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IN MEMORIAM: ROBERT A. REIM (1916-1991)

A Memorial service celebrating the victory of Jesus Christ over sin and death for all His believers was conducted in memory of Pastor Robert A. Reim on March 19 at Gethsemane Evangelical Lutheran Church, Spokane, Washington. Pastor Reim had succumbed (four days previously) after a brief illness.

Robert Adolf Reim was the oldest son of (Pastor/ Professor) Edmund Reim and his wife, Selma (nee) Schaller. He was received into the Kingdom of Grace through Holy Baptism as an infant and was instructed and confirmed in the Lutheran faith in St. John's Church, Fox Lake, WI, in 1929. He graduated from Winnebago Lutheran Academy (1934), Northwestern College (1938), and Lutheran Theological Seminary, Thiensville, WI (1941). He served Wisconsin Synod congregations in Hettinger-Reeder, ND, Sturgis, SD, and Fond du Lac, WI.

In 1959 Pastor Reim became a charter member of the Church of the Lutheran Confession and during his CLC ministry served Churches in Opportunity, WA, Mankato, MN, East Broomfield and Loveland, CO. He retired in 1985 and moved to Spokane, WA. Pastor Reim remained active, assisting at Gethsemane Lutheran Church where he held membership, as well as serving on an interim basis at Trinity, Spokane, and in CLC churches in Clarkston, WA, Orofino, ID, and Winter Haven, FL.

During his active ministry Pastor Reim served as president of the CLC and on various boards of the synod. He resigned from the Board of Doctrine for reasons of health just a couple of months before his death.

Pastor Reim's marriage in 1942 to Dorothy (nee) Behm was blessed with six children. Daughters: Gretchen Anderberg, Spokane; Sally Clark, Spokane; Elizabeth Doring, Apple Valley, MN; and Rebecca Gamble, Inver Grove Heights, MN; Sons: James Reim, Yachats, OR; and Rev. Peter Reim, Clarkston, WA. There were 21 grandchildren and one great grandchild. Also surviving are one sister, Jeanette Zemlock, Waupaca, WI; and brothers, Rev. Norbert Reim, Sun City, AZ; and Rev. Rollin Reim, Redwood City, CA.

Our CLC President wrote: "Pastor Reim was firm of conviction, quiet in spirit, and evangelical in his ministry. The Lord gave him gifts which he used well. Now the Lord has given him the best gift of all, the completion of his faith which is eternal life. May the Lord give courage to the family, and give us all such steadfastness of faith that we might in the Father's time enter into LIFE."

Those many souls to whom Pastor Reim ministered the grace of God and his brethren in the ministry throughout the synod thank the Lord for His grace toward Pastor Reim and for the Lord's gift to the church through His faithful servant. Blessed be his memory.

—Pastor Paul Fleischer

(Reprinted from the *Lutheran Spokesman*, May 1991)

Sermon Study — Ruth 1:16*

* In accordance with our custom, we are presenting a previously unpublished piece by a deceased brother. This sermon study was presented to the Pacific Coast Pastoral Conference, April 14-17, 1989. — Editor.

Robert A. Reim

Fifteen or so years ago I attended the wedding of a niece in a church that was a member of the body with which we were once in fellowship. The service was memorable because of the wretched sermon that was offered this young couple. There was nothing wrong with the choice of text, Ruth 1:16: "But Ruth said, 'Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people and your God, my God!'" There followed a fifteen minute sermon that spoke eloquently of the total sacrifice Ruth was offering. The life of a widow in a foreign land would be most difficult. She would have left all friends in Moab; she would be living in poverty; her prospects of remarriage were small in a new land. Yet her commitment to Naomi, her mother-in-law, was unconditional. There followed, then, a strong presentation of the difficulties that these young people faced in their married life. The only way in which they could possibly survive the difficulties was if they committed themselves to each other without reservation and then worked at this constantly every day of their married life. They must work at this night and day. And so it went. The presentation was forceful. The tone was stern. Fifteen minutes had passed and the end must be found. Then, finally, came the only Gospel in the entire sermon: "In the Name of Jesus. Amen." This is not a caricature. The pastor was very likely genuinely concerned about the hazards facing present-day marriages and felt that he had to lay it on the line.

Because the danger is ever there that we fall into that kind of preaching, we do well to examine this text with care and note that there is indeed a way in which we can properly present the truth of God and provide a young couple with the proper courage and confidence to make such a far-reaching commitment to each other as is indicated in the familiar words, "til death you do part." We need to shake ourselves loose from the thought that can so easily creep in, that the office of the ministry provides us with an authoritarian posture that will bring forth fruit just because we say that the fruit must be there. We need to remind ourselves always that the only power that can effectively work sanctification is to be found in the Word of the Gospel. This commitment in the wedding vow is a matter of sanctification and nothing else. What the couple needs is a rich measure of the Gospel so that they will have a good measure of the strength that they need to keep their wedding vow. This single verse from the story of Ruth provides all that is needed for a wedding address. What will be necessary is that we find a proper balance. The couple needs to leave the altar not with fear and trembling but with joy and confidence that they have what is needed to make such a commitment to each other.

The situation described in the text offers a proper parallel to the new relationship that faces the bride and groom. Ruth's determined announcement that she will go with Naomi and care for her mother-in-law can certainly be used to describe the assurance of bride and groom to each other. Ruth leaves her family and declares that she will leave the security of her home land and care for Naomi. Nothing would dissuade her. No sensible arguments from Naomi, no lack of creature comforts. Just so for the new husband and wife. That relationship calls for a totally unselfish concern for one another. It is proper and necessary to call attention to the fact that the commitment is heavy and long-lasting. "As long as ye both shall live." But then, there were no reservations in the commitment that Ruth made.

There is another parallel between the Ruth situation and the new husband and wife relationship. Both are abnormal. For Ruth to make the commitment to Naomi called for a total lack of concern for herself that simply was not natural. The self-preservation that is so natural a concern for humans must have required a careful consideration of the cost that was involved to her personally, if Ruth followed through with her proposal. Just so for a marriage that is to work and that is to last. That, too, calls for a total self-denial in favor of the concern for the marriage partner that is not at all natural to selfish man. From birth we carry the "me first" problem that makes the kind of concern called for in marriage virtually impossible. For a husband to love his wife as Christ loved the Church and for a wife to be subject to her husband as unto the Lord calls for hearts

that must be clear of all "me first" attitudes. Even as the problem was impossible according to all human thinking for Ruth, the marriage commitment is impossible for ordinary men and women.

But the problem wasn't impossible for Ruth, nor is it for the young man and young woman standing before the preacher. Even as Ruth made her commitment, the bride and groom can make their commitment with confidence. And the basis for that confidence lies in the powerful Gospel message in the words, "my God, your God." This was a confession of faith on the part of this Moabite widow. She was happy in the truth that Jehovah was her God and drew from this her confidence that she could indeed go with Naomi and care for her. The God of grace had touched her heart and had captured her. She was not an ordinary woman. She had sat around the table and heard the family devotions that Elimelech had obviously brought with him from Bethlehem. She had shared in the joy that belonged to this family in the promise of the Savior and the far-reaching implications that were a part of that promise. There she had learned that she was forgiven the sins that she had done, that she had been transformed from a child of Satan to a child of God. It was this Gospel message that had changed her heart so that she was no longer controlled by the "me first" virus but was genuinely and completely concerned about the welfare of Naomi. The only source for that kind of thinking and the strength for that kind of activity was the power of the Gospel.

And the bride and groom must be assured that they, too, are not ordinary people. Like Ruth, they have the right to say "My God" because of what God has done to them and for them. They need to hear it again that the Son of God did perfectly and completely cleanse them of all sin and did present them to the Father as holy and perfect, fit to be received by God as His own precious children. It is this Gospel truth that is going to capture their hearts and govern their thinking so that they also function as children of God. Telling them to do it is never going to accomplish anything, but giving them this power of God will effectively generate in their hearts the kind of concern for one another that will make a proper marriage possible. They must be told of the wonder of the forgiveness God grants them so that they will learn to forgive one another. They must be told of the sacrifice required of God to redeem them so that they will be ready to sacrifice for one another. We do, indeed, need to feed them well with the Gospel to work in them the conviction that they are, indeed, not ordinary people and to give them the desire and the strength to curb their ordinary attitudes.

"Til Death Do You Part"

Make this Commitment with Confidence.

- I. You will want to share Ruth's concern
 - A. Consider the lot of the widow in a strange land
 1. Faced with certain poverty
 2. Yet her concern for Naomi prevailed
 - B. Consider your marriage responsibilities
 1. Total concern for the other party
 2. Not normal because of our sinful nature
 - II. You have the same answer for these concerns
 - A. Ruth knew the Covenant God
 1. Grace for sinners
 2. God had captured her heart
 - B. You will have what you need
 1. Continued forgiveness in Christ
 2. His gracious rule in your hearts
 - a. Teaching you to love each other
 - b. Confident in facing trials
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THE LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES

#5: TO SARDIS

John K. Pfeiffer

BACKGROUND

If one would draw a circle around the seven cities addressed in this book, Sardis would fall in the center. However, if we were to look at the conditions of the Sardisian church, we would have to say that the circle in three dimensions would be in the form of a cone, with Sardis at the bottom. This will become evident in our study.

Sardis was once the capital of the ancient, powerful kingdom of Lydia. Here the fabulously wealthy Croesus sat upon the throne in the 6th century BC. After the Roman Empire devoured this kingdom, Sardis became the center of the province. There a Roman provincial court was set up, as well as a temple dedicated to emperor-worship.

Sardis was a center of agriculture, commerce, and industry for the region. Textiles and gold jewelry were produced there. Some of the first coins of the ancient world were minted in this city during the reign of Croesus.

The wealthy citizens of Sardis were patrons of mystery cults. The mystery was found in their secrecy. Only the initiates knew what went on (similar to the lodges). The cult of Cybele was among these. Cybele was declared to have power over death. Frenzied orgies were not uncommon in the ceremonies.

Sardis seems to have remained a city of wealth throughout its history. But, as often is the case, wealth bred degeneracy. They were soft and flabby in spirit. Their pride in their wealth became their downfall in the face of several enemies through the years. They were not alert and watchful. The congregation there appears not to have been able to rise above that spiritlessness.

