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THE ANGEL OF YAHWEH IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Old Testament Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Divinity

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Biblical scholars hold various views as to the meaning and the scope of the term מַלְאָכֵי יְהוָה , "the angel of Yahweh," in the Old Testament. In recent years, however, this subject does not seem to have attracted much attention and, as far as the writer knows, no recent study of the subject has been made in our own circles. This paper attempts to present a study of the views of Biblical interpreters concerning מַלְאָכֵי יְהוָה , "the angel of Yahweh," and related terms in the Old Testament and to reach some conclusions on the basis of what Scripture itself reveals.

CHAPTER II

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Ludwig Koehler in his Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros traces the noun מַלְאָכִים back to a root מִלַּךְ , "to depute, to send a messenger." He connects the noun with the Ugaritic ml'k, "Bote, messenger."¹

Gesenius-Buhl, Hebraeisches und Aramaeisches Handwoerterbuch, derive the Hebrew noun מַלְאָכִים from a verb מִלַּךְ , which, however, does not occur in the Biblical Hebrew but is preserved in Arabic and Ethiopic with the meaning "to send," particularly "with a commission." The noun מַלְאָכִים , formed by means of the prefix mēm, thus basically has the meaning of "what or whom one sends," i. e., a messenger. The noun thus may designate anyone who is sent with a message (Gen. 32:4 et passim). In a narrower sense the noun may refer to a human being whom God is sending with a message to mankind, such as a prophet (Isa. 44:26), or a priest (Mal. 2:7). Then again the noun is applied to supernatural beings who transmit a message from God (Gen. 19:15; 1 Kgs. 13:18, et passim).²

¹Ludwig Koehler, Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros (Leiden, Holland: E. J. Brill, 1953), II, 525.

²Wilhelm Gesenius, Hebraeisches und Aramaeisches Handwoerterbuch, edited by Frants Buhl (14th ed.; Leipzig: F. C. W. Vogel, 1905), sub verbo.

In the term $\overline{\text{אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה}}$, $\overline{\text{אֱלֹהֵי}}$ is in the construct state and may not have the article.⁵ According to the general grammatical rule the phrase $\overline{\text{אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה}}$ must always be translated "the angel of Yahweh," with the definite article.⁶ Girdlestone writes:

The word angel is in regimen, i. e., is limited or defined by the word which follows it; and though the second word under such circumstances generally has a definite article, yet this would be impossible in the present instance, owing to the fact that $\overline{\text{יְהוָה}}$ (Jehovah) [Yahweh]⁷ never receives one.⁸

$\overline{\text{אֱלֹהֵי}}$ does not receive an article because it is a proper noun and proper nouns do not receive an article.⁹

From the grammatical viewpoint the men who translated

⁵Wilhelm Gesenius, Hebrew Grammar, E. Kautzsch, editor, translated by G. W. Collins and A. E. Cowley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898), p. 421, par. 125a; p. 258, par. 89a; p. 431, par. 127a. Also, George V. Schick, Notes On Hebrew Grammar (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary), Section 18, par. 3.

⁶So, A. B. Davidson, Dictionary of the Bible, edited by James Hastings (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), I, 94. Also, E. W. Hengstenberg, Christology of the Old Testament, translated by James Martin (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1875), IV, 286.

⁷The translation of $\overline{\text{אֱלֹהֵי}}$ by the word "Jehovah" is open to the criticism that the translators were merely transliterating this nomen tetragrammaton on the basis of the Massoretic pointings rather than on the accepted pointings for $\overline{\text{יְהוָה}}$. Cf. note 4 above. Cf. also Gesenius, Hebrew Grammar, p. 311, par. 103m; p. 65, par. 17c.

⁸Robert Baker Girdlestone, Synonyms of the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1948), p. 41.

⁹Gesenius, Hebrew Grammar, p. 421, par. 125a; p. 422, par. 125d.

the King James Version were in error when they translated

מַלְאָכֵי יְהוָה by "an angel of the Lord."¹⁰

Harkavy's Hebrew dictionary is also in error when it translates מַלְאָכֵי יְהוָה by "an angel (prop. a messenger)."¹¹

However, while grammar and lexicography can indicate to us how to translate the words מַלְאָכֵי יְהוָה, they cannot convey to us the full meaning of these words.

¹⁰Cf. Judges 2:1; 6:11; 6:22; 13:16; 13:21.

¹¹Alexander Harkavy, Students' Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary to the Old Testament (New York: Hebrew Publishing Co., c.1914), p. 381.

CHAPTER III

VIEWS CONCERNING THE MEANING OF מַלְאָכִים מַלְאָכִים

While there are different views concerning the meaning of the term מַלְאָכִים מַלְאָכִים, two main lines of thought have emerged. One is that מַלְאָכִים מַלְאָכִים designates a lower angel or a created being. The other is that מַלְאָכִים מַלְאָכִים is a "self-presentation" of God.

Oehler in his Theology of the Old Testament indicates that Augustine, Jerome, Gregory the Great, Steudel, Trip, Hofmann (with special modifications), Kurtz, and Delitzsch held the view that מַלְאָכִים מַלְאָכִים is to be understood as "an angel," "that is, a finite spirit under subjection to God, which executes the divine command."¹

Oehler writes:

But, again, this first view occurs in two forms. According to the first of these the Malakh is an angel specially deputed by God from among the number of Malakhim for each separate occasion, and we have no means of deciding whether he is always the same angel or not (Steudel); according to the second form (principally Hofmann), it is always one and the same angel through whom God stands in relation to the people of revelation from the beginning to the end of the Old Testament. . . .²

According to Oehler the second principal view is:

¹Gustav Friederich Oehler, Theology of the Old Testament, translated by George E. Day (9th ed.; New York: Funk and Wagnalls, c. 1883), p. 131.

²Oehler, op. cit., p. 132.

