

Men's Discipleship

False Religions: Jehovah's Witnesses Part 3

Christ, Is Not Michael: The Eternal Son Revealed from Heaven

I. Introduction

- **Jehovah's Witness claim:**
Jesus pre-existed as *Michael the Archangel*, became human as Jesus, and returned to angelic form after His resurrection.
- **Protestant confession:**
Jesus is **true God and true Man**, "*of one substance with the Father*" (Nicene Creed).
- **Purpose:**
To defend Christ's divine identity and expose the theological and biblical errors in equating Him with a created angel.

Key Jehovah's Witness publications & statements

1. **"Is Jesus the Archangel Michael?" (JW Magazine article) April 2010**
 - In this article the Witnesses state: "*Jesus Christ is Michael the archangel.*" JW.org
 - They add: "...what can we conclude? Jesus Christ is the archangel. Both names — Michael (meaning 'Who Is Like God?') and Jesus (meaning 'Jehovah Is Salvation') — focus attention on his role as the leading advocate of God's sovereignty." JW.org. However, their assertion is overreaching because the two names do not correlate with each other.
 - They also use Philippians 2:9 and other passages to argue for this identification. JW.org
2. **"The Archangel Michael — Who Is He?" (JW website Bible-Teach section)**
 - The Witnesses write: "Michael, ... is evidently a name given to Jesus before and after his life on earth." JW.org
 - This is clearly an unequivocal statement of equivalence: Michael = Jesus in their theology.
3. **"Who Is Michael the Archangel?" (JW book / online publication)**
 - The book says: "...the Bible indicates that Michael is another name for Jesus Christ, before and after his life on earth." JW.org
 - It gives their scriptural reasoning (e.g., linking "archangel" voice in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 to Jesus). JW.org
4. **"Michael" entry in *Insight on the Scriptures* (Watchtower publication)**
 - Under the heading "Michael", they state: "Scriptural evidence indicates that the name Michael applied to God's Son before he left heaven to become Jesus Christ and also after his return." JW.org
 - They further say: "Michael is the only one said to be 'the archangel,' ... this seems to imply that there is but one whom God has designated chief, or head, of the angelic host." JW.org

5. **“The Truth About Angels” (Watchtower Magazine, Sept 2017)**
 - This article states: “The archangel, Michael, is the chief angel in terms of power and authority. The Scriptures clearly indicate that Michael is another name for Jesus Christ.” JW.org
6. **Watchtower Online Library – “Who Is the Archangel Michael?”**
 - The online article says: “God’s Word refers to Michael ‘the archangel.’ ... Moreover, Jesus is linked with the office of archangel.” [JW Library](http://JWLibrary)
 - They cite Jude 9 (“Michael the archangel”) and 1 Thessalonians 4:16 (voice of archangel) in their argument that Jesus is that archangel. [JW Library+1](http://JWLibrary+1)

II. The Witness Claim Summarized

JW Assertion	Scriptural Citation Used	Misinterpretation
Michael is the “chief angel” (Dan 10:13; 12:1; Jude 9) = Jesus	Hebrews 1:1-6 allegedly “compares” angels to Christ	Ignores Hebrews 1’s <i>contrast</i> rather than equivalence
1 Thess 4:16 “voice of the archangel” = Jesus must be Michael	Misreads the genitive case—Christ commands angels, not is one	Conflates authority <i>over</i> angels with angelic nature
“Only-begotten” = first created being	John 1:1-3; Col 1:15 twisted to mean <i>created</i>	Ignores Greek πρωτότοκος = rank, not origin

III. Biblical Refutation

1. Jesus is Worshiped—Angels Are Not

- **Hebrews 1:5–6** — “Let all God’s angels worship Him.”
- **Philippians 2:9–11** — Every knee bows to Jesus.
- **Revelation 5:12–14** — Angels join creation in worshiping the Lamb.
If Jesus were an angel, worshiping Him would be idolatry (cf. Rev 19:10; 22:8-9).

2. Jesus Created the Angels

- **John 1:1–3** — “All things were made through Him.”
- **Colossians 1:16** — He created “*thrones, dominions, rulers, authorities*”—terms describing angelic orders.
The Creator cannot be part of His creation.

3. Jesus’ Divine Titles and Nature

- **Hebrews 1:8** — “But of the Son He says, ‘Your throne, O God, is forever.’”
- **Isaiah 9:6** — “Everlasting Father, Mighty God.”
- **John 20:28** — Thomas: “My Lord and my God!”
Explicit divine ascriptions exclude angelic identity.

Meaning of Michael's Name

The Hebrew name “**Mî khā’ ēl**” (מִיכָאֵל) literally means “*Who is like God?*” It is not a claim of *identity* with God but a **rhetorical question** — one that implies *no one* is like God. In Hebrew grammar and theology, names often bear declarative or doxological meanings. So the name “**Michael**” functions as a proclamation of **God’s uniqueness and supremacy**, not equality.