The church in Sardis is said to have been started by the Apostle John. It is also said that this was the first church to become apostate. During the time of Tiberius, a portion of the city was leveled by a sudden earthquake. Was this the judgment upon the apostate church (cf. v. 3)? Today the city lies in ruins.

EXEGESIS AND COMMENTARY - Revelation 3:1-6

1. Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Σάρδεσιν ἐκκλησίας γράψον· τάδε λέγει ὁ ἔχων τὰ ἑπτὰ πνεύματα τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τοὺς ἑπτὰ ἀστέρας· οἶδά σου τὰ ἔργα, ὅτι ὄνομα ἔχεις ὅτι ζῆς, καὶ νεκρὸς εἶ.

AND TO THE MESSENGER OF THE IN SARDIS CHURCH WRITE: THESE THINGS SAYS THE ONE HAVING THE SEVEN SPIRITS OF GOD AND THE SEVEN STARS: I KNOW OF YOU THE WORKS, THAT A NAME YOU HAVE THAT YOU ARE LIVING, AND DEAD YOU ARE.

ἀγγέλω - "messenger" - The letter is addressed to the pastor of the church in Sardis (cf. *Journal of Theology*, 26:2 9-10).

τάδε λέγει - This is equivalent to "thus saith the Lord." It has been established in chapter one that Jesus is speaking.

ὁ ἔχων τὰ ἑπτὰ πνεύματα τοῦ Θεοῦ - Jesus declares that He possesses the Holy Spirit. "Who proceedeth from the Father and Son." The work of the Son is intimately tied together with the work of the Spirit. When Jesus promised, "Lo, I am with you always" (Matt. 28:20), they could understand that the Spirit was also with them. Thus, when Jesus speaks to the Sardisians, the enabling power of the Spirit accompanies His words.

As we will learn, the grave error of the church is that they despised the working of the Spirit. Thus, this description of Christ also comes as a serious warning. He possesses the Spirit and is, therefore, able to withdraw the Spirit. If they would not heed His call to repentance, this very thing would happen. The results would be catastrophic. If Christ withdraws the Spirit, who will there be who can believe?

Israel was guilty of such a sin. "But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit; therefore He turned Himself to become their enemy, He fought against them" (Isa. 63:10). It is the very thing that David prayed would never happen to him personally: "Do not cast me away from Your presence and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me" (Ps. 51:11). Paul, also, warned the Ephesians: "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you

were sealed for the day of redemption" (4:30).

The Holy Spirit is here referred to as τὰ ἑπτὰ πνεύματα τοῦ Θεοῦ, "the seven Spirits of God." "Seven" being the number of completeness, this may refer to the fullness of the Spirit. More likely Jesus speaks of "seven Spirits" because there are "seven churches" addressed. The Holy Spirit is actively involved with each one. Since the seven churches are representative of all the churches in the world, we are assured that the Spirit is active in all churches where the Gospel is being preached. It is as He promised Israel: "In every place where I cause My name to be remembered, I will come to you and bless you" (Exod. 20:24). When a man is indifferent toward the Gospel, it is a very serious thing.

τοὺς ἑπτὰ ἀστέρας - These are the messengers of the seven churches, the Gospel-preaching pastors. There is a very definite connection between the Spirit and the messengers. "The Holy Spirit usually works by the ministry, and the ministry will be of no efficacy without the Spirit; the same divine hand holds them both" (*Matthew Henry's Commentary*, Vol. VI, Rev. 3; part 1,2 (2), Fleming H. Revell Co., London). Christ can just as easily withdraw His faithful messengers as send them. Those who despise the Gospel and the Spirit's working will lose the faithful pastors.

It should be remembered that those who owned their own copies of the Scriptures were few. The majority depended heavily on the pastors to bring them the Word of God. Thus it remains to this day. There is a multitude of Scriptures in the world today. Though there is at least one Bible for almost every home in America, people do not spend much time reading it. They still entrust the care of their souls to pastors. If they do not have a faithful pastor, however, how shall their souls be nourished?

οἶδά σου τὰ ἔργα - Jesus had a first-hand, complete knowledge of everything that was going on in the Sardisian congregation. He is not lackadaisical about evangelical churches. He is intensely interested and keeps a constant watch. Thus, He is fully aware (οἶδά) of everything that transpires.

In the other letters, except for that to Laodicea, our Lord begins by stating something positive. In this letter, He begins with the evil that was present. The evil was so overwhelming that its shadow almost blotted out what little light of good was present. The good that was there was of such a nature that the church itself could not be credited with it. Instead, only a few names got the credit (v. 4). In the congregation as a whole, there was nothing good to which Christ could refer.

ὄνομα ἔχεις ὅτι ζῆς - This congregation had a "name" or reputation indicating that they were pulsating with life. In the eyes of men, this church gave every indication of being a Christian congregation. Outwardly, they had all the trappings of a Christian church. Putting it in a modern mode, they had their church services, which were well attended. Sermons were preached. The Sacraments were administered. They had their active men's clubs, ladies' aids, and youth groups. Everything that men could see gave them the impression that here was a vibrant Christian congregation: the First Evangelical Christian Church of Sardis.

καὶ νεκρὸς εἶ - "And DEAD you are." What a sinking feeling must have filled the hearts of the faithful few in Sardis. Their Lord and Savior pronounces their congregation **dead**. This was not just an opinion, uttered by some man. It was a divine declaration.

Jesus had given them a spiritual "cardiogram" and had found no sign of life. They were like a corpse that has been "dolled up" by the mortician's arts, while inwardly it is lacking a soul. All who passed by this church said, "My! Don't they look natural?" They thought that they had achieved all that is religion. However, they were "like white-washed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness" (Matt. 23:27).

True religion is first of all inward, and secondly it is outward. When Paul lists the fruits of the Spirit, he speaks of that which is within: ". . . love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control . . ." (Gal. 5:22f.). The foundation for these fruits rests upon the greatest work of the Spirit: **faith**. Before any of these fruits can be produced, the heart of man must be raised from the deadness of unbelief to the life of faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come to judgment, but has passed out of death into life" (John 5:24).

By His gracious operation, the Spirit "even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and has raised us up together with Him, and seated us in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus" (Eph.

2:5-6). All praise and glory be to God, who gives life to the dead! By the Gospel the Spirit carries out this great wonder. This is the Word of life, which is both Christ and His message. Believing in the message, we believe in Christ, and we cannot believe in Christ without believing in His message.

Herein is the deadness of the Sardisians. They had the externals, but not the faith. They may even have been an orthodox church, insofar as their official doctrinal position was concerned. Christ does not point to any particular work of a disgraceful nature, such as Thyatira (2:20). He does not mention some gross, doctrinal error, such as in Pergamum (2:14-15). Such mere "paper orthodoxy" is most difficult to deal with. Indeed, man cannot "get a handle" on spiritual deadness, for it is a thing of the heart. Only God can deal with it. "For God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7).

One more thing, which seems to emphasize their deadness, is the lack of any reference on Christ's part to persecution. Was there no persecution in this city because the citizens were more tolerant of Christianity? It is hard to believe that in all the cities surrounding Sardis there should be persecution, while in Sardis itself there was none. Could the answer be found in the congregation, rather than the citizens? The congregation was dead. This means that there was no inner motivation to make a public confession of faith. There was no willingness to spread the message of salvation. There was no conviction that would cause them to condemn all pagan religions and hold Jesus up as the one and only Savior and the Trinity as the one and only God.

The "First Evangelical Church of Sardis" may have had the spirit of ecumenism, which frequently arises out of deadness. Having no real faith in their own way of salvation, they were not about to condemn any other. Rather, they may have acknowledged that "there are many roads that lead to heaven." As long as a person does not claim exclusivity for his own religion and grants other religions the right to exist before God, he will not be persecuted.

When a Church has lost its vital force, it is no longer worth attacking; it is so ineffective that it has ceased to matter in the life of the community. A truly vital Church will always be under attack. A really live Church will necessarily be the conscience of the community, and because of that there will be many who will wish to silence it, and to eliminate it. "Woe unto you," said Jesus, "when all men shall speak well of you!" (Luke 6:26). There are some people whose enmity is preferable to their friendship, and whose criticism is preferable to their praise. A Church with a positive message is bound to be a Church to which there will be opposition. The Church and the world remain ever against each other. And a Church which has so accommodated itself to the world that the world finds no fault in it is a dead Church . . . a Church which is so negative as to fail to produce opposition is dead in its witness to Christ. (Barclay, p. 149)

2. γίνου γρηγορῶν, καὶ στήρισον τὰ λοιπὰ ἃ ἐμελλον ἀποθανεῖν· οὐ γὰρ εὗρηκά σου τὰ ἔργα πεπληρωμένα ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ μου.

BECOME BEING AWAKE, AND ESTABLISH THE REMAINING THINGS WHICH WERE ABOUT TO DIE, NOT FOR I HAVE FOUND YOUR THE WORKS HAVING BEEN COMPLETED BEFORE THE GOD OF ME.

γίνου γρηγορῶν - The periphrastic form is stronger than the simple imperative. It was absolutely essential that they wake up. The time of grace was dwindling.

The concept that death is a kind of sleep is not unusual in Scripture. We recall the daughter of Jairus, of whose death Christ said, "The child is not dead, but is asleep" (Luke 5:39). In that wonder-full chapter on the resurrection, Paul writes that "we shall not all sleep . . ." (1 Cor. 15:51). Reassuring the Thessalonian Christians regarding the reality of the resurrection of the dead, Paul writes, ". . . we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep . . . the dead in Christ shall rise first" (1 Thess. 4:15f.).

Spiritual death is likewise pictured as a sleep. "Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you" (Eph. 5:14). The congregation in Sardis was sleeping the sleep of spiritual death.

Those who are asleep are completely unaware of what is going on in the world around them. They are alone in a world of their own dreams. Only when they are awakened do they become aware. — Those who are spiritually asleep are unaware of the realities of the spiritual world around and in them. They are unaware of the reality of sin, of Satan, of their own evil nature, of a God of justice, of eternal wrath, and, most importantly, the

reality of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ alone. Instead, they live in a sin-induced dream-world, where the only reality is the flesh, and the powers of darkness and the threat of hell are not taken seriously. Unless one awakes from such a sleep, he will not be saved, but will perish in eternal fire.

