

The Apocalypse of the Virgin¹

Michael appears to the Virgin Mary

1 (1) The All-Holy Theotokos was about to go to the Mount of Olives to pray. (*Liber Requiei 1-3*) Praying to the Lord God she said, “In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; let the archangel Michael come, so that he may tell me about the punishments and about the things in heaven and on the earth and below the earth.” As soon as she spoke, Michael, the commander-in-chief² came down with the angels of the east and the west and angels of the south and the north, and they saluted the Highly Favored One³ and said to her:

“Hail, radiance of the Father!

Hail dwelling of the Son, hail overshadowing of the Holy Spirit! (**Luke 1:35**)

Hail firmament of the seven heavens!

Hail stronghold of the firmament!

Hail worship of the angels, hail proclamation of the prophets!

Hail loftier than all unto the throne of God!”

And the Highly Favored One said to the angel:

“Hail to you as well Michael, commander-in-chief, the minister of the invisible Father!

Hail Michael, commander-in-chief, associate also of my Son!

Hail Michael, commander-in-chief, who rules over all things and is worthy to stand beside the throne of the Lord!

Hail Michael, commander-in-chief, who is about to sound the trumpet and awaken those who have been asleep for ages! (**Rev 11:15**)

Hail Michael, commander-in-chief, first of all in the presence of God!”

2 (2) Having acclaimed all the angels in like manner, the Highly Favored One began to petition the commander-in-chief and to say, “Tell me of all things on the earth.” The commander-in-chief said to her, “Whatever you ask me, Highly Favored One, I will tell you.” The All-Holy One⁴ said to him, “How many punishments are there, by which the human race is punished?” And again the Highly Favored One said to him, “Tell me of the things in heaven and on the earth.” (*Liber Requiei 90; Obseq. Virg. p. 47*)

Mary and Michael travel to Hades

3 (3) Then the commander-in-chief Michael gave the order and it was revealed by the western angels. Hades opened, and she saw those who were being punished there. There lay a multitude of men and women who were wailing. The Highly Favored One asked the commander-in-chief, “Who are these and what are their sins?” (*Liber Requiei 90, 95; Obseq. Virg. p. 47*) The commander-in-chief said, “Mistress, these are those who did not believe in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and for this reason they are thus punished here.”

4 (4) She saw in another place a great darkness, and there lay a multitude of men and women. And she said, “What is this darkness and who are those being punished in it?” The commander-in-chief said, “Lady, many souls lie in this darkness.” The All-Holy One said, “Let the darkness be taken away so that I may see this punishment also.” The commander-in-chief said to the Highly Favored One, “It is not possible that you should see this punishment.” And

¹ The title according to the manuscript is “The Apocalypse of the All-Holy Theotokos concerning the Punishments.”

² I.e., of the heavenly host.

³ *Kecharitōmenē*

⁴ *Panagia*.

those guarding them answered and said, “Mistress, we have a command from the invisible Father that they will not see the light until your blessed Son shines forth on the earth.”

Overcome with grief, the All-Holy One lifted up her eyes to the undefiled throne of the Father and said, “In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, let the darkness be taken away, that I may see this punishment also.” Immediately that darkness was lifted up so that it covered the seven heavens.

5 And there lay a multitude of men and women, and there was great lamentation and great wailing. Seeing them, the All-Holy One wept and said to them, “What are you doing, wretched ones? How is it that you are found there?” But there was no voice nor anything heard. The angels guarding them said, “Why do you not speak to the Highly Favored One?” Those being punished said to her, “Mistress, we have not seen light in ages, and we are not able to look up.” Boiling pitch lay upon them, and seeing them the All-Holy One wept.

And again those being punished said to her, “How is it that you ask about us, holy Mistress? Your blessed Son came upon the earth and did not ask about us, neither did John the Baptist nor Moses the great prophet, and the apostle Paul did not appear to us. How is it that you, All-Holy One, the fortification of the Christians who intercedes exceedingly with the Master on behalf of Christians, would deem it worthy to ask about us, your servants?”

6 Then the All-Holy One said to Michael, the commander-in-chief, “What is their sin?” The commander-in-chief said, “These are they who did not honor the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit and did not confess you as Theotokos, that from you our Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God was born and took flesh, and for this reason they are punished here.” (*Apoc. Pet. [Eth.] 7*) Again weeping, the All-Holy One said to them, “Why did you commit such an error, wretched ones? Why did you not glorify the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit? Why did you not worship the consubstantial Trinity? Why did you not confess that the Son and Word of God received flesh from me? Why did you not believe that Christ the Redeemer was born from me, his servant? Or did you not hear the voice of the prophet, ‘*Look the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and you shall name him Emmanouel.*’ (**Is. 7:14 [Matt 1:23]**) The judgment of God is just.”

