

## 23T04a What's in a Name? Angels

Hello my friends. Thanks for joining me today for an @ the PUNLA coffee table.

What's in a name? Names. Names are important, they help us picture the person we are talking about. The Bible is full of names, many of these names we struggle to pronounce. Belief it or not, most of these names have meaning which is important to their story. Over the past couple years, I have discussed some of these, but more questions keep coming in.

In this series, I'm going to look at many prominent names to determine how the name matches the behavior, are there other names used for this character, why is the name so important. Then we will ask the tough question. Is this really their name or maybe only a title or description? Should be interesting.

Today, I want to take a look at angels.

**Let's pray. Heavenly Father please guide our discussion today. Help me to stay out of the way, so you can use me. If I say anything wrong, please don't let them remember my errand words but remember what you want them to hear regardless of my words. We trust you and we know you have promised the wisdom we need to understand your word in the Bible. Help us to let the Holy Spirit lead us and guide us. Bless our time together and I pray all these things in your name Lord Jesus. Amen.**

Okay, I know what you are going to say. Angel is not a name, and that is true it is definitely a title.

Angels are mentioned 104 times in the Old Testament and 97 times in the new testament. But what do we know about angels, well not very much. An angel is the messenger of God but that's all we know. In fact what we see in our English bible as angels is actually several different words in Hebrew Mal-ak (mal-awk) or mala-cheh both meaning representative or messenger, and Greek Angelos messenger. But this gets a little more complicated when we look at the Garden of Eden story in Genesis 3. After, Adam and Eve are expelled from the Garden. God puts a cherubim at the garden, not an angel. Or the story of Joshua meeting a "man" on the road to Jericho. We assume it was an angel, but the bible does not say angel or cherubim. But I think everyone who reads this story believes this man was from God and probably not a "man" as in human.

As I said we actually don't have much information on angels in the bible. In fact, we only have two names in the bible that most Christian consider to be angels, Gabriel and Michael.

Gabriel means warrior of God or man of God. Gabriel is mentioned in only two books of the Bible Daniel Chapter 8 & 9 and Luke Chapter 1. Neither of these accounts describe

Gabriel as an archangel. In Daniel Gabriel is delivering messages to Daniel. Angel means messenger. In Luke 1:19, Gabriel first appears to Zacharias to announce John the Baptist is coming to his father. Luke 1:19 (NAS) *The angel answered and said to him, “I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news.* Alternatively, the messenger could be I am a man of God from God. Or I am God’s messenger.

Then, Luke 1:26, Gabriel appears to Mary to announce she’ll be the mother of Jesus. That’s it. So, Gabriel is an angel but no place in the Bible says he is an archangel. Luke 1:26 (NAS) *Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee named Nazareth,* Alternative meaning could be simply The messenger of God.

Malak Gabriel in Hebrew or Angelos Gabriel in Greek literally mean the messenger from God. God’s messenger. There are no other mentions of Gabriel in the Bible and only English bibles refer to Gabriel as an archangel. I could find no place in the Greek or Hebrew which referred to Gabriel as an archangel.

So is Gabriel the name of this particular angel, the only angel named in the bible. Or I should say the only messenger of God, named in the Bible. Or could it be a title the “man of El” or “man of God” or simply the messenger of God, Angelos Gabriel. I’ll leave it up to you. Either way, how we understand the stories in Luke 1 or Daniel 8&9 are not changed if this is not a specific angel or messenger.

So, what about the other angel named in the Bible, Michael. Michael means “who is like God”. Michael appears 15 times in the bible but only four Daniel 10:21 & 12:1 and Jude 1:9 and Revelation 12:7 are referring to what most Christians believe to be Archangel Michael. But do you know what is missing from all of these verses? The word angel. Neither the Old Testament Hebrew word Malak or the New Testament Greek word Angelos, appear in any of these verses.

In Daniel 10:13 (NAS) *But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was standing in my way for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia.* So, here is Michael. Some English translations say Michael one of the archangels or Michael one of the chief princes etc. So, let’s look at it closely. “*Michael, one of the chief princes,*” This is translated from four Hebrew words, מִיכָאֵל (*mi·cha·el*) meaning Who is like God, אֶחָד (*a·chad*) which means one or alone, הָרִשְׁוֹנִים (*ha·ri·sho·nim*) before, first, chief, first one, and הַשָּׂרִים (*has·sa·rim*) chief, leader or ruler. So, the Hebrew text can be paraphrased like, He who is like God, the one, the first or highest ruler. This scripture does not refer to Michael as an angel or archangel. What if Michael is a title instead of a name? The one who is like God, the first and highest ruler. Just think about it.