γρηγορεύω is frequently translated "to watch." Indeed, there is a sense of watchfulness, vigilance, alertness, or, as is noted above, awareness. "So then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert (γρηγορῶμεν) and sober" (1 Thess 5:6). In the verses before this quote, Paul was urging the people to be prepared for the Day of the Lord, so that it did not overtake them like a thief. γρηγορεύω is often used in that context.

It is also used when encouraging a state of awareness in the face of the enemy. "Keep watching and praying, that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matt. 26:41). When a man is asleep, the enemy can easily creep up and take him captive or kill him.

στήρισον τὰ λοιπὰ ἃ ἐμελλον ἀποθανεῖν - Something was on the verge of dying. The enemy was going to kill it off, unless the Sardisians woke up to reality and established this something, making it firm and alive.

What is this "something"? Christ had already stated that the congregation was dead. This could not refer to them, though it might refer to the "few names" (v. 4). However, τὰ λοιπὰ is neuter. λοιπος is used to refer to people (2:24), but in such instances the masculine or feminine case is used. The neuter refers to **things**.

On the other hand, I cannot find a reference in which ἀποθνήσκω is used with things being the subject. However, we are dealing with an extraordinary book, which does not speak in ordinary ways.

Assuming that Christ is referring to things, they must be things which contain some kind of life, or else they could not die. Peter speaks of "the living and abiding word of God" (1 Pet. 1:23). The writer to the Hebrews says that "the word of God is living and active" (4:12). The Philippians were encouraged to "hold fast the word of life" (2:16). Jesus declares that His words "are spirit and are life" (John 6:63). The Gospel in Word and Sacrament is the creator and sustainer of spiritual life. When a church lays the Gospel aside, it can be said that the Gospel or the preaching thereof has died.

The congregation was dead, and the Gospel was in danger of dying out. Apparently, the Gospel was still being preached, although the majority was not listening. Even though the congregation had given up much, there was still something remaining. However, if the Gospel died out in Sardis, there would be no hope at all. The restoration to life would be impossible. Without the Gospel, the church would become a mere shell without a kernel, a carcass without a soul.

There must have been more than the simple Gospel, since Christ used the plural (λοιπὰ). The Gospel never stands alone. It brings with it all the blessings of salvation: all the doctrines of Holy Scripture and all the fruits of sanctification. Where the Holy Spirit is at work, there is first faith and then the rest of the fruits of the Spirit. But when the Gospel is taken away, the Spirit is no longer active in a life-giving manner. Any doctrines that remain are sapped of their life. Any sanctification that remains is not truly sanctification but is an external mimicry of sanctification. It, too, lacks the life that only the Gospel can give.

Therefore, Christ calls out with great urgency, "Become continually wide awake and establish the remaining things, which were about to die." They needed to become awake and alert to what was happening and to firm up the foundation of pure Gospel preaching in their midst. They should not let it slip away for lack of interest.

"For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away . . . how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. 2:1f.). The death of many a church has come through a lack of interest in hearing the Gospel. Other things become more interesting to them. Having a "charismatic" preacher is of greater importance to them than having a "charismatic" message. A message that pumps up self-esteem by making the listener think that he is in possession of grand, innate powers and beauty of personal character is more interesting than a message that builds self-esteem on the basis of the imputed righteousness of Christ and the adoption of the Holy Spirit. A "positive" message based on a law, which is possible to keep, is better in their minds than a "negative" message that is based on an impossible law, even though the emphasis on sin is quickly followed by a greater emphasis on forgiveness.

Every church and every Christian must be continually awake and alert to the

danger of growing weary of the Gospel. Our constant efforts must be aimed at shoring up the foundations of Gospel preaching. This can only be done by keeping ourselves ever sensitive to our personal need of forgiveness and our personal need to hear that we are forgiven for Jesus' sake. A lack of sensitivity to one's own sinfulness will result in a lack of interest in the Gospel of Christ. If we cease being aware of the fact that our faith is kept alive by the hearing of the Gospel, we will not feel the need to hear it.

οὐ γὰρ εὔρηκά σου τὰ ἔργα πεπληρωμένα ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ μου. - εὔρηκα indicates that Christ had been examining them. He had been sifting through their works to learn what these reveal about the people. (This is speaking in human terms.) What He found were incomplete works, works begun but not finished. The works came "before God" in incomplete form. He cracked open the egg and found inside neither yolk nor white.

This congregation had begun by the working of the Holy Spirit (remember the "seven spirits"). What the Spirit has begun, He wants to continue until it is filled to the full. This is sanctification. Although the Law is the test of sanctification, it is the Gospel which accomplishes sanctification.

The works that they performed were to be fruits of the Spirit, works of faith. However, they had turned away from the Gospel and, thus, away from the Spirit. It is not that they stopped working, but their works stopped flowing forth from a heart of faith. "Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?" (Gal. 3:3). Works without faith are incomplete works, dead works.

τοῦ Θεοῦ μου - Christ speaks these words while in His state of exaltation. We can understand this expression when it was spoken during His humiliation: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46). When the Son of God became flesh, He took upon Himself the nature of the creature. Even as the Psalmist said, "Thy hands made me and fashioned me" (119:73), so Jesus could speak. His body was woven by God in His mother's womb (Ps. 139:13). Insofar as His human nature was concerned, Jesus did "have a God."

However, since we usually attach the idea of subordination to the thought of "having a God," it is difficult to connect this concept with the exaltation of Jesus. When Jesus humbled Himself, He did subordinate Himself to the Father. But in His exaltation, He claims for Himself "all the fullness of the Godhead" (Col. 2:9), "all authority . . . in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28:18). This speaks of equality, not subordination.

Nevertheless, we come across such passages as these: "I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God" (John 20:17); "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . ." (2 Cor. 1:3. In this passage there is one article governing "God" and "Father." Therefore, we understand the phrase "of our Lord Jesus Christ" as being connected with "God" as well as "Father."); "The God and Father of the Lord Jesus. . ." (2 Cor. 11:31; cf. also Eph. 1:3; 1 Pet. 1:3). There can be no doubt but that Scripture continues to speak of Jesus, even after His exaltation, as "having a God."

One begins to flounder in the depths of the mystery of the Trinity. The mystery becomes deeper for the human mind by the fact that one Person possesses a human nature. We must accept the fact that all the persons of the Trinity equally share in the same divine essence. None of the Three is subordinate to the other two. The fact that Jesus now calls God, "My God," does not imply subordination. The most that we can say is that, insofar as His human nature is concerned, God is His God, even as the children of God are His brothers. Even in His exaltation, His human nature remains the product of the divine act of creation and therefore owes its existence to God, "HIS God."

3. μνημόνευε οὖν πῶς εἴληφας καὶ ἤκουσας, καὶ τήρει καὶ μετανόησον. ἐὰν οὖν μὴ γρηγορήσῃς, ἥξω ἐπὶ σὲ ὡς κλέπτης, καὶ οὐ μὴ γνώσῃ ποίαν ὥραν ἥξω ἐπὶ σέ.

REMEMBER THEREFORE HOW YOU HAVE RECEIVED AND YOU HEARD AND KEEP GUARD, AND REPENT. IF THEREFORE NOT YOU SHOULD AWAKE, I WILL COME AS A THIEF, AND NOT YOU WILL KNOW WHAT HOUR I WILL COME UPON YOU.

μνημόνευε - Jesus summons up memories. This can be a very effective method for bringing about a needed change. They all knew the way it once was. They could compare this with the way it is now. Apostasy is not achieved by an abrupt fall but by a gradual slide. If it were abrupt, it would be more noticeable. Because it is so gradual, it occurs without notice. The apostates think that everything is as it always was, that their spiritual state is normal for a Christian. Therefore, it is necessary to prod their memo-

ries, so that they can make a comparison and be horrified.

πῶς - There is a difference among translators and commentators as to whether this should be translated "what" or "how." If it is "what," then Christ is referring to the Gospel, which they received and heard. If it is "how," then Christ is referring to the manner in which they received and heard the Gospel: in faith, love, joy, zeal. ". . . we constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God's message, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe" (1 Thess. 2:13).

πῶς first of all means "how," "in what way." To make it mean "what" would be stretching it to the breaking point. πῶς sometimes has the sense of ὅτι ("that"), but this would hardly allow the use of "what."

It is my belief that this is a key verse in understanding the whole letter. It is not **what** they did that is the primary issue, but **how** they did it. They made their outward confessions of faith, but there was no inner conviction. They went through the church ceremonies, but their hearts were not in it. They performed external deeds, but these did not flow out of internal faith. If they could only recall the **spirit** with which they originally received the working of the Holy Spirit and heard the Gospel, they would realize how empty and dead their religious life had become. "Therefore take care how you listen; for whoever has, to him shall more be given; and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away" (Luke 8:18). This was the present danger for the congregation at Sardis. They needed to remind one another: "Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law or by the hearing of faith?" (Gal. 3:2).

εἰληφας (λαμβάνω) is frequently used of receiving Christ and His Word. "He who has received His witness has set his seal to this, that God is true" (John 3:33). "I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me . . ." (John 5:43). "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him . . ." (John 12:48).

τήρει - Christ commands them to "keep" or "keep guard over" something. They had become indifferent in their manner of receiving and hearing. Perhaps Ezekiel's congregation is a good example. They came to church, looking every bit like God's people. "And behold, you are to them like a pleasant song by one who has a beautiful voice and plays well on an instrument; for they hear your words, but they do not practice them" (Ezek. 33:32). Even so the Sardisians gave the impression that they were a Christian church, but they did not receive the working of the Spirit nor hear the Gospel with believing hearts.

Therefore, Christ stirs up their memories of what once was and commands them to keep guard. One who "keeps" a prisoner is very careful not to let him escape. So the Sardisians should be very careful not to let escape that frame of mind and heart which everyone should have when the Gospel is preached.

μετανόησον - τήρει is present tense, indicating that this keeping guard is a continuing activity, never to let up. μετανόησον is an aorist imperative, indicating that this particular repentance is a one-time thing. Jesus is not here speaking of the continuing state of repentance, but of repenting of this one and most deadly evil: their faithless hearing of the Gospel.

