

lesser than a divine agent of Yahweh. Hence, Joshua is commanded to respond to him by taking off his shoes from his feet:

של נעלך מעל רגלך כי המקום אשר אתה עמד עליו קדש הוא

“Pull off your shoe from your foot, for the place where you are standing on it (is) holy itself”

(Josh 5.15b).

This scene evokes the theophanic setting in Exod 3.5; Moses is ordered by the messenger god of Yahweh to take off his shoes from his feet, for the place that he is standing on is holy (Exod 3.5). Thus, both descriptions may illustrate the higher rank of an agent deity to a human.

Summary

The divine titles of warrior deities in the Hebrew Bible occur as *אבירים*, *גבורים*, *כוכבים*, *מחנה (אלהים)*, *מלאך (יהוה)*, *ממתיים*, *משחית*, *קדישין*, *שנאן*, *שר*, etc. Similar to the Ugaritic titles of warrior deities, the metaphorical expressions are adopted to denote a class of warrior deities whose number is large. The terms also indicate their lesser rank in the hierarchical divine assembly.

2. NAMED WARRIOR DEITY IN THE HEBREW BIBLE

2.1. מיכאל, “Michael”

The name of an “archangel”, *מיכאל*, described only in Dan 10.13, 21, and 12.1²⁴⁰, denotes “Who-(Is)-Like-El?” and it is attested as a common

²⁴⁰ Michael is mentioned by name in a list of seven archangels (as four in Enoch 9.1; or as seven in Enoch 20.5: thus, Uriel, Raphael, Raguel, Michael, Sariel, Gabriel, and Remiel; but, in Ezekiel 9.2–11, six men (divine beings) and one, who has in the midst of them manifested; thus, the number of archangels as seven seems more plausible). For the NT references on Michael, see Jude 9 (as the one contending with the devil over the body of Moses); and Rev 12 (as the chief-warrior deity in the divine war with his divine messengers against the devil and his own divine messengers).

name in biblical references²⁴¹ and in some extra-biblical references²⁴². Dan 10.13 further describes his military function:

והנה מיכאל אחד השרים הראשנים בא לעזרני

And lo, Michael, one²⁴³ of the chief Princes²⁴⁴ came to help²⁴⁵ me.

A celestial battle has taken place here. His name occurs also as a co-operator with another chief divine agent, perhaps Gabriel, for the mission. In Dan 10.21b, his function is described more magnificently:

ואין אחד מתחזק עמי על אלה כי אם מיכאל שרכם

And there is no one strengthening²⁴⁶ himself with me against these, except²⁴⁷ Michael your Prince²⁴⁸.

²⁴¹ The name has been used frequently for the name of humans elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible: Num 13.13; 1 Chr 5.13, 14; 6.25; 7.3; 8.16; 27.18; 2 Chr 21.2; and Ezra 8.8.

²⁴² It is attested in the Ebla. cognate: *mi-kà-il* or *mi-ki-il*; cf. Pettinato (1981: 63, 261). Dahood (1981: 276–7) suggests interestingly that the ending *-il* of the *mi-kà-il*, “Who is like El?” corresponds obviously to the ending *-ya* (the Ebla. cognate of the Hebrew forms; *yāh*, *yāhû*, *yô?*): *mi-kà-yà*, “Who is like Ya?”. If it is, then the terms of the Heb. מיכאל and the Ebla. *mi-kà-il* or *mi-ki-il* may express the same theology: the absolute ontology of the god. It is found also in an Aramaic ostrakon excavated at Nimrud (Kalhu): Segal (1958); Albright (1958).

²⁴³ Or “the first”.

²⁴⁴ A description in Ps 82.7 supports the fact that there are other entities of the שר in the divine hierarchy.

²⁴⁵ The inf. construct form, with a preposition and a 1. c. sg. suffix, of the עזר, to “help, assist”: *BDB* 740; *HALOT* 810–1 (I). Cf. Ph., Pun., Aram. *ʿzr*: *DNWSI* 836; Ug. *ʿdr*: *UT* §19.1831; *WUS* no. 2115; *DUL* 153; Ar. *ʿadara*: *AEL* 1983–7; Akk. *ḫāziru*: *AHw* 339; *CAD* 6[H] 166. Cf. *il tʿdr*, Ugaritic “Helper-gods”, discussed above.

²⁴⁶ The Hithpael, ptc. form of the חזק, to “be or grow firm, strong, strengthen”: *BDB* 304; *HALOT* 302–4. In paradoxical terms Michael is expressed as the only divine agent who can strengthen himself to help other lesser deities powerfully and effectively.

Another of his roles is as the guardian deity or protector deity of the Israelites²⁴⁹; thus Dan 12.1 reads: הַשָּׂר הַגָּדוֹל הָעֹמֵד עַל בְּנֵי עַמּוֹךְ מִיְכָאֵל, “Michael, the great prince, *who* is standing over sons of your people, will stand²⁵⁰”.

Since his epithet, שָׂר, also denotes mortal dignitaries (cf. Judg 4.2; 1 Sam 17.55), it can be applied also to indicate the hierarchical ranking of lesser deities. Furthermore these references may signify the idea that there is a clear hierarchical distinction between the ordinary lesser deities and the archangels.

Summary

The named warrior deity in the Hebrew Bible appears to be מִיְכָאֵל, “Michael” (Dan 10.13, 21; 12.1), one of the chief princes (הַרְאֲשֹׁנִים) of Yahweh. Michael is described to be superlatively strong (Dan 10.21b). He takes the role of the divine guardian of the Israelites (Dan 12.1). His divine epithet, שָׂר, (Dan 10.21b), distinguishes his position from other ordinary lesser deities. He is revealed further as the warrior deity in the biblical descriptions.

CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER IV

Similar to the Ugaritic descriptions, lesser deities in the Hebrew Bible function as warrior deities. Whilst the Ugaritic texts inform that there are some named warrior deities (e.g., Qadesh-and-Amurr; Yatipan), the Hebrew descriptions also address Michael, whose hierarchical level is to be higher than the other ordinary deities. The Ugaritic named warrior or messenger deities are suggested as the prototype of archangels in the Hebrew Bible.

²⁴⁷ After a negative address the **אֵין** limits the preceding clause and leads to the idea of an exception: *BDB* 474.

²⁴⁸ LXX reads ἀγγελος, “messenger”.

²⁴⁹ S. R. Driver (1900: 157); Collins (1993: 375, 6).

²⁵⁰ Collins (1993: 390) interestingly suggests that Michael’s standing position may indicate a judicial setting in the divine court. He concludes that “although Michael’s exact role in Dan 12:1 is not specified, it may be understood as judicial advocate or executor of the judgment or both”.