

Who is Michael the Prince?

There has been a lot of discussion through the ages who Michael the Archangel is.

This is the name of a being who is mentioned 5 times in the Bible. He is described as a prince, and an archangel. There are other humans in the Bible named Michael, but they are not of concern in this study.

As we begin I think that it is appropriate to read all of the texts that concern Michael, the heavenly being.

Dan 10:13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.

Dan 10:21 But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and *there is* none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince.

Dan 12:1 And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation *even* to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

Jud 1:9 Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.

Rev 12:7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels

In each of these passages, we see a picture of a being that is not of this world and who is connected with divinity. The question is this: Is this being Jesus, or is he another powerful being from heaven.

Is it possible that Michael could be Jesus Christ? In other words: Is Michael a divine being, and not really an actual angel, because He is really Jesus Christ the Son of God?

Obviously in scripture Michael the Archangel is a very important individual in heaven. Archangel means "chief of the angels", so Michael must be the chief or leader of the angels. But his capacity of leader does not necessarily tell us WHO he is.

The name Michael describes his importance: "(one) who is like God". My lexicon describes Michael as: "one of, the chief, or the first archangel who is described as the one who stands in time of conflict for the children of Israel".

I believe that Michael the Archangel is Jesus Christ the Son of God.

I want to share with you why I believe that, and also what I do not believe about it. And I hope to support that understanding with history and Scripture.

First of all, let's deal with some history.

Dr. Frances N. Lee Professor-Emeritus of Systematic Theology and Church History, Queensland Presbyterian Theological Seminary, says. “The dominant Pre-Mediaeval view was that [Jesus] the Second Person of the Triune God Himself is “the Angel of the Lord”.

This mainline traditional view of the Early Church was rediscovered by the Protestant Reformation and stressed also by Calvin [Martin Luther], and later by Matthew Henry, Haevernick, Keil, Delitzsch, and Hengstenberg, etc.”

Who changed this understanding that Michael is Jesus?

Would it be a surprise if I told you it was the Papacy?

Dr Lee also states: “It was only with and after ‘Pope’ Gregory the Great (who died in 604), that later Scholastics such as Thomas Aquinas systematized an alternative view. Thus it became the view of the mediaeval Church that ‘The Angel of the Lord’ was merely a created archangel called Michael - and not the divine Michael-Christ as the one and only Archangel and uncreated Leader of all created angels (as in Daniel 12:1, First Thessalonians 4:16, Jude 9 and Revelation 12:7f).”

John A. Lees, in *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, states: "The earlier Protestant scholars usually identified Michael with the pre-incarnate Christ, finding support for their view, not only in the juxtaposition of the 'child' and the archangel in Rev 12:1-17, but also in the attributes ascribed to him in Daniel.<sup>[111]</sup> Charles Haddon Spurgeon<sup>[52][53]</sup> stated that Jesus is Michael “the only Archangel”,<sup>[54]</sup> and that he is God the Son, and co-equal to the Father.<sup>[52]</sup> In Spurgeon’s view, "archangel" means "head of the angels" rather than "head angel," and is a title similar to "Leader of the host." (Daniel 8:11)

You will hear people say that the belief that Jesus is Michael the Archangel is one that were was invented by the SDA church. As you can see, that is not the case.

In the Jewish literature, Michael is described as the highest of the angels and they identify him as the angel of Yahweh which is often mentioned in the Old Testament as a Divine being!

And there are other Bible scholars, such and Matthew Henry, actually identify Michael as being Christ, the Son of God. So, this idea, that Michael is actually Jesus, is not new. It’s been around for some time.

Unfortunately when some groups have taught that Michael is Jesus, they have taught that Jesus was a created angel and not fully God. This is not true. Jesus is not a created being.

In fact, based on scripture, the early church and many of the reformers taught that Michael is Jesus the always existing creator, 2<sup>nd</sup> person of the Godhead. This is the view that I take. Let’s look at the reasons for that conclusion. We will do that by getting some definitions.

#### Definitions

Michael means “who is like God” Jesus said “If you have seen me you have seen the Father”

Archangel means “chief or over the angels” It does not necessarily mean an angel in being. (The President is Commander in Chief of the military, but he is not a soldier)

Angel means “messenger from God” and can be divine or created depending on title and context.

Then, besides Michael the Archangel, Scripture introduces us to Michael the prince.

“At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people;” Daniel 12:1.

Throughout the book of Daniel we find that we have a Prince who is looking out for us.

In Daniel 10:13 “Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me.”

In Daniel 11:21 “No one upholds me against these, except Michael your prince.”

In Daniel 9:25-27 Daniel tells us this Prince is the Messiah or Jesus: 25 “Until Messiah the Prince. And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself;” 27 Then he (Messiah the prince) shall confirm a covenant with many for one week.”

This then also makes Messiah the Prince, the prince of the covenant because he is the one who confirms the covenant.

The passage in Daniel 10 dealing with “prince” sheds some more light on this study. In Daniel 10, you have Jesus the Prince, the Son of God, doing battle with Cambyses the prince, the son of king Cyrus.

Cambyses was a Zoroastrian and had no use for any other religion. He was evidently the one who blocked the rebuilding of Jerusalem for a while. However when he died, the construction resumed.

Now let's look at captain of the Lord.

Jos 5:13 And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Are you for us, or for our adversaries?