Repentance is a change of mind (μετα: after; νοέω: perceive with the mind), a transformation of one's way of thinking. "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect" (Rom. 12:2). The congregation at Sardis needed to transform their thinking, to turn away from the old, faithless way and return to the hearing of faith and love and zeal. There should be no more empty-headed, empty-hearted pew sitting. This repentance had to be a one-time, complete change. There could be no gradual changing in such a matter as this. Either they have the hearing of faith or the hearing of unbelief.

ἐάν οὖν μὴ γρηγορήσης - This condition is undetermined, with a probability of fulfillment. — The form of this condition, in itself, should have been a strong blow to them: "If you don't wake up, and you probably won't . . ." Such was the depth of their spiritual sleep that it was like a coma, from which not even the call of Christ would awaken them. One is reminded of the writing to the Hebrews: "For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since

they crucify to themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame" (6:4-6).

ἤξω - This verb puts the stress on the arrival, rather than the process. The Sardisians would not have the opportunity to view the process of His coming. One does not see the thief as he comes. Suddenly, He would be there, and then it would be too late. There are no doubts about this. HE WILL COME, if they do not awake.

This does not appear to be the final coming for judgment on the Last Day. It is a coming which would involve this congregation alone. Yet, it is a coming for judgment.

Let all take warning. If a man despises the Gospel and the working of the Spirit, his judgment may come before he leaves this world.

ὡς κλέπτῃς - I am reminded of the young man who said, "I want to have fun while I am young. When I get older, then I will get religion." The Lord calls the sleeper to awake. If he does not heed the call, the Lord will come without warning for personal judgment. There will be no other warning than the warning of Scripture. (Even in the case of the Sardisians, the Lord did not speak to them immediately, but through the word written by John.) Men will not have time to say, "Here He comes. Let's get religious." He will come "as a thief" (cf. 1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Pet. 3:10). No one will know when that will be. It will be sudden, with no second chance.

This is a strong and frightening warning to those who do not heed the Scriptural admonitions of Christ's messengers. The "Seven Spirits" are at work through them, earnestly desiring to wake up the sleepers. As long as they sleep on, they despise the call of the Spirit. "Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. Be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. For this reason you be ready too, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will" (Matt. 24:42-44).

The comparison with a thief is obviously made only to emphasize the unexpectedness of Christ's coming. There are warnings that have reoccurred through the ages, and there are signs to alert us to His coming; but there will be nothing to indicate the very day or hour that He will make His appearance.

The same thought applies in our text. The Sardisians would not, absolutely not (οὐ μὴ), know at what hour He would come. They had already developed a "laid-back" attitude regarding their relationship with God. If Jesus now set a deadline, telling them that He would come upon them if they did not repent by such-and-such a time, they would surely have thought, "Well, we can wait until that time and then repent."

4. ἀλλὰ ἔχεις ὀλίγα ὀνόματα ἐν Σάρδεσιν, ἃ οὐκ ἐμόλυναν τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτῶν, καὶ περιπατήσουσι μετ' ἐμοῦ ἐν λευκοῖς, ὅτι ἄξιοι εἰσιν.

BUT YOU HAVE A FEW NAMES IN SARDIS WHICH NOT STAINED THE GARMENTS OF THEM, AND THEY WILL WALK ABOUT WITH ME IN WHITE, BECAUSE WORTHY THEY ARE.

ἀλλὰ ἔχεις ὀλίγα ὀνόματα - There is one good thing that Christ sees in this congregation, although the congregation as a whole cannot take credit for it. It is common for pastors to be so overwhelmed by the bad in their congregations that they forget to take note of the good. It is not this way with Christ. He overlooks nothing and no one. Though the majority were dead, He did find some with life. The Shepherd is always searching for and finding His sheep.

Why does He say "a few names" and not "a few people" or something similar? Perhaps it has something to do with "the Book of Life" (v. 5). There are **names** recorded in the Book of Life. The Shepherd does not see His sheep as lumps of wool blending into the whole flock. He sees them as individuals, each having his own identity. ". . . he calls his own sheep by name, and leads them out . . . My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me" (John 10:3,27). Individually seen, they are individually registered in the Book. (Consider also God's consciousness of the exact number of believers in Sodom - Gen. 18:22ff. Also, the 7000 faithful in Elijah's days were not lost in the masses of idolaters - 1 Kings 19:18.)

ἃ οὐκ ἐμόλυναν τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτῶν - The picture of sin as a defiling or staining of the garments is a familiar one in Scripture: "All our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment" (Isa. 64:6); "And he spoke and said to those who were standing before him saying, `Remove

the filthy garments from him.' Again he said to him, 'See, I have taken your iniquity away from you and will clothe you with festal robes'" (Zech. 3:4). There is no single sin which is the only one that "stains the garments."

Since our text identifies a particular moral disgrace within the Sardisian congregation, we should not try to point to a specific act of immorality as causing the stain. I do not get the impression that anyone in this congregation was blatantly immoral, as was the case in Pergamum and Thyatira.

What, then, caused the others to be stained and not these few? Sin defiles, any sin. The few were not unstained because they did not commit sin. "There is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and never sins" (Eccles. 7:20). What made their garments free of stain was the fact that "they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 7:14).

As for the majority, their stains remained, because they did not care enough to look to Christ for forgiveness. The Sardisians did not concern themselves with such things as repentance and forgiveness. — Some consider the staining of the garments to refer to spiritual infidelity. It may be that the Sardisian congregation did prostitute itself with idols. When a man loses interest in the Gospel, he will not think it so terrible to practice fellowship with idolaters. A lackadaisical attitude toward the Gospel is the fertilizer of ecumenism.

καὶ περιπατήσουσι μετ' ἐμοῦ ἐν λευκοῖς - Even as they kept their garments unstained in this world, so they will walk in pure white garments in heaven. They will walk about with Christ in holiness and righteousness.

What a marvelous picture! A small child is thrilled to go for a walk with his father. A little brother is honored when his big brother asks him to come along. What an honor, what a thrill, when we breathe out our last earthly breath only to hear the voice of Christ saying, "Come. Walk with Me." With this our Savior-God we most surely will walk, because He has washed away all our stains. And on those heavenly pathways, there will be no more staining, for we will be clothed in holiness and righteousness forever.

5. Ὁ νικῶν οὗτος περιβαλεῖται ἐν ἱματίοις λευκοῖς, καὶ οὐ μὴ ἐξαλείψω τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῆς βίβλου τῆς ζωῆς, καὶ ὁμολογήσω τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐνώπιον τοῦ πατρὸς μου καὶ ἐνώπιον τῶν ἀγγέλων αὐτοῦ.

THE ONE OVERCOMING THUS WILL BE CLOTHED IN GARMENTS WHITE, AND NOT NOT I WILL ERASE THE NAME OF HIM OUT OF THE BOOK OF THE LIFE, AND I WILL CONFESS THE NAME OF HIM BEFORE THE FATHER OF ME AND BEFORE THE ANGELS OF HIM.

Ο νικῶν - The Ephesians had to overcome error and their own lovelessness. The Smyrnans had to overcome tribulation. The Pergamons, persecution and laxness in discipline. The Thyatirans, doctrinal and moral compromise and failure to discipline. The Sardisians had to overcome their spiritual deadness.

ἐν ἱματίοις λευκοῖς - All who overcome will wear the heavenly garments of holiness and righteousness. What was true of the Sardisians will be true of everyone who endures to the end, who keeps alive his sensitivity to sin and his love of the message of forgiveness. To this help us, dear Father in heaven.

οὐ μὴ - The double negative is stronger than the single: "absolutely not."

οὐ μὴ ἐξαλείψω τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῆς βίβλου τῆς ζωῆς - Throughout time, there has been among the people of God a consciousness of a book of life, which stands before the eyes of God in heaven (cf. Exod. 32:33; Ps. 69:28; Dan. 12:1; Mal. 3:16-17; Luke 10:20; Phil. 4:3; Heb. 12:22-23; Rev. 20:15; Rev. 21:27). The names that are written therein are the only names that God acknowledges as belonging to Him. These are the names that Christ will confess before His Father. He will "read off" the names and declare that they are one with Him. He will own them before all the heavenly host. Thus, they will be exalted and honored on high.

οὐ μὴ ἐξαλείψω - This is for the comfort and certainty of those who remain faithful in the midst of indifference. It is "easier" to remain faithful in the midst of persecution, when brethren are struggling together for the Gospel. Then they strengthen one another. But when there is indifference, who will strengthen you? Besides this, persecution is an enemy with substance. Indifference is a puff of smoke, which is very difficult to fight.

Those who are fighting indifference need this assurance from Christ, that it will all be worth it. Their names are permanently inscribed in His book.

ἐνώπιον τῶν ἀγγέλων αὐτοῦ - Why will He confess their names before the angels? The angels have always been greatly concerned about salvation and the saved. They long to look into the Gospel revelation (1 Pet. 1:12). They rejoice over each sinner that repents (Luke 15:10). They minister to the needs of the heirs of salvation (Heb. 1:14). They carry the souls of the faithful into heaven (Luke 16:22). They will gather the elect at the End of Time (Matt. 24:31). Thus, they are not only interested, but they need to know the names of the elect. (The relationship between the Book of Life and eternal election is a subject which deserves a separate study.)

Ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ Πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις.

THE ONE HAVING EARS, LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS TO THE CHURCHES.

The Lord Jesus reveals Himself to the church in Sardis as the One who gives the Holy Spirit and who sends the messengers of the Gospel. Here is a congregation that is indifferent to the message and to the work of the Spirit. They give the outward appearance of being a Christian church, but inwardly they are dead. They go through the motions but do not have the spirit. They have works without faith. Thus, the works were incomplete before God. They were empty shells, as also is this church. Jesus calls upon them to wake up, repent, and strengthen the few signs of life that remained. They should firm up the foundation of Gospel preaching by recalling the manner in which they once received and heard the message. The same attitude toward the Gospel will result in the breath of the Spirit blowing life into these dead bones. **Change!** If they do not change, but continue in their care-less ways, Jesus will come with sudden, unexpected judgment. — The faithful few within that congregation are encouraged and held up as an example. They are pure in the eyes of their Lord and He promises to keep them at His side forever. "He who overcomes shall thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels."

Pre-Incarnation Appearances Of The Second Person Of The Trinity

David Koenig

A study of the "Angel of the Lord" passages and related references.

[NOTE: Pastor Koenig wrote this article while he was serving as a representative of the CLC with the Nigerian Church of the Lutheran Confession (NCLC). The writer states that he intends his work as a study and invites consideration and criticism. — Editor.]