. . . that the Malakh of Jehovah³ is a self-presentation of Jehovah entering into the sphere of the creature, and is one in essence with Jehovah; and is yet again different from Him. This view has been held in three different forms: (a) according to the first of these the Malakh is the Logos - the second person of the Godhead in the sense of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. This is the view of the Greek Fathers: of Justin, in his Dialogue with Trypho, chap. 56, 61, 127 f.; also of Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Cyprian. . . . At a later period this was the view of the Lutheran theologians; in our day it has been defended by Hengstenberg (who speaks of the Malakh as an uncreated angel), and by others. (b) According to the second form (so Barth), the angel of Jehovah is a created being; with which, however, the uncreated Logos was personally connected. (c) According to the third (so Vatke, DeWette, and others), the Malakh is nothing hypostatical i. e., not a personal being, but only an unsubstantial manifestation of God; a momentary descent of God into visibility, a mission of God (here מַלְאָכִי is taken in its original abstract meaning), which again returns into the Divine Being.⁴

In the textbooks on Dogmatics which are used at Concordia Theological Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, our Lutheran dogmatists take a very definite stand on the meaning of מַלְאָכִי = מַלְאָכִי.

Christian Dogmatics by Dr. J. T. Mueller contains the following quotation:

The important question, "When does the Scriptural expression Angel of the Lord (מַלְאָכִי מְרַמֵּז) denote the Angelus increatus, or Christ?" our dogmatists answer as follows: Wherever the name Jehovah or divine works and worship are ascribed to the Angel in Scripture, then this Angel must be understood to be

³Supra: chapter II, note 7.

⁴Oehler, op. cit., p. 133.

the Son of God."⁵

Dr. Francis Pieper wrote in his Christian Dogmatics:

There is absolutely no ground for Luthardt's claim that as Jehovah's ambassador a created angel could identify himself with Jehovah. Imagine the English ambassador at Washington introducing himself as "His Majesty, the King of England!" He would be recalled at once as an imposter.⁶

Dr. Pieper also wrote, "There are many passages in which the Angel of the Lord is identified with Jehovah."⁷

Dr. Pieper used a quotation from Philippi as a statement of his position on the subject:

In their native sense these passages⁸ teach that the Angel of the Lord is the uncreated angel, identical with Jehovah, to whom divine attributes, works, names, and worship are ascribed. If we found in these passages only Oriental hyperbolism, then we would sacrifice the solid basis for Scripture interpretation, and, following such a course consistently, would with the rationalist dissolve and cancel even the firmest and most indestructible revelation.⁹

Such theologians as Hengstenburg, Keil, Thomasius, Rohnert, and Joseph Addison Alexander are listed by Dr.

⁵John Theodore Mueller, Christian Dogmatics (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1934), p. 196.

⁶Francis Pieper, Christian Dogmatics (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), I, 396.

⁷Loc. cit.

⁸The passages listed are Gen. 16:7-14; 18; 19; 21:17-19; 22:11-18; 31:11-13, cp. 28:11-22; 33:25-30, cp. Hos. 12:5; 48:15 f.; Exod. 3:1-7; 13:21, cp. 14:19; 23:20 f.; 33:14 and Isa. 63:8,9; Josh. 5:13; 6:2; Judg. 6:11-24; 13:3-25.

⁹Pieper, op. cit., p. 397.

Pieper as persons who took a similar position.¹⁰

In his chapter on Angelology (De Angelis) Dr. Pieper included a quotation from Gerhard's Loci:

When either the name Jehovah or divine works or divine worship is attributed in Scripture to an angel, then this Angel must be understood to be the Son of God.¹¹

Recent literature of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod includes interesting statements on the meaning of the term מַלְאָכִים . The Rev. Prof. W. A. Poehler writes in Portals of Prayer, "In fact, the burning bush was a device of the Angel of the Lord (our Savior, before He became man) for attracting Moses' attention."¹²

The Concordia Sunday School Teacher includes the following statement in a discussion of a lesson based on Genesis 16:1-15, "'Angel of the Lord,' i.e., the Lord Himself (v. 13). It was the uncreated Angel, the Son of God, who appeared in human form (theophany)."¹³

In "What Does the Bible Say?" - a manual for the instruction of adults - the author includes the words "Angel of the Lord (Old Testament)" in a listing entitled, "Other

¹⁰Pieper, loc. cit., note 27.

¹¹Pieper, op. cit., p. 499, note 5.

¹²W. A. Poehler, Portals of Prayer, No. 127 (July 29 to September 18, 1954), p. 3.

¹³Concordia Sunday School Teacher, Junior to Senior Division, III, No. 4 (July to September, 1954), p. 37.

names for Jesus Christ are:"¹⁴

¹⁴Oswald Riess, What Does the Bible Say?, (2nd rev. ed.; Detroit: n.p., 1947), p. 41.

cates a living personal being is allowed on all hands; but a variety of opinions are entertained respecting the essential standing of this messenger of Jehovah. Some think that he was a created angel, one of those celestial spirits who were frequently delegated under the ancient economies to execute the purposes of God's grace to his chosen; while others, convinced that things are predicated of this angel involving the possession of attributes and powers superior to those of the most exalted creatures, maintain that this must be considered a real theophany, a visible manifestation of God, without reference to any distinction of persons. To each of these hypotheses insuperable objections have been urged: against the latter, on the ground that "no man hath seen God at any time" (John 1: 18; Col. 1:15); and against the former, founded on the historical circumstances of this narrative, in which "the angel of the Lord" promises to do what was manifestly beyond the capabilities of any created being (v. 10), and also did himself what he afterwards ascribed to the Lord (cf. vv. 7,8 with v. 11, last clause). The conclusion, therefore, to which, on a full consideration of the facts, the most eminent Biblical critics and divines have come is, that this was an appearance of the Logos, or Divine person of the Messiah, prelusive, as in many subsequent instances, to his actually incarnate manifestation in the fulness of time (cf. Mic. 5:2).³

In this section it is evident that the angel identifies himself with God⁴ and claims to exercise the prerogatives of God.⁵ Hagar, to whom אלהים appeared, identified him with God.⁶

³Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, David Brown, Critical Commentary (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Company), I, 149.

⁴Cf. Gen. 16:10. So, A. B. Davidson, Dictionary of the Bible, edited by James Hastings (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), I, 94.

⁵Cf. Gen. 16:10.

