



THE BASICS OF THE ORTHODOX FAITH

Roles of Angels

1. Messengers of God

Angels are primarily known as messengers. The very word "angel" means "messenger" in Greek. They are frequently depicted in the Bible delivering messages from God to humans. For example, the Archangel Gabriel announced the birth of John the Baptist to Zacharias and the birth of Jesus to the Virgin Mary. These divine messages often play pivotal roles in God's plan for humanity.

2. Worshipers of God

Angels are constantly engaged in the worship and glorification of God. They are depicted as surrounding the throne of God, singing praises and adoration. For instance, in Isaiah 6:3, the Seraphim are heard proclaiming, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." Their ceaseless worship reminds believers of the importance of glorifying God in all things.

3. Protectors and Guardians

One of the comforting teachings of the Orthodox Church is that each person has a guardian angel assigned to them from birth. These guardian angels protect and guide individuals, helping them avoid spiritual and physical dangers. In Psalm 91:11, it is written, "For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways." This belief underscores the idea that God's providential care is active in the lives of His people.

4. Intercessors and Advocates

Angels also serve as intercessors, praying to God on behalf of humans. In the book of Tobit, the Archangel Raphael is depicted as presenting the prayers of Tobit and Sarah to God. This role highlights their position as mediators who help bridge the gap between the divine and human realms, bringing human petitions to the throne of God.

5. Warriors Against Evil

Angels are seen as warriors in the battle against evil. The Archangel Michael, for example, is often depicted as a warrior who leads the heavenly hosts in the fight against the forces of darkness. In Revelation 12:7-9, Michael and his angels battle against the dragon and his angels, symbolizing the triumph of good over evil.

6. Guides and Teachers

Angels also act as guides and teachers, imparting divine wisdom and instruction to humans. In the book of Daniel, the Archangel Gabriel provides Daniel with understanding and insight into his visions. This guiding role is important for helping individuals discern God's will and navigate their spiritual journey.

7. Ministers of Comfort and Support

Angels provide comfort and support during times of distress and need. In the Garden of Gethsemane, an angel appeared to Jesus to strengthen Him before His crucifixion (Luke 22:43). This role shows that angels are also compassionate beings who offer solace and encouragement to those in need.

The roles of angels encompass a wide range of functions, all aimed at fulfilling God's will and assisting humanity. The teachings on angels provide believers with a deeper understanding of God's care and the intricate ways in which He interacts with His creation.