How did Saint Michael get his name?
Was Satan a fallen angel in heaven, and where exactly did he go from heaven?

If an angel is given a name, the name is based on what God is calling the angel to do. In the case of Saint Michael, his name means “Who is like God.” His name reflects the fact that Michael led the “armies” of God against Satan, as we are told in the Book of Revelation. We also can call upon him in defense against the snares of the devil, as we pray in the Saint Michael prayer. Therefore, we can see that Saint Michael is like God in his defense of what is truly good and true. His will is to fulfill the will of God perfectly.

Saint Michael and Satan are, in a sense, inexorably linked together because of the battle they fought. The name Satan means adversary. Satan was expelled from heaven because he believed he could/should be the equal of God. Satan rose up against God to take control of heaven and lost the battle to Saint Michael. He was then sent to earth as the Book of Revelation tells us.

As Christians we believe that Satan resides in hell. And as Catholics we must believe that hell truly exists. Part of the reason is simply that Jesus was clear about those who, through their own choice, will cut themselves off from God. But, outside of Satan and the demons, the Church has never declared that any particular human being resides there. Satan is there because he was already face to face with God and rejected him wholly, completely, and forever.

Though Satan resides in hell, he at the same time can tempt us here on earth. We interpret the snake in the Book of Genesis as being a symbol of Satan. The snake represents Satan’s influence on us, trying to lead us away from God. He wants us to do the same to God as he did. Another term we use for Satan is ‘the devil.’ Both the devil and Satan are the same being, though the term devil can also be used for Satan’s minions, who do his bidding to lead human beings away from God.

We must realize though, that Satan’s power over us is somewhat limited. He cannot force us to do anything against our will. He can tempt us and fool us into doing the wrong thing. But, ultimately we have free will, and the saying “the devil made me do it” is just flat out wrong. If Satan forced us to act against our will, then we could not be held accountable for what we did. And Satan wants us to suffer just as he does, and separate us from knowing God’s love. He, therefore, can only influence us to move in a direction away from God; we have to make the choice to act in ways that contravene God’s will for us. Fortunately, God has given us the antidote against Satan’s poisonous ways: his grace, which we receive through prayer, reading scripture, and the sacraments; and having a true desire, and acting, to grow in virtue.