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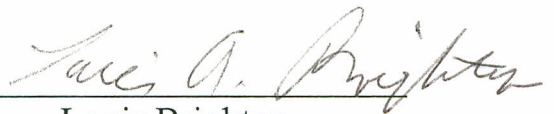
An Icon of Jesus:
Michael, the Archangel as Antagonist of Satan

A Seminar Paper presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St Louis,
Department of Exegetical Theology
in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of
Master of Sacred Theology

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**An Icon of Jesus:
Michael, the Archangel as Antagonist of Satan**

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Seminar Paper in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the STM degree
Dr. Brighton, Advisor
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The following seminar paper was written using *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th edition. Longer quotations are indicated by single spaced extracts (blocked quotations). Quotations are documented by the “notes and bibliography” style. As an exegetical study and to assist the reader in referencing cited Bible texts, those texts are presented in single spaced block form, in two columns, English and Greek, side by side.

Satan. The Devil. The Prince of this world. Although referred to by multiple names and titles, Scripture is clear that there is only one entity that is the chief, created being who opposes the work of God. That this creature in his quest to deceive the world will ultimately be defeated is clear from the first book of the Bible through the last. But there seem to be two who are presented upon the pages of Scripture as being victorious over Satan. The first, obviously, is Jesus, the Christ, the second person of the Trinity. The second is the person of Michael, the archangel. What is the relationship between these two beings? Some commentators such as Luther and Stoeckhardt have presented the idea that Michael is a pre-incarnation manifestation of the second person of the Trinity, much like “The Angel of the Lord” may be. Other commentators insist that such is not the case, based on a thorough examination of the texts. This controversy focuses on the nature of the relationship between Michael and Jesus: are Jesus and Michael one and the same, or is one the creator and the other, part of the creation? Rather than engaging directly in this debate, I would like to focus more on the shared role they have and how Michael might be best viewed as symbol or an icon of Scripture’s presentation of a specific dimension of the ministry of Christ, namely, his victorious power over the kingdom of Satan.

Jesus and Angels

In a general way, it is appropriate to speak of the ministry of Jesus as being reflected through the ministry of angels, and thus identifying Jesus with angels. Adolphine Bakker, in his article “Christ an Angel?”¹ notes that the title “an angel” is applied to Jesus in one of the earliest

1. Bakker, *Christ an Angel?*:255-6

Christian documents, The Book of Testimony, and therefore that the identification of Christ with an angel belongs to the earliest stratum of Christian belief.

In the Old Testament (OT), God works through the medium of angels as his messengers and representatives. The Hebrew term מַלְאָךְ has as a general meaning “sent one” (or “messenger”).² This meaning is borne out by how frequently מַלְאָךְ occurs with Hebrew verbs indicating movement: “send,” “come,” “return,” “go down,” and so forth. While it is true that the LXX almost every time renders מַלְאָךְ with αγγελος, the etymological equivalent to מַלְאָךְ in New Testament (NT) Greek would be αποστολος – one sent. And while this noun in the NT usually denotes the Apostles of Christ, it does so only because Christ is first of all the Father’s αποστολος. In only one NT passage does the singular phrase, “the apostle,” occur – Hebrews 3:1, where it refers to Christ. But in most OT passages the service of the מַלְאָךְ is, indeed, to communicate with humans. From this comes the more specific reference to the created, spiritual being of an “angel.” Yet it remains that such a messenger does not have to be a created, spiritual angel. For instance, in Haggai 1:13, the prophet Haggai is called יהוה מַלְאָךְ which the NIV translates “the Lord’s messenger.” In Deuteronomy 18:15 ff, although the term prophet is used, we have a clear picture of the Messiah being the spokesman/messenger for God.

In the Targum there seemed to be a Jewish refining of the term מַלְאָךְ moving from a generic/double sense of messenger or angel to a technical term indicating only created angels (which is why Josephus objects to Jesus being called an “angel”).³ Christians, however, looking for references to Christ in the Old Testament, retained the older sense. For instance, Justin declares “For Christ is king and priest, God and Lord, angel and man.”⁴ Similar to the Jewish

2. Brown, *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon*:521

3. Bakker, *Christ an Angel?*:256

4. Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*, chp 34

tendency, today many exegetes are reluctant to identify Christ as an angel for fear of confusion with created beings. But this fails to account for the clear texts of Scripture that refer to the ministry of Jesus as the “sent one” or spokesman for God.

The above is also true for the Greek word *αγγελος*. It has both the broader sense of “messenger” and the more specific focus of the created, spiritual being – an “angel.”⁵

The attempt here is not to identify Jesus as being on a par with angels, or with an individual angel per se. Indeed, the Epistle to Hebrews discusses the relationship between Christ and angels, making a clear differentiation. The doctrine of Christ’s humanity also serves this distinction – “he became man in order to save men.” Christ took the form of a man, not of an angel, in order to bring about salvation. The issue of worship demonstrates the same conclusion. Angels are not to be worshipped (see John in Revelation), but the Son is to be worshipped.

Jesus is the absolute incarnation of the messenger (and message *λογος*) of God. The angels are instruments in this ministry as well. While we do not want to confuse the two (for Jesus is far superior and of an entirely different nature), it must be admitted that angels in their function better enable us to see the work of Jesus, and that Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of their work.

