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# Michael as Christ in the Lutheran Exegetical Tradition: An Analysis

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> And war broke out in heaven, Michael and his angels, waging war with the Dragon, and the Dragon and his angels waged war, but he was not able nor was place found for them any longer in heaven. And the great Dragon was cast out, the Serpent of old, who is called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world—he was cast down to earth and his angels were cast out with him. (Revelation 12:7–9)

The identification of Michael as Christ in Revelation 12:7 has a long history in the Lutheran exegetical tradition. Both Luther and Melanchthon make the identification and the Lutheran exegetes of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries follow suit with apparent unanimity.[1] But why? Given that many church fathers identified him as a created angel,[2] one would expect that there would be more disagreement amongst Lutheran exegetes. More than this, the identification appears to be problematic, since Michael's appearance in Daniel 10 lists him as one of the other leaders in Israel and seems clearly to distinguish him from the manlike figure who appears at the beginning of the chapter and who is to be identified with the pre-incarnate Christ.[3] Moreover, we see near unanimous agreement

[1] For Luther's sermon dealing with Michael, see his *Predigt am Michaelistage* (September 29, 1544), in Martin Luther, *Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe* [Schriften], 65 vols. (Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1883–1993), 49:570–587 (hereafter WA). For Melanchthon, see *In Danielem Prophetam Commentarius* (Basel: Bartholomaeus Westheimer, 1543), esp. 148. I have not been able to find a single Lutheran exegete of Reformation or Post-Reformation times who says that the Michael of Revelation 12 is not Christ. In his posthumously published notes on Jude, John Gerhard (or Gerhard's son who edited the notes) calls it the opinion of the "orthodox," by which he means, the Lutherans. See John Gerhard, *Annotationes Posthumae in Epistolam Judae* (Jena: George Sengenwald, 1660), 29.

[2] See, for example, the quotation of Primasius in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Revelation*, ed. William C. Weinrich (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 186.

[3] For the man appearing to Daniel as the Divine Man in Daniel 10–12, see Andrew E. Steinmann, *Daniel* (St. Louis: CPH, 2008), esp. 496–507; cf. Louis Hartman and Alexander Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel*, The Anchor Bible (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1978), esp. 279–280.

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even among Lutherans that the Michael of Jude 9 is a created archangel.[4] Why this insistence that the Michael of Revelation 12 is Christ? Were later Lutheran exegetes simply following the opinion of Luther and Melanchthon, the two great fathers of the Reformation? Or was their identification of Michael with Christ in Revelation 12 due to other factors? In the Lutheran exegetical tradition as it relates to Michael's identity in Daniel, Jude, and Revelation, there were several factors that contributed to the identification of Michael as Son of God by the Lutheran exegetes of Reformation and Post-Reformation times.

After the sixteenth century, there are few references to Luther as an authority on this question in the Lutheran exegetes.[5] But his arguments for reading Michael as Christ in Revelation 12 are quite consistently repeated by later Lutherans, as we shall see. So while it is certainly true that Luther started a strong tradition of interpretation among Lutherans in identifying Michael as Christ, we must also note that the later Lutherans followed Luther on this issue not merely because of his authority as Reformer, but rather because they were convinced by his exegetical arguments, upon which they built and developed further. Theirs was not a slavish mimicry but a reasoned conclusion that Luther's explanation of Revelation 12 fits best with the context of Revelation and Scripture as a whole.

In fact, the considerations and issues that drove Luther and Melanchthon to identify Michael as Christ remained issues also for later Lutheran interpreters. The theological concern and interpretative decision that drives most identification of Michael as Christ is located not merely in the meaning of Michael's name in Hebrew and Aramaic: "Who is like God?" Although many exegetes, including Luther and Melanchthon, do cite the name of Michael as an indication of his divinity, most of these same interpreters, Luther included, find no problem with speaking of two Michaels, one a created angel who appears either in Daniel 10 or Jude 9, and the other the Son of God who appears in Daniel 12 and Revelation 12. In fact, Luther and some later Lutherans frankly admit that "Michael" is an

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[4] An exception is the disputation held under Sebastian Schmidt by M. J. Ulrich Geissler, *Epistola D. Iudae Apostoli Catholica*, (Strassburg: Johann Pastorius, 1695), 18, 26–27, where Michael is argued to be Christ consistently in Daniel, Jude, and Revelation.