⁶Cf. Gen. 16:13. אלהים is identified with אלהים and אלהים .

In contrast to this, Davidson points out:

On the other hand, the angel of the Lord distinguishes between himself and the Lord, just as the Lord distinguishes between himself and the angel. The latter says to Hagar, Gen. 16:11, "J' hath heard thy affliction;" cf. Gen. 22:15. Num. 22:31, "The Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Lord;"7

Skinner, who holds liberal theological views, seeks to solve the difficulty in a different manner:

The אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה (or אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה "א") is "Yahweh Himself in self-manifestation," or, in other words, a personification of the theophany. This somewhat subtle definition is founded on the fact that in very many instances the angel is at once identified with God and differentiated from Him; cp. e.g. vv. 10, 13 with 11. The ultimate explanation of the ambiguity is no doubt to be sought in the advance of religious thought to a more spiritual apprehension of the divine nature.⁸

In commenting on verse 13 Hengstenberg writes:

Hagar must have been convinced that she had seen God without the mediation of a created angel; for otherwise she could not have wondered that her life was preserved.⁹

Genesis 22:11,12,15,16,17,18

- 11) And the angel of Yahweh called unto him out of heaven, and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here am I."
 12) And he said, "Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know

⁷Davidson, loc. cit.

⁸John Skinner, "Genesis," International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), pp. 286-7.

⁹E. W. Hengstenberg, Christology of the Old Testament, translated by Theo. Meyer (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1871), I, 117.

that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me."

15) And the angel of Yahweh called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time

16) And said, "By myself have I sworn saith Yahweh, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son:

17) That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;

18) And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."

Leupold comments:

In our passage His [the angel's] divine character is indicated by the words that close v. 12: "thou hast not withheld thine only son from me." That one can be God and yet so distinct from Him in one sense as to be able to say, "I know that thou fearest God," is to be explained on the ground of the distinction of persons.¹⁰

Dr. Pieper declares:

Aside from any other consideration, the phrase "from Me"¹¹ (Luther: "um meinetwillen") is in itself sufficient reason to reject the idea that a created angel is here speaking. But more: not only does Abraham call the name of the place Jehovah jireh (the Lord shall see), but in the subsequent address the Angel of the Lord calls Himself the Lord who has sworn by Himself to bless Abraham and multiply his seed (vv. 15-18). No created angel could make that statement.¹²

The New Testament confirms these views; for in Luke 1: 68 and 73 we find that the angel of Yahweh is not mentioned but "the Lord God of Israel" is referred to as having

¹⁰Leupold, op. cit., p. 607.

¹¹Cf. Gen. 22:12.

¹²Francis Pieper, Christian Dogmatics (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), I, 396.

given the promise to Abraham.¹³

Exodus 3:1-15
(Particularly verses 2,4,5,6,11,14)

- 2) And the angel of Yahweh appeared unto him [Moses] in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush:
- 4) And when Yahweh saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, "Moses, Moses"
- 5) And he said, "Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."
- 6) Moreover he said, "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham," And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.
- 11) And Moses said unto God,
- 14) And God said unto Moses, "I AM THAT I AM:" and he said, "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, 'I AM hath sent me unto you.'"

In dealing with these passages Dr. Pieper states:

The story of Moses at Mount Horeb (Ex. 3:1-15) reveals in great detail the identity of the Angel of the Lord. The Angel who appeared to Moses in the burning bush could not have been a created angel, because in v. 4 the Angel of the Lord identifies himself with Jehovah. But more: the Angel of the Lord describes himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and of His people Israel, which Moses is to liberate from the Egyptian bondage. Upon Moses' insistent pleas for a more precise identification the Angel of the Lord identifies Himself as the essential and unchanging God, the $\bar{\text{א}}\bar{\text{נ}}\bar{\text{י}}\bar{\text{א}}\bar{\text{ל}}\bar{\text{ה}}\bar{\text{י}}\bar{\text{י}}\bar{\text{ו}}\bar{\text{ה}}$, "I AM THAT I AM."¹⁴

It is obvious that $\bar{\text{א}}\bar{\text{נ}}\bar{\text{י}}\bar{\text{א}}\bar{\text{ל}}\bar{\text{ה}}\bar{\text{י}}\bar{\text{י}}\bar{\text{ו}}\bar{\text{ה}}$ (v. 2) is equated with $\bar{\text{א}}\bar{\text{נ}}\bar{\text{י}}\bar{\text{א}}\bar{\text{ל}}\bar{\text{ה}}\bar{\text{י}}\bar{\text{י}}\bar{\text{ו}}\bar{\text{ה}}$ (v. 4) and $\bar{\text{א}}\bar{\text{נ}}\bar{\text{י}}\bar{\text{א}}\bar{\text{ל}}\bar{\text{ה}}\bar{\text{י}}\bar{\text{י}}\bar{\text{ו}}\bar{\text{ה}}$ (vv. 4,6,11,13,14).

In verse 5 $\bar{\text{א}}\bar{\text{נ}}\bar{\text{י}}\bar{\text{א}}\bar{\text{ל}}\bar{\text{ה}}\bar{\text{י}}\bar{\text{י}}\bar{\text{ו}}\bar{\text{ה}}$ demands the worship due only to the true God.

¹³Cf. Hebrews 6:13,14.

¹⁴Pieper, loc. cit.

The writer of Acts, in referring to Moses' experience equates the term ἀγγελος κυρίου ("an angel of the Lord")¹⁵ with ὁ κύριος and ὁ Θεός.¹⁶

Numbers 22:22-35

In this section the term $\overline{\text{אֱלֹהִים}} \text{ אֲנִי} \text{ וְאַתָּה} \text{ הוֹדֵנוּ$ is used ten times.¹⁷

The only verse that sheds light on our study is verse 31:

Then Yahweh opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of Yahweh standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face.

In verse 31 a distinction is made between $\overline{\text{אֱלֹהִים}} \text{ אֲנִי} \text{ וְאַתָּה} \text{ הוֹדֵנוּ}$ and $\overline{\text{אֱלֹהִים}} \text{ אֲנִי} \text{ וְאַתָּה} \text{ הוֹדֵנוּ}$.¹⁸

Judges 2:1-5 (particularly verses 1 and 4)

1) And an [sic]¹⁹ angel of Yahweh came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, "I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swore unto your fathers; and I said, 'I will never break my covenant with you.'"

