

# The Checkered History of the Watchtower Michael

By Lorri MacGregor

The Watchtower Society of Jehovah's Witnesses has played theological Ping-Pong with the Archangel Michael throughout its history. We ask, "Who is Michael?"

We'll begin with *Zion's Watchtower and Herald of Christ's Presence*, their official magazine of doctrine, 1879, page 48, which is teaching on Jesus Christ: "...His position is contrasted with that of men and angels, as he is Lord of both, having 'all power in heaven and earth.' Hence it is said, 'Let all the angels of God worship him' [that must include Michael, the chief angel, hence Michael is not the Son of God; and the reason is,] because he has 'by inheritance obtained a more excellent Name than they.' Michael or Gabriel are perhaps grander names than Jesus, though Jesus is grand in its very simplicity, but the official character of the Son of God as Saviour and King is the inheritance from his Father which is far superior to theirs, for it pleased the Father that in him all fullness should dwell. He has given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow both in heaven and earth. And there is 'none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.'" (emphasis by Watchtower)

This Writer would be disfellowshipped today for the worst kind of heresy! Oops! The Writer is none other than Charles Taze Russell, the founder of the Watch Tower Society! No doubt he would turn over in his grave, as today's teaching by his Society identify Jesus Christ as Michael the Archangel, while Russell says Jesus is not an angel. Furthermore in today's theology, Jesus Christ is identified by the Society as being the son of God (and also Michael the Archangel). Russell plainly says, "Michael is not the son of God." Never mind these glaring differences, "new light" was again to fall on the unfortunate Michael.

Fast forward to the *Watchtower* magazine of March 1883, on page 4, where the writer, Russell again, appears to conform to fundamental Christian doctrine, albeit briefly: "Jesus, before he became a man, was a spiritual being, of a nature superior to angels, because when he was about to humble himself and lay aside his glory to become man's ransom, 'he took not on him the nature of angels' but came still lower, and 'was found in fashion as a man'."

Here we have Jesus laying aside His glory to become a man to ransom us all. Russell was right when he pointed out that Jesus has "a nature superior to angels," and also observes "he took not on him the nature of angels." He would again be disfellowshipped for heresy today for these statements.

Pastor Charles Taze Russell, "the faithful and discreet slave" of the Watchtower organization passed away, and "Judge" Rutherford seized the reins of the Society, supposedly publishing the last of Russell's books, *The Finished Mystery*. In the 1926 printing of this book, we find this surprising teaching on Michael, specifically that he had somehow morphed into "the Pope" (of Rome), and "his angels" are the "bishops." Here's the exact quote: "A thousand two hundred and threescore days—1260 years, from A.D. 539 to 1799.—Rev. 11:2,3. 12:7. And there was war in heaven. —Between the two ecclesiastical powers, Pagan Rome and Papal Rome. Michael, —"Who as God," the Pope. —B275; C62. And his angels. —The Bishops."

No wonder this weird teaching got quietly dropped—it's really on the "far side" of biblical misinterpretation. Poor Michael was in for yet another change!

In time, Michael eventually progressed to the current Watchtower view, namely that he is none other than Jesus Christ, both before and after his resurrection. Their official doctrinal book, *Reasoning From the Scriptures*, on page 218 says this: "...So the evidence indicated 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."

What can we say about all this doctrinal flip-flopping? This is a serious matter. Jesus Christ is our Savior. If we have the right Jesus Christ we are right for all eternity. If we have the wrong Jesus Christ we are wrong for all eternity. Jehovah's Witnesses have the wrong Jesus Christ. Also, the Archangel Michael is none other than the Archangel Michael, nothing more, nothing less. Why not believe the Bible as it is written?

We suggest you print out this article, hand it to the next Jehovah's Witness you encounter, and ask them to explain to you how their "truth" changed Michael from being an angel, who was not the son of God, into the Pope of Rome, and then into the Son of God, becoming Jesus Christ Himself! Quite a feat of biblical misinterpretation! Should Jehovah's Witnesses really be trusting in an organization who can't trust Jesus Christ to be who He really is, Truly God, Truly Man, and certainly, never an angel!