

The narrative of Jude 9 is taken from a very specific apocryphal book called the *Assumption of Moses*. According to the three early church fathers, Clement of Alexandria, who lived from 150 to 215 AD (you'll notice he lived only 60 or 70 years after the completion of the canon of scripture, which is important because those who live that close had information which may be over 2,000 years and is not available to us), Origen (a very famous church father who lived from 185 to 254), and Didymus of Alexandria (not quite as famous), they cited this book as the source of the quote of verse nine. In fact, that's how we know that verse nine came from this apocryphal book, the *Assumption of Moses*.

However, we don't today have enough of that book to confirm whether what the church fathers said is actually correct.

The problem is that there are only fragments of the book, the *Assumption of Moses*, in existence today. They had the whole book; we have only fragments. Much of it has been lost in the intervening centuries.

Therefore, the only connection we have with the lost portion of that book is through the writings of these three church fathers, which we still have.

In other words, they testify to what is contained in the *Assumption of Moses*, that apocryphal literature, and they confirm that verse nine is from that apocryphal literature.

They testify to the fact that Jude nine is part of that. Let me summarize what the *Assumption of Moses* says, or at least what the church fathers say, about the battle between Michael and Satan over Moses's body:

1. Michael is commissioned by God to bury Moses.
2. We see that it is actually a verbal confrontation between Michael and Satan, but God authorized it.
3. Satan opposes the burial of Moses's body by Michael on two grounds, according to the *Assumption*. He claims to be the ruler of the Earth, which, of course, the Bible confirms that he is.
4. Therefore, he demanded that Moses's body be handed over to him as his possession. So that's the basis of this problem between the two. Now there are many questions that brings up.
5. The counter argument to Satan's argument about I'm the ruler of this world and I'm going to take this body, was that it was God who created the world and He created all mankind. This became the point of contention and dispute, to whom does Moses's body belong, and this dispute was a part of the unseen angelic conflict.
6. To Satan's claim, Michael says, "the Lord rebuke you." Michael doesn't do it, he simply says, the Lord rebuke you, and that statement is verified as part of verse nine.

7. That phrase in verse nine verifies at least part of the church father's contention that the *Assumption of Moses* was the source in Jude's epistle.
8. So, according to the church fathers, the *Assumption* says that Satan's next move after this argument with Michael is to bring a charge of murder against Moses.
9. Satan says he killed a man, and Satan claimed that since Moses was a murderer, he was part of the cosmic system and Moses's body belonged to him.
10. But regardless of the details of what occurred in the actual apocryphal literature, the *Assumption*, we know for a fact from verse nine that Moses's body was not turned over to Satan, since it was God who buried Moses, according to Deuteronomy 34:6.
11. Michael (God) won the argument, and the body went to God. As Deuteronomy 34:6 says, "God was the One who buried Moses." No one knows where the body of Moses is buried because God did not want Moses's grave to become a shrine. Moses was the servant of the Lord and that's how he should be remembered.

The Holy Spirit used outside sources found by the authors in their research for His own purposes.

But what they included from those outside sources did become divinely inspired, because it was so directed by God the Holy Spirit.

So, never forget that the writers of Scripture wrote only what God wanted, without corruption from outside sources, even though they may have used outside sources.

2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

verse 17: so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."  
(NASB)

The authors of Scripture always wrote through the process of divine inspiration, regardless of the source, guaranteeing what we study is the Word of God.

Jude nine is an example of the utter respect and deference that even the most powerful of created beings, Michael, the archangel, has for God.

Michael showed complete deference to God's will in this matter of restraining from judging.

PRINCIPLE: When you can't wait to slander, backstab, judge, to say something about somebody that you can't stand, remember this verse and remember Who has the final say. Not you! Put it in the Lord's hands.

Michael here in verse nine was the epitome of authority orientation, as the anti-authority dreamers of verse eight were not.

Now, the action of contending here between Michael and Satan is the present middle participle “*diakrínō*.” It certainly means “*contending*.”

Next, we have the verb “*διαλέγομαι*” – “*dialégomai*,” which means “to dispute” or “to argue.”

The contention and the dispute between the devil and Michael was a war of words. It was an argument. It was a verbal battle, a debate. It was not a fist fight. No one was throwing hay makers.

**Verse 9:** “Yet Michael the archangel, when disputing with the evil one (Satan), disagreed vehemently concerning the body of Moses (over who gets it).”

We have “dared” here and it is the aorist active indicative of “*τολμάω*” – “*tolmáō*” meaning “to dare” plus the negative “*οὐκ*” – “*ouk*.” This is best translated “did not dare.”

In other words, Michael “did not presume” or “dare to pass judgment” on Satan.

If Michael had done more than he was told by God, it would have been rebellion, similar to the rebellion of Satan and the fallen angels in eternity past. They rebelled against the very person of God.

It would have been something that Satan would have dearly love to have caused.

Michael, who is next to the throne of God, would have become a demon, fallen into Satan's own camp of demons.