What is confusing is that at times Scripture appears to reveal Jesus in an angelic form, particularly before the incarnation, and at other times appears to reveal the character of Jesus through an individual angel. Charles Gieschen differentiates these two through a clarification of definitions: “ANGEL CHRISTOLOGY is the explicit identification of Jesus Christ as an angel. ANGELOMORPHIC CHRISTOLOGY is the identification of Christ with angelic form and functions, either before or after the incarnation, whether or not he is specifically identified as an

5. Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament:5

angel.”⁶ Louis Brighton likewise makes the distinction in this manner: “For the purpose of the present study the term angelophany will be used in reference to a heavenly figure in visible form who is quite clearly not a divine being, but one who only speaks or acts for God. The term theophany will be retained only for that heavenly figure or manifestation who in some visible form is quite clearly God speaking and acting in his own right.”⁷ However, Brighton also entertains a third possibility – when it is not possible to conclusively determine from Scripture which is the case:

An angel-theophany would refer to that visible appearance of a heavenly personage who presents himself as an angelic figure, but who also so identifies himself with God that when speaking and acting we are to receive him as God himself – when in actual fact he may not be God but only his representative. With this term one is not compelled to define the heavenly manifestation as angelic or divine, but as angelic with divine characteristics and implications. The term itself would not necessarily deny or affirm whether the heavenly figure is angelic or divine but would leave the mystery open – one would take the figure to be neither one nor the other but something in-between, because the heavenly manifestation is either an angelic figure impersonating God, or is God himself in angelic form. But at the moment it cannot be conclusively determined which is true.⁸

It has always been difficult for Christians to present the characteristics and person of the second person of the Trinity in a form that is readily both understandable and accurate. Use of these angelomorphic or angel-theophanies allows better insight into Christ’s nature. And a study of the early Christians use of various angelomorphic traditions from the OT and other sources helps to reveal their Christology.⁹

A little later, we will be examining the nature of Michael the Archangel. Much has been written over the centuries as to his exact nature – whether this is an “angel Christology,” an “angelomorphic Christology,” or an “angel-theophany.” The scope of this presentation is so

6. Gieschen, *ANGELOMORPHIC CHRISTOLOGY: Antecedents and Early Evidence*, 28

7. Brighton, *The Angel of Revelation An Angel of God and An Icon of Jesus Christ*, 43

8. *ibid* 43-4

limited that we cannot adequately differentiate between them, and I feel so much has been written in that endeavor that the value or meaning of this representation may become overlooked. Whichever form is being utilized, these angel forms can give us insight into specific characteristics and functions of the second person of the Trinity.

Jesus as "The Angel of the Lord"

Over 60 times in the Old Testament we encounter a very special messenger from God-- "the Angel of the Lord." In the Hebrew this is מַלְאֲכֵי יְהוָה or more often מַלְאֲכֵי יְהוָה. Most of these accounts reveal an Angel of the Lord sent to befriend and protect God's covenanted people. But in these encounters we discover that this angel has qualities unlike any other angel.

He is first mentioned in his appearance to Hagar (Gen 16:7-14). He promises her a great family, seemingly of his own authority. And Hagar responds to him by calling him אֵל. It is the מַלְאֲכֵי יְהוָה who calls and interrupts the sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham (Gen 22:11 ff), who claims the sacrifice is being made to him, and then who gives the covenant blessing to Abraham. It is the מַלְאֲכֵי יְהוָה who appears to Jacob in a dream, the one to whom Jacob makes a vow, a vow that is later reported to have been made to YHWH. It is מַלְאֲכֵי יְהוָה who appears to Moses in a burning bush (Ex 3:2 ff) and then identifies himself to Moses using the great covenant name "I am" (YHWH). Most prominent are those passages in Exodus 23 (and Num. 20:16) where it is the Angel of the Lord who goes before the people in the wilderness, rescues them, and brings them to Canaan. In Exodus 33:2-3, we find a powerful statement by God saying that, while his anger at Israel's sin prevents him from accompanying Israel to Canaan, he will send his

9. Gieschen, *ANGELOMORPHIC CHRISTOLOGY: Antecedents and Early Evidence*, 349

messenger to lead them. In this way, the Angel of the Lord comes to represent God's own merciful presence as opposed to his anger at Israel's sin.

This picture of God dealing with his people and their sin with grace through his angel reappears most vividly in Zechariah 3, where the high priest Joshua stands in filthy clothes, representing his people in their sins. Although the scene of the vision is clearly the "bench of God," it is the Angel of the Lord who counters and rebukes Satan the Accuser and cleanses Joshua of his uncleanness. The Angel of God is the agent of absolution, and he delivers this Word to none other than the devil. God's Word accomplishes what it declares and clothes Joshua in clean clothes, reminding him that he is an example of his grace for all God's people.

Commentators have noted the special character of this angel. *The Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* says: "He is not only a messenger delivering God's words, but is also a minister or agent authorized to perform them."¹⁰ Gerhard Von Rad observes "When the reference is to God apart from man, Yahweh is used; when God enters the apperception of man the [*mal'ak YHWH*] is introduced."¹¹

C. Goodspeed¹² concluded four important generalities from his study of the above and other encounters between God's people and the Angel of the Lord:

1. The Angel of the Lord frequently applies to himself the name Elohim and Jehovah.
2. When the Angel of the Lord speaks to men, he does with absolute and divine authority.
3. The Angel of the Lord allows/demands honor, worship, and sacrifice.
4. Scripture writers designated the Angel of the Lord with the names Elohim and Jehovah.