Introduction

Undoubtedly there are many fine studies of this in various essays and books from different times and quarters of the church. For myself at this time I do not have access to such, being where I am. I admit that in the U. S. in a box in storage I do have Hengstenberg's *Christology of the Old Testament*. Reposing there with Dr. Hengstenberg is Dr. Pieper in his three volume *Christian Dogmatics*. In no way denigrating these faithful theologians and others who have studied and written on this subject I simply have sought to dig into the Scriptures myself and freshly discover.

Not all conservative Christian teachers of the Word would admit to what I believe from my study. Even Berkhof, whose hermeneutics book most of us have used, warns, ". . . against reading too much into the Old Testament. This is done, for instance, whenever the details of the work of redemption, as revealed in the New Testament, are read back into the Old Testament. Many interpreters, for instance, find in Genesis 3:15 already the promise of a personal Redeemer" (p. 138). Since I differ with Berkhof on this, I likely differ on the subject of this paper also.

There is definitely a danger in fanciful allegorizing of Scripture. We must not move back to pre-Reformation nonsensical hermeneutics. It is quite clear where that type of hermeneutics leads. We must not read into God's Word what He does not say. Scripture interprets Scripture, correctly. If we go to Scripture with a "blank slate" mind, the more power to us. But we all have learned already from Scripture and therefore prayerfully go to Scripture with these already-learned truths. We go to Scripture to learn even more. If we go to Scripture more to prove our point than to learn, we err.

I admit to one premise with which I got under way, to which Berkhof and some other conservatives might not agree. It is: "There is more of Christ in the Old Testament than we realize, than we moderns realize." I believe that this premise is one Scripturally-induced over the period of my time of study in the ministry.

I lay no claim to this being an exhaustive study. (Were I to claim this, it might even begin to chip away at the validity of the aforementioned premise.) May you benefit from this study as I have. May you add to this study and let me know.

The Two Words

יהוה As for the Tetragrammaton, it really needs very little said of it among us, since what we believe of it is well-known and of long standing in the church. This personal name of the Savior God is not used of any other god. It is exclusive of them. It is inclusive of all that our Lord is. Occurring at least 5321 times in Scripture, it is a word for our Lord that easily outdistances in use even the common word for "God," אלהים. The Tetragrammaton stands for the Lord and Him alone. As you know, the translation of this name is in capital letters by our standard translations. When this special, unique name of God is combined with the following, it makes the expression unique and special, as we shall see.

מלאך This word, according to the KJV, is translated as follows: angel - 113 times; messenger - 98 times; ambassador - 4 times. We will use this KJV translation breakdown. Since we are concerned with the appearance and reference to the second person of the Trinity, we eliminate all plural uses of the word. All four "ambassador" uses are plural. As to "messenger," there are twenty-four uses in the singular. All of these refer to human messengers except one, Malachi 3:1b. Eliminating all plurals of the "angel" translation, this study then goes into the singular uses that, according to Scripture's interpretation, clearly do or could apply to the Christ. There are ten plural uses: Genesis 19:1,15; 28:12; 32:1; Job 4:18; Ps. 78:49; 91:11; 103:20; 104:4; 148:2. Cherubim (pl.) and Cherub always refer to angelic beings. Seraphim in Isaiah and Gabriel and Michael in Daniel are angelic.

Of the remaining uses I posit this for you: A strong majority of the singular uses are referring to the second person of the Trinity. I positively eliminate as not referring to the Messiah: one use contained in a lie - 1 Kings 13:18; thirteen of the twenty uses in Zechariah. That leaves eighty-nine uses which are definitely or likely the Messiah. The references in Genesis 24:7,40 and Ecclesiastes 5:6 are also likely to my view up to this point in my study.

As to the translation, "messenger," in Malachi 3:1a, it refers to John the Baptist. Also the name "Malachi," which is the same as in 3:1, uses the word מלאכי but obviously refers to the author of the book in 1:1. This leaves the other Malachi 3:1b reference, and it refers to the Messiah.

There are only two uses of the two words together which do not refer to Christ. They both refer to humans. In Haggai 1:13 it is appositional to Haggai. In Malachi 2:7 it refers to the priest who is of Levi and not of Judah. All the other 56 uses of these two words together refer to Christ.

The Five Constructions Of מלאך

1. מלאך יהוה —usually translated: "The angel of the Lord."
2. מלאך האלהים —"the angel of God."
3. מלאך אלהים —"(the) angel of God."
4. המלאך —"the angel."
5. מלאך —"angel." This includes the word with the pronominal suffixes of "his" and "my." There are eight of these. Those of Malachi 1:1

and 3:1, both "my," do not refer to the Messiah.

In the following Chart I we view these five uses. Within each of the classifications the listings are arranged chronologically.

If it is an appearance of the מלאך, it stands alone. Example: Genesis 16:7.

If it is an appearance but does not have the word מלאך in the text, it is in brackets. Example: [Gen. 18:1f.]

If the speaker is the מלאך with no indication of a visible appearance, then it is listed as follows: (Gen. 22:11,15)

If it is a reference to the מלאך but not at the time of appearance or speaking, then parentheses are used: (Judg. 5:23).

If there is still some question in my mind that it refers to the Messiah, then a question mark (?) follows.

In Chart II all the references from the first chart are arranged according to periods of Old Testament history.

There is much more of Christ in the Old Testament: the sacrifices, the types, the pre-figurements, the prophecies. This study limits itself to pre-incarnation appearances and references to the second person of the Trinity, who appeared and spoke in every period of Old Testament history, as the angel of the Lord.

Chart I

מלאך יהוה

56 times

Gen. 16:7,9,10,11	to Hagar before Ishmael's birth
[Gen. 18:1f.]	to Abraham at the oaks of Mamre
{Gen. 22:11,15}	to Abraham at Mt. Moriah
[Gen. 32:24f.]	to Jacob in the wrestling
Exod. 3:2	to Moses in the burning bush
Num. 22:22,23,24,25, 26,27,31,32,34,35	to Balaam on his cursing mission
[Josh. 5:13f.]	to Joshua before Jericho
{Judg. 2:1,4}	to the people of Israel at Bochim
(Judg. 5:23)	in Deborah's song
Judg. 6:11,12,21a,21b, 22a,22b	to Gideon at Ophrah
Judg. 13:3,13,15,16a, 16b,17,18,20,21a,21b	to Manoah's wife and Manoah
(Ps. 34:7 Heb. v. 8)	David's psalm when he feigned madness
(Ps. 35:5,6)	David's psalm referring to the destroying angel
2 Sam. 24:16	to David after his numbering of Israel
1 Chron. 21:12,15,16, 18,30	to David after his numbering of Israel
1 Kings 19:7	to Elijah in the wilderness
{2 Kings 1:3,15}	to Elijah in sending him to Ahaziah's messengers
(2 Kings 19:35)	slaying the 185,000 Assyrians
(Isa. 37:36)	slaying the 185,000 Assyrians
Zech. 1:11,12	in a vision among the Myrtle trees
Zech. 3:1,5,6	in a vision with Joshua, the high priest, and Satan before Him
(Zech. 12:8)	promise of victory and glory with
Him before them	

מלאך האלהים

8 times

{Gen. 31:11}	to Jacob in the dream about the goats
Exod. 14:19	in the pillar of fire and pillar of cloud protecting from Egyptians
Judg. 6:20	to Gideon
Judg. 13:6,9	to Manoah's wife
(2 Sam. 14:17,20)	woman of Tekoa refers to Him discerning good and evil and

(2 Sam. 19:27 Heb. v.28) having wisdom
old saying

מלאך אלהים 2 times
{Gen. 21:17} to Hagar with her son crying
(1 Sam. 29:9) old saying

המלאך 10 times
(Gen. 48:16) Jacob refers to Him in blessing
Joseph's sons
2 Sam. 24:16a,16b,17 to David after numbering Israel
1 Chron. 21:15a,15b,20,27 " " " " "
(Eccles. 5:6 ? Heb. v. 5) paying the vow to Him
Zech. 3:3 in a vision as Mediator

מלאך 14 times
(Gen. 24:7,40 ?) promise to Abraham's servant
(Exod. 23:20,23) promise of Him going before people
(Exod. 32:34) promise of "my" angel going before
(Exod. 33:2) promise of Him driving out Canaanites
(Num. 20:16) Moses refers to Him at Kadesh
1 Kings 19:5 to Elijah in the wilderness
(Hos. 12:4 Heb. v. 5) he refers to Him wrestling with Jacob
(2 Chron. 32:21) destroys Assyrians
(Isa. 63:9) refers back to the pillar . . .
Dan. 3:28 saving the three
(Dan. 6:22) saving Daniel
(Mal. 3:1) promise of the coming of Him of the covenant

Chart II

Old Testament Historical Periods (only first verse of reference)

Patriarchs

Gen. 16:7 to Hagar before Ishmael's birth
[Gen. 18:1] to Abraham at the oaks of Mamre
{Gen. 21:17} to Hagar with her son crying
{Gen. 22:11} to Abraham on Mt. Moriah
(Gen. 24:7) promise to Abraham's servant
{Gen. 31:11} to Jacob in the dream about the goats
[Gen. 32:24] to Jacob in the wrestling
(Gen. 48:16) Jacob refers to Him in blessing Joseph's sons

Moses & Joshua

Exod. 3:2 to Moses in the burning bush
Exod. 14:19 in the pillar of fire and pillar of cloud
(Exod. 23:20) promise of Him going before the people
(Exod. 32:34) promise of "my" angel will go before
(Exod. 33:2) promise of Him driving out the Canaanites
(Num. 20:16) Moses refers to Him at Kadesh
Num. 22:22 to Balaam on his cursing mission
[Josh. 5:13] to Joshua before Jericho
{Judg. 2:1} to the people of Israel at Bochim

Judges

(Judg. 5:23) in Deborah's song
Judg. 6:11 to Gideon
Judg. 13:3 to Manoah's wife and Manoah

United Kingdom

(Ps. 34:7)	David's psalm when he feigned madness
(Ps. 35:5)	David's psalm referring to the destroying angel
(1 Sam. 29:9)	Achish compares David with Him
(2 Sam. 14:17)	wise woman of Tekoa refers to Him
(2 Sam. 19:27)	old saying
2 Sam. 24:16	to David after his numbering of Israel
1 Chron. 21:12	to David after his numbering of Israel
(Eccles. 5:6)	paying the vow to Him

Divided Kingdom

1 Kings 19:5	to Elijah in the wilderness
(2 Kings 1:3)	to Elijah in sending him to Ahaziah's messengers
(Hos. 12:4)	referring back to Jacob wrestling with Him
(2 Kings 19:35)	slaying the 185,000 Assyrians
(2 Chron. 32:21)	" " " " *
(Isa. 37:36)	slaying the 185,000 Assyrians
(Isa. 63:9)	refers back to Him in the pillar

* (There is not evidence He appeared, but He surely acted.)

