

# ANGELS

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# **CHAPTER 1: THE NATURE OF THE ANGELS**

The work of the Angels is vital to understand, for it is through them that God works moment by moment in our daily lives to bring about His purpose with us, and it is through them that the trials of life are ministered in order for us to be developed so that we may reach the Kingdom. It is one of our fundamental beliefs that God is everywhere present by His Spirit; but the Spirit is not an abstract essence, it is always manifested in something (as 'diabolism' is). It seems reasonable to suggest that the Spirit is largely invested in the Angels, making

them the practical means by which God manifests Himself throughout the universe and in our lives.

The fact that our reward will be to take over some aspects of their present role makes a study of their present capabilities and organisation a way of looking forward to some details of the "joy set before" us. "Unto the Angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come"; "the children of the resurrection...are equal unto the Angels" (Lk. 20:35,36). When Col. 1:12 speaks of our sharing in the inheritance of the holy ones in light, he may well have Angels in mind. Several themes emerge from this study; not least that the Angels are not all powerful in their own right- they have limited power and knowledge, and this fact is sometimes reflected by the ways in which they act in our lives.

Often we read God spoken of with what we will call the 'language of limitation'- He is spoken of as if He has certain constraints on His actions due to lack of strength and power. We know that this cannot be true of God Himself in person- He "fainteth not, neither is weary" (Is. 40:28). It follows therefore that such language must be concerning the Angels who manifest God's Name; in the same way as we explain Moses' seeing God's face in Ex. 33:12 as him speaking personally to the Angel, seeing that no man can see God Himself face to face.

Non-trinitarians are used to expounding the phrase 'God' - elohim- in Gen. 1:26 "And God said ,Let us make man in our image" as referring to the Angels, and rightly so. It seems logical to interpret most of the other references to 'Elohim' in the chapter -and in the whole of Genesis?- as also referring to the Angels, especially due to the 'language of limitation' associated with them- e. g. v. 25 ". . . and God saw that it was good", implies that God noticed it was good as He stood back and looked at what He had made. We know it was the Angels who did the actual physical work of creation, so it was them who could notice the goodness of it. God Himself knew its goodness before it was made; He did not notice it afterward, seeing that He knows the end from the beginning as He does. Similarly in Gen. 2:2 when Elohim rested on the seventh day, the implication is that they were tired- language impossible to apply to God Himself. The Hebrew for "rested" does not only mean that He ceased, but that He ceased for a reason. Ex. 31:17 is even clearer- " In six days the LORD made Heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed"- the word used to describe refreshment after physical exhaustion, e. g. regarding David and his men at Bahurim when fleeing from Jerusalem (2 Sam. 16:14). Notice in passing that the Angels who gave the Law of Moses are often mentioned specifically as instituting the sabbath (e. g. Ex. 31:3; Ez. 20:12,13,16,20)- because it is "the sabbath (the rest) of the Lord" (Lev. 23:3)- i. e. of the Angels who rested on that day back in Genesis. The fact man was to physically rest on the sabbath as a replica of how the Angels "rested" on that day implies that they too physically rested.

Scripture abounds with this language of limitation- e. g. :

Gen. 8:1 "God remembered" Noah in the ark, implying He has the capacity to forget or be oblivious;

Gen. 11:5 "The Lord came down to see the city and the tower" (of Babel), as if He had to search and come to have a closer look;

Gen. 16:7 "And the angel of the LORD (called 'God' in v. 13) found her (Hagar) by a fountain", as if He was not sure where she was and had to search;

Dt. 32:20,27: "I will see what their end shall be. . . were it not that I feared the wrath of the enemy. . . and lest they should say. . . the Lord hath not done this". God Himself knows the end from the beginning and need fear no man; but His Angels do not have ultimate knowledge or strength, and therefore such language is more suited to them.

More obvious examples of Angelic limitation are seen in the Angel having to wrestle with Jacob, the prince of Persia withstanding an Angel (Dan. 10:13) and Gabriel being caused to "fly with weariness" (Dan. 9:21 AVmg. ), or perhaps Zechariah's Angel being surprised that his charge Zechariah didn't understand (Zech. 4:13). However, this concept of 'language of limitation' should not be allowed to obscure the personal, direct relationship that is possible between God Himself and us His children. The whole idea of God manifestation through the Angels does not preclude God from direct feeling and action towards His people. A simple analogy would be that when the Queen speaks and acts, it is normally through one of her ambassadors. But sometimes the Queen may speak personally to someone, or take pity on a child by the roadside. That she is usually manifested through an agent does not stop her doing this. And how much more so with the gracious King of Heaven.

### **Geographical Limitation**

Rev. 9:14 commands: "Loose the four angels which are bound at the great river Euphrates" (R.V.). They then eagerly go forward to prepare the way for the second coming. The implication is surely that those Angels were geographically bound / limited in the scope of their work by the Euphrates River- and yet in their eagerness to progress the timetable of events leading to the last day, they yearned to go beyond that limitation. The reference to "the Angel of the waters" likewise suggests that an Angel was operative in one geographical area. It could be that as the future elohim we likewise will have areas of geographical influence in the age to come- the "cities" over which we are given dominion.

### **Limited Knowledge**

That the Angels do not have complete knowledge is vital to understand, as we will see later how Angels change their minds and purposes, and that we too as Angels in the future will not rise from the judgement seat with a sudden full spiritual comprehension and knowledge. The Angels are often described as questioning God or being uncertain as to why He acts as He does- e. g. in the parable of the wheat and tares the "servants of the householder (interpreted by Jesus as the Angels, v. 39) came and said unto Him, Sir, didst not Thou sow good seed in Thy field? from whence then hath it tares?. . . wilt Thou that we go and gather them up?" (Mt. 13:27). As will be shown later, we have here an example of the Angels in the presence of God trying to understand His ways and eagerly offering their help in bringing about His purpose as they perceive it.

It is possible for the Angels to do this in a manner which God finds inappropriate (how similar to us in this life!). A good example of this is found in Ez. 9:4,5: "And the LORD said unto Him (the man in linen of v. 2- another Angel), Go through the midst of the city. . . and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. And to the others (Angels) He said in mine hearing, Go ye after Him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have pity". The 'LORD' of v. 4 here seems to be an Angel; it is the 'He' of verse 1 who "cried also in mine ears. . . saying, Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near. . . ". The phrase "also" refers back to the "spirit" of 8:3 who put forth "the form of an hand" (language used about the cherubim,

which as we shall see were representative of Angels) and carried Ezekiel to various places in the vision. The mighty being of 8:2 with "the appearance of fire. . . as the colour of amber" also refers to this same Angel. Those of v. 1 which "have charge over the city" were Angels (as in Is. 62:6). These Angels were now being told to go through the city and slay without pity any that did not have the mark the other Angel had put on them, thus showing how the same Angels that preserve us through life can also turn against us to minister God's judgements if we are unworthy. For the present we want to note the repeated command to these Angels to not allow emotions of pity to hinder their work: "Let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children and women". Surely this implies that the Senior Angel speaking to these Angels knew that their judgement could be affected by emotional considerations, therefore the point was stressed. In the same way, we know God does make judgements based on what to us we would call 'emotion'- we read of God pitying Israel in their early days for no logical reason, and also of Him refusing to pity them in His judgements upon them. So many of David's prayers show him persuading God to show pity on him. The psalms often start off with him in trouble, claiming God has cast Him off and is insensitive to him, and then progress to a triumph of faith and the power of prayer, through him sensing that God has now pitied and helped him.

The Angel of Gen. 18:21 seems to recognize His own limited perceptions: "I will therefore go down and see, if they completely correspond with the cry which comes to me, and if not, that I may know" (LXX).

## **"Is God a man?"**

This lack of ultimate knowledge results in the Angels taking time to think things out and discuss their action with each other, which may result in an apparent delay to we humans. Thus in Gen. 18:17 "The LORD (an Angel- see later) said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?". However, this same incident shows that there are varying degrees of knowledge amongst Angels or in the same Angel over time. The Angel who destroyed Sodom reasoned: "I know him (Abraham), that he will command his children and his household after him" (Gen. 18:19). Yet perhaps the same Angel, or the mighty Angel of Israel which made the promises to the patriarchs (see later), said to Abraham a few months later after his offering up of Isaac: "Now I know that thou fearest God" (Gen. 22:12), implying that he did not know whether Abraham's faith was genuine before that incident, and that the knowledge of Gen. 18:19 was merely that Abraham would 'teach his children the truth' and did not reflect any knowledge of Abraham's personal faith. In this case, Sodom might have been preserved by reason of Abraham's known willingness to teach others 'the truth' rather than because of any personal faith in God he may have had. Thus the lesson comes home that a man's zeal or success in preaching can be unrelated to his personal faith or spirituality. The elohim "found" Abraham's heart to be faithful (Neh. 9:8). This was by a process of research and drawing of conclusions. And our Angels are in the process of doing the same with us this very day.

The idea of the rainbow being a 'reminder' to God not to destroy the earth again with a flood is rather hard to understand when applied to God. But if this is a reminder to the Angels, who brought the flood in the first place [see later], this makes more sense (Gen. 9:16). Ex. 2:24,25 is another example: "God heard their groaning (of Israel in Egypt), and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob (all actually made by an Angel). And God looked (the Angels are God's eyes- see later) upon the children of Israel, and God had respect

unto them". God remembering and taking notice of Israel is surely the language of limitation, and applicable to an Angel.

There even seems to be the suggestion that Angels have the capacity to forget. In Is. 63 we read of the Angel of the presence that went with Israel through the wilderness, and of His subsequent thoughts: "They rebelled and vexed His Holy Spirit (the "Angel of His presence"): therefore He was turned to be their enemy, and He fought against them. Then He (the Angel) remembered the days of old, Moses and His people, saying, Where is He that brought them up out of the Sea. . that led them through the seep. . the Spirit of the Lord (an Angel) caused him (Moses) to rest: so didst Thou lead Thy people" (vv. 10-14). This shows the Angel looking back to the days when He led them through the wilderness, and in wrath remembering mercy. "Where is He that brought them up. . " He asked- it was the same Angel which is speaking who brought them up. So the Angel was remembering His former manifestation of God as He brought them up from Egypt, and deciding to go back to the attitude towards the people which He had then. This again shows the place of pity and emotion in affecting Angelic decisions, although all under the over-ruling hand of God Himself.

We also have the fact that Angels pray for more knowledge. They "earnestly desire to look into" spiritual things and seek for signs of the times as much as we do- e. g. "The Angel of the Lord answered and said, O LORD of Hosts (recognizing God's control of the Angels), how long wilt Thou not have mercy on Jerusalem. . ?" (Zech. 1:12).

It may even be that Angels use language and writing skills (e. g. for writing in the book of life? how about "the language of Angels" in 1 Cor. 13:1?), and it appears that they have limitations in these too- Psalm 81 describes the work of the Angel in bringing Israel out of Egypt:

v. 1 "God of Jacob"- an Angelic term; Jacob conceived of his God in terms of an Angel- Gen. 48:15,16

v. 5 "He went out through the land of Egypt"-the Angel of the Lord did this to kill the firstborn

v. 4,5 "He ordained a Law and a statute"- the Angels ministered the Law of Moses, as Paul stresses in Hebrews 1 and 2

v. 6 "I removed his (Israel's) shoulder from the burden"- the Angel led them out of bondage

v. 7 "I proved thee (their faith) at the waters of Meribah"; as we will see, proving is the work of Angels rather than of God Himself, who has full knowledge of all things and doesn't need to "prove" anyone.

We then come to the amazing statement "I heard a language that I understood not" (v. 5)- as if the Angel being talked about didn't understand Egyptian? Or is this because the Angel was so strongly identified with His people that what was true of them became true of Him?

v. 10 "I. . brought thee out of the land of Egypt"- the Angel in the pillar of cloud did this.



# CHAPTER 2: THE LANGUAGE OF ANGELS

Certain phrases and words seem to have definite Angelic connections, and when such phrases occur together in a passage they imply God's actions are to be understood very much in terms of Angels. Some passages very clearly associate a certain phrase with Angels, but later uses of it are hard to fit into a specifically Angelic context. This may be due to our limited insight, or because the phrases refer to God manifestation in several other ways apart from through Angels. For example, Ex. 31:18 tells us that the law was written with "the finger of God", whilst elsewhere it is evident that Angels gave the law and probably wrote it physically on the stones. However, it is hard to consistently interpret the "finger of God" as a reference to the Angels.

Also relevant at this stage is the question of whether 'Elohim' is a title of God in person or of God manifest in the Angels (1). The idea that *elohim* usually refers to Angels is discussed by Umberto Cassuto; and he concludes, with reference to the Pentateuch, that "wherever the Lord is spoken of objectively, the name Yahweh occurs; but when the reference is to what Moses saw or felt subjectively [as a result of interacting with an Angel], the name Elohim is used" (2). Others of course would argue that there were multiple authors or editors of the Pentateuch, and one used the term Yahweh whilst another used Elohim. Cassuto's alternative is worth reflecting upon, and it commends itself to me in many passages.

## 2. 1 THE LORD OF HOSTS

This is a key identification tag to the language of Angels. "The Lord of Hosts" basically points to God being manifested through a mass of beings, with the implication in the word 'Hosts' ('armies') that they are organized in a hierarchical, military way in order to achieve set objectives. This mass of beings may refer to:

- Angels
- Natural Israel
- The saints (surely 'Yahweh Elohim' is more relevant to them?)
- Gentile armies used under God's close control

The vast majority of references can only sensibly apply to the Angels. This opens up a huge field of Bible research, seeing that the titles of God are used so meaningfully in Scripture. Is there any other conclusion to be drawn than that in most places where "The Lord of Hosts" occurs there is an Angelic context? If this is not accepted, then the question has to be faced-who are the "hosts" referred to?

Many of the Angelic contexts considered in this book include "The Lord of Hosts"; the cumulative weight of evidence is just too great to be ignored. Many times when the title is used it is in conjunction with other Angelic language. The more obvious connections between Angels and "The Lord of Hosts" are listed below:

- "And Jacob went on his way, and the Angels of God met him. And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host" (Gen. 32:1,2). The word for "host" here is almost identical in meaning to the normal word for "hosts"; this former carries the additional implication of an encampment.
- The Angel that met Joshua described Himself as "the captain of the Lord's Host" (Josh. 5:14,15)- the host of Angels that would go before Joshua and Israel to fight their battles.
- Elijah addresses himself to the Angel as to "the Lord God of hosts...the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant...slain thy prophets" (1 Kings 19:10). He perceived that Angel as the Lord God of hosts.
- Neh. 9:6 "the Host of Heaven worshippeth Thee"- hard to apply just to literal stars
- The Angel cherubim of Ezek. 1 moved with "the voice of an host" (1:24)
- The Angels watching Christ's birth were "a multitude of the Heavenly host" (Lk. 2:13)
- "Bless the Lord, ye His Angels. . . bless ye the Lord, all ye His hosts. . . praise ye Him all His Angels: praise ye Him, all His hosts" (Ps. 103:20,21; 148:2)
- "The Lord gave the word (to enter Canaan): great was the company (same word "hosts") of them that published it. . . even thousands of Angels" (Ps. 68:11,17).

## The Army Of The Lord

David's host increased, until it became "a great host", "like the host of God" (1 Chron. 12:22)- the parallel between David's men and the Angelic hosts is clear. Significantly, the Angelic armies that destroyed the Syrians are called 'a great host' in 2 Kings 7:6. Asa and his army defeated the Ethiopians- and it's described as them being "destroyed before the Lord and before his host" (2 Chron. 14:13). Again, the hosts of Israel become the hosts of God. When Israel finally return to the Lord, their hosts will be "as the mighty one" [Heb. *gibbor*], a title of God. They shall fight, because the Lord will be with them (Zech. 10:5,7). The "mighty ones" [again, *Gibbor*] shall "come down" at Jerusalem to defeat Israel's invaders- referring to Christ's return with the Angels (Joel 3:11). But surely the Angels will work through the 'mighty ones' of the feeble remnant of Israel. That remnant, physically weak and scarcely armed, hemmed in within Jerusalem, will become the mighty ones through which the mighty Angels will work. In that very context, as Israel's enemies make themselves strong, so the weak shall become "strong"- again, *gibbor* (Joel 3:10). I take this as a reference to the repentant and feeble remnant of Israel becoming strong, rather than [as it is often read] weak Gentile nations becoming strong in the last days. Thus there will be a standoff between the 'mighty men' of the Gentiles (Joel 3:9) and the 'mighty ones' of God, the Angelic hosts working through the feeble remnant on earth whom they will make into 'mighty ones'. Hence the many references in the prophets to the 'mighty men', the *gibborim* of the Gentiles, being slain in the last day. It will be the final showdown, screened world-wide, between the hosts of God and those of men- although we live it all out, we see it all, in our daily experience now. And we today are just as capable of being used as the hosts of the Lord, if we walk in step with the Spirit. We have to learn the lesson of Israel, who preferred to trust in the hosts of mighty ones of their own strength and their Gentile friends, rather than upon God (Hos. 10:13). When Israel walked with God, "The hosts of the children of Levi" were actually called "the host of the Lord" (1 Chron. 9:18,19 Heb.). The Angel in the pillar of cloud and fire "did not depart" from before Israel (Ex. 13:22). Joshua walked in step with the Spirit / Angel, and so he likewise "did not depart" from the tent where the Angelic pillar was (Ex. 33:11). The parallel between the Angel and Joshua is clear- and it should be in our lives too.

Note how the Angelic 'hosts' of God are contrasted with the 'hosts' of the enemies of God's people (2 Sam. 5:24; 1 Sam. 17:45,46; Is. 37:36). David and Goliath is the great example- David came to the *hosts* of the Philistines in the name of the God of Angelic *hosts*. And hence his faithful confidence that "the battle is the Lord's" (1 Sam. 17:47). This is a comfort not only in times of physical danger but in realizing that in any situation, there are far more with us than with our opponents. In every 'battle', we of course should be 'on the Lord's side'- and the battle is His, and ultimate victory assured. Perhaps these things are the reference of the enigmatic Song 6:13, which speaks of the dance or company of the two hosts- those of Angels and the corresponding hosts on earth?

The Angelic *elohim* "helped" Uzziah in his battles; and yet within the same context we read that his human armies "helped" him (2 Chron. 26:7,13). Again, the Angelic armies in Heaven are seen reflected in the human armies of Israel upon earth. The human armies are described as helping Uzziah with "mighty power", a phrase elsewhere used about the mighty power which God alone gives (the same two words occur in this context in Dt. 8:18; Zech. 4:6). And David learnt all this in practice, when he reflected how human armies *alone* lack this 'mighty power'- all human strength is not strength at all unless it's operating in tandem with God's Angelic strength: "There is no king saved by the multitude of a host: A mighty man is not delivered by great strength" (Ps. 33:16).

## Notes

(1) The linguistic arguments either way are contained in correspondence in 'The Testimony' magazine 1947 p. 420 and nearly every month in 1948.

(2) Umberto Cassuto, *Exodus* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1967) p. 32.

## 2. 2. "THE GOD OF JACOB"

Michael appears to be the Angel specifically looking after Israel (Dan. 12:1), and it would appear that He is the same Angel that appeared to the patriarchs in making the promises (see 'Angels and Israel' later). In Chapter 10 we will see how the patriarchs conceived of God in terms of an Angel, and thus the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was understood by them in terms of an Angel. This is made specific in Gen. 48:15,16, where Jacob says : "God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil. . . ". This Angel earlier told Jacob that He was "the God of Bethel"" (Gen. 31:11,13), where "Jacob vowed a vow saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go. . . " (28:20). Thus to him 'God' was the Angel. Other references lend support:

- "The Angel of the Lord appeared unto (Moses) in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. . . He said, I am the God of. . . Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. . . I have surely seen the affliction of My people (the Angels are the eyes of the Lord). . . and I am come down to deliver them. . . to bring them up out of that land unto a good land (this was all done by the Angel which led Israel through the wilderness). . . the cry of the children of Israel is come unto Me (language of limitation). . . ye shall say unto (Pharaoh), The Lord, God of the Hebrews, hath met with us (Ex. 3:2,6,7,8,9,18). The Angel stresses at least three times in the chapter that He is the God of the patriarchs. Notice too how He also calls Himself the "God of the Hebrews"- i. e. the God of Israel. If "the God of Jacob" has reference to Angels, should not also "the God of Israel"? Frequently the phrase "the Lord of Hosts, the God of

Israel" is found in the prophets; and we have seen that "the Lord of Hosts" is invariably an Angelic title.

- Ps. 76 describes the God of Jacob as dwelling in Zion (v. 2)- where the Angel lived (see Chapter 10). "At Thy rebuke. . . both the chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep" (v. 6)- the language of Ex. 15:1 concerning the Angelic destruction of Pharaoh at the Red Sea (the "Lord" in the pillar of fire and cloud which caused their destruction was the Angel which travelled in the same pillar and talked to Moses- Ex. 14:24 cp. 33:9).
- Ps. 81 has much Angelic language. "A law of the God of Jacob" (v. 4) refers to the Angels who gave the law. "I am the Lord thy God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt" (v. 10)- Angelic work. The same kind of links are found in Ps. 114 between the wilderness Angel and the "God of Jacob"- "When Israel went out of Egypt. . . the (Red) Sea. . . fled. . . at the presence of the God of Jacob; which turned the rock into a standing water" (the work of the Angel standing on the rock at Rephidim).
- "The mighty God of Jacob" dwelt in the ark (Ps. 132:2,5); this was an Angel (See Chapter 10), and cp. also Acts 7:46.
- "The God of Hosts (Angels) is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge, Ps. 46:7,11 emphasizes. Note too the reference in v. 4 to "the tabernacles of the most high"- another Angelic phrase.
- "The God of Jacob" gave a law, and he also "went out over the land of Egypt" (Ps. 81:4,5 RV)- all references to the work of the Angel on Sinai and at the Exodus.
- Jacob was renamed Israel. The elders saw "the God of Israel", or Jacob- i.e. they saw an Angel (Ex. 24:10).

## 2.3 "THE MOST HIGH"

If this phrase means 'the highest of the high ones'- as it may possibly- it would refer to one special Angel who is above the other 'high ones', or perhaps to God working through His Angelic 'high ones'. "The seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth" (Rev. 5:6) may refer to these same "high ones". There are several indicators towards "the Most High" definitely being Angelic:

- Ps. 78 is about the experience of the Angel which led Israel through the wilderness. "He led them . . . He cast out the heathen. . . yet they tempted and provoked the Most High God, and kept not His testimonies" (v. 53-56). The Angel who led Israel and gave them the Law is here called "the Most High".
- "Melchizedek. . . was the priest of the Most High God" (Gen. 14:18). It seems that worship in patriarchal times was by coming before an Angel on earth, as Abraham did. The early chapters of Job show a similar scenario (1). Melchizedek would therefore have been a priest on behalf of an Angel, or "the Most High God". Melchizedek's words give further support: "And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of Heaven and earth: and blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand" (Gen. 14:19,20). These words indicate a primary fulfilment of the promises to bless Abraham (Gen. 12:2) with seed like the stars of Heaven and dust of the earth ("Possessor of Heaven and earth") and victory over his enemies (Gen. 22:17). These promises were given to Abraham by an Angel, and are attributed by Melchizedek to "the most high God"- thus equating this title with an Angel.
- Balaam attributed the revelations he received in dreams to the most high: "He hath said, which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the most high, which saw the vision of the Almighty" (Num. 24:16). In Chapter 8 it is shown that the revelation of the word of God, especially in the form of dreams, was often executed by an Angel.
- "The Most High divided to the nations their inheritance when He separated the sons of Adam" (Dt. 32:8) at Babel- which was probably the result of Angelic work, seeing that the

phrase "come down" refers to Angelic manifestation, and there is much language of limitation in the record.

- 2 Sam. 22:7-16 associates "the Most high" with other Angelic language:
  - "fire out of His mouth"- God makes His Angels "a flame of fire"
  - "He. . . came down"- the physical movement of the Angel in manifesting God (see Chapter 6 )
  - "He rode upon a cherub"- the Angels are linked with the cherubim
  - "He. . . did fly"- Gabriel "being caused to fly swiftly" (Dan. 9:21)
  - "thick clouds. . . round about Him. . . arrows. . . lightnings"- cp. the Angel-cherubim visions
  - "the channels of the sea appeared, the foundations of the world were discovered, at the rebuking of the Lord"- alluding to the Angel's work at the Red Sea
  - "He did hear My voice out of His temple"- the Angel dwelt physically in the temple
  - "My cry did enter into His ears"- language of Angelic limitation, seeing all things are immediately known to God.
- Ps. 46 appears to be primarily about the Angelic deliverance of Hezekiah from the Assyrian invasion:
  - v. 5 "God is in the midst of her (Jerusalem)"- the Angel dwelling in the temple
  - v. 4 "the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High"- the Angel dwelling in the most holy place
  - v. 7,11 "The Lord of Hosts (of Angels) is with us; the God of Jacob (an Angel) is our refuge".

Thus "the Most High" is again associated with Angelic language.

- Ps. 50 exemplifies how God personally addresses Himself to men, and yet at times uses the language of Angels as if to direct our attention to His manifestation through them: "God is judge Himself. . . every beast of the forest is Mine. . . I know all the fowls of the mountains (God Himself having ultimate knowledge, unlike the Angels). . . offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the Most High (the offerings to the Angel in the tabernacle): and call upon Me (God Himself) in the day of trouble. . . thou shalt glorify Me" (v. 6-15).
- Ps. 57:1,2: "In the shadow of Thy wings (i.e., between the cherubim- Ps. 17:8,9; 30:7; 91:4) will I make My refuge. . . I will cry unto God Most High". The Angel dwelt literally between the cherubim- "God Most High". The next verse continues the Angelic theme: "He shall send (send physically away, let depart- fitting language for Angels) from Heaven, and save Me".
- The Asaph psalms have a remarkable amount of Angelic language. This correlates with the frequent reference to the "most High"- Ps. 73:11; 77:10; 78:17,35,36; 82:6; 83:18.
- Ps. 91 describes Joshua's commitment to living near the Angel of the presence in the sanctuary, and subsequent Angelic protection of him (v. 11 "He shall give His Angels charge over thee"). The whole psalm is full of reference to the Angel cherubim: "The shadow of the Almighty. . . cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust". That these wings and shadow is Angelic is spelt out in v. 11, by equating the cherubim protection with Angels keeping Joshua. This protection is also due to making "the Most High thy habitation. . . (dwelling) in the secret place of the Most High" (v. 9,1)- thus linking the Most High with the Angel cherubim.
- Nebuchadnezzar though he could exalt himself "above the stars (Angels) of God. . . above the heights of the clouds (of Angels)...be like the Most High" (Is. 14:13, 14). He tried to make himself the morning star (Lucifer); morning stars being an Angelic title (Job 38:7), it follows that he was trying to make himself the greatest of the Angels- i. e. the Most High. The record seems to stress that Nebuchadnezzar's sin was by rebelling against Angelic control (see later)- i. e. in rebelling against the Most High.

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### Note

(1) See R. T. Lovelock *Job* for a good description of this (Birmingham: C.M.P.A. , 1957).

## 2.4 "THE HAND OF THE LORD"

The Angels being the executors of God's actions and the means of the revelation of His personal being to man, it is not surprising that God's eyes, hand, arm and other parts of His body (remember that God is corporeal) are phrases used to describe the Angels. The following equate the "hand of the Lord" with Angels:

- In 2 Sam. 24:14 David asks to "fall into the hand of the Lord" when offered the three choices for Israel's punishment. This was fulfilled by God sending an "Angel of evil" to execute His chosen punishment (2 Sam. 24:16 cp. Ps. 78:49).
- Angels appeared as a hand in Dan. 5:5.
- Dt. 8 describes how the Angel led Israel through the wilderness, providing them with manna and gaining them the promised land. They were warned not to think "My power (spirit) and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth" (v. 17)- they were to recognize that it was God's Angel-hand, not their own, that had given them success.
- Ezekiel was carried by a hand, sometimes called "the Spirit", to see his various visions. Angels are called spirits (e. g. 2 Chron. 18:20; Job 4:15; Is. 63:10), and the method of revelation to Ezekiel invites comparison with that of John who was led into his visions by an Angel (Ez. 1:4; 2:9; 3:14,22; 8:1,3; 37:1; 40:1). This "hand" which led Ezekiel is probably another description of the Angel that carried John around.
- Daniel's figurative resurrection was by a hand touching and reviving him (Dan. 10:10). This points forward to the Angel resurrecting him in the future.
- The Lord of Hosts and God's hand are equated in Is. 14:26,27: "This is the purpose that is purposed. . this is the hand that is stretched out. . the Lord of Hosts hath purposed. . and His hand is stretched out".
- "All those things (the natural Heavens and earth) hath Mine Hand made" (Is. 66:2)- the Angels actually created those things.
- Ps. 74:11-15: "Why withholdest Thou Thy hand, even Thy right hand?. . Thou didst divide the (Red) Sea. . . Thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters"- all of which was done by Angels. Jesus being the man of God's right hand suggests the idea that this "right hand" Angel represented Jesus. Similarly God's "right hand" Angel purchased the promised land - presumably by driving out the tribes- whilst Jesus purchased our "possession" in the Kingdom by His death (Ps. 78:54; Eph. 1:14).
- "Thou didst drive out the heathen with Thy hand. . they got not the land in possession by their own. . arm. . but Thy right hand, and Thine arm, and the light of Thy countenance" (Ps. 44:2,3). The Angel-hornet drove out the nations, in fulfilment of the Angel's promise to Moses at the burning bush. Josh. 5:14 informs us that this was performed by a "host" of Angels, led by one mighty "captain". "Thy hand" therefore refers to the Angel- a conclusion strengthened by the mention of "the light of Thy countenance" (the Angel shining forth from the Holiest), and to the deliverer of Jacob (v. 4), whom Jacob clearly understood to have been an Angel (Gen. 48:15,16). Several passages attribute the Exodus from Egypt to the hand of God (e. g. Dt. 26:8), whilst it was an Angel responsible for this.
- Ps. 78 is all about the Angel in the wilderness (see later); v. 42 calls this Angel God's Hand.

- "The form of a man's hand" appeared under the wings of the Angel-cherubim in Ezekiel's visions (10:8).
- "The hand of the Lord was against (the unfaithful in the wilderness) to destroy them" (Dt. 2:15); which was done by the "destroyer" Angel (1 Cor. 10:10; Psalms 90 and 91).
- "From His right hand went forth a fiery law for them" (Dt. 33:2)- the Angels gave the Law.
- "The hand of the Lord is gone out against me" (Ruth 1:13; cp. Judges 2:15) is perhaps a reference to an Angel of evil physically going forth from God to bring problems in that family's life (cp. Job's satan-Angel).
- Job 26:13 connects the Spirit (Angel) of God, the hand of God and the creation of the world, which was done by Angels: "By His Spirit He hath garnished the Heavens; His Hand hath formed the crooked serpent".

## 2.5 "THE EYES OF THE LORD"

The eyes being the most expressive part of the face and therefore a very clear manifestation of ones self to other people, it is again to be expected that the eyes of God should be associated with the Angels. Thus God setting His face may refer to Him setting or pre-disposing the Angels in a certain course of action or attitude. Amos 9:4-8 is in this vein: "Though they go into captivity before their enemies, thence will I command the sword, and it shall slay them: and I will set Mine eyes (Angels) upon them for evil. . . the Lord God of Hosts (Angels) is He. . . have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt (the Angels did this). . . the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom". God's Angelic eyes being set for evil would correspond well with the use of "Angels of evil" previously (Ps. 78:49).

- We see later that at the restoration it was "the Angel of the Lord" (Zech. 3:1,2) that rebuked the adversaries to the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and strengthened the builders: "But the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, that they could not cause them to cease" (Ezra 5:5). This "eye of their God" equates with the frequent use of the phrase "good hand of our God upon us" in Ezra and Nehemiah- another Angelic phrase.
- Our Lord is described three times as having "eyes . . . as a flame of fire" (Rev. 1:14; 2:18; 19:12). There seems an inescapable link with the Angels being a "flame of fire" (Ps. 104:4)- as if Jesus now being in control of the Angels uses them as His means of gathering information and executing judgement.
- "Seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth" (Rev. 5:6). The Angels are made spirits (Ps. 104:4), "seven lamps of fire burning before them, which are the seven spirits of God" (Rev. 4:5)- and also, as we have seen, a flame of fire. "These seven. . . are the eyes of the Lord, which run to and from through the whole earth" (Zech. 4:10). In passing note how the Angel-eyes "run"; this is a figure referring to an enthusiastic response to God's word of command (see Hab. 2:2; Am. 8:11,12; Ps. 147:15 and cp. Ps. 103:21,21; Job 38:35).
- The eyes of the Lord are associated with His Angelic protection of His people- "the eyes of the Lord run to and from throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him" (2 Chron. 16:9). "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous" (Ps. 34:15). "The eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him. . . the Angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him" (Ps. 33:18; 34:7).
- Dan. 4:17: "This matter is by the decree of the watchers. . . the holy ones". The idea of being "watchers" is similar to that of being "eyes". The "holy one" is also an Angelic title.
- Amos 9:1 "I saw the Lord standing beside the altar". As no man can see God, this must have been an Angel standing there, similar to what Zecharias saw years later. This Angel



announced that He personally would inflict judgement on Israel: "I will slay the last of them. . . I will set Mine eyes upon them for evil. . . the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful Kingdom, and I will destroy it. . . the Lord God of Hosts (Angels) is He that toucheth the land" (v. 4,8,5). Thus the Angel, the God of Hosts and the eyes of the Lord are all connected.

- The Lord's eyes are very much connected with Ezekiel's Angel-cherubim visions (1:18; 10:12), in that the wheels were full of eyes. Dan. 7 has a similar vision- "His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire" (v. 9). The Angels are flames of fire (Ps. 104:4). "A fiery stream (from the burning-fire wheels) issued and came forth from before Him; thousand thousands . . . ten thousand times ten thousand" (v. 10). These thousands are interpreted as Angels in Ps. 68:17 and Rev. 5:11, and in their issuing forth equate with the lightnings running and returning in Ezek. 1, which in turn represent the Angels ascending and descending between God and men in Jacob's vision.
- Is. 37:17: "Open Thine eyes, O Lord, and see". This obvious 'language of limitation' was in the context of the Sennacherib invasion, where the opening of God's eyes was through the action of the Angel going out to destroy the Assyrians.
- Prov. 22:12: "The eyes of the Lord preserve knowledge"- the cherubim-Angels keep the way to the tree of life, "the way" being the true knowledge of God (2 Peter 2:2; Heb. 5:2; Rom. 3:12; Acts 9:2; 16:17; 19:9 etc. ).
- Prov. 15:3: "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good"- God omnipresent through His Spirit Angels.
- Solomon built a house for God's Name (2 Chron. 6:34), which was carried by the Angel (Ex. 23:20,21). This Angel literally dwelt in the temple. Solomon prayed that this Angelic presence would remain, so that fellowship with God, especially in prayer, could continue. He likens this Angelic presence to the eyes of the Lord being open- "let, I beseech Thee, Thine eyes be open, and Thine ears be attent (language of limitation) unto the prayer that is made in this place" (2 Chron. 6:40).
- "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (Gen. 6:8)- i. e. the Angels who brought the flood (see Chapter 7).
- Many times the idea of God "seeing" is found in Angelic contexts- e. g. Gen. 31:42 "the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the fear of Isaac (i. e. the Angel whom Jacob perceived as his God-Gen. 48:15,16). . . hath seen mine affliction. . . and rebuked thee (Laban) yesternight" (in a vision- probably controlled by an Angel).

In the same way God through the Angel in the burning bush could stress "I have surely seen the affliction of My people" (the Angel's charges, Ex. 3:7). Dt. 26:7-10 is in the same vein: "We cried unto the Lord God of our fathers"-the Angel- He "looked on our affliction". The rest of the passage is clearly Angelic: "The Lord brought us forth out of Egypt. . . with signs. . . and He hath brought us into this place"- all done by the Angel. "Thou shalt set (the firstfruits) before the Lord thy God"- the Angel in the tabernacle. Similarly God 'looking' at the Egyptians through the cloudy pillar to effect the Red Sea deliverance, refers to the Angel in the cloud bringing about the destruction of the Egyptians, as is hinted at elsewhere.

## 2.6 "THE PRESENCE OF GOD"

The Angels manifesting God, it is to be expected that this phrase should at times refer directly to them:

- "Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God (walking in the garden)"- they hid from the Angel (Gen. 3:8). The language implies the Angel searched for them and they met face to face; which must be regarding an Angel.



- "Cain went out from the presence of the Lord" (Gen. 4:16)- the Angel cherubim (see later) keeping the way to the tree of life and officiating at the altar.
- "If Thy presence go not with me. . ." Moses reasoned, in his request that an Angel should accompany him (Ex. 33:15 and context).
- "Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel" (another Angelic phrase). The Law was given at Sinai by the Angels and it was they who "came down" there to speak with Moses; Ps. 68:18.
- Similarly Ps. 97:5 "The hills melted like wax at the presence of the. . . Lord of the whole earth" (land- of Israel; the Angel standing for Israel).
- "Tremble, thou earth. . . at the presence of the God of Jacob" (Ps. 114:7)- one of the clearest Angelic phrases.
- "The Angel of His presence" (Is. 63:9)- saving the best until last.

The root meaning of "Presence" in Hebrew is 'to turn one's face'- and the ideas of faces and turning are closely linked with the Angel-cherubim, as well as with the Angels guarding the way of life in Gen. 3.

Exciting homework for the enthusiast lies in the possible Angelic connections of "the presence" in the following: Lev. 22:3; 1 Chron. 16:27,33; 2 Chron. 20:9; Job 1:12; 2:7; 23:15; Ps. 9:3; 16:11; 17:2; 68:2,8; 95:2; 97:5; 100:2; 114:7; 139:7; 140:13; Is. 64:1,2; Jer. 4:26; 5:22; 23:39; 52:3; Ez. 38:20; Jonah 1:3,10; Nahum 1:5; Zeph. 1:7.

## 2.7 "THE FEAR OF GOD"

- Gen. 48:15,16 is the key here: "God, before whom my (Jacob's) fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil. . .". The God of Abraham and Isaac meant to Jacob the same as the Angel who had daily protected him. The use of Angels as God's means of revelation to the patriarchs would explain why they would have conceived of God in terms of an Angel. This lays the basis for the Angel later being called "the God of Jacob" and the "God of Israel", especially seeing that Michael was the Angel (God) who represented Israel (Dan. 12:1). Gen. 31:42,53 provide the link with "the fear". Jacob there says "Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the fear of Isaac, had been with me. . . the God of Abraham. . . the fear of his father Isaac". Gen. 48 shows how Jacob believed the God of Abraham and Isaac to be the Angel which redeemed him from all evil. Gen. 31 shows that he thought the God of Abraham and Isaac to be "the fear"; it is therefore also an Angelic title.

- This would explain why Abraham should say when in Egypt "surely the fear of God is not in this place" (Gen. 20:11). The record seems to gently emphasize that Abimelech, the king of those parts, was 'God fearing'- were there many pagan kings who would not "come near" (Gen. 20:4) an apparently single beauty queen who had been requisitioned for him for that purpose, and who made no protest? Especially for a period of a few months! (Until the other women realized for sure that their wombs had been closed). The patriarchs' subsequent dealings with Gerar show its rulers to have been honourable and upright- even when under provocation from Abraham's sly dealing. Thus "the fear of God" not being in Gerar may refer

to Abraham sensing that the presence of God in the Angel was not with him- and therefore he resorted to fleshly scheming. The phrase does not necessarily mean that the place was not God-fearing. We too can convince ourselves that the Angel is not physically with us, even when He is, and do likewise.

- "I will send an Angel before thee. . . I will send My fear before thee" (Ex. 23:20,27) is clear enough.

- Ex. 23:23,27 parallels "my fear" being sent before Israel with "mine Angel" being sent before them. "The fear of Isaac" was clearly an Angel. Verse 28 parallels the fear, the Angel and "the hornets" which were sent by God to drive out or soften up the Canaanite tribes. However, the softening up of those tribes was by the attacks they suffered from other tribes, who were presumably under the direct control of "mine Angel" and in that sense identified with Him.

## 2.8 "THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL"

It will be shown that an Angel dwelt literally in the most Holy Place, over the ark. It is therefore fitting that He should be called "the Holy One of Israel". Angels are fundamentally linked with God's holiness- their presence on earth has made the very ground on which they stand holy (Ex. 3:5; Josh. 5:15). Maybe the holy place and "holy things" of the tabernacle were holy because of the physical presence of the Angel in the tabernacle? Hence when the glory-Angel departed from the temple at the Captivity as described in Ezekiel, the holy things lost their holiness so that God allowed them to be used in idol worship; contrast this with the judgements on the Philistines for just possessing the ark in days of closer Angelic presence.

Passage after passage, with varying degrees of conviction, connect the "holy one" with this Angel:

- 2 Kings 19:22 describes Sennacherib's scorn of the "Holy One of Israel"; the record shows how this scorn was punished by the Angel going forth from the temple and slaying the Assyrians, perhaps linking this Angel with the "Holy One" (for more on this see 'Angels and the Assyrian Invasion' in Chapter 10). The very frequent mention of the Holy One of Israel in Isaiah falls into place once the immediate context of the Angel saving Hezekiah from the Assyrians is understood. Isaiah's prophecies of the restoration were primarily fulfilled through the same Angel (see Chapter 11, 'Angels and the restoration').

- Jer. 51:5: "For Israel is not forsaken, nor Judah, of his God, of Yahweh of hosts; though their land is full of guilt against the Holy One of Israel". Yahweh of Hosts [Angels], the God of Israel and the "Holy One of Israel" are all equated here. Surely the point is that Israel's Angel had been sinned against, yet still He had not left His people.

- Ps. 89 has many Angelic allusions:

v. 1,3 "I will sing of the mercies (promises) of the Lord. . . I have made a covenant with . . . David". The promises to both the patriarchs and David were made by Angels

v. 7 "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints"- the council of Angels (as 1 Kings 2:20; Gen. 1:26; Job 1).

v. 8 "God of Hosts" (Angels)

v. 11 "As for the world. . Thou hast founded them"- work performed by the Angels.

v. 15 "the light of Thy countenance"- the Angel shining forth from the temple on the day of Atonement .

v. 18 "The Holy One of Israel is our king"- David recognized that the Angel of Israel was their real king, not him.

v. 19 "then Thou spakest in vision to Thy Holy One (i. e. of v. 18), and saidst (the promises to David)". The promises were thus made to David by God Himself commanding an Angel- the "Holy One"- to give them to David.

v. 20 "I have found David My servant"- the language of Ps. 78:70-72 about David, a Psalm which definitely concerns the work of the Angels.

- "The Lord of Hosts. . shall kindle a burning. . the light of Israel shall be for a fire, and His Holy One for a flame, and it shall burn. . "(Is. 10:16,17). "He maketh His Angels. . a flame of fire "(Ps. 104:4)- like the Angel in the bush with Moses.

- "The Holy One of Jacob. . the God of Israel" (Is. 29:23). The God of Jacob (Israel) was an Angel.

- "God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran" (Hab. 3:3). The chapter goes on to describe the Angelic-cherubim march leading the Israelites through the Red Sea and the wilderness. Ps. 78:41 also describes the wilderness Angel as the "Holy One" (for the Angelic context of Ps. 78 see Chapter 10).

- "The Lord of Hosts"- clearly an Angelic term- is often linked with the "Holy One of Israel":

"Our redeemer, the Lord of Hosts is His Name, the Holy One of Israel" (Is. 47:4)

"The Lord of Hosts is His Name; and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel" (Is. 54:5)

"Israel hath not been forsaken. . of the Lord of Hosts; though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel" (Jer. 51:5- and also cp. Is. 48:17 with Jer. 50:34).

To which add: "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts" (Is. 6:3).

## 2.9 "COME DOWN"

We will suggest in Chapter 6 that when the Angels are spoken of as physically moving, they do literally move- they allow themselves to a large degree to be bounded by space. The ideas of God visiting men and coming down therefore often have an Angelic reference. The implication in these phrases that God has to come down in order to visit men and see how they are is obvious language of limitation and therefore often applies to Angels. The Hebrew for "come down" is often used to describe literal physical movement.

