

Michael the Archangel

Named Angels · Biblical Angels

Michael stands unique among angels as the only one explicitly titled 'archangel' in Scripture, designating him as a chief prince of the highest rank in the celestial hierarchy. His Hebrew name מִיכָאֵל (Mikha'el) forms a rhetorical question—'Who is like God?'—simultaneously declaring God's incomparability and establishing Michael's role as the divine champion who vindicates that truth against all challengers.

Scripture presents Michael primarily as the great prince who stands for Israel, God's covenant people. In Daniel's apocalyptic visions, he appears as Israel's celestial patron engaged in cosmic warfare against the demonic 'prince of Persia'—a struggle revealing the spiritual dimension underlying earthly geopolitical conflicts. When Gabriel required assistance breaking through satanic opposition to reach Daniel, Michael, identified as 'one of the chief princes,' came to help, demonstrating both the reality of spiritual warfare and the hierarchy within the angelic host.

Note: Michael appears by name precisely five times in canonical Scripture: three times in Daniel (10:13, 10:21, 12:1), once in Jude (verse 9), and once in Revelation (12:7). This paucity of references contrasts sharply with his evident importance, suggesting that Scripture reveals only glimpses of extensive angelic activity normally hidden from human perception. Jewish apocalyptic literature (particularly 1 Enoch and the Book of Jubilees) greatly expands Michael's role, but such elaborations lack biblical warrant.

Daniel 12:1 prophetically declares that 'at that time'—referring to the eschatological tribulation—'Michael shall stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people.' This standing up signifies active

intervention on behalf of Israel during history's darkest hour, when unprecedented trouble shall precede Israel's final deliverance. Michael's protective role over Israel spans from Daniel's era through the end times, demonstrating God's faithfulness to His covenant promises despite Israel's unfaithfulness.

Jude preserves an otherwise unrecorded incident wherein Michael disputed with the devil concerning Moses's body. Remarkably, even this mighty archangel 'durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.' This restraint demonstrates proper angelic protocol—even when contending with a fallen cherub, Michael deferred to God's authority rather than presuming to curse in his own right. This episode likely alludes to traditions surrounding Moses's burial in an unknown location (Deuteronomy 34:6), with Satan perhaps seeking to corrupt Moses's body for idolatrous purposes.

Revelation 12:7-9 describes future cosmic warfare: 'And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not.' This eschatological conflict results in Satan's final expulsion from heaven's courts, where he has functioned as accuser of the brethren. Michael thus serves as the instrument of Satan's ultimate defeat and ejection from the celestial realm, though the dragon's ultimate destruction awaits Christ's return and the final judgment.

Note: The war in heaven should not be confused with Satan's original fall (Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:12-17). Revelation 12 describes a future event—probably occurring at the tribulation's midpoint—when Satan loses his present access to heaven as accuser (Job 1:6; Zechariah 3:1). Currently, Satan retains some access to God's presence to bring accusations against believers; Michael's victory terminates this privilege, confining the devil to earth during the tribulation's latter half.

Throughout Scripture, Michael appears exclusively in contexts of conflict—defending God's people against spiritual enemies, contending for truth against satanic opposition, and executing divine judgment against rebellious angels. He embodies the militant aspect of angelic ministry, reminding believers that we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers in heavenly places. Yet Michael's power remains derivative and subordinate; he fights under divine authority, never in his own strength or for his own glory.

Key Verses

Daniel 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.

Daniel 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.

Daniel 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.

Jude 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.

Revelation 12:7

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

Revelation 12:9

And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

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