Exile

Dan. 3:28	saving the three
(Dan. 6:22)	saving Daniel

Return

Zech. 1:11	in a vision among the Myrtle trees
Zech. 3:1	in a vision with Joshua and Satan
(Zech. 12:8)	promise of victory and glory with him before them
(Mal. 3:1)	promise of the coming of Him of the covenant

It is significant how, in every age, He appeared and acted for His people.

The Individual References

For each reference we look at the evidence that it is the second person of the Trinity and the purpose for His appearing or speaking, or the reference to Him. There are certain criteria that we use to determine whether it is the מלאך יהוה:

1. The very name itself, מלאך יהוה, has to carry weight. Since the מלאך is in the construct, it is THE angel of the Lord. Who is THE messenger of the Lord to do the work of bringing the Good News to this world? The context of each reference further supports His uniqueness.
2. If divine qualities are ascribed to the angel, whether "angel" alone or in its other constructions, then He must be God. The created angels, just like us, are His servants.
3. If He does divine works, then it is the second person of the Trinity.
4. If He is worshiped, then it can only be the Uncreate Angel. In Revelation 22:8 and in Colossians 2:18 we learn in clear passages that angels are not to be worshiped.

Our Lord, when He was on earth through the incarnation, said that no one can see God. God is Spirit. The Father spoke from heaven but was not seen. When we see Jesus, then we see the Father. He and the Father are one. On Pentecost the Spirit was present but not seen. But Jesus, who promised He would send the Paraclete, was seen and amply so before He ascended after the resurrection. In His Old Testament pre-incarnation appearances He foreshadowed all that He would do as the visible Lord.

Genesis 16:7,9,10,11 מלאך יהוה - to Hagar before Ishmael's birth. **Evidence** - This is the first reference in the Old Testament to "the angel of the Lord." Since מלאך is in the construct, as said earlier, it is THE angel. After the angel of the Lord has spoken to her, we read (v. 13): "So she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, 'Thou art a God of seeing'; for she said, 'Have I really seen God and remained alive after seeing him?'" Hagar says the angel of the Lord is LORD and God. And she has seen Him. In v. 10 it is the angel of the Lord who says, "I will so greatly multiply your descendants that they cannot be numbered for multitude." Only God can do this.

Purpose - Certainly this first appearance is indicative of who He is. This is the Lord who has mercy on the oppressed. Hagar is not the mother of the promise. Yet He appears and comforts her. He gives her strength to return to her mistress and bear up under her troubles with her.

Genesis 18:1f. [מלאך יהוה] - to Abraham at the Oaks of Mamre. **Evidence** - The term, angel, in its five constructions does not occur in this text. But there can be no doubt that the angel of the Lord appears to Abraham. In v. 1 it is the LORD who appeared. In v. 2 Abraham sees three men. In v. 22 the men turned toward Sodom; "but Abraham still stood before the LORD." The Lord then talks to him. In chapter 19:1 the two angels came to Sodom. Putting this together, it is clear that the Lord was the third man. Both before and after the two angels left it is the Lord who talks with Abraham as a man. In v. 10 the Lord said, "I will return . . ." In v. 33, "And the LORD went his way . . ." In the same human form as the two angels the Lord promises the son of promise.

Purpose - Here He gives the assurance that there is nothing too hard for the Lord. The descendant would be born. The blessing would come. Here He who is our Mediator teaches Abraham and us to intercede with prayer for others. And just as He sent on His two servant angels to do His bidding, so today our Jesus has His servant angels sent for our benefit.

Genesis 21:17 מלאך אלהים - to Hagar with her son crying. **Evidence** - While here is the angel of God, it is still God Himself. It was the angel of the Lord who appeared to her earlier, and this would be the same person. When in v. 18 the angel of God says, "I will make him a great nation," the evidence is conclusive. He said this before repeating it again for her comfort. He it is alone who can do this, not a created angel. **Purpose** - God does not forget His promises even though we might. He repeats Himself for Hagar's sake. He heard the crying of the child and again from His merciful heart reaches out. His mercy is great to all. If only it would lead them to acknowledge Him! His sun rises on the evil and on the good; His rain falls on the just and the unjust.

Genesis 22:11,15 מלאך יהוה - to Abraham on Mt. Moriah. **Evidence** - In v. 11 it is the angel of the Lord who calls from heaven. In v. 12 He says, ". . . for now I know . . . seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." In vv. 15-16 it is the angel of the Lord who called from heaven a second time saying, "By myself I have sworn, says the LORD . . ." It is the angel speaking. He is the LORD. He furthermore gives the promise, v. 17, "I will indeed bless you, and I will multiply . . ." As He would multiply Ishmael, so He would multiply Isaac. **Purpose** - The Savior who would come from that multiplied number here gives the promise to Abraham who would trust in the unseen. Absolute trust is not disappointed, but rather rewarded. To Jesus we owe our dearest, just as Abraham was willing to sacrifice his dearest.

Genesis 24:7,40 מלאכו - promise to Abraham's servant. **Evidence** - In both verses, angel is in the singular. So far in Genesis, angel in the singular refers to the second person of the Trinity. The word in the plural refers to the created angelic spirits, Genesis 19:1,15. The term here is just angel. Yet throughout Genesis the singular is for the Christ. In these two verses, angel has attached to it a pronominal suffix, "his." There are eight times in the Old Testament when the word מלאך has a pronominal suffix attached to it. They are as follows:

Refer to the Second Person

Genesis 24:7, his angel
Genesis 24:40, his angel
Exodus 23:23, my angel
Exodus 32:34, my angel
Daniel 3:28, his angel
Daniel 6:22, his angel

Refer to Human Servants

Malachi 1:1, his name
Malachi 3:1, his messenger (John the Baptist)

I think it likely that the six all refer to Jesus. In the other twelve uses of מלאך which I have listed, the evidence seems strong for its referring to Jesus. If these two do not refer to Jesus, then they would fall into the group referring to the created angelic spirits (1 Kings 13:18 and the 13 uses in Zechariah). **Purpose** - The angel had appeared at Mamre guaranteeing a Son. He had stayed Abraham's hand on Mt. Moriah. It would seem natural that He also would see to it that the son of promise would have a wife to fulfill the promise of multiplied descendants. As He goes with Abraham's servant, guaranteeing success, so He goes with all His servants guaranteeing success. In our earthly

task, Jesus will direct and perfect.

Genesis 31:11 מלאך אלהים - to Jacob in the dream about the goats. **Evidence** - The angel of God said, v. 13, "I am the God of Bethel . . ." This is enough for me. But at this point it would be good to compare the other references where angels speak. They do not speak as God but for God. This is an important distinction. We know that in the prophetic writings there will be situations when the speaker will change from the writer to God and then back again. This is indicated by the change in pronoun from the narrator referring to God in the third person with the change to God speaking in the first person. It is not the same here. It is "the angel of God said." The created angels speak separately from God. Gabriel does not speak as God, but for God (Dan. 8:15-17). In Isaiah the voice of the Lord is separate from that of the angels. In Genesis 28:12 the angels ascended and descended, while it is the LORD who spoke. The one passage I have not settled yet in my mind is Genesis 19:13 and 21. The angels say it was the "LORD" who "sent us to destroy it." In verse 21 it is either the LORD speaking or one of his angels. **Purpose** - Jacob had to face his Laban as we do today. What comfort to know that our Lord works all out to good then and now. For assurance the Lord referred Jacob back to what He had told him at Bethel. We must refer back to the Word of God over and over again for the same.

Genesis 32:24f. [מלאך יהוה] - to Jacob in the wrestling. **Evidence** - There is no question that the man here is the second person. Over 1100 years later, Hosea states that Jacob wrestled with מלאך. He changed Jacob's name to "one who wrestles with God." Jacob acknowledges that, v. 30, "I have seen God face to face . . ." He names the place Peniel, accordingly. Here, as before, God grants blessing. **Purpose** - We, like Jacob, must cling to Jesus and be persistent in prayer. This brings blessings.

Genesis 48:16 המלאך - Jacob referring to Him in blessing Joseph's sons. **Evidence** - Having just looked at Genesis 32, who is it who redeemed Jacob from Esau's wrath? The angel of the Lord. Who can redeem from "all" evil? The angel of the Lord. Again, it is God who blesses. Jacob seeks this for his grandsons. The redeeming angel is the Redeemer of Job 19:25. **Purpose** - Jacob knew his Redeemer. In this first of the references to "the" angel, he is aptly distinguished as the one who redeems, ransoms, recovers by paying back. We know Him as our Redeemer from all evil. If He were not, no blessing could come to us.

Exodus 3:2 מלאך יהוה - to Moses in the burning bush. **Evidence** - The angel of the Lord appeared in the flame of fire. In v. 2 God the Lord calls to Moses from the bush and speaks to him. The angel of the Lord and God seem to be one and the same. In the exodus from Egypt the angel of the Lord figures prominently in the pillar of fire and of cloud giving deliverance. It begins here. **Purpose** - The Lord seeks out Moses to deliver His people. Still today God gives us leaders to show us The Way. The angel of the Lord delivered His people from captivity in Egypt and from captivity in sin.

Exodus 14:19 מלאך האלהים - in the pillar of fire and pillar of cloud. **Evidence** - Here, as in Genesis 31:11, it is the angel of (the) God. This is very definite. In v. 19 it is the angel of God in connection with the pillar. In v. 24 it is the LORD in the pillar. Likewise, in chapter 13:21 it was the LORD in the pillar. The LORD and the angel of the Lord are God. **Purpose** - Here He protects His people from the Egyptian army. He stands between His people and their enemy. It is ever so. He is present with us. Were He not between us and our adversaries, woe to us. In the pillar He led and guided His people. Today, He has told us, "Lo, I'm with you always."