Next is Daniel 12:1 (NAS) *Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued.*” So, here is Michael again.

Some English translations say Michael the archangel. So, what does the Hebrew say, *“At that time Michael, the name Michael in Hebrew is מִיכָאֵל or Mikael which literally means “who is like God” This does not necessarily refer to the Archangel Michael although it might. “The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people”.* The Hebrew words are הַגְּדוֹל (hag-ga-do·vl) meaning great or greatest or highest, הַשָּׂר (has-sar) meaning ruler or leader, יַעֲמֹד (ya·a·mod) there is no perfect English word but it can mean to take a stand or withstand or even fulfill, עַל- (al-) meaning upon, above or over, בְּנֵי (be-nei) is translated all sorts of different ways in the bible but it could mean son or man or brothers or children or even breed or heir, then עַמְּךָ (am-me·cha) which could mean people or every peoples or nation or nations. Okay, most English Bible translations say this is Archangel Michael standing up for Israel, but why? It could just as easily be “the highest ruler” who is “like God” or Jesus. Takes a stand over all people and nations.

Daniel says “Michael our prince” or “Michael the great prince or ruler” but never angel, Malak or archangel.

So, what about the New Testament starting with Jude 1:9 (NAS) *“But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil ...* There is Michael the archangel. This is where we get this idea from. The Greek “Michael” Archangelos. Some English translations say, Michael one of the mightiest of angels. So, again let’s look at the Greek we have, *“But Michael the archangel,”*. This is two Greek words, Μιχαήλ (michaēl) from the Hebrew word מִיכָאֵל or Mikael which literally means “who is like God”, and the Greek word ἀρχάγγελος (archangelos) meaning ruler of the angels or archangel. Or in this case “the who is like God, the ruler of the angels.” So is Michael a name of a specific angel, the only archangel named in the Bible or is this a title “one who is like God”, “the ruler of the angels.” Only one being comes to mind in this case. Only Jesus is the one who is like God. Only Jesus is the ruler of the angels. Thought provoking is it not.

Later in Revelation 12:7 (NAS) *And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war.* Wait a second Michael’s angels, aren’t they God’s angels. No mention of archangel here either. Just the “one who is like God” and His angels. This again could be read as Jesus and His angels.

The question that came to me was. Is an archangel even an angel? Does an archangel have to be an angel? The ruler of the angels does not have to be an angel. In fact, Jesus has to be the ruler of the angels. The leader of the angels must be Jesus. The only one who is like God is Jesus. Jesus is God, ruler of everything.

I was pretty intrigued at this point. There is one other scripture in the New Testament that uses the term archangel in most English translations, 1 Thessalonians 4:16. This is commonly called the “rapture” scripture. 1 Thessalonians 4:16 (NAS) *For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.*

Read it again, *For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel.* Is this saying Jesus will come shouting with the voice of an archangel?? Or is it more like Jesus will come shouting as the archangel. The ruler of the angels. The ruler of everything. It does not require any special interpretation to see the voice and shout as coming from Jesus Himself as the ruler of everything.

Again. If you read Daniel 10 & 12 and insert Jesus or an angel named Michael, they both work, and it does not really affect the story being told. And in Jude and Revelation, you can do it again. Jesus or an angel named Michael. Although I have to be honest, the story in revelation works better with Jesus, since Jesus is the main character of the story in revelation.

Let's Pray

**Father God, thank you for giving us the resources and sources to answer these tough questions. We know you know all things. When we see how things fit perfectly in your plan. Wow. Only with God is this possible Thank you for giving us the Holy Spirit to guide us and help us. Help us to open the Bible and look into history to answer our questions. I pray these things in your name Lord Jesus, Amen**

Okay.

Gabriel means "man of God". Is it the name of a specific angel? Maybe but it does not have to be.

Michael means the "one who is like God". No one can be like God except God. So is it a name or a title? Is Michael an archangel, well yes. But the Bible does not call archangels angels rather an archangelos is the ruler of the angels. Michael is the only archangel in the Bible but it is possible that Jesus is the one who is like God and the ruler of the angels.

Interesting thought for sure. But if you disagree with me, that's okay too. Disagreeing about this does not affect how we follow Jesus or reach others for Jesus. If we are both wrong, it won't affect whether we go to heaven or hell. Only following Jesus determines that.

So next time you read a name in the Bible, take the time to find out what it means and consider is it a name of a specific individual human or angel, or is it a title or description. Thank you for joining me @ the PUNLA Coffee Table today, I hope you'll join us for the rest of the series What's in a Name?

If you liked the message, please share the link with a friend. Send me comments, my email should be on the screen.

Until next time @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. God bless.