In essence: Michael’s very name is a *battle cry of humility and worship* — “Who is like Yahweh? None!”

Biblical Function of the Name

In Scripture, Michael appears as a **chief prince** and **protector of Israel** (Daniel 10:13, 21; 12:1), and as the **archangel who contends with Satan** (Jude 9; Revelation 12:7). His name’s meaning reflects his **role**:

- In Daniel, he defends God’s people against spiritual and earthly powers that *pretend* to rival God.
- In Revelation, his victory over the dragon dramatizes the answer to his name: *no creature can be like God*.

So “Michael” isn’t divine in essence but is an **angelic title that glorifies God** through contrast — the name itself rebukes any being that would try to usurp God’s place (like Satan).

Protestant Theological Understanding

Protestant theology holds firmly that:

- **Only God is “like God.”** (Isaiah 40:18; 46:9)
- **Angels are created beings** (Psalm 148:2–5; Colossians 1:16).
- **Christ is eternal, uncreated, and divine** (John 1:1–3; Hebrews 1:3–6).

Therefore, Michael’s name is a **declaration of God’s incomparability**, not a divine title. It means:

“Who could possibly be like the Almighty? Not me, not any angel — only God Himself.”

Summary Table

Aspect	Meaning
Name	<i>Mî khā’ ēl</i> — “Who is like God?”
Form	Rhetorical question (implying <i>none</i>)

Aspect	Meaning
Purpose	To exalt God's uniqueness
Role in Scripture	Defender of Israel, leader of angelic armies
Protestant View	A created archangel, not divine; his name is doxological, not ontological

Jehovah's Witness Interpretation

Jehovah's Witnesses (Watchtower Society) teach that:

Michael the Archangel is the pre-human Jesus Christ.

They argue this from the following reasoning:

1. The name *Michael* means "Who is like God," which they take to imply a **special likeness to God** rather than a rhetorical question.
2. Michael is called *the archangel* (Jude 9), and since 1 Thessalonians 4:16 says "*the Lord will descend from heaven with the voice of an archangel*," they claim this "voice" must belong to Jesus.
3. Michael leads the heavenly armies in Revelation 12:7, while Jesus leads heaven's armies in Revelation 19:11-16—therefore, they must be the same being.
4. Since Jesus was created (per their Arian theology), it makes sense to them that he would be the highest created angel.

Watchtower Sources

- *The Watchtower*, December 15 1984, p. 29: "Scriptural evidence indicates that the name Michael applied to God's Son before he left heaven to become Jesus Christ..."
- *Reasoning from the Scriptures* (1985), p. 218: "At the resurrection, Michael resumed his heavenly name and position."
- *Insight on the Scriptures*, Vol. 2, p. 393: "The evidence indicates that Michael is another name for Jesus Christ in his heavenly role."

Protestant Rebuttal

a. The Name "Michael" Is Rhetorical, Not Descriptive

As we noted earlier, *Mī khā' ēl* means "Who is like God?" — a **question affirming that no one is**.

If Michael's name were intended to *describe* him as Godlike, the Hebrew form would differ (e.g., *ke Elohim* = "like God"). Instead, it is a **rhetorical proclamation of God's uniqueness**, consistent with angelic humility, not deity.

Isaiah 40:25 – “To whom then will you compare Me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One.”

Exodus 15:11 – “Who is like You, O Lord, among the gods?” (*Mi kamocha*, the same rhetorical structure.)

Michael’s name echoes this doxology.

b. Jesus Is Distinguished from Angels

The New Testament explicitly denies that Jesus is or ever was an angelic being:

- **Hebrews 1:4-6** – “He has become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs... Let all God’s angels worship Him.”
- **Hebrews 2:5** – “It was not to angels that God subjected the world to come.”
- **Colossians 1:16-17** – All angels were *created by* Christ, not with or as Him.

If Michael is a created archangel, and all things (including angels) were created *by* Christ, then Jesus **cannot be** Michael.

c. The “Voice of the Archangel” (1 Thess 4:16)

The passage says the Lord descends *with* the voice of an archangel — **not as** the archangel. It is describing the *accompaniment* of heavenly power and angelic heraldry, as in Matthew 24:31, not an identity statement.

d. Revelation 12 vs 19

- Revelation 12:7 – Michael leads angels in heaven’s war *before* the earthly kingdom is revealed.
 - Revelation 19:11-16 – Christ, the Word of God, rides forth to judge the nations, wearing many diadems and bearing the name “King of kings and Lord of lords.”
They occur in different visions, roles, and time frames; the conflation is interpretive, not textual.
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Protestant View

Protestant orthodoxy holds that:

- **Michael** is a *created archangel*, one among other angels (Daniel 10:13—“one of the chief princes”).