Exodus 23:20,23 מלאך - promise of His going before the people. **Evidence** - God promises to send an angel before His people in v. 20. In v. 23 "my" angel will go before His people and blot out the enemies. In v. 20 we have reference to the angel of the Lord in the pillar of fire and of cloud. In v. 23 we are reminded of the commander of the armies of the Lord with Joshua before Jericho. In v. 21 we read, "Give heed to him and hearken to his voice; do not rebel against him, for he will not pardon your transgression; for my name is in him." This reminds of the Father's testimony at the Transfiguration: "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." If the Son is not obeyed, if there is not the obedience of faith, then there is not the possession of pardon for transgressions. Who has the name of God within, in the midst of him, but the Son? **Purpose** - To whom shall a believer of any age go but to the Messiah who has the words of life?

Exodus 32:34 מלאך - same as above. **Evidence** - מלאך is used in Hosea 12:4, standing

alone, and then it does refer to the angel.

Exodus 33:2 מלאך - same as above.

Numbers 20:16 מלאך - at Kadesh on the border of Edom. This also has reference to the above, but now at the border of Edom. God promised and now Moses reflects back over how He fulfilled the promise with the angel.

Numbers 22:22,23,24,25,26,27,31,32,34,35 מלאך יהוה - to Balaam on his cursing mission. **Evidence** - Ten times it is the angel of the Lord. In vv. 23 and 31 we read that the angel of the Lord had a drawn sword in his hand. It is the exact same wording as in Joshua 5:13. This is not the same as at Eden where the cherubim had a flaming sword. The Joshua reference, with this one, points to the angel of the Lord. In v. 32 the angels says, ". . . your way is perverse before me . . ." to Balaam. It is the Lord who is the judge before whom right and wrong are decided. Balaam fell on his face, v. 31, and says in v. 34, "if it is evil in thy sight . . ." Only to God do we confess our sin. In 1 Chronicles 21:16 the exact same wording of a drawn sword in his hand is attributed to the angel of the Lord. In v. 35 the angel says Balaam is to speak the "word which I bid you . . ." In v. 38 Balaam says, "The word that God puts in my mouth, that I must speak." The angel is God. (We have this same form of proof of the Holy Spirit as God in Acts 5:3-4.) **Purpose** - Salvation and deliverance for God's people means defeat and destruction for their enemies. The drawn sword in His hand. With Balaam we see that, do what the enemy may, God will protect and preserve His own. To the ass in the common-place, the dusty road, so He comes. To us in our common, everyday, crude conditions He comes and is with us. Remember also how He was laid in that animal-slobbered manger as our Redeemer.

Joshua 5:13f. [מלאך יהוה] - to Joshua before Jericho. **Evidence** - While the angel of the Lord is not mentioned here, and there is not a cross reference with angel used (such as with Gen. 32:34; Hos. 12:4), yet this is the second person of the Trinity. We have just considered the Exodus and Numbers references to the angel of the Lord from the commissioning of Moses to deliver His people until their coming to the brink. Now at Jericho the commander of the army of the Lord appears to give Joshua instructions on victory. In Exodus 33:2 and in 23:23 the angel is promised in connection with the conquest of Canaan. Here He is. He has the drawn sword in his hand as in the two other references. Joshua worships him, v. 14. Angels are not to be worshiped (Rev. 22:8). In v. 15 we read that the commander told Joshua, "Put off your shoes from your feet; for the place where you stand is holy." The place is holy because the Lord is there, not a created angel. It is the same as He said to Moses (Exod. 3:5). In chapter six the instructions to Joshua are recorded as from the LORD. This is a continuation of the discussion of the commander of the Lord's army with Joshua. **Purpose** - He appeared to give Joshua the instructions and the courage. By the instructions it would be clear that God gives victory and the praise should go to Him. The great Commander still leads us from victory to victory.

Judges 2:1,4 מלאך יהוה - to the people of Israel under Joshua. **Evidence** - At Bochim we see that it is the angel of the Lord, God Himself in the second person of the Trinity. The angel says, "I brought you up from Egypt . . . which I swore to give . . . I said . . . I will never break my covenant with you" (v. 1). God testifies here that He is the angel who brought them up just as here He speaks. **Purpose** - Sadly the angel of the Lord testifies here to His faithfulness in the face of Israel's faithlessness. The people had not broken down the heathen altars as they were supposed to. So the heathen would be a thorn in their side. There is only one mediator between God and man. Jesus is the way, the life and the truth. Compromise with the world denies us His abundant blessing.

Judges 5:23 מלאך יהוה - in Deborah's song. **Evidence** - It is the angel of the Lord here. All that has been seen in the use of that expression bears upon this brief reference. **Purpose** - Though Meroz may have been a little town in or near Jezreel, yet it opposed the Lord's will and His people. "He who is not with me is against me." We never want to forget that the Lord is also judge of all the earth.

Judges 6:11,12,20,21,22 מלאך יהוה - to Gideon at Ophrah + לאך האלהים. **Evidence** - Six times it is the angel of the Lord and once the angel of (the) God. Here He appeared. The angel of the Lord and the LORD are used interchangeably as the speaker to Gideon. Both are the same. In v. 22 Gideon sees it is the angel of the Lord and acknowledges Him as "Lord God!" Having seen the face of the angel of the Lord, he fears he will die. **Purpose** - The angel of the Lord imparted to Gideon strength for his task. He encouraged Him. And by His direction deliverance was accomplished. Still today through His

Word we gain strength and courage and this upon the basis of the deliverance won by Him.

Judges 13:3,6,9,13,15,16,17,18,20,21 מלאך יהוה + לאך האלהים - to Manoah and his wife.

Evidence - Ten times he is the angel of the Lord and twice the angel of (the) God. In v. 6 His countenance was "very terrible." He appears as a man. In v. 18 the angel of the Lord says His name is "wonderful." This is the same word as in Isaiah 9:6. In v. 20, as the angel ascends in the flame, it reminds of His presence in the burning bush and the pillar of fire and in the fiery furnace. Manoah, upon knowing that they had seen the angel of the Lord, said, v. 22: "We shall surely die, for we have seen God." **Purpose** - In answer to the cries of the people for deliverance the angel appears to give promise of one to be born.

Old Saying מלאך אלהים + מלאך האלהים. **Evidence** - In Judges 13:6 we have the first reference to what I have labeled "an old saying." It is found also in 2 Samuel 14:17,20; 19:27 (Heb. 28); 1 Samuel 29:9. In Judges it is "like the countenance of the angel of God"; 1 Samuel - "as blameless in my sight as the angel of God"; 2 Samuel 14:17 - "like the angel of God to discern good and evil"; v. 20 - "like the wisdom of the angel of God to know all things that are on earth"; 2 Samuel 19:27 - "like the angel of God." This simile in its uses credits the angel with attributes of God. Even if the Judges reference is not the first, the others being in First and Second Samuel and phrased similarly all hold together.

In Judges it definitely applies to the second person of the Trinity. We see from the context that the reference in 2 Samuel 19:27 also applies to God. Mephibosheth's attitude toward David, the king, is as if he were divine. Mephibosheth is humble and worshipful before him. He is dependent upon him and knows that he may do what he will. The comparison of the king to the angel of the Lord fits far better than to a created angel. **Purpose** - This simile in daily life in the four Samuel references applies interestingly enough to David, the ancestor of the Savior, who appeared in Old Testament times as the angel of the Lord. Those in authority over us in the spheres of home, church and government are operating in God's stead. Respect to them is respect to God. Oh, that those in authority would pattern their lives after that of the Highest Authority!

Psalm 34:7 (Heb. 8) מלאך יהוה - David's Psalm when he feigned madness. **Evidence** - In Genesis 32:2 we have the angels in the plural as God's army. Here it is the angel of the Lord who encamps around those who fear Him. Do we stand in awe of angels? Maybe, but of God above all. He delivers. In v. 8 it is the LORD who is good. In v. 9 we are told to fear the LORD. The context as well as the phrase, "angel of the Lord," show that it is the Savior. **Purpose** - This seems to refer historically to the angel of the Lord's work in the exodus. He is Savior and Judge.

Psalm 35:5,6 מלאך יהוה - David referring to the destroying angel. **Evidence** - Except for these two Psalms, all other references in the book are to angels. Coming, as these two do, close together in adjacent Psalms, it appears that they would refer to the same angel. This is the angel of the Lord. All the previous references to that phrase have to be taken into account. Here we look back at His work of judgment in the exodus and forward to His destroying work at Jerusalem. This fits the context. **Purpose** - David appeals to Him for deliverance from his enemies. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay," says the Lord. Finally on the last day He will carry out that final judgment on our enemies who refuse to repent. This work of our Savior is pictured in references like these. It is Jesus who will come the second time to judge the world when the time of grace has ended.

2 Samuel 24:16,17; 1 Chronicles 21:12,15,16,18,20,27, 30 מלאך יהוה + המלאך

- to David after numbering Israel. **Evidence** - These both refer to the same thing. In 1 Chronicles 21:12 it is the angel of the Lord "destroying throughout all the territory of Israel." In 2 Samuel it is the angel, understood as then He who was by the "threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite." In 1 Chronicles 21:16 we read, "And David lifted his eyes and saw the angel of the Lord standing between earth and heaven, and in his hand a drawn sword . . ." This same picture of the angel of the Lord we have had already in Joshua 5:13 and in Numbers 22. In both those cases it was the Lord. In 1 Chronicles 21:16 David and the elders fell upon their faces before the angel of the Lord, in the position of humble worship. In v. 17 David speaks to God and in v. 18 the angel of the Lord responds. In its natural context it seems that they are one and the same. When the LORD speaks to the angel of the Lord in the text, it is the Father speaking to the Son. I take all angel references as applying to the second person. This is based upon the cross references and the narrative flow. **Purpose** - The angel of the Lord comes to see to

David's repentance. By His work He draws from David a confession of sin and (as previously, with Abraham) has David intercede for the people.

Ecclesiastes 5:6 (Heb. 5) מלאך - paying the vow to Him. **Evidence** - A vow is made to God and to Him the vow is paid. All around this verse it is God to whom the words are spoken. It seems that this, "the angel," is also God. It is possible, but to me not likely, that a created angel is meant. Up to this point nearly all the singular uses have been referring to the Lord in a very conclusive manner. This would be an exception.