When the All-Holy One said these things, the darkness again fell upon them as it was from the beginning.

The punishments in the southern places

7 (5) And the commander-in-chief said, “Where would you like us go, Highly Favored One? To the west or to the south?” She said, “To the South.” Immediately the cherubim and the seraphim appeared, and they led forth the Highly Favored One to the south, where the river of fire came forth. (*Apoc. Pet. [Eth.] 6*) Therein lay a multitude of men and women, some up to the waist, some up to the chest, some up to the neck, and others up to the top of the head. (*Apoc. Paul 31*) Seeing them the Theotokos asked the commander-in-chief, saying, “Who are these, and what are their sins?” The commander-in-chief said, “These who lie in it up to their waist are those who inherited the curse of father and mother, and because of this they are thus punished here as accursed.”

8 (6) The All-Holy One said, “And who are these lying in the fire up to the chest?” The commander-in-chief said, “These are those who beat, outraged, and defiled their godparents in fornication, and because of this they are punished thus here.” (*Apoc. Pet. [Eth.] 7*)

9 (7) The Theotokos said to the commander-in-chief, “Who are these lying up to the neck in the flame of the fire?” He said, “These, All-Holy One, are those who ate human flesh.” The

Theotokos said, “And how is it possible for one person to eat of the flesh of another person?” The commander-in-chief (said), “Listen, Mistress, I will tell you about this. These are those who threw off their own unborn children from their wombs and cast them out as food for the dogs and those who betrayed their brothers before kings and rulers, and because of this they are punished thus.” (*Apoc. Pet. [Eth.] 8; Apoc. Paul 40*)

10 (8) The All-Holy One said, “Who are these lying in the fire up to the top of the head?” The commander-in-chief said, “These are those who take interest from their money and of their own free will go forth into the church of God. And because of this they are punished thus.” (*Apoc. Pet. [Eth.] 10; Apoc. Paul 37*)

11 (9) Then she saw in another place a person hanging by the feet, and worms were devouring him. She said to the commander-in-chief, “Who is this, and what is his sin?” He said, “This is one who laid hold of the precious and life-giving Cross and swore falsely. The angels tremble before it, but people lay hold of it and swear falsely. And because of this they are punished thus.”

12 (10) Then she saw a woman hanging from her two ears, and they were devouring her. And she asked, “Who is she, and what is her sin?” The commander-in-chief said, “This is one who eavesdropped in her neighbor’s houses and made up wicked and contentious words. And because of this she is punished thus.”

The punishments in the western places

13 (11) Seeing these things the All-Holy One wept and said to the angel, “*It would have been better for that one not to have been born.*” (*Mark 14:21//Matt 26:24*) He said to her, “Truly, All-Holy One, you have not yet seen the great punishments and agonies of the sinners.” The All-Holy One said, “Come, Michael, the great commander, and lead me forth so that I may see all the punishments.” The commander-in-chief said, “Where would you like for us to go?” The All-Holy One said, “To the west.” And immediately a luminous cloud appeared and led her forth to the west.

14 (12) She saw a cloud of fire that was spread out, and a multitude of men and women lay therein. And the Theotokos said, “What was their sin?” He said, “These are they who on the morning of the holy Lord’s Day lie like the dead and do not glorify God in the church. And because of this they are punished.” The All-Holy One said, “If someone cannot go forth or cannot wake up early, what shall he do?” The commander-in-chief said, “Listen All-Holy One, if someone’s house is set on fire on all four (sides), and fire surrounds him, and he cannot come out, he has a pardon, for it is not possible to flee from the fire because it surrounds him. Thus even sloth⁵ is somehow able to have a pardon.”

15 (13) Then she saw in another place fiery benches, and on them sat a multitude of men and women who were burning. The All-Holy One asked, “Who are these, and what are their sins?” The commander-in-chief said, “These, All-Holy One, are those who do not stand up for the priests when they enter into the temple of God, and similarly those who do not stand for their godparents. And because of this they are punished thus.”

