

# St. Michael and All Angels

## FIGHTING FOR GOD?

Luke 10:17-20

## St. Michael and All Angels

### Analysis by Peter Keyel

17 The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, in your name even the demons submit to us!" 18 He said to them, "I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning. 19 See, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing will hurt you. 20 Nevertheless, do not rejoice at this, that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

*(Author's Note: Interpretations of Rev 12:7-9 involve Archangel Michael tossing Lucifer/Satan's defeated rear-end out of heaven following a failed rebellion against God. Jude 1:9 also refers to St. Michael and Lucifer's contests. This is also consistent with his presence in Daniel as protector of God's Chosen people.)*

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## DIAGNOSIS: Isn't St. Michael a Great Model for How We Should Live?

**Step 1: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem) :** *Authority over the Enemy*

Authority over the enemy is something we all want, no matter who that enemy is. Foreign nations, rivals in our companies, we all want control over our lives, if not others'. How else do we help people stand firm against evil? We have great examples like St.

Michael the Archangel. Stay loyal to God, do what is right, fight evil and you get the fame of throwing Satan out of heaven. With St. Michael as our helper, we can stand up to evil and cast it out of our church, home, and life. Isn't it great how the 70 follow in this tradition? Let's follow them and get out and tread all over those snakes and scorpions in our lives!

### **Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem) : *Authority Abused***

The problem is that snakes and scorpions were created by God and play an important role in our world. Even the figurative snakes and scorpions were created by God just as much as we are. In standing up to evil, we not only destroy God's creation, but we have to be able to identify evil to isolate it and stop it. This requires our knowledge of good and evil. That same knowledge we defied God to obtain. If it's our knowledge of good and evil, it ceases to be God's knowledge of good and evil.

### **Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem) : *Fallen from Heaven***

Michael's name means "Who is like God?" This is in fact the problem. In seizing knowledge of good and evil, even with the intent of destroying the evildoers, we are claiming that we are like God. We are not. Is it any wonder how so many of our projects to "do good" in the world end up doing more harm than good? If we are against God, St. Michael is throwing our sorry rear-ends out of heaven along with Satan.

## **Prognosis: Isn't It Great that Jesus Gives Us Life?**

### **Step 4: Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution) : *Names Written in Heaven***

Along with being Destroyer-in-Chief of hell's minions, another one of St. Michael's roles is carrying the departed souls of the recently dead. To these souls, he gives one last chance for them to save themselves to further stymie Lucifer. Yet, we have a promise greater than one last-ditch chance at saving ourselves (and if it is God against us, how exactly is loyal St. Michael

going to be saving us?). Jesus assures us that our names are written in heaven. This does not come because the demons submitted to us, or because we followed St. Michael's (or even Jesus's) example. This comes directly from Jesus, who is God. Unlike St. Michael, though, Jesus demonstrates this authority not in a climactic showdown against hell's army, but when he is nailed to a cross, condemned and executed as one more criminal. That Jesus is God is seen in the resurrection, and it is this God who assures us that our names are written in heaven solely because of who God is.

#### **Step 5: Advanced Prognosis (Internal Solution) : Service Restored**

Rejoicing that our names are written in heaven is not about exercising knowledge of good and evil and trampling our enemies, but trusting God's promise that "nothing will hurt you." We trust, along with St. Paul, that nothing can sever that tie God has given us in Christ... not life, death, angels or anything else. We no longer require our own knowledge of good and evil to stop evil. We have God's Word that our names are written in heaven, and just as Jesus assures us of this promise, so we can now trust that it is for all-the snakes and scorpions are not enemies, but God's loved children.

#### **Step 6: Final Prognosis (External Solution) : Service to Enemies**

Trust in this promise leads to strange things. We no longer need to seek authority over the demons, as it is Jesus' name to which they will submit. Free of depending on our knowledge of good and evil and our need for authority to stand against our enemies, we can tell all how Jesus has redeemed us. How we have been turned from the Satans and demons who were cast out of heaven, and toward the 70, now sent out to heal and proclaim God's healing promise. Instead of trampling our enemies under foot, we love them. We forgive them. We show them that their names, too, are written in heaven by Jesus.