowledge any intervention of God in the world. The Pantheists identified God with the material world whereas the Rationalists of each generation proclaimed that there is no other world except the one that we see. Finally, the

²⁸ *Shepherd of Hermas*, Vision 3, 4, 1-2, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 203.

²⁹ *Ibid*, Mandate 6, 2, 1-9, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, pp. 222-223.

³⁰ St. Justine, the philosopher and martyr, *I Apology* 6, § 2, in **B**, v. 3, p. 164. Athenagoras, in **B**, v. 4, p. 288. Tatianus, *Homily to the Greeks*, 7, in **B**, v.4, p. 246. Theophilus of Antioch, *2 Autolytus*, 28, in **B**, v.5, p. 40.

³¹ Tertullian, *Apologeticus*, 22, in Migne, *P.L.*, 1, 465; *Ibid*, *De carne Christi*, 6, in Migne, *P.L.*, 2, 810.

³² St. Irenaeus, *Heresies*, book II, in Migne, *P.G.*, 7, 818.

³³ Acts 23:8.

contemporary Rationalists attempted to explain the ideas of Judaism concerning Angels as though they originated from the personalisation of Divine Attributes and Actions, or as being the remnants of ancient polytheism that had entered into the Jewish religion, having been borrowed from the Parsees or the Babylonians.

The fact that Biblical Teachings concerning Angels cannot be from Persian or Babylonian influence can be understood if one keeps in mind that these Teachings are found in the older Books of the Old Testament, consisting of the Pentateuch, the Book of Job and Psalms that were written before the Babylonian captivity. All we can accept in accordance with this theory is that the belief in Angels, which already existed amongst the Israelites, was clarified and perfected compared to the Babylonian ideas concerning the spiritual world that the Israelites avoided.

Nevertheless, belief in the spiritual world even outside Judaism confirms that this is based upon an ancient Tradition that was passed down from the first created man. The general belief of various religions, regardless of the different influences that disfigured the original belief, is solid proof of its Truth.

The argument that belief in Angels originates from the personalisation of the Divine Attributes is enough to provide the assurance of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and His Holy Apostles that remains indisputable, clear and certain.³⁴ However, rational proof concerning

³⁴ Trembelas, *Dogmatique*, v. I, p. 409-410.

the existence of Angels cannot be presented because the Creation is a free Act of God.³⁵

4. Concerning the Way of the Creation of Angels.

We find an indirect indication of God's creation of Angels in the Book of Exodus: "*For in six days the Lord made the Heaven and the earth, and the sea and all things in them.*"³⁶ It is stated more specifically in Nehemiah where Esdras, addressing the Lord in prayer, says: "*Thou art the only True Lord; Thou made the Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens, and their array, the earth, and all things that are in it, the seas, and all things in them; and Thou quickened all things, and the Hosts of Heaven worship Thee...*"³⁷ St Paul also taught that "... *by Him all things were created that are in Heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether Thrones or Dominions or Principalities or Powers.*"³⁸

Athenagoras in his Deputation verifies that the Angels were made by God.³⁹

Tatianus noted that "...*the Word became the Creator of the Angels...*"⁴⁰

³⁵ Ott, *Precis*, p. 169.

³⁶ Ex. 20:11.

³⁷ Nehemiah 9:6.

³⁸ Col. 1:16.

³⁹ Athenagoras, *Deputation*, 24, in **B**, v. 4, p. 301.

⁴⁰ Tatianus, *Homily to the Greeks*, 7, in **B**, v. 4, p. 246.

St Basil also uses similar words stating that “...*the creative Word, Who is the Creator of all things, brought into being the Angels.*”⁴¹

Clement the Alexandrian added “...*and the Angels and men are the Works of God’s fingers.*”⁴²

St John Chrysostom, speaking of the creation of Angels noted that God “...*Who is needless, created the Angels, Archangels and the rest of the Bodiless Essences...*” “...*because of His Goodness.*” He did not create them because “...*He needed their services...*” “...*for the Divine is needless.*” Despite not needing them, He created them out of His Love and because He is Absolute Good.⁴³

The Holy Fathers of the Orthodox Church note that Holy Scripture does not mention the way in which Angels were created. About the “*when and how*” they were created, nothing is mentioned. The reason why Holy Scripture keeps silent with regard to the manner by which Angels were created, St John Chrysostom gives the following explanation: “*It is because of the incapability and fatness of the mind of the Jews, who were unable to comprehend anything spiritual...*” and who “...*were guided through the visible phenomena rather than by the spiritual.*” Consequently they were in danger of

⁴¹ St. Basil the Great, *To Psalm 32*, § 4, in Migne, *P.G.*, 29, 333..

⁴² Clement the Alexandrian, *Protrepticus*, ch. 4, § 63, in **B**, v.7, p. 49.

⁴³ St. John Chrysostom, *To Stageirion 1*, § 2, in Migne, *P.G.*, 47, 427.

“...*deifying the creatures...*” and even more so “...*the Angels.*”⁴⁴

Thus the Holy Fathers avoid mentioning the manner of the creation of the Angels. Only St Gregory of Nyssa supported the opinion that if the first couple (Adam and Eve) had not fallen, then the multiplication of the human race would not been through union of man and woman, but as that of the Angels.⁴⁵ According to his Teachings, Angels multiply in an indescribable, Supernatural way. Although if this was so, then they should be of one kind alone. St Gregory and St Athanasios did not support this opinion. St Athanasios stated: “...*the irrational creatures are not like man, neither the Angels as the Thrones, nor the Thrones as the Powers, but they are all creatures; each one made according to their kind and essence, and as such do they remain.*”⁴⁶

Methodios of Olympos (+311) also supported similar Teachings when he opposed the opinion of Origen who stated that all Angels are equal because of their origin, and that the different Orders came from their different Works and Services. Thus he believed that Angels were of different Orders with different duties and responsibilities.

⁴⁴ Ibid, *To Genesis*, Homily 2, § 2, in Migne, *P.G.*, 53, 29. Ibid, *To Psalm 8*, § 6, in Migne, *P.G.*, 55, 115. St. Basil the Great, *About the Holy Spirit*, XVI, § 38, in Migne, *P.G.*, 32, 136. Theodoretus of Cyrus, *To Genesis*, question 2, in Migne, *P.G.*, 80, 80.

⁴⁵ St. Gregory of Nyssa, *About the making of man*, 17, in Migne, *P.G.*, 44, 189.

⁴⁶ St. Athanasius the Great, *Against Arians*, II, 19, in Migne, *P.G.*, 26, 188.

The same opinion was adopted by St Epiphanius who supported the opinion that a Cherub cannot be transformed into an Angel and that each Heavenly spirit remains in the Order into which God had created it.⁴⁷

St John of Damascus remarked that whether “...*they are equal in essence, or they differ amongst themselves...*” the Angels are “...*not like us. Only God Who created them knows.*”⁴⁸

The only indication we have concerning the time of their creation, is that from the Book of Job according to which “...*when the stars were made, all My Angels praised me with a loud voice.*”⁴⁹ In accordance to this, all the Holy Fathers agree that the creation of Angels took place before the creation of the visible world. God first created the Angelical Hosts of Heaven and then the visible world and man “...*who is the image of the Higher Power.*”⁵⁰

St Basil the Great spoke of “...*an older condition before the creation of the world...*” which is “...*above time, eternal...*” and “...*which is according to the Heavenly Powers.*” “*God, the Maker and Creator of all things, made creatures according to this Heavenly Place,*

⁴⁷ Methodius of Olympos, in Migne, *P.G.*, 41, 1121 and 1124.

⁴⁸ St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About fore-knowledge and destination*, II, 34, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 869.

⁴⁹ Job 38:7.

⁵⁰ St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Catechesis*, 6, in Migne, *P.G.*, 45, 28. St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Homily* 38, § 9, in Migne, *P.G.*, 36, 320.

the intellect and invisible natures and all their decoration.”⁵¹

Parallel to the Teachings ascribed to St Dionysios the Aeropagite that “...*the Eternal are determined to be made before those things which were created in time...*” “...*they are not coeternal with God Who exists before all time.*”⁵²

St Augustine taught that Angels were created although it is said that they always existed since they were present when, through the changing of the visible Creation, time began.⁵³ He also believed that Angels were created during the first day of Creation and that the Creative Command of God “...*Let there be light...*”⁵⁴ refers to their creation.⁵⁵

On the contrary, Origen supported the belief that Angels were created before the different successive creations of God.⁵⁶

⁵¹ St. Basil the Great, *Hexaemerus*, Homily 1, § 5, in Migne, *P.G.*, 29, 13.