- "The Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the children of men builded" at Babel. This language of limitation must be concerning the Angels, seeing that God is aware of all things. The Angelic response was "Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language" (Gen. 11:5,7). This recalls the Angels' words of Gen. 1:26 "Let us make man in our image".

- In the same way the Angels responded to news of Sodom's sins by saying "I (God manifest in the Angels) will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it which is come unto Me; and if not, I will know" (Gen. 18:21). The two Angels were therefore sent to Sodom, and decided "We will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord" (Angelic language; e. g. Ex. 33:12 cp. 20); Gen. 19:13. God coming down was therefore in the form of the Angels sent to Sodom.

- Ex. 3:8 is very clear- the Angel in the burning bush says "I am come down to deliver" Israel.

- Many passages talk of the Angel's presence on Mount Sinai as God coming down there- e. g. Ex. 19:11,20; Neh. 9:13

- The Angel in the pillar of cloud that spoke regularly to Moses is described as the Lord coming down to him (Num. 11:17,25; 12:5).

- 2 Sam. 22 is a chapter full of reference to God's manifestation through the Angels (see Chapter 3). Verse 10 describes God bowing the Heavens and coming down in this context. Similar passages are found in Ps. 18:9; 144:5.

- Elijah's commanding of fire to "come down" from Heaven to destroy the bands of men sent to capture him (2 Kings 1:10) was probably effected by Angelic means, similar to how "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty Angels, in flaming fire (cp. Ps. 104:4) taking vengeance on them that know not God" (2 Thess. 1:7,8).

- Fire coming down from Heaven (e. g. 2 Chron. 7:1) to consume acceptable sacrifices probably refers to the Angels being made a flame of fire (Ps. 104:4) to consume the sacrifice. In 2 Chron. 7:1 this would be by the Angel dwelling in the temple. The same scenario was probably seen in Eden, when the Angel cherubim consumed the sacrifices.

- Mic. 1:12 describes evil coming down from the Lord- created by God (Is. 45:7) by His "Angels of evil" (Ps. 78:49).

## **2. 10 "VISIT"**

- "The Lord visited Sarah as He had said" (Gen. 21:1)- it was an Angel who made the promises to her about Isaac and whom Abraham entertained at that time. Similarly in 1 Sam. 2:21 "The Lord visited Hannah, so that she conceived"- most other cases of barren women conceiving are related to an Angel, and so this visiting of Hannah was most likely also Angelic.

- Joseph prophesied to Israel : "God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land" (Gen. 50:24; see Ex. 13:19 too)- a promise alluded to by the Angel in the burning bush who was sent to fulfil it (Ex. 3:16,17; 4:31).

- The Angel who made the promises and spoke to Israel from Sinai explained that He would punish them for their disobedience. Many times this punishment is described as God visiting Israel for their sins (e. g. Hos. 9:9-note the Angelic context).

- Ps. 59:5 "O Lord God of Hosts, the God of Israel (both Angelic terms), awake (language of Angelic limitation) to visit all the heathen". See Is. 29:6; Zech. 10:3; Jer. 11:22,23; 50:31; Amos 3:13,14 for other examples.

- Ps. 80 has many Angelic references. In this context we find (v. 14):"O God of Hosts (Angels): look down from Heaven (the Angels are God's eyes; note the language of limitation), and behold, and visit this vine" (Jesus-v. 17).

- Jeremiah pleads "Visit me. . O Lord God of Hosts" (Angels)- Jer. 15:15,16.

- The Angel shepherd of Israel promised to "visit upon you the evil of your doings" (Jer. 23:2).

- The Jews were to remain in Babylon "until the day that I visit them, saith the Lord; then will I bring them up, and restore them to this place" (Jer. 27:22). "After seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you and perform My good word toward you" (Jer. 29:10). This visiting to bring about the restoration was clearly the work of Angels (see 'Angels and the Restoration').

- Acts 15:14: "Simeon (Peter) hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His Name". Peter had explained the story of Cornelius' conversion, which the record in Acts 10 emphasizes was the result of Angelic work. The visiting of the Gentiles with the Gospel was therefore arranged by Angels. 'Angels and the end of the Law' (see Chapter 12) suggests that there was a group of Angels whose task it was to end the system of spiritual prejudice towards the Jews and open the way for salvation based on faith rather than race.

- Mic. 7:4 tells us that the day of Israel's visitation will be executed by her watchmen- the Angels (Is. 62:6 AVmg. ; Dan. 4:13,17,23; and see Chapter 8 for an explanation of how the Angel eyes of God watch over the outworking of His word with Israel).

- The Jews knew not the time of their visitation- by Christ and the Angels in AD70 (Lk. 19:44; 1 Peter 2:12).

- The book of Job speaks of Job's trials as a result of God visiting Job (e. g. 35:15)- when in practice those trials were brought by his satan-Angel (see Chapter 9).

- One of the characteristics of the Angel that declared God's Name to Israel was that He would visit "the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and fourth generation" (Ex. 34:7). The fact this was not always done because it depended upon the response of individuals indicates that such language cannot be true of God Himself. It is more relevant to the Angels, who are capable of changing their decreed intentions. In passing, another possibility is that "I punish the children" (Ex. 20:6 etc) is an allusion to the ancient legal practice of punishing all members of a household (as with Achan)- and three or four generations at most would live in an extended household. So the

idea could refer to the punishment of entire households, rather than a prediction that Divine judgment would as it were stalk the generations of the sinner.

## CHAPTER 3: THE CHERUBIM

The visions of the cherubim and living creatures all seem to have Angelic associations, many of which are detailed elsewhere [\(1\)](#). One of the clearest is that the cherubim were to keep "the way" to the tree of life (Gen. 3:24), whereas the keeping of the way is later said to be in the control of Angels- e. g. in Gen. 18:19 the Angels decide Abraham will keep "the way of the Lord", implying they were the ones guarding it; and in Ex. 32:8 the Angel talking with Moses on Sinai comments "They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them" (see too Dt. 9:10,12). Thus in Gen. 6:12 "God looked (the Angels are God's eyes) upon the earth, and. . . all flesh had corrupted His way". Further connections between Angels and the flood are found in Chapter 7.

John Thomas [\(2\)](#) highlights the fact that God is described as being fundamentally light (1 Jn. 1:5), Spirit (John 4:24) and a consuming fire (Heb. 12:29). These three elements figure strongly in the cherubim visions. The Angels are very closely connected with light, Spirit and fire, leading to the conclusion that God is very largely manifested through the Angels. It is emphasized that the cherubim have wings. The Angel that lead Israel through the wilderness is likened to a bird with large protecting wings, similar to the idea of the cherubim: "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings; so the Lord alone did lead them" (the work of the wilderness Angel); Dt. 32:11,12.

The cherubim seem to represent God's system of manifestation remaining fundamentally the same in different times. Thus in Isaiah 6, Ezekiel 1 and Revelation 4 there appear to be different beings sitting upon a central throne, surrounded by various arrangements of Angels. The "living creatures" of Ez. 1 are the cherubim of the similar vision of Ez. 10. On the heads of the living creatures was a firmament with the throne on it. Ez. 1:4,5 says that the creatures came out of the midst of the amber, whilst Rev. 4 says they were from the midst of the throne, thus suggesting that the creatures were still very close to the throne, although apparently beneath it in Ez. 1. The cloud, brightness and amber of Ez. 1:4 therefore equates with the throne in the midst of the cherubim in the other visions.

The visions of the cherubim alternate between the refugee encampment by the river Chebar in Babylon, and the temple. The same living creature seen by Chebar was seen over Jerusalem (Ez. 10:15,20). The glory which Ezekiel saw in the cherubim over the Jerusalem temple was also in Babylon (Ez. 10:4)- to try to teach Judah that they didn't need to have a physical temple, an outward religion, in order to have God's cherubim presence of glory with them. The way this all worked out in practice was presumably that the Angelic cherubim system did literally remove from Jerusalem to Chebar in a literal, geographical sense.

### Revelation 4

Notice the Angelic language in Ezekiel 1:

- v. 4 "a whirlwind. . . a great cloud"- the Angels will be revealed in a cloud (the Shekinah glory?) at the second coming. Note too how Job's satan Angel (see Chapter 9) was also manifested in a whirlwind.
- "A fire"- God "maketh His Angels. . a flame of fire".
- "A brightness was about it. . . out of the midst of the fire". The language of this verse is reminiscent of the Angelic manifestation on Sinai.

The four wings of the creatures point to them being Angels- Angels are spoken of as 'flying ' in Dan. 9:21. The creatures running and returning would relate well to the notion of Angels literally travelling to and fro in God's service, as made specific in Jacob's ladder vision. The firmament with a rainbowed throne upon it on the heads of the living creatures indicates that the same system of God manifestation occurs at different levels- with Israel, both natural and spiritual, and in the organization of Heaven itself. This concept is a key to understanding the cherubim visions- that each vision can be interpreted with reference to God manifestation through both human and Heavenly beings. The layout of the tabernacle was a "pattern of things in the (literal) Heavens" (Heb. 9:23). In the wilderness journey, the ark was covered in the tabernacle by the various layers of the tent detailed in Ex. 26:1-6: sea cows' skins, red rams skins, goats hair, blue, purple, scarlet and linen. These would form a kind of rainbow over the ark, and above that there was the Angel in the pillar of cloud or fire. This "pattern of things in the Heavens" replicated the visions of a throne (the ark) over-arched by a rainbow and the glory of God.

The mercy seat- or throne- was surrounded by the four cherubim, and between these a mighty Angel dwelt. The four cherubic wings over the ark equate with the four wings of the Ez. 1 cherubim; however, we must digress to show how the ark was covered by four cherubic wings. On two of the walls of the Most Holy were cherub wings, which met in the middle, over the ark. This in turn had two cherub wings overshadowing it, thus making a total of four wings over it. Relevant passages are 1 Kings 6:27; 8:6-8.

That the throne of God is represented by the ark of the covenant is shown by comparing Rev. 11:19 and 4:1-5:

<b>Rev. 11:19</b>	<b>Rev. 4:1-5</b>
"The temple of God was opened in Heaven"	"A door was opened in Heaven"
"There was seen in the temple the ark of His testament"	"A throne was set in Heaven, and one sat on the throne. . . there  was a rainbow round about the throne".
"There were lightnings, and voices and thunderings"	"Out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices"

The throne in Rev. 4 was surrounded by cherubim, as was the "throne" of the ark of the covenant.

We are going to suggest that there was one mighty Angel, perhaps the one representative of Jesus (see Chapter 12), who physically dwelt between the cherubim. The four cherubim covered the ark, over which dwelt an Angel; Ps. 99:1,7 therefore describes the Angel as

dwelling between the cherubim: "The Lord reigneth. . . He sitteth between the cherubims. . . He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar: they kept His testimonies, and the ordinance that He gave them". These latter things were all done by the Angel. Also relevant is Ps. 68:17,18: "The chariots of God are. . . thousands of Angels; the Lord is among them, as in. . . the Holy place". One Angel, which dwelt in the Holy Place, was therefore central to those thousands of others. See too Is. 37:16,17 on this. Similarly, Isaiah saw "the King, the Lord of Hosts (Angels) sitting between the cherubim" (Is. 6:5). The phrase 'living God' may mean 'the God of the living ones', and would therefore describe this mighty Angel- it is linked with "the Lord of Hosts" (Angels) in Jer. 23:36 and the Angel that dwelt in the temple (Ps. 42:2).

This Angel would have manifested the supreme presence of God Himself in the midst of the cherubim visions. The association between the living creatures and the rainbow leads to the speculation that the 'rainbowed Angel', "a mighty Angel" of Rev. 10:1, was the same powerful Angel surrounded by the four living creatures/ cherubim. That these were four specific Angels separate from the other Angels is suggested by Rev. 15:7: "One of the four beasts gave unto the seven Angels seven golden vials. . ."; in Rev. 7:11 the Angels stand around the beasts, and in 5:12 they are closer to God's throne than the other Angels. Are these "the first princes" (Angels) of Dan. 10:13?

## **David and the Cherubim**

Almost as a footnote, it is worth showing how David's description of how the cherubim acted in his life in 2 Sam. 22 is full of Angelic language:

v. 2 "My rock"- an Angel (Gen. 49:24)

v. 3 "My shield"- the Angel who made the promises to Abraham (Gen. 15:1)

v. 3 "My saviour"- as the Holy Spirit Angel was to Israel (Is. 63:8-10)

v. 7 "He did hear my voice out of His temple, and my cry did enter into His ears"- the language of Angelic limitation regarding the Angel who dwelt in the temple.

v. 9 "fire"- God makes His Angels a flame of fire (Ps. 104:3,4).

v. 10 "came down " - God manifest in the Angels, as at Sodom and Babel.

v. 11 "a cherub. . . did fly. . . wings of wind". Gabriel could "fly swiftly"; the Angels are made "spirits"- winds.

v. 12 "darkness. . . thick clouds"- the Angel dwelt over the darkness of the Most Holy and in the pillar of cloud; cp. the scene during the Angelic manifestation at Sinai.

v. 15 "arrows. . . lightning"- Angel cherubim language

v. 16 "the blast of the breath (spirit) of His nostrils". God's spirit is manifested through Angels.

v. 17 "He sent from above, He took me"- the physical movement of the Angels from Heaven to earth to obey God's word (see Chapter 6)



v. 25 "Before His eyes"- Angels

v. 37 "Thou hast enlarged my steps. . so that my feet did not slip"- the Angel keeping David from sinning?

23:1 "God of Jacob"- an Angel

23:3 "the rock of Israel" (an Angel) inspired David- which is the work of Angels (see Chapter 8).

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## Notes

(1) See J. Allfree *The Cherubim* (Mansfield: Bible Study Publications, 1986).

(2) John Thomas, *Elpis Israel* (Birmingham: C. M. P. A. , 1979 ed. ) p. 151.

## 3-1 The four living creatures

There seems to be an association between the "four winds", the four "living creatures" and the four "beasts" mentioned at various points in Scripture. It is suggested that these all refer, even if indirectly, to a literal four cherubic Angels. Rev. 7:1 is the clearest evidence: "I saw four Angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth". The stress is on "the four winds".

Dan. 7:2,3 connects the winds and the beasts: "Behold, the four winds of Heaven strove upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea". The "four winds" may refer to Angels- God makes His Angels spirits or winds. Other passages possibly connect the four winds and the Angels:

- Zech. 2:6: "Flee from the land of the north (Babylon). . for I . . spread you abroad as (by?) the four winds of the Heaven". The Jews who returned from exile to Jerusalem came from one place- Babylon; not the four corners of the earth. The Angels had scattered or "spread abroad" Israel at the captivity (see notes on Zech. 1 and 2 in Chapter 11).

- Ez. 37:9: "Prophesy unto the wind. . . and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God; come from the four winds, O breath (wind), and breathe upon these slain, that they may live". Is this the command to Michael, Israel's Angel which comes into action for them in the last days (Dan. 12:1) to start to regather Israel? He is called forth from his exalted place dwelling between the four cherubim Angels. The language is reminiscent of that in Gen. 2:7, where the Angel breathed into man the breath of life, which caused him to stand up upon his feet (cp. Ez. 37:10)- and here the Angel is being asked to do the same, to Israel. Further connections between the "wind" and Israel's Angel are in Jer. 4:11-13: "A dry wind of the high places in the wilderness toward the daughter of My people, not to fan, nor to cleanse. . . he shall come up as clouds, and his chariots shall be as a whirlwind: his horses are swifter than eagles". Chariots, horses, whirlwind and clouds are all the language of Angelic manifestation (e. g. Ps. 104:1-4; 2 Kings 6:17; 13:14; Job 38:1), and are here equated with "the wind". The word for "dry" in Jer. 4:11 literally means 'dazzling white'- a connection with the white garments of the Angels?

- The horse rider of Zech. 1:8 is defined as an Angel in v. 10. This vision is the basis of that in Rev. 6, where a different one of the four beasts is associated in turn with a different horse rider. This further links the four beasts with Angels. The beasts are "full of eyes" - i. e. Angels.

- Is Mt. 24:31 relevant? "He shall send His Angels. . . and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds"- their personal Angels extract them from the control the other Angels have over them at the moment of Christ's return?

## **Angel-beasts**

If these connections are valid, then the beasts and the four living creatures of the prophetic visions should be seen as referring on one level to different Angels controlling the various political or religious systems represented by the beasts. Thus the four horns of Zech. 1:19 would equate with the four living creatures of the cherubim and also of Daniel, and therefore the four nations of Dan. 2. Dan. 8:8 provides an example of these links: "When he was strong, the great horn was broken (see the link between horns and the cherubim- Angels in Hab. 3:3-5; the Angel behind Alexander); and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of Heaven". This would therefore describe the division of Alexander's Kingdom between four Angels- the "notable ones" or "winds", each of whom controlled one of Alexander's succeeding generals. His Kingdom was "divided toward the four winds of Heaven" (Dan. 11:4)- the Kingdom was not literally scattered throughout the world, but divided to four Angel-winds.

Often, Angels are described in terms of the men, empires or armies they control- the frequent descriptions of human armies in language which refers to Angels too provides proof of this (e. g. Is. 66:15; Ez. 26:7,10; Joel 2:5; Nahum 2:3,4,13). Nahum 3:3 RV speaks of how the Assyrians will come with the noise of wheels, as prancing horses, jumping chariots, and "the flashing sword" (RV). This is all cherubim-Angel language. The Angels behind those nations and armies were manifested through them, and this there is the use of such similar language. In the same way, the description of the beasts are relevant to the nations they represent, and also to the Angels which control them. Rev. 9:11 provides another example: "They (the Arabs?) had a king over them, which IS the Angel of the bottomless pit". This Angel is both a Heavenly Angel and the earthly leader over which the Angel has charge. Rev. 9:16 says that "the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand"- cp. "thousand thousands" of Angels in Dan. 7:10. Rev. 9:17 continues: "horses. . . and them that sat on them". Horses and riders in Rev. 6 and Zechariah have clear Angelic connections (Chapter 11); "the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions"- lions and Angels are linked in Rev. 9:17; 10:1,3. John Thomas rightly observes that the rider of a horse must have control of the horse, and whatever the horse represents. The Angels have control of the nations under them, in the same way as Angels stand beside rivers (representing nations) in Daniel, to show their control over them. Thus again we see that the system of God's manifestation has remained constant- both through the Angels in Heaven and the organizations of men on earth. Thus 1 Chron. 12:8 describes David's ecclesia in the wilderness as having faces "like the faces of lions" (Angel-cherubim language?), being "a great host, like the host of God"- David's host became increasingly in line with God's Heavenly Hosts of Angels, the four living creatures.

It is worth noting too that Ez. 14:21 talks of God sending "My four sore judgements upon Jerusalem, the sword and the famine and the noisome beast, and the pestilence". These are four similar judgements to those ministered by the four living creatures in Rev. 6 and by the

four Angel chariots of Zech. 6. Later we will see that these creatures and chariots represent Angels; so it is worth speculating that whenever a group of four judgements are mentioned, there is a reference to the four cherubim Angels bringing them. Ezek. 6:15,17 mentions the same four judgements as 14:21, and describes them as "the evil arrows" sent by God- His "Angels of evil" (Ps. 78:49)? The context in Ez. 14 is God saying that even if Noah, Daniel and Job were in the land, they would not stop the judgements coming (v. 14,20). This seems to be directly referring to the Angels deciding to bring their judgements on Sodom (which typifies Jerusalem- Is. 1:10) despite a handful of righteous being there (Gen. 18:24). It is even possible that the "noisome beasts" of Ez. 14:15 which were to spoil the land in judgement are the four beasts/ living creatures of Dan. 7 controlling the various nations used to execute these judgements. The the four living creatures of Daniel's visions had eyes on them (Dan. 7:8,20; 8:5,21), surely reminding us of the Angel-cherubim four living creatures covered with eyes in Rev. 4:6,8- cp. the cherubim wheels also full of eyes in Ez. 1:18; 10:12. Thus the Assyrian invader is described as having wings and "glory" (Is. 8:7,8), both of which are terms associated with the Angel-cherubim, seeing that they were ultimately behind the invasion.

### *Implications*

The idea of an Angel representing political powers has interesting implications in Dan. 8:8-12: "four notable ones toward the four winds of Heaven (the number four and "winds" we have seen to both have Angelic connections). And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which. . . waxed great, even to the host of Heaven (the Angels controlling the Jewish people); and it cast down some of the host and of the stars (both "host" and "stars" are Angelic words), and stamped upon them; Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host (the "Most High" Angel, the Angel of Jesus, who was the real prince of the Angel hosts), and by him. . . the place of His sanctuary (i. e. the temple, where the "Most High" Angel dwelt) was cast down. And an host (of Angels controlling the Romans and perhaps the Papacy too) was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the Truth to the ground. " "The Truth" here does not necessarily refer to a set of doctrines or people holding them which comprises the true Gospel. This can never be thrown down, and in any case "the Truth" in this sense was not thrown down after the destruction of the temple in AD70- it grew then as never before. "The truth" being thrown down may parallel the host and stars being cast to the ground in v. 10- in which case "the truth" represents the Jews- or it may hint at the Mosaic Law being "thrown down" by the Angelic destruction of the temple and the Mosaic system. "Thy Law (of Moses) is the Truth" (Ps. 119:142). This all lays the basis for Rev. 12 describing the conflicting groups of Angels in Heaven at the time of the final abolition of the Mosaic system (see 'Angels and the ending of the Law' in Chapter 12). In preparation for this, the reader may like to ponder whether there are many examples of 'Angels' in Revelation not referring to literal Heavenly Angels.

We thus see different groups of Angels controlling various political powers, in conflict with each other and deposing each other from authority, in so far as the powers they control are in conflict with each other. Even without the preceding Biblical arguments, this is surely the conclusion to be drawn from the glib statement that 'the Angels control the nations'- but the nations are in conflict with each other! Obviously the Angels personally are working together in a spirit of loving unity and co-operation, although the short-term results of their work may appear superficially to be at tangents to each other.

## **CHAPTER 4: The Court Of Heaven**

We are obviously treading on Holy ground in trying to understand how God's work is organized in Heaven, and yet we believe there are enough hints for us to make some broad suggestions which hopefully will help us appreciate more how God is working in our lives.

Rev. 14:17,18 describe an Angel coming out of "The temple which is in Heaven" and another coming out of the Altar (Christ). Does this imply that although all Angels are subject to Christ in rank, some are in His control and others in the Father's ? Jesus will return with "His Holy Angels". Presumably when He returns not every single Angel in Heaven will return with Him. The Father's Angels will remain. As Jesus is in control of our daily lives through our guardian Angels, it would seem a fair assumption that the guardian Angels of the saints of all ages are in the specific control of Jesus, and these are the "reapers" of the spiritual harvest which will return with Him to judge us. If we are judged by our guardian Angels (see Chapter 8-1), then they must be Christ's own Angels which return with Him.

## **The court of Heaven**

The notion of a court of Heaven is a major Biblical theme. The visions of 1 Kings 22:19-23, Isaiah 6 and Rev. 4 show God seated on a throne with Angels before Him, bringing information and requests to Him and departing with commands to obey; the idea of a council in Heaven is clearly hinted at in Job 1; Gen. 1:26; Ps. 89:7. God sitting on a throne implies that each request or piece of information presented is 'judged' and an appropriate decision made. The 'case' of the adversaries to God is presented by a 'satan' Angel. Ps. 11:4,5 describes the scene: "The Lord's throne is in Heaven (mirrored by the Mighty Angel of Israel being enthroned over the Mercy Seat in the temple): His eyes (Angels) behold, His eyelids try, the children of men. The Lord trieth the righteous (who are in His presence by their Angel), but the wicked and him that loveth violence His soul hateth". Rev. 12:10 may be understood in this context: "The accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night". When we read that Enoch "had witness borne to him that he had been well pleasing unto God" (Heb. 11:6 RV), this is courtroom language. Could it not be that his representative / guardian Angel in the court of Heaven had made this testimony to God Almighty? Likewise Lk. 21:13 speaks of how when a believer is persecuted, "it shall turn to you for a testimony". What does this really mean? For me, the most satisfactory explanation would be that the Angels give a positive testimony of the faithful believer in the court of Heaven.

Once one starts reading Scripture looking for these allusions to the court of Heaven, evidence multiplies. Take, from many possible examples:

- Mt. 18:14 RVmg.: "It is not a thing willed before your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish".
- The Angels were given "charge concerning thee" (Jesus)- in the court of Heaven, God's purpose was declared and His charge made clear concerning His Son (Lk. 4:10 RVmg.)
- "Elohim has taken his place in the divine council  
In the midst of the elohim he holds judgment" (Ps. 82:1).

"Let the heavens praise your wonders, O Yahweh,  
Your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones  
For who in the skies can be compared to Yahweh?  
Who among the sons of God is like Yahweh,

A God greatly feared in the council of the holy ones  
Great and awesome above all that are around him?" (Ps. 89: 5-7)

"The heavenly host bows down before you" (Neh. 9:6)

- "Dost thou hearken in the council of God?" (Job 15:8 RVmg.)- note how this is said in the context of Job, where we have the most classic statement of the operation of the court of heaven in the opening chapters.
- The sparrows are represented in the presence of God (Lk. 12:6 Gk.); even animals have their representative Angels there. This is 'how' in one sense a personal God sees and knows all things; because His Spirit / Angels are in His presence reporting all things to Him. At least this is how we are invited to perceive it. The sparrows aren't forgotten in the presence of God, and we are of more value than many sparrows (Lk. 12:6,7); Matthew has: 'Your Father feeds the sparrows; are you not of more value [same Greek as in Luke] than many sparrows?' ; 'no sparrow falls to the ground without your Father knowing...you are of more value than many sparrows" (Mt. 6:26; 10:29,31). The sparrows being in God's presence is paralleled with His feeding them [Gk. 'to bring them up'] and being aware of what is happening to them on earth. God feeds / raises the sparrows through His Angelic messengers.
- Nebuchadnezzar was told that the destruction of his power was a "matter by the decree of the watchers [i.e. Angels, the eyes of the Lord], and the demand by the word of the holy ones" (Dan. 4:17). The Chaldee words translated "matter, "decree" and "demand" are all legal terms, implying a legal answer / response, "a judicial decision" as Strong defines "the demand". Something came before the court of Heaven- presumably the matter in question was Nebuchadnezzar's pride and his position on the Jews (Daniel's advice in 4:27 to shew mercy to the poor may be a reference to what the King should've been doing to the Jews- perhaps by enabling their return to their land?). And a 'judicial decision' was made and "a watcher and a Holy One came down from Heaven" to operationalize it (Dan. 4:13). If this is the extent of Angelic attention to the heart of a Gentile king- how much more earnestly are they debating the states of our hearts and our actions, and issuing decrees for action accordingly?
- The members of this court of Heaven have various names- Holy ones (Hos 12:1; Zech 14:5); spirits (1 Kgs 22:21-23; Ps 104:4); messengers/angels (Ps 91:11; 103:20); ministers (Ps 103:21; 104:4); servants (Job 4:18); those on high (Job 21:22); princes (Jos 5:14; Dan 10:13). Supremely, Is. 9:5 LXX speaks of Messiah as "the Messenger of the Great Council" [*megales boules angelos*].
- "Let us make man" (Gen. 1:26), "Behold, the man has become like one of us" (Gen. 3:22) and "Come, let us go down" (Gen. 11:7) are examples from early Genesis. Franz Delitzsch (1) analyzes the Hebrew constructions here at great length, concluding that these verses manifest a "communicative plural", implying God conferring with His council.

The idea of Angels being sent out from this council to operationalize Divine commissions opens up so many Scriptures. An Angel was sent before Israel to keep them in the way (Ex. 23:30)- an evident allusion to the Angel-cherubim keeping the way to the tree of life. But did all Israel remain "in the way" whilst in the wilderness? Evidently not. Did the Angel fail? No. The Angel was given power and strength in order to potentially enable Israel to remain "in the way", just as our Angels are given that same power. But Israel refused to work with the Angel; they didn't make use of the Angel's efforts to keep them in the way.

What is so awesome is that the Hebrew word *sod*, 'council' or 'court', is something open to us as mortals. In Biblical times, Kings had their *sod*, their gathering of intimate advisors and ministers. But *we*, mere mortals on earth, are invited to be part of the *sod* of God Almighty,

having His purpose and plans revealed to us (Ps. 25:14; Job 29:4). But *sod* members weren't passive listeners; they gave their advice and requests, and the King factored that into His decision making. This is a picture of the power of prayer from those who have understood the way and essence of the King of Heaven.

## Heavenly Hierarchy

There is evidently a hierarchy amongst the Angels as there will be among us in the age to come. It is interesting to see how the Angels relate to each other, and how their actions complement each other in order to bring about the trials of our lives. Once we grasp this idea, we can try to analyse the Angelic action in our lives and imagine all the different parts played by various Angels to bring it about. This system is maybe hinted at in Ecc. 5:8, where the hierarchy of corrupt human rulers and judges is contrasted with the righteous hierarchy of Heaven: "If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgement and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter: for He that is higher than the high ones (A. V. "highest" is plural) regardeth; and there be higher than they" (the high ones). Thus:

- The Most High One
- The Higher than the High Ones
- The High Ones

The "high ones" referring to Angels, it may be that the phrase "Most High" also refers sometimes to God manifested through an Angel who is higher than all the others, perhaps foreshadowing Christ, who was also made higher than the Angels. The idea of the Heavenly organization being like a court is often developed in other references to the Angels- e. g. there appear to be accusing and defending Angels who stand around the throne of God and obey His judgements <sup>(2)</sup>. A close study of the record of Sodom's destruction will reveal that the 'Lord' spoken of there was one of the Angels who arranged the judgements on Sodom. "The Lord said, Because the cry (NIV 'Outcry') of Sodom. . is great. . I will go down now" (Gen. 18:20,21). Perhaps this outcry of Sodom was from the Angels who were shocked at its sinfulness, whose concern prompted the senior Angel into 'coming down' in judgement. It may be that 1 Cor. 6:3,5 refers to this idea of different levels amongst the Angels. We are to "judge" our brethren, not in condemning them but in discerning between them, in the same way as we will "judge Angels" in the future. Then, we will not condemn them, but perceive / discern the differences between them.

It was Rudolf Rijkeboer who drew my attention to the significant difference between representation and symbolization in Revelation (3). The 24 elders of Rev. 4:5 represent rather than symbolize the believers, whose guardians they are. These Angels represent the saints in the court of Heaven. In this lies the practical meaning of all this; that we, our 'case', our thoughts and deeds, are represented in none less than the court of Heaven; and there they are judged, discussed, and responded to.

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## Notes

(1) Franz Delitzsch, *A New Commentary on Genesis* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1888), pp.98,99.

(2) This is the thesis of David Kingston *Angels and the Court of Heaven* (1988).

(3) Rudolf Rijkeboer, *Jesus' Last Message* (Voorburg, Holland: De Broeders In Christus, 1998) p. 36.

## 4-1 ANGELIC CO-OPERATION

### The Passover

A classic example of Angelic co-operation is found in the account of the first Passover. Ex. 12:23 says that the Passover Angel would "pass (hover) over the door and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you". 'The destroyer' refers to an Angel- Ps. 78 speaks of the "Angels of evil" who brought the plagues, and as the plague of the firstborn was one of them, it follows that this too must have been brought about by an Angel. The same Angel is referred to in Jer. 51:1- the "destroying spirit" ["wind", AV] who was sent forth by God to smite Babylon; note how Revelation also describes Babylon as being destroyed by a singular Angel. In another Angelic context we read: "O Lord my Lord; will you be the destroyer of the remnant of Israel?" (Ez. 9:8 Heb.). "Let the Angel of the Lord persecute them" (Ps. 35:5,6) has the same Angel in mind. The destroyer Angel is perhaps alluded to in Job 18:13: "The firstborn of death". Job 33:23 LXX certainly is relevant: "Though there should be one thousand Angels of death...". This same 'destroyer' Angel is referred to again in the context of being present with Israel to punish them if they disobeyed in 1 Cor. 10:10 - "they were destroyed of the destroyer". So we have here on this first Passover night the situation where one Angel is commissioned to do a certain task- in this case kill all firstborn in Egypt- and goes ahead with this task blind to any other consideration, e. g. whether the people concerned were obedient Israelites or not. Therefore another Angel was needed, presumably more powerful or senior to the 'destroyer', to stop the faithful Israelites being killed. Of course God could have given the 'destroyer' additional instructions about not killing the Jews; but it seems to be God's way of working both amongst us and among the Angels to assign each a specific role in the execution of His purpose, and to take pleasure in seeing each Angel or saint working in loving co-operation with another, after the pattern of the Angelic co-operation. The way David's prayer stopped the Angel from destroying Jerusalem (1 Chron. 21:15) is similar to how the Angel intended to kill Moses but was stopped (Ex. 4:24-26) and how an Angel, also with sword in hand, intended to kill Balaam but was stopped (Num. 22:22,23). These incidents suggest that some Angels are given a task to do and they go forth to do this, regardless of, or not understanding, perhaps, any wider network of issues. The impression is given that they are stopped in their tracks by human repentance or intercession to God. This 'tunnel vision' is to be seen in God's people now as they blunder around in trying to fulfil God's will, needing others to ameliorate and modify their approaches.

Ez. 20:8-14 talks more about this destroyer Angel: "Neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt: then I said, I will pour out My fury upon them, to accomplish My anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt. But I wrought for My name's sake, that it should not be polluted among the heathen, among whom they were, in whose sight I made myself known

unto them, in bringing them forth out of the land of Egypt. Wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness. And I gave them My statutes. . My sabbaths. . the house of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness. . but I wrought for My name's sake, that it should not be polluted" .

The destroyer Angel went out through the midst of the land of Egypt to kill the firstborn. He wanted to kill the Jews too because they were not forsaking the idols of Egypt- i. e. they were preparing to take them out of Egypt with them (Ex. 13:17 and Acts 7:43 lend support here). "I"- God manifest now in the Passover Angel- "wrought for My name's sake" (v. 9) against the Destroyer that this should not be done. He remembered how He had "made myself known unto them" in the burning bush, by saying there "I am the Lord your God "(v. 5). "Mine eye (the Passover Angel) spared them from destroying them ",v. 17; i. e. from the work of the Destroyer Angel, both in Egypt at the night of Passover and also in the wilderness. Notice how God is spoken of as both wanting to destroy them and also striving for His Name's sake (born by the Angels) so this should not happen. It seems sensible to interpret this by reference to the two powerful Angels active at this time, perhaps representing the groups of Angels of good and Angels of evil (i. e. disaster bringing) which appear to be in Heaven.

1 Cor. 10:10 speaks of an Angel called "the destroyer" who brought about Israel's punishments in the wilderness. And yet Ps. 78:49 speaks of these as being executed by "A band of Angels of evil" (RVmg.). Likewise Rev. 9:14 has one Angel controlling others, perhaps as our guardian Angel has control over many others to effect his plans for us. The one Angel had control over others, Angels specifically used to bring evil upon those whom God rejects. It may be they will be used again in the judgment of the last day. Or it could be that 'Angels' in Ps. 78:49 is an intensive plural, and the AV reading is correct: "by sending evil angels...". The one great Angel of evil is "the destroyer" of 1 Cor. 10:10. This could imply that some of the references to a "Satan" who brings disaster, as in Job, refer to one specific Angel who does these things, or co-ordinates them.

## **Angels in Ezekiel**

The case of the Angelic keepers of Jerusalem in Ezekiel 9 mentioned earlier is another example of all this. "The Lord (the angel of v. 1) said unto him (the v. 3 man in linen), Go through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations. . and to the others (angels) He said. . Go ye after him through the city and smite" (v. 4,5). So as at the Passover we have one Angel protecting and others executing judgement, each limited in the role assigned them. These ideas are brought together in Ez. 20:17 where concerning Israel in the wilderness God says "Mine eye (i. e. an Angel- the Angels are the eyes of God going to and fro in the earth) spared them from destroying them, neither did I make an end of them in the wilderness". When God gave Israel an Angel to go with them who would bear His Name in Ex. 23, God warned them that this Angel would not pity them but would be easily provoked by their errors. I suggest that this Angel was the 'destroyer' which went with them, while the Angel of Is. 63 which "in His love and in His pity redeemed them; and bare them and carried them all the days of old" (v. 9) was the one which we read here in Ez. 20 spared them from destruction- i. e. from the destroyer Angel which went with them. Presumably this shows that the Angel of mercy was more powerful than the Angel of righteous anger and justice, the destroyer, and that only occasionally was the 'destroyer' allowed free reign, e. g. when the people lusted as recorded in 1 Cor. 10:10. This would reflect the basic characteristics of God Himself- mercy more powerful than judgement in His character. And amongst us the potential elohim, perhaps



there is the same mixture of 'destroyers', sincerely upholding the high standards God expects and feeling justified in acting to that end, and the 'Angels of mercy' who restrict their action except in severe cases. But amazingly God works through and in all, to His glory. Both types of *elohim* are sincere, not even misguided, but rather fulfilling the role in God's way of working which they have been called to play.

## **With Daniel**

The word 'strengthened' occurs several times in Dan. 10. An Angel 'strengthens' Daniel, and then comments that "Michael your prince", another Angel, had also helped him- he had "strengthened himself with me" (Dan. 10:21 RVmg.). But then the Angel comments that "As for me...I stood up to confirm and strengthen him", i.e. Michael (Dan. 11:1 RV). The Angel who strengthened Daniel was helped by another Angel, Michael, strengthening him; and then that Angel strengthened Michael. This is possibly a window into the nature of our existence and relationship with each other in the future age!

## **Angels and Assyrians**

Sometimes this way of working may seem inefficient in human terms, but it is efficient to the production of God's glory through our loving co-operation, after the pattern of the Angelic co-operation. It has been shown clearly that Isaiah 13 concerning the fall of Babylon is more relevant to the destruction of Sennacherib's Assyrian army in Hezekiah's time, 'Assyria' and 'Babylon' being interchangeable terms [\(1\)](#). Thus we read in v. 3,4 of the Angels coming against Israel in judgement, and mustering the Assyrian armies against Jerusalem: " I have commanded My sanctified ones, I have also called My mighty ones for Mine anger, even them that rejoice in My highness. . the weapons of His indignation, to destroy the whole land. . the Lord of hosts (Angels) mustereth the host of the battle". Yet we clearly read elsewhere that "the Angel of the Lord" went out and smote the Assyrians. So we have some Angels sent with a mission to bring the Assyrians there and others sent to destroy them. Other Angels are actually described as the armies themselves, the weapons of indignation against the land of Israel. And another Angel 'destroys' them. So here we have the wondrous ways of God, absolute unity in absolute diversity.

This notion develops into the suggestion that there are two groups of Angels- Angels of evil (Ps. 78:49) and of good. Thus God creates both good and evil- and Isaiah 45:5-7 emphasizes that He makes a distinct creation of both- using these separate groups of Angels. However we stress that the Angels of evil are not sinful Angels. This division is perhaps hinted at in 2 Chron. 18:18, where "all the host of Heaven" are seen standing around the throne of God himself "on His right and on His left". The exact way in which these two groups of Angels work is unclear, and this perhaps explains the difficulty all Bible students face in understanding the undefined "power of darkness", hints of which lurk throughout Scripture (e.g. evil spirits, the forces of evil unleashed at the end of Revelation etc. ), and also in defining the apparently super-human power of righteousness which the Psalms and New Testament especially speak of. At present these topics seem to defy close definition- until we appreciate the Angelic basis behind them?

Having limited knowledge, the Angels are capable of acting too hastily- thus Job 4:18 "His Angels He charged with folly" (the Hebrew for 'folly' can imply 'over-action'). God uses the inter-play of the Angels to restrain them in their actions, seeing they are often dependent on authority from each other in order to implement their plans. Rev. 9:13-15 exemplifies this: "I

heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar (i. e. from the mighty Angel that dwelt there? <sup>(2)</sup>). . . saying to the sixth Angel. . . loose the four Angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four Angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day. . . ". There seems no reason to doubt that these, along with most other mentions of 'Angels' in Revelation, can be taken as literal Angels. The fact that they were "loosed" implies a possible restraint from action- as if the action they desired to take was held back by another ("the sixth") Angel "preparing" or 'adjusting' (Greek) them for a certain period.

## **The Wilderness Wanderings**

When we come to examine the Angelic work behind the leading of Israel through the wilderness and their entering of Canaan we find a complex picture. The 'LORD' in Exodus very often refers to an Angel, but we find a number of actions of the 'LORD' which are not according to those set down in Ex. 23 concerning the Angel described there. In Exodus 23:21 the Angel is described as not forgiving their sins, but in Ex. 32:30-32 Moses goes up to the 'LORD' (Angel) in the mount and asks for forgiveness for the people's sin with the golden calf. The 'Lord' in the mount must have been an Angel because Moses saw his back parts- and there is no way this is possible of God Himself in person, "whom no man hath seen, nor can see" (1 Tim. 6:16). "No man hath seen God at any time" (John 1:18). This 'Lord' on the mount gave Moses the Law- and elsewhere we are told that the Law was ministered by Angels. The Angel on the mount then says He has sent "Mine Angel before thee" (to Canaan), Ex. 32:34. So we have one Angel sending another here. The details of Angels in this part of Scripture are looked into later in this study. The fact is that an Angel was sent to prepare the way for the Israelites to enter Canaan. Similarly in Ex. 23:27 God says He will "send My fear before thee, and will destroy all the people to whom thou shalt come". Jacob likens his guardian Angel to "the God before whom my fathers walked" (Gen. 48:16), who is called "the fear of Isaac" (Gen. 31:42,53) when Jacob describes the personal presence of God in his life. So the "fear of God" is associated with an Angel; God sent His fear, an Angel, before Israel into Canaan, as promised explicitly in Ex. 23. The fact we read a phrase like "the Angel of elohim" in Gen. 21:17 confirms that individual angels can be messengers of other Angel-elohim, and that there is a degree of hierarchy in the Heavenly organization.

Elsewhere, God says that the fear amongst the Canaanites prior to Israel's approach and the weakness of those nations was due to "the hornet" being sent before Israel (Dt. 7:20; Josh. 24:12); it would seem then that this is a reference to the Angels softening up the Canaanite tribes, perhaps through inciting the Egyptians to raid them and ruin the economy <sup>(3)</sup>.

Revelation abounds with examples of Angels talking and co-operating with each other in order to execute God's purpose; e. g. in Rev. 16:5 one Angel comments on the wisdom of another Angel's action- "the Angel of the waters <sup>(4)</sup> said (to the third Angel of v. 4), Thou art righteous. . because Thou hast judged thus". In a less obvious way, this is taught in other Scriptures, especially in Genesis. Gen. 1:26 is a classic example- "God said, Let us make man in our image". Here we have the Angels making a joint decision, as they did at Babel: "The LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the children of men builded (again, the language of limitation, as if God had to make closer inspection- the 'LORD' must therefore be the Angels). . Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language" (Gen. 11:5,7). And in Gen. 18 we have an example of Angels discussing their policy with regard to one of their charges in the physical presence of the saint: . . "and Abraham went with them (the Angels) to bring them on their way (they were therefore in his presence). And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do? For I know him, that he will command his children

and his household after him. . " (v. 17-19). This conversation was presumably inaudible to Abraham. Who knows what conversations go on between our guardians as we sit with Bibles in our hands, obedient to God, and our Angels decide how much to reveal to us in accord with how they know we will behave in the future? The cherubim and living creatures are representative of the Angels. The four Angels or groups of Angels that comprised them had wings which "kissed one another" (Ez. 3:13 A. V. mg. ) and moved with a soft, smooth sound, despite all four being distinct in some ways. Thus the loving co-operation of the Angels in their work is emphasized.

## Angelic co-operation: Conclusions

It would be worth speculating whether every time God is said to 'remember' something, this language of limitation refers to Angels, who have the capacity to have their memories limited, and to need to remember things. After God remembers, He often does an action which necessitates other Angelic action, as if one Angel- the one which 'remembers'- commands other Angels. One wonders whether this is the case when God "remembered" Noah in the ark and sent a "wind" to drive back the waters. The Angel "Who maketh His Angels Spirits (winds)" was therefore sending an Angel in control of a wind to execute His work. The idea of the Angels being in control of the winds and all elements of the natural world is a common one , seen most clearly in the book of Job. We will consider later how it may well be the Angels referred to when we read other language of limitation about God, especially with regard to God repenting or changing His purpose about something.

