

2. We have the introduction here of Michael, the archangel, which is also a rare occurrence in Scripture. There is only one archangel named in scripture – Michael.
3. There is a unique contention between a former elect angel and Michael, the archangel. (What we see here is part of the angelic conflict, a direct confrontation between Satan and probably the most powerful of angels that are still part of the elect angel category.)
4. Although Michael disputes Satan over Moses' body, I think it's very curious that he has nothing bad to say about Satan. In fact, it says even when he disputed, he dared not bring any accusation against him.
5. It can be inferred here that Michael is authority-oriented. He is following the Lord who rebukes Satan, not Michael. So, even though he is in a tussle with Satan, he says nothing. It's up to the Lord to do the rebuking.
6. Even though Michael is a powerful angel (how powerful we're not totally certain), there is no doubt he is at the top of the hierarchy. He will never override or usurp the power of God by personally condemning Satan. He will not, in all of his glory and power, shove God aside, as in Matthew 25:41. Michael stuck to the job that God gave him in contending over the body of Moses.
7. The angelic authority-orientation is a lesson for all of us in obeying God's Word and sticking to His plan. These powerful creatures always bow to God's will. (Shouldn't we? Who are we to deviate? We do all the time don't we?)
8. All judgment is the prerogative of God, and God has already judged Satan and his fallen angels. Why does Michael need to add to that? (There is no need to do that, so he doesn't.)
9. It is not up to Michael to intercede in God's judgment. He will just go into this debate as instructed, to retain the body of Moses.

The bottom line here that we should remember is that this archangel explicitly followed the orders of God in contending with the devil for Moses' body. This is an example of authority-orientation to divine instruction. And Michael had that instruction directly from God.

We have instruction in the Scripture. We must know that instruction in order to obey the Lord and be authority-oriented ourselves.

Quickly, let's get some background information on Moses.

There is only one mention of Moses' death in the Bible and it's found in Deuteronomy 34:5-7.

We know, even though Numbers 12:3 says, "Now the man Moses was very humble, more than any person who was on the face of the earth," that Moses had a temper. He killed a man, but, ultimately, he misrepresented God when he struck the rock at Kadesh instead of speaking to the rock as God ordered. Numbers 20:1-13

But now we need to see what actually happened to Moses after he died.

Deuteronomy 34:6: “and He, God, buried Moses in the valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth Peor. But no man knows his burial place to this day.”

It was God who buried him. Of course, no one knows the exact place, but they do know the vicinity. Then, in Deuteronomy 34:7, we jump back to Moses at the time of his death. Moses was 120 years old when he died, and his eye was not dim, nor his vigor abated.

We see from this passage that Moses was buried in spite of the battle of Jude 9 between Satan and Michael. We can, therefore, infer that Michael won the conflict, or God did.

God took care of Moses's funeral after it was all over and, as usual, Satan and his machinations were thwarted. The grace of God shone through even after the failure of Moses. That also is a lesson for the believer in Jesus Christ. No matter how badly you fail, no matter what you do in this life, God's grace is still in effect. Moses recovered and Moses was blessed, even though he failed. He was vigorous till the day he died. His eyes did not dim at all.

We see that God did not give up Moses, even in death. Satan wanted Moses's body. Who buried Moses? God did. God's grace is always the issue in our failures. And He is with us, even unto death and thereafter. Satan cannot have us. That's one little lesson here.

Satan wanted Moses's body after he died. He couldn't have it. God buried Moses, but why? That's the question. Well, we also know from this passage in Deuteronomy 34:6-7, that the grave site of Moses was hidden. Only God knew its exact location. So, the place of burial was obviously not important for the people to know. After the body was contended with, God took the body by Himself, or maybe with Michael.

This event taught the lesson that Moses failed to teach when he struck the rock. Moses made an issue of himself. God said Moses is not an issue. God, you see, did not want the grave of Moses to become a shrine of Israel. He was not the issue in life, or in death.

Moses was truly one of the great men of Israel's history, without a doubt. There were a few of them. Abraham, certainly, but Abraham was the beginning, the progenitor of the Jewish race. Moses was great because he was the founder of the nation, or at least the first leader of the nation. Moses was the first leader of the nation for God and the theocracy.

Moses was raised well educated in Egypt. He was an architect. He was a soldier. He was well respected. He would have been pharaoh. But he was first and foremost God's plan, and it was Moses's life in God's plan that should be remembered, not the location of his lifeless body.