1 Kings 19:5,7 מלאך + יהוה - to Elijah in the wilderness. **Evidence** - It is the angel of the Lord both times. **Purpose** - The persecuted prophet is watched over by his Lord. The Lord Himself comes to His individual servant to encourage him. See how full of care the Lord is here. So with us, He will never leave nor forsake.

2 Kings 1:3,15 מלאך יהוה - to Elijah in sending him to Ahaziah's messengers. **Evidence** - Both citations are the angel of the Lord. By now, to read this expression in the chronological development of Scripture should be to read it as the Savior. **Purpose** - The Lord encourages Elijah to speak against the idolatry of the king. He is instructed in what to say. So it is for us that we have His Word and through it are encouraged and instructed in what to say.

Hosea 12:4 (Heb. 5) מלאך - referring back to Jacob's wrestling. **Evidence** - Hosea refers to the man as the angel. The evidence for Genesis 32 is valid for this cross reference. Hosea says he "sought his favor"—surely not the favor of a created angel, but of the Savior.

2 Kings 19:35; Isaiah 37:36; 2 Chronicles 32:21 מלאך + יהוה - slaying 185,000 Assyrians besieging Jerusalem. **Evidence** - In two of the three parallel references it is the angel of the Lord who slew. **Purpose** - In answer to Hezekiah's prayer in behalf of His people, He slays the adversary army, extending their time of grace. As before, He shows Himself as judge of this wicked world. He acts in behalf of His people. The Assyrians would not conquer Jerusalem. Later He would call forth the Babylonians to exile a recalcitrant people.

Isaiah 63:9 מלאך - refers back to Him in the pillar. **Evidence** - Who could the angel of His presence or the angel of His face be but the Messiah? Time and again in the Old Testament, witnesses stated in awe that they had seen God face to face when they beheld the angel of the Lord. The angel of the Lord is the one who has saved time after time. **Purpose** - The second half of the verse gives the purpose and the cause of the angel of the Lord, "in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old." See Exodus 33:14: "My presence [my face] will go with you and give you rest."

Daniel 3:28 מלאך - saving the three. **Evidence** - Here we have the Chaldee or Aramaic synonym for angel with the pronominal suffix, "his." To me, the suffix here, as in the other five places, gives more the personal than the possessive idea. Angel in the singular by now should be regarded as the angel of the Lord, unless the context points otherwise. In v. 25 the fourth one in the furnace was seen to be "like a son of the gods," by Nebuchadnezzar. In Daniel the angel Gabriel is referred to in the form of a man. The one in the furnace has a superior description. **Purpose** - In every fiery furnace of affliction, who is it that walks with His people to sustain them?

Daniel 6:22 מלאך - saving Daniel. **Evidence** - Daniel states that his God sent "his angel." Because this is the same word with the same pronominal suffix in the same book in connection again with the saving act, I treat it as with Daniel 3:28, referring to the angel of the Lord.

Zechariah 1:11,12 מלאך יהוה - in a vision among the Myrtle trees. Zechariah 3:1,3,5,6 + המלאך - in a vision with Joshua and Satan. Zechariah 12:8 - the promise of victory and glory with Him. **Evidence** - The angel of the Lord is in six verses. In 3:3 it is angel. The angel of 3:3 says in v. 4, ". . . I have taken your iniquity away from you and I will clothe you with rich apparel." Only God can forgive sins. There is a narrative angel here, as we also read of in Revelation. The created angel has thirteen references. It is possible that the "other angel" of 2:3 (Heb. 2:7) is the Lord. That would change the ratio to eight to twelve. In 12:8 Hebrew parallelism of "like God, like the angel of the LORD, at their head," points out how the angel of the Lord is God. (In Zech. 3:4 "angel" is not in the Kittel text and not in the KJV and NASB. They use "he." But the RSV and the NIV translate "angel.") **Purpose** - Zechariah is a book for the end times. It also comes towards the close of Old Testament times. Here the singular use of angel applies

some thirteen times to a created angel. This is in preparation for this use in New Testament times. Yet here we also have distinctly the Old Testament angel of the Lord. He is the one to take away sin. He is pictured as Mediator in chapters one and three. In chapter twelve He is the Head of His people, granting them victory and glory.

Malachi 3:1 מלאך - the promise of the coming of Him of the covenant. **Evidence** - In v. 1 the second messenger/angel is parallel with the Lord. He is then further described as the righteous judge in v. 2f. The Lord who is coming is the angel of the covenant, our Jesus, who brings us the Good News of fulfillment of all Old Testament Law and Prophecy.

Summary

In 56 out of 58 times the phrase, מלאך יהוה, refers to our Lord. Twice it refers to humans (and that in two very late books, Haggai and Malachi.) The phrase is definite, "the" angel of the Lord, due to the word "angel" in the construct state. All of these 56 references would likely be acknowledged as referring to the second person of the Trinity, through applying the criteria I stated at the beginning. Beyond this the waters are not, I think, so well charted. Yet in the other four constructions of the singular, מלאך, either by the criteria or by cross reference, they too are seen to be referring to the Lord and not to a created angel.

I still have a little question in my mind on Genesis 24:7,40 and Ecclesiastes 5:6. The singular use in the lie of 1 Kings 13:18 we need not consider, since it is a lie, after all. As for the thirteen (or possibly only twelve) singular uses in Zechariah, they are in preparation for the New Testament's usage.

We may justifiably write THE Angel of the Lord.

In Old Testament times His purposes were the same as in the New Testament times in appearing and speaking, with the added reason in Old Testament times of the prophetic prefigurement of His incarnation. His purposes, gleaned from these studied references: mercy, promise, testing, guidance, blessing, faith, redemption, holiness, protection, pardon, instruction, warning, encouragement, judgment, wisdom, humility, direction, life, salvation, victory, glory, hope—in one-word summaries.

Just see how throughout Old Testament history
The Messiah showed Himself as possessing God's glory.
Yet also He would take on the nature of a man
In order to redeem according to the Divine Plan.
Appearing as the Angel of the Lord must holy,
To our Messiah belongs this term almost wholly.

With Praise to Him.

P A I D E I A

From a Pastor's and Professor's Notebook

Roland A. Gurgel

XIII

Isaiah

Perfect Peace in an Imperfect World!

Where the Gospel blooms in all of its peaceful sweetness, Satan works his hardest to turn man to seek other kinds of peace, which in reality are but delusions. He, Satan, cries, "Peace, peace, where there is no peace." When Jesus walked this earth revealing in Himself, in His life, His death, and His resurrection the eternal peace of His heavenly

Father for mankind, Satan was present, attempting to discredit, to hide, to counteract the perfect peace Jesus proclaimed in Himself. Many were caught in the snares Satan laid. As a result Jesus cried out, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side . . . because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation . . ." (Luke 19:42-44). Jerusalem did not know the things that pertained to their temporal and eternal peace.

This sad cry of Jesus concerning Jerusalem and echoed at another time in His lament, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, **how often would I have gathered thy children** together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (Matt. 23:37-38) —this sad cry Jesus had uttered at other times in the history of Jerusalem and Judah.

In Isaiah's day the Lord Jesus was also calling out to the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem the message of perfect peace for time and eternity, promised to them under the shadow of His wings. We heard that cry in the words of Isaiah 1:18, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." And in chapters 7-12 the wonderful work of Immanuel, who was to come in the person of Jesus 700 years later, is set forth in detail.

You will recall the words, "A virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isa. 7:14); "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulders: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The **Prince of Peace**" (Isa. 9:6); "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse . . . **but with righteousness shall he judge the poor** . . . The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb [a symbol of peace] . . ." (Isa. 11:1-10).

Jesus walked the streets and roads of Jerusalem and Judah in prophecy in Isaiah's day, calling out His message of peace. And the reaction of the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judah to that message of perfect peace in the God-promised Messiah? For many a scorning and rejecting so that at that time, too, Jesus would have to say, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. . . . because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." Don't you hear that thought echoed in the inspired words coming from the pen of Isaiah in chapter 6:9-12? "And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes . . . Then said I, Lord, how long? And He answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate . . ."

Peace offered, peace rejected, peace lost! A general statement in Isaiah 6:9-12, but a thought applied very specifically to Ahaz, a king of Judah at the time of Isaiah. Ahaz was promised by the Lord peace from earthly enemies (Syria and Israel, cf. 7:1-10). The Lord offered him also a sign of greater peace in the Prince of Peace who should come born of a virgin (Isa. 7:14). Ahaz, however, turned his back on the Lord and His sign in disdain. "If thou hadst known in this thy day the things that belong to thy peace!"

The Savior does not delight in seeing a rejection of His peace—"How often would I have gathered thy children together . . ." He wept over Jerusalem. And we feel the same sorrow in the words of Isaiah, "Then said I, Lord, how long?"

But though there be sorrow over the rejection of this peace and for those who reject it, yet the Lord directs Isaiah's eyes and ours to joy over those who, by the grace of God, find and hold to that perfect peace in Christ Jesus. Consider the promise in Isaiah 6:13, "But yet in it shall be a tenth and it shall return . . . so **the holy seed** shall be the substance thereof." To quote Kretzmann, "As in Israel, so in all the nations of the world the Lord has His holy seed, people who by His grace accept the Gospel and are saved." That seed shall be gathered and finally brought into the eternal peace of a perfect world. A few quotes from chapter 11:6-16 will serve to highlight that thought: "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb . . . And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse . . . to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious . . . in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people . . ."

This whole section of Isaiah's prophecy comes to a glorious conclusion in chapter 12, which is a psalm of praise and thanksgiving for the perfect peace that God gives His people. It reveals **minds stayed** on the Lord Jehovah!

And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee:
though thou wast angry with me,
thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me.

Behold, God is my salvation: I will trust, and **not be afraid**:
for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song;
he also is become my salvation.

Therefore **with joy** shall ye draw water
out of the wells of salvation.

And in that day shall ye say, Praise the Lord,
call upon his name, declare his doings among the people,
make mention that his name is exalted.

Sing unto the Lord; for he hath done excellent things:
this is known in all the earth.

Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion:
for great is the Holy One of Israel **in the midst of thee**.

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace,
whose mind is stayed on thee."
