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## Michael (Angel)

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alty). This vision raises the problem of false prophecy and how to detect it. After all, both Zedekiah and Micaiah were authentic prophets who deserved to be listened to. The idea that it was Naboth's spirit that enticed the prophets and not God, thus lets God off the hook, so to speak, as God is shown to allow this only reluctantly (Goldenberg: 96). Judah ha-Levi (*Kuzari* 3.73) explains the vision as a rhetorical strategy to bolster the argument and make it sound more convincing. In a similar vein, Qimḥi (at vv. 20–23) explains that Ahab was already sentenced to death by divine decree (*mitah la-shamayim*) and it was God who instilled the false spirit into the band of prophets. The whole scene Micaiah describes was his invention to drive home the point that Ahab was doomed.

Rashi cites an aggadah (most likely *ySan* 11:5, 30c), which seems to imply that Micaiah was wounded during the battle and his blood atoned for Israel and allowed them to escape punishment. Ginzberg (6:313) questions this, suggesting that the aggadah may actually refer to the suffering of the pious king Jehoshaphat.

**Bibliography:** ■ Ginzberg, L., *Legends of the Jews*, 7 vols. (Philadelphia, Pa. 1909–38). ■ Goldenberg, R., “The Problem of False Prophecy: Talmudic Interpretations of Jeremiah 28 and 1 Kings 22,” in *The Biblical Mosaic* (ed. R. Polzin/E. Rothman; Philadelphia, Pa. 1982) 87–104. ■ Knibb, M. A., “Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah,” in *OTP* 2 (ed. J. H. Charlesworth; New York 1985) 143–76. ■ Sievers, J., “Michea figlio di Imla e la profezia in Flavio Giuseppe,” *Ricerche Storico Bibliche* 11.1 (1999) 97–105.

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See also → Ahab (King of Israel); → Ahaziah;  
→ Jehoshaphat (Person); → Micah (Book and Person); → Ramoth-Gilead

## Michael (Angel)

- I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament
- II. New Testament
- III. Judaism
- IV. Christianity
- V. Literature
- VI. Visual Arts
- VII. Music
- VIII. Film

### I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament

Michael (MT *Mikā'el*, LXX Μιχαήλ), is the name of an angel, a heavenly figure, that appears in the HB/OT in Dan 10:13, 21; 12:1. The human name, which occurs in texts from the Persian period, such as Num 13:13, Ezra 8:8, 1 Chr 6:40; 7:3; 8:16, and 2 Chr 21:2, can be translated “Who is like God?” The career of the angel Michael starts in the Hellenistic period around the 2nd cent. BCE, which is the date of composition of the book of Daniel and probably also the oldest Enoch traditions in which he plays

an important role (1 En. 9:1; 20:1–7; 40; etc.). He becomes a very prominent figure in Jewish and Christian eschatological writings from the Roman period.

In his first appearance in Dan 10:13 and 21 he is portrayed as the patron angel of Israel and opposed to the angels of Persia (10:13) and Greece (10:20). According to this conception each nation has a guardian angel, who fights for that nation against the other angels. This contradicts the idea of Sir 17:17 that other peoples have “rulers,” but Israel is under the direct protection of YHWH (Bauer: 195). It has been argued that the angel Michael is a transformation of a Phoenician deity Mikal (Delcor: 210–11) but given the frequency of the name Michael in Persian and later times this hypothesis seems to be unwarranted (Mach: 569). In Dan 12:1 Michael is called the “great prince” and fights for his people in the eschatological battle. In later texts Michael is called ὁ ἀρχάγγελος = “the archangel” (1 En. 20:1–7; 71:3; 2 En. 22:6; 4 Bar. 9:5; Jude 9), but in Dan 12 the Greek versions translate the Hebrew text (ὁ ἀγγελος ὁ μέγας = “the great angel”). As the patron angel of Israel (cf. also 1 En. 20:5; 40:8–10; 2 En. 18:9; 3 Bar. 37:1; 44:10; 1QM 17,6–8) Michael also becomes an intercessor for the Israelites (Tob 12:15; T. Dan 6:2; T. Levi 5:5–6). The angel Michael becomes more prominent than any other angel, so that he could easily be identified with any unnamed angel.

**Bibliography:** ■ Bauer, D., *Das Buch Daniel* (NSK.AT 22; Stuttgart 1996). ■ Delcor, M., *Le livre de Daniel* (SB; Paris 1971). ■ Mach, M., “Michael,” *DDD* (ed. K. van der Toorn et al.; Leiden 2<sup>1999</sup>) 569–72.

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### II. New Testament

Michael, aside from Gabriel (Luke 1:19, 26), is the only angel mentioned by name in the NT. In Jude 9, Michael is called archangel (ἀρχάγγελος). He contends with the devil (διάβολος) for the body of Moses, whom God himself has buried, according to Deut 34:6. The same motif is found nowhere in pre-Christian texts, which is why it has been suggested that it refers to the lost ending of the *As. Mos.*, as presumed by early Christian authors (Origen, Didymus the Blind, Gelasius; see Bauckham; Berger). With this short narrative in Jude 9, the author wants to show in his argumentation that even the highest angel was afraid of the act of condemning the devil and so committed it instead to God.

Michael is the only angel in the book of Revelation who is called by name, although heavenly beings have an important role to play in this book. Revelation 12:7–9 describes a cosmic battle (cf. the War-Rule 1QM from Qumran) between Michael and the dragon (δράκων). Michael is the leading angel to whom other angels are assigned in the war against the devil and his angels. Michael fights in