In the practical business of being stimulated to see how the Angels work in our lives, it is interesting to think of how our guardian Angel may ask other Angels to help Him in giving us the help He sees we need. Thus when the "Angel of the Lord went forth in the camp of the Assyrians" or "the Lord sent forth an Angel which cut off all the mighty men of valour in the camp of the king of Assyria" (2 Chron. 32:21) we infer that this was Michael, the Angel Prince who stands for God's people Israel ,going into action. Whilst the action is rightly attributed to Him, there seems no doubt that He brought this about by the use and control of other Angels, activated (as in many of the visions of Angelic judgement in Revelation) by a loud cry from the Angel which brought other Angels into action- "through the voice of the Lord (singular) shall the Assyrian be beaten down" (Is. 30:31). But the language used elsewhere in Isaiah to describe the destruction of the Assyrians is reminiscent of the cherubim, implying multitudes of Angels at work to bring about God's purpose in this. And encouragingly, if our Angel has not the strength or authority to give us a blessing which He sees we need, He can ask another Angel to bring this about- thus Daniel's guardian Angel had to ask Gabriel to help Daniel understand the vision which He knew Daniel so desperately wanted to have interpreted (Dan. 8:16). It may be that this request by the guardian Angel was not for the best for Daniel, because it seems to have been denied by God- v. 27 says that at the end of the interpretation or "understanding" being given by Gabriel, "I was appalled by the vision; it was beyond understanding" (v. 27 N.I.V.). In that case, it would seem that when Gabriel said "Understand, O son of man. . " (v. 17), Gabriel Himself either did not appreciate that giving Daniel the understanding would not help him, or He obeyed the request from the guardian Angel unquestioningly.

Or alternatively, was Gabriel saying in v. 17 that Daniel was to understand that the vision would not be fully understood till the last days, as in Dan. 12:4? This would mean that it is in the hands of the Angels as to at what time, both individually and as the body of God's people generally, we gain spiritual understanding of certain parts of the word, in the same way as

the Angels debated "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do? . . ". This may be very relevant to the various interpretations of Revelation held by God's true people down through the years, each interpretation giving great encouragement to a certain group of saints, despite their details varying considerably. This process would then be seen to be under the direct control of the Angels.

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## Notes

(1) See H. A. Whittaker *Isaiah* (Cannock: Biblia, 1988).

(2) Horns are connected with Angels in Zech. 1:18; Hab. 3:4, and by the four horns on the altar suggesting reference to the Angel cherubim; see also Chapter 11.

(3) See J. Garstang, *Joshua-Judges* (Constable, 1931) for copious details on this.

(4) That a specific Angel controls "the waters" is implied by the way flood waters are described as praising God (Ps. 42:8; 148:7), water trembling at God's presence (Ps. 77:17; Hab. 3:10), and the deep waters mourning (Ez. 31:15). How else can waters sensibly be personified as having such feelings, unless these figures of speech are in fact based upon the real existence of a personal "Angel of the waters"?

# CHAPTER 5: GOD AND THE ANGELS

God Himself has a close interest in and control of the work of His Angels; thus in Rev. 9:13,14 we read of the sixth Angel sounding, wanting to bring about certain things on the earth. The response to this was "a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth Angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four Angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates". This voice was probably either from Christ (the altar), as the head of the Angels, or God Himself; or maybe a mighty Angel representing God or Christ (see Chapter 12). It instructed the Angel how to bring about His intention by bringing other Angels into operation which this sixth Angel presumably had in its control- hence they were to be "loosed" by Him.

## Reverence For God

The reverence and humility for God's will which the Angels exhibit whilst not always fully understanding it is a great exhortation for us. "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints and to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him" (Ps. 89:7) in the Heavenly council. They are given specific directives by God which they go and execute to the best of their ability and then report back to God- His "Angels. . . that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word" (Ps. 103:21). "Canst thou send lightnings (Angels) that they may go and say unto thee, Here we are (Septuagint: 'We do Thy pleasure?')" (Job 38:35). Compare this with "Ye ministers of His, that do His pleasure" (Ps. 104:4). Jude 9 states that the Angels speak in a soft, gentle way- they do not dare bring a "railing accusation" against the men they operate upon. Similarly the wilderness Angel that gave the Law and pronounced the blessings and curses upon Israel did not do so in a matter of fact 'obey or perish' tone of voice; He "pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt", as He will plead with them to repent in the last days too (Ez. 20:36). The Angel spoke to Moses "as a man speaketh to his friend" (Ex. 33:11)-i. e. in a relaxed, friendly

way. It should be remembered that it was in this tone of voice that the "fiery Law" of Moses was given, rather than in a harsh, judgemental way as is often thought. Similarly Eliphaz had a vision in which he "heard a still voice" (Job 4:16, AV mg. ); most visions being associated with Angels, it seems fair to assume this was an Angel's voice- as was the "still small voice" Elijah heard? (1 Kings 19:12).

Because of their limitations, there is a sense in which God is still far above the Angels: "His Angels He charged with folly" (Job 4:18). The word for 'Folly' may imply over-action; that this is concerning literal Angels and not men is shown by the contrast in v. 19- "how much less in them that dwell in houses of clay", i. e. men. If God cannot treat His Angels as equal to Him, "in whom He put light" (AVmg. ), how much less can He treat men?. "The stars (Angels?) are not pure in His sight" (Job 25:5). Because of this we read in Ps. 113:5 "The Lord our God exalteth Himself to dwell on High (A. V. mg. ), who humbleth Himself to behold the things that are in Heaven (the Angels) and in the earth", implying that God only looks closely at us sometimes. This is why David pleads so much for God to open His eyes to our problems. This verse seems to imply that sometimes God exalts Himself into His own majesty, and at others condescends to bow down to behold the Angels and us. Maybe this pattern will continue throughout eternity, God sometimes withdrawing into the supreme heights of His personal spirituality, and at others humbling Himself to deal with us. However, we should never doubt the obedience of the Angels to the will of God declared in His commandments to them. "The wrath of a king is as messengers (Angels) of death" (Prov. 16:14)- as if to say that as the Angels- of evil and death in this case- are zealous to obey the king of Heaven's command, so are the messengers who obey a human king's over-hasty command to kill someone.

## Sodom

God's way of using the Angels to punish Sodom gives insight into the relationship between them and God. God Himself knew exactly what He would do because of the wickedness He knew was in the city. The Angel who debated whether to reveal to Abraham His purpose with Sodom (Gen. 18:17) says "Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great. . I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto Me". The Angels responsible for Sodom had brought the "cry" or news of Sodom's sins to the attention of this senior Angel, who then investigates it further to see whether or not their news was correct. "And if not, I will know"- the emphasis being on the "I"- i. e. 'whether their news was correct or incorrect, I will know because I am blessed with greater powers than they'. This senior Angel seems to manifest God to a very great degree, as Gen. 19:13 describes the other two "men" (Angels) saying to Lot "we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord (the third "man"- the senior Angel); and the Lord (senior Angel) hath sent us to destroy it". These two Angels sent to execute the judgements were under specific guidelines- v. 22 "I cannot do anything till thou be come thither". Thus these Angels were given power conditional on certain things happening. Perhaps this was part of the work of Palmoni, the "wonderful numberer" of Daniel, who is the Angel responsible for all timing; maybe He decreed that they could only have power once the condition of Lot leaving the city was fulfilled. Maybe this Angel co-ordinates all the huge number of timings which go to make up God's purpose? This would explain the passages which imply that a set time is allowed to some human beings to bring about repentance and response to God's offers. Thus Pharaoh was condemned because he "let the appointed time pass by" (Jer. 46:17).



## Perfect Unity

In respect of God's relationship with the Angels, it is interesting to note that there seems to be a theme in Scripture of all of the Angels being involved in each action one of them does, due to the perfect unity that exists between them and God. Thus when one of the Angels acts in our lives, all the others are conscious of it too. Consider:

- Luke 15 describes the joy in Heaven when one sinner repents; the man who found the lost sheep "calleft together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me. . when she (the woman) hath found it (the lost coin) she calleth her friends and neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me. . likewise I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the Angels of God over one sinner that repenteth". The man and the woman must therefore represent God manifested through our guardian Angel. The Angel physically leaves the presence of God in Heaven and then goes off to arrange circumstances to encourage the sinner to return. He then calls all the others together to rejoice "when He cometh home" (into Heaven, into the multitude around the throne of God from which Angels go and return in obeying God's Word). The whole Heavenly household (or just those other Angels which our guardian has used in arranging circumstances for us to repent?) then rejoice together. Thus we read in Hebrews 1:14 that *all* the Angels are "ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation". ALL the Angels are involved together in this work. ALL things in Heaven (the Angels) and on earth (the things they arrange on earth) are for our sakes!

- Luke 11:7,8 gives further insight into how prayer is heard- the householder, God, is in His house (Heaven) with the door shut and his children with him in bed, and in order to get up- corresponding to God answering our prayer in the parable- the *whole* household, the children of God (a description of the Angels- Luke 20:35,36 etc. ), have to be roused. Thus all the Angels are conscious of one specific action on our behalf.

- 1 Kings 22:19-23 gives another picture of the Heavenly council and way of working described earlier- Micaiah saw "the Lord (God Himself) sitting on His throne and ALL the host of Heaven(the Angels) standing by Him on His right hand and on His left". God told them His desire- for Ahab to die at Ramoth-Gilead. He then asked which Angel wanted to effect this- "Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth Gilead? And one (Angel) said on this manner, and another said on that manner". We thus learn that like us, on hearing God's desire the *elohim* all have different ways of trying to fulfil it. One "Spirit" (Angel) suggested that He would put a lying spirit in the mouth of Ahab's prophets, and this was the suggestion chosen and enabled by God. This shows that the Angels do not all automatically know the best way of bringing about God's purpose, and therefore they need to seek His advice and perhaps discuss things amongst themselves first before acting. The thing we want to especially note in the present context is that "ALL the host of Heaven" were there around the throne of God participating in this decision. And so all the Angels are involved in the decisions God and the Angels make about us.

- Ex. 12:41 "All the hosts (Angels) of the Lord went out (with Israel) from the land of Egypt".

## Angelic Influence On God?

Dan. 4:17 speaks of Nebuchadnezzar's humiliation as being "by the demand of the word of the holy ones". Was it that the Angels had noticed this man's awful pride, reported it to God Himself in the court of Heaven, and then been empowered to carry out his demise? The same

context reminds us that God does according to *His* will in the army of Heaven (Dan. 4:35). And yet His purpose is to some extent moulded by them. And we are led to ask, how much influence do *we* His beloved children have upon His actual purpose? In the context of Daniel, one observes that a “herald” cried aloud to peoples of all nations and languages, and bid them worship the Babylonian image, on pain of being cast into a fiery furnace (Dan. 3:4 ff.). And yet in Rev. 14, an Angel cries to all nations and languages, warning them that if they *do* worship the image, they will be cast into the lake of fire. The Angels had observed Nebuchadnezzar’s arrogance and defiance, and many centuries later they will work out their way of parodying it in their future proclamation. The point is, they have the power to work out their way of operation in accordance with their perceptions and understandings; in this we see the “freedom of the spirit” which is now and shall be ever accorded to Yahweh’s elohim.

## CHAPTER 6: How Angels Work

We are frequently reminded that we cannot know the ways of God's working, and this is of course true. "As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit (this phrase is alluded to in John 3), nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all" (Ecc. 11:5). Yet there are certain principles and patterns in how Angels work which God seems to have revealed unto us to enable us to draw closer to Him and to the more readily accept His Angels at work in our lives. One such principle is that the Angels often give evidence to men that they are at work; thus the Angel of Rev. 11 says "I will give power unto My two witnesses". The witnesses here are witnesses to the work of the Angel, not to the Truth. This overcomes the problem of the "witnesses" mentioned by traditional expositors not holding the full truth. God- the Angels- do not leave themselves without witness to the pagan world, but send them rain and seasons (Acts 14:17). Job and other Scriptures stress how rain and seasons especially are the work of the Angels.

The Angels never affect our freewill, but nevertheless provide the necessary arrangement of circumstances to encourage us to do God's will, and affecting the lives of unbelievers to this end too. In order for unbelievers to present the necessary trials to us in order to bring this about, the Angels harden the hearts of these people. Thus in Psalm 78 we read of the plagues on Egypt being brought by the "Angels of evil", including the slaying of the firstborn. These plagues were due to Pharaoh's heart being hardened by God (Ex. 4:21)- i. e. by the Angels of evil. In passing, Ex. 4:20,21 states that "Moses took the rod of God in his hand. And the Lord said unto Moses . . . see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in thine hand". The wonders were done by the Angels we are told in Psalm 78 and other commentaries on the Exodus in Scripture. But Moses through obeying the Word of God had control over those Angels, they were in His hand, symbolized by the rod. And so with us too.

The Angel was sent before Abraham’s servant in order to find a wife for Isaac (Gen. 24:7); but there was still the very real possibility that the intended woman wouldn’t agree to follow the servant back to Isaac (Gen. 24:8). We conclude that Angels enable things to happen in potential, not least the calling of people into God’s family, but their plans and potentials can still be frustrated by human refusal to cooperate. Thus the Angels formulate their plans perhaps without knowing whether we will respond suitably to enable the plans to go ahead, or maybe they arrange circumstances whether they know we will obey or disobey, so that we always have the encouragement that if we obey and do our part we will have the pre-arranged workings of the Angels behind us too. The entrance of Israel to Canaan shows this. God had promised in Ex. 33 to send an Angel before them which would drive out the tribes

from Canaan; the 'Hornet'- a result of Angelic activity- was sent before them to do the same ( more proof of this provided later). Dt. 9:3 describes this: "The LORD thy God is He which goeth over (the Jordan) before thee; as a consuming fire (the language of Angels- Ex. 24:17) He shall destroy them (the nations). . so shalt thou drive them out". Thus when Joshua approached Jericho to attack it "there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand. . and He said. . As captain of the host of the Lord (Angels) am I come" (Josh. 5:13,14). So in prospect the Angels drove out every tribe that was in the land; the people of Israel had to just go in and possess the work which the Angels had done. So when they failed to drive out certain tribes, this was an example of human failing to be "workers together with God". Thus in prospect, the Angels led them to the promised "rest"- Dt. 25:19; Josh. 1:13; Is. 63:1 N.I.V. ; although in practice they did not enter that rest because of their faithlessness (Heb. 3:11-4:11), despite the Angel promising He would lead them there- "I will give thee rest" (Ex. 33:4). Was this due to the Angel over-estimating the spiritual strength of His charges? Ps. 81:16 gives another example by saying that if Israel were obedient, they would have been fed with honey as well as Manna- whilst Dt. 32:13 says they did have honey on their journey. Again, what they could have had and what they were given in prospect is spoken of as if it was reality due to the nature of how Angels work.

## God's Rest

We digress to consider that the "rest" promised by the Angel entailed. The word is often used about the tabernacling of God in the ark- thus Dt. 12:1-8 warns the people not to use existing altars in Canaan "for ye are not as yet come to the rest. . . there shall be a place which the Lord your God shall choose to cause His Name to dwell there" (v. 9,11). Clearer associations between the "rest" and the Ark are:

- Num. 10:33 "The ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them. . . to search out a resting place"

- 1 Chron. 28:2 "An house of rest for the ark"

- Ps. 132:8 "Arise, O Lord, into Thy rest: Thou, and the ark of Thy strength". The whole Psalm is about the ark, and concerning its location in Zion God says "this is My rest for ever; here will I dwell" (v. 14).

However, the real resting place of God's Name is not in the literal ark, but in the hearts of people humble to God's Word: "Where is the house that ye build unto Me? and where is the place of My rest?. . . to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word" (Is. 66:1,2). God's Angel literally dwelt in the ark , and they are His eyes through which He "looks" to the humble man. Thus God's Angels are searching the earth for people with hearts humble to the word, so that God can "rest" with us- and we with Him. The "ark" is spoken of as going ahead of Israel to spy out a resting place for them (Num. 10:33); but the ark is being put by metonymy for the Angel within it. Psalm 132 speaks of God choosing and desiring the ark's resting place, as if He engages in a process of searching. Such a process is only befitting of the Angels, seeing that God has absolute knowledge of every heart. The double emphasis on "the God of Jacob" (v. 2,5) being associated with the ark strengthens the Angelic context, seeing "the God of Jacob" is an Angelic term. Similarly "My covenant" of v. 12 points to the Angels, seeing they ordained the covenant.



## Conditional Conquest

This idea of the Angels' work for us being proportional to and dependent on our obedience is hard to fully accept, yet it is fundamental to our understanding of God's way of working in every enterprise we are involved in. The principle is outlined in Dt. 13:17, which said that the spoil of a captured city that was devoted to the Lord was not to be kept, as it was by Achan. This was so that "the Lord may. . . shew thee mercy, and have compassion upon thee". "The Lord" refers to the Angel, seeing that the attributes of mercy and compassion recall those of the Angel who declared them as part of His Name in Ex. 33 and 34. Dt. 13:17 continues: "... as He hath shown unto thy fathers...to multiply thee". These promises were made by Angels. Verse 18 lends further support ". . do that which is right in the eyes (Angels) of the Lord thy God".

Num. 32 has more of the same; the Gaddites and Reubenites were reprimanded for not going over Jordan into Canaan because they were not literally following the Lord- the Angel that had physically gone over in front of them. Moses stresses four times (v. 20,21,27,29) that they should go over armed "before the Lord". They were to at least show willing to fight in order to do their part in gaining possession of what the Angel had already done for them- "until He (the Angel) hath driven out His enemies from before Him "(v. 21). Notice He does not say 'until you have driven them out with your own sword', although they were to go over armed.

With us, the Angels have worked out every victory for us in prospect- we have to have the faith to go ahead and act, believing that they have acted, even when there is no visible evidence. Our works must therefore repeat those which our Angels have done previously- hence their great interest in us. The Angel brought Israel "forth out of the land of Egypt into a land that I had espied for them" (Ez. 20:6); the Angel in the ark "went before them in the three days journey to search out a resting place for them" (Num. 10:33). Yet Israel still had to send out human spies, and carefully "describe the land in a book" (Josh. 18:4-8).

If Canaan is seen to represent the Kingdom, the things which are stopping us entering the Kingdom are our sins. In prospect, Jesus, the antitype of the great Angel which lead Israel into the land and drove out the enemies in prospect, has vanquished all our sins. When Israel sinned, the help the Angels were giving Israel to help them possess what they had already prepared for them, was taken away. Thus with the first attack on Ai, the Angels had in prospect driven out the people of Ai, but the realisation of that was conditional on Israel's obedience. "Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I (God manifested through the Angel) be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you"(Josh. 7:12). It is perhaps in this context of the Angel going before the people that we read concerning Caleb that "Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb. . because that he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel" (Josh. 14:14)- i. e. he zealously followed the Angel which went before him, and therefore he obtained his inheritance which in prospect the Angel had prepared for him. This understanding of how Angels work was shown later by Deborah (Jud. 4:14), when she quotes the words of Dt. 9:3 concerning the Angel going before Israel to drive out the nations to Barak, to inspire him with courage in fighting them: "And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not the Lord gone out before thee?"(quoting Dt. 9:3). She recognized that the work the Angels did when they went out many years ago to do all the groundwork necessary for Israel to destroy all the tribes of Canaan was done for all time. It was not too late to make

use of that work by making a human endeavour in faith. So with us, the smaller objectives in our lives as well as our main goal of reaching the Kingdom have all been made possible through the work of Christ and the Angels in the past. Deborah's recognition of this is shown in her song- Jud. 5:20: "They (the Angels) fought from Heaven; the stars (Biblical imagery for Angels) in their courses fought against Sisera". In passing, note that the Hebrew for 'courses' is almost identical with that for 'ladder' in the account of Jacob's vision of a ladder of Angels. Strong specifically defines it as meaning 'staircase'.

1 Chron. 4:10 gives another example of this using of previous Angelic promises and preparatory work in order to achieve an act of faith. Some of the children of Judah later requested that their border be enlarged, at the expense of driving out neighbouring Canaanite tribes. "Jabez called on the God of Israel (an Angelic term), saying, Oh that Thou wouldest bless me indeed (a reference back to the Angelic blessing of Abraham's seed with the promise of possession of the land?), and enlarge my coast, and that Thine hand (an Angelic phrase) might be with me, and that Thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested. " In passing, is this the basis of "deliver us from evil... (i e.) lead us not into (spiritual) temptation" in the Lord's prayer? In that case our sins are being likened to the tribes which Jabez drove out in faith, and we should believe that our Angel has driven our sins out for us in prospect, so that we might inherit the promises.

## **All Things Possible**

In the same way, an Angel may be given a mission to preach somewhere, and success may be arranged by Him in prospect, but it is for us to put the work into practical effect, without which the converts will not be produced, despite the Angels preparatory work, although of course ultimately this is all foreknown by God Himself. Thus we read in Rev. 14:6 of an Angel being sent "having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth (same word as 'land'- i. e. the land of Israel), and to every nation, kindred and tongue and people "(i. e. the whole world as well). However, this actual work of preaching to the Jews and to the world will be done by the saints; thus they will work out in practice what was achieved by the Angel in God's plan. In this context it is worth considering how the great commission as recorded in Mt. 28:18,19 is set in the context of other references in Matthew to world-wide preaching. We are to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations; and yet it is the Angels who will gather the harvest from "the world" (Mt. 13:38), Angels who will "repay" us for our work at the last day (Mt. 16:27), Angels who gather the elect from "the four winds" (Mt. 24:31) and gather [converts from] "all nations" to judgment (Mt. 25:32). The implication surely is that in our preaching work, the Angels are with us and will gather in the converts which we have made.

Ps. 81 has clear Angelic allusions; the Angel laments "Oh that My people had hearkened unto Me, and . . . walked in My ways! I would soon have subdued their enemies. . . He should have fed them with the finest of the wheat, and with honey of the rock should I have satisfied thee" (v. 13-16). Thus our Angel will act more quickly for us according to our obedience, and may have physical and spiritual blessings prepared for us which we are yet to realize due to our lack of wholly following the Angel into our inheritance. The Angel planned to give Israel honey as well as water out of the rock on their journey- the water representing Christ and the Spiritual blessings from Him (1 Cor. 10:4; John 7:38,39); yet even richer blessings (honey from the rock) were possible; and are possible for us in our wilderness lives. Similarly the "bread from Heaven" which represents the Word (so Jesus interpreted it throughout John 6) would not have been stodgy manna ,but "the finest of the wheat".

So the conclusion is that because our Angel has been so zealous in acting for us, we too should be zealous in return- thus Abraham's servant, knowing that God had sent an Angel before him to prepare the way for his mission of finding a wife for Isaac (Gen. 24:40), was eager to be as zealous as possible to do his part in the work- "Hinder me not, seeing the Lord (the Angel) hath prospered my way" (v. 56). There are many other examples of this. Because the Angel is with us, we must joyfully and enthusiastically do our part. Thus God encourages those rebuilding Jerusalem to have faith because the Angel is still among them: "Yet now be strong. . . and work: for I (the Angel) am with you, saith the Lord of Hosts (Angels): according to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt (the Angel made that covenant) so My Spirit (Angel) remaineth among you; fear ye not". Similarly Nehemiah recounts the past activities of God's Angel (Neh. 9:19-24) as a stimulus to faith in God bringing them through immediate problems" (v. 32) and to making a rededication of their commitment to Him (v. 38 "because of this we make a sure covenant").

## 6-1 The Physical Presence Of The Angels

It seems that great stress is placed in Scripture on the Angels physically moving through space, both on the earth and between Heaven and earth, in order to fulfil their tasks, rather than being static in Heaven or earth and bringing things about by just willing them to happen. There are a number of examples of this which between them build up a conclusive case:

- Gen. 18:10 describes the Angel saying to Abraham "I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son". On that first visit, the Angel must have enabled Sarah to conceive, and then He physically returned nine months later

- To encourage Jacob that God would bring him back to Canaan and preserve him in his life as a fugitive, he was given a vision of Angelic protection (Gen. 28:12,13) showing Angels ascending and descending from him to Heaven and back, thus showing that the Angels looking after him would move physically to and fro between him and the throne of God, receiving directions and power to implement them in his life. God manifested through Jacob's specific guardian Angel then goes on to say, v. 15, "I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken of unto thee". At the end of his life, as we showed earlier, Jacob mentions the presence of the Angel which he had sensed all through his life. But that one Angel controlled the multitude of Angels which he saw that night in vision ministering to him.

- Ex. 3:8 The Angel at the burning bush said "I am come down to deliver thee . . . to bring thee unto the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites. . .". We know an Angel was physically sent in advance of the Israelites to drive out those tribes, and so the phrase "I am come down" used by the same Angel here may therefore be taken literally- He literally, physically "came down". Although this phrase "came down" is often used to describe God manifestation, it may be that when it is used in connection with the Angels, it does have a physical, literal application.

- The Angel told Joseph to stay in Egypt" until I bring thee word" (Mt. 2:13)- as if He was going to physically go to Egypt, and once there inspire Joseph to have a dream in which this would be revealed to him.

- The Angels being physically with us in our lives means that we are always in the presence of God, as they represent Him. The fact that "the Lord spoke to Moses face to face" through an Angel shows that they represent God's face, and they are also likened to the eyes of God. Even when a man is wicked in some ways, he may still have presence of the Angels in his life. Thus although Israel were wicked in the time of Jehoahaz and were therefore punished by Hazael of Syria, because of the covenant with Abraham "neither cast He them from His presence (mg:face) as yet" (2 Kings 13:23). And therefore Jehoahaz is described as doing what was right in the sight (the eyes) of the Lord (i. e. the Angels with him), although he did not take away the high places (2 Kings 14:3-5).

- 1 Chron. 14:15 gives an incident similar to the scenario of the conquest, with the Angel physically going ahead of them and the people having to do their part in following. "When thou (David) shalt hear a sound of going (like the noise of the Angel cherubim in Ezekiel 1?) in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then shalt thou go out to battle; for God (the Angels) is gone forth before thee to smite the host of the Philistines". So once the Angels had physically moved forward and David had heard them doing this, he too could move ahead in doing the human part in bringing God's purpose about. David alludes to this as a regular experience when he speaks of God 'going out' with the hosts / armies of Israel (Ps. 60:10 RV). His hosts were as the hosts of God (1 Chron. 11:22)- he walked in step with the Angel Cherubim above him, as Ezekiel was to do later.

- The Lord Jesus speaking of "The Angels of God in Heaven" (Mt. 22:30) suggests that they spend a fair proportion of their time located there physically. God 'comes near' whenever we call upon Him (Dt. 4:7 RV). Perhaps this refers to an Angel literally being sent out from Heaven to come near to us in working out the answer to our prayer.

- Psalm 57:3 "He shall send from Heaven, and save me". The word "send" is normally translated 'to send away, to let depart', implying physical movement away. This implies Angels are physically sent over space to answer prayer. The same word occurs in other verses where this same idea stands up well- e. g. Ps. 144:7 "Send Thine hand (an Angel) from Heaven. . ."

- Gen. 24:40 "The LORD before whom I walk shall send His Angel with thee and prosper thy way" (Abraham to Eliezer as he journeyed to find a wife for Isaac). Here clearly the Angel was physically sent.

- Ex. 9:14: "For I will at this time send all My plagues upon thine (Pharaoh's) heart, and upon thy servants. . .". The plagues were physically sent forth in the sense that they were caused by the "Angels of evil" which were "sent among them" (Ps. 78:49). The Angels were therefore literally sent from God with the plagues.

-Ex. 23:20 "I send an Angel before thee" (Israel at Sinai).

- Luke 4:11 records how Jesus was reminded that the Angels would "bear (Him) up". Presumably this was to be taken literally- the Angels physically with Him would have literally held Him under the arms if He jumped from the temple. So we see the literal physical presence of the Angels in our lives. The eyes of God, an evident reference to the Angels, are associated with the temple (1 Kings 8:29; Ps. 11:4; Ps. 5:6-8). The implication surely is that the Angel[s] specifically functioned in the temple / sanctuary.

- Daniel 3:28 shows Nebuchadnezzar recognizing that an Angel had been physically sent to Daniel and his friends in the fiery furnace.

- The sense of the physical presence of the Angel was shown in Peter's case in the matter of Cornelius. Acts 10:5 says that the Angel told Cornelius to send men to Joppa to ask for Peter, whilst the Angel ("The spirit", v. 19) tells Peter in v. 20 that He has sent the men, showing how God works through men. Thus Peter heard the voice of an Angel in his vision, and this awareness of the Angel is perhaps continued when Peter says in v. 33 "we are all here present before God"- i. e. before the Angel which both he and Cornelius were conscious had led them together. And later when Peter was in prison it was maybe that same Angel that led him forth. How relieved and safe he must have felt as he walked through those two streets with the Angel next to him! But the fact is that the Angel walked beside him through much of his life, although his eyes like ours were holden from seeing Him. So often in our lives we would have so much more courage if only we could see in faith that Angel next to us.

- If the physical movement of Angels from Heaven to earth to perform certain tasks can be taken literally, Rev. 9:1,11 and certain other passages taken on a more literal slant: "I saw a star (symbolic of an Angel) fall from Heaven unto the earth: and to Him was given the key of the bottomless pit. . . the Angel of the bottomless pit" (Rev. 9:1,11).

- 1 Sam. 2:21 describes the LORD "visiting Hannah" so she would conceive- perhaps another reference to the physical sending of an Angel as in the case of Sarah.

- Dan. 9:21 "I am now come forth to give thee (Daniel) skill and understanding" said Gabriel, implying He had been sent forth from Heaven to earth by God to explain the vision to Daniel.

- The deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib's army is often attributed to the work of the Angels (see later). The gathering of the Angels together to do this is likened to shepherds being rallied from different parts of the moor or from their various houses to come and frighten off a lion attacking the flock. Thus the idea of a hasty, physical moving together is conveyed: "Like as the lion (Assyria) and the young lion roaring on his prey (Jerusalem), when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him. . . so shall the LORD of hosts (a common title for God manifested in the Angels) come down to fight for Mount Zion. . . as birds flying (i. e. gathering together and moving together), so will the LORD of hosts defend Jerusalem" (Is. 31:4,5).

- When Michael came to help the other Angel overcome the prince of Persia, that Angel "was not needed there with the kings of Persia" (Dan. 10:13 RVmg.). It seems that once the job was done, the Angel wasn't physically required there any more.

- Israel in Egypt had light, but Egypt was in darkness (Ex. 10:23). And yet later, at the time of the Exodus, it was the Angel in the pillar of cloud and fire that gave light to the Israelites and darkness to the Egyptian pursuers. One possible conclusion could be that the guardian Angel of each Israelite was physically with them at the time of the plague of darkness, giving them light and yet darkness to the Egyptians.

- The vision of Jacob's ladder showed the Angels coming and going, sometimes physically present with us, sometimes not. We read that the Angels are "sent forth" to gather us to judgement; thus Jesus will come at a time when the Angel is not physically next to us; we

know it will be at a time when we are not particularly prepared for His coming- at a mundane moment like when working in the field or sleeping, so that to some extent all the virgins are slumbering, as in the parable; i. e. we will not be in a moment of crisis when we have the Angel physically next to us.

- Gen. 28:13-15 are the words of the Angel to Jacob: "I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of". How much clearer can we get?

- The command for sisters to wear hats at ecclesial meetings was "because of the Angels" (1 Cor. 11:10)- because of the physical presence of the Angels there?

More sense can now be made of the passages which speak of God "coming down" through the Angels, e. g. at Babel, if the Angels physically descend to earth to implement God's will and manifest Him to men. The idea of God "visiting " His people through an Angel also takes on a literal element- thus Isaiah 10:3 speaks of the "day of visitation" in the context of God's destruction of the Assyrian hosts through His Angel.

### **The Angel Eye Of God**

The frequent references to Israel being removed from His sight, or eye (e.g. 2 Kings 17:23) may refer to the way that an Angel was permanently present in Israel, the land in which the Angel eyes of the Lord ran to and fro. By going into captivity, Israel were thus removed from God's Angelic 'eye'. This would explain how Israel were never out of God's sight in the sense of His awareness of them. And yet language of limitation is being used here- because the Angel dwelling in Israel no longer 'saw' the people. This idea may be behind the references to God's eye not sparing nor pitying Israel (Ez. 7:4)- when in fact God Himself did and does spare and pity Israel. The implication would then be that His grace and pity is even greater than that of His Angels- which is an encouraging thought to us here on earth who struggle to believe in the extent of God's personal grace to us.

### **God Departing**

God departing from Saul may mean that the Angel physically left him- the Hebrew for 'depart' can imply physical movement (it is also translated 'withdraw', 'pluck away' etc. ). At times in our lives we may feel the presence of God coming and going; the present writer certainly does. It would seem logical that such feelings are connected with the presence or absence of our Angel, although the Angel leaving us does not necessarily imply God's displeasure with us. The Angel may return to God (cp. Angels ascending and descending on Jacob's ladder) to report on His actions or to seek further commands; or they may depart from us in order to give us a feeling of spiritual depression so that our faith is tempted all the more. Job and Jesus on the cross are prime examples of this- hence the real anguish of Christ's cry "My God, My God (His Angel? see later), Why hast Thou forsaken Me?". In this case, an added trial of the crucifixion would have been that Jesus did not feel at His spiritual strongest to face the ordeal. Job explains how all things in life come and go in rhythms, and so also does our spirituality (12:15; 34:29; 36:32; 39:3- the context of each of these needs to be studied to get the point). So Jesus was perhaps on a spiritual 'low' cycle due to the Angel not being with Him. Maybe Christ's question on the cross alluded back to the Angel's promise to Joshua that He would never forsake him. Joshua needed this to be repeated to him many times, implying he questioned whether the Angel really would never forsake him. Jesus

maybe had the same experience- in which case the stress would have been 'Why have you forsaken Me?- when you emphasized to my great type in Joshua that you wouldn't?'. But maybe the words of David to Solomon in 1 Chron. 28:20 later came to His mind: "My God (cp. "My God, My God") will be with thee; He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, *until* thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the Lord". Recognizing He had now been forsaken, Jesus agreed "It is finished". Indeed, from the moment He left the Upper Room the work was finished and therefore the presence of the Angel departed (Jn. 17:4 "I have finished the work. . ").

However, with these suggestions we have to square the fact that the Angels of Christ's "little ones", "do always behold the face of My Father in Heaven" (Matt. 18:10). There seem two options here:

- The Angels may be physically present with us on earth but also maintain a presence in the 'court of Heaven', perhaps by means of another Angel there.

- A more likely explanation lies in the meaning of the word "behold" - 'to look to, be aware of, perceive, take heed'. Although physically present with us, the Angels are intensely aware of the face of God which they behold when assembled in the court of Heaven awaiting God's words of command. The "little ones" in the context are the spiritually weak- does this have something to do with their Angels being physically absent from them in Heaven?

## CHAPTER 7: ANGELIC CONTROL

### Angels And The World

It would seem that the natural creation may see the Angels when they are invisible to us- thus Balaam's donkey saw the Angel standing in the way and was too frightened by the realness of it to go further. This was to teach Balaam that he ought to have seen the Angelic presence at work without having his eyes specially opened to see the Angel, in the same way as the ass didn't need it's eyes opened to see the Angel.

The Angels are often portrayed as the controllers of the natural elements- e. g. in Moses' song of thanks for the deliverance at the Red Sea, he seems very conscious of the fact that God was manifest in the Angel, and He thanks Him for "Blowing with (His) wind (cp. "who maketh His Angels spirits/ winds"), the sea covered them" (Ex. 15:10). The other allusions in the Song to the Angel are:

v. 2 "I will prepare Him an habitation"- alluding to the fact that the Angel was going to prepare them a habitation in the land, and perhaps also referring to the building of the tabernacle for the Angel to live in.

v. 2 "my father's God"- alluding to Jacob talking of the God (the Angel, as Jacob meant-see earlier) which preserved him

v. 7 "Thou sentest forth Thy wrath"- the Angel physically sent forth

v. 13 "Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people . . . guided them unto Thy holy habitation"- the language of the Angel in Is. 63 relating how He led and guided them to the land, and also of the promise to send an Angel with them to do this.

Individual animals may be commanded by the Angels to bring about His purpose- Amos 9 is an example of this . "Though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence (this is the language of Angelic limitation- all things are known to God without His searching for them): and though they be hid from My sight (i. e. God's Angel-eyes) in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent and it shall bite them" (v. 3)- in the same way as the Angel commanded Balaam's donkey. The Angelic context is set by the following:

v. 1 "The Lord standing upon the altar"- cp. the Angel of Lk. 1:11 and other Angels appearing by altars

v. 5 "God of Hosts" (Angels)

v. 8 "the eyes (Angels) of the Lord".

1 Kings 22 describes the Angels being sent out from the court of Heaven to do God's word. So when we read of God sending lions (2 Kings 17:25,26), sending wild beasts and famine (Lev. 26:22; Ez. 5:17; Dt. 32:24), sending locusts (Joel 2:25), it would seem that Angels are sent forth from God's throne in order to command animals to obey God's word. And moreover, He sends an evil spirit between men (Jud. 9:23) and stubborn hearts are also sent from God (Ps. 81:13). The same Angels who are sent to control the animals can also therefore work to give men certain attitudes of mind.

The language of Job 38 about God's relationship to His creation is hard to understand seeing that God Himself is all powerful and of ultimate knowledge- e. g. v. 16 says that God "walked in the search of the depth"; He came to understand the breadth of the earth (v. 18), looked inside snowflakes to see their wonder (v. 22). The Angels being in control of the natural creation no doubt "earnestly desire to look into" such things. The Angels having created the natural world, it is understandable that they should continue to have close links with it. It appears that there is an active, two-way inter-relationship between the Angels and their creation; thus the Elohim rejoice because of wine (Judges 9:13) and other things whose creation they superintended. Ps. 148 lends support to this notion. Verse 2 speaks of all the Angels praising God, and then goes on to describe the Heavens, fire, storm, hail etc. doing likewise; perhaps implying that each of those things has an Angel controlling it, which is what really gives God praise. Otherwise, how can such inanimate objects praise God?

God's amazing control of events in the natural world is surely through Angelic influence. God gives the lightning- often associated with Angels- a specific charge [as He does to His Angels] that it "strike the mark" (Job 36:32 RV).

## **Angels And Creation**

In the same way as the Angels are so closely associated with their charges that they are identified with them (see Chapter 8), so the Angels are described as the things in the natural world which they have created. At least two passages make this point, after careful reflection upon them:



- Ps. 8:5,6 is quoted in Heb. 2:7 to prove Christ's superiority over the Angels: "Thou hast made him a little lower than the Angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands (an Angelic phrase); Thou hast put all things under his feet". "All things" often includes Angels in its context in New Testament usage. The works of God's Angel-hands in the natural creation have been put under Christ's feet, but the purpose of the quotation in Heb2 is to show that the Angels have been put under Christ's feet. Heb. 2:11 takes the point further by saying that as the Angels are identified so exactly with that they have created, so Christ was identified with His new creation, even to the extent of having an identical nature to them.

- The quotation of Ps. 102 in Heb. 1 can appear to pose major problems for our belief in the humanity of Christ and that the world will never be destroyed. "And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands: they shall perish, but Thou remainest, and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail". The context in Hebrews is again Christ's superiority over the Angels; however, the context in Ps. 102 is of Christ on the cross thinking of the eternity of God, how that "of old", "in the beginning" (clearly alluding back to the beginning of the natural creation in Gen. 1), God created the Heavens and earth by His Angel-hands. But "they shall perish. . wax old like a garment. . as a vesture shalt thou change them" (Ps. 102:26). This language is similar to that used elsewhere about the ending of the Angel-oriented Mosaic Law (e. g. Heb. 8:13). Thus the literal Heavens and earth will not perish, but the Angelic system that created them will do. Thus both the natural creation and the Mosaic system are identified exactly with the Angels that created them.

## **The Flood**

The flood makes a good case study of Angelic control of the natural world. Jude 14 quotes Enoch's prophecy of the flood as saying that it would be associated with the Lord coming with "ten thousands of His saints" (Angels- cp. Dan. 7). The fact that Angels were used to cause the flood is found written between the lines of the Genesis account. The "windows of Heaven" being opened must refer to Angelic activity, as Job describes God calling for the wind and lightening to obey Him, and they come to Him and obey. This language must be about animate beings- i. e. the Angels responsible for these elements of nature. Gen. 8:1 says God remembered Noah- the language of limitation, as God Himself cannot forget or need to bring things to memory. We have suggested that this language of limitation be always applied to the Angels; thus it would seem they were in charge of the flood. "God (the Angel co-ordinating the flood?) made a wind (an Angel- "Who maketh His Angels spirits"- 'spirit' is the same word as 'winds') to pass over the earth. . and the waters returned from off the earth, in going and returning (A. V. mg. )". This last phrase is used elsewhere about the Angels as God's eyes roaming around the earth on His missions, and also there is the connection with the ideas already discussed of the Angels constantly going to and fro between God and the earth and around the earth.

Isaiah 63:10 describes the work of the Holy Spirit Angel with regard to punishing Israel in language which hints at the flood: "It repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth (land), and it grieved Him at His heart" connects with "They rebelled, and vexed His Holy Spirit (cp. grieved at the heart): therefore He was turned to be their enemy (cp. "repented"), and He fought against them". 2 Peter 3:6,7; Mt. 24:37 and Dan. 9:26 (an impressive trio) say that the flood is a type of God's judgement of the earth at the second coming- and we know

that Jesus will come with His Angels with Him to do this, in the same way as the Angels were prominent in this earlier "coming" of the Lord at the flood.

## **Incredible Control**

The idea of every little thing in life and the world being controlled by Angels contradicts the notion that God has set this world in motion according to certain natural laws, and that things continue without His direct intervention- as if the whole system is run by clockwork which God initially wound up. Intervention in this system by God has been called 'the hand of providence'. However, these ideas surely contradict the clear Biblical teaching that every movement in the natural creation is consciously controlled by God through His Angels, thus needing an energetic input from Him through His Spirit for every action to occur. Consider the following:

- "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them" (Mt. 6:26)- God consciously feeds the birds with their every mouthful.

- "If God so clothe the grass of the field. . . shall He not much more clothe you?" (Mt. 6:30). The blessings God gives us do not come by clockwork- we thankfully recognize they are individual acts of mercy towards us. Perhaps our sometimes 'clockwork' prayers are an indication that we think God's blessings of food etc. are clockwork too?. In the same way, God individually and consciously cares for each blade of grass. Fundamentally, they do not grow as a result of chemical combination or photosynthesis, but due to the conscious care of God using such processes.

- One sparrow "shall not fall on the ground without (the knowledge of) your Father" (Mt. 10:29). God is aware of the death of each bird- He does not allow animals to die due to their natural decay (the clockwork mechanism) without Him being actively involved in and conscious of their death. Again, Jesus shows how God's knowledge and participation in the things of the natural creation must imply an even greater awareness of us. "The very hairs of your head are all numbered. . . ye are of more value than many sparrows" (Mt. 10:30,31).

- God "maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Mt. 5:45). God consciously makes the sun rise each day (Job 38:12)- it isn't part of a kind of perpetual motion machine. Hence the force of His promises in the prophets that in the same way as He consciously maintains the solar system, so He will maintain Israel.

- Ps. 90:3 implies that each person dies as a result of a conscious, specific command from God; not just because of natural processes.

- Ps. 104 is full of such examples: "He watereth the hills. . . causeth the grass to grow. . . maketh darkness (consciously, each night). . . the young lions. . . seek their meat from God. . . sendest forth Thy Spirit (Angel), they are created" (not just by the reproductive system).

- Consider too Job 38:32; 39:27; Am. 9:6; Is. 40:7; Prov. 11:1.

## “7-1 "Time and chance" ?

Despite all this clear teaching, we seem to find the active participation of God in every movement within His universe hard to accept. This is maybe due to our lack of faith in the vastness of God's manifestation through the Angels. And as Jesus reasoned, if there is such intense Angelic participation and presence in the natural creation, how much more in the new spiritual creation? But the Lord's people seem to find it hard to accept that God has not left the natural creation to run according to its 'own' so called 'laws' . Hence their problem in grasping the extent of Angelic control over their lives?

