

Knowing, Praying, Living the Holy Scriptures

"How I have loved thy law, O Lord! The whole day it is my meditation." (Ps 118:97)

Deuteronomy 32:8-9

"When the Most High divided the nations, When He scattered the sons of Adam, He set the boundaries of the nations by the number of God's angels. And His people Jacob became the Lord's portion; The allotment of His inheritance is Israel." (OSB modified)

Deuteronomy 32 is known as "the Song of Moses," and it is one of the most important sections of Scripture. To illustrate we might note that it is *this* Song that the Maccabean martyrs quote in the context of their suffering (2 Macc 7:6; cf. Rev 15:3), and that the Song is the Second of the Nine biblical Canticles that form the basis of the Matins Canon. Moses' Song is a brief poetic retelling of the whole story of Israel, from its "creation" as a people (32:6) to a prophetic anticipation of Israel's coming exile (32:26) and restoration (32:36, 43).

Deut 32:8-9, which stands at the beginning of the Song, is of profound importance in setting up the dramatic stage or "world" of Scripture. It is also somewhat scandalous to our modern ears, given our commitment to Monotheism and our tendency to flatten or rationalize away the unseen spiritual realm. What we are told is that Israel's God, Who is the *Most High* God, divided humanity into different people groups, 70 to be exact (cf. Genesis 10-11), and when He did, He chose to apportion the Gentile nations to "angels" or "sons of God"—that is, "divine beings"—while He Himself rules Israel directly (cf. Sirach 17:17). In a word, this is the theology of Israel's "election."

But the implication is that the Gentile nations have been given "angelic overseers" which populate the heavenly court that is pictured in passages such as 1 Kgs 22:19-23 and Job 1-2. Now, in other passages of Scripture, we are led to the conclusion that these "angels" were not content to merely "oversee" the nations, and in this role, to direct the worship of the nations back to the Most High, but they actually claimed the worship for themselves, usurping the supremacy of Israel's God, and thus they fell. This is perhaps the picture we are given in Psalm 81: "I said, 'You are gods, and all sons of the Most High, but you die like men, and like one of the rulers, you fall'" (81:6-7).

When we arrive at the New Testament, we encounter a world with a full-blown picture of the spiritual realm as consisting of both good and evil "principalities," "powers," "authorities," "rulers in heavenly places," etc. (cf. Rom 8:38-39; Eph 3:10; 6:12; 1 Pet 3:22). In Christ, Christians are raised above this realm of spiritual tyranny, and are seated with Christ in heavenly places (Eph 1:20; 2:6). Rather than being subject to angels, Christians *will judge angels* (1 Cor 6:3). Christians, and especially the Apostles and Martyrs, are the replacement for the fallen heavenly hierarchy, and it is through their witness that the nations are liberated from the realm of pagan darkness and superstition, their enslavement to "the powers," and brought back under the rule of the Most High God, Israel's God, now revealed in the Person of Christ who bears the Name of God (Phil 2:9-11; cf. Psalm 81:8).

In its positive aspect, the teaching of Deut 32:8-9 can be understood to disclose the mystery of "guardian angels" which our Lord points to in Matthew's Gospel: "See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven continually see the face of My Father who is in heaven" (Matt 18:10). These angels are "ministering spirits" sent out for the salvation of God's "portion," the true Israel of God (Heb 1:7, 14).



ST. PHILIP ORTHODOX CHURCH

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His Grace Bishop THOMAS



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December 22, 2019

FOREFEAST OF & SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST

COMMEMORATIONS:

ANASTASIA THE GREAT MARTYR
CHRYSOGONOS, THEODOTA, EVODIAS, &
EUTYCHIANUS, THE MARTYRS

Tone 2 - Eothinon 5

Orthros Gospel: St. Luke 24:12-35

Epistle: Hebrews 11:9-10, 32-40

Liturgy Gospel: St. Matthew 1:1-25

RESURRECTION TROPARION - Tone 2 - When Thou didst submit Thyself unto death, O Thou deathless and immortal One, then Thou didst destroy hell with Thy godly power. And when Thou didst raise the dead from beneath the earth, all the powers of heaven did cry aloud unto Thee: O Thou who art risen from the dead, O Lord, glory to Thee!

KONTAKION OF PREPARATION OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY - Tone 3 - The Virgin cometh today to the Cave to give birth, ineffably to bring forth the Word eternal. Therefore, rejoice O earth, at the message, with the angels and shepherds give glory to Him, Who shall appear by His own will, as a young Child, He Who is from eternity God.