16 (14) Then the All-Holy One saw in another place an iron tree, and it had branches of iron, and a multitude of men and women were hanging on it by their tongues. Seeing them the All-Holy One wept, and asked, “Who are these and what are their sins?” The commander-in-chief said, “These are perjurers, blasphemers, slanderers, deniers of the faith of Christ, false accusers, the foul-mouthed, the quarrelsome, and those who divided brothers from brothers and

⁵ Or possibly “hesitation” or “fear.”

wives from husbands, and those who did not keep the bed undefiled and separated faithful brothers from the faith of Christ, and were rousing strife and tension in them with their brothers.” (*Apoc. Pet. [Eth.] 7, 9, 12*)

17 (15) The All-Holy One saw in another place a man hanging from four (limbs), and from his nails blood poured forth violently, and his tongue was tied in a flame of fire, and he was unable to groan or say “Lord, have mercy on me.” Seeing him the All-Holy One wept and herself said, “Lord, have mercy” thrice. After she said this, the angel who had authority over the scourge came and released the man’s tongue for the glory and honor of the immaculate Lady.

The All-Holy One asked the commander-in-chief, “Who is this pitiful one who has such a punishment?” He said, “This, All-Holy One, is the steward who did not do the will of God but ate the things of the church, saying, ‘The one who serves in the temple gets his food from the temple.’ (**1 Cor 9:13**) And because of this he is punished thus.” (*Liber Requiei 98*) The All-Holy One said, “Let it be unto him as he believed.” And again he tied his tongue.

The punishments of the clergy

18 (16) Then the angel said, “Come, All-Holy One, and I will show unto you where the clergy are punished.” The All-Holy One went forth and saw priests hanging from their twenty nails, and fire was coming out from their heads and flowing over them. Seeing them the All-Holy One wept and asked the commander-in-chief, saying, “Who are these and what are their sins?” The angel said, “These, All-Holy One, are those who were standing before the altar of God, and when they were breaking the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, the stars fell down, and the dreadful throne in heaven shook and the footstool of our Lord trembled, and they did not realize it, nor did they understand the mystery of God, but they were thinking little of his immaculate body and blood without fear of God. And because of this they are punished thus here.” (*Liber Requiei 95-96; Apoc. Paul 34, 36*)

19 (17) Then the All-Holy One saw a man and a winged beast having three heads like flames of fire; two heads were at the man’s eyes and the third head was at his mouth. Seeing him the All-Holy One asked the angel, “Who is this, that he cannot free himself from the mouth of the dragon?” The angel said to her, “This, All-Holy One, is the reader who does not practice the commands of the holy Gospel.” (*Liber Requiei 95; Apoc. Paul 36*)

20 (18) And the angel said, “Come, All-Holy One, and I will show you where the angelic schema⁶ is punished.” She went forth and saw them where they were lying in the fire, and the sleepless worm gnawed them. (**Mark 9:48; Isa 66:24**) The All-Holy One said, “Who are these, and what are their sins?” The angel said, “These, All-Holy One, are those who wore the angelic schema and on earth were called patriarchs and metropolitans and archbishops, but they were not worthy of their name, nor did they honor it. On earth they were asked, ‘Bless, holy ones,’⁷ but in heaven they are not called holy, because they did not act as those bearing the angelic schema, and because of this they are punished thus here.” (*Apoc. Paul 35*)

21 (19) Then she saw women hanging by their fingernails, and a flame of fire came out of their mouths and burned them. Many beasts devoured them, and they cried out, groaning, “Have mercy on us, for we are punished more severely than all those who are in the punishments!” Seeing them, the All-Holy One wept and asked the angel, “Who are these and what are their

⁶ A type of monastic habit indicating advanced rank. The text continues to indicate high-ranking bishops, who would have been celibate.

⁷ Or possibly “they were called blessed holy ones.”

sins?” The angel said, “These are the wives of priests who did not honor the priests, but after their priests died they took husbands, and because of this they are punished thus here.”

22 (20) The All-Holy One saw in the same manner also a deaconess hanging, and a two-headed beast was gnawing her breasts. The All-Holy One asked the angel, “What is her sin?” He said, “She is a deaconess who defiled her body in fornication, and because of this she is punished thus.”

23 (21) She saw other women over the fire, and all the beasts devoured them. The All-Holy One asked, “Who are these and what is their sin?” He said, “These are those who did not do the will of God, being lovers of money, and being impious they took interest on accounts.”

(22) Hearing these things, the All-Holy One wept and said, “Woe to the sinners!” And the angel said, “Why do you cry out, Lady? Truly you have not yet seen the great punishments.”

The punishments in the left parts of Paradise

24 The angel said, “Come, All-Holy One, and I will show you every punishment.” And the Theotokos said, “Show me, great commander.” He said to her, “Where would you like for us to go, Highly Favored One? To the eastern parts, or toward the left parts of Paradise?” She said, “To the left parts of Paradise.”

