

# Battle for the Body of Moses

Jude 8-9

Jude

a study of the epistle

## Jude 8

**8** Yet in the same way these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties.



# Various Translations

- **NASB:** “these men, also by dreaming”
- **ESV:** “these people also, relying on their dreams”
- **KJV:** “these filthy dreamers”
- **NET:** “these men, as a result of their dreams”

# ἐνυπνιάζομαι (*enypniazomai*)

- **Interpretation #1:**

The dreams are understood as the basis for the moral baseness of the opponents; they appealed to their dreams as a source of revelation, as a justification of their lifestyle.

- **Interpretation #2:**

Jude is criticizing the false teachers as ignorant, hypnotized, or dreamers.



# “Dreams” in the Bible

- Joel 2:28 –

“It will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions.”







# Deuteronomy 13:1-3a

**1** “If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, **2** and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, ‘Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,’ **3** you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams...”

## Isaiah 56:9-12

**10** His watchmen are blind, All of them know nothing. All of them are mute dogs unable to bark, Dreamers lying down, who love to slumber; **11** And the dogs are greedy, they are not satisfied. And they are shepherds who have no understanding; They have all turned to their own way, Each one to his unjust gain, to the last one. **12** “Come,” they say, “let us get wine, and let us drink heavily of strong drink; And tomorrow will be like today, only more so.”



**The Truth is:**

Claiming to have a dream  
from the Lord does not  
validate whatever one might  
say.

**Why is this so dangerous?**

## 3 Sins in v. 8

1. Sexual Sin

—“defile the flesh”

2. Rejection of God’s Lordship

—“reject authority”

3. Blasphemy of Angels

—“revile angelic majesties”



# The Dreamers

## 1. “defile the flesh”

- They appeal to dreams to justify their sexual sin.
- The word “defile” often designates sexual sin in the Old Testament.
- It also fits with the sins of the angels in v. 6 and S&G in v. 7.

**Notice:**

**These intruders do not  
believe they are defiling  
their flesh?**

**Why not?**



# The Dreamers

## 2. “reject authority”

– What authority?

- Church?
- Government?
- Angels?

– “authority” here is singular (*kyriotēs*)

- Might be better translated “lordship” or “sovereignty”

## Remember v. 4?

“For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and **deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.**”



# The Dreamers

## 3. “revile angelic majesties”

### – Possible reference to human beings

- But, the parallel Hebrew term is never rendered this way in the NT (*doxa*)

### – Possible reference to angels (considering v. 9)

- Then the question arises: good angels or evil angels?

# Good Angels or Evil Angels?

- Interpretation #1: Good Angels
  - Jude would not be worried about scorn heaped on evil angels.
- Interpretation #2: Evil Angels
  - Based on v. 9, where Michael refused to pronounce his own judgment on Satan, suggests that Jude has evil angels in mind.



# Good Angels Theories

- Gnostics criticized the angels for their part in the creation of the evil material world.
- Antinomians criticized the angels as mediators of the Mosaic Law.
- Some disparaged angels because they knew believers would “judge” them (1 Cor. 6:3).

# Jude's Argument (I Think...)

The false teachers insult demons, but the archangel, Michael, did not even presume to blaspheme to devil himself but left judgment up to God.

If Michael as an angel with high authority did not even presume to judge Satan, how can the opponents be so filled with pride that they insult supernatural beings?



**REBUKE**  
**THE**  
**DEVIL**



People

Meet the Experts!  
"There's a true battle  
between good and evil  
going on," says Brynne  
Larson (far right), with  
friends (from left)  
Savannah and Tess  
Scherkenback and her  
father, Rev. Bob Larson.

# All-American EXORCISTS

THEY LOVE MAKEUP, SCHOOL, HORSES AND SHOPPING,  
BUT THESE 3 CHILDHOOD BEST FRIENDS ALSO SHARE  
A MORE UNUSUAL HOBBY: FIGHTING DEMONS

By NICOLE WEISENSEE EGAN  
Photography by GILLIAN LAUB

**A**s the oldest daughter of a world-renowned exorcist, Brynne Larson grew up believing demons existed. But she never thought much about it—until the night she had a sleepover for her 16th birthday at her Arizona home. "Suddenly one of my friends manifested demons," says Brynne, now 22, whose close friend Tess Scherkenback was there as well. "This deep voice came out of her saying, 'She's mine. You can't have her.' We were shocked. It was like, 'Oh my God! What happened to my friend?'"