- **Jesus Christ** is the *uncreated, eternal Son of God*, consubstantial with the Father, Creator of all (John 1:1-3; Col 1:16-17).
- The *similarity of function* (both fight evil) reflects *divine delegation*, not *ontological equality*.

In Protestant thought, Michael's name *exalts God* by denying any being's likeness to Him — precisely the opposite of the JW interpretation.

Summary Table

Doctrine	Jehovah's Witness View	Protestant View
Meaning of "Michael"	"Who is like God" = one who is like God (title of honor)	"Who is like God?" = rhetorical; no one is like God
Identity of Michael	Pre-human Jesus	Created archangel, servant of God
Relationship to Jesus	Same person	Distinct; Jesus is Creator, Michael is creature
Supporting Texts (JW use)	Dan 10, Jude 9, Rev 12, 1 Thess 4	Heb 1–2, John 1, Col 1, Isa 40
Theological Root	Arianism (created Christ)	Nicene orthodoxy (eternal Son)

Michael's Role vs. Christ's Role

Michael the Archangel	Jesus Christ
Defends Israel (Dan 12:1)	Reigns over all nations (Matt 28:18; Rev 19:16)
One among angels (Jude 9)	Commander of all angels (Matt 13:41; 24:31)
Refuses to rebuke Satan directly	Christ rebukes Satan by authority (Matt 4:10)
Scripture consistently distinguishes Michael as <i>servant</i> , not <i>Savior</i> .	

Jesus' Unique Mediation and Redemption

- **1 Tim 2:5** — One Mediator between God and men: the *Man* Christ Jesus.
 - **Hebrews 2:14–17** — He partook of *flesh and blood*, which angels cannot do. Redemption requires true humanity and true deity—not an angelic being.
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IV. Theological & Historical Witness

1. Early Church Fathers

- **Athanasius, *On the Incarnation* (§3):**
“He became what we are that He might make us what He is—not an angel but true God in flesh.”
- **Augustine, *City of God* 11.19:**
“The Son is begotten, not made; the angels are made, not begotten.”

2. Reformation Confessions

- **Westminster Confession VIII.2:**
“The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God... did, when the fullness of time was come, take upon Him man’s nature.”
- **Belgic Confession Art. 10:**
“We believe that Jesus Christ, according to His divine nature, is the only Son of God, eternal, not made nor created.”

3. Modern Protestant Commentators

- **John MacArthur:** “Christ is the Creator of angels, not chief among them.”
- **R.C. Sproul:** “To demote Christ to angelic status destroys the gospel itself, for no angel could bear the wrath of God.”

V. Christology: The Word Made Flesh

John 1:14 — “The Word became flesh.”

Angels do not and cannot *become incarnate*. The Incarnation uniquely unites God and man in one person—never angelic nature.

VI. Key Doctrinal Implications

1. **Atonement:** Only a divine Savior can bear infinite wrath.
2. **Worship:** If Christ were angelic, Christian worship would be idolatrous.
3. **Revelation:** Jesus reveals the Father fully (John 14:9), a role no created being could fulfill.
4. **Mediation:** The God-Man alone bridges God and man, not heaven’s messengers.

VII. Practical Application

- Teach believers to **interpret JW proof-texts contextually** (Heb 1; 1 Thess 4).

- Strengthen assurance: salvation depends on the **eternal Son**, not a created being.
- Cultivate reverent worship of the risen, divine Christ.

VIII. Conclusion

The biblical, theological, and historical witness is unanimous:

Jesus Christ is not Michael the Archangel.

He is “*the image of the invisible God... by whom all things were created*” (Col 1:15-16).

To call Him anything less is to deny His glory and the very gospel that saves.

God in the Old Testament

I AM ([Exodus 3:14–15](#); [Isaiah 48:12](#))

The Shepherd ([Psalm 23:1](#))

The Light ([Psalm 27:1](#))

The Rock ([Psalm 18:2](#))

Ruler of all ([Isaiah 9:6](#))

Judge of all nations ([Joel 3:12](#))

The Bridegroom ([Isaiah 62:5](#); [Hosea 2:16](#))

God’s Word never passes away ([Isaiah 40:8](#))

The Sower ([Jeremiah 31:27](#); [Ezekiel 36:9](#))

First and the Last ([Isaiah 48:12](#))

Jesus’ Reference to Himself

I AM ([John 8:58](#))

The Shepherd ([John 10:11](#))

The Light ([John 8:12](#))

The Rock ([Matthew 7:24](#))

Ruler of all ([Matthew 28:18](#))

Judge of all ([John 5:22](#))

The Bridegroom ([Matthew 25:1](#))

Jesus’ words never pass away ([Mark 13:31](#))

The Sower ([Matthew 13:3–9](#))

First and the Last ([Revelation 1:17–18](#))