

heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God” (Acts 7:55-59;

To stand or sit at God’s right hand is to take the place of honor, dignity, and authority. Mark’s Gospel tells us that it is Jesus, not Michael, who sits at the Father’s right hand: “So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God” (16:19) See also Col 3:1; Eph 1:20; Heb 10:12; 12:2; Luke 22:96). In Heb. 1:13, we find it is the Father who says to the Son “to which of the angels has he ever said, sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool?” 1 Peter 1:22, says, [Jesus Christ] “who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him.

Saint Polycarp (69-155), Bishop of Smyrna, disciple of St. John the Apostle, and friend of St. Ignatius of Antioch, says that everything is subject to Jesus and exhorts his readers to: “believe on him who raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead and gave him glory’ and a throne on his right hand; ‘to whom he subjected all things, whether in heaven or on earth,’ whom ‘everything that breathes’ serves, who will come as ‘judge of the living and the dead”’ (*Letter to the Philippians 2: 17-20*).

The Watchtower Society also uses Hebrews 1:5-6 to support their position, “For example, to which one of the angels did he ever say: ‘You are my Son; I, today, I have become your Father? And again, “I myself shall become his father, and he himself will become my son”?’ But when he again brings his Firstborn into the inhabited

earth he says: ‘Let all God’s angels do obeisance to him.”’ (*New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, revised 1984 (NWT).

(Obeisance: a movement of the body expressing deep respect or deferential courtesy, as before a superior; a bow, curtsy, or other similar gesture [*Webster’s Third New International Dictionary*, Encyclopedia Britannica, 1976).

Both the 1961 and the 1970 editions of the *NWT*, as well as *The New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures* (1956) and *The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures*, (1969) used the word “worship” rather than “obeisance.”

(Worship: To honor or reverence as a divine being or supernatural power” (*ibid*).

The Governing Body of the Watchtower Society wants you to believe that the angels do obeisance to the sole archangel, but they know that this isn’t what the verse really says. Angels don’t worship archangels, who, after all, are simply other created creatures, and there is more than one archangel.

When the *NWT* was first printed, this verse slipped by the translating committee and effectively undercut the argument that Jesus Christ is really Michael the Archangel.

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Pamphlet 601

Is Jesus really Michael the Archangel?

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The Watchtower Society (Jehovah’s Witnesses) teach that Jesus was, and is now, Michael the Archangel.

“The name of Michael appears only five times in the Bible. The glorious spirit person who bears the name is referred to as ‘one of the chief princes,’ ‘the great prince who has charge of your [Daniel’s] people,’ and as ‘The archangel.’ (Dan. 10:13; 12:1; Jude 9. *RS*) Michael means ‘Who is like God?’ The name evidently designates Michael as the one who takes the lead in upholding Jehovah’s sovereignty and destroying God’s enemies.

“At 1 Thessalonians 4:16 (*RS*), the command of Jesus Christ for the resurrection to begin is described as ‘the archangel’s call,’ and Jude 9 says that the archangel is Michael. Would it be appropriate to liken

Jesus' commanding call to that of someone lesser in authority? Reasonably, then, the archangel Michael is Jesus Christ. (Interestingly, the expression 'archangel' is never found in the plural in the Scriptures, thus implying that there is only one.)

"Revelation 12:7-12 says that Michael and his angels would wage war against Satan and hurl him and his wicked angels out of heaven in connection with the conferring of kingly authority on Christ. Jesus is later depicted as leading the armies of heaven in war against the nations of the world. (Rev. 19:11-16) Is it not reasonable that Jesus would also be the one to take action against the one he described as 'ruler of this world,' Satan the Devil? (John 12:31) Daniel 12:1 (RS) associates the 'standing up of Michael' to act with authority with 'a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time.' That would certainly fit the experience of the nations when Christ as heavenly executioner takes action against them. So the evidence indicates that the Son of God was known as Michael before he came to earth and is known also by that name since his return to heaven where he resides as the glorified spirit Son of God." (*Reasoning from the Scriptures*, Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., 1989, p. 218).

Response:

Let it be said from the outset that there is no historical or Scriptural evidence to support the contention that Jesus was, or is, Michael the Archangel.

Angels are pure spirits created by God, probably at the same time as the visible creation. The word *angel* means a messenger and is sometimes used of a human person who acts as a messenger (e.g., Is. 18:2; 33:7). But normally the word is used in the English Bible only of those pure spirits who act as divine messengers. Thus God sends angels to announce His will, to correct, punish, teach, rebuke, console (Ps. 102:20; Matt. 4:11; 13:49; 26:53). The mission and apparition of angels is constantly mentioned in Scripture. Different grades or choirs are named: Seraphim (Is. 6:2, 6); Cherubim (Gen. 3:24; Sirach. 49:10; Ez. 10:1-22); Thrones (Col. 1:16); Dominations (Col. 1:16); Virtues (1 Pet. 3:22); Powers (Col. 1:16; 1 Pet. 3:22); Principalities (Col. 1:16); Archangels (1 Thess. 4:16); and Angels.

Archangels are those in the eighth of the nine orders or choirs of angels. They are so called because they are sent on important missions by God. In the Bible three archangels are named: Michael, who, at the head of the good angels, fought Lucifer and his companions (Dan. 10:13-21; Jude 1:9; Rev. 12:7); Raphael, who guided the young Tobias (Tob. 3:25); and Gabriel, who was sent to Daniel, Zachary, and Mary (Dan. 8:16; 9:21; Luke 1:19-26).

In the Book of Tobit, the Archangel Raphael reveals himself to Tobit and his son

Tobias: "I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels who present the prayers of the saints and enter into the presence of the glory of the Holy One" (12:15). Although only three archangels are named in the Bible, apparently, there are seven. Apocryphal Jewish literature, such as the Book of Enoch, supply those of Uriel and Jeremiel, while many are found in other apocryphal sources, like those Milton names in "Paradise Lost".

Gabriel means "Power of God"; Raphael means "God heals". The name Michael means "who is like God?" (this is a question, not a statement); it is like a war cry against those rebellious angels who refused to serve. Most of us think of Michael only as the one who overcame Satan, as Saint John describes him in the Apocalypse (12:7). Saint John also sees him as defender of the Church. Michael is mentioned by the prophet Daniel as one of the chiefs of the heavenly hosts and the guardian of the people of both covenants, the Hebrew people and the Church Militant. Michael, is styled "*one of the princes*" (Daniel 10:13). Both the liturgy and popular devotion call upon Michael the Archangel. His intercession is asked for at the incensing in solemn Mass, in the prayers for the dying, in the Confiteor, and in the prayer after Mass beginning "Saint Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle." He is also specially invoked as the protector of soldiers.

Saint Stephen, just prior to his death had a vision of Jesus: "But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; and he said, 'Behold, I see the