

SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 8



Contend
for the faith
which was
once delivered
to the saints
Jude 1:3

MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

Scripture Text: Jude 9

In **verse 9**, Jude again reverted to another historical account to bring us understanding of his argument regarding those in **verse 8** who “speak evil of dignities.” He brought up the interesting account concerning *Michael the archangel* and the dispute *about the body of Moses* to teach that, even in the face of opposition, there is a right way to behave.

MEMORY VERSE: *For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.*

—1 Peter 2:21-22

One Who Is Like God

Michael. Who is this? The name *Michael* in the original Greek language as well as in the Hebrew language means “One who is like God.” Some translations say that it means “Who is like God?” Two references to the name *Michael* are in the Book of Daniel. In **Daniel 10:21**, it says, “Michael your prince,” and **Daniel 12:1** says, “Michael . . . the great prince.” In each case Daniel refers to *Michael* as a “prince.” Who is this “One who is like God,” a “prince”?

In **John 14:8** Philip said, “Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us,” Jesus’ reply in **verse 9** was, “Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” Jesus stated in **John 10:30**, “I and my Father are one,” and **Hebrews 1:3** declares that Christ is the brightness of God’s glory, “the express image [copy] of his person.”

Jesus Christ is the “One who is like God.” He is *Michael*. Since Jesus is *Michael*, He is also the “prince” in Daniel’s prophecy and in the Messianic prophecy in **Isaiah 9:6**, which says, “. . . the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called . . . The Prince of Peace.”

The Master of Angels

The archangel. While the name *Michael* is used in reference to Christ five times in the Scriptures, the word *archangel* is used only twice. It is always used in the singular form and is composed of two words: arch and angel. The word *arch* means “chief or master.” (It comes from the Greek word *archo*, which means “to be first in political rule or power.”) The word *angel* means “a messenger,” or one messenger. There is not a host of archangels since there can be only one chief, or master.

Who is the *archangel*? **Matthew 26:53** asks the question, “Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?” **1 Thessalonians 4:16** states, “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God . . .” If “the Lord himself” has “the voice of the archangel,” it only stands to reason that “the Lord himself” is the *archangel*. Religions that teach that Lucifer and Gabriel are archangels have no basis in truth. The word *archangel* is not used with any name in the Scriptures other than *Michael*, who is Jesus Christ.

Disputation With the Devil

Contending with the devil . . . about the body of Moses. It was necessary to establish the identity of the *archangel* because in Jude’s account, *Michael the archangel* contended *with the devil . . . about the body of Moses*. This contention was very familiar to first century Jewish converts. It is mentioned in *The Targum of Jonathan*, in *Oecumenius*, and in *The Assumption of Moses*. Briefly, they say that the Lord desired to hide *Moses’* body so that the people of Israel would not be tempted to worship the leaders of the past. In the dispute,

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the *devil* claimed that since *Moses* murdered an Egyptian, he was unworthy of such an honorable burial. It is evident from the inclusion of this account in Jude that this portion of Hebrew tradition was believed to be true.

Christ Our Example

Durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee. The Amplified Bible reads, “The archangel Michael, contending with the devil . . . dared not [presume to] bring an abusive condemnation against him, but said, The Lord rebuke you!” Jude reasoned that if Jesus Christ, *Michael the archangel*, with His superior position, knowledge, and power, would not stoop to accuse the *devil*, then why should anyone else be so presumptuous and “speak evil of dignities” (verse 8)? **Matthew 10:24** says, “The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.”

Jude has shown Jesus Christ in a highly contentious situation to teach us how to act and speak in similar situations. In this day of heated conflict and high emotions, we should be mindful of Jude’s words and Christ’s example. We may say “The Lord rebuke you,” but we should never use personal assaults or abusive language or stand for the right in a wrong way (see **Matthew 5:37**).

JUST A THOUGHT

**Truth suffers more when one stands for it in a wrong way
than it does when one does not stand for it at all.**