# Acts

## 19:13-16

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## Jude 9

**9** But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!”



# A Difficult Verse

## The Main Point:

The false teachers insulted supernatural beings, but Michael was so humble that he did not presume to condemn Satan but asked the Lord to rebuke him.

# “Michael the archangel”

- In Daniel 10:13 & 21 (LXX), he is designated as a “prince” (*archon*) and as “the great prince” (*ho archon ho megas*) in Daniel 12:1.
- In 1 Thessalonians 4:16, the voice of an archangel will signal the coming of Christ.
- In Revelation 12:7, he leads the battle against the dragon and the evil angels.



# Archangels



# 7 Archangels?

- Tobit 12:15 – “I am Raphael, one of the seven angels who stand in the glorious presence of the Lord, ready to serve him.”
- The earliest Christian references come in the late-5<sup>th</sup>/early-6<sup>th</sup> centuries.

What does the Bible tell us?





# Death of Moses: Deuteronomy 34:6

“And He  
buried him in  
the valley in  
the land of  
Moab,  
opposite  
Beth-peor;  
but no man  
knows his  
burial place  
to this day.”

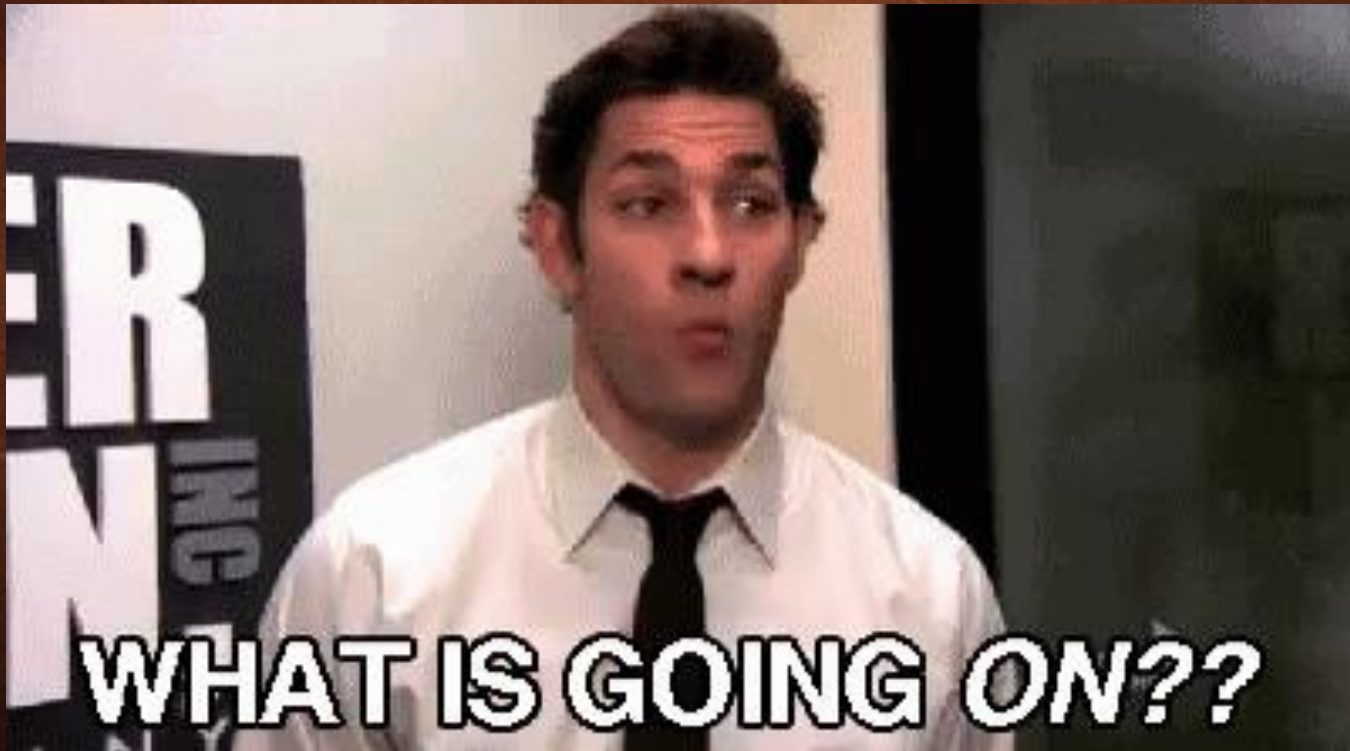




Nicolai Abildgaard (1743 - 1809) - The Archangel Michael and Satan Disputing about the Body of Moses.  
ARoS Aarhus Kunstmuseum. C. 1782. Oil on canvas, 49.7 x 61.7 cm.



# The Question On All Our Minds:



## Origen & Clement of Alexandria Attest:

- This event was found in a Jewish work called “The Assumption of Moses.”
- We have one partial copy (1/3) of this work in Latin discovered at Milan in 1861...but it does not contain the event described in Jude 9.



# Why the Body of Moses?

- Some say that Satan is establishing Moses' guilt (possibly for his murder of the Egyptian) and claiming the body for himself.
- Josephus states that God hid Moses' body, lest, if it had been exposed to view, it would have been made an idol of.

## An Allegory?

Some say “the body of Moses” means the Jewish Church accused by Satan, before God, for its filthiness, on which ground he demands that divine justice should take its course against Israel, but is rebuked by the Lord who has “chosen Jerusalem”: thus, as “the body of Christ” is the Christian Church, so “the body of Moses” is the Jewish Church.