For those readers who by now are chanting "time and chance happeneth to all men":

- "All men" in Ecc. 9:11 in the context seems to mean "all men" literally- we are quick to say it does in Ecc. 3:20 and other 'mortality of man' passages. It is impossible that time and chance in the sense of events in our lives should happen by random to believers, without any control of God. Do "all things work together for good" to us, or only some things?

- "Time and chance" is probably a Hebraism for death- whether wise (spiritually) or strong or swift, the same thing, "time and chance", happens to all; i. e. death. Ecc. 9:12 backs this up: "For man also knoweth not his time (i. e. of death). . as the birds that are caught in the snare (i. e. killed); so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them". The context back in v. 4,5 is clearly talking about the universality of death.

- "Chance" does not mean 'random' or uncontrolled events. The Hebrew root by contrast implies something specifically ordained- often by God.

There are important implications following from these ideas with regard to our faith in prayer. It seems to the present writer that our belief that the world is going on inevitably by clockwork is one of the things which militates against faith. To give a simple example: we may need to catch a certain train which is to leave at 9a. m. We wake up late at 8:45a. m. and find it hard to have faith in our (all too hasty) prayer that we will get it, because we are accustomed to trains leaving on time (at least in the Western world). But if we have the necessary faith to believe that each individual action in life is the work of God, then it is not so hard to believe that God will make the action of that train leaving occur at 9:30 a. m. rather than at 9a. m. when He normally makes it leave.

On a higher level, the same applies to miracles. It is hard for men to believe that Jesus could suddenly create fully grown fish- i. e. that matter should be created from nothing- because this contradicts the so-called 'laws' of science. But if we accept that such 'laws' are purely man made, resulting from his observations of how God normally or often works in man's limited experience, and are a product of pseudo-science ("the lie" men chose to believe as opposed to God), and that each action in life is consciously controlled by an Angel, then it becomes easier to have faith that 'miraculous' things have and do happen, not least because our concept of what a 'miracle' is changes. We no longer need define it as a super-natural occurrence, but as a specific action by God performed in a way we are not used to. Remember that Heb. 11:1,2 defines faith as the ability to believe that the world was created by the word of God (through the Angels) so that the things which we now see were not created out of matter which previously existed. One of the most fundamental laws of science and of the human understanding of the world is that matter cannot be created or destroyed. Yet Hebrews 11 shows us that faith flatly contradicts this- God (through His

Angels) did create matter. And so in every aspect of life the same challenge comes to us, that God through the Angels is greater than the natural 'laws' which the flesh imagines control reality.

## 7-2 Angelic Manifestation Of God.

The intensity of God manifestation to men or Angels can vary with time and requirement. The vehicle of manifestation may bear the name of God throughout the various degrees of manifestation. Although the Angels have borne God's Name from creation, God seems to have placed His Name specifically on the wilderness Angel (Ex. 23:20,21). In the same way Jesus carried the name of Yahweh when on earth- He came in the Father's Name (Jn. 5:43) and did and said many things which previously had been specific to Yahweh. Thus He walked on the water and stilled the waves as Yahweh was said to do (Ps. 107:29); yet Phil. 2:9 implies He was given the Name at His ascension: "God also hath highly exalted Him and given Him the Name which is above every name".

This variation of intensity in God's manifestation of Himself is indicated again in Mt. 6:4 "Thy Father which seeth in secret Himself shall reward thee openly"; as if God is especially manifest in Christ when we stand before him in judgement to receive our rewards openly. Similarly God emphasized the degree of His manifestation in Angels when He sent Moses to liberate Israel: "I appeared unto Abraham. . . Jacob. . . by the name of God Almighty; and by My Name Jehovah was I not known unto them?" (Ex. 6:3; properly translated). God had revealed Himself as Jehovah previously (thus Abraham could speak of 'Jehovah Jireh' in Gen. 22:14), but the patriarchs conceived of God as a singular Angel- "God Almighty" (as Jacob: "The Angel that redeemed me from all evil"). Now Yahweh says "ye shall know that I am Yahweh your Elohim which bringeth you out from under the burden of the Egyptians" (Ex. 6:7). God is saying, 'I will be Elohim; I will be manifested not in just one Angel, but in many'.

God's statement to Moses about His manifestation in the Angels must be seen in context: "Moses returned to the Lord (the Angel of the bush? It sounds as if he went to a specific place to meet the Lord-i. e. the Angel), and said, Lord, wherefore hast Thou so evil entreated this people? why is it that Thou hast sent me? (the Angel at the bush sent him). . . neither hast Thou delivered Thy people" (Ex. 5:22,23). Moses complained about the Angel, and so God reminded him that 'Yahweh personally will be your Elohim Angels', and that because of his questioning of the Angels he was in fact doubting God Himself personally.

The Angels' manifestation of God is so great that they are called "the Angel of His presence" (Is. 63:9); whilst concerning the same Angel going with Israel through the wilderness we are told "My presence shall go with thee" (Ex. 33:14). Thus when Adam and Eve "hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden" (Gen. 3:8) they were hiding from the Angel walking in the garden. The language certainly implies that the Lord God was walking around in a personal form and eventually confronted them face to face.

### God= Angels?

It follows from what we have learnt so far that often when we read of God doing something, it is in fact an Angel doing it. The following are a few examples of this which are typical of the many others which await discovery:

- The promises made to Abraham were made by an Angel. This is implied in the Genesis account and repeated later- e. g. Judges 2:1 describes the Angel which led the people of Israel out of Egypt and into Canaan reminding them of "the covenant which I swore unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break My covenant with you". Thus when we read passages talking of the covenant God made with them and with Abraham, let us watch out for further allusions to Angelic work.

- Dt. 6:12 shows that the Israelites were encouraged to conceive of God as the manifestation He gave them through their guardian Angel, in the same way as we can relate to God Himself by perceiving His manifestation through the guardian Angel we have; they were told "Beware lest thou forget the LORD thy God which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt (the Angel did that). . the LORD thy God is a jealous God among you (cp. the language concerning the Angel which was to journey among them in Ex. 23, and the declaration of one of that Angels' attributes as "jealous" in Ex. 34). . ye shall not tempt the LORD thy God (God Himself can't be tempted- therefore this is concerning the Angel). . ye shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD thy God and His testimonies which He hath commanded thee (the Angel gave Moses the Laws on Mount Sinai, as stressed in Hebrews). . that thou mayest go in and possess the good land which the LORD swore unto thy fathers (the Angels made the promises), to cast out all thine enemies from before thee (the Angels did this, as we saw earlier). . the LORD showed signs and wonders upon Egypt (the "Angels of evil " did this). . He brought us out from thence, that He might bring us in to give us the land which He swore unto our fathers (all these three things were done by the Angel)".

- "Thou shalt not tempt the LORD thy God" (Dt. 6:16). GOD himself cannot be tempted (James 1:13-15); thus this command must be about the Angel. And this was exactly how Jesus interpreted the passage when He quoted it in the wilderness temptations, to prove that one must not mis-use Angelic help by tempting the Angels to hold Him up if He jumped from the temple.

### 7-3 God Changing His Mind

There are several cases in Scripture where God appears to change His purpose, while on the other hand we know that there is "no variableness nor shadow of turning" with God. Some [\(1\)](#) explain this by suggesting that God changes His purpose in accordance with the repentance and obedience of His people. There may be some truth in this, seeing that it appears the Lord's 'coming' in AD70 was 'scheduled' in some ways for 40 years after His death; when actually it was 37 years. Was the 3 years 'hastening' due to the prayers for the hastening of the Lord's day requested in 2 Pet. 3, and also because of the Jews filling up their cup of wrath so quickly, due to their persecution of the Christians? Yet this view has its problems, and the alternative suggested here is that God Himself is unchanging, but He has delegated His purpose to His Angels to a far greater degree than we realize. Because they have limited wisdom and strength, their decreed purpose may well change; and thus it appears that God changes His mind. In several apparent instances of God changing His purpose, it can be seen that it is in fact the Angels who are changing.

- Gen. 6:6 says that "It repented The LORD that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart". To repent means to change around. It was the Angels who actually made man on earth, in the image of themselves, and we have shown that it was the Angels who actually brought the flood on the earth. So it was they who repented and therefore decided to bring the flood. Thus only Noah "found grace in the eyes of the LORD" (v. 8).

The eyes of the LORD are the Angels- it was they who surveyed the earth and saw that it was wicked, except for Noah. The phrase in v. 13 "the end of all flesh is come before Me" implies that it was brought to God's attention- another example of language of limitation, which must refer to the Angels. Thus it was the Angels who repented, or changed their mind, about creation.

- The Angels who visited Lot in Sodom wanted initially to lodge in the street, but they were persuaded by Lot to change their plans (Gen. 19:3). And who is to say that to some extent this isn't possible today, too?

- When Moses "besought the Lord his God. . . repent of this evil against Thy people" he was praying to the Angel. He definitely conceived of "his God" as an Angel, therefore. And if we have personal guardian Angels, then Moses' guardian was no less than Michael, the Angel of Israel, the Angel that dwelt between the Cherubim. Truly he was "the servant of the Lord" (the Yahweh Angel); there was truly no such man whom the Lord-Angel knew face to face so well.

- Dt. 32:36: "For the Lord shall judge His people, and repent Himself for His servants, when He seeth that their hand is gone, and there is none shut up, or left". The hand that was with Israel was their Angel- after the Angel physically left Israel, resulting in their punishment, the very pity of their state caused the Angel to repent, and return to them. He "shall judge his people". This is quoted in Heb. 10:20 concerning the judgement seat- where we know the Angels will play an important part (see 'Angels and the judgement seat', Chapter 14).

- Jer. 15:6 "Therefore will I stretch out My hand against thee, and destroy thee; I am weary of repenting". The hand of God is an Angelic term, and here we see it responsible for the frequent repenting (changing of mind) of God concerning Israel. Frequent repentance is fundamentally not a characteristic of God Himself- "God is not a man, that He should repent" (Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29).

- Ps. 90:13 "Let it repent Thee concerning Thy servants. . . Return, O Lord. . . O satisfy us early with Thy mercy. . . for we are consumed by Thine anger". This 'prayer of Moses' (title) is lamenting how Israel were being destroyed by the Angel as they wandered in the forty year period of punishment. It may even be that the Angel left Israel in a sense (hence "Return O Lord") although still leading them. Thus there are different degrees of the Angelic presence- as at the restoration the Angel did in a limited sense return to the temple. Yet Moses clearly believed that this period of decreed punishment could be shortened ("satisfy us early with Thy mercy") by the Angel repenting. Previously his prayers had succeeded in making the Angel repent of the evil that He had planned to do to Israel, and Moses evidently hoped the Angel would again repent. Why exactly didn't He? Ps. 91 follows on from Ps. 90, and is also clearly Angelic.

- Jeremiah's message as the Babylonian armies approached Jerusalem had stressed that if the Jews repented, then God would repent of the evil He was planning to bring upon them (18:8,10; 26:3,13). The Jews did not repent, and so Jerusalem was taken and Zedekiah deported. Even at this thirteenth hour, God said to the Jewish forces that remained at large outside Jerusalem and who were about to flee to Egypt: "If ye will still abide in this land, then will I build you, and not pull you down. . . for I repent Me of the evil that I have done unto you" (42:10). What a God we have! Although Israel had not repented, the Angel repented to the extent of changing His pre-requisite for repenting of bringing more evil on them. And so

God changed this from returning wholeheartedly to the Law, to merely remaining in the land of Israel rather than fleeing to Egypt. The Angel's eagerness to repent and willingness to accept even the slightest sign of repentance in His charges, explains why Moses was so willing to strive to make the Angel repent by his prayers. Thus in Ex. 34:9 Moses asks the Angel to forgive the people's sin, although it was one of the Angel's stated principles not to do so (Ex. 23:21). Moses had had personal experience of such repenting; the Angel "sought" to kill him, but God changed his mind due to Moses' repentance (Ex. 4:24). What of us? Jer. 31:18,19 tops all for such encouragement: "Turn thou Me (said Ephraim), and I shall be turned. . . I (God in the Angel) was turned, I repented"- and therefore God repented too!

- "Who knoweth if He will return and repent. . . turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth Him of the evil" (Joel 2:14,13). These are the attributes of 'the Lord' that passed before Moses in Ex. 34:5,6, thus also indicating that this was an Angel. Jonah 4:2 makes the same connection.

- 1 Sam. 15:28,29,35: "The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee (Saul). . . and hath given it to (David). . . the strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for He is not a man, that he should repent. . . and the Lord repented that He had made Saul king over Israel". This juxtaposition of such conflicting statements seems to imply that it was the Angel who allowed Israel to have kings, although it was not the will of God Himself. He allowed the Angel to permit Israel to have a king, although the Angel later repented of this. God Himself, who does not repent, then firmly intervened to replace Saul with David.

- "The Lord repented Him of the evil, and said to the Angel that destroyed the people, It is enough; stay now Thine hand" (2 Sam. 24:16). This "destroying Angel" (1 Chron. 21:15 RV) is surely "the destroyer" who operated in the wilderness. We see here one Angel having the ability to formulate a purpose and another blindly carrying it out until told not to- a scenario which we see repeated elsewhere (e. g. at the Passover and in Ez. 9). It was only David's prayer which led to "the destroyer" ceasing. Notice how the Angel repented and then encouraged David to offer a sacrifice so the Angel would be "intreated for the land" (v. 19,25). Similarly, the Angel repented of punishing Israel and wanted to restore them, and to enable this to happen He encouraged the people through Ezra to be spiritual. Thus Angelic repentance has to be confirmed by human action.

- Ps. 106:44,45,23: "He (the wilderness Angel) heard their cry: and He remembered for them His covenant, and repented according to the multitude of His mercies ('mercies' is a word often associated with the promises). . . He (the destroyer Angel) said that He would destroy them, had not Moses stood before him in the breach. . . lest He should destroy them". The Angel's repentance is very often mentioned along with Him recalling the promises He made to the patriarchs. This would explain why powerful prayers (e. g. of Jacob and Ezra) often make mention of the promises- because it is by recognizing that the answer to our request will further the fulfilment of those promises that our Angel is likely to repent and hear us.

- The relatively small amount of human repentance needed to make the Angel repent is shown in Amos 7. Amos sees visions of the impending judgements on Israel. After each he prays "O Lord God, forgive, I beseech Thee: who shall stand for Jacob? ('If you, his Angel-God, don't?') for he is small". The answer comes: "The Lord repented for this. It shall not be, saith the Lord". He repented for the sake of one intense prayer! Notice too Amos asking "Who shall stand for Jacob?". Michael the Angel stands for Israel in the court of Heaven (as the Angel 'God of Jacob'; Dan. 12:1), and thus it appears Amos is pointing out that if Israel is

condemned and punished they will have no Angel with them- and so the Angel / God changes His mind.

- Hos. 11:8 wonderfully summarizes how frequently the Angel can repent due to the intense emotional pain He feels at punishing His charges: "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? (the Angels punished Sodom and surrounding cities like Admah). . . Mine heart is turned within Me, My repentings are kindled together". If by mere reason of being Abraham's seed hard hearted, idol-worshipping Israel could evoke such feelings, how much more- and this our minds surely cannot comprehend- will our Angel be moved by the new Israel at least making some effort to obey the Lord!

- Hebrews 3:9-11 implies that God changed His mind about letting Israel enter the land: "your fathers tempted Me, and saw My works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation. . . So I swear in My wrath, they shall not enter into My rest". Or as Num. 14:34 (A. V. mg. ) says "ye shall bear your iniquity, even forty years, and ye shall know the altering of My purpose". These were the words of the Angel to Moses. We know that God cannot be tempted (James 1:13-15); therefore the passage in Hebrews referring to God being tempted and therefore swearing that they would not enter the land must be concerning the Angel which led them; and similarly the altering of purpose which this involved was the altering of the Angel's plans, not those of God Himself.

- Moses seems to have pleaded with the Angel to change His stated purpose of not going up with the children of Israel through reminding the Angel of the mockery this would bring Him into among the nations around. Thus Ex. 34:9 shows Moses pleading for this "O LORD, let my Lord (the Angel) I pray thee, go amongst us" after the clear statement in Ex. 33:3 "I will not go up in the midst of thee". So let us not be afraid to ask God to change what seems like His purpose in our lives, no matter how hard it seems, if we truly feel that another way would give Him more glory. Moses would not have tried if he did not think success in that prayer was possible. But he not only tried, he succeeded. Also consider Ex. 32:11: "Moses besought the face of the LORD (A. V. mg-i. e. the Angel) and said, LORD, why doth Thy wrath wax hot against Thy people, which Thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt (the Angel did this). . . turn from Thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against Thy people". Thus Ezek. 20:17 says that God's eye (the Angel) "spared them. . . in the wilderness" when they provoked Him. Psalm 90 is Moses meditations on the fact that his generation were slowly dying in the wilderness, and on the vapidness of life at that stage. And yet he is bold enough to plead with God to change His purpose- "Return, O LORD, how long? and let it repent Thee concerning Thy servants. O satisfy us early with Thy mercy (i. e. don't leave it till some distant point in the future when Messiah is here to show me Thy mercy- do it early, do it now). . . make us glad according to the days wherein Thou hast afflicted us. . ." (v. 13-15). So from his previous experience of changing God's purpose , Moses was not afraid to try and do so again. This possibility of God changing His mind about this is shown by the Hebrew of Ps. 95:11: "That they should not (Heb. 'If they enter', as AVmg. ) enter My rest". The ambiguity here nicely shows the possibility of them entering.

- Similarly Hosea 12:4 implies that through his intense prayer, Jacob had power over the Angel he wrestled with in getting his prayers heard. "He had power over the Angel (he didn't in the physical wrestling), and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto Him" (this was the way Jacob prevailed over the Angel).



- Dt. 4:31 and 31:6,8 say that despite the sins Israel may commit, their Angel-God "will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant. . . He will not fail thee". But then Dt. 31:17 says that because the people would disobey Him, God "will forsake them. . . and they shall be devoured. . . and I will surely hide My face in that day for all the evils which they shall have wrought". We have seen that in the Pentatuch, especially in God's dealings with Israel on their journey, God is to be conceived of as an Angel; which would explain the apparent fickleness shown here.

- Similarly "I will give thee rest" (Ex. ,33:14), the Angel said (33:11). But they did not enter that rest- Heb. 4:8,10. "Rest" was defined as the land being subdued before God with all the tribes driven out (Josh. 1:13,15; Num. 32:21,22; 1 Chron. 22:18). This being conditional on Israel's faithfulness, we conclude that when the Angel said "I will give thee rest" He was speaking of what was possible in prospect; or perhaps He over-estimated Israel's obedience, or was unaware of the degree to which their entering the rest was conditional on their obedience.

- Zeph. 2:2 urges Israel to repent "Before the decree bring forth, before the day pass. . the day of the Lord come upon you". It may well be that this is referring to God's decree to the Angels to begin judging Israel.

- Judges 2:1 "And an Angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swore unto your fathers: and I said, I will never break My covenant with you". The subsequent rebuke of Israel by the Angel makes this passage imply that although the Angel had promised never to break the Covenant, He could and would do so. Later, He did: "And I took my staff, even Beauty, and cut it asunder, that I might break My covenant which I had made with all the people. And it was broken in that day" (Zech. 11:10,11). This 'repentance' must make the "I" refer to God manifest in the Angel. v. 6 gives the context: "I will no more pity the inhabitants of the land, saith the Lord" (cp. Is. 63:9 regarding the wilderness Angel:"in His love and in His pity" He redeemed Israel from Egypt). Although the Angelic covenant was broken, it is to be re-established: "I will even deal with thee as thou hast done, which hast despised the oath in breaking the covenant (i. e. you've broken the covenant, I'll do the same). Nevertheless I will remember My covenant with thee. . . and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant. . . thou shalt receive thy sisters. . . and I will give them unto thee for daughters, but not by thy (former) covenant. And I will establish My covenant with thee. . . " (Ez. 16:59-62). This covenant was a marriage covenant. "For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God" (Michael the Angel?), Is. 54:6. This is all referring back to the Angel calling Hagar, showing that God's Angel was figuratively 'married' to Israel; thus it was the Angel who divorced and will take back Israel.

- Another compact example of Angels shortening a time period (as they will regarding the second coming) is found in comparing Rom. 9:28,29 with Matthew 24:

<i>Matthew 24</i>	<i>Romans 9</i>
v. 22 "For the elect's sake	The seed preserved by the Lord of hosts / Angels (:29)
Those days shall be shortened	v. 28 "He will finish the account (of Israel's

	sin), and cut it short in righteousness: because a short(ened) work will the Lord make upon all the earth (land)"
...[or else] there should no flesh be saved"	v. 29 "as Sodoma"

Romans 9 is quoting from Is. 28:22, which is about "a consumption, even determined upon the whole land. . . from the Lord God of hosts (Angels)". Thus the Angels planned to destroy Israel even more terribly than they did in AD70, but the "determined" "days" of "consumption" were "shortened" because the Angels- other ones apart from the destroying Angels?- had preserved a faithful seed or remnant, which is the theme of the section of Romans where the quotation from Is. 28 occurs. And there must be marked similarities in the last days too.

### **Bold Moses**

So great was Moses' concept of the Angel's limitation and characteristic of changing His mind, that he "returned unto the Lord (the Angel), and said, Lord. . . why is it that Thou hast sent me? (The Angel in the bush sent him). For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast Thou delivered Thy people at all" (Ex. 5:22,23). Moses here gives a great warning to us: because God's purpose and the Angels who implement it can change, we must not let this militate against humble faith and works. "My Lord delayeth His coming", the unworthy complain. They are quite right- He does delay, because a few verses later we are told that "the bridegroom tarried" (same word as 'delayeth')- God's purpose, even regarding the time of the second coming, may be subject to change, but this should serve to humble us and increase our faith rather than make us bitter and doubtful of God. Thus God through the Angel responds: "with a strong hand (i. e. by an Angel) SHALL he let (Israel) go" (Ex. 6:1). God goes on to stress that He is ultimately connected with the Angels, therefore implying that to wrongly question them is to question God Himself: "I appeared (through an Angel) unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob by God Almighty (i.e. an Angel), and by My Name JEHOVAH was I not known to them?" (Ex. 6:3,7)- this is the correct translation, seeing that God had revealed Himself as Jehovah to the patriarchs, e. g. at Jehovah-Jireh. Moses and Israel would be brought to accept God's vindication of the Angel, so they would know that "I am Jehovah (in) your Elohim (Angels)".

Despite all this, the Angels being active in our lives represent by that token God's fundamental faithfulness to us- "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints (Angels) and to be had in reverence of all them that are round about Him (the Angels round about the Heavenly throne). O Lord God of Hosts (Angels), who is a strong Lord like unto Thee? Or to Thy faithfulness round about Thee?" (Ps. 89:7,8). The Angels around the throne are here equated with God's faithfulness. It is likely that other occurrences of this word may also have an Angelic context.

The idea that God's purpose is signed and sealed unchangeably and the Angels are just putting it into practice militates against our faith in prayer. Jacob "had power over the Angel, and prevailed" (Hos. 12:4)- not physically, because the Angel eventually had power over him that way; but spiritually, through his wrestling in prayer, he succeeded. "He wept, and made supplication unto Him. . . even the Lord God of Hosts (Angels)". Because the Angels do change their mind and God's purpose is in many ways open-ended, we should be greatly encouraged in our prayers, knowing that we convince our Angel first (see later), then Christ,

and finally trust in God's love to answer what Christ presents to Him. Or has God delegated certain power for the answering of prayer to Angels, leaving it up to them to decide how to answer prayer? No wonder Jacob strove with that Angel so zealously! The idea that we have power over the Angels by our prayers is continued when we consider that Jacob and Jesus saw Angels ascending and descending in that order- as if to imply that the Angels are sent on their missions by us?

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### Note

(1) For example H. A. Whittaker, *Revelation: A Biblical Approach*, Appendix 1 (Honest Truth Inc., 1976); see too the writings of E. W. Bullinger.

## 7-4 God's Willing

These ideas help explain the fact that there appear to be two groups of words used to convey the idea of God's "will" in the New Testament, and possibly in Hebrew too. We are familiar with saying that we 'will' something to happen- e. g. 'willing' a child to win a race. We do not decree against all odds that the action will happen. The same is true of the word in Greek. Christ "would" (will-ed to) have passed by the disciples in the boat- i. e. He wished to, but He did not irrevocably will to do so, because actually He didn't- because of Peter's willingness to show faith. This same word is used to describe God's will:

"If we ask anything according to God's will, He heareth us" (1 Jn. 5:14). This 'will' can therefore be affected by prayer and reasoning.

"This is the will of God. . . that ye should abstain from fornication" (1 Thess. 4:3); "It is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing "(1 Peter 3:17). "I will give unto this last, even as unto thee "(Mt. 20:14). The word thus means the desires, which can be emotionally swayed:

"Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring (willing) to see Thee" (Lk. 8:20).

"Now at that feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would" (i. e. desired); Mt. 27:15.

"Joseph. . . not willing (wishing) to make her a public example" (Mt. 1:19)

"This they willingly are ignorant of" (2 Peter 3:5)-i. e. they desire to be ignorant.

Further examples are: Mt. 16:24; Lk. 13:31; Jn. 8:44; 1 Cor. 7:37; Eph. 2:3; James 4:15; 1 Peter 4:2; Rev. 4:11.

It is this will of God, His emotional desires, which can be changed, and which are expressed through His Angels being able to be 'emotionally' swayed. Thus any prayer can be theoretically answered according to such a definition of the will of God. This realm of God's dealings with man, we suggest, is delegated to the Angels. Such a situation where God Himself in person is subject to emotion cannot be possible. So let us "not be unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5:17).

## God's Will

The other group of words describe the determinate will of God which is totally immutable:

"The counsel and deed" of the Sannhedrin that condemned Christ to death (Lk. 23:51)- no changing them.

"The ships. . . are. . . turned about with a very small helm, withersoever the governor listeth"- the captain moves the rudder, and the ship inevitably moves in the direction commanded (James 3:4); just like God's control of His immutable will.

"They. . . took counsel to slay them " (Acts 5:33)- they firmly decided.

The same word is used about God's will:

"The immutability of His counsel" (Heb. 6:17)

"Of His own will begat He us with the word of Truth" (James 1:18)- His predestination of us to receive the word of the Gospel over and above our personal worthiness. Similarly the Angel did not give Israel in the wilderness "a heart to perceive" (Dt. 29:4), although they have opened our heart (cp. Eph. 1:18 RV).

"Him (Jesus) being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23)- thankfully, nothing could ever alter God's will that Christ should die for our sins (see too Acts 4:27,28; Heb. 7:212).

Most significantly "Father, if Thou be willing (the determinate will), remove this cup from Me; nevertheless, not My will (emotional desires). . .", Lk. 22:42. And so the pattern is set- recognizing that our will and desires are emotional, merely our wishes, compared to the determinate will of God.

It is this will which presumably God personally superintends, although it appears to apply only to the basic elements of salvation- e. g. the sureness of His promise of salvation (Heb. 6:17), His calling of us to the Gospel (James 1:18), and His will that Christ should be sacrificed. He will not let the Angels change His purpose concerning such fundamentals- "I will ransom (Israel) from the hand of the grave (the Angel-hand of death). . . repentance shall be hid from Mine eyes" (Angels)- Hos. 13:14; cp. "I have purposed it, and will not repent" (Jer. 4:28). The less fundamental aspects of His purpose are in the control of the Angels, and subject to His desires only. It is these things about which we normally pray, and therefore knowing the nature of the Angels we have every encouragement to wrestle with them in our prayers so they may be heard, in that God will give power to His Angels so they can perform their will. "(God). . . performeth the counsel (humble advice) of His messenger" (Heb. Malak-Angels; Is. 44:26).

## 7-5 ANGELS AND PRAYER

This leads on to a consideration of Angels and prayer. The fact we can alter God's will by wrestling in prayer with the Angels throws a serious question mark over the average public Christadelphian prayer, which seems to be a list of requests interspersed with a host of "If it

be Thy will"s. Presumably we base our style of prayer on Biblical example. But where are the examples of men requesting something in prayer and adding a half hearted "If it be Thy will"? Consider, as a random example, Elijah's calling down of fire to consume the sacrifices in front of the Baal worshippers. He didn't mention 'if it be Thy will'. He decided what he wanted, and he prayed with great faith. If our concept of the will of God is that it is all signed and sealed before we start to pray, then the very request for the prayer to be heard only if it is God's will makes a mockery of prayer. If God's will is determinate and decided already, then it will happen whether we pray or not. But prayer is powerful. We can change the declared will of God in many things- even up to the date of the second coming!

Thus for the man in good conscience with God "Thou shalt make thy prayer unto Him, and He shall hear thee (no mention here of 'if it is His will!'). . thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee" (Job 22:27,28). Absolute faith in prayer which is according to God's broad desires results in our requests effectively being decrees of what is now going to happen! To the present writer this is the only reasonable understanding of the relationship between the 'will' of God and our prayers. It is not difficult for us to know what the will of God in the sense of His desires is. We have been born again by the word of God. We were not born again by the will of man, but by the will of God. The will of God is therefore found in the word of God (James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23; John 1:12-14). Thus if we pray according to our knowledge of God's desires as explained in the word, we are praying according to His will- and therefore if we have faith "He heareth us". Jesus said as much: "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what YE will, and it shall be done unto you" (Jn. 15:7). Notice He didn't say 'you will ask whatever is according to God's will , and it will be heard'. We ask whatever we desire, and we will receive. This is because our will should be the will of God if the word of God is in us.

A nice picture of the Angels at work in dealing with our prayers is given in Mal. 2:17: "Ye have wearied the Lord with your words" (in prayer). The Hebrew for "wearied" means to 'exhaust by work'- as if God really makes a lot of effort in considering our prayers. God Himself never wearies- such language is surely more relevant to the Angels? The exhortation to an Israel whose prayers were half hearted and formal repetition needs to be heeded by all of us; and encouragement taken at the great energy expended to deal with our prayers.

It would seem from the earlier comment on Jacob wrestling with the Angel in prayer, that our prayers are in the first place heard by our guardian Angel, and that we can plead with Him for an answer. It appears from Is. 6:7 that Angels even have the power delegated to them to forgive (through Christ, now) our sins in response to our prayers. The Angels being God's eyes means that they are His sensors to our prayers and thoughts; thus it would be fitting if our prayers went to them first in the process of their presentation to God, although God Himself knows our every thought and word. Heb. 2:6 says that God is mindful of man because He visits him- which He does through His Angels (visiting is Angelic language). Thus God is mindful (literally mind-full!) of us because of the Angels "visiting" us with trials and observation "every moment" (Job 7:18). However, in the same way that for such thoughts to be powerful with God they have to go through Christ, so they also have to be presented to Him by the Angels. Naturally it must ever be remembered that there is only one mediator- the Lord Jesus, not Angels (1 Tim. 2:5). The connection between the Angels as God's eyes and His hearing of prayer becomes more relevant once it is realized that to 'find grace in God's sight' (eyes-Angels) is equivalent to saying 'please hear my prayer'- see Gen. 19:19; 32:5; 33:10,15; 34:11- at least in Genesis. This again explains why early believers conceived of

God in terms of an Angel, as they would have prayed to the Angel and received the answers and other revelation of God from one.

## **Prayer As Incense**

Again, Revelation has much to say about Angels and prayers. Rev. 14:18 pictures an Angel coming out of the incense altar, and triggered by the incense of our prayers, asking another Angel to do something dramatic on earth. This is how powerful prayer is! Rev. 5:8 shows each of the Angels (again notice how all of them are involved) having golden vials in which are our prayers, and that with them in hand they bow down to Jesus. So it would appear that our prayers go first to them, then to Jesus, and then to God Himself, who then gives His answer to the Angel before His throne to go forth and execute. Rev. 8:3 describes one Angel being given much incense- i. e. prayers- presumably by the individual guardian Angels. He then offers this up on the altar (Christ) to God, and the response from God comes in the form of the Angels sounding their trumpets. It is interesting to note that actually these Angels had already been prepared for what they were going to do (Rev. 8:2) when they had been earlier before the throne of God. God knows our prayers before we say them. He knew what the prayers of the people at that time would be, and had earlier prepared the Angels to answer them, and this was unleashed by their cumulative prayer. But without that prayer- that human part of the equation- the prepared answer would not have been put into action. The prayers were offered up by one Angel- this either means there is one Angel with overall responsibility for offering up prayers to Christ (the altar), or that there is one Angel who collects together the prayers from one period of time or about one particular subject and then offers them up to Christ. The fact "much incense" is mentioned presumably means that there was much prayer made at this time, and this was added to the "prayers of all saints" (v. 3) which had already been made about this.

Perhaps this idea of our prayers going first to an Angel is hinted at in Psalm 80:1 "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel (the language of Is. 63:11 regarding the guardian Angel of Israel in the wilderness), thou that leadest Joseph like a flock (the Angel led Israel through the wilderness); Thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth. . ". It would seem that the Angel "went up in the midst of them" as Moses had successfully pleaded for by physically dwelling between the Cherubim whilst they were encamped, occasionally shining out with the shekinah glory either in pleasure or anger at the people's behaviour during the journey. In this Psalm we see a prayer addressed to this Angel. We have commented earlier on the use of the word "send" with regard to God physically sending forth an Angel in answer to prayer. "The LORD send thee help from the sanctuary (Most Holy)" (Ps. 20:2) indicates that the Angel was physically there, and that God would send out His help through that Angel. The other allusions to the Angel in Ps. 80 are detailed in Chapter 12, but v. 4 is interesting at present. "O Lord God of Hosts (Angels), how long wilt Thou smoke against the prayer of this people?". Incense represents prayer, but it seems that if prayer is insincere the Angels as it were fill the sanctuary with smoke to stop the incense getting through to Jesus. This is perhaps the situation in Rev. 15:8, where the temple was filled with smoke from "the glory of God and His power" (the Angels? cp. 2 Thess. 1:8,9), so that "no man"- i. e. no man's prayer?- could enter until the Angels had fully punished the world.

Is. 1:15 also seems relevant to God's method of rejecting prayer through the Angels. "When ye spread forth your hands (in prayer) I will hide Mine eyes (Angels) from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear". God Himself hears and sees all words and actions,

including insincere prayer. But He lets Himself be limited through His Angels turning away from being sensitive to some words of prayer.

In Zech. 1:12 “the angel of the Lord” asks Yahweh of hosts “how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem...?”. Surely the Angel was representing those of God’s people such as Ezra who were asking God “how long?”. And in response to that, the Angel seeks to persuade other Angels [“Yahweh of hosts”] to act. Dan. 8:15 records daniel seeking to understand the meaning of a vision; but two verses earlier, an Angel had asked another Angel for understanding of the same vision. Here surely we have the practical meaning, in Angelic terms, of God knowing our prayers and arranging the answers before we even ask them. Perhaps it was daniel’s guardian Angel who asked a more senior Angel for the interpretation of the vision, knowing daniel was going to be asking for it. Yet it was the second Angel who actually gave the answer to daniel (Dan. 8:14). Verse 16 describes the one Angel standing at the Ulai river calling out: “Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision”. Yet at this time, daniel himself was in vision at the Ulai river (:2). His guardian Angel was there, right in front of him. And He had foreknown daniel’s feelings and arranged for another Angel to respond to them...and so the second Angel (Gabriel) also comes near where daniel was standing (:17). His guardian Angel had literally called Gabriel to come over to daniel... And all this is going on for you and me *hourly* in the court of Heaven! There’s another example of this in dan. 12. There are two Angels with daniel by the river (:2). One of them asks the other: “How long shall it be to the end...?” (:6; cp. 8:13). Yet this was exactly the spirit of daniel! And then the other Angel gives *daniel* the answer. His guardian Angel knew his unexpressed questions and desires, and passed them on to another Angel to answer.

## Angels Answering Prayer

Does it follow that our guardian Angel or the Angel coordinating the offering of the prayers will only offer them to Christ if they are for some specific furthering of God's purpose when there are enough of them? This idea is very attractive regarding the second coming- once there is enough incense concerning this, it will be offered to Christ, who will then send it to God and the answer empowering Christ and the Angels to act will come. The fact that the incense is offered together must indicate a period of amassing it, and therefore a slight gap in the answering of the prayers through their being delayed in being offered to Christ.

An interesting thought arises from Prov. 15:29: "The Lord is far from the wicked: but He heareth the prayer of the righteous". This implies that God is too physically far away from the wicked to hear their prayer. Ps. 10:1 is one of the many references in the Psalms to God being physically far away when a prayer is not answered: "Why standest Thou afar off, O Lord? Why hidest Thou Thyself in times of trouble?". This is the language of limitation- God Himself hears every sound of our lips, including the prayers of the wicked, which He says are like smoke in His nostrils and an annoyance to Him. So if our prayers are heard when God is 'near' us, does it not follow that when our Angel is physically near us, then our prayer is more quickly heard? Hence Jesus' Angel was physically with Him in Gethsemane in order to encourage Him in prayer. Once we accept that prayer goes first to an Angel, then this suggestion looks more sensible.

Luke 1 exemplifies how Angels are used in answering prayer. The Angelic context is set by v. 65 saying that Zacharias and Elisabeth "were both righteous before God"- recalling the language of the Law, where coming before God was coming into the presence of the Angel in the tabernacle. In God's sight no man is justified (i. e. counted to be righteous)- Ps. 143:2,

although men may be justified in the view of His Angels. The people praying outside made a fitting parallel with the incense being offered in the temple. Seeing it was the day of Atonement, the prayers were fundamentally for forgiveness of sins which the animal sacrifices of the past year had not properly atoned for. The answer came in the form of an Angel standing on the right side (implying acceptance) of the incense altar, and giving news of the coming ministry of Jesus, the true means of Atonement. Gabriel says that He had been sent in answer to this prayer (v. 19)- He was therefore the Angel that appeared to Zacharias.

In Rev. 8:8 we have an Angel casting a mountain into the sea. This must surely connect with the Lord's encouragement that we can cast mountains into the sea by our faith (Mk. 11:23). Therefore... it surely follows that our prayers have a direct effect upon the Angels. They throw mountains around because of our faithful prayer... Inevitably we see a connection with Ps. 46:2, which comforts us not to fear when mountains are cast into sea. Surely the point is that we shouldn't be scared when we perceive the awesomeness of the power of prayer and its influence upon Angels. It's all too easy to ask for things without perceiving how it would really be if that prayer were answered. We need to have specific and focused faith in what we ask for, realizing that legions of Angels are potentially able to operationalize what we ask for.

## **Delayed Answers**

The fact the Angels are limited in wisdom and power explains the delay in answer to some of our prayers. Daniel 10 is a clear example of this. Daniel 10:2 records that Daniel prayed for three weeks, presumably for understanding of the vision. In v. 12 Daniel is told by the Angel that "from the first day... thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words". So because of his prayer ("words"- perhaps put like that to emphasize the power of the 'mere' words uttered in prayer), an Angel was sent from God to give him the understanding he had asked for. His very first prayer for this was answered- but the actual answer came three weeks later. The reason for this was that the Angel had been withstood by the prince of Persia for 21 days (v. 13). Three weeks is 21 days. So Daniel's first prayer was answered, but it took the Angel three weeks to work out the answer in practice; but during this time Daniel kept on praying, although at the time it must have seemed to him that no answer was forthcoming. So let us be prepared to persevere in prayer, as those saints in Rev. 8 did and were rewarded by the incense finally being offered by the Angel to Christ, and then to God.

It may just be possible that there is a mighty Angel of answered prayer (Gabriel?), in the same way as there is a 'wonderful numberer' co-ordinating the timing of God's purpose, and an Angel specifically representing Jesus and Israel (do these four make up the four forms of Angel manifestation in the cherubim and four living creatures?). This Angel would co-ordinate the presentation and answering of prayers. Thus in Luke 1:10,11 we see the priest's offering of incense paralleled with the prayer of the people, and in reply to these prayers and those of Zacharias an Angel comes and stands at the right hand of the altar of incense to announce the granting of the peoples' request (for forgiveness), and Zacharias' request for a child, in the form of the birth of John and his ministry of reconciliation with God. The incense altar represented the offering of prayer- the Angel coming to stand at the right side of the altar indicates answered prayer. The command from the altar (of incense?) in Rev. 9:14 to the sixth Angel telling Him to loose other Angels was maybe from this same Angel of answered prayer. All these suggestions need very careful development, especially guarding



against making the Angels rather than Jesus our mediator. There is only one mediator (1 Tim. 2:5).

## 7-6 Angels On Earth

### 'Going out'

Angels are of course active in answering our prayer, obeying the commanding voice of God Himself in Heaven- answers to prayer "go. . . out" by prayer and fasting (Mt. 17:21). The answer to prayer is therefore likened to a 'going out'- of the Angel and command from the throne of grace? This language of 'going out' is frequently used in the Old Testament about the going forth of the cherubim Angels. Isaiah 37 is shot through with allusions to the Angel cherubim destroying the Assyrian host (see Chapter 10). The Angel went forth (v. 36)- perhaps referring to Him physically going forth out of the temple where He dwelt to slay the Assyrians outside the walls of Jerusalem. This phrase 'went out' is nearly always used about literal physical movement, which we have seen is what Angels literally do. Thus in the Ezekiel visions of the cherubim, they and the lightnings "went forth", physically and literally, in performing God's work. "Let my sentence come forth from Thy presence (Angelic language); let Thine eyes (Angels) behold the things that are equal", seeing they are involved with the 'coming forth', according to the parallelism of this verse. Similarly Job's satan Angel "went forth" from the presence of the Lord (Job 1:12). And so it happened that there were Angels on earth, as it were. Zech. 2:3 also has an Angel going forth to answer the prayers concerning restoring the fortunes of Jerusalem (see Zech. 5:5 too). Ps. 81:5 describes the Angel going out through the land of Egypt in order to "remove (Israel's) shoulder from the burden". Ps. 81 is 'Angelic', following Ps. 80, which is another such Psalm. Heb. 1:14 also offers support: the Angels are "sent forth" to minister to us- by answering prayers? In the court of Heaven, God "thrusteth away the desire of the wicked" (Prov. 10:3 RV)- as if their prayers are rejected there. Peter was delivered from prison as a result of the Angel being "sent forth"- from the court of Heaven, by the prayers of the other believers at their prayer meeting (Acts 12:11 RV). When those same believers commented: "It is his Angel" (:15) they were perhaps not mocking Rhoda; rather they were thanking God that Peter's guardian Angel had indeed been sent forth due to their prayers. Again, Angels on earth.

In response to Hezekiah's prayer, an Angel 'went forth' on earth and slew 185,000 Assyrians (2 Kings 19:35). Hezekiah was aware of the court of Heaven responding to his prayer; for he had commented that God would there "reprove the words" of Rabshakeh (2 Kings 19:4). The Hebrew for "reprove" is a legal term, meaning to convict, judge, plead etc. Hezekiah knew that the court of Heaven was considering Rabshakeh's words, and his prayer was a plea for those words to be convicted in Heaven's court, and an answer sent out. And this is what happened. Later, we read of Hezekiah asking that same court to "remember" his good life- again using a word capable of having legal overtones, of considering witness. And God replied by saying that He had "heard" that prayer- the same Hebrew word is translated 'to make a proclamation', as if He had considered Hezekiah's 'plea' and would respond (2 Kings 20:3,5).

This close association between Angels and answered prayer resulted in many of the early believers conceiving of God in terms of an Angel, as we have seen Jacob in particular did.

Hannah is another example; she prayed to the Lord of Hosts (Angels) to "look on the affliction of Thine handmaid" (1 Sam. 1:11); and the Angels are God's eyes through which He looks on us. She came to pray "before the Lord" (v. 15)- i. e. before the Angel dwelling over the ark. Angels are associated with conception- the cases of Samson, John and Jesus quickly spring to mind.

There is a vision described in 1 Kings 22:22 of the Angels presenting their various plans of how to slay Ahab. God says to the one whose plan He accepts "Thou shalt persuade him (Ahab), and prevail also: go forth, and do so". Thus the Angel still has to "prevail" or 'struggle' to operationalize a command from God which they know is His will to perform; and we have to do likewise, not least in the preaching of the Gospel, both obeying and prevailing. This makes more sense of Jer. 51:12, which says that "The Lord (of Hosts/ Angels, v. 14) hath *both* devised and done that which He spake" about Babylon. Consider the implications of Ez. 12:25: "I will speak, and the word that I shall speak shall be performed. It shall be no more deferred: for in your days, O rebellious house, will I speak the word, and will perform it, saith the Lord" (R.V.). There seems to be the suggestion that God 'speaks' a word / plan / intention; and when He decides to operationalize it, then He speaks it again- presumably in the court of Heaven.