⁵² St. Dionysius, *About the divine names*, X, § 3, in Migne, *P.G.*, 3, 940.

⁵³ St. Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, book XII, ch. 15, § 2, in Migne, *P.L.*, 41, 364.

⁵⁴ Gen. 1:4.

⁵⁵ St. Augustine, *De civitate Deis*, book XI, ch. 9, in Migne, *P.L.*, 41, 325.

⁵⁶ Origen, *About Principles*, book III, 5, 3, in Migne, *P.G.*, 11, 327. – Cf. Fragkopoulos, *Christian Faith*, p.85

Theodoretos of Mopsuestias denied the priority of the creation of Angels while his opinions were adopted by Theodoretos of Cyrus who supported the idea that Angels as essences that can be described although bodiless by nature, have need of some place in which to establish themselves. Nevertheless before the creation of Heaven and earth such a place did not exist and as a consequence neither could Angels have existed!⁵⁷

5. The Spirituality and Bodilessness of the Immortal Nature of Angels

Many Holy Fathers support the belief that Angels are in a certain “*place*” and hold certain “*positions*.”⁵⁸ St John of Damascus taught that: “...*because the Angels are intellectual beings, they are in spiritual places, not described corporeally...*” They “...*exist in airy places in a light and movable nature.*” They are not bound by specific, perceptible or material places, yet they are not Ever-present as God is. Instead “...*when they are in Heaven, they are not on earth, and when they are sent to earth by God, they do not remain in Heaven.*” They are “...*always moving...*” having the whole Universe at their disposal, moving with ease and without any obstacles

⁵⁷ Theodoretus of Cyrus, *To Genesis*, Question 3, in Migne, *P.G.*, 41, 364.

⁵⁸ St. Basil the Great, *About the Holy Spirit*, XVI, 38, in in Migne, *P.G.*, 32, 137. St. Ignatius, *To Trallians*, 5, 2, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 99.

restricting them such as “...walls and doors and locks and seals.”⁵⁹

St Gregory of Nazianzos spoke of the Heavenly Powers as being “... always ready to be present everywhere for all...” and explained that this is due to their “... desire to serve and a light nature.”⁶⁰

Clement the Alexandrian observed that Angels are “...the closest beings to the Eternal and Blessed Life.”⁶¹

St Cyril of Jerusalem described the dwelling place of Angels as the first and visible firmament, which is smaller than that of the second firmament which is smaller than that of the third. “*The Heaven of Heavens...*” which “...Scripture did not mention...” speak only of three Heavens, not because “...they are only such in number, but because it was beneficial for us to know such a number.”⁶²

To the aforementioned we must add that we cannot speak of perceptible and material places where Angels dwell since “...we do not know precisely the essence of the Angels; and even if we philosophise ten thousands of reasons, we will be unable to find even one.”⁶³ Therefore

⁵⁹ St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About fore-knowledge and destination*, II, 34, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 869.

⁶⁰ St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Homily 28*, § 31, in Migne, *P.G.*, 36, 72.

⁶¹ Clement the Alexandrian, *Stromata*, in **B**, v.8, p. 246.

⁶² St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis*, VI, § 2, in Migne, *P.G.*, 33, 541-543.

⁶³ St. John Chrysostom, *Concerning the unintelligible*, 5, § 3, in Migne, *P.G.*, 48, 74.

St Irenaeus challenged his contemporary heretics who claimed to have Higher Knowledge, by asking “...*what is the nature and the number of the invisible Angels?*”⁶⁴

Although we cannot know the exact nature of Angels, we are enlightened by Holy Scripture that God “...*makes His Angels spirits...*”⁶⁵ and that the Spirit of Divine Wisdom goes “...*through all understanding, pure and most subtle spirits...*”⁶⁶ and that there are “...*seven spirits who are before the Throne...*” of God.⁶⁷ Subsequently, the nature of Angels is spiritual, free from any matter or flesh, as manifested by Holy Scripture when referring to the fallen angels who, in the New Testament, are characterised as “...*unclean spirits.*”⁶⁸ Our struggle against them is described by St Paul as follows: “*For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the Heavenly places.*”⁶⁹

Therefore, Angels are characterised as “...*intellectual beings and thin as the mind...*” “...*bodiless and intellectual natures...*” “...*bodiless and invisible and needless...*” “...*thin, rational and always*

⁶⁴ St. Irenaeus, *Heresies*, book II, ch. 30, § 6, in Migne, *P.G.*,7. Cf. *Ibid*, in Hadjephraimides, pp. 176-177.

⁶⁵ Psalm 104(105):4.

⁶⁶ Wisdom, 7:23.

⁶⁷ Rev. 1:4.

⁶⁸ Matth. 8:16; 10:1; 12:43, 45. Mark 1:23, 26-27; 3:11, 30; 5:2, 13; 7:25; 9:25. Luke 6:18; 8:29; 9:42; 11:24, 26. Acts 5:16; 8:7. Rev. 16:13.

⁶⁹ Ephes. 6:12.

moving essence...” “...*essences, intellectuals, always moving, bodiless...*” of whose “...*kind and number only the Creator knows.*” They appear in Holy Scripture as Flames of Fire to reveal “...*the light and fiery and warmth and quickness and sharpness concerning their Divine aptitude and service.*” By manifesting as “...*the fiery...*” and “...*the Heavenly intellect’s Divinity as well as their ability to imitate the Divine...*” as the anthropomorphism signifies, “...*the intellectual and, according to their nature, the primacy and ruling...*” “...*the nakedness and without sandals...*” “...*the assimilating to the Divine simplicity...*” is according to their capabilities.⁷⁰

The majority of Holy Fathers believe that Angels have some kind of “*airy body, thin and immortal,*” when compared to us humans. For this reason they are called “*bodiless and immaterial*” although when compared to God Who is the Absolute Simple, Immaterial and Incorporeal Being, they are “*thick and material.*”⁷¹

Tertullian, bearing in mind that which does not exist is bodiless, supports the idea that Angels are spiritual

⁷⁰ St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Homily 38*, § 10, in Migne, *P.G.*, 36, 321. St. Gregory of Nyssa, *To prayer*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 44, 1165. *Ibid*, *Catechesis*, 6, in Migne, *P.G.*, 45, 25. St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About angels*, II, 17, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 865 and 868. St. Dionysius, *About the heavenly hierarchy*, XV, §§ 2 and 3, in Migne, *P.G.*, 329.

⁷¹ St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About angels*, II, 17, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 865 and 868.

essences despite having certain bodies and forms that are visible only to God.⁷²

Clement the Alexandrian noted that the demons “... are called bodiless not because they do not have bodies (for they have form; therefore, they have a conscience concerning hell.”) Thus, he concluded “...and the Angels have a body, which can be seen...” as likewise “... the soul has a body.”⁷³

Origen stated that “*bodiless*” is an attribute that can only be ascribed to God’s Nature. He could not understand how it is possible for any kind of living creature to exist without some kind of body although one can speak of the existence in another life of an essence with a simple body, pure, clean and thus airy and Heavenly.⁷⁴ Having in mind the Psalmist who wrote: “...Who makes His Angels spirits, His Ministers a Flame of Fire...”⁷⁵ Origen commented “...we do not have a bodiless essence which is of Fire neither a soul of Fire, but only the hypostasis of the Angels.”⁷⁶

St Basil the Great proclaimed that Angels “...become visible in the form of their bodies when they appear to those who are worthy...” As man “...is not simple but consists of body and soul...” likewise “...when

⁷² Tertullian, *De carne Christi*, in migne, *P.L.*, 1, 405; *Adversus Praxeam*, 7, in migne, *P.L.*, 2, 162.

⁷³ Clement the Alexandrian, in *B*, v. 8, p. 32..

⁷⁴ Origen, *About Principalities*, I, VI, 4, in migne, *P.L.*, 11, 170.