[5] The sixteenth century commentary of Selnecker, however, cites Luther extensively. Nikolaus Selnecker, *Der Prophet Daniel und die Offenbarung Johannis* (Leipzig: Jacob Berwaldt, 1567), passim. The later Lutherans cite the Fathers frequently and Luther only infrequently. See John Gerhard, *Adnotationes in Apocalypsin D. Johannis Theologi* (Jena: Johann Ludwig Neuenhahn, 1665), 101–102; Abraham Calov, *Biblia Novi Testamenti Illustrata* (Dresden and Leipzig: Johann Christoph Zimmermann, 1719), 1837–1838.

angel's name.[6] For Luther and others, the meaning of Michael's name could not have been decisive in identifying Michael with Christ in Revelation 12:7. Nor is the primary reason for identifying Michael as Son of God the fact that Michael is given very high honors as chief over the angels, though this again is an important consideration for most. Nor is the opinion of some venerable church fathers on this issue the reason for their insistence that the Michael of Revelation 12 is Christ himself, though this again is often mentioned and is considered important by most Lutheran exegetes.[7] Rather, the primary reason for the Lutheran insistence on Michael's identification with Christ lies in the nature of the battle that Michael wages. What does it mean that Michael casts Satan out of heaven (Revelation 12)? What does it mean that Michael fights against God's enemies in the last days (Daniel 12)? The Reformation and Post-Reformation Lutheran exegetical tradition is unanimous in its answer: it means that Christ conquers false teaching and false teachers through his word. The battle between Michael (Christ) and Satan pictured in Revelation 12 and Daniel 12 is not a one-time occurrence, but a continual battle, as Christ through his word conquers false teachers and false teaching, and every force, physical and spiritual, that militates against his word. A created angel simply cannot do this. It is God who works through his word and also God who works through angels.[8] Thus it was their understanding of Michael's work that led Lutheran exegetes to identify him with Christ, and to insist vehemently on this designation.

It is hard to disconnect this conviction that the battle of Revelation 12 centers around the victory of God's saving gospel against heresy in the church from the polemical context of Luther, Melanchthon, and their heirs. The polemical context is quite clear with Luther. Since he views Michael in Daniel 10 and 12 and Revelation 12 as Christ, Luther can preach Revelation 12 as Christ himself fighting against the devil and those false teachers who manifest him in the world. More than this, if Michael is Christ, then Christ is the Christian's *Feldheubtman, (the commander of the battlefield),* the one who fights for us. Thus Christians must not hope for peace against their

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[6] See Selnecker, *Der Prophet Daniel*, at Rev. 12:7: "*Wiewol Michael eines Engels name ist (spricht Lutherus in der Vorrede uber Danielem), doch verstehen wir hie den Herren Christum selbst*." "Although Michael is an angel's name (as Luther says in his preface to Daniel), we understand him here as Christ himself." On "Michael" as an angel's name, see also below.

[7] See note 5 for examples.

[8] See especially Calov, *Biblia Veteris Testamenti Illustrata* (Frankfurt am Main: Balthasar Christoph Wustius, 1672), 626, who argues that in Daniel 8:15–18 the Son of God (later identified with Michael) uses Gabriel to appear to Daniel and puts his words in Gabriel's mouth.

spiritual foes, but must consider themselves *Kriegsleute* (people of war). The war Michael wages, after all, is in the church. And Michael's and the church's enemies are the Anabaptists, the Sacramentarians, the Pope, and the Turk.[9] In Luther's mind, the interpretation of Michael as Christ makes Michael's war immediately applicable to the present problems of the church, and, besides this, it is certainly rhetorically effective. We find this same application in Melanchthon, who pictures Michael's fight against the enemies of the church in Daniel 10 and 12 as a fight against the Pope and the Turks.[10] John Conrad Dannhauer likewise relates the battle in heaven in Revelation 12 to a fight within the church, but goes further by asserting that it is Luther's fight with the Antichrist, seeing Michael as Christ accomplishing his will through Luther.[11]

John Gerhard notes that Christ has waged this battle throughout history, and quotes several church fathers who confessed likewise. Whether against Nero or Simon the Magician (Acts 8), Christ prevailed through his word and through preachers of it (the Apostles and their successors) against the devil and the heathenism and false worship he inspired.[12] Thus the battle in Revelation 12 and Daniel 12 extends to all faithful preachers through whom Christ continues to cast Satan out of heaven, that is, to reveal him as the liar he is through the preaching of the pure word of God.[13] So also Victorin Strigel, a devoted disciple of Philipp Melanchthon, connects Michael's (Christ's) battle against Satan with Jesus' promise to his disciples in Matthew 28:20, "Behold, I am with you always to the end of the age." That is, he is with his church in his word, by which he fights together with his angels (both heavenly beings and teachers of the church) against the lies and heresies of the devil.[14]

The Lutheran polemic is also closely associated with a desire to locate the climax of the battle fought by Michael in Daniel 12 and Revelation 12 in Reformation times. Well known is Luther's and his associates' belief that the world would quickly come to an end. And since Michael is to appear at

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[9] Luther, *Predigt am Michaelistage*, 578–579.