Erich Keller in his unpublished thesis summarizes it this way:¹³

10. Botterweck, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, 317

11. Von Rad, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament Vol I*, 77

12. Goodspeed, *The Angel of Jehovah*, 593-615

13. Keller, *The Angel of the Lord*, 80

That He is one in essence and nature with Jehovah follows from the fact that:

A – He identified himself with Jehovah and Elohim;

B – He attributes to himself divine attributes and performs divine works and miracles;

C – He was recognized as God by those to whom he appeared

a - in that they addressed him as God,

b - in that they declared they had seen God and feared that they would die;

c - in that they paid him divine honor by worshipping him and by offering sacrifices which he accepted;

D – He is identified with Jehovah by the sacred writers, who interchanged his name with that of Jehovah.

Who is the Angel of the Lord? The natural conclusion from the above is that he must be God – or at least one of the persons of the Trinity. Keller suggests

The Angel of the Lord in the Old Testament is not an ordinary, a created Angel, but rather the uncreated Angel, the coequal with Jehovah, who is connected with Jehovah by unity of nature, but personally distinct from Him.... That his, nevertheless, is a separate personality from that of Jehovah, is evident not only from his own, but also from Jehovah's words (cf. Ex 23, 20 ff; Judg. 6,12; Zech. 1,12). ... If the Angel of the Lord, then, in every respect is equal to Jehovah, is of the same nature as Jehovah, yet has a personal existence of his own, He can be no other than the promised Angel of the Covenant of Malachi, the Logos of the New Testament, the second person in the Trinity.¹⁴

Likewise, C. Goodspeed continues in his article by addressing this question: Is “The Angel of Jehovah” identical with “Jehovah”? He says that the use of the titles “Jehovah” and “The Angel of Jehovah” signifies a distinction – one being the sender, the other the sent. He, then, observes that Scripture texts confirm what the titles imply. So if he is not Jehovah (the Father), and he is divine, then the Angel of Jehovah must be the Son or the Spirit. Goodspeed notes that Jesus is the “Revealer” and in Hebrews 3:1, Jesus is the “one sent” (Apostle). His final conclusion is that the Angel of Jehovah in the Old Testament and the Christ of the New Testament is the same person.

14. Ibid, 80-81

Additional confirmation for this comes from the realization that the Angel of the Lord does not appear in the New Testament; Jesus does. And New Testament writers and characters seem to identify Jesus with the Angel of the Lord. It should be noted that in the New Testament some angels are identified as coming from God (i.e. Matthew 1:20 ἄγγελος κυρίου), but they never have the definite article identifying them as special angels, nor do any of them display the unique qualities or character that we see in the OT Angel of the Lord.

The Angel of the Lord, then, provides the persona through which the pre-incarnate Christ operates throughout the Old Testament. Goodspeed concludes

the incarnation of Deity, the pre-existence of our Lord, the divinity of Christ, and the doctrine of the Trinity—carrying with them, as they do, the whole superstructure of apostolic instruction—are not exclusively of New Testament growth, but strike their roots down through all inspired teaching to the beginning of the world, thus binding all revelation together in a complete unity.¹⁵

This identification of the pre-incarnate Christ with the Old Testament Angel of the Lord is significant since it gives us insight into a specific attribute of that pre-incarnate Christ. A.B. Davidson in his *Old Testament Theology* writes: “In particular providences one may trace the presence of Jehovah in influence and operation; in ordinary angelic appearance one may discover Jehovah present on some side of His being, in some attribute of His character; in the angel of the Lord He is fully present as the covenant God of His people, to redeem them.”¹⁶ Keller sees this same attribute in operation: “The Angel of the Lord in the Old Testament ... showed himself to be the Angel of the Covenant in safeguarding, guiding, and directing the destinies of the covenant people.”¹⁷ Our conclusion is that the pre-incarnate second person of the Trinity reveals Himself as “the Angel of the Lord” in relation to God’s people, so that they might

15. Goodspeed, *The Angel of Jehovah*, 615

16. Botterweck, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, 317

17. Keller, *The Angel of the Lord*, 92

be better able to apprehend the presence and transcendence of God in their limited and sinful condition, specifically receiving his grace and mercy.

Jesus and Michael

In three books of the Bible (in 5 verses)--Daniel, Jude, and Revelation--we encounter another being who, like the Angel of the Lord, has some peculiar and confusing attributes. This is Michael. After the Babylonian exile, the Jewish concept of angels undergoes a radical change, and Michael becomes prominent in a number of Jewish non-canonical and apocryphal literature: 1 Enoch, the Ascension of Isaiah, the Apocalypse of Moses, the apocalyptic Book of Elijah, and even one of the Dead Sea Scrolls in a fragmentary Aramaic apocalyptic writing. However, our primary text is Scripture, and so, at this time focus will be given to the Scriptural references of Michael. For what is in the Biblical text itself is amazing!

It starts with his name מִיכָאֵל. The name means “who is like God.” Who is like God? The first answer this name seems to imply is that there is no created being who is like God – including Michael. Humans are sinful and mortal. Although they were created in the image of God, even before the fall they were not on the level of God – infinite, omniscient, omnipresent. The angels – good or bad – do not share in those attributes any more than man, though like God, they are spiritual beings. Lucifer discovered that he could not be like God when he rebelled against God and was driven out of heaven (by Michael). No one is like God!