⁷⁵ Psalm 104(105):4.

⁷⁶ Origen, *Against Celsus*, VI, 71, in *B*, v. 10, p. 115.

*we speak about an Angel, we do not consider him to be of one simple nature.”*⁷⁷

St Gregory the Theologian of Nazianzos pointed out that “...*we do not have the Heavenly intellectual nature in order to be able to see the bodiless.*”⁷⁸

St Augustine described Angels as having some kind of body, not as mortal and perishable as that of the humans, but airy, such as that which we too will receive at the time of the General Resurrection. He acknowledged that when Angels appear, they have a real body, so they are able to change their appearance according to their wishes and the nature of their Mission.⁷⁹

This matter was finalised at the 7th Ecumenical Council, which declared at the 4th meeting that Angels are “*bodiless.*” During the 5th meeting a 7th century writing by John, Bishop of Thessalonica, was read in which he supported the opinion that only God is Infinitely Bodiless, while the Angels, the Archangels and the Higher Powers have thin, airy and fiery bodies according to Psalm 104(105):4. This is the belief of the majority of Holy Fathers. The Holy Council concluded that it is not sinful to represent them in images, to honour them and give them human form because that is how they appeared on

⁷⁷ St. Basil the Great, *About the Holy Spirit*, XVI, 38; *Epistle* 8, § 2, in Migne, *P.G.*, 32, 137; 248 and 249.

⁷⁸ St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Homily* 28, § 31, in Migne, *P.G.*, 36, 72.

⁷⁹ St. Augustine, *Sermo* 362, § 17, in Migne, *P.L.*, 39, 1622. *Ibid*, *Epist.* IX, 3, in Migne, *P.L.*, 33, 72. *Ibid*, *Sermo* 12, § 9, in Migne, *P.L.*, 38, 104. *Ibid*, *De Trinitate*, II, § 7, in Migne, *P.L.*, 42, 853.

innumerable occasions. The Holy Council did not deal with this matter in great detail nor did it proclaim a special decree. Nevertheless St Tarasios, Patriarch of Constantinople and President of the Council, remarked: “*Do you hear what this Father says ... we should paint the Angels because they are describable...*” and also because they appeared to so many people. The Holy Council responded positively.⁸⁰

Nevertheless, Angels are bodiless and intellectual powers. St Basil the Great confirmed that “...*they do not change...*” in their bodies in the same manner as the human body that ages. For there is no “...*child or youth or elder amongst the Angels...*” Instead “...*they remain in the condition...*” in which “...*from the beginning they were created...*” as “...*their composition...*” remains “...*whole and unchangeable.*”⁸¹

St John of Damascus commented that if they are described in Holy Scripture as being in the form of a man or youth, dressed in white and speaking with human voices, although they appear to those who are worthy, they are in a transformed appearance, for they cannot be seen by humanity in their true essence.⁸² This is confirmed by the Angel who accompanied Tobit and who told him: “*All these days I appeared unto you; ... I neither ate nor drank, but you did see a vision.*”⁸³

⁸⁰ Mansi, v. XIII, col. 132, 164 and 165.

⁸¹ St. Basil the Great, *To Psalm 45*, § 1, in Migne, *P.G.*, 29, 388.

⁸² St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About angels*, II, 17, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 869.

⁸³ Tobit 12:19.

Clement the Alexandrian remarked that Angels do not speak and do not communicate with one another as men do since they have neither ears, tongues nor the instruments of speech such as voice, lips or pharynx. Being bodiless, they have no need of arteries, vital organs, souls or air to breathe, neither do they need a tongue or hearing because without the need for words they communicate between themselves through their thoughts and wills.⁸⁴ They also have no need of gender as they “...neither marry nor are given in marriage...”⁸⁵ according to the words of our Lord.

Some Holy Fathers believe that the mysterious “*manna*” is the “...*Heavenly food of the Angels*” and they declare that as irrational men are fed, likewise must we consider that the Angels are fed, for they are not completely needless. Man has therefore eaten “*the bread of the Angels.*”

Origen noted that Abraham was blessed because he was able to offer unleavened bread (*azyma*) to the three Angels who appeared to him at “...*the oak of Mamre.*”⁸⁶ The Angels are nourished by bodiless thoughts, words and healthy acts, not because they face the danger of vanishing

⁸⁴ Clement the Alexandrian, *Stromata*, book VI, ch. 7, in **B**, v. 8, p. 199.

⁸⁵ Matth. 22:30.

⁸⁶ Gen. 18:1-8.

into non-existence, but because if not sustained, they will cease to be good spirits.⁸⁷

St John of Damascus, exalting the excellent spiritual food of Angels, observed that they are “...*seeing God according to their capability and this they have as their food.*”⁸⁸

The spiritual nature of Angels ensures their immortality which in turn is guaranteed by the Son and Word of God, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Who promised us that “...*those who are counted worthy to attain that Age, and the Resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the Angels and are sons of God, being sons of the Resurrection.*”⁸⁹

St John of Damascus proclaimed that each Angel “...*is not immortal by nature, but by Grace...*” because “...*only God exists always...*” “...*for whatever has a beginning also has an end according to its nature.*” Clarifying the term “*by Grace,*” he explained that “...*we think about the bodiless and invisible in two ways: on the one hand according to their essence; on the other hand by Grace. Speaking about God, He is by Nature [Immortal]*”

⁸⁷ Clement the Alexandrian, *Pedagogus*, I, 6, in **B**, v. 7, p. 99. Ibid, *To John*, book XIII, ch. 33, in **B**, v. 12, p. 143. St. Cyril of Alexandria, *To John*, book IV, 2, in Migne, *P.G.*, 73, 561.

⁸⁸ St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About angels*, II, 17, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 872. St. Justin, the philosopher and martyr, *Dialogue*, 57, in **B**, v. 3, p. 261.

⁸⁹ Luke 20:35-36.

whereas the Angels and demons and souls are [immortal] by Grace.”⁹⁰

St Gregory the Theologian of Nazianzos commented that the Psalmist’s expression “...*He makes His Angels spirits...*” is used in the sense that God preserves His Angels by His Word. Thus, it is obvious that all creatures who enjoy immortality are preserved by the Word of God

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God Who is in Trinity “...*first thought about the Heavenly Powers. And the thought immediately became Action. The Heavenly Powers are divided into three decorations, each one having three Orders, and all are nine...*” “...*each Order either by nature or by position differs from the other, which remains unknown to us ... The nine Orders (a tenth they say will be from fallen man) have their Life with God, promising that they will acknowledge Him as Lord and Master and Creator ... Thus the Creator accepting their good thought, grants to them as a reward the permanent establishment in the Good and the Unchangeable.*”⁹²

According to Mogilas: “*First and before anything else God made all the Heavenly Powers from nothingness by His Word, as excellent glorifiers of His Glory. And He made that spiritual world where they know well God, according to the Grace which they received; and they*

⁹⁰ St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About angels*, II, 17; *About man*, II, 26, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 868 and 925.

⁹¹ St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Homily* 28, 31, in Migne, *P.G.*, 36, 72.

⁹² Kritopoulos, in Karmeris, *The dogmatics*, v. II, p. 513.

submit themselves completely to His Will ... The Angels are spirits, which were made from nothingness and brought into being by God, to glorify God and to serve Him; then to serve the human race, guiding them to the Kingdom of God. They also protect cities, kingdoms, countries, monasteries, churches and spiritual men and every man.” (According to Acts 5:19-20; 12:7; Matthew 18:10 & 12:7) *“They also protect the small children...”* according to St Matthew’s Gospel (18:10). *“Also they present to the Divine Majesty our prayers and alms and all the good deeds ... and they intercede for us. They also reveal the Will and Law of God, guiding the Prophets and the Just.”*
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6. The Changeability of Angels’ Natures Has Been Gifted with Free Will

The Angels, as spiritual beings,⁹⁴ are Gifted with free will, having the *“...authority and the freedom either to remain and to progress in goodness and virtue, or to turn to evil.”*⁹⁵ St Basil the Great believed that it is possible for Angels to turn to evil because *“...the Heavenly Powers are not by nature Holy...”* as the *“Holiness”* is from *“...outside of their nature...”* and *“...they receive it by being careful and hard-working...”* *“...Through the Communion of the Holy Spirit, God grants them the perfection...”* and they are able to *“... hold to their Order by insisting on remaining in Goodness.”*

⁹³ Mogilas, in Karmeris, *The dogmatics*, v. II, p. 602.