[10] Melanchthon, *In Danielem Prophetam Commentarius*, 149.

[11] Cited in Calov, *Biblia Novi Testamenti Illustrata*, 1838.

[12] It is interesting to note that Abraham Calov, *Biblia Novi Testamenti Illustrata*, 1837 vehemently condemns Hugo Grotius for interpreting the dragon as representing Simon the Magician, despite that fact that Gerhard cites this opinion as a valid application of the text.

[13] Gerhard, *Adnotationes in Apocalypsin*, 102.

[14] Victorin Strigel, *Hypomnemata In Omnes Libros Novi Testamenti* (Leipzig: Ernst Vögelin, 1566), 345.

the end according to Daniel 12, the identification of Michael's battle also as the historical battle against Pope, Turk, and other enemies of Lutheranism seemed a natural application of the text. Since Christ works through his word, through teachers who preach his word, Michael's identification as Christ goes well with an ecclesiological interpretation of the cosmic battle fought by Michael in Revelation 12 (Pope and false teachers) and the earthly battle he fought in Daniel 12 (Turk and Pope).

This polemical context continues through the seventeenth century. Abraham Calov's identification of Michael as Christ in Revelation 12 is polemical by nature, since Calov's great *Biblia Illustrata* is a reply and rebuttal to the pre-modern liberal and syncretist, Hugo Grotius, who identifies Michael as a created angel. Calov responds by calling him, along with a host of Roman Catholic commentators, as well as Philipp Melanchthon himself, an "angelolater" (a worshiper of angels).[15] Since this angel is given an *epinikion* (victory song) and because he is credited with casting Satan out of heaven, to call him a created angel is to attribute divinity to him. Calov makes clear that he considers Michael to be Christ, and that Christ wages his war with Satan and his angels by sending preachers of the word to defend his church against the fiery attacks of Satan, made manifest by false teaching and physical persecution.[16] Satan's power is in lying and accusing. Through the preaching of the truth, especially the Gospel that forgives sins, Satan's power to accuse is destroyed and his lies are revealed for what they are. As Paul states, "Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies" (Rom 8:33). By the preaching of the gospel, Michael and his ministers silence the only power Satan has left, the power of slander and accusation.

How can this heavenly battle in Revelation 12 be interpreted as the battle fought on earth? John Winckelmann gives a concise answer to this question, stating that John saw the battle in a heavenly vision and that, moreover, the church is the very kingdom of heaven on earth.[17] The battle pictured in Revelation is a vision, and like the rest of Revelation, these visions are not to be interpreted as literal occurrences. Rather, God accomplishes on earth what is pictured in heaven, where Satan holds no literal place. Luther himself rejects the idea that Satan or even his accusations

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[15] Since Melanchthon identifies Michael with Christ in his 1543 Daniel Commentary, it is hard to explain why his name is listed with such Roman Catholics as Bellarmine and Cornelius à Lapide.

[16] Calov, *Biblia Novi Testamenti Illustrata*, 1837–1838.

[17] Aegidius Hunnius and John Winckelmann, *Thesaurus Apostolicus Complectens Commentarios in omnes Novi Testamenti Epistolas Et Apocalypsin Iohannis* (Wittenberg: Meyer and Zimmerman, 1705), 1245.

could be thrown out of a literal heaven at any time other than before the fall into sin. Since the fall of Satan, war is not waged in heaven, but on earth, where the church is.[18] Victorin Strigel even makes the claim that "heaven" in Revelation always signifies the church, and that it is only natural to take it as the church here in Revelation 12.[19]