However there is one who is like God--not a created being--but the only-begotten Son. Jesus says, “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30). He says again, “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.” (John 14:9) And in John 5:18, the Jews tried to kill Jesus because in his words and deeds He was “making himself equal with God.” No orthodox Christian would deny

that Jesus shares divinity with the Father and the Spirit. But in the very name “Michael” we have an identification of this being with the “only-begotten Son.” If he is not the same as the second member of the Trinity, he is linked very closely with him.

Michael appears first in the Old Testament book of Daniel. We shall look at these three verses as a unit, since they appear in a single vision of Daniel.

Daniel 10:13

But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia.

Daniel 10:13

καὶ ὁ ἄρχων βασιλείας Περσῶν εἰστήκει ἔξ ἐναντίας μου εἴκοσι καὶ μίαν ἡμέραν, καὶ ἰδοὺ Μιχαηλ εἰς τῶν ἀρχόντων τῶν πρώτων ἦλθεν βοηθησαί μοι, καὶ αὐτὸν κατέλιπον ἐκεῖ μετὰ τοῦ ἄρχοντος βασιλείας Περσῶν

Daniel 10:21

But first I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth. (No one supports me against them except Michael, your prince.)

Daniel 10:21

ἀλλ’ ἢ ἀναγγελῶ σοι τὸ ἐντεταγμένον ἐν γραφῇ ἀληθείας, καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν εἰς ἀντεχόμενος μετ’ ἐμοῦ περὶ τούτων ἀλλ’ ἢ Μιχαηλ ὁ ἄρχων ὑμῶν,

Daniel 12:1

At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered.

Daniel 12:1

καὶ ἐν τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ ἀναστήσεται Μιχαηλ ὁ ἄρχων ὁ μέγας ὁ ἐστηκὼς ἐπὶ τοὺς υἱοὺς τοῦ λαοῦ σου, καὶ ἔσται καιρὸς θλίψεως, θλίψις οἷα οὐ γέγονεν ἀφ’ οὗ γεγένηται ἔθνος ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἕως τοῦ καιροῦ ἐκείνου, καὶ ἐν τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ σωθήσεται ὁ λαός σου, πᾶς ὁ εὐρεθεὶς γεγραμμένος ἐν τῇ βίβλῳ.

This section of Daniel begins in chapter 10 and is the last vision in Daniel’s book. It is, perhaps, the most challenging of all apocalyptic literature in the Bible, and therefore has had a number of meanings and interpretations given to it. It apparently begins within the historic time frame of the return from the Babylonian captivity and ends with a description of judgment day and the completion of time on earth.

The difficulty in interpreting this vision begins with the first verses. Someone appears to Daniel in verses 5-6 and leads him through this vision: “I looked up and there before me was a

man dressed in linen, with a belt of the finest gold around his waist. His body was like chrysolite, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude.” Many commentators have identified this person as Gabriel, who appears to Daniel two times earlier in his book (chapters 8 and 9). This does not seem likely since on both occasions Gabriel is identified in the text and here is not. More importantly, the image of the speaker in chapter 10 is nothing like that described in earlier chapters, nor is it anywhere else in Scripture used to describe the appearance of an angel. It is used, however, in two other books of the Bible to describe the image of God – in Ezekiel and in Revelation. Because of the similarity to those two appearances, John Walvoord concludes that this is not the appearance of an angel but “the evidence seems more in favor of considering this a theophany.”¹⁸

In Ezekiel (1:4-28) we have many common features with the appearance in Daniel – the lightning, light, feet of burnished bronze, chrysolite, and the mighty voice. Ezekiel clearly identifies this for us as the glory of the Lord. Keil and Delitzsch comments that this is “the living God Himself upon the throne among ‘the living creatures;’ ... God appears as He who is coming in judgment.”¹⁹ The appearance in Ezekiel’s vision, then, is YHWH himself!

In Revelation (1:10-16) there is another similar appearance of these features we see in Daniel – eyes like blazing fire, feet of burnished bronze, and a mighty voice. John tells us that this was like the “son of man.” Jesus called himself “the son of man” on many occasions. Louis Brighton explains “John sees the Lord Christ in his heavenly glory, and as he sees Christ *he is reminded that his Lord is now in this glory because he has completed his mission through his*

18. Walvoord, *The Key to Prophetic Revelation*, 243

19. Keil, *Commentary of the Old Testament (Vol 9)*, 33-34

death and resurrection.”²⁰ (italics in original) The appearance in John’s apocalypse is again of God, this time specifically Jesus, the second person of the Trinity.

With a fair degree of certainty we can understand the appearance in Daniel to be that of God for three reasons. First, the prophecies of Daniel and Ezekiel come from the same time frame – the Babylonian captivity. It is more likely that they would have been using this image in the same way. Second, there is one aspect to the vision in Ezekiel that is not present in the appearance in Revelation, which better ties it to the vision in Daniel and its meaning – lightning. Daniel says the speaker’s face was like lightning. Lightning is a vital part of the Ezekiel passage. It is not a part of that image in Revelation where we have the face of the speaker instead described like the “sun.” Lightning and thunder are associated with sin (i.e., the giving of the 10 Commandments), judgment, and the might of God. The vision in Daniel is very much associated with the might and punishment of God. Revelation is set in the context of hope and God’s grace for the believer. Third, Brighton says, “his Lord is now in this glory because he has completed his mission through his death and resurrection.” At the time of Daniel, the Christ had not yet been incarnated, let alone having completed his mission. It would be premature for Scripture to present Christ in this glorified state. This all leads us to conclude that the source of this message in Daniel 10 must be YHWH – the Almighty God.