Jos 5:14 And he said, No; but *as* captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What says my lord unto his servant?

Jos 5:15 And the captain of the LORD'S host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou stand *is* holy. And Joshua did so.

“Captain of the host of the LORD” or, “Commander of the Lord’s Army” uses the same word in the Hebrew, “sar”, as the word for prince in Daniel) Accepts worship & tells Joshua to take off shoes for he is standing on “holy ground”

In addition, in the next two verses, we see that the "Captain of the host of the LORD" is now called "The LORD". The original Hebrew word is "Yahweh" (YHWH) which refers

to the true God. It is the proper name of the one true God. Thus the Scriptures itself identifies this person, the captain of the host of the Lord, as God or Lord.

Nowhere in scripture does a holy angel accept worship. So either this prince or commander that accepts worship is divine, or he is an evil, fallen being.

But his being is definitely not a created being! He accepts worship and actually encourages that He be worshipped. In addition, He is identified as the one true God, Yahweh!

In Revelation, when John tried to worship an angel, the angel told him not to do that: "And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, **See thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant**, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: **worship God**: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." (Revelation 19:10) We are not to worship created beings. We are fellow servants with the angels, who serve God. Thus, angels will not accept worship. We are only to worship God!

So, what Joshua saw was the Lord! Joshua is told that this ground is holy and he is to take off his shoes. He is in the presence of the Lord. Thus, the Scriptures identify this Being as God and He actually accepted the worship and the reverence that Joshua gave Him, which no created being of heaven will do. He actually invited Joshua to worship and reverence Him!

We also see that Jesus accepted worship when He was on earth! Many times, Jesus accepted the worship of the people around Him (A few examples: Matthew 14:33; 28:9,17; Luke 24:52; John 9:38; Hebrews 1:6).

There is one more factor. This being is neither for nor against Joshua: He is challenging Joshua to be on his side.

Now in Scripture, the voice of the archangel is mentioned.

1Th 4:13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

1Th 4:14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

1Th 4:15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not precede them which are asleep.

1Th 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

1Th 4:17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

1Th 4:18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

What about this voice? Who does it belong to?

Greens Literal Translation says:

**Because the Lord Himself shall come down from Heaven with a commanding shout of an archangel's voice, and with God's trumpet. And the dead in Christ will rise again first. Thessalonians 4:16**

Joh 5:25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

Joh 5:26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

Joh 5:27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

Joh 5:28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

Joh 5:29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

It is the voice of the Archangel that awakes the dead according to Paul. Jesus said that it was to be his voice that was going to raise the dead at the second coming.

Now that we know that it is Jesus Himself who is doing the shouting, we can read 1 Thessalonians 4:16 with new eyes. What 1 Thessalonians 4:16 is really saying, is that Jesus descends from heaven shouting with the voice of the Archangel. Thus, Jesus is doing the shouting but with His own Archangel's voice! This comparison shows that the Archangel really is Jesus.

Also, there is another point to consider; In both Thessalonians and John, we see that the voice causes the resurrection of life to the righteous dead. The dead in Christ will rise when they hear His voice. Both Scripture must be describing the same event so Jesus and Michael must be the same person.

Therefore I believe that from that we have strong evidence in these passages that Jesus is Michael the Archangel.

We could also compare Michael the Archangel to the Angel of the Lord. This being is mentioned in Zachariah 3.

**Zec 3:1 And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him.**

**Zec 3:2 And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?**

Here the Angel of the Lord stands in opposition to Satan. We see Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the Lord. Satan, the accuser, is also present to oppose what the Angel of the Lord is doing. In the second verse, the Angel of the Lord starts speaking to Satan. In this verse The Angel of the Lord is actually called "the LORD".

So, The Angel of the Lord is actually called "the LORD" because He has his Father's name in Him. We know that it is not the Father speaking. Why would the God the Father say: "The Lord rebuke you"? No, it is not the Father, it is the Son! One Lord is speaking of the other Lord. Jesus is speaking about His Father, that His Father will rebuke Satan.

What is the practical application for us

So, Michael the Archangel is the chief prince. He will be the victor in the end. It is Jesus who is our prince, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of God's people. He is the captain of the host of the LORD and He is fully divine. He is literally God's only begotten Son. Thus, His name is wonderful, which means His name is incomprehensible and beyond our understanding! Michael is our Jesus who has come to save His people from their sins and He is now our high priest in Heaven, in the heavenly Sanctuary.

In Daniel 10, we find that Jesus himself comes down to engage in the great controversy. He gets up close and personal with the powers of this world. He will not force the consciences, but he will work to influence the powers of the world to good.

Beyond that, Christians have an army of evil arrayed against us. Jesus Christ as mighty leader of this army assists us in this spiritual warfare. Having assured our eternal salvation on the cross, he directs his army to stand with redeemed humanity to protect them from the enemy.

We cannot be assured that there will be no difficulties in our lives, but we can know that through difficulty, beings who are concerned with our salvation are standing by us, directed by a great prince. Prince Jesus, who died for our sins!

He has a better covenant. He is a better sacrifice. He is superior to all the angels. He has an unchangeable priesthood in heaven and He always lives to make intercession for us! So He is our savior and at every step of the atonement process He is the one who does it for us!

Jesus the mighty holy prince. Jesus the mighty angel-leader. Jesus the eternal son of God. Jesus, Michael, the one who is like God.