4) And it came to pass, when the angel of Yahweh spake these words unto all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voices, and wept.

¹⁵Cf. Acts 7:30. (Nestle, 16th edition, places κυρίου in the critical apparatus.) Eberhard Nestle, editor, Greek New Testament, rev. by Erwin Nestle (16th ed.; New York: American Bible Society, n.d.), p. 30.

¹⁶Cf. Acts 7:33 and 35.

¹⁷Ludwig Koehler, Lexicon In Veteris Testamenti Libros (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1953), II, 526.

¹⁸Supra: p. 13.

¹⁹Supra: p. 4.

Some of the comments on this section are:

Jewish commentators generally have supposed the reference [in verse 1] is to a prophet or commissioned messenger, whom they conceive to have been Phinehas the high priest. We are inclined to think, from the authoritative tone of his language, that he was "the Angel of the Covenant" (Exodus 23:20; Joshua 5:14); the same who appeared in human form and announced himself captain of the Lord's host.²⁰

The "angel of Jehovah" is not a prophet, or some other earthly messenger of Jehovah, either Phinehas, or Joshua, as the Targums, the Rabbins, Berthean, and others assume, but the angel of the Lord who is of one essence with God. In the simple historical narrative a prophet is never called Maleach Jehovah.²¹

The Messenger of Yahweh) not a prophet, but, as always in Jud., Yahweh himself as he appears to men in human form or otherwise sensibly manifests his presence; . . .²²

In verse 1 $\overline{\text{אלהים}} \text{ אלהים}$ identifies himself with God by claiming to have brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt and by stating that he has kept the covenant made with them.

Verse 5 tells us that the children of Israel sacrificed, not to $\overline{\text{אלהים}} \text{ אלהים}$, but to $\overline{\text{אלהים}} \text{ אלהים}$, thus indicating that in the minds of the children of Israel there was a distinction between the angel of Yahweh and Yahweh Himself.

²⁰Jamieson, Fausset, Brown, op. cit., II, 74.

²¹C. F. Keil and Franz Delitzsch, Commentary on Joshua, Judges, Ruth, translated by James Martin (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, n.d.), 263.

²²George F. Moore, "A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Judges," International Critical Commentary (2nd ed.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903), p. 57.

A distinction is made between $\overline{\text{אֱלֹהִים}}$ and $\overline{\text{אֱלֹהִים}}$ in Judges 5:23.

Judges 6:11,12,14,16,21,22

- 11) And there came an [sic]²³ angel of Yahweh, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites.
 12) And the angel of Yahweh appeared unto him, and said unto him, "Yahweh is with thee, thou mighty man of valour."
 14) And Yahweh looked unto him,
 16) And Yahweh said unto him,
 21) Then the angel of Yahweh put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of Yahweh departed out of his sight.
 22) And when Gideon perceived that he was an [sic] angel of Yahweh, Gideon said, "Alas, O Lord God! for because I have seen an [sic] angel of Yahweh face to face."

Keil and Delitzsch comment, "The Angel of the Lord, i. e., Jehovah, in a visible form, appeared this time in the form of a traveller with a staff in his hand (ver. 21.)"²⁴

R. H. Pfeiffer writes, "The angel of Jehovah (i. e., Jehovah himself) appeared to Gideon at Ophra,"²⁵

Gideon realizes after $\overline{\text{אֱלֹהִים}}$ has departed that he has seen more than an ordinary angel.²⁶

²³Supra: p. 4.

²⁴Keil and Delitzsch, op. cit., p. 330.

²⁵R. H. Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1941), p. 317.

²⁶cf. Judges 6:22.

𐤀𐤊𐤁𐤏𐤃𐤁 𐤀𐤊𐤁𐤏𐤃𐤁) are equated.³¹

The angel of Yahweh tells Manoah not to sacrifice to him but to Yahweh.³² Here we have another indication that a distinction exists between 𐤀𐤊𐤁𐤏𐤃𐤁 𐤀𐤊𐤁𐤏𐤃𐤁 and 𐤀𐤊𐤁𐤏𐤃𐤁.

Manoah finally recognizes the angel as the angel of Yahweh³³ and refers to him as God.³⁴

II Samuel 24:16,17

16) And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, Yahweh repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, "It is enough: stay now thine hand." And the angel of Yahweh was by the threshingplace of Araunah the Jebusite.
17) And David spake unto Yahweh when he saw the angel that smote the people, and said, "Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly:"

I Kings 19:5,7

5) And as he [Elijah] lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel³⁵ touched him, and said unto him, "Arise and eat."
7) And the angel of Yahweh came again the second time,

The above passages are used by many commentators to indicate that the term 𐤀𐤊𐤁𐤏𐤃𐤁 𐤀𐤊𐤁𐤏𐤃𐤁 does not always refer to the same angel.

J. D. Davis comments:

³¹Cf. Judges 13:3 and 6.

³²Cf. Judges 13:16.

³³Cf. Judges 13:21.

³⁴Cf. Judges 13:22.

³⁵ 𐤀𐤊𐤁𐤏𐤃𐤁, without an article.

While an angel sent to execute the commands of God might be called the angel of the Lord (II Sam. 24:16; I Kings 19:5,7), yet mention is made of an angel under circumstances that justify one in always thinking of the same angel, who is distinguished from Jehovah, and yet is identified with him,³⁶

Hengstenberg in his Christology of the Old Testament

wrote:

But, however certain it is, that אלהים ואלוהים can only mean the angel of the Lord, it would be wrong to assert, that the grammatical reason is sufficient to prove, that in every case, in which אלהים ואלוהים is mentioned, without an angel being spoken of before as in I Kings 19:5-7, the Logos must necessarily be intended. The angel might also be an ideal person, and denote an actual plurality. . . . Among the passages in which the אלהים ואלוהים is mentioned, there are in fact some, in which this explanation is a very obvious one, e.g., Ps. 34:8; II Sam. 24:16; and II Kings 19:35.³⁷

Hengstenberg also wrote:

. . . in the passages in which the names of God alternate with "אלהים", and also in those, in which divine attributes are imputed to the "אלהים", he is usually called the angel of the Lord from the very first; whereas, on the other hand, in passages, in which unmistakable reference is made to ordinary angels, an angel is spoken of first, and it is only after he is known to the reader, that he is called the angel at all.³⁸

II Samuel 24:16 is a definite indication of a distinction between אלהים ואלוהים and אלהים .