We cannot leave the subject of Angels and prayer without returning to Daniel 10. Verses 2 and 3 show Daniel praying for three weeks- presumably for the fortunes of Israel to be restored. As the days went by, it would have seemed natural to assume that the prayer was going unanswered. However, the Angel told him that "from the first day. . thy words were heard" (v. 13), but the delay was because "the prince of the Kingdom of Persia withstood Me (the Angel) one and twenty days"- i. e. three weeks. So his first prayer was heard, but it took the Angel three weeks to work out the answer in practice. How many of our prayers are like that! The Angel then describes how he confirmed and strengthened Darius (11:1) to the same end to enable the prayer to be answered- as if when our Angel sees someone set in a course of action which will lead to the answer of our prayer, they are confirmed and strengthened in it. The same idea is found in Dan. 9:23; a command being given from God to answer a prayer as soon as it's prayed, but there being a delay to the answer due to the Angels effecting the answer. "At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment (from God to answer your prayer) came forth, and I (the Angel) am come to show thee". The wonder of all this needs some reflection. Our words, the thoughts within human braincells, call forth the Angels from the court of Heaven. "When we cried unto the Lord, he heard our voice, and sent an angel [from the myriads standing on the right and left hands of His throne] and brought us forth out of Egypt" (Num. 20:16). Yet the voice that Angel responded to was the voice not so much of specific prayers but of the situation of the people. And the same is with us...

The concept of the court of Heaven is a major key to understanding the book of Revelation. Events on earth are described in terms of their connection with the Angelic system in Heaven which has arranged them. "The accuser of our brethren" being cast out of Heaven (Rev. 12:10) would therefore refer to how in the court of Heaven, an Angel represents the system who accused the brethren on earth. This isn't to say that the Angel representing the accuser is sinful. "It was given unto" the beast to have power to persecute the saints (Rev. 13:7), just as the Lord had perceived that His persecutors only had the power that was "given" unto them [thereby associating the saints' final time of trial in the last days with the Lord's sufferings]. But the power was "given" by the Angels in the court of Heaven, empowering people on earth to carry out what they permit. The 12 gates of the Heavenly Jerusalem are identified with 12 Angels, whereon are written the names of the 12 tribes of Israel (Rev. 21:12). This

suggests that the tribes of Israel are reflective of the situation in Heaven, where there are Angels representing each tribe. Dan. 8:24 speaks of Israel as “the people of the saints” (RVmg.), although v. 13 speaks of “the saint” (RV “holy one”) as an Angel. 1 Sam. 17:45 parallels the Angelic hosts, and the hosts of Israel’s armies; they were to follow where the host of God went, just as David’s army had to follow the sound of the cherubim “marching” over the mulberry bushes (1 Chron. 14:15). And whilst we follow where we are led, we are identified with our Angels to the extent that what is done to us is done to them. To defy the armies of Israel was thus to defy the armies of Heaven (1 Sam. 17:45). Thus the four faces of the Angel cherubim were reflected in the four standards of the camp of Israel; the people were intended to “keep in step with the Spirit”, following where they went, as they had done in the wilderness years. They were to walk “each one straight before him” (Is. 57:2 RVmg.), as each of the cherubim went straight ahead (Ez. 1:12). And we too are to follow where our Angel potentially enables us to go. The Angel went in to Jericho to take the city; and the Israelites went “straight” ahead, following the Angel, and thus took the city (Josh. 5:13,14; 6:20).

## CHAPTER 8: ANGELS AND MEN

### 8-1 OUR GUARDIAN ANGELS

The Angels being "ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" and the fact that "the Angel of the LORD encampeth around" those who fear God indicates that we do have at least one Angel in control of our lives personally. "Encampeth" means more 'to settle down'- the Angel does not rush into our lives at our frantic behest when we are in a sudden crisis, but has settled down around us for a long time in preparing that trial. How hard it is to accept this in practice! It would appear that all the people of Israel had a guardian Angel- this seems to be implied by Ex. 7:4 "(I will) bring forth Mine armies (of Angels), and My people the children of Israel", implying that there were two armies leaving Egypt- one of Angels, another of their charges. Thus we read in Ex. 12:41 "it came to pass that *all* the hosts of the LORD (a phrase often used about the Angels- but here concerning the Israelites too) went out from the land of Egypt". In the same way as the Angels were especially Israel's guardians in guiding them out of Egypt, it may be that the Angels minister in a guardian capacity to us especially in leading us out of the world to baptism (cp. the Red Sea). Heb. 1:14 offers tentative support in that the Angels are said to "minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation". At baptism we become heirs of salvation (Romans 4:13; Gal. 3:27-29)- those who "shall be heirs" are those as yet outside the promises of salvation. Confirmation of all this is provided by a careful reading of Dt. 33:2,3. This describes God coming "unto them" (Israel) "with ten thousands of saints"- i. e. Angels- and giving them "a fiery Law". The next verse records: "Yea, He loved the people; all His saints are in Thy Hand (Angelic language). . . every one shall receive of Thy words". Here the saints appear to be the people, thus showing that God's love to Israel was shown by each of them having an Angel (thousands of saints for thousands of people), who individually taught them the word of God, albeit all at the same time. The Angels in the court of Heaven are watching us, almost with baited breath. We are made a theatre unto the Angels, as if they are in the audience as we act out our lives (1 Cor. 4:9 RVmg.). David asked: "Let thy good spirit / Angel lead me in the plain country" (Ps. 143:10 RVmg.)- as if he realized that there were Angels / spirits of evil, as well as of good. Thus we too pray not to be lead into temptation- but rather, lead in the way of life. Angels do lead us in life, but they can lead us in either the downward or the upward spiral.

Abraham's servant said that he walked 'before the Lord' (Gen. 24:40), reflecting how he too saw that he was following an Angel. He therefore urges Bethuel: "Hinder me not, seeing the Lord hath prospered my way" (Gen. 24:56). He felt he was on a roll, being led onwards by the Angel- and he didn't want anything to interrupt that. The sensitive believer will perceive similar situations, time and again, as we seek to follow the leading of the Angel / cherubim before whom we walk. If we walk in step with the Angel, success is assured. Thus in Jud. 5:19,20 Israel's fighting is paralleled with the Heavens and stars [=Angels] fighting for them. The Lord of Hosts of Angels was working in tandem with the hosts of Israel. And it's the same for the new Israel. Heb. 12:22 speaks of how we, the hosts of the church, are paralleled with hosts of Angels: "...to innumerable hosts, the general assembly of angels, and the church of the firstborn" (RVmg.).

Insofar as Israel followed their Angel, they had success. We repeatedly read that the cities they conquered were 'sent up in flames' (Jud. 1:8; Josh. 6:24; 8:8; 11:11), surely because they were following the Angel who was himself as a devouring pillar of fire (Dt. 9:3). Yet quite naturally we balk at the height of our calling, to follow the Angel. The Angel assured Gideon that "Yahweh is with *you* [singular]"; and yet Gideon seems to have intentionally misunderstood this by arguing back that if Yahweh is really with *us*, then why are they suffering so much (Jud. 6:12,13). He flinched at the personal call of his Angel to action- just as we can, seeking instead to take refuge behind the community. Yet God Himself turns to Gideon and bids him "go in the strength of this one"- the Hebrew grammar referring to the Angel. Robert Boling comments: "The referent of "this one" is the Yahweh envoy [i.e. the Angel], presumably in his capacity as commander of Yahweh's army" (1). And this is the same call to us- to go in the strength of the Angel which goes before us, and seek to replicate Him, Heaven's plan for us, on this earth. And God backed up this call to Gideon to follow the Angel by saying he should go out in faith, "because Ehyeh is with you" (Jud. 6:16)- a direct quotation from the Angelic manifestation to Moses in Ex. 3:12. It's an interesting exercise to follow the parallels between the Angelic commander of Yahweh's armies, and Joshua as the human commander of them on earth. And one doesn't have to be a military leader in iron-age Israel to feel that same call to follow the Angel.

## Angels And Our Spirit

Angels being "Spirits" it is reasonable to suggest that they have particular control over the spirit/breath of life and character (the spirit can also refer to the mind) which is within each of their charges. The intensity of their interest in us is demonstrated by the fact that they personally, consciously keep us alive every moment- "the God, in whose hand thy breath (spirit) is" (Dan. 5:23) is our Angel. They are the source of Spirit, they are made spirits to sustain men (Ps. 104:3,4); and we have seen that the hand of God is Angelic language. When "the spirit returns to God" (Ecc. 12:7) is this a reference to our Angel physically returning to Heaven, having been with us on earth for much of our lives? Heb. 12:22,23 is a passage that seems to defy convincing exposition: "Ye are come unto. . . an innumerable company of Angels. . . to the spirits of just men made perfect". This would equate the spirits with the Angels who had been their guardians. Two other references in Hebrews to "spirits" are to Angels (Heb. 1:7,14). Other passages which seem to imply some consciousness after death would therefore refer to our guardian-Angel spirit; e. g. the souls under the altar crying to God after their death (Rev. 6:9,10). The implication could well be that we should ourselves endure, because we are now associated with the Angels who were the guardians of faithful men of the past who endured. The thought is obviously intended by the writer to encourage

us to hold on, knowing that as the guardian Angels stood by and perfected through trial the lives of the faithful in the past, so they will with us.

Similarly, Jesus will "bring with Him" from Heaven "them also which sleep in Jesus" (1 Thess. 4:14) when the Heavenly Jerusalem (the believers) comes down from Heaven at Christ's return (Rev. 21:1). However, we know that Jesus will bring the Angels with Him. Being the guardians of those who have died, in this sense those people come with Christ from Heaven, although of course literally and personally they cannot see they "sleep in Jesus" in the dust of the earth. Num. 16:19 describes "the common death of all men" as being "visited after the visitation of all men"; visiting is very much Angelic language, and thus indicates that an Angel consciously causes a man to die (by taking his breath away). Job came to recognize that every moment he existed was a trial to him, sent by his Satan-Angel (see Chapter 9). Thus he complained "Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? are not his days also like the days of an hireling?" (7:1). The Hebrew for "appointed time" is exactly the same as for "host" as in hosts of Angels. This neatly connects the idea that the exact duration of his life was controlled by God's Angel-host, as was every trial which he experienced. This would be the work of the "wonderful numberer" Angel of Dan. 8:13 who controls all time periods. Job 14:13,14 says the same: "O that Thou wouldest hide me in the grave. . . if a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come". His appointed time was his life; and the phrase is again the same word as "host", frequently used regarding Angels. "The ways of man are before the eyes (angels) of the Lord, and He pondereth all his goings" (Prov. 5:21). God pondering us (root 'to roll flat') is surely the language of limitation, and applicable to the Angels. Moses being gathered to his people by an Angel (Dt. 32:50) may also refer to his spirit/Angel returning to where the guardian Angels of his ancestors were. This solves the considerable difficulty of his ancestors being physically dead and decayed, and being buried in a different place from where Moses died.

The very close association of the Angels with their charges is shown by the Angels (the beasts and the elders, see Chapter 3) identifying themselves with their charges by saying that Christ had "redeemed us" out of every nation, and given them the hope of being king-priests in the future Kingdom (Rev. 5:9,10). Unto the Angels the world to come has not been put in subjection, nor do they belong to specific nations, but because they identify so closely with us they can speak in this way. Rev. 5:9 RVmg. speaks of the Angels praising God that He had purchased men unto Himself "and madest them to be [AV "made us"] . . . a kingdom . . . and they [AV "we"] shall reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:9,10). If the RV is correct, we have a picture here of our Angels thanking God in advance for the salvation which He has prepared for us their charges. The great Angel Michael is described as "your (Daniel's) prince" - i. e. Angel (Dan. 10:21). It would seem from this that our 'guardian' Angel changes according to what we are trying to achieve for God. Similarly the great Angel of the Exodus appears to have been Moses' personal guardian because Moses and the Angel were working for the same ends.

John saw under the altar "the souls of them that had been slain for the word of God" (Rev. 6:9). Seeing that there is no conscious survival of death, could this not refer to the guardian Angels of the former martyrs, crying out for the blood of their charges to be avenged? They are *so* closely identified with them that they can ask for "our blood" to be avenged. It's apparent enough that this is not the people themselves speaking - for they are dead. Surely then it refers to their Angels, who identify so strongly with them? Perhaps in the same way, Rev. 5:10 has guardian Angels thanking Jesus for making "us" king-priests to reign on earth. And when the believers are finally glorified, there is an ecstatic voice in Heaven, exalting that

the Lamb's wife has made herself ready (Rev. 19:6). Surely this must refer to the Angels rejoicing that their charges have finally made it to salvation? We, for whom they laboured perhaps for centuries, preparing our genetic pool [note how the Angels "prepared" Edom unto destruction long before it happened, Ez. 35:6], and the myriad of circumstances we would meet which were designed to bring us towards the Kingdom. No wonder they will be so ecstatic.

Notice the fascinating repetition within 1 Sam. 3:4-6,10,16: the Angel calls Samuel's name, and he replies "Here am I". Then Eli calls his name for the first time, and Samuel likewise responds "Here am I" - insisting that Eli has already been calling him, when in fact it had been the Angel. Clearly the Angel spoke to Samuel with the voice of Eli! Could this imply that that Angel was Eli's guardian? At very least it reflects how closely sensitive and understanding the Angels are to their charges on earth- they can imitate the exact intonation of their voices! By all means compare this with how the early believers were sure that what appeared to be Peter standing at the door was his Angel- they imagined that his guardian Angel looked exactly like him.

When Paul speaks of how he is "like those sent from God and standing in His presence" (2 Cor. 2:17), he's using language which the Jews applied to the Angels (2). I take this to suggest that Paul felt himself to be so at one with his guardian Angel that he can appropriate such Angelic language to himself.

## **Guardians**

We have seen that the Angels represent the face and presence of God; the fact they are physically present in our lives means that we should live in a sense of awe and humility at the nearness of God to us. Often this presence of the Angel is used as a means of motivating us to higher endeavour for the Lord. We have seen that Jacob conceived of his guardian Angel as "the fear of my father Isaac". This then is one of the ways we should fear God- to live in constant respect and awareness of the Angel in our lives. Paul uses the idea of charging brethren "before the elect Angels that thou do these things without preferring one before another" (1 Tim. 5:21), as if to say that the physical presence of the ecclesia's guardian Angels should inspire humility and obedience in the running of ecclesial affairs. Similarly the first time Moses struck the rock, he was standing in the presence of the Angel- "Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock" (Ex. 17:6), but it would seem that the second time Moses took the rod "from before the LORD (the Angel)" (Num. 20:9) and went alone to the rock; this lack of Angelic presence perhaps accounts for his rashness at this time.

Despite their limitations, we know that the work of our guardian is so over-ruled that they will never tempt us above what we are able to bear. The trials they chose for us are in accordance to the spiritual strength they know we possess- thus the Angel leading Israel through the wilderness "led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines; for God (the Angel leading them) said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt; but God led the people about through the way of the wilderness" (Ex. 13:17,18). So we see the great fear our guardian Angel has that we will return to Egypt (the flesh), and therefore He gives us trials which will prevent this, although at the time we feel like Israel that the trials are actually enough to make us want to return to the world.

However there is also the sense in which the Angels have limited knowledge about our spiritual capacities; "We are made a spectacle. . . to Angels" (1 Cor. 4:9) implies that the

Angels look on at the sufferings God has brought on us through our guardian Angel, and intensely scrutinize how we are acting as if earnestly watching a theatre play (so the word "spectacle" implies). Thus they are anxiously looking for the outcome of their trials on us, not knowing the final result. The fact that only at the judgement will the names of the worthy be confessed to the Angels by Jesus (Rev. 3:5) makes it appear that the ultimate outcome of our probations is not known to our guardians, hence their eagerness in our lives to see how we react. It is not until the harvest that they are sent out to root out of the Kingdom all things that offend.

This would explain why the Angels seem capable of over-estimating our spiritual strength- not least in the assuring of Israel that they would reach the land, and that He would never break the covenant. Later we see that these things were conditional on Israel's obedience. Jer. 2:19-21 further indicates the Angels' surprise at the weaknesses of their charges- "The Lord God of Hosts (Angels). . . broke thy yoke, and burst thy bands (in Egypt); and thou saidst, I will not transgress (Israel's covenant of obedience to the Angel). . . I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed (done by the Angel, Ps. 80:8; note the angelic context of Ps. 80): how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto Me?".

## **Community Care**

There appear to be guardian Angels not only for individuals but also for groups of believers- e. g. Israel, or an ecclesia. The stars of the ecclesias in Rev. 1:20 are defined as the Angels of the ecclesias. The seven lamps are the seven spirits / Angels of God before His throne (Rev. 4:5)- yet they are clearly representative of the 7 ecclesias on earth of which Revelation has earlier spoken. There seems no reason to doubt that literal Angels are being referred to, especially as elsewhere Angels are also likened to stars-e. g. Job 38:7; and the king of Babylon "exalted (himself) above the stars" (Is. 14:13); i. e. the Angels. Hence their punishing of him, and his subsequent recognition of the Angels' power. There seems no more symbolism attached to the phrase "Angels" in Rev. 1, seeing it is in the context of the candlestick parable being interpreted: "The seven stars are the Angels of the seven churches" (Rev. 1:20). The apparent rebuke of the Angels is because they are so closely associated with their charges. However, to some degree the words of Jesus in the letters may also apply personally to the Angels- e. g. "I will. . . remove thy candlestick" (2:5) may imply God would take away the Angel's charge from his care unless the Angel repented-i. e. changed his way of dealing with the ecclesia. The frequent calls to "repent" in the letters can easily apply to the Angels changing their mind or way of dealing with the ecclesia (see Chapter 7 for more examples of Angels repenting).

This would explain the confusing fact that part of the letters are addressed to an individual and other parts to the whole ecclesia. Thus 2:16: "I will come to you . . . and fight against them"; or "unto you (i. e. the Angel). . . I say and unto the rest" (2:24). Similarly the command to "strengthen the things (the faithful believers- strengthened spiritually by the Angel) which remain" (3:2) cannot apply to a whole ecclesia which has many apostate members.

The references to the Angel princes of Greece, Persia and Israel in Dan. 10:20,21 could suggest that each nation or people has an Angel representative in Heaven. Indeed Dt. 32:8 appears to say so: "[God] laid down the boundaries of every people according to the number of the sons of God", i.e. the Angels. It could even be possible that the strange reference in Eph. 6:12 to wicked spiritual beings in the Heavens refers to the Angelic representatives of

the evil nations and powers here on earth. Those righteous Angels represent those powers in the court of Heaven- without themselves personally being the least bit wicked or sinful.

## **Unappreciated Involvement**

It is so easy to under-estimate the amount of work the Angels are doing in our lives; Jacob recognized that his Angel physically fed him all his days, and that it was not just at the crises in his life that the Angel had been present; he describes the Angel as "ever redeeming me" (Gen. 48:15,16), as if the whole process of life is one continual redeeming process by the Angel, as He designs trials for us which will perfect us in order to gain redemption, as well as physically redeeming us more times than we realize. Nebuchadnezzar realized after his humbling that one of his reasons for pride had been due to him not realizing the extent to which the "great Babylon which (he) had built" (Dan. 4:30) and the Kingdom he had gained were in fact the total result of the work of the Angels; "He doeth according to His will in the army of Heaven (the Angels), and among the inhabitants of the earth" (v. 35). Israel too were humbled by the Angel in their lives: "The Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee. . He . . suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna. . that He might make thee know that. . by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live" (Dt. 8:2,3). It was the Angel that led them, and provided manna (Ps. 78:23-25), and who needed to "know what was in thine heart" (Dt. 8:2)- God Himself knows the heart of men (Ps. 44:21; Jer. 17:10). Israel came to rely on God's command to the Angels to provide manna for their life. "He commanded the clouds (Angels). . and rained down manna " (Ps. 78:23,24). These commands were the "every word of God" that Israel came to rely on for their food.

So recognizing the extent of Angelic work in our lives should in itself be a humbling experience, not least because if we recognize we are led by the Angels through life, we cannot plan ahead in our own strength. When Israel crossed the Red Sea, the pillar of cloud that led them went behind them so that the Egyptians could not see ahead of them to where the Israelites were, although the actual distance was not great at all (Ex. 14:19,20). This means that the pillar of cloud, which represented the Angel leading them, was too thick to see through, and so it follows that if the Egyptians could not see through it when it went in front of them, neither could the Israelites for most of the wilderness journey. And if our lives are truly led by the Angel, we should not expect to see the way ahead stretching in front of us, but just rest assured that we are actually being led.

Because of the great importance of Angels or a specific Angel in our lives, many of God's people seem to have conceived of God in terms of an Angel. Jacob (Gen. 48:15) and the patriarchs are clear examples. The extent of this is shown by Jacob vowing to his Angel at Bethel that "if God (the Angel) be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go. . . so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord (Yahweh) be my God" (Gen. 28:20,21). That the 'God' was definitely the Angel is shown by Gen. 31:11,13: "The Angel of God spake unto (Jacob). . . I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me". So was Jacob promising his Angel that if He protected him, "then shall Yahweh be my Elohim (Angel)"- i. e. 'then I will recognize Yahweh is behind you, and I will relate to Him as I do to you'?

## **Two Way Process**



It even appears that the Angels learn and increase their knowledge from watching our response to what knowledge they have already revealed to us. "Principalities and powers" is a phrase apposite to the Angels <sup>(3)</sup>, and it is clearly used regarding the Angels who gave the Law in Col 2:15. Eph. 3:9,10 makes the amazing statement: "To make all (both Angels and Christians- A. V. "Men" is not in the original) see what is the fellowship of the mystery (that both Jews and Gentiles can be saved), which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God (and therefore from the Angels too). . . to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be made known by the ecclesia the manifold wisdom of God". We share the heavenlies with the Angels- and in any case, why cannot 'the heavenlies' refer to literal Heaven also in a sense? As Christ was resurrected and ascended to literal Heaven, the Heavenlies of Eph. 1:20, so we are baptized and spiritually ascend to Heaven straight afterwards (Eph. 1:20). The principalities and powers to whom the mystery was made known cannot be the human rulers of the world- 1 Cor. 2:7,8,14 are conclusive on this score: "We speak the wisdom of God (cp. Eph. 1 "the manifold wisdom of God") in a mystery (cp. "the mystery. . which hath been hid" in Eph. 1). . . which none of the princes of this world knew (principalities and powers!). . . the natural man (i. e. the princes of this world) receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God (the "mystery" of v. 7), for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned". Because Angels control world rulers, "principalities and powers" can refer both to them and the Angels behind them.

### **Angelic Feeling Toward Us**

We have seen that the guardian Angels are emotional beings, capable of changing their plans in accordance with how moved they are by our prayers, and to an extent they fellowship the sufferings they bring upon us- so the Angel in the burning bush could tell Moses "I have seen the affliction of My people (for whom I am guardian). . and have heard their cry. . for I know their sorrows: and I am come down to deliver them. . and to bring them up out of that land (again, the work of the Angel)"( Ex. 3:7,8). The purpose of God in Christ is to "bring together in one all things, which are in Heaven (Angels) and which are on earth (us their charges )", and in the day of judgement we will perhaps be united in some special spiritual sense to our Angel who has redeemed us through this life.

### **Angels And Trials**

This is one of the most important aspects of the Angels' work which is most important to understand. The tribulations which come upon God's people are described in Daniel 8:13 as being under the control of "Palmoni" (A. V. mg. ), or the 'wonderful numberer' as that can be translated, implying that there is one powerful Angel who co-ordinates the timing of all things, and other Angels ask this Angel for information concerning the time periods worked out for the saints in their charge, as here in Daniel's case. Job seemed to have sensed very keenly the "appointed time" for his trials to end and for his "change" of nature to occur. We have seen that the phrase "appointed time" is the same word as "host" used regarding the Angels. But like Job, because we can't see the Angel physically it's easy to get bitter about the trials brought upon us by them, as Balaam got bitter with the ass until he physically saw the Angel causing the trial (Num. 22:23).

Because the Angels are of limited knowledge, it seems that they bring some trials upon us in order to find out more about us- e. g. the Angel said to Abraham when He saw he was prepared to offer Isaac "Now I know that thou fearest God" (Gen. 22:12). This is language of

limitation- God Himself knows all things, but the Angel wanted to test Abraham. Indeed, the apocryphal *Book Of Jubilees* claims in so many words that it was an Angel called Mastema who was responsible for the idea of testing Abraham in order to determine his level of obedience.

In the same way it has been suggested that Job's satan was an Angel wanting to find out more about Job, not understanding how a man with all the blessings Job had could sincerely worship God. God therefore gave this Angel the power needed to try Job to see whether this was the case. The idea of an Angel being called a satan (adversary) is familiar to us in Num. 22:22 where the Angel stood in the way of Balaam for an adversary. The fact the Angel brought the trials would explain why all through the book the trials are credited to God. Satan coming "from going to and fro in the earth" (Job 1:7) would connect with the descriptions of the Angels being God's eyes going to and fro in the earth (Zech. 1:11). Job 1:16 describing God sending a flame of fire to minister one of the trials is understood in the Angel context when one recalls that He "makes His ministers a flaming fire" (Ps. 104:4). The series of "messengers" who come to Job announcing the trials (Job 1:14) may possibly also be Angels. Job associates his trials with God's eyes being upon him (e. g. Job 7:8) and we have seen that the eyes of God seems to be a synonym for the Angels.

### **"To know. . . whether"**

Deut 8:2,3 is on the same theme: "Thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee (the Angel did this) these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments or no. And He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna. . ."; the Angel gave them trials in order to find out what was in their heart. God "knoweth the secrets of the heart" (Ps. 44:21); "I the LORD search the heart" (Jer. 17:10), and therefore He does not have to tempt us -which James 1 says He Himself doesn't anyway- in order to know what is in our hearts. But His Angels do. We see exactly the same with Hezekiah when the ambassadors from Babylon came to see what was in his house- "God (his Angel) left him, to try him, that He might know all that was in his heart" (2 Chron. 32:31). Perhaps this means that the Angel physically left him, which would imply that the contents of our heart tends to be conditioned by our sense of the presence of the Angel, or of God's near presence, and God wants to see what our heart is really like without our sensing of His presence being immediately close to us. This may have been why the Angel left Jesus on the cross, so that His spiritual mind would be fully manifested to God and the Angels. The Angel with Israel in the wilderness initially thought "Surely they are my people, children that will not lie" (Is. 63:8)- but found Himself mistaken to some extent after testing them. The fact an Angel was called 'satan' in Num. 22 and in Job's case means we can maybe have another look at Luke 22:31, where Jesus tells the disciples "satan hath desired to have you (lit. : 'demanded you for trial') that he may sift you as wheat". Wheat is normally a symbol of the righteous after a process of tribulation or judgement. The satan here could be an Angel, demanding them for trial from God, as Job's satan Angel did.

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### **Notes**

(1) See Robert Boling, *The Anchor Bible: Judges* (New York: Doubleday, 1975) p. 131 for a discussion of the grammar and translation here.

(2) H.A. Kelly, *Satan: A Biography* (Cambridge: C.U.P., 2006) p. 62.

(3) See H. A. Whittaker *Bible Studies* p. 375 (Cannock: Biblia, 1987) for detail on this.

## 8-2 "Seducing spirits"?

The following evidence seems to suggest that the Angels can give those who are closing their minds to the clear truth of the word the temptation to believe wrong things, in a similar way to which God through the Angels hardened Pharaoh's heart as a result of his own already hardened heart. Ezekiel 14:9 clearly states "If the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the LORD hath deceived that prophet". Jeremiah says that "O LORD Thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived (mg. 'enticed')" (Jer. 20:7); although Jeremiah was not actually deceived in the prophecy he was given, it seems that he sensed there was a possibility that he had been, which is backed up by the Ezekiel reference. In the same way we saw in 1 Kings 22:22 that the Angels made the false prophets of Ahab to prophesy falsely. This fact is picked up in the New Testament by Paul saying it was possible for an Angel from Heaven to preach a wrong Gospel to them (Gal. 1:8). If it was fundamentally impossible for an Angel to do this, why does Paul say it? It may even be that "be not soon shaken in mind. . . neither by Spirit, nor by word, nor by letter. . ." (2 Thess. 2:2) refers to the possibility of an Angel-Spirit giving the temptation to believe that the day of Christ would come without the "falling away" (see context). And are the "seducing spirits" of 1 Tim. 4:1 Angels too, that God has "made spirits" (Ps. 104) like this in order to try us? The strong delusion of 2 Thess. 2:11 which God would send was sent by Him- i. e. by His Angels through whom He does all things. Isaiah 19:13,14 says that the princes of Zoan were become fools because of the "perverse spirit" the LORD had mingled in their hearts- presumably through the work of His Angels. So we conclude that through the work of the Angels God can work directly on mens' hearts, and that sometimes he does send an "evil spirit" (an "Angel of evil"?) on us, like He did to Saul, which temptations we must spiritually battle against to overcome.

### Ezekiel 20

Ezekiel 20 provides another example of 'seducing spirits'. The whole chapter is full of references to the Angel that cared for Israel:

v. 8 "they rebelled against Me" -cp. Is. 63:10, where Israel are said to have rebelled against the Holy Spirit Angel.

v. 10 "I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness"- this was all done by the Angel who promised to do so to Moses in the burning bush.

v. 11 "I gave them My statutes, and shewed them My judgements. . . I gave them My sabbaths"- these commands were given by the Angel on Sinai.

v. 13,14 "Then I said, I would pour out My fury upon them in the wilderness, to consume them"- such changing of mind must refer to the Angel rather than to God Himself (Cp. the Angel telling Moses that He would no longer go up with Israel, and then deciding to go).

v. 17 "Mine eye (Angel) spared them from destroying them. The eye or Angel of God spared Israel from a destroying Angel ("the destroyer" of 1 Cor. 10:10).

v. 22 "I withdrew Mine Hand"- an Angelic phrase. Because of their continued disobedience, the Angel "Therefore. . . gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgements whereby they should not live; and I polluted them in their own gifts, in that they caused to pass through the fire all that openeth the womb, that I might make them desolate, to the end that they might know that I am the Lord" (v. 25,26). These "statutes that were not good, and judgements whereby they should not live" were not the actual laws which comprised the Law of Moses. By contrast it is emphasized that if a man kept those judgements, "he shall even live in them" (v. 13)- cp. "judgements whereby they should not live". "The law is holy and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Rom. 7:12). Therefore the language of Ez. 20:25 cannot apply to the actual Law of Moses. It must therefore apply to the traditions and 'Halacah' built up by the rabbis which were considered by the Jews to be equivalent in value to the Law given to Moses initially. It was these human commands "that were not good" (cp. "holy, just and good"), and which led to sacrifices being unacceptable to God. These commands were invented by men- and yet in a sense the Angel "gave them" these commands by operating on the hearts of men, working through the perverse thinking of men to create them- although ultimately to the end that the Jews "might know (better and more meaningfully) that I am the Lord" (i. e. the true nature of God).

If the Comforter was an Angel (see Chapter 13), then Jn. 16:13 slots into all this: "The Comforter. . . the spirit (Angel) of truth"- implying that there can be a Spirit-Angel- of error. It is probably going too far to quote 1 Jn. 4:1,2,6 here, but there may be some connection, bearing in mind that there do seem to be two distinct groups of Angels of good and evil (see 'Angels co-operating' in Chapter 4). "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit (person led by that Angel?) that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: but every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God; and this is that spirit of Antichrist, whereof ye have heard (in Gal. 1:8, 1 Tim. 4:1, 2 Thess. 2:11 etc. ) that it should come. . . hereby know we the spirit (Angel Comforter) of Truth (surely alluding to the Comforter "spirit of truth" in Jn. 16:13? [\(2\)](#)), and the Spirit of error", i. e. those led by an Angel into error. This leads us on to consider the place of the Angels and the Word of God.

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### Note

(2) Note the many other links between John's Gospel and epistles.

## 8-3 Angels and the Word of God

We have seen that 1 Kings 22 describes Angels being "sent out" to operationalize God's word / will. Yet we also read of God's word being sent out; He sent a word [of judgment] against Jacob (Is. 9:7); God sent His word and delivered them (Ps. 107:20). Angels were sent out to do those things; yet they are so closely identified with God's word, because they exist to fulfil it. In this sense too, the Lord Jesus was "the word made flesh"; and we likewise should seek to be. In Jer. 23:18,22 we find prophets standing in the "council of the Lord" (RV) to receive His word; and yet this sounds very much like Angels standing in the court of Heaven to receive God's word of command. Likewise note the parallel between an Angel sitting under an oak and a prophetess sitting under an oak (Jud. 4:5 RVmg.; 6:11). "The God of the spirits [Angels] of the prophets sent his Angel" to the prophet John (Rev. 22:6 RV); implying that as God had sent His Angel-Spirits to inspire the prophets, so now He did to John. Ps. 147:15,18 speak of the sending out of God's word to melt snow and send rain; this

must surely refer to the Angels being sent out from the court of Heaven to do these things. The way the "watcher and holy one" came down from Heaven is paralleled with the word of Divine command likewise coming down from Heaven (Dan. 4:23,31). The universe is not just ticking away on clockwork; the Angels are actively being sent out from Heaven to perform what may appear the most mundane and repetitious of things. Thus God sends out His Angels; He sends out His word; and He also sent out His prophets (Haggai- Hag. 1:12; Ezekiel- Ez. 3:5,6). God rose up and sent out His prophets (2 Kings 17:13; Jer. 7:25 and many others). He is described as doing this because those prophets likewise identified with the word and became part of their own message. So when God asks Isaiah whom He should send out, in a scene reminiscent of the Angelic court of Heaven in 1 Kings 22, Isaiah says "Send me" (Is. 6:8). He wanted to be part of God's way and word. And with us too, we are all in that sense 'apostles', sent ones, in that the word we preach must be identified with us personally. For the Lord's parable speaks of how the Father sends out His servants- us- to invite men and women in to the supper of His Kingdom (Mt. 22:14).

## **Watchers Of The Skies**

The point has been made that the Angels watch over our response to the Word, as they do all aspects of our spiritual development. I here summarize the arguments:

Jeremiah 1:11,12 tells us that the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah saying "What seest Thou? And I said I see a rod of an almond tree. Then said the LORD unto me, Thou hast well seen; for I will hasten My word to perform it". The word translated 'hasten' means to watch over, and is very similar to the word for 'almond'. Almonds are associated with God's eyes; the bowls of the lampstands were almonds (Ex. 25:33,34). Zech. 4:2 talks about these almond bowls on the candlestick, and v. 10 interprets them as the "eyes of the LORD which run to and fro through the whole earth". 2 Chron. 16:9 talks about the Angels in the same way; "the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him". Similarly in Rev. 4:5 the lamps in the bowls of almond are equated with the "seven spirits (or Angels) of God". Rev. 5:6 equates the seven eyes with the seven spirits. Thus the almond rod which Jeremiah saw represented God's eyes or Angels who would watch over the word of God which Jeremiah was to speak to perform it.

Relating this idea to our guardian Angel, it seems not unreasonable to suggest that they who were used to inspire men with the word of God in the first place and who now watch over it's fulfilment in the world today, will especially look on us to see if that word is going to achieve it's main purpose of making us spiritual people, and that conversely they punish us if we disobey that word. Thus Daniel, who was relatively attune to the Angelic ways of working, said (Dan. 9:14) "Therefore hath the LORD (the Angel?) watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us. . for we obeyed not His voice", alluding back to God's command concerning the Angel which was to look after Israel "If thou shalt indeed obey His voice, and do all that I speak. . " (Ex. 23:22). Dan. 4:13,17 describe the Angels as watchers -i. e. watching over the execution of the word, and in order to fulfil it they (the watcher Angels) drove Nebuchadnezzar from men (v. 25) and they "commanded to leave the stumps of the tree" (v. 26).

## **Angels And Inspiration**

There seems to be a strong implication that the Angels were involved with writing the Bible through their inspiration of men. So close is the connection between the word of God and of Angels that "the sound of the (Angel) cherubim. . . was heard . . . as the voice of the Almighty God when He speaketh" (Ez. 10:5). Zechariah stresses that the prophecies of the restoration were given by an Angel (1:9-14; 4:1,5; 5:5,10; 6:4,5; see 'Angels and the Restoration' for commentary on these). The true prophet is one who "has stood in the council of the Lord to perceive and hear His word" (Jer. 23:18,22); and yet these are exactly the words used of how the Angels stand in the council of Heaven and hear Yahweh's word (1 Kings 22; Ps. 103:18-22). The Angels are therefore reflective of the situation on earth; as they stood before the Father's throne to hear the word in the council of Heaven, they were representative of the prophet on earth whom they were used to inspire. As the prophets were gathered together before the thrones of the Kings of Israel and Judah, they were reflecting how the Angels in Heaven were assembled before the throne of Yahweh, on whose throne the human kings were ruling (1 Kings 22:10). The lying spirit / Angel which appeared before Yahweh's throne would therefore have been reflected in Micaiah (:15). What we have here is the court of Heaven being reflected in the situation upon earth, seeing that each of the prophets was represented by an Angel in Heaven. There's another example of this in Acts 10:3,22,25: an Angel 'comes in' to Cornelius and gives him hope of salvation, and then Peter 'comes in' to Cornelius and explains that hope in more concrete terms. Peter was acting out what his guardian Angel had prepared for him to do, just as Israel had to follow the leading of the guiding Angel in the wilderness. When men speak hard words against us, the situation on earth is somehow mirrored in the court of Heaven- Ps. 64:3,7 speak of how *men* "aim their arrows, even bitter words"; and God responds by shooting arrows from His Heavenly control room.

We have mentioned that Rev. 4:5 equates the lamps of fire with the spirits. Ps. 104:4 likens the Angels to Spirits. The light which the lamps emitted maybe symbolizes the Word, a light to our path. The fact that the Law of Moses (and the whole Pentateuch? Consider Acts 7:38,53; Gal. 3:19; Heb. 2:2) was given by Angels is stressed by Paul- e. g. it was "the word spoken by Angels" (Heb. 2:2; see Acts 7:38 too). That the Angels ministered the Word in the past is picked up by Paul in 2 Cor. 3 when he says that because we have taken over the role of the Angels in this respect, we should teach the word boldly: "Who hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter but of the spirit. . . seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech" (v. 6,12). The context refers to our preaching, that it should not be with the "enticing words of man's wisdom". Thus the Angel told John that he was of "thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep (lit. :guard, preserve from corruption) the sayings of this book" (Rev. 22:9). This shows that the Angel was a prophet. This title does not only mean one who foretells future events, but in Biblical usage refers more to one who ministers the word of God under inspiration; the Angel was therefore responsible for inspiring the Bible like the prophets (Old and New Testament ones) were. An Angel told Elijah to tell the messengers of Ahaziah that he was displeased that Ahaziah had enquired of Baalzebub: "Is there not a God in Israel?". This not only shows direct Angelic inspiration of the prophet Elijah, but the phrase "God in Israel" suggests the Angelic title 'The God of Israel', as if to say "There is the Angel of Israel giving the inspired word; why seek to a pagan god?". Note too how the Lord describes the Angels as "servants" (Mt. 22:13), using the common description of the prophets as Jehovah's servants- as if He saw a close connection between Angels and prophets.

David also implies that his inspiration was directly from an Angel: "The God of Jacob. . . the Spirit of the Lord spake by me. . . the God of Israel said. . . the Rock of Israel spake to me" (2

Sam. 23:1-3). These four descriptions of God are all Angelic phrases. The Angel which dwelt over the ark between the cherubim, with their Angelic connections, was firmly linked with "the ark of the testimony" (the word of God). "I (the Angel) will meet with thee. . . from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment" (Ex. 25:22). Amos 2 speaks as if the Angel raised up the prophets (cp. the Angel's words in Zech. 1:1-8; see Chapter 11): "I destroyed the Amorite before them (the work of the Angel-hornet). . . I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and led you forty years through the wilderness (all the work of the Angel). . . I raised up your sons for prophets" (v. 9-11)- another example of Angelic involvement in a man's calling and spirituality.

### **"The word spoken by Angels"**

Another link between Angels and the spirit of prophecy is to be found in the way Nebuchadnezzar perceived that his dream had been given him by the Angelic "holy ones" (Dan. 4:13,17), and therefore he asks the prophet Daniel to interpret it for him because he knew that "the spirit of the holy gods is in thee" (Dan. 4:18). Note how the Angels have a special role in performing the miracle of preserving God's word intact. This latter work of the Angels is maybe referred to in Prov. 22:12 "The eyes (Angels) of the Lord preserve knowledge", which is now concentrated in the form of the written word. Psalm 68:11 shows how the Angels receive Words from God, which they obey by putting into practice (cp. Ps. 103:20,21 "ye ministers of His. . . hearkening unto the voice of His word"); but they sometimes, as we have seen, cause men to be inspired by those words. Ps. 68 comments on the Exodus from Egypt. "The Lord gave the word; great was the company (the 'host'- a word often used about the Angels) of them that published it". This "great company" is defined in v. 17 as "the chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels". The association between the Angels and the prophesied word perhaps accounts for "be not forgetful to entertain strangers (i. e. the itinerant spirit gifted prophets, cp. 2 Jn. 10): for thereby some have entertained Angles unawares" (Heb. 13:2). A clearer equation of prophets and Angels is found by comparing 1 Pet. 1:10 and 12: "Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently. . . which things the Angels (also) desire to look into", referring to the Cherubim Angels peering down intently into the blood on the mercy seat, the "salvation" which the prophets searched after. In the parable of redemption contained in getting a wife for Isaac, the servant went to seek our Rebecca, representing the prophets going to take us out of the world to begin a wilderness journey to our new husband. He must surely represent the word taking us out of the world; yet he was led by an Angel (Gen. 24:7), suggesting the Angels work through the word they inspire to bring us out of the world. Other passages relevant to this theme of Angels giving the Word of God are Ex. 23:22; Num. 22:35; 23:17; 24:1,2; Heb. 2:2.

We are possibly intended to equate the word of God and the Angels in Gen. 15:1,4,5: "The word of the Lord came unto Abraham in a vision. . . and behold the word of the Lord came unto him. . . and He (definitely the Angel) brought him forth abroad". The association between Angels and inspiring men through visions is made explicit in Num. 12:5-8: "The Lord came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle (this is clearly the Angel). . . and He said. . . If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord (the Angel) will make Myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses. . . with him will I speak mouth to mouth (only an Angel could do this), even apparently, and not in dark speeches" (i. e. I won't give him the word of God by visions and dreams as I usually do to inspire men, but I will give him the word of God by direct speaking



to him). Similarly Balaam could only go to Moab if he spoke the Angel's words (Num. 22:35), but he later calls these the "words of God. . . the vision of the Almighty" (Num. 24:4). Note how an Angel is stressed as the source of Revelation in the Acts of the Apostles: 5:19; 8:26; 10:3,7,22; 11:13; 12:7-11; 27:23; whilst the Spirit is said to do the same in Acts 8:29,39; 10:19; 11:12,28; 16:7; 21:4, suggesting that Angels spiritually guided men and revealed God's will and word to them.

The limitations of the Angels should not make us doubt the infallibility and fundamental truth of the word they inspired. Ultimately God was behind the work of inspiration executed by His Angels. God describes the word which He inspires as coming into His mind (Jer. 19:5)- as if it occurs to Him, and then He inspires men with it. The Word being with God in the beginning and being fundamentally the mind of God Himself (Jn. 1:1,2; Heb. 11:1-3), such language of limitation must refer to the Angels. Things come into their mind or are revealed to them, which they then inspired men to write. The context in Jer. 19:3 is Angelic- "The Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel". It is a fundamental truth that the entire Bible is infallibly inspired, notwithstanding the means through which that inspiration worked. However, it may be that some parts of Scripture are extremely intensely inspired, and this would be understandable if Angels are associated with inspiration, and input their feelings too in some way; thus "The Spirit (Angel?) speaketh expressly. . ." (1 Tim. 4:1), implying that Paul felt under especially intense inspiration in saying this. There are other examples of this: "The Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand" (an Angelic phrase; Is. 8:11). Why say this if Isaiah did not feel extraordinarily inspired to say this? Or Is. 5:9: "In mine ears said the Lord of Hosts (Angels). . .".