But some Lutheran commentators are aware of the difficulty in simply identifying Michael with Christ. This is seen especially in several Lutheran commentators distinguishing the Michael of Daniel 10 or Jude 9 from the Michael of Daniel 12 and Revelation 12. As mentioned previously, there is a problem with identifying the Michael of Daniel 10 with the Son of God. In fact, when Revelation 1:13–16 first introduces Christ, it describes him with the same characteristics as those that are attributed to the Man who appears to Daniel (10:5–6). This includes a description of his golden belt or sash, his eyes as flames of fire, his feet/legs like brass, a face like the sun or like lightning, and a mighty voice.[20] The identification of this Man as the Son of God is affirmed both by Revelation and the context of Daniel 7:13–14, where the Messiah is clearly referenced and described as "one like a son of man." In Daniel 10, the one who appears to Daniel is described similarly to the one who is clearly identified in Daniel 7 as the Son of God, and the description of Christ in Revelation 1:13–16 draws from both Daniel 7 and Daniel 10 to picture him. Clearly John identifies the "one like a son of man" in Daniel 7 and the "man clothed in linen" of Daniel 10, and identifies them as one man, Christ.[21] In fact, the Lutheran interpreters from the period of Orthodoxy all acknowledge this much. All agree that the Man who appears to Daniel in Daniel 10:5–6 is no one but the Son of God.[22] The Lutherans were, of course, eager to see that the Old Testament pictured the Son of God as constantly present to his church. They saw the Son

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[18] Luther, *Predigt am Michaelistage*, 574–576: "*Diabolus ab initio mundi ist ex caelo heraus gefallen. Er hat uns ex paradiso auch gerissen per suum casum. In coelo ergo supra non est Diabolus, pugna, proelium*." "The devil has fallen from heaven from the beginning of the world, and through his fall he has torn us also from paradise. In heaven above there is therefore no devil, no fight, no battle."

[19] Cf. Strigel, *Hypomnemata*, 345: "In this book, heaven is universally (*universaliter*) used to designate the Church, which is truly the kingdom of the heavens." So also Selnecker, *Der Prophet Daniel*, at Rev. 11:19: "*Der Himmel ist allhie nicht anders, den das Reich Christi hie auf Erden*." "Heaven is nothing else in this passage than the Kingdom of Christ here on earth."

[20] See the helpful chart comparing Daniel 10, Ezekiel 1, and Revelation 1 in Steinmann, *Daniel*, 499. See also Hartman and Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel*, 279–280.

[21] Cf. Steinmann, *Daniel*, 357; Louis A. Brighton, *Revelation* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 49–50.

[22] See especially Calov, *Biblia Veteris Testamenti Illustrata*, 672–673.

of God appearing in angelic form to Abraham, to Jacob, and to others. Melanchthon makes this one of his main proofs for understanding Michael as the Son of God—because Christ is always present, even in the Old Testament, fighting for his church.[23] But this is precisely the problem with identifying Michael as the Son of God in Daniel 10. The problem is that this Man of Daniel 10 is the very one who speaks about Michael as a separate and lower being in the following verses. How could this same messenger, identified already in Daniel 7 as the pre-incarnate Christ, be speaking of Michael as a separate being if Michael were the pre-incarnate Christ himself?

Lutheran interpreters like Winckelmann and Dannhauer saw this problem. But instead of concluding that Michael cannot in fact be the Son of God, they distinguished two different Michaels. The Michael of Daniel 10, it is claimed, must be a created angel, but other occurrences of Michael, they argue, are appearances of Christ.[24] The same view is approved as a valid interpretation by John Pappus.[25] But it seems that the Michael identified as a "chief prince" in Daniel 10 should be identified with the Michael who is mentioned as the "great prince" in Daniel 12.[26]

Others, like Pappus and Calov, see no real problem in identifying the Man who appears in Daniel 10:5–6 and the Michael who is spoken of later in this chapter as the same Messiah. In fact, Calov finds the identification to be suggested by the context. After the appearance of the divine Man in Daniel 10:5–6, Daniel falls into a deep sleep. He awakes to the touch of a hand. Calov sees this as the hand of Gabriel, and points to Daniel 8:15–18 as a parallel. And the parallel is quite striking. In Daniel 8:15 Gabriel appears to Daniel with "the appearance of a man," when suddenly a man's voice comes and commands Gabriel to explain a vision to Daniel. Then in v. 18, this same Gabriel touches Daniel, awaking him from a deep sleep and standing him on his feet. Calov sees the parallel language in Daniel 10 as signifying that it is Gabriel who is waking Daniel again and again explaining a vision to him—this time the vision of the Son of God in vv. 5–

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[23] Melanchthon, *In Danielem Prophetam Commentarius*, 147–150.