³⁶John D. Davis, The Westminster Dictionary of the Bible, revised by Henry Snyder Gehman (5th ed.; Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, c.1944), p. 29.

³⁷Hengstenberg, op. cit., IV, 286.

³⁸Hengstenberg, op. cit., IV, 289.

I Chronicles 21:12,15,16,17

[11) . . . "Choose thee]

12) "Either three years' famine; or three months to be destroyed before thy foes, while that the sword of thine enemies overtaketh thee; or else three days the sword of Yahweh, even the pestilence, in the land, and the angel of Yahweh destroying throughout all the coasts of Israel. . . ."

15) And sent an angel³⁹ unto Jerusalem to destroy it: and as he was destroying, Yahweh beheld, and he repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed, "It is enough, stay now thine hand." And the angel of Yahweh stood by the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite.

16) And David lifted up his eyes, and saw the angel of Yahweh stand between the earth and the heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem. . . .

17) And David said unto God, "Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? . . . Let thine hand, I pray thee, O Yahweh my God, be on me and on my father's house;"

In verse 15 God⁴⁰ is spoken of as sending an angel.

Then in the last part of verse 15 we come across the term

יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ .⁴¹ Even though David sees the angel of Yahweh (verse 16), David addresses him as אֱלֹהֵינוּ

אֱלֹהֵינוּ (verse 17). A distinction is made between יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ and אֱלֹהֵינוּ in verse 15.⁴²

I Chronicles 21:18,20,27,30

18) Then the angel of Yahweh commanded Gad to say to David, that David should go up, and set up an altar for Yahweh on the threshingfloor to Ornan the Jebusite.

39 אֱלֹהֵינוּ, without an article.

40 אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ.

41 Supra: p. 21.

42 Infra: cf. comments on I Chronicles 21:18 and 21:27.

- 20) And Ornan turned back, and saw the angel;
 27) And Yahweh commanded the angel; and he put up his sword again into the sheath thereof.
 30) But David could not go before it to enquire of God: for he was afraid because of the sword of the angel of Yahweh.

In verse 18 אלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל tells David to set up an altar for אלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל .

Yahweh is pictured as commanding the angel.⁴³

David would not enquire of אלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל because he was afraid of the sword of אלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל .⁴⁴

Psalm 34:7 (8)⁴⁵

- 7) The angel of Yahweh encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.

As to the identity of the angel of Yahweh, Delitzsch holds:

The אלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל is none other than He who was the medium of Jahve's intercourse with the patriarchs, and who accompanied Israel to Canaan. This name is not collective (Calvin, Hupfeld, Kamphausen, and others). He, the One, encampeth round about them, in so far as He is the Captain of the host of Jahve, and consequently is accompanied by a host of inferior ministering angels; or insofar as He can, as being a spirit not limited by space, furnish protection that covers them on every side.⁴⁶

⁴³Cf. I Chronicles 21:27.

⁴⁴Cf. I Chronicles 21:30.

⁴⁵Hebrew text.

⁴⁶Franz Delitzsch, Biblical Commentary on the Psalms, translated by Francis Bolton (2nd ed.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1890), III, 410.

Matthew Henry explains:

The angel of the Lord, a guard of angels (so some), but as unanimous in their service as if they were but one, or a guardian angel, encamps round about those that fear God, as the life-guard about the prince, and delivers them. God makes use of the attendance of the good spirits for the protection of his people from the malice and power of evil spirits; and the holy angels do us more good offices every day than we are aware of.⁴⁷

Also, compare the first passage quoted from Hengstenberg's Christology of the Old Testament on page 21 of this paper.

Zechariah 1:11,12

- 11) And they answered the angel of Yahweh that stood among the myrtle trees, and said, "We have walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest."
 12) Then the angel of Yahweh answered and said, "O Yahweh of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years?"

Commentators react variously towards this passage:

The prophecies of Zechariah are of peculiar importance in connection with the doctrine of the angel of the Lord. They contain in themselves materials amply sufficient for a correct settlement of the question. In the very first vision, "the angel of Jehovah" appears surrounded by a company of inferior angels. He is represented there, as absolutely exalted far above them all. They bring their reports to him, as to their king and Lord, and give him an account of their proceedings. The hypothesis of an ordinary angel completely breaks down here. -The supposition, again, that the angel of Jehovah is nothing but a form of manifestation

⁴⁷Matthew Henry, Matthew Henry's Commentary On The Whole Bible (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, n.d.), III, Psalm 34:7.

of Jehovah himself, founders on ver. 12, "O Lord of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah." The personal distinction between Jehovah and his angel is very apparent here. The angel of the Lord addresses the Lord and intercedes with him.⁴⁸

. . . it is noteworthy that the Angel of Yahweh, the speaker, here [verse 1] as in v. 12 and 3:2 distinguishes between himself as a divine manifestation and Yahweh the God of the whole earth.⁴⁹

But is this a created or an uncreated angel? The latter view is maintained by McCaul, Lange, Hengstenberg, Philippi, and Kahnis, the former view by Hoffman, Delitzsch, Kurtz, Koehler, Pressel. . . . The simplest way of reconciling these two classes is to adopt the old view that this angel is the Second person of the Godhead, even at that early period appearing as the revealer of the Father.⁵⁰

Dr. P. E. Kretzmann expresses the opinion that אֱלֹהִים בְּעֵינֵי אֱלֹהִים in verse 11 is "that peculiar uncreated Angel, the Son of God as He revealed Himself to believers of the Old Testament."⁵¹

In verse 12 a distinction is made by אֱלֹהִים בְּעֵינֵי אֱלֹהִים

⁴⁸Hengstenberg, op. cit., IV, 296-7.