(23) As soon as she spoke, he led forth the Highly Favored One to the left parts of Paradise. And behold, there was a great river of fire and great darkness. The appearance of the river was darker than pitch, and in it was lying a multitude of men and women, and it boiled like a cauldron and like a wild sea raging with waves, and the waves were upon the sinners. When the waves rose, they sank the sinners. And they were not able to look up and say, “Have mercy, just judge.” But the sleepless worm was gnawing them, (**Mark 9:48; Isa 66:24**) and there was no counting the number of the beasts that were gnawing them.

25 Seeing the All-Holy Theotokos, the angels who were punishing them all cried out with a great voice and said, “Holy is God who has compassion through the Theotokos! We give you thanks, O Son of God, since from eternity we have not seen light, and today we have seen it through the Theotokos.” And again they all cried out with one voice, saying, “Hail, Highly Favored Theotokos! Hail, lamp of the light that never sets!⁸ Hail to you also, Michael, the commander-in-chief, the intercessor for all creation! For we, seeing the sinners being punished, are greatly grieved.”

The All-Holy One, when she saw the angels humbled on account of the sinners, lamented and said, “Woe to sinners and their neighbors.” And she said, “Let us see the sinners.” When the All-Holy One went forth with the archangel and all the angels, they lifted up one voice saying, “Lord have mercy!”

26 After they made the fervent (prayer), the river’s surge stopped, the fiery waves grew calm, and the sinners appeared as mustard seeds. Seeing them, the All-Holy One wept and said, “What is this river, and what are its waves?” The angel said, “This river is the outer fire, and those who are being tortured are the Jews, who crucified our Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God and who refused holy baptism, and those who commit fornication against the immaculate chism of godparenthood, and he who fornicates against mother and daughter, and sorcerers and murderers, and women who strangle their babies.”

The All-Holy One said, “According to their faith, let it be unto them.” Immediately the waves were upon the sinners, and the darkness covered them. The commander-in-chief said, “If anyone should be cast into this darkness, there will be no remembrance of him in the presence of

⁸ Or “the inaccessible light.”

God.” (*Apoc. Paul 41*) And the All-Holy One said, “Woe to sinners, for the flame of the fire is everlasting.”

27 (24) The commander-in-chief said, “Come, All-Holy One, and I will show you the lake of fire, (**Rev 20:10, 14-15**) where the race of the Christians is punished.” The All-Holy One went forth and saw the lake of fire and the sinners in it. Some she heard, but others she did not see.⁹ She asked the angel, “What is their sin?” He said, “These, All-Holy One, are those who were baptized and swore allegiance to Christ the Word alone but did the works of the devil and lost the time of their repentance. And because of this they are punished thus.”

Mary intercedes on behalf of the sinners in the torments

28 (25) The All-Holy One said, “I beg of you one request: I ask of you that I enter in and also be punished with the Christians, because they are the children of my son.” The angel said to her, “May you rest in Paradise, Lady.” The All-Holy One said, “I beg of you, let us pray for the sinners that the Lord our God will hear them and have mercy on them.” The commander-in-chief said, “As the Lord God lives, seven times a day and seven times a night, when we offer up the hymn of the Master, we, the angels, intercede on behalf of them all, and the Lord God does not hear us.” (*Liber Requiei 93-94*)

29 (26) The All-Holy One said, “I beg of you, order the armies of the angels and raise me up to the height of heaven and make me to stand in the presence of the invisible Father.” And she stretched forth her immaculate hands to the immaculate throne of the Father and said with a great voice, “Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, God, the invisible Lord who loves humankind, compassionate Master, have mercy on the sinners, for I have seen, Lord, their great afflictions and punishments, and I cannot bear their pain. Command your servant, Master, that I will also be punished with the Christians.”

There came a voice saying, “How can I have mercy on them, who did not themselves have mercy? Let them receive what is due according to their deeds.” (*Liber Requiei 100*) The Theotokos said, “I do not beg, Master, on behalf of the unbelieving Jews, but for the piteous Christians I call upon your compassion.” There came a voice for the second time, saying, “They did not have mercy on their own brothers, and how can I have mercy on them?”

The Theotokos said, “Long-suffering Lord, have mercy on the Christian sinners. Look upon their punishments, for every creature calls upon me, your servant, saying, ‘Holy Mistress, help us!’” (*Liber Requiei 99*) Then the Lord said to her, “Listen, Holy of Holies, All-Holy Virgin, if anyone calls upon your name, I will not forsake him, either in heaven or on earth.”