Today, we remember his closeness and the uniqueness of his relationship with God. No one had a relationship with God like Moses.

Moses's relationship with God included being in God's immediate presence in the Tabernacle. He spoke with God face to face. It began at the burning bush, and it went right on through the very death of Moses. He had the honor of being buried by God himself. That's the kind of relationship he had with God. Moses received instructions directly from God for the people of Israel. He received these instructions so that he could lead the Israelites in God's purposes as a nation. So, the focus on Moses was misdirected. The focus was how God worked through Moses, and not Moses' exalted position in Israel. And he was exalted.

The emphasis is always on God, not the man. That's always true. Another great lesson: no matter how great one is in the church, or in Israel, they are never the issue. Moses's life belonged to God, and God's grace shone through all that Moses accomplished until that very last moment at the rock. And then His grace was denigrated. Moses should be remembered in Biblical history because of his service to the Lord and his relationship with the Lord, and nothing else. That is the case for any servant of God.

After his death, Moses became most revered amongst the Jews. Because of the newfound reverence, that's why God precluded Moses' grave from becoming a shrine.

Why did God do that? Unfortunately, this type of worship was the propensity of Israel throughout their history. They were always jumping into worshiping someone, or some idol, rather than God.

So, God sent Michael to handle the details of Moses's burial, but those actions were entirely opposed by Satan. Exactly why that is true is a bit obscure but, without a doubt, Michael was intruding on Satan's turf and, of course, his turf is planet Earth. He is the prince, or the ruler, of this world. And so, as with that title, and with that office, he claimed the right to dispose of Moses's body.

This whole incident is bound up in the angelic conflict. Jude reveals the conflict, not just in terms of mankind, who were created to resolve that conflict, and the way that we normally view it, but Jude extends that conflict to two angels, one fallen and one elect.

Very rarely, in fact this is the only time in Scripture, that we get a picture of a conflict between angelic enemies. So, this is a direct confrontation, a rare view into this massive, unseen conflict.

This is a rare view into the massive conflict in which angels are in direct confrontation with each other. And it is a unique illustration that Jude uses to bring the evil of false teachers into much sharper focus.

Let's get a couple of points on Michael.

Michael means "he who is like God." Not God, like God. It's a very interesting title. Satan wanted to be like God. Michael is given the title "who is like God." A creature of great glory and magnificence, one that we cannot understand, and yet he has this title.

Daniel points to the fact that he is royalty. Michael is called royalty in the angelic realm.

Michael is head of the armies of Heaven. He's the commander. Revelation 12:7-ff. It's clear that he is related to Israel in a special way, in judgment and in rescue.

Then we have the second named angel, sometimes thought of as an archangel, but not named so, who is Gabriel. Gabriel means the mighty one in Hebrew. However, he is never specifically called an archangel, (in Scripture, he is always referred to, or related to, some special mission). Daniel 8:16, Daniel 9:21, Luke 1:19, and 26-38, all describing missions of Gabriel.

So, we have in Jude 9: **Yet Michael the archangel, when “he disputed with the devil...”**

First, we have “διακρίνω” – “*diakrínō*,” which means to “dispute” or “contend.” Next, we have the adjective “διάβολο” – “*diábolos*,” which can be translated “accuser” or “devil.”

The source of this struggle over the body of Moses appears to come from what we call oral tradition and Jewish apocryphal literature.

Jewish apocryphal literature actually are books and writings that were never recognized as part of the completed canon of Scripture.

These apocryphal books, although they certainly contain material which agrees with Scripture, have been declared to not be a part of the canon of Scripture because, at some point, they disagree with it.

This apocryphal literature had a specific use in the time in which Jude wrote. It was used by the Jews for devotional purposes. This was true of believers in ancient times, actually before the time of Jude, and it was devotional literature for some of the authors of Scripture, of the New Testament.

So, these apocryphal books were in existence at the time of the writing of the New Testament and before. Consequently, these books were in circulation and available to men like Jude. No doubt he had seen these apocryphal books. Therefore, since these books were available, it's not surprising that Jude might have drawn from one of those books.

But here we have a verse that comes from apocryphal literature. The question is, when he drew from an apocryphal book, does that, in fact, affect what he wrote in Jude as divinely inspired?

We'll also see, if we ever get to verse 14, that Jude also drew from another apocryphal book, the book of Enoch.