⁹⁴ Damalas, *Catechesis*, pp. 15-16. Mitsopoulos, *Themata*, p. 66.

⁹⁵ St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About angels*, II, 17, in Migne, P.G., 94, 868.

He then uses the imagery of iron that, when it is in contact with fire, becomes warm and hot and receives the colour and energy of the fire. Likewise, the Holy Powers, not having Holiness by nature, receives it through their Communion with the Holy Spirit Who by Nature is Holy. And because they receive their Holiness from outside their nature, it is possible for their nature to change. This is proven by the example of Lucifer who would not have fallen if his nature was not capable of changing.⁹⁶

The fact that bodiless Angels receive their Holiness from their Communion with the Holy Spirit does not mean that they were created at the beginning as “...*infants and afterwards, through progress, they became worthy of receiving the Holy Spirit*” Instead, they received their Holiness right from the beginning.⁹⁷

When we say that Angels had received Holiness right from the beginning of their creation from nothingness, we must not think that they were perfected in Holiness. Their perfection was accomplished by the Holy Spirit and it depended on the good use of their free will. Although there was no imperfection in their nature inclining them towards evil, the Creator implanted seeds of Holiness in them that made it more difficult to move or to change, but it did not make them unable to move towards evil. They were able to progress and become perfect in Holiness “...*desiring the Good, according to the*

⁹⁶ St. Basil the Great, *About the Holy Spirit*, XVI, § 38, in Migne, *P.G.*, 32, 137. *Ibid*, *Against Eunomius*, 3, § 2, in Migne, *P.G.*, 29, 660.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, *To Psalm 33(34)*, § 4, in Migne, *P.G.*, 29, 333.

love towards God and participating in the measurement of Holiness...” which, “...according to the analogy of their superiority of Holiness, they have from the Holy Spirit...” while “...other differences according to their nature and Order...” they received from the first Cause of “...pure brightness.”⁹⁸

The progress and perfection in Holiness by Angels is verified by the fact that they were “*made to be quick*” by the Holy Spirit and subsequently it became more difficult to fall from Goodness. They were made to be quick after the Great Test, when their wills were tested at the time of Lucifer’s rebellion against God and after other angels had fallen with him. The rest of the Angels could also have fallen but they were saved because of their love of God, whereas Satan’s “...*departure from God made him an outcast.*” Thus, because of their free choice of virtue, the Angels became unshakeable in their faith and loyalty through the Grace of God.⁹⁹

The opinion of St Ignatius the Theophoros is very interesting. He believed that “...*even the Heavenly Beings and the glory of Angels and the Rulers, both visible and invisible, are also subject to Judgement, if they do not believe in the Blood of Christ.*”¹⁰⁰ In other words,

⁹⁸ St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Homily* 38, § 9, in Migne, *P.G.*, 36, 320. *Ibid*, *Homily* 28, § 31, in Migne, *P.G.*, 36, 72.

⁹⁹ St. Basil the Great, *About the Holy Spirit*, XIX, § 49, in Migne, *P.G.*, 32, 157. *Ibid*, *That God is not the cause of evil*, § 8, in Migne, *P.G.*, 31, 348. St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About fore-knowledge and destination*, II, 44, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 977.

¹⁰⁰ St. Ignatius, *To Smyrnaeans*, 6, 1; in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 112.

according to the opinion of the Apostolic Father, until the Incarnation of the Lord and His Death on the Cross, the Angels had not yet achieved the unshakeable stage.

St Gregory the Theologian of Nazianzos raised the question: “*Are the Angels unshakeable and difficult to move towards evil?*” because “...*the Angelic and Heavenly Powers have their perfection and brightness and their unshakeability towards evil only from the Holy Spirit.*”¹⁰¹

St John of Damascus stated that Angels are “...*difficult to move...*” towards evil and although they are not “...*unshakeable...*” he added that “...*from now...*” (in other words after the Incarnation of the Word of God) they are “*unshakeable.*”¹⁰²

St Cyril of Alexandria observed that through Christ “...*we believe that the nature is Sanctified, whether you name it ‘Angels,’ whether [it is] that which is Above and Higher, Thrones and Principalities, even the Seraphim, ... are not Sanctified by their own, but from the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit.*”¹⁰³ Elsewhere he said “...*the Angels and the Archangels and even the Cherubim, which are higher than the first, receive their Holiness only from Christ in the Holy Spirit.*”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Homily 28*, § 31, in Migne, *P.G.*, 36, 71. *Ibid*, *Homily to Pentecost*, 41, § 11, in Migne, *P.G.*, 36, 444.

¹⁰² St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About angels*, II, 17, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 872.

¹⁰³ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *To Leviticus*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 69, 549.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 68, 625.

However, if Angels were to be become perfect by progressing in Holiness, would their progress open the way to higher Angelical Orders? In other words, would the lower Orders of Angelical Hierarchy be raised through their perfection to higher Orders? As a matter of fact, the Alexandrian Fathers do accept this idea of the lower Orders of Angels being raised to higher Orders by their perfection in Holiness.

Clement the Alexandrian clearly spoke of a “...noble Angel (who was placed) in the sun at the beginning of the days...” as well as of Angels who were “...called days...” and who “...are placed with the Angels of the sun, and they will be lords of days, as the one upon the sun.” He also mentioned men “...who will change over to Angels...” and who “...will be taught for one thousand years by the Angels...” concluding with the belief that “...then those who taught will move over to the Archangelic Authority...” being replaced by those who were taught by them.¹⁰⁵

Other Holy Fathers are very cautious on this subject as we cannot draw conclusions based on allusions. St John of Damascus concluded that Angels “...differ from one another in brightness and position; either according to their brightness they have the position or according to their position they participate in the brightness.”¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Clement the Alexandrian, in *B*, v. 8, p. 348.

¹⁰⁶ St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About angels*, II, 17, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 872.

Pachymeris supported the opinion that “...*the Angelic decorations were created according to their validity...*” but he did not clarify it. For this reason he believed that it is possible to piously state that God foreknowing “*their Gift*” before their creation “...*produced their Orders according to their validity from which they cannot fall away because they became accustomed to receiving the Good through their free will.*”¹⁰⁷ Pachymeris received this explanation from the Teachings of St Maximos.¹⁰⁸

7. Supernatural Superiority of Angels in Power and Knowledge

Angels stand above all intellectual beings with freedom combined with greater power than man and thus enter the sphere of the Supernatural. They are deprived of creative power and as St John of Damascus said of those who erroneously believe that Angels were able to create: “...*they are the mouth of their father, Satan...*”¹⁰⁹ whereas St Cyril of Alexandria observed: “...*not even from the Events was [it] ever made known that the Angels created anything from non-existing.*”¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Pachymeris, *Comments on the divine names*, ch. XI, § 2, in Migne, *P.G.*, 3, 289 and 292.

¹⁰⁸ St. Maximus, *Comments*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 4, 93.

¹⁰⁹ St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About Diabolos and Demons*, II, 18, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 873.

¹¹⁰ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Thesaurus*, Homily 17, in Migne, *P.G.*, 75, 305.

Holy Scripture proclaims that Angels are “...*strong in power...*” and “...*in power and force they are greater.*” In addition, Holy Scripture refers to some instances in which their power is manifested. Thus it is confirmed that in one night an “...*Angel of the Lord went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and eighty-five thousand and they rose early in the morning, and, behold, these were all dead corpses.*”¹¹¹ No human means of defence can prevent their activities as revealed when the Angel freed St Peter from prison.¹¹²

St Basil the Great, interpreting the Psalmist’s words: “...*the Angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them...*”¹¹³ observed: “*Examine what is the nature of the Angels, when in all the camp and great army one Angel arrives. For the measure of Him Who protects you, the Lord grants you intercession; for [with] the power of the Angel He surrounds you with walls from all sides to protect you. ... Thus the Angel protects you from the front and back; and from both sides he will not leave you unprotected.*”¹¹⁴

St Gregory the Theologian of Nazianzos mentioned bodiless Powers as being “...*powerful by nature and acquired...*” and implies progress in the increase of their power.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ 2 Kings (4 Kings)19:35.