# My Response to That Theory



## Dr. M.R. James:

“The soul of Moses left the body when Moses died of the kiss of God. Immediately Michael and his angels came to receive the soul, and to bury the body. This was the moment for the contest between Michael and Samael (or Satan). Samael, as being the lord of matter, claimed the body as his; this claim being denied by the Archangel on the ground that all creation is God’s, Samael brought up another charge against Moses, viz. that Moses being a murderer, having killed the Egyptian, was not worthy of burial at all. This blasphemy kindled the wrath of Michael, but he restrained himself, saying only: ‘The Lord rebuke thee, O slanderer’ (diabole).”



# My Two Cents

I believe Satan wants Moses' body in order to prevent his physical resurrection in a glorified body.

**Spoiler Alert:**

He was Unsuccessful.





# Michael's Response to Satan

“The Lord rebuke you!”

This alludes to an Old Testament narrative that also involves Satan.

Turn to Zechariah 3:1-5

# In the Zechariah Account

The Lord pronounces judgment against Satan, while His Word brings forgiveness to Joshua, removing his dirty garments and replacing them with clean clothes.

The Lord's verdict is decisive, sealing Satan's powerlessness before God to claim those who belong to Him.



# Apply This To Michael's Restraint

- Michael does not deny that Moses sinned or attempt to defend his behavior.
- He appeals only to the Lord's rebuke with the confidence that Moses would receive forgiveness by God's Word, and be clothed in His righteousness.

Turn to Hebrews 11:23-29

# Richard Bauckham:

“The point of contrast between the false teachers and Michael is not that Michael treated the devil with respect, and the moral is not that we should be polite even to the devil. The point of contrast is that Michael could not reject the devil’s accusation on his own authority. Even though the devil was motivated by malice and Michael recognized that his accusation was slanderous, he could not himself dismiss the devil’s case, because he was not the judge. All he could do was ask the Lord, who alone is judge, to condemn Satan for his slander. The moral is therefore that no one is a law to himself, an autonomous moral authority.”



# In Other Words

- My faith in Christ saves me from having to “do battle” with Satan directly.
- While defeated, the devil is still powerful and direct conflict with him is not where the believer wants or needs to be.
- He has already been defeated, and my salvation and the judgment of the evil one is in the hands of God and God alone.



# Next Week: The Way of Cain