In Daniel 10:13 is the first reference to Michael. Daniel has been mourning, fasting and praying on behalf of God’s people for three weeks. God appears to Daniel, telling him that “the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days.” If this is God, how can a mortal be resisting him? Has God simply allowed this as he allowed Pharaoh to resist letting his people go, or an unbeliever to resist the work of the Holy Spirit? What may be significant is the term “prince,” מַלְאָכִי. It seems more likely that this reflects a spiritual adversary rather than a mortal,

20. Brighton, *Revelation*, 49

especially in light of the context of the entire vision. As H.C. Leupold in his study notes, “[t]his approach leads us to conclude that an *angel*-‘prince’ must be meant.”²¹ Could it be that this is Satan engaging God in some resistance or struggle? Scripture tells us that Satan was cast out of heaven because of his revolt against God. In the book of Job, it seems Satan discussed or argued with God about Job over some period of time. The same is true over Joshua, the high priest in Zechariah 3. And if God were in a dispute with Satan, whom would He call on for assistance? Scripture does promise there would be one who would overcome Satan. The promise is first made in Genesis 3:15. The Christ – the second person of the Trinity would have that power. This is what Desmond Ford is speaking of in his commentary when he says, “‘The prince of the kingdom of Persia’ is primarily Satan himself Similarly, Michael in this chapter is spoken of as the ‘prince’ of Israel (v. 21).... Both Satan and Christ were moving upon the mind of the King.”²²

Jesus and Satan both are referred to as princes. Jesus is called the Prince of life (ἀρχηγὸν τῆς ζωῆς) in Acts 3:15, Prince and Savior (ἀρχηγὸν καὶ σωτῆρα) in Acts 5:31, and the Prince of the kings of the earth (ὁ ἄρχων τῶν βασιλέων τῆς γῆς) in Revelation 1:5. (Note that such an identification of this prince with a person of the Trinity would be consistent within Daniel as well, where God is referred to as the “prince of the host” in Daniel 8:11.) Satan, however, is called the prince of this world (ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου) in John 12:31 as well as the prince of devils (τῷ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων) in Matthew 9:34. And Satan is commonly referred to as the “prince of darkness” (in fact one translation of “A Mighty Fortress” has that term) based on the illusion of Ephesians 6:12. Furthermore, it is possible (and perhaps more accurate) to translate this phrase as “the first of the princes” instead of “one of the

21. Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel*, 457

22. Ford, *5N77*, 250

princes.” We have two princes here--the “first of the princes” in the spiritual realm and Satan as the other, and Satan is the one with whom the “first of the princes” is in conflict. This “first of the princes” is “the first” because he will be the victorious one.

The confusion enters when we discover the identity of this prince is not Jesus, but rather he is revealed as “Michael.” Of course, the orthodox Christian immediately tends to shy away from equating Jesus with Michael because of the Mormon heresy of identifying Jesus as Michael, the spirit brother and equal to Lucifer.²³ It is right that we should mark and avoid this heresy--Lucifer and Jesus are not spirit brothers nor co-equal created beings. But that doesn't mean we cannot speak of them using the *same terms*, such as “princes,” to point out their inequality and the surpassing power of the Lord. Furthermore, these common designators can provide hope and comfort to the believer. Satan is a prince. But we have a prince – a more powerful one. Satan is the commander of his demonic hosts. But we have a commander –the very Lord of Hosts – who leads a greater army of angels.

One of the approaches to this dilemma of Michael's appearance here is the interpretation of the phrase “one of the princes.” This could be easy to understand, if Michael is an archangel, one of the seven archangels, and that Scripture here is using an indirect reference to them by employing the term “princes”. In other words, the conception would be that princes are the archangels and Michael is one of them. Confusion arises, however, in that nowhere else does Scripture refer to multiple archangels. Nor is an archangel directly called a prince anywhere else in Scripture.

But rather than focus on identity, the text focuses on the conflict along with the ultimate victory that will be. In Daniel 10:21, we have Michael again, this time called “your prince.” Again many commentators have continued to call Michael one of the archangels, this time

attributing to him the function of being the guardian angel to Israel. Again the challenge is to harmonize that with the larger picture presented in this vision. There are two princes—God’s prince (Jesus or Michael?) and Satan. There are two kingdoms—the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness. All people of all times are part of one kingdom or the other. God’s will is being contested by Satan, and in the end, God’s power will be victorious and will defeat Satan. We recognize from the New Testament that it is the Christ who is the prince of all God’s people and who will win the victory over Satan. But in this Old Testament vision – before the incarnation of the Christ – the battle is portrayed as being carried out by Michael. He is the image or substitute the Old Testament Scripture uses to personify the prince.

In Daniel 12:1 we have the struggle continuing between Michael and Satan. But by chapter 12, the arena has changed from the spiritual conflict going on at the time of the return from the Babylonian captivity to the great spiritual struggle that will occur in the last days. Here Michael is called “the great prince.” We know, especially from Matthew 25 and the book of Revelation, that at the end, and in the end, Christ will ultimately be the final victor and God’s people will be granted the gift of eternal life. For Satan, Christ means judgment, and the judgment of Satan means deliverance for God’s people. But here in the Old Testament, the part of the victor at the end times is portrayed by Michael, and as the OT people see Michael, they see victory.