¹¹² Acts 5:19 and 12:7.

¹¹³ Psalm 34(35):7.

¹¹⁴ St. Basil the Great, *To Psalm 34(35)*, § 5, in Migne, *P.G.*, 29, 364.

¹¹⁵ St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Homily 28*, § 31, in Migne, *P.G.*, 36, 72.

It is understandable that Angels, as intellectual and logical beings, move automatically and quickly towards Knowledge with which the Holy Fathers accept that God enlightens them.

St Gregory the Theologian of Nazianzos presented Angelic Powers as being “...*the first Lights from God...*” and he believed “...*they danced around the first Cause of Light and from Him they receive their clear Light and are formed in Goodness, so that other Lights are made and are able to enlighten others influenced by the first Light.*”¹¹⁶

According to St. Augustine, as soon as Angels were created, they were made as created Light, which is attracted by the Word, the Light Who creates, and they watch Him, seeing themselves in Him and each other.¹¹⁷ In comparison to other creatures, Angels have two types of knowledge: the “*scientia infusa*” through which they see the creatures in the Creator - in the Word Who is the unalterable Cause of everything that exists - and the other type of knowledge gained through their direct supervision of Creation. In the Word in Whom the ideas of Creation exist from all Eternity, everything is made perfect and clear rather than through direct examination. However, Angels know themselves even better through the Word

¹¹⁶ Ibid, *Homily* 38, § 9; *Homily* 28, § 31, in Migne, *P.G.*, 36, 320 and 72.

¹¹⁷ St. Augustine, *De Genesis ad litteriam*, IV, § 41, 50, in migne, *P.L.*, 34, 313 and 317.

rather than through themselves, although through themselves and within themselves they are known.¹¹⁸

We are informed of the extent and depth of their knowledge from the Words of Christ Who revealed that they have a higher knowledge in many ways compared to that of all men. They are placed between God and man although their knowledge is restricted as St Matthew stated in his Holy Gospel: “...*But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the Angels of Heaven, but My Father only.*”¹¹⁹ Their knowledge of God is limited according to their capability and nature and in many ways they disregard His Divine Acts. God is unintelligible “...*not only to the Cherubim and the Seraphim, but...*” also “...*to the Principalities...*” and “...*to the Authorities...*” and “...*there is no other created power which has exact knowledge of God...*” “...*even from among the Cherubim or the Seraphim...*” “...*, if they wished to know something...*” of God, they would only be able to hear “...*that Heaven and earth is full of His Glory.*” Although Angels see God, they do not see Him as He is except in accordance with their capabilities¹²⁰ that enable them to see the Glory and Divine Energies of God. However they do not see His Essence.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, *De civitate Dei*, XI, § 29, in Migne, *P.L.*, 41, 343.

¹¹⁹ Matth. 24:36. Acts 1:7.

¹²⁰ St. John Chrysostom, *Concerning unintelligible*, 3, §§ 2, 4 and 6, in Migne, *P.G.*, 48, 725 and 729. Ibid, *To John Homily* 15, § 1-2, in Migne, *P.G.*, 59, 98. St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis*, VI, § 6 and 11, § 11, in Migne, *P.G.*, 33, 545 and 704-705.

The Event of the Divine Dispensation of the Incarnation of the Word and Son of God was unknown to Angels as witnessed by the two great Apostles, St Paul and St Peter. St Paul wrote: “... to make all see what is the fellowship of the Mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God Who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that now the manifold Wisdom of God might be made known by the Church to the Principalities and Powers in the Heavenly places.”¹²¹ St Peter recorded: “To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the Gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from Heaven – things which Angels desire to look into.”¹²²

St John Chrysostom, commenting on the words of St Paul, observed that “...for this reason he calls it ‘Mystery,’ because neither the Angels knew, nor was it was known to others...” “...for what a king thinks, the adjutant does not know.” Therefore “...the supreme Powers do not know the many Divine Economies of God, I mean the Principalities, Authorities and Dominions.”¹²³

St Gregory of Nyssa, clarifying the “*manifold Wisdom of God*,”¹²⁴ observed: “...the manifold Wisdom of God, which worked the great Wonders...” “...is made

¹²¹ Ephes. 3:9-10.

¹²² 1 Peter 1:12.

¹²³ St. John Chrysostom, *To Ephesians*, Homily 7, § 1, in Migne, P.G., 62, 50. Ibid, *Concerning unintelligible*, 4, § 2, in Migne, P.G., 48, 729 and 730.

¹²⁴ Ephes. 3:10.

known to the Heavenly Powers through the Church.” “For before this time they knew only the simple and uniqueness of God’s Wisdom.” “They were clearly shown the diversity of this Wisdom, through the Church: how the Word became Flesh, how life is mingled with death, how through His own Wounds He healed our wounds; how through the weakness of the Cross He conquered the power of the devil...” and set “... free the captives...”¹²⁵ The words of the Psalm “Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors! And the King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors! And the King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord of Hosts. He is the King of Glory”¹²⁶ are accepted as being spoken by the Angels, the Heavenly Powers, who accompanied our Lord as He Ascended into Heaven, and having had no knowledge of Him having become Man, “... they ask: ‘Who is this King of Glory?’”¹²⁷ This interpretation is adopted by many other Fathers.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ St. Gregory of Nyssa, *To the Song of Songs*, Homily VIII, in Migne, *P.G.*, 44, 948.

¹²⁶ Psalm 24:7-10.

¹²⁷ St. Gregory of Nyssa, *To the Lord’s Ascension*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 46, 693.

¹²⁸ St. Ambrosius, *De fide*, IV, in migne, *P.L.*, 16, 619. Jeronymus, *In Isaiah*, 17, in migne, *P.L.*, 24, 610. St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis*, 14, 24, in Migne, *P.G.*, 33, 857. Theodoretus of Cyrus, *To Psalm 24*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 80, 1033. St. Justin, the philosopher and martyr, *Dialogue*, 36, in *B*, v. 3, 240. St. Cyril of Alexandria, *To Psalm 24*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 69, 845.

Angels do not know future events or what is in the hearts of men. St John of Damascus wrote that “...*the future is not known by the Angels of God...*” and the forecast “...*is revealed to them by God.*”¹²⁹

Tertullian proclaimed that the truthfulness of the Foreknowledge and Foresaying is suitable testimony of the Divinity.¹³⁰ The author of the Dialogues addressed to Caesarius assured that “...*the Angels ignore the future.*”¹³¹

St Isidoros of Pelusiom wrote: “... *the Angelic Hosts, who are co-servants by nature, ignore the events which are not of this present time.*”¹³² The fact that Angels also ignore the thoughts of men is supported by St Hilarios and St Cyril of Alexandria who remarked that the Angels know “...*that God is the only One Who knows the secrets of men’s hearts.*”¹³³

8. The Number and Hierarchy of Angels

According to the Book of Daniel, the number of Angels were “...*thousand thousands [who] ministered to Him, and ten thousands of myriads attended upon Him...*”¹³⁴ whereas the Prophet “...*beheld in the night vision... one coming with the clouds of Heaven as the Son of*

¹²⁹ St. John of Damascus, *Catechesis*, II, 3, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 877.

¹³⁰ Tertullian, *Apologeticus*, 20, in Migne, *P.L.*, 1, 391.

¹³¹ Caesarius, *Dialogue*, I, question 44, 44, in Migne, *P.G.*, 38, 913.

¹³² St. Isidorus of Pelusion, *Epistle* 1, 195, in Migne, *P.G.*, 78, 308.

¹³³ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *To John*, book II, ch. 1, in Migne, *P.G.*, 73, 224.

¹³⁴ Dan. 7:10. Cf. Damalas, *Catechesis*, p. 17.

Man.”¹³⁵ In the Book of Revelation we read: “...Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many Angels around the Throne, the living creatures, and the Elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands.”¹³⁶ Furthermore Christ referred to the innumerability of the Angels when He gave Himself up to the Jews at Gethsemane, as He said to St Peter: “Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of Angels?”¹³⁷ Also, the use of the term “clouds” is used many times in Scripture to express the immeasurable number of Angels or Saints of the Lord.

