

Archangels

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There are only two angels named in Scripture; Michael and Gabriel. Michael is the only angel called an Archangel or “chief angel”. In many places we read of “an angel” without any identification but it seems these two angels have a special role to play in the service of God.

Satan (Lucifer) was originally an “*anointed cherub*” and drew one third of the angels of heaven after him when he exalted himself in pride attempting to exalt himself above the throne of God.

Michael is always seen as a **defender** of God, His throne, and His people Israel, whereas Gabriel is said to “*stand in the presence of God*” and is always seen **communicating prophetic messages** to God’s servants.

When Moses died God buried him in a secret location to prevent the people from making a god of him or using his grave as a place of idolatry. Satan “*disputed about the body of Moses*” and it was Michael who “*contended*” with the Devil (Jude 1:9).

When Daniel was seeking God in prayer for His people, Gabriel was sent by God but he was hindered for 21 days by one of Satan’s demon princes appointed over the kingdom of Persia. Gabriel was only able to reach Daniel because, as he said, “*Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me*” (Dan.10:13).

Michael is described as the “*the great prince which standeth for the children of thy (Daniel’s) people*” (Dan.12:1) and as Israel’s “*prince*” (Dan.10:21).

During the Tribulation Michael will be very active defending repentant Israel for Daniel states:

*“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”* (Dan. 12:1).

Michael is the guardian angel of the nation of Israel and this is why the “*voice of the archangel*” will be heard at the Rapture of the Church (1Thess.4:16) for he will know that the 7 years of Tribulation is about to begin **when Israel will seek the Lord** and again become God’s witness on earth.

Halfway through the 7-year Tribulation, Satan (the Dragon) will make war with heaven and seek to overthrow God's throne but Michael, leading his angels, will cast Satan and all his angels out of heaven into the earth. Perhaps Michael will be the angel who binds Satan with a great chain and cast him into the bottomless pit when Christ returns (Rev.20:1-2).

In all the above instances we find Michael actively contending on behalf of Israel or representing the nation before God. He is undoubtedly Israel's guardian angel and has some proportion of the angels of heaven under his authority.

Surely if God has given Michael the Archangel the task of watching over Israel it must indicate how important Israel is in the entire plan of God to restore the earth to Divine management and to complete the work of redemption.

Gabriel has an entirely different role for each time he appears in Scripture he is **communicating a message** from God to His servants. He appeared to Zacharias as he offered incense in the Temple at Jerusalem saying:

*"I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am **sent to speak unto thee**, and to shew thee these glad tidings"* (Luke 1:19).

The glad tidings were that Elizabeth would have a special son, John the Baptist, who would be a prophet of the Lord and come in the spirit and power of Elijah to announce the coming of Messiah.

Six months later Gabriel appeared to Mary in Galilee and informed her that she would conceive by the Holy Spirit and her child would be *"the Son of the Highest"* sitting upon the throne of David and *"of his kingdom there shall be no end"* (Luke 1:32-33).

If we go back to the Book of Daniel we find Gabriel helping Daniel to **understand the vision** given to him concerning Israel's future during the Persian and Grecian Empires up to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes:

*"And I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, **Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision"*** (Dan. 8:16).

Again, in Daniel chapter 9, Gabriel brings a prophetic message of Israel's future from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem after the

Babylonian captivity to the millennial kingdom:

*“And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to **give thee skill and understanding**” (Dan. 9:22).*

The last three chapters of the Book of Daniel record an amazing prophecy of Israel’s experience through the Persian and Grecian eras and finally in the last 7 years of Israel’s history during the future great Tribulation. Gabriel’s name is not mentioned but we note that the name Gabriel means in the Hebrew “*man of God*” and Daniel describes the angel as “*a certain man*” (Dan.10:5), “*one like the similitude of the sons of men*” (Dan.10:16) and “*one like the appearance of a man*”(Dan.10:18). It seems probable that it is Gabriel again.