In this reference, Michael is also called “the protector of your people”. Many commentators hastily conclude this to be the primary function of Michael. Yet this is not his primary function but a derivative of his primary function. This is quickly realized when it is remembered that, of the three references in Daniel and of the other Scriptural references to Michael this is the only one that refers to him as a protector. What we have noted and will

23. Branch, Richard, *The Jesus of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*

continue to observe is that Michael is always presented in conflict with Satan. The sphere of this struggle is not limited to the period of the kingdom nor of the Babylonian captivity. Michael's primary function is not that of protector of Israel but as antagonist of Satan. And it is out of his role as antagonist of Satan that his corollary role of protector of Israel is derived.

Michael is mentioned again in Revelation 12:7.

Revelation 12:7

7 And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back.

Revelation 12:7

7 Καὶ ἐγένετο πόλεμος ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, ὁ Μιχαὴλ καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ τοῦ πολεμῆσαι μετὰ τοῦ δράκοντος. καὶ ὁ δράκων ἐπολέμησεν καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ,

Again, in this context there is a struggle ensuing in the spiritual, heavenly realm. Again, the chief combatants, or leaders of the combatants, are Michael and Satan. Again, Michael's presence illustrates the judgment that comes upon Satan, and Satan is cast out of heaven. What is plain is that those things that clearly only belong to the second person of the Godhead are being ascribed to Michael.

First, with Michael are "his angels." The possessive pronoun makes it clear that these angels belong to him. The question naturally arises, to whom do the angels belong? Would they ever be said to belong to any created being? The angels belong to God, because he is their creator – Jesus, being the one by whom all things were made according to Colossians 3:1 (ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτίσθη τὰ πάντα ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς). In his exaltation, Jesus is the one who is over all, the *only* one who is over all, and that includes good and evil angels alike (1 Corinthians 15:23-25):

But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until *he has put all his enemies under his feet.* (*emphasis mine*)

This leads us to the second consideration. Notice that the text says that the dragon will be hurled down. It is Jesus who will put his enemies under his feet. Only Jesus has the power to overthrow Satan. And what is that power by which Satan is overcome? Revelation 12:11 tells us “They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.” The question is whom are “they”. It would be easy to say that “they” (those who overcome him) are the martyrs, and this is referring to the blood of the martyrs, their testimony and their willingness to give up even their own lives. But there are three problems with that. First, the martyrs, the “holy ones” are not mentioned in this context. The immediate context is of Michael overthrowing Satan, and “they” must refer to the victors in that battle. Second, Satan is not overthrown by the blood, the witness, or the sacrifice of saints. Third, Satan has been overcome by Christ’s blood shed as a Passover lamb, by the truth which he spoke and by his death on the cross. Jesus is the one who overcomes Satan.

Although this is the work of the Christ, there is a beautiful symmetry that is preserved by using the name Michael. The name “Satan” is not used either in verse 7, yet that it refers to him cannot be in doubt. The first reason for that is the use of a symbol whose meaning is already clear from the first part of the chapter. Secondly, the text tells us in verse 9 that the dragon is Satan or the Devil. In verse 7, then, you have (1) a symbolic name for Satan (the dragon), (2) and his angels, (3) engaged in battle. In parallel, you have (1) a symbol or icon for Jesus (Michael), (2) and his angels, (3) engaged in battle.

The great Lutheran exegete Dr. George Stoeckhardt saw this relationship as being so close between Michael and the second person of the Trinity that he says:

John beholds a great war in heaven. Michael and His angels are engaged in a hot warfare with the devil. This Michael often appears in the Old Testament. That is the Angel which appears as the Protector of the people of God. He is the *Angel of the Lord, the Christ*. He takes up battle against the dragon, and brings on a great

war in the realm of the spirit world. And the outcome of this warfare shows that the devil and his angels cannot overcome *Christ* and His angels.... But now the devil has lost his chance to accuse them because he has lost his power to lead them into sin. And for this they must thank Michael, *that heavenly Prince, Christ*, who has fought for them to make them free.... They extol *God and Christ* for shearing the dragon, Satan, of his might.²⁴ (*emphasis added*)

It is not surprising that the last text dealing with Michael, Jude 9, again involves a struggle with Satan.

Jude 9

9 But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"

Jude 9

9 Ὁ δὲ Μιχαὴλ ὁ ἀρχάγγελος, ὅτε τῷ διαβόλῳ διακρινόμενος διελέγετο περὶ τοῦ Μωϋσέως σώματος, οὐκ ἐτόλμησεν κρίσιν ἐπενεγκεῖν βλασφημίας ἀλλὰ εἶπεν· ἐπιτιμήσαι σοι κύριος.