This is why God told Michael, do not dare to revile, put a violent accusation on Satan. Satan was awaiting execution of divine judgment in the future. It had already been pronounced there would be a time in the future when he would be cast into the lake of fire. And he knew it. What could be more devastating by way of judgment? God had pronounced the judgment. How could Michael improve on that pronouncement when God had already done the judging in eternity past?

In fact, that's what the whole angelic conflict was about. God had judged and sentenced Satan. Satan appealed. God granted the appeal. Now here we are in human history and that appeal is playing out. So, God said, Michael, go get the body, but don't you judge Satan. That's my job.

He was very careful not to overstep his bounds, even remotely. Michael demonstrates utter obedience and authority orientation to the mission God had given him.

Compared to the anti-authority false teachers in verse eight, Michael did his job as directed by God.

**Principle:** If you reject divine authority, there is no authority in this world that you will not reject.

What is this reviling accusation which Michael was prohibited from doing?

We have the genitive singular of the “βλασφημία” – “*blasphēmía*” and it means, in the Greek, “to rail against,” “to slander,” “to utilize evil speech, slanderous, accusatory speech,” even if it's a true accusation.

It's important here to note that “*blasphēmía*” is used in a qualitative way. It means that it involves a kind of reviling.

In other words, it reveals what sort of reviling was involved here and this usage we can see from another passage, 2 Peter 2:11.

Peter uses “*blasphēmía*” in 2nd Peter 2:11 qualitatively to further define the kind of reviling. It is a judging reviling.

This is not name calling. That's not what reviling is here. This is pronouncing judgment. This is an accusatory reviling. This is as if Michael is standing in a court, reading the charges against Satan.

Jude uses “*blasphēmía*” to define the kind of reviling. It is an accusatory reviling. It would be the same as pronouncing judgment. We see what kind of reviling this is, by the Greek noun, “κρίσις” – “*krísis*.” “*Krísis*” is translated “judgment” or “accusation”.

**Verse 9: “Yet Michael the archangel, when disputing with the evil one (Satan), disagreed vehemently concerning the body of Moses (over who gets it). He did not dare to bring judgment by maligning, but (leaving the judgment in God’s hands) said:”**

“*Krísis*” is translated in 2 Peter 2:11 as “judgment.” Then the same word is translated in Jude nine as “accusation.”

But “*krísis*” essentially has the same meaning in both verses, even though it is translated differently. “Judgment” and “accusation” are actually the same concept, using different words with a slightly different connotation.

“*Krísis*” is a noun expressing the action of “*judging*” or “*accusation*.” This is not just a principle. This is actually doing the reviling. It's a judgment being actively rendered. In other words, spoken.

So, this phrase in Jude nine is parallel to the phrase used in 2 Peter 2:11, “pronounce a reviling judgment.” Both 2 Peter 2:11 and Jude nine are simply describing a sinful action, or what would be a sinful action, if Michael does it.

If Michael had “pronounced a reviling judgment” against Satan, it would have been an act of rebellion against God.

So, my point is that Michael could not make one little act of rebellion. Why? Because if he rebelled by making one little accusatory remark, he would have committed a similar act of rebellion as

Satan and the fallen angels in eternity past had. What was the sin of Satan? Arrogance. I will be like the Most High was what he said. The five I-wills.

If Satan had been able to lure, or to goad, Michael into a reviling act of judgment, if he had at all shown any anti-authority, a sinful act, then Satan would have notched a victory against this most powerful opponent. Next to God, in the very throne room of God, once again we would have a rebellion - that's what's at stake here. Of course, Jude is using this illustration because it's a great example of rebellion in the churches and the false teachers.

Had Michael rebelled in this manner, he would have then fallen into Satan's own camp of demons. He would have been just another one of the merry band of Satan. That's where it would have taken him: severed contact from God immediately.

We need to do what Michael did in his authority orientation, and in his humility, by remaining in the plan of God, advancing to spiritual maturity, and precluding arrogance in our soul, recognizing it, but not judging it. Leave that in the hands of the Lord.

PRINCIPLE: When you are under attack, when someone would deter you from the plan of God, when you are being mauled by anyone in this life, never forget the justice of God is always in effect. His justice is so much greater than anything you can come up with to get back at anyone else or to refute anyone's argument.

You see, those believers (that Jude is writing to), like Michael, must remain true to God's word, His mandates, and not succumb to the demands and the apostasy of the false teachers.

The last phrase of verse nine reveals what Michael did say to Satan, a very simple sentence. He said, "the Lord rebuke you." This is the coup de grace of the argument between Satan and Michael.

Here, Jude cites the Ultimate Authority and the Perfect Judge. Michael cannot rebuke Satan, but certainly the Lord can. Any judgment Michael might render against Satan is totally unnecessary, as well as being wrong. The justice of God will perfectly handle Satan.

Satan has no answer to Michael's statement, "the Lord rebuke you." Conflict over.

Now the verb "rebuke" here in the last phrase of verse nine is the aorist active optative of verb "ἐπιτιμάω" – "epitimáō." "Epitimáō" means to "rebuke."