⁴⁹H. G. Mitchell, J. M. P. Smith, Julius A. Bewer, "A Critical and Exegetical Commentary On Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, and Jonah," International Critical Commentary, edited by C. A. Briggs, S. R. Driver, Alfred Plummer (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1912), p. 120.

⁵⁰John Peter Lange, Commentary on the Holy Scriptures, edited by Philip Schaff (New York: Scribner, Armstrong, and Company, 1875), XVI, 26.

⁵¹P. E. Kretzmann, Popular Commentary of the Bible, Old Testament (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1924), II, 703.

between himself and $\text{זָרַח אֱלֹהִים בְּאֵזְרָאֵי} .52$

Zechariah 3:1,2

1) And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of Yahweh, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him.

2) And Yahweh said unto Satan, "Yahweh rebuke thee, O Satan; even Yahweh that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?"

In this section $\text{זָרַח אֱלֹהִים בְּאֵזְרָאֵי}$ (verse 1) and $\text{זָרַח אֱלֹהִים בְּאֵזְרָאֵי}$ (verse 2) are both equated⁵³ and also distinguished.⁵⁴

In commenting on verse 2, Dr. P. E. Kretzmann writes, "And the Lord, Jehovah, for it is He who is the Angel of the Lord," ⁵⁵

Zechariah 12:8

B) In that day shall Yahweh defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of Yahweh before them.

In this verse the two terms $\text{זָרַח אֱלֹהִים בְּאֵזְרָאֵי}$ and $\text{זָרַח אֱלֹהִים בְּאֵזְרָאֵי}$ are equated.

⁵²Robert B. Girdlestone, Synonyms of the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1948), p. 42, note 1.

⁵³Jamieson, Fausset, Brown, op. cit., IV, 667. So also, George Adams Smith, "The Book of the Twelve Prophets," Expositor's Bible (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1900), II, 314.

⁵⁴Supra: cf. quotation from International Critical Commentary on p. 25.

⁵⁵Kretzmann, op. cit., II, 705.

Malachi 2:7

7) For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of Yahweh of hosts.

The phrase which the King James Version translates by "the messenger of the Lord of hosts" appears in the Hebrew text as $\text{מַלְאָכֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ}$.

Keil translates this verse incorrectly. "For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and men seek law from his mouth, because he is a [sic] messenger of Jehovah."⁵⁶ As elsewhere, so here, the Hebrew text has the equivalent of "the angel of Yahweh."

In commenting on this verse Keil writes:

מַלְאָכֵי יְהוָה , the standing epithet for the angels as the heavenly messengers of God, is here applied to the priests, as it is in Hag. 1:13 to the prophets.⁵⁷

Koehler places an exclamation mark after the listing of Malachi 2:7 under the term מַלְאָכֵי יְהוָה .⁵⁸

Haggai 1:13

13) Then spake Haggai the Lord's messenger in the Lord's message unto the people saying, "I am with you," saith Yahweh."

Keil points out that:

The prophet is called מַלְאָכֵי יְהוָה in ver. 13, i.e., mes-

⁵⁶C. F. Keil, The Twelve Minor Prophets, translated by James Martin (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1951), II, 445.

⁵⁷Keil, op. cit., p. 446.

⁵⁸Koehler, op. cit., II, 526.

senger (not "angel," as many in the time of the fathers misunderstood the word as meaning), as being sent by Jehovah to the people, to make known to them His will (compare Mal. 2:7, where the same epithet is applied to the priest.)⁵⁹

Here again the Hebrew text has the equivalent of "the angel of Yahweh."

Koehler does not include Haggai 1:13 in his listing of passages under the term מַלְאָכֵי יְהוָה , but lists it separately on page 525.⁶⁰

⁵⁹Keil, op. cit., II, 184.

⁶⁰Koehler, op. cit., II, 525.

CHAPTER V

THE IDENTITY OF "THE ANGEL OF YAHWEH"

Nowhere in the Old Testament is there any direct statement that "the angel of Yahweh" is to be identified with the Messiah, the Son of David, whose appearance is foretold in the prophetic passages. The Targums never paraphrase the expression "the angel of Yahweh," but they reproduce it by the corresponding Aramaic words.¹ No doubt, however, many of the passages in which Yahweh and "the angel of Yahweh" are distinguished must have proved puzzling to the Old Testament believer. Apparently the ancient Jews never reached a point of understanding the term "the angel of Yahweh" beyond meaning a special messenger of Yahweh who represented the Godhead in visible form for the purpose of conveying a particular divine message. P. E. Kretzmann declares that "this view was held by the ancient synagog, not only as a matter of course, but also as a matter of policy."²

With the advent of Christianity and the light which New Testament revelation shed on the meaning of the Old Testament, the views of early Christianity concerning the iden-

1 אַלְיָהוּוֹה אֲנִי אֲמַרְתִּי .

2p. E. Kretzmann, Concordia Theological Monthly, II (February, 1922), 33.

tity of "the angel of Yahweh" were divided. Clement of Alexandria, Jerome, Gregory the Great, and others were among the early teachers of the church who followed the Jewish understanding of the phrase. On the other hand, most of the Greek fathers, such as Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Cyprian, and Eusebius, held the view that "the angel of Yahweh" was the Second Person of the Godhead.³

Kretzmann points out that the belief that "the angel of Yahweh" was a created angel generally met with the approval of Roman Catholic theologians because it gave support to this church's doctrine of the adoration of angels.⁴ Nevertheless, the Catholic Encyclopedia declares:

The person of "the angel of the Lord" finds a counterpart in the personification of Wisdom in the Sapiential books and in at least one passage (Zech. 3:1) it seems to stand for that "Son of Man" whom Daniel saw brought before the "ancient of days."⁵

It further adds that, "Tertullian regards many of these passages as preludes of the incarnation; as the Word of God adumbrating the sublime character in which he is one day to reveal himself to men."⁶

Naturally also the groups that reject the doctrine of

³Kretzmann, op. cit., p. 34.