Clement the Alexandrian believed that Angels are “..infinite in number.”¹³⁸

St John Chrysostom referred to the “..infinite municipalities of the Bodiless Powers...” “the thousands” of which no one can affirm their exact number.¹³⁹

St Irenaeus challenged the heretics of his day who proudly boasted of their presumed knowledge of the number of Angels.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁵ Dan. 7:13. Matth. 25:31. Mark 13:26. 1 Thess. 4:16.

¹³⁶ Rev. 5:11; 9:16; 19:1, 20.

¹³⁷ Matth. 26:53.

¹³⁸ Clement the Alexandrian, *Stromata*, book VII, ch. 11, in **B**, v. 8, p. 274.

¹³⁹ St. John Chrysostom, *To Hebrews*, Homily 6, § 4, in Migne, *P.G.*, 63, 59.

¹⁴⁰ St. Irenaeus, *Heresies*, book II, ch. 30, § 6, in Migne, *P.G.*, 7. Cf. *Ibid*, in Hadjephraimides, pp. 176-177.

St Dionysios the Aeropagite observed that “...*who are they and how many are the decorations of the Heavenly Essences...*” “...*the only thing I say that I know is their Divine Service.*”¹⁴¹

Origen, clarifying the statement of St Paul in his letter to the Ephesians,¹⁴² noted that “...*besides those ‘Principalities, Powers, Might and Dominions’ which are mentioned, there also exist others who are named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.*”¹⁴³

According to St Basil the Great who stated that it is impossible for anyone to know “...*the intellect and invisible natures and all their decorations...*”¹⁴⁴ St John Chrysostom concluded that “...*there are other powers, of which we do not even know their names.*”¹⁴⁵

Finally, St Cyril of Jerusalem, interpreting the Parable of the Lost Sheep,¹⁴⁶ concluded that the number of Angels is “*unspeakable*” [indescribable.] In addition he observed that from the number “*one*” symbolising humanity, one could understand the incalculable numbers of Angels symbolised by the number “*ninety-nine.*”¹⁴⁷

¹⁴¹ St. Dionysius, *About divine names*, 6, 1, in Migne, *P.G.*, 3, 200.

¹⁴² Ephes. 1:21.

¹⁴³ Origen, *About Principals*, book I, ch. 5, 1.

¹⁴⁴ St. Basil, *To Hexaemerus, Homily 1*, § 5, in Migne, *P.G.*, 29, 13.

¹⁴⁵ St. John Chrysostom, *Concerning unintelligible*, 4, § 2, in Migne, *P.G.*, 48, 729.

¹⁴⁶ Matth. 18:10-14.

¹⁴⁷ St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis*, 15, § 24, in Migne, *P.G.*, 33, 904.

The different names and Orders of the Angelic Hosts support the Teachings that they are different in Hierarchy and Ranks. In the book of Tobit we read of the “...*seven Holy Angels which present the prayers of the Saints, and which go in and out before the Glory of the Holy One.*”¹⁴⁸ They are the ones mentioned by Hermas, “...*who were created first of all...*”¹⁴⁹ and of whom Clement the Alexandrian had in mind when he spoke of “...*the seven first Angels who have the greatest of power.*”¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, Holy Scripture speaks of “...*Cherubim and the fiery sword that turns about...*” which God stationed “...*against the Garden of Delight...*” “...*to keep the Way of the Tree of Life...*”¹⁵¹ and of the six-winged Seraphim who stand “...*round about...*” God’s Glory and who “...*with two wings ... covered their faces, and with two [wings] ...covered their feet, and with two ... flew...*” while glorifying the One Who sat on the “...*high and exalted Throne.*”¹⁵² St Paul mentioned “*Thrones, Dominions, Principalities, Powers*” and “*Might,*” as well as “*Angels*” and “*Archangels,*”¹⁵³ while St Jude named one of them “*Michael.*”¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁸ Tobit 12:15.

¹⁴⁹ *Shepherd of Hermas*, Vison 3, 4, in Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, p. 203.

¹⁵⁰ Clement the Alexandrian, *Stromata*, 6, § 16, in **B**, v.8, p. 232. Rev. 8:2.

¹⁵¹ Gen. 3:25.

¹⁵² Is. 6:1-3. Jez. 10:1-19.

¹⁵³ Col. 1:16. Ephes. 1:21. Rom. 8:38. 1 Thess. 4:16. Josuah 5:14.

¹⁵⁴ Jude 9. Dan. 10:13, 21; 12:1. Rev. 12:7-9.

The books ascribed to the authorship of St Dionysios the Aeropagite and St John of Damascus, divide the Angelic Hosts into nine Orders and three Decorations:¹⁵⁵

- 1) The first decoration is composed of Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones who stand round about God and have a close communion with Him.
- 2) The second decoration is composed of Dominions, Authorities and Powers.
- 3) The third decoration is composed of Principalities, Archangels and Angels.

However, it is obvious that these are the personal opinions of the Holy Fathers since we do not have a common opinion with regard to Angelology amongst the Holy Fathers.

Thus St Basil described the Angelic Orders as Principalities, Powers, Thrones and Authorities, adding“...*and whatever intellectual natures that are unnamed.*”¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁵ St. Dionysius, *About divine names*, VI, § 2; VII, §§ 1 and 4; VIII, § 1 and IX, § 1, in Migne, *P.G.*, 3, 200, 205, 240 and 257. St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About angels*, II, 17, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 872. Damalas, *Catechesis*, pp. 17-18. Mitsopoulos, *Themata*, p. 67.

¹⁵⁶ St. Basil the Great, *About the Holy Spirit*, XVI, § 38, in Migne, *P.G.*, 32, 136.

St Gregory of Nyssa enumerated only eight Orders as being “*Authorities, Dominions, Thrones, Principalities, Powers, Seraphim, Cherubim and Liturgies.*”¹⁵⁷

St Athanasios the Great of Alexandria also referred to less than nine Orders being “*Angels, Seraphim, Cherubim, Archangels, Authorities, Thrones and Principalities.*”¹⁵⁸

St. Irenaeus does not mention the Cherubim or Seraphim.¹⁵⁹

St Gregory the Theologian of Nazianzos spoke of “*Angels, Archangels, Thrones, Dominions, Principalities, Authorities, Brightnesses and Ascensions.*”¹⁶⁰

St John Chrysostom, based on St Paul’s writings in Ephesians 1:21, observed that “...*there are Angels and Archangels and Thrones and Dominions and Principalities and Authorities, although these are not the only groups in Heaven, ... their nations are innumerable and their kinds are tremendous, of which no one is in a position to present...*” as proved by St Paul who believed

¹⁵⁷ St. Gregory of Nyssa, *To the Song of Songs*, XV, in Migne, *P.G.*, 44, 1100.

¹⁵⁸ St. Athanasius the Great, *To Serapion*, I, § 13, in Migne, *P.G.*, 26, 561.

¹⁵⁹ St. Irenaeus, *Heresies*, book II, ch. 30, §§ 3-4, in Migne, *P.G.*, 7, 816 and 817. Cf. *Ibid*, in Hadjephraimides, pp. 175-177.

¹⁶⁰ St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Homily* 28, § 31, in Migne, *P.G.*, 36, 72.

“... there are names which will be known in the future, but now are unspeakable.”¹⁶¹

St Cyril of Alexandria, with reference to Angels and their Orders noted that “...they were created by God from non-existence. They are Angels and Archangels, Thrones and Authorities, Powers and Principalities and higher than them are the Seraphim.”¹⁶²

It is obvious that there is no agreement amongst the Holy Fathers concerning the number of Orders and their Divisions.¹⁶³ This differentiation of Ranks, between the lower and higher levels is real and is supported not only by the writings ascribed to St Dionysios the Aeropagite, but by many other Holy Fathers and ecclesiastical Scholars. The writings of St Dionysios the Aeropagite supports the opinion that “...the Order of the Holy Cherubim partakes of a higher level of knowledge and understanding; the lower decorations partake also in wisdom and knowledge, but partial and lower compared to them...” and that the lower Orders receive their brightness from the higher Orders.¹⁶⁴

St Cyril of Jerusalem declared that “...the Angels see God according to their capability...” “...the Thrones

¹⁶¹ St. John Chrysostom, *Concerning unintelligible*, 4, § 2, in Migne, *P.G.*, 48, 729.

