

THE ARCH-ANGEL.

This term signifies chief-messenger, and occurs but twice, Jude 9; 1 Thes. 4:16. It is never used in the plural, and altogether seems to teach that there is but the one chief-messenger of Jehovah.

While we are not directly told who is Jehovah's chief-messenger, except that his name was called Michael, the thought suggests itself, Can it be that he who was called Michael – Jehovah's chief-messenger – was none other than our Lord in his pre-human condition? He who "did not meditate a usurpation to be like God, but divested himself, taking a bondman's form, having been made in likeness of men" (Phil. 2:6,7 – Diaglott), and whom Jehovah in consequence highly exalted and gave "a name above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess to the glory of God the Father"? (Phil. 2:10,11.)

We call to mind that Jesus was called "the messenger of the covenant" (Mal. 3:1), and from what we learn of his pre-human glory (see Dec. issue, "Consider Him"), we conclude that HE must have been "chief messenger." Surely we may well reason that Jehovah's first-born, the beginning of the creation of God, would be the chief. And the thought gathers force as we remember that he was the "only begotten of the Father" – the only being whom Jehovah directly created, and in this sense the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and ending of Jehovah's creation, who "was before all things, and by whom [as Jehovah's agent] all things consist" (Col. 1:16,17), "Without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:3).

Surely chief-messenger would be a fitting title for this being. And we inquire, If he was not the chief-messenger, who was his superior?

In the above quotation (Phil. 2:6), Paul seems to suggest an inference not directly stated; that he is contrasting the course of the pre-existent Jesus with that of Satan – the rebel-angel – the chief of "those messengers which kept not their first estate." In Isa. 14:12-15 we seem to have an account of how Satan did meditate a usurpation of Jehovah's honor and power, saying in his heart, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. ...I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High."

In his pre-human condition, Jesus, as the first-born and chief-messenger, must have outranked Satan, whose rebellion must have been directed against His, as well as against Jehovah's authority. Thus Paul's language inferentially shows that the very exaltation which Satan sought by pride and rebellion, and failed to reach, is in substance obtained by the chief-messenger who humbled himself and has now been exalted to the Divine nature.

One expression in Scripture may at first sight seem to conflict with this thought that Jesus and the arch-angel are identical. It is Heb. 1:13: "But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool?" Unto none of the angels, we answer, but to Him who was superior, a chief over angels – the only begotten of the Father. Thus seen, this Scripture not only does not oppose but supports this view.

Examining the various connections in which the word is found should teach us something. We find Jude using it (vs. 9) with profound respect, as of one in superior control. In Daniel 10:13-21; 12:1, Michael is again mentioned in great respect, and as the superior of Gabriel, who himself was one of the most honored angels (Luke 1:19). Further it is significant, that in the announcement of the conception of Jesus, Gabriel was sent (Luke 1:26), a fact which can scarcely be accounted for otherwise than as we now do, by supposing that it was the chief-messenger whose existence was

transferred from being in a form of God (a spiritual being), to the babe of Bethlehem, to become a man. Doubtless the chiefest messenger remaining in the courts of glory was sent on that most marked and notable occasion.

In Dan. 12:1, the prophecy touches the Day of the Lord and its events – the very time in which we are living – the time of resurrection, etc., and instead of saying, Then shall Messiah set up his kingdom, etc., it says, "At that time shall Michael stand up [begin to exercise his power and dominion] – the GREAT PRINCE, etc." We reason that this Great Prince – Michael – Jehovah's chief-messenger, is none other than the Lord of glory, whose presence we are now proclaiming.

But the key to the whole matter seems to be in our hands when we learn that the name Michael means: "Who as God," or "Who is like God."

Who is like God but him whom God hath highly exalted and given a name above every name; who is partaker of the divine nature, and "the express image of the Father's person," of whom it is written, that "All men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father," also – "And let all the angels of God worship him"? With the meaning of the word Michael in this last text how significantly it reads: At that time shall he who is like God stand up – come into power – the Great Prince. Yes, he shall take to himself his great power and reign. (Compare Dan. 12:1,2; Rev. 11:17,18.)

Paul's mention of the Arch-angel is in harmony. "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the chief-messenger and the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise," etc.

Yes, beloved, we believe that the great chief-messenger is present, and is even now standing up or assuming control and

organizing his kingdom; hence the unrest among the kingdoms of earth, which are tottering to their fall – the voice (of command) from the chief messenger is now distinctly heard by those who have an ear to hear, hence the dissolution of present systems. "He uttered his voice, the earth melted" – symbolically. (Psa. 46:6).