This is what the Lord, in His justice, will do. No greater word can be used against Satan than what Michael just said, when God is the subject. In fact, none of us can hear more horrible words than that. When the Lord rebukes you, you are rebuked.

Michael turns the sentencing of Satan over to the Lord. And that is something that all opponents of God must reckon with.

Satan has lived for century after century after century, but the reckoning is in front of him, and it is also in front of these false teachers Jude is writing about, and that's the point. Michael turns the sentencing of Satan over to God.

Michael knows that Satan's judgment and sentencing has already been pronounced by God in eternity past.

So, the sentence has already been pronounced. This sentence by God is already a verbal commitment by God of final judgment. Matthew 25:41, the judgment is coming.

Michael thought, maybe this will have effect on Satan and maybe it won't. But really, he understood that what he was going to say to Satan really would have no appreciable effect because Satan was already condemned.

All Michael did, therefore, was to cite that which would have the most effect on Satan. Thus, in using the optative mood, Michael honored the essence of God, and he did so by refusing to revile Satan.

Michael would not attempt to control and to contain this situation on his own. He knew he couldn't do that. He could just stick to the reason for which he was sent: to contend with Satan. That's all he could do.

PRINCIPLE: *If you could keep from superimposing your imperfect justice against some arrogant person when they attack you, then you would be able to relax and be confident that God's justice is the only effective justice.*

God's Word is immutable. When He gives it, it cannot change. But that's okay because it is always just, it is always righteous, it comes from his omniscience, it's never wrong. He doesn't have to go back on His word. His essence guarantees that His word is right and correct and it's immutable. It does not change.

PRINCIPLE: *What's the point of you putting down someone else? What is the self-righteous point of you vindicating yourself to other people who are unjust, who don't like you, who have it in for you? What's the point? Do you think arrogance changes its mind because you have a point? Do you think you're going to convince arrogance that you're right and they're wrong?*

*No, you are not, and that's the principle here.*

The use of the verb here is an aorist active optative. This verb, “*epitimáō*” is of great importance for us to understand why Jude used this particular mood.

Actually, he did it for two reasons, which tell us much about the meaning that he is driving at here.

The optative is a mood that expresses “a wish” or “a desire.” This is what I want to have happen. You would use the optative if you used the verb “want” or “desire.”

However, in using the optative in Greek, it presents no great anticipation of that wish occurring. It is a mood of great contingency.

The optative here represents the overall outlook of Michael in all of this confrontation. It's the perfect verb to use.

Michael makes the decision not to pass sentence. The Supreme Court of Heaven is perfect justice and God's justice never fails you. When you are being attacked, when there is injustice directed toward you, just remember God vindicates you. It's not incumbent upon you to defend yourself, to vindicate yourself, to make sure everyone knows you're right. When you stand back and let the Lord handle it, it always gets handled.

I know that doesn't sound very appetizing to you because you want to vindicate yourself. I must not let other people think that of me. They might think badly of me. I've got to prove myself right. And you know, the further you go into that, the more you get into arrogance. Back off. Let the Lord handle it. He does every time. When you put it in the hands of the Lord, I have never seen Him fail. It may not happen in the next five minutes, may not happen in the next month, but be patient. It always happens.

**PRINCIPLE:** Our judgments would have no more effect on other persons or other circumstances than Michael's would have had on Satan. You cannot change arrogance in another person. You can't do it. So, stop trying. Put it in the hands of the Lord.

You cannot change the sin nature of man. There's only one thing that can change the nature of man: faith alone in Christ alone and growing to spiritual maturity. That's what kicks arrogance out of the human soul. Will it be completely gone? No. But it progressively leaves. Live your life without arrogance, without worrying about vindicating yourself.

**Verse 9:** “Yet Michael the archangel, when disputing with the evil one (Satan), disagreed vehemently concerning the body of Moses (over who gets it). He did not dare to bring judgment by maligning, but (leaving the judgment in God’s hands) said: “May the Lord rebuke and punish you (based on His omnipotence and divine standards).” (EXT)

**Verse 10:** “But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed.” (NASB)

We're going to leave the illustration aspect of verse nine and return to real descriptions of false teachers, “But these men revile the things which they do not understand.”

How do you speak evil of something you don't even know? We'll find out!

We began with the plural nominative pronoun “οὗτος” – “*hoûtos*.” It leads off verse 10 and refers back to the “dreamers” of verse eight. The false teachers, the corruptors, that Jude is writing about and describing.



We were given three descriptions of the false teachers (the “dreamers”) in verse eight and now we can add a fourth characteristic to the false teachers.

As you would expect, they speak evil. In fact, that is what verse 8b says about the dreamers. They speak evil of dignitaries. It is the same word as we have in verse 10, “βλασφημέω” – “*blasphēméō*,” from which we get the word “blasphemy.”

In verse ten, as in verse eight, it means to “revile”, “to rail against.” But, unlike verse eight, it's not dignitaries or authorities they speak evil of.