The nature of God's word must be borne in mind when considering how the Angels fulfil it. We have seen in Chapter 7 that the flood was the result of God's commands to the Angels. "But the heavens and earth which are now by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgement" (2 Peter 3:7). Thus when God spoke to the Angels about the flood, His commandments then also included details of the judgements at the second coming. Thus there may be a degree to which the Angels have to interpret God's word first before acting upon it, or where they can only fulfil some aspects of it at any one time.

## **Pre-existent Word?**

It may even be that the Bible or the "whole counsel of God" existed in written form in Heaven before it was revealed to men. The fact that there is a literal book of life with writing in it indicates that the Angels do use their capacity to read; and will we too in some form in the Kingdom? Dan. 10:21 is the key passage on this: "I (the Angel) will shew thee that which is noted in the Scripture of Truth: and there is none that holdeth with Me in these things but Michael your prince". In passing, does this imply that the only other Angel apart from Gabriel who had successfully "earnestly desired to look into" these things and understood was Michael, the Angel for Israel? This passage would seem to necessitate some written record in Heaven capable of interpretation by the Angels, the meaning of which was being given to Daniel- hence our great privilege, along with him, in being granted at least a partial understanding of these things.

Gabriel goes on to say "now will I shew you the truth" (Dan. 11:2). "Thy word is truth" (John 17:17); does this again indicate that the actual Bible was in written form in Heaven before revelation to men? So the Angels hear God's word in Heaven, and sometimes inspire men to write some of these words down. In Rev. 1:1 it says that the Revelation came from Jesus



originally (and from God before that), but was sent to us and signified by the Angel. Does it follow that the Angel was responsible for working out the symbology, the signifying (putting into sign language) of the book, under the infallible guidance of God and Jesus? If so, we can better understand how the Angels eagerly watch over our attempts to understand the word, and are in a position, as Gabriel with Daniel, to step in and assist us in our understanding of it- not least through the trials of life which they bring opening our eyes to it (cp. Job 36:15). However, we know that not all the Angels have this ability, but rather earnestly look into the things contained in the word; or alternatively, they are used by God to work out the symbology which they themselves do not fully understand.

## 8-4 Angelic Help

We will see in Chapter 12 that the Angels were responsible for the spiritual strengthening of our Lord against temptation, and they therefore do the same for us, whose nature He shared. One of the ways the Angels spiritually strengthen us is by revealing the understanding of God's word to us, as they initially inspired it. The following gently hint this way:

- "Gabriel. . . being caused to fly swiftly. . . informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding" in the word of God He had previously revealed to him (Dan. 9:21,22). The Angel flying swiftly should be compared with the passages which talk about running swiftly in order to understand and obey God's word (Hab. 2:2; Amos 8:11,12; Ps. 147:15; Dan. 12:4; 2 Thess. 3:1). Dan. 8:18 also describes how the Angel gave Daniel spiritual revelation.

- Reflecting on the Angel leading Israel in the pillar of fire, Nehemiah reflects "Thou (the Angel) gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not thy manna from their mouth" (Neh. 9:20). In passing, the association of an Angel with God's "good spirit" suggests that the good and evil spirits that troubled Saul were actually Angelically-controlled dispositions of mind, co-ordinated by two different Angels. This giving of a new heart to Saul by the Angel (1 Sam. 10:9) appears to be the basis of Jer. 31:33, where God says He will make a new Covenant with them (remember it was an Angel who made the Old Covenant also), when He "will put My Law in their inward parts. . . and will be their God" . "The God of Israel' is an Angelic title (see Chapter 2). This giving a new heart to Israel described here and in Jer. 32:39 and Ez. 36:26 appears to be over and above Israel's personal spirituality, although as with the case of Saul it will probably be a vast magnification of some small spiritual effort made of their own freewill, as Saul must surely have had. Yet these words are quoted in the New Testament about God doing this to our hearts now (Heb. 8:10); inviting us to read the other passages in the New Testament concerning the Spirit creating a new mind or creation in us as referring to the Angel magnifying and developing the initial freewill effort that we make to be spiritual. In this light consider Acts 15:8,9; 2 Cor. 3:3; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 3:14-20. The Angels being so strongly associated with the word of God invites us to think that they act in large measure through the word in effecting this 'magnification' of our own effort.

- Rabshakeh retreated from Jerusalem because God "put a spirit in him" (Is. 37:7 RV). The AV has: "I will send a blast / spirit upon him". Was it not that the Angel who later destroyed him came upon him and put a spirit / disposition of mind within him that made him want to retreat?

- "For God giveth to a man that is good in His sight (the Angels are God's eyes) wisdom, and knowledge, and joy" (Ecc. 2:26).

- "There is a spirit (capacity to spiritually understand, in the context in which Elihu is speaking) in man; and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding" (Job 32:8). Does in-spirit-ation have something to do with God's Spirit-Angel (Ps. 104:3,4) reviving this spiritual capacity in man?

- Perhaps the Satan which moved David to number Israel was a Satan-Angel (2 Sam. 24:1), acting directly on David's heart to bring about a trial for both David and Israel? This is one of the many indications that the numbering of the people was not David's sin. And perhaps it was a Satan-Angel that stood at Judas' right hand (i. e. to influence him), confirming him in the way he had chosen to go, as God hardened Pharaoh's already hard heart (Ps. 109:6,7).

The passages which talk about God's face shining upon men refer primarily to the Angel in the Most Holy shining forth in blessing upon men. Ps. 119:135 has the same idea: "Make Thy face to shine upon Thy servant; and teach me Thy statutes". Here the reference to the Angel is paralleled with having the understanding opened to the Word, implying that the Angels (especially our guardian who knows our needs so much?) open our eyes to the word (Ps. 119:18).

## **The Work Of The Spirit**

The knotty problem of the Holy Spirit starts to be resolved if we accept that God does all things by His Spirit, and that the Angels use the Spirit of God to help us understand the word, e. g. through the word itself or through bringing trials into our lives. "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law" (Ps. 119:18) may be alluding to the Angel opening Hagar's eyes to see a well of water (cp. the word) in the desert (Gen. 21:19). Indeed, the "Holy Spirit" may refer to a specific Angel set apart for this purpose of strengthening us so that we might reach the Kingdom, like the wilderness Angel provided Israel with the manna (= the word of God, so Jesus reasons in Jn. 6) and every type of sustenance in order that they should get through the wilderness to the promised land. In the same way, the Holy Spirit is associated with our calling and choosing. The Angel was associated with the sealing of the believers (Rev. 7:2,3). We must not "grieve the Holy Spirit of God (cp. how Israel vexed the Holy Spirit Angel-Is. 63:10) whereby ye are sealed". Eph. 4:30 also links this grieving the Holy Spirit (referring to the Holy Spirit Angel of Is. 63:10) and abusing God's sealing of us, as if by the unspiritual behaviour Paul is speaking of in Eph. 4 we will truly grieve or sadden our Angel who has sealed us.

"The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His" (2 Tim. 2:19). Thus the Angelic Holy Spirit sealing is associated with God's foreknowledge. "Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His son (in spiritual attributes). . . whom He did predestinate, them He also called. . . justified. . . glorified. . . if God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:29-31). Our being known by God at the beginning, our predestination, our calling and final glorification are all things which are achieved by the Holy Spirit sealing Angel. The sealing is also associated with the circumcision of the heart (mind) in Rom. 4:11, and with believing the word (Jn. 3:33) and believing in Christ (1 Jn. 5:10). All these things are ultimately the result of our freewill. Further connection between the seal and the word is found in the following comparison:

<i>Deuteronomy 11:18</i>	<i>Song 8:6</i>
"Lay up these words in your heart	"Set me (the bridegroom, Jesus, the Word) as a
. . . and bind them for a sign upon (thee)"	seal upon thine heart"
"Bind (these words) for a sign upon your hand".	"A seal upon thine arm"

Because being sealed is an individual process (Jn. 3:33 "he has set to his seal. . . "), it would be fitting if our guardian angel was heavily involved in this work, revealing those things to us from the word which will help us circumcise our mind and overcome our personal weaknesses, in response to our desire for those things.

## CHAPTER 9: ANGELS AND JOB

It was suggested earlier that Job's satan was an Angel. If it refers to a human satan then there is the problem of him never being mentioned again in the book. If it is an Angel seeking to understand the basis of Job's spirituality, then the many references to God bringing the trials fall into place. If we are not intended to see the satan here as an Angel then the use of such clearly Angelic language in Job is confusing. The fundamentally Angelic basis of the book of Job perhaps provides one of the keys to understanding this difficult book. It is hoped that the following notes will give further insight into both Job and the ways of God. Firstly, additional evidence that the satan was an Angel.

Job's Satan Angel says that he has come from roaming up and down the land. There is a play on words here, for the Hebrew words *shatan* [satan] and *shut* [to roam] sound similar. The kings of Persia had a system of intelligence offices who likewise roamed the land, looking for signs of disloyalty amongst the people. This idea would've been familiar to the Old Testament readers of Job. And so the point was, that in *God's Kingdom*, there's an equivalent- the Angels roam around likewise, knowing and seeing all<sup>(1)</sup>.

So often, Job speaks of his desire to present his case in God's court, to prepare his defence, to legally answer false accusations. Consider Job 13:3, 19, 22; 19:28,29; 23:2-7; 31:35-37 in Stephen Mitchell's excellent and painstaking translation: "I want to speak before God, to present my case in God's court... I have prepared my defense, and I know that I am right... Accuse me- I will respond... Someday my witness would come; my avenger would read those words. He would plead for me in God's court, he would stand up and vindicate my name... If only I knew where to meet him and could find my way to his court. I would argue my case before him... I would counter all his arguments and disprove his accusations. Would he try to overpower me or refuse to hear my defense? Surely he would listen to reason; I would surely win my case... if only God would hear me, state his case against me, let me read his indictment".

Note that Job sees God as his adversary, his 'satan'. And yet the book begins with the court of Heaven, where 'satan' is Job's adversary. God and the 'satan' are clearly paralleled in Job's thinking. There is every reason therefore to understand the satan as one of God's Angels, in some ways representing God. And the final meeting with the adversary in court

which Job so longed for is to be found at the end of the book- when God Himself appears in the whirlwind and meets with Job, condemning him, causing him to realize the weakness of his case, and then justifying him with a grace amazing in its depth and generosity.

## **A satan-Angel**

In Job 2:5 satan asks God: "Put forth Thine hand". The hand of God is an Angelic phrase. God agrees- "he is in thine hand" (v. 6). Thus satan's hand is God's hand, which is an Angel. Job seems to emphasize the place of God's hand in bringing his trials- 2:5,6,10; 6:9; 10:7; 13:21; 19:21; 27:11 AVmg; 28:9. Job in 12:9 feels that in the same way as God's hand had created the natural creation- and the Angels did this- so that same Angelic hand was upon him for evil. "By His Spirit (God makes His Angels spirits) He hath garnished the Heavens; His hand hath formed the crooked serpent" (26:13). Thus Job associates God's Spirit with His hand, which is satan's hand. It seems far more fitting that this hand and spirit should be Angelic rather than human. Again, it was Angelic work that formed the Heavens. Job recognized that his trials came from the hand of God, but knew that His hand would not kill him- "with Thy strong hand Thou opposeth Thyself against me. . . howbeit He will not stretch out His hand to (bring me to) the grave" (30:21,24). This was exactly the brief given to satan- to try Job, but "preserve his life". The hand of God creating evil (2:10,11) must surely refer to God's "Angels of evil" (Ps. 78:49) rather than to man- Cyrus had to be taught that no one except God (including human satans!) created evil (Is. 45:5-7). Job sees God as "mine adversary / enemy" (Job 16:9 RV); he understood God to be the satan. Yet it is almost certain that the believers in patriarchal times saw God as manifested in Angels.

Job is full of 'language of limitation'- e. g. "surely now He (God) would awake for thee. . ." (8:6); "Thou enquirest after mine iniquity, and searchest after my sin. . . remember, I beseech Thee, that Thou hast made me as the clay" (10:6,9). Job being set in patriarchal times with the relatively open appearance of the Angels, it is to be expected that there should be a conception of God in terms of Angels by Job and his friends.

"Hast thou considered (lit. 'set your heart upon') My servant Job. . . ?" (2:3) God asked satan initially. Later Job complains to God "what is man, that Thou dost magnify him? and that Thou shouldest set Thy heart upon him? (lit. 'consider him')" (7:17). Thus Job sees God- whom he probably conceived of as an Angel- as considering him, whilst we are told earlier that satan was told to do this. A human satan considering Job would not in itself have brought the trials, and Job would not have complained so bitterly about a human being considering him. An Angelic satan setting his heart upon Job would account for this 'considering' alone leading to the trials. If it is argued that it is a human satan who set his heart on Job here in Job 7, then the context is hard, though not impossible, to square: "Thou dost magnify man. . . Thou preserver of men" (v. 20,21). There is some hint of physical movement by 'God' which would seem applicable to the Angel too: "Thou shouldest visit him. . . depart from me. . . let me alone" (v. 18,19).

"He shall deliver thee in six troubles; yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee" (5:19). Ps. 91:10 seems to look back to this: "There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling". Ps. 91 is Moses' encouragement to Joshua that the destroying Angel in the wilderness would not harm him, but he would be protected by the Angels who would "keep thee in all thy ways" (v. 11). Thus Moses may have seen Job 5:19 to be talking about evil brought by Angels of evil (Ps. 78:49 shows his appreciation of these)- i. e. Job's satan Angel who brought the trials.

And most conclusively, the "sons of God" of 1:6 are interpreted as Angels in 38:7.

## Further Insights

With this understanding of the book of Job, we can learn a lot from it about man's relationship with God as manifested through the Angels:

-2:4 "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life". 'Skin for skin' is a human expression- maybe based on trading one animal skin for another. Is this inspiration's way of expressing in human language the satan Angel's conversation with God, or do Angels use such human metaphors in their talking to God? We and other believers in the Biblical record tend to- so why not Angels too? The mighty Angel of Rev. 18 speaks of Babylon as "the habitation of devils (demons), and the hold of every foul spirit. . ." (Rev. 18:2), as if He is using the language of the day concerning demon possession.

-2:3 "Hast thou considered My servant Job?" God asked the Angel. Presumably the satan Angel was not therefore Job's 'guardian', as if he was he would have obviously been 'considering' him. In this case, other Angels can get involved in our lives apart from our guardian, either by direct discussion with God or by application to our guardian. Or are different Angels our guardians for different periods? Satan's query "Hast not Thou made an hedge about him?" (1:10) may be an example of one Angel questioning another, in this case Job's guardian Angel. Yet later Job accuses 'God' of hedging him in by giving him both good and evil. Thus his initial guardian Angel may have been replaced by the 'Satan'-Angel during the time of his distress.

- 2:3 "Thou movedst Me against him (Job), to destroy him without cause", God rebuked the Angel. This shows that Angels have to persuade God to do things, which sometimes they are unsuccessful in due to their lack of spiritual perspective in the things they request; exactly like us in our wrestlings in prayer with God through our Angel. If God agrees, He "performeth the counsel (advice) of His messenger" (Angels; Is. 44:26). "To destroy him" implies "to ruin him" (N. I. V. )- which did happen to Job. Thus the Angel appears to have gained his request, despite God in some ways being unwilling, or disliking, the request. "Move" means to prick or stimulate- God can be moved or provoked to action by the Angels, as human beings can provoke Him to anger.

- 1:7,8 "Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth?". God knew what the satan Angel's response would be. Thus God guides an Angel to think about a believer- or person- in order to further that Angel's spiritual education. This is still necessary, despite them having "had their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" previously. The knowledge of good and evil which the Angels have is exactly the same as we have- "the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil" the Angels lamented in Eden (Gen. 3:22). Despite our experience of life, we appreciate pitifully little how God works through evil. Some can scarcely comprehend it, especially if they have no knowledge of the Truth. Yet by nature they have some dull concept of it- and it is this dim concept which the Angels possessed in Eden, which was shared with us by Adam's eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Thus we can understand why the Angels need to be educated like this.

- 5:7 "Man is born unto trouble, as the sons of the burning coal lift up to fly" (AVmg. ) is using Angel-Cherubim language to say that it is inevitable that our Angels will bring trials into our lives.

- 7:17-20 has been shown above to refer to the Angel. Verse 21 is therefore Job complaining that "thou shalt seek me in the morning" to give him more trials ("Thou shouldst visit him every morning, and try him every moment", v. 18), but would not find him (more language of limitation) because "I shall sleep in the dust. . I shall not be" (i. e. Job thought he would die that night). Job therefore perceived God as manifest in the Satan-Angel as limited. Note too that Job asked the Angel to "pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity". If such power was delegated to Jesus, Peter and the apostles, it can be to Angels too- hence the Angel shining forth on the day of Atonement as a sign of Israel's forgiveness.

- 23:3 "Oh that I knew where I might find Him" speaks as if God was a physical being on earth- fitting, if Job conceived of God in terms of an Angel whom he occasionally met.

- 10:11,12 Job complains "Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews. Thou hast granted me life and favour, and Thy visitation hath preserved My spirit". "Fenced" is the same word as "hedge" when Satan complains that God has made a hedge about Job. Perhaps the Angel told Job this as well as God. Job is therefore saying that actually the only hedge or fence he has is his own physical body. In 3:23 and 19:8 this hedging seems to be interpreted as a feeling of spiritual restriction- as if like Paul, Job yearned to be released from this body of sin and corruption to "the glorious (spiritual) liberty of the sons of God" (Angels?). Job accepts that the Angel is keeping him alive every moment: "Thy visitation (Angelic language) hath preserved my spirit". We have already suggested that the Angels being spirits give and take the spirit of life from our body. Job seems to be saying 'You (the Satan Angel) say I'm hedged about with blessings. But now the only hedge I've got is this sick body. The only help you give me now is to give me my spirit to keep me alive, only so you can torment me more'. Understandable, if faulty, reasoning in Job's situation.

- 14:3 "Dost thou open Thine eyes (Angels) upon such an one, and bringest me into judgement with Thee?". Job here seems to be able to sense when the Angels were closely present in his life- he seems to be asking why God is using His Angel-eyes to take such a special interest in him; why God has asked His Angel to "consider My servant Job". When Job asks God to 'look away' from him, or remove His eyes from him (Job 7:8,19 RV and frequently in Job), this would then be understood as a reference to God's Angel-eyes, whom Job perceived as bringing about his problems.

- 14:5 "his (man's) days are determined, the number of his months are with Thee"- i. e. the 'wonderful numberer' Angel of Dan. 8:13 who controls the timing of all things?

- 16:9 "He gnasheth upon me with His teeth; mine enemy sharpeneth His eyes upon me". In the context, Job seems to be perceiving God as his enemy, and we have shown that God's eyes often refer to the Angels.

- 19:8 God (the Angel) "hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass, and He hath set darkness in my paths". This seems remarkably similar to the Angel Satan barring the path of Balaam that he could not pass (Num. 22:22-27). Job and Balaam have certain similarities- both were prophets (in Job's case see 4:4; 23:12; 29:4 cp. 15:8; Amos 3:7; James 5:10,11); both had genuine difficulty in understanding God's ways, but they to varying degrees consciously rebelled against what they did understand; both thus became angry with God (in the Angel), and were reproved by God through being brought to consider the Angel-controlled natural creation. One suspects there are more links than this.

- 19:26 "In my flesh shall I see God". Throughout the Old Testament there are examples of men being terrified at the idea that they had seen God in the flesh- Manoah and Isaiah are obvious examples. Because of this, it is unlikely that Job would talk in such a way about seeing God Himself in person face to face. It is therefore far more likely that Job conceived of 'God' as God manifested in an Angel. The same reasoning can be applied to 42:5: "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee". Job presumably felt that now he more fully understood the ways in which God worked with him- through the satan-Angel.

- 20:29 "This is the portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage of his decree from God" (AVmg. )- the decree from God is put into action by Angels.

- 21:9 "Their houses are safe from fear (cp. Job's, which fell down as a result of the Angel-satan whirlwind), neither is the rod of God upon them". Earlier in 9:34 Job pleaded: "Let Him take His rod away from me, and let not His fear terrify me". The fear of God is Angelic language, and it is the same as the rod of God. That rod acted through the satan-Angel.

- 26:13 "By His Spirit He hath garnished the heavens; His hand hath formed the crooked serpent". Here the hand and Spirit of God are equated- both are Angelic phrases, and thus provides further evidence that the Angels actually performed the creation.

- 34:18 "Is it fit to say to a King (God), Thou art wicked? and to princes (Angels), ye are ungodly?". Here Elihu (speaking on God's behalf), is rebuking Job for wrongly accusing the Angels, who had brought the trials.

- 38:22 "Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail. . . ?" implies that God has gone exploring though His own creation- language more relevant to Angels than God Himself.

- 6:9,10 "Oh. . . that He would let loose His hand, and cut me off. . . I have not concealed the words of the Holy One". We have shown that God's hand was satan's hand and that the satan Angel was forbidden to "cut (Job) off" as both Job and the Angel requested. Job associates the satan with the Holy One, which is also Angelic language. Job being a prophet (see notes on 19:8), he would have received revelation from an Angel. He did not conceal the word of this "Holy One".

- 1:14 "And there came a messenger (Heb. 'malak') unto Job" with news of the calamities brought by the satan Angel. It would be understandable if that 'malak' should have been translated 'Angel' seeing there is so much other Angelic language in this area.

- 1:16,19 Job's sons were killed by wind and fire- both of which are associated with Angelic manifestation.

- The Hebrew word 'shaddai' (Almighty) is often linked in the Pentateuch with the idea of fruitfulness and provision of good things (Gen. 17:1; 28:3; 35:11; 43:14; 49:25). The Hebrew root 'shad' is the word for 'breast'. The references in Genesis speak of the Almighty making the promises; elsewhere we see that the promises were made by the Angels. Thus the Angels were perceived as providers of all good things, which would explain why the book of Job so frequently uses 'shaddai' as the word for God; and why one of the purposes of the book is to correct the wrong idea of shaddai as a giver of only good things, perhaps through the desire

to contrast the true God with other contemporary fertility gods who were thought to provide all good things.

- It may be that Job's satan Angel was the Angel representing the three friends (satans) of Job. Because of His close identification with them, the satan Angel spoke their thoughts as if they were his own- e. g. compare Eliphaz's thoughts of 4:5 with satan's words of 1:9,10.

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## Notes

(1) This idea comes from Neil Forsyth, *The Old Enemy: Satan And The Combat Myth* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987) p. 114.

# CHAPTER 10: ANGELS AND ISRAEL

## 10-1 Angels And Israel

The Angels are especially sensitive to affairs relating to Israel. The Angel-eyes of the Lord are ever upon the land of Israel. God likens those who oppress Israel to someone touching His eyeball ("the apple of Mine eye", Zech. 2:8). The Angels as God's eyes are thus very sensitive to Israel's natural and spiritual state. The reason for this especial emphasis on the Angels' care of Israel is twofold; firstly to show what great involvement they have in the affairs of the new Israel, and secondly to teach us how we may watch over mortals in the Millenium and perhaps beyond, when we take over the Angels' role.

"The vineyard of the Lord of Hosts (Angels) is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah His pleasant plant: and He looked for judgement but behold oppression" (Is. 5:7). God looking for judgement implies the use of His eyes- the Angels. In passing, it seems worth querying whether this verse indicates Angelic preference for Judah as opposed to Israel, as if they were a favourite plant of the Angel husbandmen. How do we feel at the idea of Angelic preference being shown according to our spirituality?

Further evidence of the strong connection between Angels and Israel is found in the Asaph Psalms, especially 73-83. They are full of Angelic language, and seem to go through the history of Israel from Egypt to the captivity with reference to the Angels' work. Mal. 1:9 indicates that the Angels even associate themselves with Israel's sins, such is their closeness to them: "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts (Angels). . Beseech God that He will be gracious unto us". Dt. 33:2,3 RVmg. bring out the solidarity between the Angels and Israel by describing them both as thousands of saints / holy ones.

It seems to me that God's intention was that His people Israel were to develop their nation into the world-wide Kingdom of God on earth- a calling they miserably failed to achieve in the past, even though the prophets speak of the wonderful way it will come true in the future. Their territory would have literally been "to the ends of the earth"- and perhaps that's why there's the ambiguity in the Hebrew word *eretz*, which can mean both 'the land / earth' of Israel, and the whole planet earth. Further, the 70 Jewish elders appointed in Ex. 24:9-11 were



what the New Testament letter to the Hebrews calls a reflection of the things of Heaven on earth- for there were 70 Gentile nations within the *eretz* / land promised to Abraham (tabulated in Genesis 10), and I suggest that these 70 elders were intended to ultimately rule over them. This would explain the enigmatic Dt. 32:8, which speaks of the boundaries / differentiation of the Gentile nations being set according to "the sons of Israel", or (LXX) "the Angels of God". Putting the evidence together, it would seem that there were 70 Gentile nations in the *eretz* / land, represented in Heaven by 70 Angels, who in turn were represented on earth by the 70 elders of Israel. It was God's intention that His people should rule over the nations- and yet they as it were marred the reflection of what was in Heaven, the pattern of things in Heaven became ignored. And yet the day is yet to come when men will eagerly take hold of the skirts of a Jew and go with him to worship the true God. From all this I see yet again all the potentials God has made possible for us in our age... and how, despite the fact He may foreknow that we'll waste them, He still sets up those potential possibilities for us. We are too are chosen to be king-priests over this world (Rev. 5:10), we too have a representative Angel in Heaven beholding God's face... yes, *you*, and me. We have an Angel there. It's for us to go ahead and reflect the pattern of Heaven here on earth.

## The Promises

The promises which form the basis of the "hope of Israel" were made by Angels- many of them were given in visions, which were strongly associated with Angels. Thus the Lord "brought (Abraham) forth abroad and said, Look now toward Heaven, and tell the stars. . . (after a silent pause) So shall thy seed be. . . I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land" (Gen. 15:5-7). It must have been an Angel that led Abraham out of his tent to a suitable spot and made those promises. The Angel which brought Israel out of Egypt to the land promised to Abraham is frequently described as bringing Israel out of Egypt to give them the land in similar language to which the 'Lord' in Gen. 15 speaks of giving Abraham the land. Gen. 17:3 says that "Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him", making the promises. Men often fell on their faces in the presence of Angels, and God talking with Abraham seems similar to the Angel talking face to face with Moses later. In Gen. 18:1 "the Lord appeared" to Abraham regarding the future of Sodom in the form of an Angel, we are told later in the chapter. The same phrase "the Lord appeared" is also used to introduce the giving of the promises to Abraham in Gen. 17:1. Even clearer, "the Angel of the Lord. . . said. . . in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of Heaven" (Gen. 22:15-17). The Angel that appeared to Moses in the bush said that He was the God of the patriarchs who had appeared to them and "established My covenant with them. . . I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham. . . " (Ex. 3:2-9 cp. 6:2-8). Similarly the Angel that made the promises to Abraham could say to Hagar "I will multiply thy seed (as well). . . that it shall not be numbered for multitude" (Gen. 16:10).

The lead up to the promises to David is full of Angelic hints, as if it was an Angel who made the promise:

2 Sam. 7:2: "I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God (i. e. God) dwelleth within curtains"- it was the Angel who dwelt over the ark and in the tabernacle (see later).

v. 6 "I have . . . walked in a tent and in a tabernacle"- the Angel "walked" in the sense that the Israelites physically walked, carrying the tent and tabernacle on their shoulders, with the associated Angelic presence in them.

"I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt"- the Angel did this.

v. 8 "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts"-Angels

v. 9 "I took thee from the sheepfolds. . . I was with thee withersoever thou wentest"- Angelic care of David, His physical presence through the Angel being very closely with David.

v. 10 "I will. . . plant. . . My people Israel"- the Angel planted Israel as a vine (Ps. 80:8; a Psalm which has many Angelic references).

Verses 12-14 go on to make the promise to David. David's response was to praise "The Lord of Hosts. . the God of Israel" (2 Sam. 7:26), both of which are Angelic titles, as if David felt that the Angels had given him the promises.

## 10-2 The Angel Michael and Israel.

It would appear from Michael being described as "the prince which standeth for the children of thy (Daniel's) people" (Dan. 12:1) and because 'Michael' elsewhere in Daniel refers to an Angel, that Michael is the Angel especially responsible for Israel, and therefore one of the most powerful Angels- "Michael one of the chief princes" (Dan. 8:13), "the great prince" (Dan. 12:1). The LXX renders Dan. 12:1 as "the great Angel" (AV "great prince"). Under Michael's control there are many other Angels similarly dedicated to the affairs of the people of Israel- Dt. 11:12 describes the land of Israel as "a land which the LORD thy God careth for: the eyes of the LORD thy God (i. e. the Angels) are always upon it from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year". In passing, does the phrase "the LORD thy God" refer to the Angel which led them through the wilderness? The Angel Michael? Remember Moses was speaking to the people of Israel at this time, and as we saw earlier, they very much conceived of the "the LORD thy God" in terms of the Angel of the presence going with them. Thus God was promising that His Angels would physically be present in the land and would be especially sensitive to the events there. The degree to which God wanted Israel to conceive of Him in terms of Angels is shown by carefully considering the command for Israel not to have chariots (Dt. 17:16 cp. Is. 2:7). As this form of transport became increasingly popular, it must have seemed as crazy as Christians being told not to possess motor cars. There must have therefore been a highly significant teaching behind it. Was the purpose of it to make Israel look to the Angel-cherubim chariots of God? The word for 'cherubim' carries the idea of a chariot; the notion of horsemen corresponds with the Angel horseriders of Zechariah and Revelation.

Zech. 1:11 describes the Angels as walking "to and fro through the earth (Heb. 'eretz'- the land, of Israel), and behold, all the earth (land) sitteth still and is at rest". "They are the eyes (Angels) of the LORD which run to and fro through the whole earth" (Zech. 4:10). It may even be that the satan Angel of Job was walking to and fro through the land of Israel (going up and down in the "earth"- land) rather than through the whole planet, inspecting the true worshippers (who would only have been located in the area around Israel in all probability). Perhaps it is to the physical presence of the Angel in the land that Ezek. 35:10 refers " Thou (the Arabs) hast said, These two nations and these two countries (Israel and Judah) shall be mine, and I will possess it; whereas the LORD (the Angel Michael) was there". Yet this same Angel ministered judgement on Israel- Ezek. 7:14 and 20:17 describe God's eye (the Angel Michael) not sparing or pitying, and in so doing goes back to the language of Is. 63 where we see that the Angel was capable of showing pity, but ceased to because of Israel's sin (v. 9,10).

Ps. 83 also speaks of the Arab aggression towards Israel and therefore Michael in the last days: "They have taken crafty counsel against Thy people" (v. 3)- Israel are Michael's people. They say "let us take to ourselves the houses of God" (v. 12)- i. e. the Angel's dwelling place in the temple. They will be punished by a mighty theophany involving " a wheel. . . the wind. . the fire. . . Thy tempest. . . Thy storm" (v. 13-15)- all of which is the language of the Angel-cherubim and God manifestation in the Angels (e. g. Ps. 104:1-4).

## **The Angel Michael Standing Up**

The closeness of association between the Angel Michael and His people Israel is shown by the fact that when He 'stands up' in the last days many of the people of Israel ("thy-Daniel's-people") also 'stand up' in resurrection (Dan. 12:1-3).

Both Isaiah 63 and Habakkuk 3- which appears to allude to Isaiah 63 and be commenting on the work of the Angel leading Israel through the wilderness- imply that God through Michael will suddenly become aware of His work for Israel in the past and decide to "revive (the) work in the midst of the years" (Hab. 3:2), or "remember the days of old, Moses, and His people, saying, Where is He that brought them up out of the Sea. . that led them through the deep?". Notice the language of limitation in the idea of the Angel remembering things and stirring Himself up. This leading was the work of the Angel Michael- as if the "Angel of His presence" (Is. 63:11-13) is reminding Himself in the last days of His previous manifestation for Israel, and resolving to revive such work.

However, at present it seems that for almost the last 2,000 years there has been little Angelic activity on behalf of the land of Israel. Hence the Angel Michael is described as "standing up" for Israel in the last days; and Zech. 12:4 says significantly "In that day, saith the LORD,. . I will open Mine eyes (the Angels responsible for Israel- notice the references to them like this earlier in the prophecy) upon the house of Judah", as if Angelic activity on Israel's behalf revives in the last days. The "hand of God" is associated with causing the latter day revival and repentance of Israel, and we have shown that this is an Angelic phrase: "I will turn My hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin; and I will rebuke thy judges. . ." (Is. 1:25,26). "In that (last) day, the Lord shall set His hand. . . to recover the remnant of His people. . He shall shake His hand over the river. . and make men go over dryshod" (Is. 11:11,15). Compare also how the hand of the Lord purged Isaiah and the people he represented (Is. 6:5) from their sin (Is. 6:6).

Ez. 20:35 shows how the 'second Exodus' of the Jews from their dispersion at the time of the second coming will also involve the activity of the Angel Michael. "I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face". It must be through the Angel Michael that God pleads with them face to face (cp. Ex. 33:10).

## **10-3 Angels At The Exodus**

### **Angels On The Wilderness Journey.**

Israel's guardian Angel was to "keep" them in the way (Ex. 23:20), clearly echoing how the Angels kept the way to the tree of life in Eden. The same Hebrew word for "keep" occurs very often in Exodus in the context of Israel being told to keep God's commands; but their

freewill effort was to be confirmed by the Angel keeping them in the way of obedience. They were to “keep” themselves in the way (Dt. 4:9 and many others; s.w. “take heed”, “observe” etc.), but the Angel would keep them in it. This mutuality is developed in Ex. 23:21, where having said the Angel will keep them, Israel are told “Beware of him, and obey his voice”. “Beware” translates the same Hebrew word as “keep”. The Angel would keep them., but they were to keep to the Angel. This is an example of how we are intended to have a mutual relationship with our guardian Angel, leading to Him strengthening us in the one way. This word translated “keep” is also translated “spies” in Jud. 1:24; the spies were the keepers in the way of Israel, to bring them in to the land. And yet the Angel at the exodus was their ‘keeper’ to bring them into the land. The spies were working in harmony with their Angels; and thus they succeeded. Joshua and Moses too were working and walking in harmony with this same Angel in their work; for “By a prophet (Moses) the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet (Joshua) was he preserved [s.w. “keep”]” (Hos. 12:13). An Angel ‘brought Israel out of Egypt’, and it was an Angel who ‘kept’ Israel (Ex. 23:20). This again shows how prophets and Angels were in tandem with each other. In the work of bringing out and ‘keeping’ a people for God’s Name, we too can have this sense of working in tandem with a guardian Angel every step of the way.

The clear parallels between the Israelites' journey through the wilderness to the promised land and our journey towards the promised land of the Kingdom are numerous. The significant amount of Angelic activity on their journey must be seen as representing the similarly vast Angelic work in our probations. The partnership between Moses and the Angel at the exodus to bring Israel out of Egypt is perhaps matched by that between Jesus and the Comforter Angel (see Chapter 13) to deliver us from spiritual Egypt. The fact that the Angels went ahead to prepare their entrance to the promised land shows how our place in the Kingdom is certainly possible, partly due to the work of our Angel in going ahead and paving the way. We saw earlier that in prospect all Israel's battles with the inhabitants of Canaan had been won by the Angels, and it was for them to live in a suitable way and to display enough faith to enable them to make use of these victories. "The LORD thy God (the Angel) walketh in the midst of thy camp (a phrase used by the Angel earlier and then repented of- "I will not go up in the midst of thee") to deliver thee and to give up thine enemies before thee; therefore shall thy camp be holy: that He see no unclean thing in thee and turn away from thee" (Deut 23:14).

## **"Be strong!"**

Later Moses encouraged Joshua (and all uncertain journeyers through the wilderness) by commenting on the great work of the Angels in preparing the way to enter the promised land. There is a connection made between the fear of God among the Canaanite nations, the "hornet", and the Angel: "I send an Angel before thee. . . I will send my fear before thee. . . and I will send hornets before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before thee" (Ex. 23:21,27,28). Moses recalled how God had said to him "The LORD thy God He will go over before thee", and then said to Joshua "be strong and of a good courage, fear not nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God (the same Angel called 'the LORD thy God' in relation to Moses [\(U\)](#)), He it is that doth go with thee; He will not fail thee nor forsake thee" (Dt. 31:3,6,7). These words are quoted in Heb. 13:5, and it is good to note the original Angelic context in which the words were used: "Be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I (the Angel) will never leave thee nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord (i. e. the Angel) is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do

unto me". Later on we see that Joshua did conceive of God in terms of the Angel- he took Moses' exhortation.

Thus when it was Joshua's turn to die, like Moses his deathbed advice was to be mindful of the Angel that was with Israel: "The LORD our God, He it is that brought us up out of the land of Egypt. . and preserved us in all the way wherein we went. . the LORD drove out from before us all the people (all these things were done by the Angel at the exodus ). . He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins (this is alluding to Ex. 23:21 where God describes the Angel at the exodus going with Israel as not pardoning their transgressions). . if ye forsake the LORD . . then He will turn. . and consume you" (Josh 24:17-21). These last phrases are taken up in Is. 63, where speaking about the Angel of the presence with Israel in the wilderness we read "He turned to be their enemy. . He fought against (consumed) them" (v. 10). Earlier the book of Joshua commented "There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass" (21:45). The promises by the Angel at the exodus came true in prospect; but tragically Israel did not make them good, so that in reality only a fraction of the blessings were realized.

## **Psalm 78**

Psalm 78 brings out most clearly the enormous importance of the Angel's work in guiding the people through the wilderness. The whole Psalm has reference to Angelic activity at this time:

v. 1 "My people"- i. e. the Angel Michael's, the Angel of Israel.

v. 7 "That they might. . . not forget the works of God". Often Israel were told not to forget the works the Angel did for them on the Exodus.

v. 10 "The covenant of God. . . His law"- both given by Angels.

v. 11-13 They "forgot His works. . . marvellous things did He in. . . the land of Egypt. . . He divided the Sea"- the work of the Angel leading them.

v. 26 "He caused an East wind to blow in the Heaven" (to give manna, Angel-provided food, v. 25)- the Angel caused another wind or spirit-Angel to bring the manna. God 'loosed' the East wind / Angel and also the South wind / Angel. It may be that since the quail were migrating from Egypt at this time, the South wind / Angel carried them North and the East wind / Angel drove them into the desert where the Israelites were. The same language recurs in Rev. 9:14, where Angels are again loosed to bring about God's purpose. And within Ps. 78 even, the idea recurs: "He unleashed against them his hot anger. . . a band of destroying angels" (:49 NIV).

v. 40 "How oft did they provoke Him in the wilderness, and grieve Him in the desert". This is the language of Is. 63:9,10 about the "Angel of His presence" leading Israel.

v. 41 "They. . . tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel". God Himself cannot be tempted, and the 'language of limitation' used here must be relevant to the Angel, not to God Himself.

v. 38 "He being full of compassion forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not". This recalls the language of Ex. 33 and 34 concerning the Angels which were to go with the people- a "God full of compassion. . mercy. . truth" (R. V. ). The reference to destruction in the wilderness must refer to the 'destroyer' Angel which was with them, as shown earlier.

v. 36 "they did flatter Him with their mouth, and they lied unto Him with their tongues". 'Flattery' is the language of limitation- it must refer to an Angel rather than God Himself.

v. 43 "He had wrought His signs in Egypt". The plagues were actually executed by the Angels.

v. 14 "In the daytime also He led them with a cloud". We have seen that it was the Angel who led them.

v. 5 "He established a testament in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel". The Law was given ("appointed") by the Angels.

v. 19 "They spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?". The reference to "Angels food" (i. e. food provided by Angels) shows that the Angels provided the manna (and Christ likens the manna to the word, which as we have seen was also ministered by Angels). Thus the people were tempting the Angels.

v. 52-54 "His own people (Michael's) to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock. . . He led them on safely. . . He brought them to the border of His sanctuary". The Angel was their shepherd, seen in the cloud and fire that guided them through the wilderness; as Ps. 80:1; Is. 63:9-11.

Thus as a shepherd leads and chases his sheep, so the Angel led Israel through the wilderness. "He guided them safely, so they were unafraid; but the sea engulfed their enemies" (:53 NIV). But the reality is, they *were* afraid. Yet due to the work of the Angels they were given the potential to be unafraid; and so it is with us. How often do we 'waste' or fail to use the potential which the Angels have provided for us! Gen. 49:24 describes "the mighty God of Jacob" (an Angelic phrase) as the shepherd and rock of Israel. The references in Deuteronomy to God being the rock that Israel forsook therefore refer to the Angel. It is worth noting that the shepherd and rock ("stone" of Gen. 49:24) are both clear titles of Christ- implying that this Angel specifically represented Jesus? Hence "that rock (Angel) was Christ" (1 Cor. 10:4). See Chapter 12 for more ideas on this Angel.

## **Tale Of Two Angels?**

It is very difficult to sort out exactly how many Angels travelled with them through the wilderness, and where they were located- between the cherubim, in the cloud, in the fire, and where the many Angels which we saw earlier accompanied them would have travelled, and also the place of the 'destroyer' Angel. It may be that the references to these various Angels only disguise the fact that they are talking about the same Angel, due to God being able to manifest Himself in a number of forms which if analysed with human logic appear contradictory- the great paradox of unity amidst diversity. There is a strong implication in the record that the one mighty Angel dwelt in the cloud and led Israel, especially in the record of the Red Sea crossing. Elsewhere the idea of a cloud is associated with a number of people or Angels- e. g. the "great cloud of witnesses" in Heb. 12:1 or the clouds of Angels with which

Jesus will return. Ex. 40:37 is also significant: "If the cloud were not taken up" - as if "the cloud" was plural, implying it comprised many beings.

When Moses asked to see God's face, he was probably not asking to see God Himself in person; on nearly every occasion when men saw an Angel and thought they had seen God, they feared for their lives because they knew that man cannot see God and live. It seems almost Jewish culture to have believed this, and no doubt Moses had the same view. Dt. 4:11 (see A. V. mg. ) states that the Mount burning with fire when Moses ascended it was due to the pillar of fire standing there, appearing to reach to the "midst of Heaven", showing Heaven and earth were connected through this manifestation. The Angel led them through the wilderness, and elsewhere we read that the pillar of fire led them; the conclusion is therefore that the pillar of of fire was where the Angel dwelt. Thus the Angel literally "went before" them as God promised it would, in the form of the pillar. Angels are elsewhere associated with pillars of fire, e. g. the one which came to Manoah, and not least in that God came down in a pillar of fire to speak to Moses. Ex. 14:19 conclusively shows the pillar of fire/cloud and the Angel to be identical: "the Angel of God which went before the camp of Israel removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud (the Shekinah glory) went from before their face, and stood behind them".

So let us consider the record in Ex. 33 and 34 in more detail. It seems vital to recognize that the 'LORD' spoken of here is some form of Angelic manifestation. Moses asked to see the face of the Angel (33:18 cp. v. 20); presumably it was a different Angel to whom he spoke face to face (33:11), or perhaps the same Angel but manifesting God to a different degree or alternatively a different, more powerful Angel. The fact Moses saw the back parts of this 'LORD' shows that the 'LORD' was not God Himself in person- no man has ever seen Him, or even started to approach the light in which He dwells (1 Tim. 6:16 etc. ); this must include Moses. This conclusion chimes in with the type of statements about 'the LORD' which we read in these chapters, which suggest reference to the Angel rather than to God Himself:

33:1 "The LORD said. . the land which I swear unto Abraham. . ". We have seen that it was the Angel which made these promises.

33:2 "I will drive out the Canaanite. . "; this was done by the Angel of the LORD sent before to do this.

33:3 "I will not go up in the midst of thee (i. e. the Angel was saying He would no longer dwell in the Holiest): lest I consume thee"- the consuming of Israel for their sins on the journey was done by the 'destroyer' Angel. We can therefore suggest that the Angel was manifest in some way, perhaps through two separate Angels, in the following places:

- in the pillar of fire going before them
- in the Holy of Holies

In addition to this, there is the implication that a great number of Angels- perhaps the guardian Angels of each of the Israelites- were with them too: "great was the company of those that published it. . . even thousands of Angels" (Ps. 68:11), i. e. the word concerning Israel leaving Egypt and entering the promised land.