Even though this text is found in the New Testament, its context is the Old Testament. This event follows the death of Moses, some 1,400 years before Christ. We see the similarities with the previous texts: Michael and Satan are involved in a struggle, Michael being the victor. But there is something else here. Michael uses the phrase, "The Lord rebuke you!" Now some commentators are quick to say that this proves that Michael cannot be a person of the Trinity or that it weakens the image of Michael as the proxy for the Christ since Michael must invoke the Lord's name here to ensure victory. But it does just the opposite. It connects this scene to that in Zechariah 3 where the Angel of the Lord is in dispute with Satan over Joshua, the high priest. In that encounter, the Angel of the Lord seals his victory over Satan by employing the same phrase, "The Lord rebuke you!" We have already seen that the Angel of the Lord is, in fact, the pre-incarnate Christ at work. Zechariah leaves no doubt in this, for even though he identifies the Angel of the Lord as the one Satan is standing before, when the Angel speaks, Zechariah

24. Stoeckhardt, *Lectures on The Revelation of Saint John*, 47

identifies Him as “the Lord”--“The Lord said to Satan, ‘The Lord rebuke you, Satan’”

(וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־הַשָּׂטָן יָגֵעַר יְהוָה בְּךָ הַשָּׂטָן). The truths learned from this encounter, then, with all the parallels with that in Jude, would lead us to conclude that in the conflict with Satan over Moses’ body Michael must serve the same role and a similar function as the Angel of the Lord in the conflict with Satan over Joshua, the high priest. As the Angel of the Lord gives embodiment to the pre-incarnate Christ, Michael is at least a type or figure of the pre-incarnate Christ. Here in the Jude text, Michael is specifically at work signifying judgment against Satan, and demonstrating that he represents the power that alone can conquer Satan.

In comparing these two texts, we also see the difference between these two manifestations of the pre-incarnate Christ. In Jude, Michael is pictured in a struggle against Satan, illustrating the victory of Christ thwarting his evil purposes and conquering him. In Zechariah, as the Angel of the Lord, Christ is primarily working for the benefit of Joshua, who stands as a representative of God’s people. It is not coincidence that on the three occasions in Scripture that we encounter Michael he is engaged in battle against Satan. Satan’s purpose is to accuse and destroy the people of God. Christ’s purpose is to save. In order for Him to accomplish that, He must engage and defeat the evil one. Jesus points to this truth in Matthew 12:29, “Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man’s house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man?” When the pre-incarnate Christ is pictured in the Old Testament book of Daniel, or during the Old Testament time when Satan was arguing over the body of Moses (as recounted in Jude), He is pictured through the work of Michael. And that picture of Michael is not only that he will engage in battle with the evil desires of Satan but that Christ will in the end bring judgment down upon Satan. This conclusion becomes valid for both the New Testament and well as the Old Testament: Christ (or his proxy Michael) will win

that battle against Satan for his people. For God's people, Michael illustrates the judgment of Satan, and the judgment of Satan means deliverance for God's people.

Jesus and the Archangel

There are two times in Scripture where the term "archangel", ὁ ἀρχάγγελος is used.

Both are in the New Testament; in both it is important to note that only the singular form is used.

Jude 9

9 But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"

Jude 9

9 Ὁ δὲ Μιχαὴλ ὁ ἀρχάγγελος, ὅτε τῷ δ
ιαβόλῳ διακρινόμενος διελέγετο περὶ το
ῦ Μωϋσέως σώματος, οὐκ ἐτόλμησεν κρί
σιν ἐπενεγκεῖν βλασφημίας ἀλλὰ εἶπεν·
ἐπιτιμήσαι σοι κύριος.

In our earlier consideration of Jude, we passed over a unique description given to Michael – that he is ὁ ἀρχάγγελος, the archangel. As cited in the Lutheran liturgy, archangels are commonly accepted as part of the heavenly hosts, one of the number of ranks of angels that may exist. But where did this concept come from? Is it Biblical, or is its source from outside the Bible – and Bible commentators have just assimilated that into our collective understanding? The term "archangel" is used in the singular in Scripture both times it is used. For the source of the concept of more than one archangel, we have to go outside the Scriptural record.

As mentioned above, it is after the Babylonian exile that the Jewish concept of angels undergoes a radical change. Like Michael, archangels becomes prominent in a number of Jewish non-canonical and apocryphal literature. In Tobit and in 1 and 2 Enoch, certain angels are presented with given names: Uriel, Suru'el, Raphael, Raguel, Michael, Saraqa'el, and Gabriel (also Jeremiel or Remiel are included or sometimes substituted for one or another of the others in

the list of archangels in various texts). With special names come special functions. For instance, of Raphael it is said that he is "...one of the seven holy angels who presents the prayers of the saints" to God (Tob. 12:15). Raguel apparently "takes vengeance on the world of the luminaries" (Enoch 20:4). From these apocryphal stories and legends, archangels quickly became popular in art (especially in the Middle Ages), in mystic writings, and even as names for animated cartoon and movie characters. Not only that, but they have so permeated the exegetical landscape that many commentators will identify, for instance, the angel Gabriel as an archangel, not on the basis of the Biblical text (where he is nowhere acknowledged as such), but simply because he is given a name and because of the reference in the extra-canonical writings.

Without preconceptions, then, let us return to the text. Jude calls Michael "the archangel." From this we then know there is a being called an archangel. We know so far of only one. Furthermore, we know that this archangel is Michael, and therefore has whatever characteristics Michael does. As for Michael, we know that this archangel is a personal representative of Christ. So what does this title add "archangel" to our understanding of the person of Christ? "Arch" means "over," or "above," or "before". Therefore Jesus surpasses the angels. This brings us back to Adolphine Bakker's article that investigates the Book of Hebrews as it looks at the difficulty in portraying Jesus as an angel because he is superior to them.²⁵ Bakker rightly points out that the reason the author of the Hebrews makes such a clear distinction is in order to safeguard the assertion that only through the service and servanthood of Jesus is salvation won for us – never through the work of any angel. The term "archangel" accentuates this distinction. Jesus is not an angel in the sense of a finite, created being. He is over them. He surpasses them. He is the creator of the world – "For by him all things were created: things in *heaven* and on earth, visible and *invisible*, ... *all* things were created by him and for him. ...