[24] Hunnius and Winckelmann, *Thesaurus Apostolicus*, 1245; John Conrad Dannhauer, *De Custodia Angelica* (Strasbourg: Johann Mülbius, 1641), 34.

[25] John Pappus, *In Omnes Prophetas* (Frankfurt am Main: Johann Spiessius, 1593), 235–236. Pappus mentions the opinion of other interpreters who try to solve the problem that Daniel 10 poses for interpreting Michael as Christ by arguing that the divine man who appears to Daniel in 10:5–6 disappears and is replaced by a created angel, who talks about Michael (the very Man who had just appeared to Daniel). This is Calov's opinion, as noted below.

[26] This problem is handled more fully below in dealing with Jude.

6. Just as Gabriel's hand touched Daniel and stood him up in Daniel 8:18, so now the reader is to understand that it is Gabriel who touches Daniel and makes him stand up in Daniel 10:10–11. Further, just as Gabriel was described in Daniel 8:15 as having the appearance of a man, so we are to understand that it is Gabriel here in Daniel 10:16 who is described as having the likeness of the son of man. Just as Gabriel explained a vision to Daniel in Daniel 8, so we are now to understand that it is Gabriel explaining this vision.[27]

The difficulty in this position is the change of person without explicitly introducing a new subject. But Calov is convinced that the parallel with Daniel 8 suffices to show the reader that a new subject, Gabriel, has appeared. It should be noted, however, that even if Calov is correct in his interpretation of Daniel 10 here, this does not mean that Michael is *eo ipso* the divine Man of 10:5–6. Rather it means only that the divine Man disappears after appearing to Daniel. Calov still has to prove that the Michael spoken of by the messenger in Daniel 10:13 should be identified with the divine Man in 10:5–6. What of the fact that Michael is here in Daniel 10:13 called "one of the chief princes"? Calov explains that "one" can often signify "first," so that this phrasing (especially in analogy to Michael's epithet of the "great prince" in Daniel 12:1) would designate Michael as chief over the chiefs.[28] Thus Calov interprets Daniel 10:13 in light of Daniel 12:1, where he sees Michael doing the work that Calov believes belongs to God.

Here in Calov we have probably the strongest and most contextually defensible argument for taking Michael as Christ in Daniel 10 and 12 and Revelation 12. It does, however, involve what most would consider an awkward switch of subject, with no explicit indication to the reader that the divine Man has left and Gabriel has arrived. But this is certainly a more acceptable position than denying that Michael is Christ in Daniel 10 only to confess that he is Christ in Daniel 12.

But though Calov is insistent in his commentary on Daniel and Revelation that Michael is the uncreated Angel, God himself, he finds the Michael of Jude 9 to be "in the number of the created angels."[29] Calov cannot see the Son of God in his glory speaking to Satan in the way

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[27] Calov, *Biblia Veteris Testamenti Illustrata*, 626, 674. Modern scholars have also argued that because of the parallel with Gabriel in Daniel 8, the interlocutor in Daniel 10 must also be Gabriel, though they would then identify the man in 10:5–6 also as Gabriel, not the divine Man. Cf. Hartman and Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel*, 279.

[28] Calov, *Biblia Veteris Testamenti Illustrata*, 674.

[29] Calov, *Biblia Novi Testamenti Illustrata*, 1699.

Michael the Archangel speaks to Satan in Jude 9: "The Lord rebuke you." This was the position of most Lutherans.[30] Luther, Gerhard, Calov, Pomarius, and the majority of Lutheran commentators find no problem with taking Michael as a created archangel in Jude and yet asserting that Michael is the Son of God in other occurrences.[31] Jude, of course, presents its own problems for those who contend that Michael is the Son of God. The Michael of Jude opposes Satan not as if he were God but as being unable to speak as God. This, as Pomarius asserts, is unworthy of Christ, who is not afraid to say even in his humiliation to Peter, a mere mortal, "Get behind me, Satan."[32] While Luther does not attempt to reconcile his taking Michael as a created angel in one book of Scripture while claiming him as Christ in others,[33] Calov's, Gerhard's, and Pomarius' distinction between Michaels is colored by a polemic against the ecclesiology and Christology of Roman Catholics and Calvinists, as their commentaries make clear. They give no explanation of their inconsistent appellation except to state that the identification of Michael in Jude does not need to accord with his identification as Christ in other Scriptural passages. So they are willing to live with the inconsistency, and simply restate that the work of Michael in Daniel and Revelation marks him as Christ.

