

MESSIANIC PROPHECY— THE ANGEL OF THE LORD

The Phrase *Malach YHWH*

- 1) The Angel of Jehovah (Yahweh)- *Malach YHWH*, always singular
- 2) The Angel of the God- *Malach Ha-Elohim*, always singular with the definite article
- 3) The angels of God- *Malachei Elohim*, plural, and is never used with a definite article¹
- 4) The sons of the God- *Benei Ha-Elohim*, “angels” appears in Gen 6:2, 4; Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7

Notes from NET Bible on *Malach YHWH*

Hebrew "the messenger of the LORD." Some identify the angel of the LORD as the preincarnate Christ because in some texts the angel is identified with the LORD himself. However, it is more likely that the angel merely represents the LORD; **he can speak for the LORD because he is sent with the LORD's full authority.** In some cases the angel is clearly distinct from the LORD (see Judg 6:11–23). It is not certain if the same angel is always in view. Though the proper name following the noun "angel" makes the construction definite, this may simply indicate that a definite angel sent from the LORD is referred to in any given context. It need not be the same angel on every occasion. Note the analogous phrase "the servant of the LORD," which refers to various individuals in the OT.

- It is difficult to agree with the NET's assessment. There doesn't seem to be any other evidence in the Scripture where someone who has the Lord's authority (ie. a prophet) speaks with the same degree of authority and supernatural power to guarantee the outworking of specific promises or covenant.
- Their analogous expression "servant of the Lord" does not seem to fit as much as they assert

Genesis 16:7-14

"Now the **angel of the LORD** found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur.⁸ He said, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from and where are you going?" And she said, "I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai."⁹ Then the **angel of the LORD** said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit yourself to her authority."¹⁰ Moreover, the **angel of the LORD** said to her, "**I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they will be too many to count.**"¹¹ **The angel of the LORD** said to her further, "Behold, you are with child, And you will bear a son; And you shall call his name Ishmael, Because the LORD has given heed to your affliction.¹² "He will be a wild donkey of a man, His hand *will be* against everyone, And everyone's hand *will be* against him; And he will live to the east of all his brothers."¹³ Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, "You are a God who sees"; for she said, "Have I even remained alive here after seeing Him?"¹⁴ Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered." (NASB)

- The Angel of the Lord promises to multiply her descendants (cf. Gen 3:16; 17:2, 20; 22:17; 26:4, 24)
- The text states that she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her as "God"

Genesis 22:10-18

¹⁰ Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.¹¹ But the **angel of the LORD** called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am."¹² He said, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now **I know that you fear God**, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, **from Me.**"¹³ Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind *him* a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son.¹⁴ Abraham called the name of that place The LORD Will Provide, as it is said to this day, "In the mount of the LORD it will be provided."¹⁵ **Then the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven,¹⁶ and said, "By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son,¹⁷ indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies.¹⁸ "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."** (NASB)

- The Angel of the LORD refers to God in the 3rd person and states that Isaac was not withheld from Him (22:1-2)
- The Angel of the LORD swears by Himself that He will multiply his seed (12:1-3; 15:5)

¹ Most of this information is taken from *Messianic Christology* by Arnold Fruchtenbaum, pp. 109-114.

Genesis 31:11-13

"Then the **angel of God** said to me in the dream, 'Jacob,' and I said, 'Here I am.'¹² "He said, 'Lift up now your eyes and see *that* all the male goats which are mating are striped, speckled, and mottled; for I have seen all that Laban has been doing to you.¹³ '**I am the God of Bethel**, where you anointed a pillar, where you made a **vow to Me**; now arise, leave this land, and return to the land of your birth.'" (NASB)

- The Angel of God declares himself to be the **God of Bethel**
- The Angel of God says Jacob swore a vow to Him (cf. Genesis 28:11-22) at Bethel.

Exodus 3:1-5

"Now Moses was pasturing the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.² The **angel of the LORD** appeared to him in a blazing fire from **the midst of a bush**; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed.³ So Moses said, "I must turn aside now and see this marvelous sight, why the bush is not burned up."⁴ When the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, **God called to him from the midst of the bush** and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am."⁵ Then He said, "Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." (NASB)

- The Angel of the Lord and "God" are both in the midst of the burning bush and seen as synonymous

Judges 2:1

"Now the **angel of the LORD** came up from Gilgal to Bochim. And he said, "I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the land which I have sworn to your fathers; and I said, 'I will never break My covenant with you'" (NASB)

- The Angel of the LORD claims the actions of God Himself (Ex 19:4)

"I am the **LORD your God**, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery." Exodus 20:2

Judges 13:2-24

- The Angel of the LORD appears in verses 3, 9, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21 but when Manoah summarizes the situation he says they have seen God
- The Angel declares his name to be "wonderful" (Isaiah 9:6).

Exodus 23:20-23

"Behold, I am going to send an **angel** before you to guard you along the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared.²¹ "Be on your guard before him and **obey his voice**; do not be rebellious toward him, for he will not **pardon your transgression**, since **My name is in him**.²² "But if you truly obey his voice and do all that I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries.²³ "For My angel will go before you and bring you in to *the land of* the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hivites and the Jebusites; and I will completely destroy them. (NASB)

- The Angel of the LORD is to be obeyed
- The Angel of the LORD is to have the prerogative of forgiving sins (cf. Matthew 9:2-6)
- The Angel of the LORD is a supernatural mediator between God and man for the forgiveness of sins (1 Tim 2:5)

Summary

New Testament believers (and Jewish non-believers) must be able to reconcile the various passages of OT scripture which speak extremely high of this Angel of the LORD personage. He has the very name of God (YHWH) in Him. There are other people with "theophoric" names (names with God's name attached to them such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Elijah). However, none of these names have the full four lettered YHWH in them like Angel of YHWH.

Based on the above evidence, we must conclude that the Angel of the LORD is YHWH Himself, but also separate from Him in some capacity. Yahweh certainly is not sending Himself to go lead the Israelites out of Egypt! The most obvious sensible conclusion is that the Angel of the LORD is the pre-incarnate appearance of the LORD Jesus (Col 1:19; 2:9)