¹⁶² St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Genesis*, I, § 3, in Migne, *P.G.*, 69, 21.

¹⁶³ St. Basil the Great, *Homily*, XV, § 1, in Migne, *P.G.*, 31, 465. St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis*, 23, § 6, in Migne, *P.G.*, 33, 1113. St. Cyril of Alexandria, *To Leviticus*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 69, 549.

¹⁶⁴ St. Dionysius, *About heavenly hierarchy*, VIII, § 1; *About divine names*, XII, in Migne, *P.G.*, 3, 240 and 292.

and the Dominions more than the first...” [Orders]¹⁶⁵ Elsewhere he stated that “...*the Rank of the Angel of a nation (ethnarch)...*” is “...*higher than that of the one who has been entrusted with his protection...*” and although “...*all the Angels are of the same essence...*” they differ in that while some “...*are princes ... others are subjects...*” and that “...*the Archangel of the Angels is a prince.*”¹⁶⁶

St John Chrysostom spoke of the “...*Mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God*”¹⁶⁷ and the ignorance, which the Principalities had...” and remarked: “... *If the Principalities did not know, even more the Angels ignored.*”¹⁶⁸

St Dionysios the Aeropagite expressed the opinion that the services to mankind and to the world in general are performed by the lower decorations, the Angels, whereas the higher decorations and especially the first “...*are always around God.*” However, it is not so because according to the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Angels are “...*all ministering spirits sent out to minister to those who will inherit Salvation.*”¹⁶⁹ Thus in the case of the Prophet Isaiah, one of the Seraphim was sent with a live coal taken from the Altar with which he touched the Prophet’s mouth.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁵ St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis*, VI, § 6, in Migne, *P.G.*, 33, 548.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid*, *Catechesis*, XI, in Migne, *P.G.*, 33, 704.

¹⁶⁷ Ephes. 3:9.

¹⁶⁸ St. John Chrysostom, *To Ephesians, Homily 7*, § 1, in Migne, *P.G.*, 62, 49.

¹⁶⁹ Heb. 1:14.

¹⁷⁰ Is. 6:6-7.

St Gregory of Nyssa observed that the ministry of the spirits that will be sent to those who will be Saved is ascribed to the Powers.¹⁷¹

St Basil the Great, referring to the experience of the Prophet Isaiah commented that in relation to the action of the Seraph who took the live coal and touched the lips of the Prophet, “...*the Powers who are above this world, are considered to be worthy of being closer to God because of their holiness, [and] do not refuse to descend from Heaven for the benefit of men.*”¹⁷²

9. The Ministry and Work of Angels

St Basil the Great believed that the Work and Ministry of Angels was “...*according to their life and nature...*” and “... *they always see and glorify God...*” although their “...*occasional work is to be sent to men in order to call them to repentance and to take them.*”¹⁷³

St John Chrysostom remarked that the Angels “...*glorify and worship...*” God “...*by praising Him constantly with Mystical Odes and much fear.*”¹⁷⁴ This is confirmed by Holy Scripture when we read that “...*an Angel of the Lord stood before...*” the shepherds or

¹⁷¹ St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius*, I, in Migne, P.G., 45, 348.

¹⁷² St. Basil the Great, *To Isaiah*, 6, § 183, in Migne, P.G. 30, 428.

¹⁷³ *Ibid*, *To Isaiah*, 6, § 185, in Migne, P.G. 30, 433.

¹⁷⁴ St. John Chrysostom, *Concerning unintelligible*, 1, § 6, in Migne, P.G., 48, 707.

“...with the Angel a multitude of the Heavenly Host...” praised “...God saying: *Glory to God in the highest...*”¹⁷⁵ whereas the Seraphim exclaim: “*Holy, Holy, Holy*” while turning their faces because they cannot look directly at God.¹⁷⁶ St John the Apostle, Evangelist and Theologian mentioned in the Book of Revelation that he saw the Cherubim surrounding the Throne of God and exclaiming: “*Blessed and Glory and Wisdom!*”¹⁷⁷ while others present the prayers of the Saints or attend to the Will of God.¹⁷⁸

This endless Glorification of God by the Holy Angels is the result of their Blessedness in God. Their knowledge of the infinite Perfections of God continuously increases and therefore they stand in awe before His Divine Majesty. The repetition of the Thrice Holy Hymn is not by any means a monotonous or tiring duty. Instead it is an expression of their admiration, which is constantly renewed because of the boundless Majesty of God Whom they always see, praise and worship. This is one of the many expressions of the Blessed Life that they enjoy according to the words of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Who said that “...*this is Eternal Life, that they may know Thee, the only True God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent.*”¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁵ Luke 2:9, 13-14.

¹⁷⁶ Is. 6:1-3. Jez. 10:1-19. Rev. 4:8.

¹⁷⁷ Rev. 4:7-11; 5:8-14; 7:11-12. Psalms 103(104):20-22; 148(149):1-2, 4.

¹⁷⁸ Rev. 5:8, 11, 13; 7:11-12; 8:2, 7-9:1, 13, 16; 10:1-7, 9; 11:1, 15; 12:7; 14:6-9, 15, 17-20; 15:1, 7-8; 16:1-17; 17:1, 7; 18:1, 21, 19:1, 4, 14, 17; 20:1; 21:9; 22:1, 6, 10.

¹⁷⁹ John 17:3.

Origen believed that “...*the Powers in Heaven are elevated higher because they glorify the High One.*”¹⁸⁰

St Gregory the Theologian of Nazianzos characterised the Angels as being “...*singers of God’s Majesty, seers of the Eternal Glory, not that God needs to be Glorified (for there is no need to add to Him Who is complete and Who is the Giver of Good to all), but in order to continue to do good and to the first beings.*”¹⁸¹

However, if the main Ministry of the Angels is to Glorify God in order that they become more Blessed, then their Ministry to mankind must be considered as being only partial and is performed by them, certainly not because God is unable to do so, but for their own benefit. Thus St Peter and St Paul proclaimed that “...*the manifold Wisdom of God...*”¹⁸² is made known to the Angels through the Church and that they “...*desire to look into...*”¹⁸³ the Holy Mysteries (Sacraments) through which man is Sanctified.

St Justin the Philosopher and Martyr commented that “...*the Providence of man and those things which are under Heaven...*” God “...*gave ... to the Angels whom He has appointed.*”¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁰ Origen, *To Luke*, 2, 14. See footnote 70 in Trempeles, *Dogmatique*, v. I, p. 432.

¹⁸¹ St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Homily* 28, 31, in Migne, *P.G.*, 36, 72.

¹⁸² Ephes. 3:10.

¹⁸³ 1 Peter 1:12.

¹⁸⁴ St. Justin, the philosopher and martyr, *2 Apology*, 5, § 2, in *B*, v. 3, p. 202.

Athenagoras added: “...many Angels and Ministries the Maker and Creator of the world distributed and placed to be around the elements and the Heavens and the world and for their good order...” so that “...the Providence of all...” will be of God, “...as on a ship the general providence has the captain who guides the ship to safety, but the partial Providence...” is distributed to the “...appointed Angels.”¹⁸⁵

Clement the Alexandrian spoke of the stars that shine and move by their appointed Angels,¹⁸⁶ whereas Origen believed that Angels supervise nature, the air, the fire and the rest of the elements, while others oversee the birth of animals and the growth of plants.¹⁸⁷

St Gregory of Nyssa taught that God created the visible world and man, but before these, He created the Angels and each Angelic Power to sustain and support part of the universe.¹⁸⁸

St Gregory the Theologian of Nazianzos spoke of the Intellectual Powers, amongst which “...others received part of the world while others have been appointed for other parts of the whole universe, according to how...” God “...has appointed them.”¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁵ Athenagoras, *Deputation*, 10 and 24, in **B**, v. 4, p. 288 and 301.

¹⁸⁶ Clement the Alexandrian, in **B**, v. 8, p. 348.