Luther and the Lutheran exegetes are not vitiating the unity of Scripture. They are not suggesting that Revelation and Daniel or Jude come out of different traditions, so that the same Michael can be viewed as a created angel in Jude or Daniel 10 and as the Son of God in Revelation and Daniel 12. Rather, they are suggesting that Michael is a name given both to a created angel and to Christ. As mentioned previously, this invalidates any argument that the meaning of Michael ("Who is like God?") demands his divinity. But is not the thought of two Michaels problematic when a better option seems obvious—that there is only one Michael and he is a created angel? This was the opinion of most Roman Catholic exegetes, who mock-

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[30] It should be noted that there is precedent for the Lord himself speaking, "The Lord rebuke you!" to Satan in Zechariah 3:2, "And the Lord God said to Satan, 'The Lord rebuke you, Satan!'" The issue for Calov and others is not the words of the rebuke itself but the context of Michael speaking it in Jude. Schmidt is open to the interpretation of Michael being a created angel in Jude, but sees no problem with identifying the Michael of Jude with Jesus. See note 4 above.

[31] Martin Luther, *The Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude Preached and Explained By Martin Luther*, trans. and ed. by John Lenker (Minneapolis: Lutherans in All Lands Co., 1904), 373–374.

[32] Samuel Pomarius, *Plenus Et Perspicuus In Epistolam S. Judae Catholicam Commentarius* (Wittenberg: August Brüningius, 1684), 255–256.

[33] Luther's sermon was delivered more than two decades after his notes on Jude.

ed the Lutherans for what they saw as a clear and laughable inconsistency.[34]

But this phenomenon of two Michaels in the Lutheran tradition shows that, for Lutheran minds, paramount in assessing the identity of Michael is not his name or the honor given to him, nor the opinion of church fathers, but his actions—even if this means dealing with the inconsistency of having two Michaels in Scripture. It is primarily because Michael is leading a war against Satan, against his false teachers, and protecting the church on earth that he is identified as the Son of God in Daniel and Revelation. But since he is acting and speaking like a subordinate creature in Jude 9, there he cannot be the Son of God.

With this brief analysis of the Lutheran exegetical tradition concerning the identity of Michael, it becomes clear that if we wish to adopt the opinion of Luther and the Lutheran tradition on the identity of Michael as Christ, we must take into account the exegetical and theological reasons for this identification. In fact, since the identification of Michael depends not on his name but on the work that he does, it follows that to affirm Michael as Christ in Jude vitiates the very exegetical principle that establishes Michael as Christ in Daniel and Revelation. The Michael of Jude does not act and do as Christ does.[35] The argument from Michael's name to the divinity of Michael cannot then be used. We would then have to live with the seemingly bizarre coincidence of having two Michaels, one God and one a created angel, in Scripture. Most Lutherans, as we have seen, were happy to live with this. Are we?

There is, of course, an exegetical alternative, and that is to interpret Michael as one created angel, like Gabriel, who appears in Daniel, Jude, and Revelation at the Lord's bidding. His work is that of an angel, carrying out the work of God; he is not the Son of God, working through his word to preserve his church. This interpretation has been set forth by many. Charles Gieschen, for example, argues that Michael is a created angel whose actions are at the bidding and by the power of the Lamb, who made atonement for sin once and for all and thereby silenced Satan's accusations against the children of God in heaven, so that Michael was commanded to cast Satan and his accusations forever out of heaven, from the court of

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[34] See Gerhard, *Annotationes in Epistolam Judae*, 29. The Jesuits John Lorinus and Jacob Gretser call the Lutherans "delirious innovators" for their inconsistency, and speak of their position as "unheard of."

[35] This is, again, the majority position. But Schmidt, *Epistola D. Iudae*, 18, 26–27 argues that Zechariah 3:2 shows that the Michael of Jude is not acting in a way inconsistent with divine character.

God.[36] Thus the vision of Revelation 12 would be an image representing the objective result of Christ's atonement (reconciliation with God and justification) instead of an image of Christ fighting with his word in the church.

In concluding, the Lutheran insistence that both Old Testament and New Testament present Christ to the reader as constantly present to defend his church is most definitely comforting and correct, as is the insistence that Christ does this through his Word. The traditional Lutheran interpretation of Michael's identity in Revelation 12, though it suffers from apparent inconsistency in relation to Jude and Daniel 10, seeks to be true to this reality.

[36] Charles A. Gieschen, "The Identity of Michael in Revelation 12: Created Angel or the Son of God?" *CTQ* 74 (2010), 174.