30 (27) The Theotokos said, “Where is Moses? Where are all the prophets and fathers? Where are the holy apostles and martyrs and all the saints? Where are you, holy Paul, apostle of the Lord? Where are the four evangelists, the eyewitnesses of the Lord, who proclaimed him? Where is the power of the precious and life-giving Cross, which delivered Adam and Eve from the ancient curse? Where is the holy Lord’s Day, the boast of Christians, the name of the Lord’s third-day resurrection? Where are the orders of the angels? Come, and let us pray for the Christian sinners, that the Lord will hear them and have mercy on them.”

31 Then Michael the archangel and all the angels raised one voice with the Lady, (*Liber Requiei 92-93*) saying, “Have mercy, Master, on the Christians! Have mercy on those who confess you, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, true immortal God, even if they have fallen into sin!” Then Moses also spoke, “Have mercy, Master, on those to whom I gave the Law!” And John said, “Have mercy, Master, on those to whom I gave your New Testament and

⁹ Or possibly, “she saw easily.”

the holy Gospel!” Then Paul cried out, saying, “Have mercy, Master, on those to whom I brought your epistles in the Church!”

And the Lord God said, “Listen, all of you: if they lived their lives according to the Law which Moses gave, and according to the Gospel which John gave, and according to the epistles which Paul brought, and according to the power of the precious and life-giving Cross, thus will they be judged.” They had nothing to say except, “Have mercy, O just judge! Have mercy, Lord!”

(28) The Theotokos again said, “Have mercy, Master, on the sinners, because they kept your Law and heeded your Gospel, and believed in your Son, and were baptized with holy baptism, and honored your precious and life-giving Cross, and confessed you, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit on the earth, but they were foolish, simple people, and the devil envied them. And the Lord said, “Listen, All-Holy One: if anyone did evil to them, and they did not requite with evil, (**1 Thess 5:15; Rom 12:17; 1 Pet 3:9**) you speak rightly. But if some people did not do evil to them, and they requited with evil, how can I have mercy on them? But it will be given to them according to their deeds.” Then they all, hearing the voice of the Master, had nothing to answer.

32 When the All-Holy One saw that they were all at a loss, and the Master did not hear them, and his mercy was hidden from the sinners, she spoke thus, “Where is Gabriel, who declared to me ‘Hail, for from before the ages you shall conceive him who is co-beginningless with the Father,’ and now does not look upon the sinners? Come, all you righteous elect, whom God has justified, and let us fall down before the presence of the compassionate and merciful God, so that God will hear us and have mercy on them.” Then Michael the archangel, and all the angels, and the righteous, and the prophets, and the apostles, and the martyrs, and all the elect fell down before God, saying, “Have mercy, have mercy, have mercy, Master, on the sinners according to your great mercy!”

The Lord grants a yearly respite to those in the torments

33 (29) Then the Master,¹⁰ the merciful lover of humankind, seeing the supplication of all those who were pleasing to him, had compassion and said, “Go down, my beloved Son, and heed the supplication of my servants, and let your face shine on the sinners.” Then when the Master, the Son and Word of God, came down from his immaculate throne and those who were in the punishments saw him, they all raised one voice saying, “Have mercy on us, Master!”

The Master said to them, “Listen, all of you: I made Paradise and formed humankind according to my own image. But humankind transgressed, and by its own sins it was handed over to death. But I would not suffer the works of my hands to be tyrannized by the serpent, on account of which I was born of the immaculate Virgin Mary. And having been baptized, I blessed the Jordan, on account of the nature that had grown old in sin. I was nailed to the cross, in order to free you from the ancient curse. I asked for water, and you gave me vinegar with gall. I was placed in the tomb by the Jews; I trampled down the enemy; I raised up my elect. And you would not listen to me, but you bound yourself to the present age, and falling into sins, you became playthings of the demons, and you have received what is due according to your deeds.

34 “But now, because of the supplication of my mother, and because of Michael my archangel and the multitude of the holy angels, and because of all the saints of the ages who are pleasing to me, you will have rest for the days of the holy Resurrection, until the day of

¹⁰ The manuscript has here in addition “the Son,” which is absent, however, from other early manuscripts, and so I have omitted this in light of the instructions given to the Son that follow.

Pentecost to glorify the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.” (*Liber Requiei 100; Apoc. Paul 44*)

(30) Then they all raised a voice, saying, “Glory to your Kingdom, Lord! Glory to your compassion, Master! Glory to your love of humankind, Holy One, for to you is due honor, majesty, and magnificence, to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, now and always, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.”