¹⁸⁷ Origen, *To Jeremiah*, Homily 10, § 6, in Migne, *P.G.*, 13, 365. *Ibid*, *Against Celsus*, 8, 57, in Migne, *P.G.*, 11, 1064. *Ibid*, *To Numbers*, Homily 14, § 2, in Migne, *P.G.*, 12, 680.

¹⁸⁸ St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Catechesis*, 6, in Migne, *P.G.*, 45, 28.

¹⁸⁹ St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Homily*, 28, § 31, in Migne, *P.G.*, 36, 72.

Angels' supervision of man is a general Teaching of Holy Scripture and of the Holy Fathers of the Orthodox Church. In the Book of Psalms we read: "*The Angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them.*"¹⁹⁰ Jacob spoke of an "Angel" who delivered him "...from all evils."¹⁹¹ Daniel, after his liberation from the pit of the lions proclaimed that "...God has sent His Angel, and stopped the lions' mouths..."¹⁹² similar to when the three children were thrown into the "...midst of the burning furnace..." and the Angel "...delivered His servants, because they trusted in Him."¹⁹³ Furthermore, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, referring to the role of the Guardian Angel, warned us: "*Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in Heaven their Angels see the Face of My Father Who is in Heaven.*"¹⁹⁴ What is more, in the Book of Acts the release of St Peter was accomplished by an Angel whom the Lord had sent to free him.¹⁹⁵

St John Chrysostom observed that everyone has a Guardian Angel.¹⁹⁶

"*The Shepherd of Hermas*" referred to the "...two Angels with man, one of righteousness and one of

¹⁹⁰ Psalm 34(35):7.

¹⁹¹ Gen. 48:16.

¹⁹² Dan. 6:22, 28.

¹⁹³ Dan. 3:23, 25.

¹⁹⁴ Matth. 18:10.

¹⁹⁵ Acts 12:7-11, 15

¹⁹⁶ St. John Chrysostom, *To Acts*, Homily XXVI, § 3, in Migne, *P.G.*, 60, 201.

wickedness...” as the young in faith who are “...warned by the Angels to do good, because wickedness was found in them.”¹⁹⁷

St Justin the Philosopher and Martyr also spoke of God’s Providence for men, which He appointed for them.¹⁹⁸ In “*Answers to the Orthodox*,” attributed to him, it is mentioned that Angels who are, according to their ministry, “...sent as guardians of men...” and who “...are either sent for both soul and body or are sent to the soul after its departure from its bod, until the time of the world’s renewal.”¹⁹⁹

St Gregory of Nyssa stated that after man’s fall into sin, God gave him an Angel since the devil always tries to find ways of destroying man.²⁰⁰

St Cyril of Alexandria added: “...when the Saints are tempted, the Angels are present to hear of the bravery and the victory of those who are able to overcome the assaults; for man’s mind is unable to withstand such assaults from the enemies.”²⁰¹

¹⁹⁷ *Shepherd of Hermas*, Mandate 6, 2, 1 and Vision 3, 5, 4, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, pp. 222 and 204.

¹⁹⁸ St. Justin, the philosopher and martyr, *2 Apology*, 5, 2, in **B**, v. 3, p. 202.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid*, *Answers to Orthodox*, question 30, in **B**, v. 4, p. 88.

²⁰⁰ St. Gregory of Nyssa, *About the life of Moses*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 44, 337.

²⁰¹ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *To Psalm 33:8*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 69, 888.

It seems that St John Chrysostom restricted the Guardian Angels only to those who have received the Holy Mystery of Baptism.²⁰²

St Basil the Great also noted: “...every one who has believed in the Lord has been entrusted with an Angel whom we should not turn away because of our evil deeds. For as the smoke turns away the bees and the bad smell the doves, likewise sin turns away the Guardian Angel of our life.”²⁰³

Origen also limited the Guardian Angels only to those who are Baptised. The *Diakonia* [Ministry] of the Guardian Angel in general is expressed by his belief that the good Angel of the Lord prevails, urges and governs our lives. For those deeds that need daily correction and repentance he sees the Face of our Heavenly Father²⁰⁴ to Whom “...he prays with us and cooperates with us according to those things that we pray about...” as in the case of Tobit and Sara who were healed by Archangel Raphael as a result of their prayers.²⁰⁵ In addition to this, Angels surround those who are worthy and gather in prayer, offering them Strength and Power. Their Ministry is not restricted to protecting the body and life from innumerable dangers since they act as “Correctors” and “Lawyers” who direct lives, providing “indestructible

²⁰² St. John Chrysostom, *To Colosians, Homily 3*, § 4, in Migne, *P.G.*, 62, 322.

²⁰³ St. Basil the Great, *To Psalm 34*, § 5, in Migne, *P.G.* 29, 364.

²⁰⁴ Origen, *To Numbers, Homily 20*, 3, in Migne, *P.G.*, 12, 733.

²⁰⁵ Tobit 3:16-17.

walls” to protect and save the faithful, as well as inspiring us with good thoughts and decisions.

Clement the Alexandrian believed Angels are present at the birth of a child.²⁰⁶

Tertullian spoke of the Angel of Baptism and the Angel of Prayer.²⁰⁷

The Holy Fathers and Ecclesiastical Scholars referred to Angels of nations²⁰⁸ as written in Holy Scripture when, for instance, God promised to send His Angel before Israel so that he would guide them correctly, taking them into the land that God had prepared for them.²⁰⁹ Furthermore, “...when the Most High divided the nations, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the nations according to the number of the Angels of God.”²¹⁰

St Basil the Great, referring to Daniel 10:13 where Archangel Michael is mentioned as being one of the “princes,” concluded that there are in fact, many “princes.”²¹¹

²⁰⁶ Clement, *Stromata*, book VI, ch. 17; *Who is the saved rich man*, 42, *From the Prophets*, 50, in **B**, v. 8, pp. 238; 374; 346-347.

²⁰⁷ Tertullian, *De baptismo*, 5; and *De oratione*, 16, in Migne, *P.L.*, 1, 206 and 1174.

²⁰⁸ Clement, *Stromata*, 7, 2 and 6, 17, in **B**, v. 8, pp. 246 and 238. Origen, *To Genesis, Homily IX*, § 3, in Migne, *P.G.*, 12, 213.

²⁰⁹ Ex. 23:20.

²¹⁰ Deut. 32:8.

²¹¹ St. Basil the Great, *To Isaiah*, ch. 10, § 240, in Migne, *P.G.*, 30, 540. *Ibid*, *Against Eunomius*, III, § 1, in Migne, *P.G.*, 29, 656-657.

St John Chrysostom observed that at the beginning the number of Angels were according to the number of nations but now they are according to the number of Faithful.²¹²

St Gregory of Nyssa, with reference to the Psalm “...unless the Lord builds the house, they labour in vain who build it; unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain...”²¹³ spoke of “...the ministering spirits...” as well as “...watchers who surround the city.” In other words, Guardian Angels of cities.²¹⁴

Clement the Alexandrian observed that “...the Angels are distributed for the protection of men.”²¹⁵

St Gregory the Theologian of Nazianzos mentioned “...Angels of Churches...”²¹⁶ as St John the Apostle and Evangelist had written of in his Book of Revelation.²¹⁷ St

Shepherd of Hermas, Parable 8, 2-3, 5; 2, 1, 6, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, pp. 252-254.

²¹² St. John Chrysostom, *To Colosians*, Homily 3, § 2, in Migne, *P.G.*, 62, 322.

²¹³ Psalm 127:1.

²¹⁴ St. Gregory of Nyssa, *To the Songs of Songs*, Homily 12, in Migne, *P.G.*, 44, 1033.

²¹⁵ Clement the Alexandrian, *Stromata*, book VI, ch. 17, in *B*, v. 8, p. 238.

²¹⁶ St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Homily*, 42, § 27 and 9, in Migne, *P.G.*, 36, 492 and 469.

²¹⁷ Rev. 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14.

Basil also referred to the “...*Holy Angels of Churches who have been entrusted with their protection.*”²¹⁸

²¹⁸ St. Basil the Great, *To Isaiah*, ch. 1, § 46, in Migne, *P.G.*, 30. St. Cyril of Alexandria, *To John*, book VI, in Migne, *P.G.*, 73, 1021.