The message is the same as Gabriel’s:

*“Beloved, **understand the words** that I speak unto thee...Now I am come to make thee **understand what shall befall thy people** in the latter days...But **I will shew thee** that which is noted in the scripture of truth” (Dan.10:11,14,21).*

These angels are glorious in their appearance and have great strength as the following description will indicate:

“Behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz: His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in color to polished brass” (Dan.10:5-6).

*“Bless the LORD, ye his angels, **that excel in strength**, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word” (Ps.103:20).*

Lucifer (Satan) was created a magnificent angel and he is described by God in similar terms to Gabriel:

*“Thou hast been **in Eden the garden of God**; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. **Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth**; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee” (Ezek.28:13-15).*

When Satan sinned he drew one third of all the angels of heaven after him. Many of these were confined to Tartaros (2Pet.2:4) in the

bottomless pit at the time of the Flood, but in the Tribulation the bottomless pit will be opened and they will be released (Rev.9:1-11).

We have seen that Michael is responsible **to contend** where necessary against the powers of darkness and Gabriel has had the task of **communicating God's Word** to His servants but what was **Lucifer's role before he sinned?**

It seems that Lucifer's sphere of activity may have been **on the earth** for when Satan tempted the Lord in the Mount of Temptation he claimed that **all the kingdoms of this world** had been "*delivered*" to him. We read:

*"And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him **all the kingdoms of the world** in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for **that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine**" (Luke 4:5-7).*

The fact that Jesus did not challenge this statement would indicate that it was true: At some time in the past Satan had been given "*all the kingdoms of the world*" and that was probably from God before Satan sinned. It is therefore plausible that Lucifer's area of responsibility, before he sinned, was over the earth and its kingdoms. He still rules among the nations: he is the god of **this world** and is the prince of the power of **the air**.

To Job God said:

*"Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?... When the morning stars sang together, and **all the sons of God shouted for joy?**" (Job 38:4,7).*

If ALL the sons of God (angels) shouted for joy at creation that would indicate that Lucifer and his angels had not sinned before Genesis chapter 1:1. We don't know how long Adam lived before the serpent tempted Eve but if Lucifer was given dominion over the nations it may have been sometime **after Adam was created**. There could not be nations without human beings.

These facts paint an interesting picture and may provide **the motive** for Lucifer's rebellion. Having been given dominion over the nations that would be born, Lucifer may have seen the opportunity to take over the earth but in order to do that he must get Adam and Eve to disobey their Creator and give their allegiance to him. While Adam continued to worship God Satan was only a servant of God.

God's plan was to establish His Kingdom on the earth but Satan had taken over the Kingdom so God had a plan to recover the Kingdom.

God's response to Satan's deceit was to send His beloved Son in the fulness of time to put down all rebellion and recover the kingdom lost to Satan. The story of redemption was the only way that this could be achieved and so Christ had to come and, through death, destroy him that had the power of death, that is the Devil, in order to rescue mankind from Satan's dominion. Only through the Gospel of Christ could men be released from the bondage of sin and Satan.

The fact is that man was created with a free will and because it is the character of God to be longsuffering and to love fallen mankind, He has given every opportunity under every circumstance for men to be saved. Provision was made under the Old Covenant and the Father sent the Son. When Christ was rejected, He sent the Holy Spirit to strive with men. He will send His Son again, but as Judge.

Satan has been a terrible adversary deceiving men and bringing them into bondage but he knows he is a defeated foe and as we draw near to the end of the age he will intensify his opposition to the Truth. During the Tribulation Satan will take his war to the portals of heaven but Michael will cast him down and confine him to the earth (Rev.12:7-9).

Finally Christ will return and reign.

*"Then cometh the end, **when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father**; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For **he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet**. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1Cor.15:24-26).*

Because the Lord Jesus rose from the dead and became the firstfruits of them that slept, redeemed and resurrected mankind can dwell for ever in the **eternal Kingdom of God** in a new heaven and new earth.

The rebellion initiated by Lucifer, and assisted by Adam and Eve, will finally be over; Satan will be cast for ever into the lake of fire with all who follow him and the tabernacle of God will be with men on a renovated earth (Rev.21:3). Michael and Gabriel will have had a role to play in implementing God's plan of recovery. ●