⁴Kretzmann, op. cit., p. 33.

⁵Catholic Encyclopedia (New York: Robert Appleton Co., c.1907), I, 479.

⁶Loc. cit.

the Trinity, such as the Socinians, Arminians, and Rationalists, must of necessity reject the possibility of any revelation of the Second Person of the Trinity in the Old Testament, including such a one as may lie in the term "the Angel of Yahweh."

In one of his sermons St. Augustine presents the two views current in the church of his day in regard to the identity of "the angel of Yahweh":

. . . that the very same one who speaks to Moses is designated both as Angel of the Lord and as Lord raises a great question. . . . There are two opinions which may be reached, both of which are according to faith, whichever may be the correct one Some say that he is called both Angel of the Lord and Lord for this reason that he was Christ of whom the prophet clearly states that He is the Angel of great counsel. For angel is a word denoting a function not a being's nature. For angel in Greek is one who is called messenger in Latin. Messenger thus is a word denoting action: on account of acting, i. e., announcing, he is called a messenger. Who would deny that Christ has announced to us the kingdom of heaven? Furthermore, an angel, i. e., a messenger is sent by one who announces something through him. And who would deny that Christ was sent. He who so often said, "I have not come to do my will, but the will of Him who sent Me?" He was sent in a special sense. . . . Those, however, who believe that that Angel of the Lord was not Christ but an angel who had been sent must weigh the reason why he is called Lord They themselves answer, "Just as in the Scriptures a prophet speaks and yet it is said that the Lord is speaking, not because the Lord is a prophet, but because the Lord is in the prophet, so also when the Lord deigns to speak through an angel. . . the latter is rightly called angel on his own account and Lord because of the indwelling God. For surely Paul was a human being and Christ God, and yet Paul himself says, 'Do you wish to have proof of Him who speaks in me, Christ?' The prophet also said, 'I shall hear what the Lord will speak in me.' He who speaks in the human being, speaks in the angel. Therefore the Angel of the Lord appeared to Moses and said, 'I am that I

am.' It is the voice of the indweller, not of the temple!⁷

Apparently the two views presented by Augustine remained current during the ensuing centuries without calling forth any important discussions.

With the advent of the Reformation the problem of "the angel of Yahweh" in the Old Testament was again brought into the foreground of theological discussion, especially in the Protestant Church.

Luther became the protagonist for the view that the Old Testament served the purpose of revealing Christ, His Person, and His Work, to the believer of the Old Testament church and that the New Testament furnished the light by which to interpret the Old Testament Scriptures. Luther's conviction in this respect appears not only in his interpretation of the Psalter, but also in his exegesis of many other passages. It is only natural that Luther in many passages in which the term "the angel of Yahweh" occurs identified him with the Second Person of the Trinity.

However, even Luther apparently seems to have been uncertain as to whether the term "the angel of Yahweh" denoted the uncreated angel or the Logos in each and every passage that the term is used. Thus, in his explanation of Gen. 16:7, Luther remarks:

⁷Sancti Aurelii Augustini Hipponensis Episcopi Opera (Venetiis: 1762), VII, 38-9.

Who the angel was who spoke with Hagar, Moses does not say. Hilary holds that it was God Himself and almost inclines to the opinion that he would like to connect such appearances of the angels with the mystery of the Holy Trinity. However, although human beings, too, are called angels, I hold that this angel appeared to Hagar in human form; for when angels appear to men they assume the form of the body in which they appear.⁸

Similarly in Judges 6:11,22, Luther is thinking of a created angel, for he renders the designation by, "ein Engel des Herrn."

In this connection it must also be borne in mind that in the New Testament the term *ἄγγελος κυρίου* occurs in a number of passages where admittedly the term does not refer to the Logos.

This situation ultimately raised the problem as to where "the angel of Yahweh" represented a created angel and where it meant the uncreated angel, identical with the Logos.

Luther's conviction concerning the identity of "the angel of Yahweh" appears from his comments on Gen. 48:16. Explaining Jacob's words, "the Angel which redeemed me from all evil," Luther declares:

For this Angel is the same Lord or the Son of God whom Jacob had seen when he wrestled with God, Gen. 32:30 and who was to be sent into the world by God in order that He might proclaim to us deliverance from death, forgiveness of sins, and the kingdom of heaven. And this Angel is our Goel, our Redeemer, or Avenger, who rightfully delivers and frees us from the power of the

⁸Dr. Martin Luthers Sämmtliche Schriften, edited by Joh. Georg Walch (St. Louis: Luth. Concordia-Verlag, 1880) I, col. 991.

devil. . . . therefore one ought carefully to note that Jacob is here speaking of Christ, the Son of God, who alone is the Angel or emissary, born in time as true man by the Virgin Mary; not the Father, also not the Holy Spirit.⁹

Luther's comment on Genesis 32:24-30, the passage describing Jacob's wrestling with a man, is:

This, however, is our opinion that this wrestler is the Lord of glory, namely our Lord God Himself or the Son of God who was to become man, who appeared to the fathers and spoke with them.¹⁰

On the other hand, in some passages the evidence pointing to the equivalency between "the angel of Yahweh" and Christ is too meager to reach any definite conclusions, e. g., Psalm 35:5,6. Hoenecke in his Dogmatik agrees that the term $\text{אֱלֹהִים} \text{ אֲנִי} \text{ וְיְהוָה} \text{ אֲנִי}$ does not everywhere indicate an uncreated angel. Hoenecke declares that it depends upon the characterization of the angel. He adds the remark: "This is also the principle for the understanding of Scripture concepts in connection with other matters."¹¹

As a guiding rule our Lutheran dogmaticians have set up the principle:

As often as and wherever either the name Jehovah or a divine work and divine worship is given to the Angel who appears to the patriarchs and to other believers in the Old Testament, there one must understand not a created, but an uncreated angel, namely the Son of God,

⁹Ibid., II, col. 1866.

¹⁰Ibid., II, col. 780.