The idea of two Angels being present with Israel is found again in Ez. 20:17,22; God's "eye", which is definitely Angelic language, spread them from being destroyed- by the destroyer



Angel. And therefore God “withdrew mine hand”, also Angelic language, in order not to destroy them. Note too how it is the Angelic “eye of the Lord” which is paralleled with God’s mercy in Ps. 33:18,22. And encouragingly, it is this “eye of the Lord” which is in the Angelic court of Heaven, and yet views the righteous on earth (Ps. 11:4).

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## Notes

(1) This shows the same Angel becoming personally associated with different men if their purpose is the same, because they need the help of the same Angel to achieve their goal.

## 10-4 "The Angel of His presence"

Now we come to a vital point. Having shown that the 'LORD' in these chapters must refer to a mighty Angel, it follows that the promise to send another Angel with them through the wilderness was made by a superior Angel who was in control of another Angel. Ex. 33:11,12 show Moses talking to the LORD "face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend" - i. e. in a relaxed, friendly way. Thus the identity of the 'LORD' is clearly an Angel. This Angel says in v. 20 a few verses later that His face cannot be seen by any man, but His back parts may be seen by Moses. As we have said, the fact He could be seen at all shows He was not God Himself. It must follow that we are either hearing another Angel speak more mighty than the one with whom Moses spoke face to face- and there is no indication of this in the text, which speaks as if it is the same 'LORD' throughout- or that the Angel with whom Moses spoke started to manifest God to a different degree. The 'LORD'- the Angel- then says, 33:14, "My presence shall go with thee". This "presence" was another Angel, as 32:34 makes clear: "behold, Mine Angel shall go before thee". This idea of one Angel sending another ties up with the way things are expressed in Is. 63. The language used there regarding God redeeming His people has echoes, as we have earlier touched upon, in the record of the Angelic deliverance of Israel- "In all their affliction He was afflicted. . in His love and in His pity He redeemed them, and carried them all the days of old. . He was turned to be their enemy and fought against them (the punishment of Israel in the wilderness was by Angelic means- 1 Cor. 10:10). . the Angel of His presence saved them" (v. 9,10). The Angel "of" or 'sent from' His presence is then seen as a direct allusion to Ex. 33:14, where from the presence of the mighty Angel whose face Moses could not see, there came a promise of another Angel to be with them in the day to day affairs of the journey .

The alternative to this view is to insist that there was only one Angel present, but manifest in a bewildering variety of ways. A strong point in favour of this is that Ex. 3:11 describes the Angel that spoke face to face with Moses as descending in a pillar of cloud, whilst Ex. 34:5 describes the Angel whose back parts alone Moses could see as descending in "the cloud"- presumably meant to link with "the cloud" of Ex. 33, in which the Angel of His presence descended to speak face to face. Thus when the Angel warned Moses as He spoke face to face with him "thou canst not see My face" (33:20) He meant that if He were to fully show Moses his glory as requested, they could not continue their relationship "as a man speaketh unto his friend" (33:11). Human fellowship with God must always be through God to some extent masking and not fully declaring His own intense holiness in order to let us approach to Him. If the Holy Spirit in the New Testament refers to an Angel (the same Comforter Angel that was with Moses in the wilderness- see Ch. 13), we have the same idea in 1 Cor. 12:4: "There are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit" (Angel)- the Angel of His presence.



## Motive For Confidence

At Moses' death, the positive thrust of his closing exhortation was his conviction that the Angel of His presence which had been with them so far would continue to be so, to enable them to enter the land. This alone shows the great part that the Angel played in Moses' life. "The Lord thy God, He will go over before thee. . . and Joshua shall go over before thee. . . and Joshua shall go over before thee (showing Moses' belief that Joshua would work with the Angel- cp. Ps. 91, where Moses commends Joshua for keeping close to the Angel in the tabernacle). . . Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God (the Angel God of Israel), He it is that doth go with thee, He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (Dt. 31:3-6). The Angel of His presence confirmed to doubting Joshua <sup>(1)</sup> that "As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee; I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (Josh. 1:5). Solomon too pleaded for the Angel to remain in the temple in similar language (1 Kings 8:57). The Angel's emphasis on "I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" leads us to consider Heb. 13:5: "Be content with such things as ye have (the context is of coveting material possessions and other women): for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee". Thus our Angel will provide us with our physical and emotional needs in order that we should enter our promised land, and we should rest assured in trusting our Angel for such things rather than seeking to provide them ourselves. "We may boldly say, The Lord (the Angel) is my helper, and I will not fear (cp. the Angel's exhortation to Joshua not to fear) what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13:6)- we need not fear even the spiritual temptations created by men. So is it coincidence that Paul starts this section by reminding us that "some have entertained Angels unawares"? (13:2).

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### Notes

(1) Notice all the times Joshua is exhorted to be stronger in faith by the Angel of His presence.

## 10-5 The Angel In The Temple / Tabernacle

Psalms 78 says that because of their sins, "He (i. e. the Angel) forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which He placed among men". This implies that the Angel was physically present in the tabernacle, and that God's displeasure was shown by this Angel literally being withdrawn. A number of other references support this idea of an Angel physically being present in the tabernacle, and therefore being the source of the glory which sometimes shone forth:

- 1 Chron. 13:6 "David went up. . . to bring thence the ark of God the LORD that dwelleth between the cherubims, whose name is called on it". The unusual phrase 'God the LORD' may imply 'the Angel the Yahweh', as if recognizing that the Angel had God's Name, as we know the Angel which lead Israel was given by God. Thus in this context David goes on to say about the ark of the Lord "whose Name is called on it". When Uzzah died it is stated "there he died before God" (v. 10), as if he died in the presence of an Angel- i. e. the Angel present inside the ark which he touched.

- 1 Chron. 15 and Ps. 68 describe the entering of the ark into Jerusalem in terms of the Angelic march through the wilderness at the Exodus, thus connecting the Ark with the Angels.

- The commands concerning the tabernacle were given to Moses by the Angel- do phrases like "Let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them" (Ex. 25:8) have primary reference to the Angel speaking the words? In the same way, does Psalm 99:1 refer also to the physical presence of an Angel between the cherubim? "The LORD reigneth. . He sitteth between the cherubim (through His Angel); let the earth (land of Israel) be moved". Similarly "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel (the Angel- so Isaiah 63 describes the wilderness Angel), thou that leadest Joseph like a flock (the Angel lead them through the wilderness); thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth" (Ps. 80:1). And again in Ps. 20:1,2 "The God of Jacob (i. e. the Angel who Jacob recognized had been so much in his life) defend thee; send thee help from the sanctuary. . ", as if it was in the sanctuary (Holy Place) that the Angel was located.

- Acts 7:38 (especially the Diaglott translation) speaks as if the Angel was physically present with Moses on the journey: "he (Moses) was in the church in the wilderness with the Angel which spake to him in the Mount Sina and with our fathers". In passing, this implies that it was the same Angel (Michael) who gave the promises to Abraham, who gave the Law, and who went with them through the wilderness. Truly He is the Angel connected with Israel!

- Lev. 4:17 describes the priest as sprinkling the blood "before the LORD, even before the veil". This implies that the veil and the "LORD" were associated, as if the Angel, the 'LORD', was just behind the veil, i. e. in the Most Holy.

- Num. 14:42,44: "Go not up, for the Lord is not among you. . but they presumed to go up. . nevertheless, the ark of the covenant of the Lord (which the Angel had made with them) departed not"- as if to imply that the Lord (the Angel) was in the ark, and therefore did not go up with them because the ark did not.

- Ecc. 5:1-7 is about how one should go "to the house of God" (the temple) to offer sacrifice and pray to God: "Be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools. . . let not thine heart be hasty to utter any word before God. . . when thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it (by bringing the vow to the temple). . . suffer not thy mouth (your prayers and vows) to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the Angel that it ws an error"- as if there was an Angel in the temple, albeit manifest through a priest? Cp. v. 2 "let not thine heart be hasty to utter any word before God". The priest was "the messenger (Angel) of the Lord of Hosts" (Angels)- i. e. of the Angel in the temple? (Mal. 2:7).

- 2 Chron. 31:2 [Heb.] speaks of Jerusalem and especially the temple as the city of the hosts of the Lord- as if the Angelic hosts were especially present in the temple.

- It was because of this fact that when the Angel located Himself outside the camp, the tabernacle was set up again in that same location outside the camp- "I will not go up in the midst of thee (said the angel). . . and Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp. . as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended (the Angel). . . and the Lord spake unto Moses face to face" (Ex. 33:3,7,9,11). In passing, note that it was because Joshua lived in this tent (he "departed not out of the tabernacle") that he is said in Ps. 91 to have made his habitation with the Angel, who therefore protected him in the subsequent wanderings. And to raise the fascination factor, note that the Septuagint tells us that Moses "pitched his own tent" and called it the tabernacle (Ex. 33:7 LXX); similarly, "the tent" may be a synonym for Moses' own tent (see Ex. 18:7). Does this mean that the mighty Angel of

Israel was Moses' personal guardian, seeing that "the Angel of the Lord encampeth (tent language again) around about them that fear Him" (Ps. 34:7)?

## The Angel In The Temple

When the temple was built, this same Angel would have lived there. There are many references in Isaiah to the Lord-Angel- coming out of His dwelling place in the temple to punish the Assyrians; the sacrifices and prayers made "before the Lord" in the temple were thus made in the presence of this Angel. Such phrases as "The Lord of Hosts (Angels) which dwelleth in Mount Zion" (Is. 8:18) are common. Solomon's dedication of the temple emphasized the fact that God's Name dwelt there-which was carried by the Angel (Ex. 23:20,21), and that His eyes (Angels) were present in the house. Thus Mic. 1:3 speaks of "the Lord cometh forth out of His place (the temple, v. 2), and will come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth". This probably has primary reference to the Angel going forth from the temple to slay the Assyrians in Hezekiah's time. Dan. 8:11 speaks of "the prince of the Host" living in the temple, a phrase recalling the Angel captain of the Lord's host in Josh. 5:15. The Messianic Ps. 3:4 speaks of Christ praying to this Angel in the temple on the cross: "I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and He heard me out of His holy hill" of Zion.

We have seen that the "God of Israel" is an Angelic phrase, and that Angels have been associated with the glory of God, e. g. at the declaration of the Angel's name to Moses in response to his request "Shew me Thy glory"; "the God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham" (Acts 7:2); and we have suggested that it was an Angel who made the promises to Abraham by appearing to him. Coupling this with the notion of descriptions of the Angels' physical movements being literal, it is worth considering whether the visions Ezekiel had of the progressive departure of "the glory of the God of Israel" (Ez. 8:4) from the temple to the East of Jerusalem and then further away are describing the literal departure of the Angel from His dwelling place over the ark in the temple. Similarly "the glory" Angel departed (1 Sam. 4:21) when the ark over which He dwelt was taken by the Philistines.

Even in New Testament times, the Lord Jesus could speak of God as "him that dwelleth" in the sanctuary / Most Holy (Mt. 23:21,35 RVmg.). Presumably the Angel was still in some degree present in the Sanctuary even then.

## 10-6 The Sar ha-olam: "The prince of this world"

There was a Rabbinic tradition that the whole world was under the power of the Angel of death which controlled Egypt at the first Passover, but had no dominion over Israel. They referred to this Angel as the Sar ha-olam, and at the time of Jesus the phrase "Prince of this world" would have been understood as referring to this Angel <sup>(1)</sup>. This is how Christ's use of the phrase would have been understood. He described the "prince of this world"- the Angel of death and darkness- as coming to him and finding nothing in Him (Jn. 14:30). This would be alluding to the Angel of death at the first Passover (and Jesus was speaking at Passover time) coming to each house and finding nothing worthy of death there because of the blood of the lamb on the lintel. Jesus may have been using the 'language of the day' as He did regarding Beelzebub and demons, but the consistent fitting of the type implies Jesus believed the Rabbinic idea was at least partially correct, in that the whole world apart from Israel was under the control of a specific Angel. However, spiritually Israel were not under the protection of the blood of the lamb because they rejected Christ. The "prince of this world" Angel would therefore destroy them too. It can be shown <sup>(2)</sup> that "the prince of this world"

refers to the Jewish system, perhaps to the Angel(s) that headed it. Christ's allusion to the Sar ha-olam would then have a telling double twist. The Angel whom the Jews thought would not touch them because of the other Angels hovering over them (the real idea of the word 'passover') to protect them from the destroying Angel, was going to destroy them; the protecting Angel which hovered over them and led them through the wilderness was "turned to be their enemy"- i. e. to be the destroying Angel (Is. 63:10), the Sar ha-olam.

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### Notes

(1) For more documentation on this see James White, 'The Devil and his Angels', *The Christadelphian*, July and August 1950.

(2) See my *In Search of Satan*, Appendix 1 .

## 10-7 ANGELS AND ASSYRIANS

### THE ASSYRIAN INVASION

Much of the book of Isaiah has reference to the Assyrian invasion, with its ultimate destruction by Angelic forces; hence the frequency of Angelic-linked language like "Lord of Hosts", "Holy One" etc. The frequent use of phrases like "Fear not, I am with thee" in Isaiah recall the assurance to Joshua and Israel that the Angel would be with them against other nations more powerful than they.

Isaiah 37, for example, is packed with Angelic language, and clearly shows how Hezekiah conceived of God in terms of an Angel:

v. 16 "O Lord of Hosts, God of Israel" -both Angelic titles.

"That dwellest between the cherubims" The great Angel dwelling over the ark

"Thou art the God. . . of all the kingdoms of the earth". The Angels control the Kingdoms of men.

"Thou hast made Heaven and earth" - the Angels' work.

v. 17 "Incline Thine ear, O Lord, and hear"- language of Angelic limitation

"Open Thine eyes and see" Eyes = Angels.

"The living God" - 'God of the living ones'- the Angel between the Cherubim.

The historical account emphasises that Rabshakeh continually reminded them of the strength of the hand of the Assyrians; the phrase occurs six times in 2 Chron. 32:13-15 alone. The hand of the Lord is an Angelic title; as if he was really mocking the Angel of Israel. There are also many references in Isaiah to the arm of the Lord delivering Israel at this time, which

is again an Angelic title. Similarly, the latter day Assyrian will be destroyed by the arm of the Lord, as manifest in Christ and the Angels with Him.

Hezekiah "went up to the house of the Lord, and spread (Sennacherib's letter) before the Lord"- before the Angel dwelling over the ark in the temple. What greater example to us, to have the Angels fully in mind when we pray in an emergency?

## **Nahum**

Other prophets seem relevant to this same period, and it is interesting to see the Angelic connections with the Assyrians in their writings. Nahum provides a good example:

1:11 "One come out of thee that imagineth evil against the Lord, a wicked counsellor"- Rabshakeh

1:3 "God is jealous. . slow to anger. . and will not at all acquit the wicked"- these are the attributes of the Angel listed in Ex. 34.

1:3,6,8 "Whirlwind. . clouds. . darkness. . fire"- all associated with Angelic manifestation in the Cherubim and at Sinai.

1:4 "He rebuketh the Sea and maketh it dry"- alluding to the Angel drying up the Red Sea.

1:5 "The mountains quake at Him. . the hills melt. . the earth and all that dwell therein"- reminiscent of the description of the Angels' work in leading Israel to Canaan (e. g. Hab. 3:4-15; Ps. 68:7,8; Judges 5:4,5)

Thus when we read later in the prophecy of the destruction of Nineveh by chariots with flaming fire (2:3-5), it is evident that the Medes were but representatives of the Cherubim chariots with Angels made as a flame of fire (Ps. 104:4); thus the "worthies" of 2:5 are the Angels, and the work controlled overall by the "Lord of Hosts" (3:5)- of Angels. There are several other examples of human armies being described in Angelic language.

Perhaps it is to the seven Angel-spirits of Revelation and Zechariah that Micah refers: "When the Assyrian shall come into our land. . . shall we raise against him (in warfare, the Hebrew implies- cp. Obadiah 1) seven shepherds, and eight princes of men" (Mic. 5:5). The only beings to fight the Assyrians were the Angels who slew them, seeing that the Jews scarcely fired an arrow in anger at them. Both "shepherd" and "prince" are Angelic titles (see Ps. 80:1; Is. 63:9-11 and Josh. 5:14; Dan. 10:13;12:1 respectively). The Angels could be "princes of men" as those in Daniel were both princes of Heaven and also of human nations, e. g. Persia.

# **CHAPTER 11: ANGELS AND THE RESTORATION**

## 11-1 Angels In Jeremiah

There is much reference to Angelic language in the prophecies of Israel's return from captivity in Babylon, which also points forward to the part Angels play in the present and future regathering of Israel. It is significant that Ezra and Nehemiah speak of the "God of Heaven" whilst Zechariah speaks of the "God of the earth" or 'land' of Israel, perhaps because the Angel of Israel literally went to Heaven when the glory departed from Jerusalem, and returned, in a sense, at the restoration- to depart again at Christ's death ("Your house is left unto you desolate"; of the Angel that once dwelt in the temple). "I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your land" (Mal. 3:11) sounds as if there was an Angel called "the devourer" at the time of the restoration, as there was one called "the destroyer" at the Exodus. He was given command to destroy Judah's harvests due to their lack of commitment to God's house; yet He could be rebuked or restrained by God, implying the Angel focused on fulfilling what He was told to do without taking into account any other factors- until God overrode or restrained Him.

The following commentary on the relevant passages highlights the main uses of Angelic language and the implications that follow.

### Jeremiah

The latter day application of Jeremiah and Ezekiel have possibly been emphasized to the neglect of their primary reference to the Babylonian captivity and restoration. This is no doubt due to a (correct) reaction against the critical school of thought which assigns a vague primary application to much Bible prophecy and then proceeds to mutilate the text.

### Chapter 23

23:3 "I will gather the remnant of My flock"- the Angel of Israel is likened to a shepherd in Ps. 80:1; Is. 63:9-11 etc.

v. 4 "I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them"- rulers who would genuinely care for Israel like the master shepherd, the Angel, did. Jeremiah was frequently moved to lament the false shepherds of Israel, which is understandable if the Angel shepherd of Israel inspired Jeremiah. He would have been deeply hurt at his flock being left to ruin by those to whom He had delegated His shepherding role (cp. how in Is. 63:9-11 both the Angel and Moses appear to be the shepherd that led Israel).

v. 5 "I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper". Zech. 6:12 interprets this as a reference to Zerubbabel: "the man whose name is the branch. . . shall build the temple of the Lord". Zerubbabel being a king-priest was in the kingly line, and thus can correctly be called a king in the line of David (Matt. 1:12; Lk. 3:7; 'Sheshbazzar' of Ezra 1:8 is the Babylonian equivalent of 'Zerubbabel'; Ezra 3:8 describes his brothers as "priests and Levites"). Great prince Nehemiah humbly entered Jerusalem incognito on an ass (Neh. 2:11-15)- it is a wild speculation that Zerubbabel did the same, and thus provided a primary basis for Zech. 9:9 "Thy king cometh unto thee (also unrecognized, in the case of Jesus entering spiritually ruined Jerusalem). . . lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass".

v. 7,8 "They shall no more say, The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, The Lord liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them" (primarily fulfilled by the Babylonian policy of scattering their captives among other nations they conquered- hence the existence of the Samaritans in Israel). The Angel brought Israel out of Egypt- and was also responsible for their regathering from Babylon.

v. 11 The Babylonian captivity was to be because "in My house have I found their wickedness, saith the Lord". The Angel that dwelt in the temple could call it "My house".

v. 14 "They are all of them unto Me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah"- both of whom were visited and destroyed by Angels. Similarly the Angels would bring judgement on Jerusalem

v. 15,16 "The Lord of Hosts "(Angels). This title of God is common in these prophecies.

## **Chapter 24**

v. 1 "Two baskets of figs were set before the temple of the Lord"; one representing the apostate Jews who remained in the land, and the other those who went to Babylon and later revived spiritually. We have seen that an Angel dwelt literally in the temple. This vision of two groups of Jews standing before an Angel is probably the basis of the vision of Zech. 3, where Joshua and the Jews eager to rebuild Jerusalem stand before the Angel, with the satan standing there too. 'Satan' is often associated with apostate Jews in the New Testament.

v. 5 "The God of Israel" (Jacob)- Angelic language.

v. 6 "I will set Mine eyes (Angels) upon them for good"

v. 7 "I will give them an heart to know Me"- the Angels acting directly on a man's heart.

v. 10 "The land that I gave unto them and to their fathers"- done by the Angel.

## **Chapter 25**

v. 11 "This whole land shall be a desolation". The Angels of Zech. 1:11 reported that "all the earth (land- of Israel) sitteth still and is at rest" (cp. also Jer. 30:10), indicating that they were responsible for the state of the land.

## **Chapter 29**

This chapter stresses the Angelic title "Lord of Hosts" (v. 8,17,21,25)

v. 10 "I will visit you" (God manifestation through the Angels) "after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon". Notice the further similarity with the visiting of the Jews by the Angel at the Exodus.

The use of Exodus language in both Isaiah and the other prophets regarding the return from captivity creates a link between them and Isaiah. This means that Isaiah has a dual application

to both Hezekiah's time and also the restoration (how else can the Cyrus passages be satisfactorily understood?). For more evidence of this, see the appendix.

The similarity of language makes the equation look like:

Angel visiting Israel in Egypt= Angel saving Judah from Assyria in Hezekiah's time= Angel saving Judah from the Babylonian captivity.

v. 12 "Then shall ye call upon Me, and ye shall go and pray unto Me, and I will hearken unto you"- prayer to God manifest in the Angel.

v. 14 "I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places, whither I have driven you, saith the Lord: and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive". All this was the work of the Angel.

v. 19 "They have not hearkened to My words, saith the Lord, which I sent unto them by My servants the prophets"- Angels inspiring the word of God.

### **Chapter 31**

v. 28 "Like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict, so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the Lord".

The interpretation of Jer. 1:11 in 'Angels and the word of God' in Chapter 8 shows that the watchers here are Angels.

v. 31 "I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah". Will the future covenant with Israel be made through Angels? Or is this regarding the new covenant that the Angels arranged in Christ? See 'Angels and the end of the Law' in Chapter 12 for details of how separate groups of Angels instituted both the Law and Christian dispensation.

v. 32 "Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt". This covenant was given by the Angel at Sinai. "Which My covenant they break; and should I (therefore) have continued an husband unto them?" (AVmg. ). This associates the Angel with marrying Israel, and would explain the passages in Ez. 16,20 and elsewhere which speak of God falling in love with Israel and being flattered by their love. The implication in these passages is that God made an emotional decision in 'proposing' to Israel at Sinai. Such language is far better suited to Angels than to God Himself. The Angel here in v. 32 seems to be saying that His divorcing Israel would be justified- and as we see later in Hosea, God did divorce Israel. This contradicts- apparently- God's personal abhorrence of divorce. The situation appears less contradictory if it is recognized that the Angels actually divorced Israel, with God looking on and accepting the reason for the Angel's action. Mal. 2:14 brings this out: "The Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant". This "wife of thy youth" cannot be God Himself- seeing that He is witnessing between Israel and this other party. It is fitting if she therefore represents the Angel, whom Israel married in her national youth at Sinai, where the Angel made the covenant with Israel to constitute Himself "the wife of thy covenant". It should be



remembered that Malachi was prophesying in the same context of the restoration as Jeremiah. The Jeremiah passage shows that just before the captivity God, manifest in the Angel, considered divorcing them, and He thought similarly after the restoration too, according to Malachi. "The God of Israel. . . the Lord of Hosts (Angelic titles) saith that if He hate here, put her away" (AV: "The Lord hateth putting away". The ambiguity here seems designed)). This is the same idea as Jer. 31:32- the Angel saying He would be justified in divorcing Israel, although He did not want to.

v. 33 "I will put My Law in their inward parts". The Law was given by Angels; again, notice the action of Angels on the human heart. The word is soon to be placed in Israel's stony hearts- and the power of the Spirit Angels will be operative in this.

". . . and will be their God". The Angel will still be "the God of Israel" in the Kingdom; or will He be replaced by Christ?

v. 36 "If those ordinances depart from before Me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before Me for ever"- the Angel of Israel will always preserve them.

## 11-2 Angels In Ezekiel

### **EZEKIEL**

The primary fulfilment of Ezekiel too is in the restoration from Babylon. The great emphasis on the Angel-cherubim shows the importance of the Angels in it. The Cherubim of chapter 1 "came out of the north" (v. 4). "The North" in the prophets often refers to "the north country" of Babylon. Is the whole vision primarily describing the Angels coming from Babylon, with the wheels "upon the earth" (v. 15) representing natural Israel under Angelic control? Thus "when the living creatures (Angels) went, the wheels went by them" (v. 19), due to the Angelic inspiration of the Jews and their touching the hearts of men like Cyrus, Ezra and Nehemiah "according to the good hand (Angel) of . . . God upon" them; "the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels" (v. 20). Remember that the Angels are the vehicles of God's Spirit. The visions of the glory progressively removing from the temple show the Angel departing from Jerusalem, and then in chapters 40-48 the glory Angel returns to a re-built Jerusalem. Recall how the Angel in Ex. 33 and 34 is also described as the "glory". What other primary application can chapters 1 and 40-48 have? The exact dimensions of the temple given in Ezekiel recall Zech. 1:16 and 2:11, where the Angel accurately measures Jerusalem in preparation for the rebuilding of the temple. In the same way as it is possible to argue that Christ's second coming in AD70 was described in detail but was postponed to the last days because of Israel's lack of spiritual response, it may be that Ezekiel's visions of the temple were what should have been achieved during the restoration, but because of the feeble spiritual response of the Jews during and after the restoration, as lamented by Malachi, Zechariah and Nehemiah, the full glory of the temple which God intended was postponed until Christ's return in our last days.

Ezekiel's familiar prophecies of Israel's regathering thus have their primary fulfilment in the restoration. Ez. 36:36 is obviously relevant: "The heathen that are left round about you (the other nations that the Babylonians had placed in Israel) shall know that I the Lord build the

ruined places" (by the miraculous rebuilding of the temple amidst great opposition). 37:14 alludes directly back to the vision of the Angel-cherubim's spirit being placed in the "wheels" of natural Israel: "I (the Angel) shall put My spirit in you, and ye shall live". There are many links discernible between Ezekiel and Zechariah, as they both prophesy concerning the same scattering and restoration of Israel. Just two examples:

<i>Ezekiel</i>	<i>Zechariah</i>
36:29 "I will also save you from all your uncleanness: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you".	9:17 "Corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids. . . how great is His goodness" (in forgiveness).
37:16 "Judah. . . the children of Israel. . . Joseph, the stick of Ephraim. . . all the house of Israel"	10:6 "The house of Judah. . the house of Joseph. . they of Ephraim"

## 11-3 Angels In Zechariah

### 11-3-1 Zechariah Chapters 1-3

The first half of this prophecy is packed with Angelic language and insight into exactly how the Angels scattered and restored the Jews. The allusions to Angelic activity appear to diminish in the second half of the prophecy, as the emphasis shifts away from the primary fulfilment in the restoration to the more glorious regathering of Israel and the establishment of the Kingdom.

### Zechariah Chapter 1

v. 3 "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts (Angels); Turn ye unto Me, saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the Lord of Hosts".

The triple repetition of "Lord of Hosts" clearly points towards the Angels. 'Turning' back to God has the implication of patching up a marriage: "If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again?. . . yet return again unto Me, saith the Lord" (Jer. 3:1). This is similar to Jer. 31:32 and Mal. 2:14 already considered, where again in an Angelic context God, through the Angel, implies He would be justified in divorcing Israel.

Mal. 3:7 seems a parallel passage : "Even from the days of your fathers (cp. Zech. 1:2,4,5) ye re gone away from Mine ordinances (given by an Angel), and have not kept them. Return unto Me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of Hosts" (Angels).

v. 4 "The former prophets have cried, saying, Thus saith the Lord of Hosts"- Angels responsible for inspiration. "They did not hear"- alluding to Jer. 34:14, where the context is about the keeping of bondmen. This was a problem during the restoration period (Neh. 5:1-12).

v. 6 "Like as the Lord of Hosts (Angels) thought to do unto us. . so hath He dealt with us"- as if the idea came into the Lord's mind and He decided to act on it; the language of limitation, surely, seeing the 'logos' was with God Himself from the beginning.

v. 8-11 "A man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees"- defined in v. 10,11 as an Angel: "O my Lord, What are these? And the Angel that talked with me said. . . they answered the Angel of the Lord that stood among the myrtle trees". The red, speckled and white horses behind him (1:8; 6:2-7) would therefore also appear to be ridden by Angels- indeed they are called "the four spirits (Angels; Ps. 104:4) of the Heavens" in 6:5. The horse riders of Rev. 6 are clearly based on this vision in Zech. 6, and they would therefore be Angels. Zech. 6:5 describes the horses as "standing before the lord of the whole earth"- the mighty Angel of the Cherubim that stands for the land (earth) of Israel. In 1:8 they are behind Him, although He then sends them out to survey the state of the land of Israel. They return to Him, reporting that "we have walked to and fro throughout the earth (land), and behold, all the earth sitteth still and is at rest". Is there any reason to doubt that these Angels literally walked about in the land, albeit unseen, at a similar speed to which we walk? They walked "to and fro" because it is not in their ability to know the exact situation of a country just from a cursory glance. The comment of the Angel on this was: "I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease" (v. 15)- that were sitting at rest in God's land. This scenario is similar to that in 1 Kings 22, where Angels come and go from God, reporting back information and receiving commands, showing how much the Angel in the myrtle trees, "the Lord of all the earth" (land), was a representation of God Himself.

v. 12 "The Angel of the Lord answered and said, O Lord of Hosts, how long wilt Thou not have mercy on Jerusalem"- an Angel praying 'O God of us Angels. . '? Angels have the same problems grappling with time periods as we do! Notice it was the "Lord of Hosts" (Angels) who "had indignation these threescore and ten years" against Jerusalem.

v. 13 "And the Lord (of Hosts) answered the Angel that talked with me with good words and comfortable words". These words of comfort therefore came from a "comforter"- the title of Israel's Angel (see Chapter 13). There must surely be a highly significant connection here with Is. 40, the start of Isaiah's prophecies concerning the restoration:

"Comfort ye My people, saith your God" (Is. 40:11)- the God of Israel was manifested through an Angel. "Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her appointed time (the 70 years) is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned" (40:2). Zechariah explains how the Angels spoke comfortably to Jerusalem, enabling the restoration. "Comfortably" means literally 'to the heart'- and we have seen that the Angel, "the good hand of. . God" acted upon the hearts of Ezra and Nehemiah, stirring up the spirit of Cyrus, to enable the restoration. Nehemiah actually means 'Comfort of Yah'; 'Nehemiah ye, Nehemiah ye My people'. The Angel spoke comfort to Jerusalem through the words and work of Nehemiah.

Jerusalem had by the end of 70 years " received of the Lord's hand (the Angel) double for all her sins". Is. 40 can therefore be seen as the Angel preparing the way for Cyrus' decree. This is confirmed by the similarities between Is. 45 concerning Cyrus and Is. 40:

<i>Isaiah 40</i>	<i>Isaiah 45</i>
v. 3,4 "Prepare ye the way... make straight in	v. 1,2,13 "Thus saith the Lord to Cyrus. . I

the desert a highway. . . the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain".

will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight. . . I will make straight all his ways. . he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives"

Notice too the emphasis in both chapters on the natural creation.

Indeed, Cyrus is closely identified with the Angel using him; "He is my shepherd. . . saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built" (Is. 44:28), exactly as the Angel-shepherd (Is. 63:9-11; Ps. 80:1) of Israel said. This explains why an Angel can be called "the prince of Persia" in Dan. 10:13. Is it an 'undesigned coincidence' (not that any exist in Holy Scripture anyway) that John the baptist and his disciples (cp. Elijah's school of prophets) are called Angels (Mal. 3:1; Lk. 7:24)? It is as if the same Angel worked through Nehemiah and Cyrus to "prepare. . . the way" as worked through John years later.

Malachi 4 is relevant to all this. It speaks of "The Lord of Hosts" (Angels); notice the triple repetition of this phrase in the few verses of the chapter, and the reference to this Lord giving the Mosaic Law in v. 4; which was Angelic work. The Angel says that the day was coming upon Israel when the earth (land) would be smitten with a curse (4:6), and a day of fiery trial would result in them not being left "root nor branch" (4:1). These are both clear titles of Christ. The Angel can change His mind, we know. It seems that the Angel is threatening to totally cast off Israel and leave them without even the hope of Christ, the root and branch which had previously been promised to Israel in their times of lowest spiritual ebb (e. g. in the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Zechariah) to remind them that although they sinned, a root and branch in the person of Christ would still arise to save them. Such a threat cannot have been made by God Himself, who knew from the beginning the nature of His purpose with natural Israel as the seed of Abraham His friend. This Angel warned Israel that "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet. . lest I come and smite the earth (land) with a curse" (v. 5,6). Elijah being sent by an Angel here in Mal. 4 confirms our interpretation of Is. 40- that Cyrus and the Elijah prophet were sent by an Angel.

v. 14 "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion (the temple) with a great jealousy". "Jealous" being the same Hebrew word translated "zealous", we see the tremendous zeal of the Angels for the restoration. Hence the ability of Ezra and Zerubbabel to achieve so much, seeing that they worked with the Angel. The pathetic, half hearted response of the Jews due to their obsession with materialism as decried by Haggai, Malachi, Ezra and Nehemiah must have been so 'frustrating' for the Angels, who were willing to provide so much power and success for those who would whole-heartedly commit themselves to the work. How many similarities with the new Israel?

v. 16 "I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: My house shall be built in it, saith the Lord of Hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem". As the Jews literally returned to Jerusalem, the Angel too physically returned to "My house"- where He used to live. To some limited degree the Angel must have literally been in the temple- as Ez. 40 prophesied would happen. However, in the same way as the temple described by Ezekiel was not built on the scale intended by the Angels because of Israel's apathy, so maybe the Angelic presence too was greatly diminished to what it could have been. The presence of the temple Angel in Lk. 1 indicates that He was there to some degree. The Lord of Hosts stretched the line upon Jerusalem by the Angel surveying and measuring Jerusalem as described in Zech. 2, Rev. 11 and Ez. 40-47.

v. 18,19 "Four horns. . . which have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem". The number four is associated with the four cherubim Angels- the four types of Angel-controlled punishment explained elsewhere in these studies.

v. 20,21 "Four carpenters. . . are come to fray them (the four horns), to cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up their horn over the land of Judah to scatter it". The four carpenter Angels "frayed" the horn Angels which had scattered Israel. For another example of Angels casting out other Angels from a previous position, see 'Angels and the ending of the Law' in Chapter 12. The Hebrew for 'fray' means 'to hasten (with anxiety), to frighten'. Thus one group of Angels hastens the fulfilment of other Angels' work; hence in v. 12 an Angel prayed to the Lord of Hosts (Angels) encouraging them to end their indignation because the 70 years were ended. Similarly the Comforter Angel says that Jerusalem has "received of the Lord's hand (Angel) double (i. e. too much?) for all her sins" (Is. 40:2), and that her warfare ('appointed time') has ended, or expired. The phrase "appointed time" is the same word translated "host", used concerning the Angels, thus indicating that the period of the captivity was under Angelic control. Thus Dan. 10:1 also points out that "the time appointed was long"- implying too long, seeing that "the thing was true"?. This helps us to explain Angels being in some ways in opposition to each other in Daniel, e. g. the Angel prince of Persia withstanding another Angel in His action because of the need to execute a certain time period first.

## **Zechariah Chapter 2**

This chapter exemplifies the relationships between the Angels in implementing God's purpose. Chapter 1 has described the continuing sins of the Jews, and the Angelic actions in punishing both the Jews (by the four horse-Angels), and their oppressors by the four carpenter-Angels. In chapter 2 an Angel begins to prepare judgements on Jerusalem, but is interrupted by another Angel who describes God's plan to restore Jerusalem, and quickly corrects the impression made on Zechariah by the first Angel.

v. 1 "A man with a measuring line"- the Angel of 1:16; cp. Ez. 40:3; 47:3; Rev. 21:15-17 and the idea of "the measure of a man, that is an Angel". Measuring is a figure of judgement- e. g. "judge not. . . for with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you" (Mt. 7:12); "shall I come unto you with a (measuring) rod?" (i. e. in judgement- 1 Cor. 4:21).

v. 3 continues: "The Angel (i. e. the one doing the measuring) that talked with me went forth, and another Angel went out to meet him, and said unto him, Run (i. e. run back), speak to this young man (the observing Zechariah), saying, Jerusalem shall yet be inhabited".

The Angelic language continues: "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts (Angels). . . I will come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee" (v. 8,10)- i. e. the Angel would physically return to Jerusalem (the temple? In which case this has yet to be fulfilled). The primary fulfilment of this was in the return from Babylon- the Angel led them back across the deserts, physically moving with them, to enter Jerusalem. This would explain the restoration from Babylon in terms of the wilderness journey and the Angel's guidance of them then- because this very same Angel was involved in leading them through a different wilderness, back to Israel.

v. 5 especially has reference to the Angels' part in the restoration: "I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her". As the Angel had been a pillar of protecting fire to Israel previously, He would be to them instead of a

physical wall as they started rebuilding Jerusalem amidst great opposition, with no physical wall to protect them.

### **Zechariah Chapter 3**

A theme of Zechariah's early prophecies is the opposition between groups of people, individuals or Angels who want to rebuild the temple and restore Israel, and adversaries to them. Thus in chapter 1 there are the carpenters opposed to the horns, and the Angel who wants to measure (judge) Jerusalem being countermanded by the Angel who decrees that Jerusalem is to be inhabited in chapter 2. This is continued in chapter 3 by the vision of Joshua and satan standing before the Angel. It is suggested that this 'satan' is an Angel (we are familiar with satan Angels from 1 Chro. 21:1 and Num. 22:22 at least); this is because groups of people, even evil ones, have their viewpoint represented or brought to the notice of the court of Heaven by a satan Angel- a 'devil's advocate', as it were!

The satan Angel "resists" the Angel representing Joshua. The resisting was during the 21 year period when the temple rebuilding was suspended (Ezra 4:24). This corresponds to the 21 days (years), during which the Angel prince of Persia resisted Gabriel's work of rebuilding (Dan. 10:13). Taking this further, this 21 day-year period is the same as the three weeks (21 days) which Daniel spent praying for the rebuilding to commence. Somehow- and the complexity of the situation is well beyond the present writer- the period Daniel spent praying was over-ruled; there is a sense of time in the court of Heaven, and probably will be in the Kingdom too (e. g. Zech. 14:16). His prayer was answered from the first day he prayed (Dan. 10:12), but despite one Angel being eager to answer it, another opposed it. Why. . . how. . . ?

v. 1 "And He shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the Lord, and satan standing at His right hand to resist him". The prayers offered by Joshua the high priest came before the Angel to whom all prayers go initially, in the form of an Angel presenting his case; whilst the satan Angel opposed Him. He was a satan by reason of representing the Samaritan opposition. In our notes on Jer. 24:1 we suggested that the two baskets of figs placed before the Angel in the temple laid the basis for this vision. The baskets represented the faithful and apostate Jews. The Joshua Angel would have represented the faithful Jews eager to rebuild Jerusalem, whilst the satan Angel would represent the apostates whose very existence militated against God answering the prayers of the rest of Israel. Does the same principle apply to Israel after the spirit- that the apostasy and apathy of some hinders the answering of the common prayers of the others? And our common prayer is surely for the second coming and the greater restoration of the true temple.

v. 2 "And the Lord said unto satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee". The Angel-Lord (Jude 9) says that despite the sins of the bad figs in Israel and the opposition of the Samaritans, His choice of rebuilding Jerusalem will stand. Jude 8-10 lends support to this line of interpretation. Jude says that Michael the Archangel did not "bring a railing accusation" against the satan Angel, nor did He "despise dominion" (another Angel-ruler) or "speak evil of glories" (AV:"dignities"; the same word is in Jude 24 "the presence of His glory"- the Angels). This marked lack of aggression which Jude emphasizes shows that there was no conflict between the Angels, as may be wrongly inferred from the severity of the English word "rebuke".

Our demeanour generally, especially with each other when it is necessary to have divergent opinions, or to correct others' ways of executing God's purpose as they see it, should be done

in the same mutually loving spirit. Notice how Jude 8 links the satan of Zech. 3 with a "dominion"- a ruler or 'prince'. The satan Angel who resisted the Joshua Angel for 21 days is "the prince of Persia" in Dan. 10:13. "The Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee; is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?". Another allusion in Jude (v. 23) interprets this: "Others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh". The implication is that the Angel just about decided in favour of saving Jerusalem out of the 'fire' of eternal punishment (cp. Jer. 17:27) for her sins- He had "compassion, making a difference" (v. 22). The "garment spotted by the flesh" must connect with the "filthy garments" worn by Joshua as he came into the Angel's presence.

v. 4,5 The Angel "answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee. . . so they (the Angels that stood by). . . clothed him with garments. And the Angel of the Lord stood by".

Does this mean that the Angel commanded other Angels to arrange Joshua's forgiveness and to end his being "polluted from the priesthood" (due to lack of proven ancestry and the high priestly garments), in order that the prayers he presented should be more powerful? This would explain why he was given both a mitre and garments (v. 5). In passing, why did Zechariah suggest giving him a mitre (v. 5)? The greater Joshua was also clothed with a change of nature by the Angels (as outlined in Rev. 4 and 5).

v. 7 "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts (Angels); If thou wilt walk in My ways, and if thou wilt keep Mine ordinance (of Lev. 18:30 about the abominations of the surrounding nations). . . thou shalt also judge My house. . . My courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these (Angels) that stand by".

"My house" refers to the Angel dwelling in the temple; the offer of places to walk among the Angels is the same idea as being "made equal unto the Angels" in Lk. 20:35,36.

v. 8 "I will bring forth My servant the Branch". As shown earlier, it would seem that an Angel was personally associated with arranging the advent of Jesus, as He arranged that of Zerubbabel, the type. Ps. 80 has a clear Angelic context; it describes the God of Hosts, His right hand, making "the branch. . . strong for Thyself" (i. e. so Jesus could fully reconcile them with God?).

v. 9 "I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. . . saith the Lord of Hosts" (Angels). Again, the ability of an Angel to arrange forgiveness of sins.

## 11-3-2 The Vision Of Seven Lamps

### Zechariah Chapter 4

The vision is of a bowl with seven lamps, fed from a sump of oil in a bowl which is supplied by pipes from two olive trees.

The "seven lamps are the seven eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth" (Zech. 4:2,10)- i. e. they represent the Angels active in the land of Israel to enable the restoration. They are energized by the spirit in the bowl. The candlestick being part of the tabernacle was therefore also a "pattern of things in the Heavens"; it represented how the

Heavenly organization of Angels works. The olive trees "are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth" (v. 14). The "Lord of the whole earth" is the Angel of 3:1 (making "the God of the earth" in Rev. 11:4 also an Angel). The olive trees actually stand by the candlestick, thus making the whole arrangement of bowl, branches, pipes and lamps represent the workings of the one Angel- in the same way as the Angel of Jesus in Rev. 1 can somehow stand in the midst of a candlestick.

The olive being a symbol of leadership (in Judges 9:8 the olive tree was the first tree to be thought of as a national leader), it would be fitting that they represented Joshua and Zerubbabel. However, there is a definite allusion to the Angel cherubim here. "Within the oracle he made two cherubims of olive tree" (1 Kings 6:23); "and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two (olive tree) cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony" (Ex. 25:22). If the olive trees are like the Cherubim, then "the Lord of the whole earth" of Zech. 4:4 which was between them connects with the ark- the Angel that dwelt over the ark, between the Cherubim. Josh. 3:11-13 also makes the connection between the ark and the "Lord of all the earth". The candlestick therefore represents the Angel coordinating the restoration, as well as the other "seven" Angels in His control.