TODAY: Orthros 8:45 am, Divine Liturgy 10 am
Coffee Hour after Liturgy
Sunday School Christmas Program, 12:30 pm
Advent Paraklesis, 2 pm

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Office Hours: Monday through Friday 10:00 - 3:00

Fr Noah & Fr James are available for hospital visits. If you or anyone you know is in the hospital or homebound and would like a visit, please call the church office.

Weekly Ministries & Stewards:

	This Week:	Next Week (Dec 29):
PROSPHORA BREAD:	MaryLynne Black	Gabi & Catalin Tinjala
EPISTLE READER:	Raja Kyriakos	Brian Fitzgerald
USHERS:	Colin M. & Steve K.	Justin G. & Peter C.
ALTAR CANDLES:	----	----
ALTAR BOYS:	“Archangel Gabriel”	“Archangel Michael”
GREETERS:	Jim & Doris Eggers	Teen SOYO
CLEANING TEAM:	Olena K., Almash A., Zerfenesh & Tsegereda	Jamil & Nicole Kyriakos family
COFFEE HOUR:	Order of St. Ignatius - Donation	----

EVERYONE is invited to stay for refreshments after the Divine Liturgy. Your assistance in cleanup is appreciated.

YOUR FLOWER OFFERINGS support the beautification of our church during this holy season. Flower offering envelopes are available on the literature rack. Thank you!

YOUR CHRISTMAS CARD OFFERINGS benefit Ministries, Monasteries, & Mission Situations.

Mark Your Calendar:

Circumcision & St. Basil - New Year's

Tuesday, December 31
Vespers & Artoklasia 6 pm
Game Night 7 pm
New Year's Prayers 9 pm

Wednesday, January 1
Divine Liturgy 10 am,
New Year's Prayers 11:30 am

Theophany

Sunday, January 5
Great Blessing of Water, 11:30 am
Outdoor Blessing of Water
@ Lenape Park, 2 pm

Monday, January 6
Orthros 8:45 am, Divine Liturgy 10 am
Great Blessing of Water, 11:30 am

Bp THOMAS Visit
January 9-14, 2020

Feast of Presentation
February 1-2, 2020

Pray For:

Living	Departed
Doris	Elder Ephrem
Julie	Doris
John	George
Archimandrite David	Kh. Anastasia
Lasha B	Jamileh
Otari B	
Daniel H	<u>Catechumens</u>
John	Zachary, Evan,
Zerfenesh	Tina, Robert,
Thomas, Elizabeth & all Missionaries	Michael, Todd,
New & Expectant Mothers & children	Kendra, Liesel, Todd, John
	Moses, Virginia, Conor
	<u>St. Nina's List</u>
	Andrea
	Faith
	Sloane

OUTREACH COLLECTION:

Turkeys

EVANGELISM CHALLENGE:

“Serve in a soup kitchen or shelter”

This Week:

NATIVITY FAST CONTINUES ...

Office closed – December 23-January 3

Mon, Dec 23: Advent Paraklesis, 7 p.m.

Tues, Dec 24: Royal Hours, 9 am
Vespers Liturgy of St. Basil, 10 am

Festal Orthros, 9:30 pm
Divine Liturgy, 11 pm

CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!

Wed, Dec 25: Vespers for the Synaxis
of the Theotokos, 12 pm

Thur, Dec 26: Orthros 9 am; Liturgy 10 am
for the Synaxis of the Theotokos

Fri, Dec 27: *Office closed.*

Sat, Dec 28: VESPERS 6 p.m., Confession 7 p.m.

Sun, Dec 29: ORTHROS 8:45 a.m., Divine LITURGY 10 a.m.
Coffee Hour 11:45 a.m.

Please check
the table in
the Great
Room for
items marked
with your
name or free
to take!



Ministry Highlights

“As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” (1 Peter 4:10)

UPDATING THE Photo Directory

to encourage unity, fellowship, and ministry at St. Philip

Please submit your updated family photo, address, emails, and telephone numbers to:

stphilipphotos20@gmail.com.

You may also submit a printed photo for the directory. We will have a section for Stewards, and another for Friends. Have questions? Contact Dale Yeager ([daleyeager@live.com](mailto:daleyager@live.com)), Colin Miller (Colinmil@comcast.net) or Subdeacon David Hyatt (dhyatt@st-philip.net).

ATTENDANCE: At Vespers Dec 14: NA Divine Services on Dec 15: NA
OFFERINGS: Candles, \$248.25. Collections, \$313. Youth, \$9. Flowers, \$75. Beautification, \$10,000. Christmas Card Fund, \$505. COF, \$40. IOCC, \$25. Land Acquisition, \$2,100. Pastoral Discretion, \$1,000. St. George-Taylor, \$660. Stewardship, \$15,604.63. Total received: \$30,579.88.

GOD BLESS YOU FOR YOUR FAITHFULNESS & GENEROSITY!