¹¹Adolf Hoenecke, Ev. Luth. Dogmatik (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1909), II, 160.

the Prince of the heavenly hosts, the Lord of all angels, who in unutterable condescension, appeared to the fathers in the Old Testament in some assumed visible form and so prefigured His future incarnation.¹²

This conviction has come down through the Lutheran Church through such works as Büchner's Concordanz, a work formerly widely used in our Lutheran Church in America, which states:

Christus, der unerschaffene Engel, der Erzgesandte und Groszbote, Ebr. 3,1. welcher den groszen und verborgnen Rath der heiligen Dreieinigkeit von unserer Seligkeit zu offenbaren in die Welt kam. Er ist an allen den Stellen zu verstehen, wo dem Engel der Name Jehovah, göttliche Eigenschaften, göttliche Werke, oder göttliche Ehre beigelegt wird. Dasz der Sohn Gottes bereits in A. T. wirksam war, wie dies das N. T. Joh. 1, 11, c. 12, 41. 1 Cor. 10,4. 9. 1 Petr. 1,11. Ebr. 11,26. c. 12,25. 26. andeutet, und der Glaube der alten christlichen Kirche bezeugt, stimmt ganz in das biblische System. So wie es Ein Plan Gottes zur Erlösung und Erziehung des menschlichen Geschlechts ist, der durch die ganze Schrift durchgeht: so ist es auch Ein Werkzeug, welches diesen Plan von jeher ausgeführt hat, und der göttliche Leiter der Menschen ist.¹³

This position in regard to the identity of "the angel of Yahweh" was elaborated on extensively by Quenstedt in his Systema Theologicum and was also presented to the convention of the Central District of the Missouri Synod by C. M. Zorn in 1883 in his essay on the topic, "Our Lord Jesus Christ before His Incarnation and His Revelation in the Old

¹²J. A. Quenstedt, Theologia didactico-polemica sive systema theologicum (Lipsiae: 1702), p. 404.

¹³Gottfriedt Büchner, Biblische Real- und Verbal-Hand-Concordanz, American edition by A. Späth (Philadelphia: The Kohler Publishing Co., 1871), p. 316.

Testament." In Thesis III the author deals with the topic, "Our Lord Jesus Christ Has Personally Revealed Himself Under Special Names and Appearances in the Old Testament" and supplies the reasons for his conclusions. They are not new but reflect the conclusions reached by Lutheran theologians of the past. To prove the identity of "the angel of Yahweh" in many passages, in accordance with the rule laid down by Lutheran theologians of the seventeenth century, a number of Scripture passages of the Old Testament are exegetically treated and the New Testament passages which throw light on the problem are particularly emphasized.¹⁴ The gist of the essayist's arguments follows below.

Basic for the argument is the conviction that the Messiah or Christ, the Second Person of the Godhead, was revealed to the people of the Old Testament covenant in the Word of God. So, e. g., in the Word, Gen. 1, by which all things were created, John 1:3; even more clearly in Ps. 2:7 and Ps. 110:1 where the divine nature of the Messiah is emphatically declared.

In addition to this, a combination of Old Testament

¹⁴C. M. Zorn, ("Our Lord Jesus Christ Before His Incarnation and His Revelation in the Old Testament,") Verhandlungen der fünfundzwanzigsten Jahresversammlung des Mittleren Distrikts der deutschen evang.-luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio und anderen Staaten, versammelt zu Cleveland, Ohio, vom 1. bis 7. August 1883 (St. Louis, Mo.: Luth. Concordia-Verlag, M. C. Barthel, Agent, 1883), pp. 42 ff.

statements lead to the conclusion that Christ also revealed Himself visibly in Old Testament times. In the previous chapter it was shown that in a considerable number of instances "the angel of Yahweh" is given divine names, attributes, and worship and thus equated with God. Yet "the angel of Yahweh" and Yahweh are differentiated. By drawing in Gen. 48:15 a closer description of the function of "the angel of Yahweh" is gained. He is "the Angel," says Jacob, "who redeemed me from all evil." The term used is $\text{לַאֲמֹלֵי אֱלֹהִים}$, the redeeming Angel. The term לַאֲמֹלֵי which Jacob used is identical with לַאֲמֹלֵי in Job 19:25 which in conservative Lutheran circles is regarded as a reference to Christ. Pertinent to establishing the identity of "the angel of Yahweh" in Ex. 14 and 23 is also Isa. 63:7-12, where the prophet declares that it was "the angel of his face" who helped Israel in its distress, particular reference being to "all days of old." (v. 9b) The conclusion lies close at hand that the angel of Yahweh who led Israel during the Exodus, who is also designated as Yahweh (Gen. 13:21; Deut. 14:14; Neh. 9:12), is identical with "the messenger of the covenant" in Mal. 3:1. If one agrees that the Messenger of the Covenant in Mal. 3 is Christ, the conclusion is inevitable that the angel of Yahweh in many passages of the Old Testament likewise is a designation for Christ who was to appear in the flesh. As for the New Testament there is one important passage in which

the apostle St. Paul equates the Angel of the Lord and similar terms with Christ. In I Cor. 10:4,5,9, St. Paul declares that Israel in the desert "drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ." The apostle furthermore warns the Corinthians against tempting Christ, "as some of them (Israel) also tempted and were destroyed of serpents." Luther comments:

We have here strong and irrefutable evidence that the God who led the people of Israel out of Egypt and through the Red Sea, who guided them in the wilderness by a pillar of cloud and of fire, who nourished them with heavenly bread, and who did all the miracles which Moses describes in his books; likewise, who brought them into the land of Canaan and gave them kings and priesthood and everything, is indeed God and none other than Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of the Virgin Mary, whom we Christians call our God and Lord, whom the Jews crucified and even today blaspheme and curse.¹⁵

In the view of Luther, the Lutheran dogmaticians of the seventeenth century, as well as of the essayist C. M. Zorn, and the exegetes and dogmaticians of the Synodical Conference, this evidence is sufficient to substantiate the principle set up above for equating "the angel of Yahweh" in many instances with Christ, the Second Person of the Trinity.

However, there is no universal agreement. Hengstenberg is the most consistent in identifying "the angel of Yahweh" with Christ. Other prominent Old Testament scholars adhere

¹⁵Luther, op. cit., III, 1931.

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