And he is the head ... so that in everything he might have the *supremacy*” (Colossians 1:16, 18 – *italics added*). Michael engages in conflict with Satan over the body of Moses. Who is Michael? As the picture of Christ, he is the archangel – the one over all created spiritual beings. Who is Satan? He is one of the created, finite, spiritual beings, albeit the prince of the evil ones. Who will be victorious in this conflict? The one who is superior. The archangel, of course. The end is never in doubt.

The only other time “archangel” is used is in 1 Thessalonians.

1 Thessalonians 4:16

For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

1 Thessalonians 4:16

ὅτι αὐτὸς ὁ κύριος ἐν κελεύσματι, ἐν φωνῇ ἀρχαγγέλου καὶ ἐν σάλπιγγι θεοῦ, καταβήσεται ἀπ’ οὐρανοῦ καὶ οἱ νεκροὶ ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναστήσονται πρῶτον,

The first century Christians were as much or even more confused about the second coming of Christ as are Christians today in the 21st century. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians in these words to let them know that when Christ returns, there will be no mistaking it! He mentions the coming of the Lord and describes it in three phrases: “with a loud command,” “with the voice of the archangel” and “with the trumpet call of God.” How are we to understand these – as three distinct items, or as a single event described in three terms? In either case it strengthens the relationship between Michael and Jesus, for it links the role of Michael with the final process of victory over Satan.

I believe the best answer, however, is to take them as a combined single event. When John in his Apocalypse tells the story of how he received the vision, he says that it began when “I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet.... I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw ... someone ‘like a son of man’” (Revelation 1:10-13).

This figure is identified as the glorified Jesus. When Jesus speaks to John, his voice sounds like a trumpet. Trumpet calls in the Old Testament were sometimes associated with God speaking or commanding his people, as in the giving of the Ten Commandments. It certainly would be appropriate to apply the same to Paul's statement here in 1 Thessalonians. When the Lord returns and He speaks or commands, it will be a trumpet call to those who hear it. It may be best to take all three of these phrases expegetically, in parallel with each other – each describing the same thing. In other words, when the Lord returns, there will be *one* great sound, that Paul has described in *three* ways: “with a loud command,” “with the voice of the archangel,” and “with the trumpet call of God.”

The “voice of the archangel” is used appropriately here, since, as we have seen, Michael has become representative of the victory of Christ over Satan, and at Christ's final return, his judgment over Satan will finalize that victory forever. Furthermore, at the final judgment Christ assumes his position as Lord over all, including over his chief enemy – the angel Satan, and over all of his enemy's angels as well.

While Scripture uses the term “archangel” only twice, it tells us, then, several things about Him. In Jude He is the same as “Michael,” in Thessalonians, the Lord is shown to be over all. His position is that of being over all the created spiritual beings, including Satan. So we know that Christ, represented on these occasions as Michael the Archangel, will engage Satan on behalf of his people; He will bring Satan under his judgment; and in the end, and at the end, He will be Victor-King!

Conclusion

In the New Testament we have the clear revelation of the second person of the Trinity as Jesus the Christ, true God and true Man. In the Old Testament this second person of the Trinity disclosure his nature and operated before his incarnation. Rather, there we clearly see Him as “the Angel of the Lord,” and we see at least part of his nature in “Michael the Archangel.”

Perhaps the answer to this relationship between Jesus and Michael might be best understood in comparison to the relationships of Jesus and Melchizedek (Genesis 14:18-20) and Jesus and Solomon (2 Samuel 7:11-16). That is, within the context of historical persons we find typological prophetic types of the Christ. At the very least, in the person of Michael the Archangel, whether he is rightly to be understood as an “angel Christology,” an “angelomorphic Christology,” or an “angel-theophany,” we find an iconic representation of the work of the Christ, most often of the pre-incarnate Christ.

And in this understanding perhaps we find the meaning of this representation. The two images (Jesus as “the Angel of the Lord” and of “Michael the Archangel”) go together, hand in hand. As “the Angel of the Lord” Jesus reveals his grace and mercy in relation to God’s people, so that they might be better able to apprehend the presence and transcendence of God in their limited and sinful condition. As “Michael the Archangel” He reveals his judgment in opposition to Satan and the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms, as the one who will engage them and in the end have victory over them.

In the Book of Revelation, we have seen how Jesus reveals himself in various ways – the Son of Man, and Lamb of God, etc – not because these are different persons but because they accentuate different characteristics of his one divine nature. To be sure, different people will

ultimately see Jesus differently. To the believer, Jesus is the Lamb of God, the loving one who has secured our salvation through his death on the cross. To the unbeliever, Jesus is predominantly the Son of Man, coming with his angels in judgment. Likewise, in the Old Testament metaphor, Jesus is “the Angel of the Lord” to his chosen people –the revelation of God’s will and promises.

To Satan and his hosts, Jesus is the mighty prince who is ultimately victorious over the evil one. But to God’s people, whose vision has been clouded by this sinful world, we can see him more clearly in the icon of Michael the Archangel, who appears as the mighty prince who time and time again is victorious over the evil one.

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