This shows the close association between the Angel-cherubim and Joshua and Zerubbabel. Thus from the Angelic inspiration of these two men, the spirit was supplied to the candlestick through the gold pipes- the faith they showed and their prayers supplied the spirit which enabled the seven lamp Angels to act. However, the close link between the two olive trees and the Cherubim Angels once again shows that the ultimate impetus to our faith, prayers and spirituality comes from God's spirit in the Angels rather than from any personal inspiration we may feel. This idea of the flow of the spirit, enabling God's action through the Angels as a result of our prayers, is found elsewhere:

- "This shall turn to my salvation, through your prayer, and the supply of the spirit of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:19)
- ". . . how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit ("good things", Mt. 7:11) to them that ask Him?" (Lk. 11:13).

## **Of Oil And Olives**

Thus in the vision of the seven lamps, the prayers and faith of Joshua and Zerubbabel were the oil, the spirit that was supplied to activate the seven lamp Angels that went to and fro in the land of Israel preparing the way for the restoration. However, the olive trees were "sons of oil" (4:14 AVmg)- they were anointed with the oil initially. Is this a dim foreshadowing of the birth of the spirit ("sons of oil")? The oil of the spirit is clearly a symbol of the word- the men of the olive trees were sons of the spirit word through their belief in the word of God through Jeremiah concerning the restoration. The olive branches emptied the golden oil out of themselves- if we are to have the same victory of faith as Joshua and Zerubbabel, we have to in the same way pour ourselves out in prayer and golden faith. The amount of oil flowing into the bowl determined the amount flowing out of it to the lamp Angels, seeing that there was a constant flow of the oil in the vision. Thus the amount and intensity of our prayers and spirituality affect how brightly the Angels burn in their zeal to fulfil our requests. Notice too the power of the prayers of a small minority of God's people. The two olive branches which feed the bowl are replaced by Christ, the one branch (Zech. 3:8; 6:12), who would provide the Spirit in abundance so that the true spiritual temple could be built- "the branch. . . shall grow up out of His place, and He shall build the temple of the Lord" (6:12).



It is difficult to relate Rev. 11:1-5 to all this. It is clearly based on this and other visions in Zechariah, but the exact links are elusive. The measuring of the temple in Rev. 11 is similar to that in Zech. 2, which was stopped by the Angel. In Rev. 11 the measuring (for judgement) goes ahead for the Jews but not for the Gentiles. The two witnesses of Rev. 11 are empowered to overcome their adversaries, as Joshua and Zerubbabel were given power to overcome theirs. There are often what appear (superficially?) to be vague allusions to the Old Testament in Revelation, and it is hard to determine their exact significance (e. g. Job 3:21= Rev. 9:6). Maybe the points of contact between Zechariah and Rev. 11 are examples of this? But Rev. 11:4 seems specific: "these are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks". And why two candlesticks when there was only one in Zechariah?

Let us take the rebuke which the Angel gave Zechariah twice (a sign of rebuke often in Scripture- e. g. "Simon, Simon"): "Knowest thou not what these be?" (v. 5,13), the Angel answered Zechariah when he asked what the system of pipes represented. Let us be humble to the Word, let us really accept the potential power of our prayers and truly poured out spirit. Note too the Angel's method of educating Zechariah by asking the question "What seest thou?" (v. 2). Through what mechanism do they open the word of God to us and lead us to concentrate on certain parts of it, as they did to Zechariah?

### 11-3-3 Zechariah Chapters 5- 14

#### **Zechariah Chapter 5**

This seems to be almost in parenthesis, concerning the sins of Israel and ultimately the evils of Judaism and false religion.

#### **Zechariah Chapter 6**

Chapter 3 depicts the Angels of Joshua and the satan Angel standing before the mighty Angel called "the Lord of the whole earth" in 4:14. Chapter 4 shows this same Angel similarly flanked by two olive trees. Chapter 6 has the same "Lord of all the earth" Angel (6:5) flanked by two brass mountains (v. 5 cp. v. 1), with four chariots full of horses being sent out from Him.

'Chariots' and the 'cherubim' are linguistically connected, and thus also connected in Biblical usage- e. g. "He rode upon a cherub (chariot)" (Ps. 18:10). The number four has links with the Angel cherubim; John Thomas <sup>(2)</sup> interprets these "four (chariot) spirits of the Heavens" (6:5) as the same as the four faces of the cherubim. The whole vision is full of Angelic language. "The chariots of God are. . . thousands of Angels" (Ps. 68:17); God makes His Angels spirits (Ps. 104:4). We have mentioned previously that the horses within the chariots also represent Angels (Chapter 3), under the control of the four mighty cherubim Angels. This is similar to Ps. 68:17 describing God's chariots as being full of Angels.

v. 6 "The black horses which are therein go forth into the north country; and the white go forth after them". "The north country" must be Babylon (2:6; Jer. 1:13,14 etc. )- those Angels went to minister to the Jews there and to enable the hearts of the Persian rulers to continue to support the work of rebuilding (or is this looking back to the judgements on Babylon in preparation for Cyrus' decree concerning the restoration?). Another group of Angels went toward the South- i. e. the land of Judah (Ez. 20:46,47).

v. 7 "The bay went forth, and sought to go that they might walk to and fro through the earth: and He (the Angel) said, Get you hence, walk to and fro through the earth. So they walked to and fro through the earth". The "earth" here is probably 'the land' of Israel- which would have included Babylon, at its proper extent from 'sea to sea'. These Angels, the same as those who originally surveyed the whole area by walking "to and fro through the earth"" in 1:10,11, "sought" permission from the co-ordinating Angel to continue their work.

v. 8 "These (two groups of Angels) that go toward the north country (Babylon) have quieted My spirit (Angel) in the north country". The Spirit-Angel that needed quietening in Babylon was perhaps the satan-Angel that was resisting the Angel seeking to further the rebuilding work. He would have gone (literally?) to Babylon to give the "prince of Persia" the idea of banning the rebuilding. The two Angels that quietened Him were those of Dan. 10:12,13- the Joshua-Angel of Zech. 3:1, and Michael who "came to help Me" (Gabriel) in Dan. 10:13. Alternatively, note that Dan. 9:21 describes Gabriel being "caused to fly with weariness"- thus it may have been Gabriel who was 'quieted' or 'given rest' (AVmg. ) in Zech. 6:8, implying He was in Babylon trying to enable the rebuilding but needed the support of the other two Angels.

## **Zechariah Chapter 7**

Notice the frequent references to "the Lord of Hosts" and the Angel returning to His house- where He had dwelt in the temple.

## **Zechariah Chapter 8**

v. 2 "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts (Angels); I was jealous (zealous) for Zion (the temple) with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her with great fury". The Angel's tremendous zeal for the restoration comes bubbling through. No wonder the Kingdom prophecies of Isaiah, Ezekiel and Zechariah could have been fulfilled if only the people had worked together with the Angels to their full potential!

v. 3 "I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem". The physical movement of the Angel back to Jerusalem.

v. 4 "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts (Angels): there shall yet old men and old women dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age". The Angel, v. 3, was to dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, i. e. in the temple. Here in v. 4, old men and women were to do so- showing the Angel's close identification with his charges, such as Anna the prophetess who "departed not from the temple" at the time of Christ. As a result of the Angelic work in restoring Jerusalem, the old people who could remember the temple in its former glory when they were taken captive 70 years previously would return to Jerusalem again.

v. 6 "If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvellous in Mine eyes (Angels)? saith the Lord of Hosts". The Angel is saying 'Because you find it hard to believe what I can really do for you, I might not do it in reality; but don't think My Angels (eyes) can't actually do it if they want to!'

## **Zechariah Chapter 9**

v. 14 "The Lord shall be over them"- as the Angels went over David beyond the mulberry trees (2 Sam. 5:24) and as the Angel in the cloud was over Israel in the wilderness. "His arrow shall go forth as lightning"- Angel cherubim language. He "shall go with whirlwinds of the South"- the group of Angels sent into "the south" (i. e. Judah) in Zech. 6:6.

v. 16 "The Lord their God shall save them in that day as the flock of His people"- the Angel is elsewhere styled a shepherd (Is. 63:9-11; Ps. 80:1). "The lord of Hosts (Angels) hath visited His flock the house of Judah" (10:3). Similarly, Israel "went their way as a flock, they were troubled because there was no shepherd" (10:2)- i. e. the Angel was not with them.

### **Zechariah Chapter 10**

v. 10 "I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria" (Babylon- they are frequently used interchangeably). Notice the word "again"- as the Angel brought Israel out of Egypt the first time, so He would do it again in the restoration.

### **Zechariah Chapter 11**

Earlier it was suggested that the "I" referred to in this chapter is concerning the Angel, as it was an Angel who broke the covenant with Israel, as described in Zech. 11:10.

### **Zechariah Chapter 12**

v. 4 "In that day. . . I will open Mine eyes (Angels) upon the house of Judah"- cp. Michael 'standing up' for Israel in the last days (Dan. 12:1).

v. 5 This shows how Angels will be very much in evidence on earth at the time of Jerusalem's surrounding by armies and Armageddon: "The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the Lord of Hosts (Angels) their God". Who this 'God' refers to is defined in v. 8: "He that is feeble amongst them (the "inhabitants of Jerusalem") at that day shall be as David, and the house of David shall be as God, as the Angel of the Lord (which will go) before them". This implies that the inhabitants of Jerusalem will have the same power as the hosts of Angels which will have been seen fighting "before them". Thus the Jews will "walk up and down in His Name" (Zech. 10:12) as the Angels are now said to do (Zech. 1:11; Job 1:7).

### **Zechariah Chapter 13**

v. 7 "Awake O sword ,against My shepherd. . . smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered". The shepherd here clearly refers to Jesus, but the shepherd elsewhere in Zechariah refers to the Angel- another proof that there was one specific Angel in the Old Testament that foreshadowed Jesus.

## **11-3-4 Angels In Haggai**

### **HAGGAI**

If Judah had followed what the Angels made potentially possible, they would have worked zealously to rebuild the temple according to Ezekiel's specifications. Note the word play in Hag. 1:13,14: the *messenger* (Heb. *malak*- the word for Angel, the Angel who was behind the

words of the prophets) gives a message (*malakut*) to the people to "work" (*melaka*). It's rather like making a word play in English between 'word' and 'work'- if the word of the prophets, the word of the Angels, had been taken seriously, the people would've worked. And so with us- if we perceive the spiritual possibilities which the work of the Angels is setting up through God's word, then we will work, doing our part to bring it all to realization.

The Angels were zealous for the restoration to proceed, and therefore influenced the people as far as they could to be zealous for it too. They did this in various ways- e. g. by direct rebuke through the prophets whom they inspired: "Thus speaketh the Lord of Hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built" (1:2). The context of this, according to Ezra 5:1, was of the people losing heart in the rebuilding because of the opposition from the Samaritans and the temporary ban on the work from Babylon. They argued: 'We'll do God's work if we get the chance, but this ban is clearly a sign from God not to go ahead'- when really it was their self-satisfaction with their "ceiled houses" (1:4) that made them give up so easily. But the Angels were eager to go ahead! The paltry excuses for shirking the Lord's work today are no better. As ever, they stem from the apathy born of materialism, but are wrapped up in pseudo-spiritual reasoning. The satan Angel that caused the 21 day-year delay in the rebuilding (Dan. 10:12,13; Zech. 3:1 etc. ) was maybe representing the apathy of the Jews as well as the opposition of the Samaritans in the court of Heaven. The two Angel chariots sent to overcome this opposition (see notes on Zech. 6) would therefore have tried to influence the Jews to be more genuinely committed to Zion's cause. Part of their work was in the inspiring of Haggai's words (n. b. the many references to "the Lord of Hosts" in Haggai). Again, the context of Ezra 5:1 must be remembered- Haggai prophesied to encourage the people during the 21 year cessation of the rebuilding (details in Ezra 4).

Despite the apathy of the people, the Angel's encouragement was tremendous: "Be strong, O Zerubbabel. . be strong, O Joshua. . be strong, all ye people. . and work: for I am with you, saith the Lord of Hosts" (Angels)- 2:4. "My Spirit (Angel) remaineth among you" "(2:5), just as the same Angel was with them "when ye came out of Egypt". And with us too.

In common with Ezekiel, Zechariah and Isaiah, Haggai also speaks of the possible glory that could have been at the restoration, but which has now been postponed until the second coming: "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts: Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the Heavens, and the earth. . and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts (Angels). . . the glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts" (2:6,7,9). Compare this with what actually happened- the old men wept because the new rebuilt temple was nothing like the former temple.

## 11-4 Angels In Ezra And Nehemiah

### EZRA

#### EZRA Chapter 1

v. 1 "The Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus". The Angel acted directly on his heart (or on his guardian Angel?).

## **EZRA Chapter 5**

v. 5 "The eye of their God (the Angel) was upon the elders of the Jews, that they could not cause them to cease" (building).

## **EZRA Chapter 6**

v. 22 "The Lord had made them (Israel) joyful, and turned the heart of the king of Assyria unto them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel" (the God of Jacob- an Angelic term for the Angel that stands for Israel). Note the emphasis on the Angel directly working on human hearts.

## **EZRA Chapter 7**

The theme of the Angel acting on the heart is common here: "The king granted (Ezra) all his request, according to the hand (Angel) of the Lord his God upon him. . . blessed be the Lord God of our fathers (the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was an Angelic term), which hath put such a thing as this in the king's heart. . . I was strengthened as the hand (Angel) of the Lord my God was upon me" (v. 6,9,27,28).

## **EZRA Chapter 8**

v. 31 "We departed from the river of Ahava. . . to go unto Jerusalem; and the hand (Angel) of our God was upon us"- on the dangerous journey back across the desert with no military escort, carrying the temple treasures. As the Angel was with them from the Red Sea to Jerusalem at the Exodus, so He was again.

## **EZRA Chapter 10**

v. 11 "Now therefore make confession unto the Lord God of your fathers"- confession of sin to an Angel.

## **NEHEMIAH**

Notice the same emphasis on the Angel acting directly on the hearts of the Jews and Persians- 2:8,12,18; 4:6.

The Angel Gabriel explained to Daniel that he had to battle with both the rulers of Persia *and Greece* in order to bring about the fulfilment of Daniel's prayer and Jeremiah's prophecy- in the command for the Jews to return to Judah. By appreciating the local politics which the Angel brought about between Persia and Greece, we can better understand why Gabriel had to manipulate *Greece* in order for the *Persians* to allow the Jews to return, and even to encourage them to do so: "From the point of view of the Persian king a strong pro-Persian Judea was a major threat to the Greek coastal lifeline, and as long as the Greeks dominated the coast and Egypt he supported a strong Judean province headed by a Judean-Persian official and peopled by a pro-Persian population, most of whose families were hostages in Babylon and Persia"<sup>(1)</sup>.

## Notes

(1) Othniel Margalith, "The Political Role of Ezra as Persian Governor," *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 98:1 (1986):111.

# CHAPTER 12: ANGELS AND JESUS

## 12-1 Angels And Jesus

### Great Unity

Both the Angels and the Lord Jesus are called God's "Holy One" (Dan. 4:13,17; Acts 2:27). This isn't to say that Jesus is an Angel; rather are we showing the solidarity between Himself and the Angels. The closeness of the Angels to Jesus is shown by the fact that they literally bore Him up whenever He tripped against a stone. No wonder therefore that He had such temptation to misuse this great protection; His conquering of the temptation to make use of such Angelic interest in Him at His arrest and crucifixion appears an even greater victory once this is appreciated. The fact that the Cherubim and the mercy seat were made of the same material shows the unity between Christ and the Angels in God's purpose (Ex. 25:19); thus the stone, representing Christ, has the seven Angel eyes of God embedded in it in Zech. 3:9. Our Lord's words "These things saith he (Jesus) that hath the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars (both Angelic symbols), I know thy works" (Rev. 3:1) suggest that He is so closely united with the Angels that it is through their presence everywhere and reporting back to him that He is able to know all our ways. Rev. 3:5 follows on in the context of the Angels and Jesus uniting to declare our verdict at the judgment: "I will confess his name before my Father, and before His Angels". It is possible to show that the Angels are described as the "fellows" of Christ by a careful comparison of Zech. 3:4 and 8, where the dedication of the High Priest ceremony is performed on Christ (in vision) by His "fellows" or Angels. Although it is not mentioned in Zech. 3, that ceremony included anointing. Thus Heb. 1:9 describes Jesus as being anointed "above thy fellows" in the context of proving His superiority to the Angels- i. e. His fellows. He speaks of how He personally will send fire on the land of Israel (Lk. 12:49), and yet in Revelation it is the Angels who pour out fire upon the land- He is directly manifested through their work. Note too how the Lord, straight after His resurrection, repeats verbatim the Angels words to Mary: "Woman, why are you weeping?" (Jn. 20:13,15). Likewise, when He appears to the women in Mt. 28:9,10, He repeats the Angel's words of Mt. 28:5,7. This indicates the unity which He felt with them especially after His resurrection. When the Angel 'brought Peter forth out of the prison', Acts 12:17 records this as "the Lord" (Jesus) doing so (RV).

Yet the Angels are not to be seen as equal to Christ. Even in his mortality he had power over them to some degree. His authoritative "Peace, be still" was probably primarily addressed to the Angels controlling the natural elements. The reference to Angels 'ministering' to Him after the temptations suggests their inferiority. Thus He could summon twelve legions of Angels at the time of His greatest passion

There are evident links between John 1 and Genesis 1; God (the Angels) made the world in Gen. 1; and in Jn. 1 the word does the same with regard to the new creation, thus suggesting that Christ has exactly mirrored the role of the Angels in regard to the natural creation. Adam and Eve heard "The voice of the Lord God (i. e. an Angel) walking in the garden", implying that this voice had a corporeal manifestation; i. e. there was an Angel almost called "The voice of the Lord". This would seem to be Christ's personal Angel, seeing He was called "The word made flesh" in John 1. His closeness to them is shown by the parable of the lost coin; when the woman "hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together . . . likewise. . . there is joy in the presence of the Angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Lk. 15:9,10); here Jesus likens Himself to the woman rejoicing over her lost coin in His joy at our repentance, thus making the Angels have the same relationship to Him as friends and close neighbours.

It seems that Jesus has His own personal Angels- He returns "with all His holy Angels"; the Angel of the altar (Christ) would also appear to be specifically connected with Him (Rev. 16:7), perhaps marshalling these Angels for Christ. So close are Christ and the Angels and such His respect and love for them, that it seems that Jesus will even feel ashamed or embarrassed before them when He comes to consider one of the unworthy at the day of judgement- Luke 12:8 implies that the same feeling of embarrassment and shame which the unworthy have now when backing out of preaching will be felt by Jesus when He looks on them at the judgement. And it is quite possible that one of the things which motivated our Lord to continue hanging on the cross was the thought of praising God in the midst of the Angels at His ascension: "My praise shall be of Thee in the great congregation (of Angels?): I will pay my vows before them that fear Him".

John 1:50,51 give another picture of the Angels' role in the ministry of Jesus: "Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. And He saith unto them, Verily, Verily I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see Heaven open, and the Angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man". The allusion to Jacob's vision of Gen. 28:18 is clear. That vision was to show Jacob the extent of Angelic care of Him- and this was repeated for Jesus. However, the context of v. 50 is that Nathanael marvelled at Jesus' knowledge. Jesus seems to be saying that they would see even greater spiritual revelation ("Heaven open") because of the ministry of the Angels to Him, ministering spiritual knowledge to Jesus to communicate to His disciples. This would imply that apart from directly ministering spiritual revelation to Jesus, the Angels also imparted specific 'physical' knowledge to Jesus- e. g. about Nathanael under the fig tree.

Angelic unity with the risen Lord Jesus is brought out by a comparison of the words spoken to the women after the resurrection. Mk. 16:7 has the Angels telling the women: "He is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him, as he told you". But Mt. 28:7 has the Angel saying: "He is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. Lo, I [the Angel] have told you". Perhaps what the Angel said was: "... as he told you...Lo, I have told you", thus bringing out the new unity between the risen Christ and the Angel.

## **Angels And The Cross**

The lamb killed in Eden to provide skins was a type of Christ (Rev. 13:8); and the strong hints that the actions of God in Genesis were nearly all performed by Angels that we have seen previously, suggests that in the type the sacrifice of Christ on the cross was also co-

ordained by the Angels. "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts" (Zech. 13:7). "Lord of Hosts" is definitely an Angelic title; thus this verse indicates that not only is Christ the Angels' "fellow", but that they arranged for the 'sword' of death to awake against him. The Messianic Ps. 38:2 describes Christ reflecting on the agony of the cross: "Thy hand (an Angelic phrase) presseth me sore".

Angelic involvement in the crucifixion may help explain the confusing change of pronouns which must be apparent to any serious student of Isaiah 53. The first six verses appear to be an account of the Jewish and Christian believer's feelings about the Lord's sacrifice, and use the pronouns "We. . our". Verses 7-13 are in the first person: "For the transgression of My people was he stricken. . . therefore will I divide him a portion" (Is. 53:8,12). "My people" suggests that the speaker here is Michael, the Angel of Israel.

## 12-2 Angelic Strengthening Of Jesus

### **PSALM 80: ANGELIC STRENGTHENING OF JESUS**

How exactly "God was in Christ" is beyond our ability to define. Yet Jesus being of our nature and having our same battle against sin received strengthening from God against this which must have some similarities with how God helps us. His Divine Sonship without doubt played a large part in this strengthening; and yet I suggest the Angels also worked in His life to strengthen Him in the battle against sin. It is attractive to see the Angelic ministering to Him after the wilderness temptations as being both natural and spiritual refuelling. The Angelic strengthening of Jesus is brought out most clearly in Psalm 80, which has a definite Angelic bearing:

v. 1 "O shepherd of Israel"- the Angel acted as a shepherd to Israel in the wilderness, as Is. 63:9-11 states specifically.

"Thou that leadest Joseph. . before Ephraim"- the Angel in the pillar of cloud led Israel, going before the first tribe in the order of march.

"That dwellest between the cherubims"- the great Angel that dwells literally over or in the ark.

v. 2 "Stir up thy strength"- language of Angelic limitation? God is essentially strength in constant activity.

v. 3 "God"- not Yahweh.

v. 4 "God of Hosts" (Angels).

v. 3,7 "Cause Thy face to shine", referring to the Angel in the tabernacle shining forth.

v. 8 "Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: Thou hast cast out the heathen and planted it"- this was the work of the Angels.



v. 14 "God of Hosts (Angels) look down from Heaven (the Angels are God's eyes), and behold, and visit this vine"- begging the Angel to literally return from Heaven to dwell in the land?

v. 19 "God of Hosts" (Angels).

This Angel is asked to give special attention to "the branch that Thou madest strong for Thyself. . let Thy hand (an Angelic phrase) be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the Son of man whom thou madest strong for Thyself" (v. 15,17). Christ is the branch (Is. 11:1; Jer. 23:5), and in any case both the branch and the "Son of man" are made strong for the Angel's own purpose ("for thyself"). This Angelic making strong is surely alluded to when the Angel "strengthened Him" in the garden (Luke 22:43). This chimes in with the popular idea that Angelic presence was withdrawn from Jesus on the cross- hence His cry primarily to the Angel "My God (strength), my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Mt. 27:46); perhaps fulfilling the crucifixion prophecy of Ps. 31:22 "I said in my haste, I am cut off from before Thine eyes (Angels): nevertheless Thou heardest the voice of My supplications when I cried unto Thee". Ps. 22:19 also seems relevant: "But be not far from me, O Lord (remember the physical coming and going of the Angels): O my strength (cp. "My God, My God"- the Angel), haste Thee to help Me". Verse 21 has the language of the Cherubim: "Thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns" (Cherubim)- as if the Angel to whom He prayed dwelt in the midst of the Cherubim. We have earlier suggested that such a mighty Angel was probably the personal Angel of Christ. Gen. 49:23,24 confirms all this: "The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him (a prophecy of the Lord's sufferings): but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:) even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee. . ". There are similarities here with Moses' hands being held up by Aaron and Hur until Amalek was destroyed- an exhausted man with both hands upheld above his head until the great enemy of God's people (cp. sin) was destroyed must recall the suffering of Christ on the cross. The many Angelic titles in these verses ("God of Jacob. . of thy fathers") are made all the more relevant by being mentioned in the context of Gen. 48:15,16, which is the clearest association of them with the Angel. Thus it was through the Angels that Christ was strengthened on the cross.

However, it is likely that Jesus did not over-use this Angelic strengthening against sin, in the same way as He refused the (legitimate?) pain killer at the cross. Some words in Psalm 91 may just possibly imply this, although it is conceded that the following interpretation is tenuous: "He shall give His Angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the adder shalt thou trample under feet" (v. 11-13). It is suggested that this be read as a description of the Angels spiritually protecting Christ against sin, especially during His wilderness temptations. "Keep" in v. 11 is the same word used in Gen. 3:24, and thus alludes to the Angels keeping men in the way to the tree of life- not physically but spiritually preserving them. The figure of dashing the foot against a stone suggests the idea of spiritual stumbling against a "rock of offence" or stumblingstone. The Angels bore Jesus up to help Him avoid these. The treading underfoot of the adder must be another connection with Genesis 3; the seed of the woman trampling sin underfoot. This conquest of sin by Jesus was therefore partly due to Angelic strengthening of Him. Through them "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself", making Christ a sin-offering for us.

It was noted earlier (Ch. 7) that one example of the Angels changing their mind was in the fact that the Angel promised never to break the covenant with Israel (Judges 2:1 etc. ) and yet did so (Ez. 16:59-62; Zech. 11:10). The Angelic context of Zech. 11 is interesting. If the "I" in this chapter is God manifest in an Angel- which it must be, seeing that "I. . . break My covenant which I had made", and God Himself cannot be associated with such a change of purpose- we see that the Angel was in control of Christ's sacrifice: "I took my staff, even beauty (Christ) and cut it asunder (on the cross); that I might break My covenant". Thus the Angel used Christ's sacrifice to break the covenant. He then seems to merge Himself with Christ: "And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price (Jesus never personally said this as far as we know, but the Angel could have effectively said so to the Jews). . . so they weighed for My (Christ's- and the Angel) price thirty pieces of silver. . . and I (the Angel working through Judas) took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter".

## Care And Encouragement

It would appear from Is. 49:2 that Jesus was protected and specially guided by the Angel in the first thirty years of his life: "In the shadow of His hand (an Angelic phrase) hath He hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in His quiver hath He hid me". The word 'quiver' comes from the word for an astrologer, in the sense of being something that conceals knowledge. Thus the Angel hid the true identity of Jesus, so that "flesh and blood" alone could not recognize that He was God's Son (Matt. 16:13-17). We have seen that "the Lord" that passed by Moses and hid him with his hand in the cleft of the rock was an Angel. This strengthens the interpretation of God's hand here as being an Angel passing by rather than God Himself in person covering Moses. By all means compare this incident with 1 Kings 19:5-12, where Elijah had the same experience as Moses- "a cave" in v. 9 ="the cleft"; the same one as in Ex. 33:22. It was also this Angel which gave Jesus the words of God which He spake: "The Lord of Hosts (of Angels) is His Name. . . I have put My words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand (an Angelic phrase), that I may. . . say unto Zion, Thou art My people" (Is. 51:15,16). "The Lord God (the Angels) hath given Me (Jesus) the tongue of the learned. . . He wakeneth (Me) morning by morning, He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned. The Lord God hath opened mine ear (to understand about His crucifixion?), and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters. . . (in obedience to what the Angels told Me)", Is. 50:4-6.

Much insight is given into the intense humanity of our Lord by reflecting upon His relationship with His Angel in times of depression, as outlined in the Psalms and suffering servant prophecies. Isaiah 49 shows Christ's depression at Israel's lack of response to the Gospel: "I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent My strength for nought, and in vain" (v. 4). He encourages Himself that "though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord (the Angels), and my God shall be My strength" (Gabriel? 'Strengthener of God'). The Angel then encourages Jesus: "Thus saith the Lord, the redeemer of Israel, His Holy One (an Angelic title), to him whom man despiseth, whom the nation (of Israel) abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, (Gentile) kings shall see and arise. . . because. . . the Holy One of Israel. . . shall choose thee" (v. 7). The Angel encouraged Jesus with the thought that he was pleased with His progress, and could foresee Jesus being a light to the Gentiles as well as to Israel. Thus pleasing the Angels was a great goal for Jesus, and the sense of their presence and interest in His life was a great source of encouragement. Hence on the cross His panic fear of losing their presence: "I said in my haste, I am cut off from before Thine eyes" (Angels, Ps. 31:22). Notice too Christ's great respect of the Angels. This, along with his

honouring of John the baptist, shows the great humility of the one who was greater and more righteous than both John and the Angels.

The same idea is found by a close analysis of Psalm 8. It is quoted in Hebrews 2 to prove Christ's superiority over the Angels. Verses 3-5 therefore show Christ's marvel at how a human like Himself should be considered worthy to have such great Angelic attention. Such was his respect of them: "When I consider Thy Heavens, the work of Thy fingers (the Heavens were created by the Angels; the Law was given by the Angel finger of God writing on the stones), the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; what is man, that Thou art mindful of Him? (why should You think so much about mere Me?) and the son of man (Jesus) that Thou visitest (Angelic language) Him? For Thou hast made Him a little lower than the Angels. . Thou madest Him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands (the Hand of the Lord is Angelic language; they were used to create all things); Thou hast put all things (including the Angels) under His feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field. . "- i. e. the things of the natural creation made and controlled by the Angels.

Psalm 42 has many echoes of the cross, although primarily it refers to David's longing for the tabernacle whilst exiled by Absalom. "My soul thirsteth for God, for the God of the living ones (the Angel in the tabernacle); when shall I come and appear before God (the Angel)?" (v. 2). He reflects how in the past "I went with them to the house of God" (v. 4)- i. e. Bethel, with all its Angelic associations. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" (v. 5)- the same in the Septuagint as Matt. 26:38 "Now is my soul troubled". Jesus rallies Himself: "Hope thou in God (His Angel); for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance"- fulfilled by the Angel appearing to Jesus in Gethsemane (transferring some of the glory of His countenance to Jesus as He did to Moses, so that Christ's arresters initially fell down when they saw Him?). "O my God. . . I will say unto God my rock ("the rock" is an angelic phrase- Gen. 49:24; Dt. 32:4,18), Why hast Thou forgotten Me?" (v. 6,9). Strong defines 'forgotten' as "to be oblivious of from want of memory or attention"- surely Jesus would not accuse His Father of this? It must be the the language of limitation which Jesus could use to Angels. Psalm 89 is a commentary on the promises to David concerning Jesus in 2 Sam. 7. The punishments that were to come on Israel were to come on Jesus, especially in His sufferings on the cross: "Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes" (Ps. 89:32). This was fulfilled in the process of Christ's crucifixion. "Visit" has Angelic connections- it was the Angels who brought about Christ's passion.

## **Strength And Glorification**

It is impossible to exactly determine the amount of Angelic help Jesus received, but the spirit of Christ in the Psalms seems to attribute His final victory over sin and death in large measure to the Angels. This is not, of course, to under-rate the supreme and ultimate personal sacrifice of our Lord. "Now know I that the Lord saveth His anointed (Christ); He will hear Him from His Holy Heaven (the Angel in the temple? (1)) by the strength of the salvation of His right hand" (Ps. 20:6). We have seen that the hand of God represents an Angel. Or again: "The Lord is my strength and shield (as the Angel who gave the promises to Abraham was a shield and reward to him, Gen. 15:1), my heart trusted in Him, and I am helped. . the Lord is his strength, and He is the strength of salvation of His anointed (Christ)" (Ps. 28:7,8). This may also refer to the fact that an Angel raised Jesus from the dead, as well as to the spiritual strengthening they gave Him.

Acts especially stresses that Jesus was "by the right hand of God exalted" from the grave (Acts 2:33; 5:31), and is now at the right hand of God. If the right hand of God refers to the great Angel that represented Jesus in the Old Testament, and also the same Angel of Israel that dwelt between the cherubims (hence the Angel calls Jesus "Israel" in Isaiah), it would be fitting if after being the means of God's upholding of Jesus by His right hand during His ministry (Ps. 63:8), He raised Jesus and then was replaced immediately in His position at God's right hand by Jesus. Isaiah refers to God's taking of Christ's hand to strengthen Him (e.g. 41:13; 42:6). We take someone's hand with one of our hands- so God strengthened Jesus through His hand, and the hand of God is an Angelic phrase. Psalm 80 has a definite Angelic context; God's hand is linked with the "God of Hosts", v. 14, and the planting of the Jewish vineyard (v. 15)- which was done by the Angels at Sinai and in the planting of Israel in their land.

This hand of God made a specific branch "strong for Thyself". This branch was Jesus (Is. 11:1; Jer. 23:5; Zech. 3:8; 6:12). The word for 'strong' is not the normal Hebrew word translated this way. It implies more to be alert, strong minded, and is the same word translated "good courage" used so often by the Angel in assuring Joshua of His support of him. We will see how the Angelic encouragement of Joshua was also repeated to Joshua-Jesus (their names being identical in itself makes Joshua a detailed type of Christ). Thus the strengthening of Joshua foreshadows that of Christ, both of His mind and courage, and also ultimately in His resurrection. It was this kind of mental strength that the Angel gave to Jesus in Gethsemane. The same word is used in Ps. 89:21 concerning the seed of David (the whole Psalm is a commentary on the Davidic promise): "with whom My hand (Angel) shall be established: Mine arm (Angel) also shall strengthen Him". The ultimate strengthening of Christ was in his resurrection, and the Angels being present at the tomb suggests they were responsible for this too. The point has been made that Peter's experience in prison was similar to our Lord's; a Herod willing to please the Jews by persecuting Christians, Passover time, sleeping between two soldiers (cp. two thieves), being smitten on the side, the death of James cp. John the baptist etc. In this parallel Peter being led out of the prison by the Angel would correspond to Christ being resurrected by the Angel.

## **Taking Hold**

Is. 41:9 is quoted in Heb. 2:10,14 about God taking hold of Jesus, His servant. Is. 41:10 continues concerning Jesus, therefore, "Fear thou not; for I am with thee (the Angels' words to Joshua again); be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness" (an Angel). The right hand Angel of God strengthened, upheld and helped Jesus spiritually. His dismay which the verse implies He had was therefore at His feeling of being spiritually inadequate to fulfil His great calling- exactly like Joshua. But as with Joshua, the Angel strengthened Him.

Rev. 4 and 5 describe the important part that the Angels had to play in welcoming Christ into Heaven on His ascension, and in giving Him then His full reward and glory<sup>(2)</sup>. Having been so intensely involved in His every literal movement, this is understandable. Zech. 3:4,5 describes the same scene: "Joshua (Jesus) was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the Angel. And He (the Angel) answered and spake unto those (Angels) that stood before Him saying, Take away the filthy garments (human nature?) from Him. . they (the Angels) set a fair mitre upon His head, and clothed Him with garments. And the Angel of the Lord stood by". Perhaps the one Angel supervising this glorification of Jesus in Heaven was Gabriel, who appears to have been Christ's personal guardian Angel. God raised Jesus by His

own right hand (Acts 2:33)- an Angelic phrase. Angels were visibly associated with Christ's resurrection and ascension.

## 12-3 The Angel Gabriel

The degree to which there was an Angel in Old Testament times specifically representing Christ seems to have been generally overlooked. Even in more general terms, there are references to Angels doing things which elsewhere we are told Jesus did:

- Jesus is described as the redeemer of Israel in Lk. 1:68; 24:21, and passage after passage in the prophets says the same. But very often the language used to describe Israel's redeemer has Angelic hints: Lk. 1:68 says that through Christ God "visited (a word with Angelic connections) and redeemed His people" (Israel).

- Is. 44:6 calls "the Lord of Hosts" (Angels) Israel's redeemer.

- Is. 49:7 calls this redeemer the "Holy One of Israel"- which as we have seen is also Angelic language. There is a connection between the tempting of the Holy One (the Angel Gabriel?) at Massah (Ex. 17:7; Dt. 6:16) and the new Israel tempting Christ (1 Cor. 10:9).

- The arm of the Lord- a title of Christ- is described as awaking (cp. Christ's resurrection), and as being "It which hath dried the (Red) Sea, the waters of the great deep; that hath made a way for the ransomed to pass over" (Is. 51:9,10). This is describing the work of Christ in language applicable to the Angel of the Exodus who brought Israel through the Red Sea.

- Christ is called "The messenger (Heb. 'malak', the Angel) of the covenant" (Mal. 3:1).

- It is quite possible that the Angel of Rev. 10:1 who descends from Heaven in a cloud with a face like the sun, holding the books of judgement is referring to Christ's second coming in person.

- Is. 43:1-5 is full of allusions to the Angel leading Israel through the wilderness into Canaan; "I am. . . the Holy One of Israel, thy (Israel's) saviour". Is the Angel saying "I am your Jesus"? Maybe Acts 7:35 helps: "This is Moses (Jesus) whom they renounced. . . him God sent to be a . . . redeemer with the hand of that Angel which appeared. . . in the bush" (Diaglott). The strong partnership between Moses and the Angel in the wilderness perhaps points forward to that between Christ and the (same?) Angel Gabriel [?].

- Is. 45:8 describes the spiritual coming of Christ from heaven at His first advent: "Drop down, ye Heavens, and let the skies pour down righteousness". Is. 64:1 is similar: "Oh that Thou wouldest rend the Heavens, that Thou wouldest come down. . . men have not heard. . . what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him". This is quoted in 1 Cor. 2:9 about the revealed mystery of Christ's Gospel (see the context there). Coming down is Angelic language- but here it is used concerning Christ.

- Jesus is described as the "prince" (Mic. 5:2; 1 Chron. 5:2 AVmg. ); but this is a title of Angels in Daniel.

- Christ's promise that "I will go before you into Galilee" (Mk. 14:28) sounds very much like a conscious allusion to the Angel going ahead of Israel; as if Christ felt that he (through the

Comforter Angel? the Angel Gabriel) had taken over the role of the Angel that represented him previously?

- "Let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches" (Rev. 3:22 etc. ) is a pithy example. The primary speaker of the letters to the churches was the Angel-the Angel Gabriel? But they were actually from Christ, "The Lord the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:17 RV). The one special Angel in the midst of the Cherubim in the Old Testament visions of Ezekiel 1 would then equate with the Son of Man ("The Lord the Spirit") in the midst of the lightstands (Rev. 1:13) and the lamb on the throne surrounded by Angels in the four living creatures of Rev. 4 and 5.

### **"That rock. . . "**

1 Cor. 10:4 clearly states: "they drank of that spiritual rock which followed them. . . and that rock was Christ". However, Dt. 32 seems to imply that the rock was an Angel. "I will publish the name of the Lord (a reference to the Angel declaring the name in Ex. 34). . . He is the rock. . He found (Israel) in a desert land. . He led him" (v. 3,4,10). This is all describing the activities of the Angel. Israel rebelled against the Angel (Is. 63:10), "lightly esteemed the rock. . . of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful" (Dt. 32:15,18). Another link between the rock and the Angel is in Gen. 49:24: "The mighty God of Jacob (an Angel). . . the shepherd (the Angel, Is. 63:9-11). . the stone. . of Israel". Note that Jesus is clearly the shepherd, the stone and the rock (of offence).

The language of 1 Cor. 10 invites us not to interpret "the rock" just as the physical rock. It can be shown (Ch. 13) that the Comforter was an Angel representing Christ, in fact the same Angel as in Is. 63 which led Israel through the wilderness. It is therefore fitting that "the rock", the same Angel, should be chosen by Paul in 1 Cor. 10 as a type of Christ. What came from the rock was "spiritual drink"- showing that the Rock Angel spiritually as well as physically fed them. Christ's interpretation of the manna as representing the word in John 6 would support this idea of the Angels spiritually strengthening Israel on their journey. Ex. 29:42 implies this happened daily; the Angel stood at the door of the tabernacle each day to speak with them. Perhaps the same is true today for those who through Angelic help feed daily on the manna of the Word. See 'Angelic strengthening of men' (Ch. 8) for more on this.

It is possible that Israel tempting Christ in 1 Cor. 10:9 is meant to refer back to 1 Cor. 10:4 "They drank of that spiritual rock that followed them; and that rock was Christ". Tempting Christ was therefore tempting the rock to produce water. The rock was a title of the Angel that was with them, and it was he, representing Christ, whom they tempted.

Although this Angel Gabriel has now been replaced at God's right hand by Jesus, He still seems to represent Jesus, seeing the Angel in the midst of the candlesticks (cp. the Angel between the cherubim) was "one like the Son of man" (Rev. 1:13)- i. e. it was not the Son of man Himself. Similarly the Comforter Angel (see later; probably the same Angel) personally represents Jesus, so much so that His presence with the disciples was to be the same as Christ's physical presence among them (hence the emphasis on the use of the personal pronoun in the Comforter passages). The vision of Rev. 1 has close links with that of Dan. 10. If the Rev. 1 vision is concerning the Angel, then so is that of Dan. 10. The context of the Daniel vision is that he had been praying for the opposition to the restoration to be overcome. He was therefore given this vision of the mighty Angel who was going to answer his prayers;

Daniel describes the vision as being "of a certain man" (10:5); when the Angel comes to him to tell him that despite the opposition He was going to answer his prayers, Daniel describes him as "one like the appearance of a man" (10:18)- possibly implying that it was the same Angel he had seen in vision, although in a less awesome appearance.

Isaiah 9 describes the titles which Jesus was to take (at His ascension- Phil. 2:9 etc. ); they include (v. 6) "Mighty God"- 'El Gibbor' (see margin). This phrase is the same as 'Gabriel'. So can we conclude that at His ascension, Jesus took over the role of the Angel Gabriel? Thus until then the Angel Gabriel would have been a type of Jesus, and perhaps His guardian Angel. Maybe this implies that we will take over the role of our guardian Angel when we are glorified. Is. 9:6 also gives Jesus the title 'Wonderful'- which is the name of another Angel (Judges 13:18 mg. ; or is this just another title of the Angel Gabriel?). Thus when Jesus was exalted above the Angels as explained in Heb. 1, Jesus took the names of the Angels as He took those of God Himself.

## 12-4 The Wilderness Temptations Of Jesus

### THE WILDERNESS TEMPTATIONS OF JESUS

The evidence for the 'devil' in the wilderness being Christ's internal desires seems too strong to be dismissed. However, there are a number of hints in the records which imply that Angels had a part to play in the confused mind of Christ. His temptations show that He was thinking of misusing their power, and this must have constantly been with Him- not least on the cross (Mt. 26:53).

Both John and Ezekiel were shown by an Angel a future temple and a high mountain. Perhaps Jesus in His confused state (He had not eaten for forty days- cp. 1 Sam. 30:11,12) thought an Angel was leading Him in vision to the same scene. Jesus saw the state of the Kingdoms in the future (Lk. 4:5)- i. e. when the Kingdoms of men have become the Kingdoms of Christ (Rev. 11:15). It is noteworthy that there are many points of contact in Revelation 21 and 22 with the wilderness temptations- a "holy city", a great mountain, temple towers, a wrongful falling at someone's feet. John was shown the visions (Rev. 1:1; 4:1) in the same way as Jesus was "shown" the Kingdoms by an Angel.

Because of Christ's love and respect for the Angels, He may have been tempted to resign His potential superiority over them and worship the mighty Angel which had represented Him in Old Testament times. It was maybe this Angel that Jesus imagined offering Him all the Kingdoms of the world if He would worship him. Bear in mind it is the Angels who rule over the Kingdoms of men. We have seen that Nebuchadnezzar was humbled by seeing that the Angels were in control of the kingdoms of men. Dan. 4:32 says "the Most High ruleth in the Kingdoms of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will". Jesus being offered these Kingdoms cannot be just an incidental allusion back to this passage in Dan. 4. He was offered them by "the Most High"- an Angelic phrase, perhaps referring to the 'highest of the high ones'- the great Angel who represented Jesus, dwelling between the Cherubim?

Christ overcame all His temptations by quoting from Deuteronomy, showing that His mind was seeking strength from the words of the Angel leading Israel through the wilderness.

There are clear similarities between the Angel's leading of Israel through the wilderness and Christ's experience in the wilderness:

### *Deuteronomy 8*

v. 2 "The Lord thy God [an Angel] led thee. . in the wilderness"

Forty years in the wilderness

v. 3 "He (the Angel who led them in v. 2) suffered thee to hunger".

The Angel "fed thee with manna" (Ps. 78:25)

"Man doth not live by bread alone"

### *Matthew 4*

v. 1 Jesus led by the spirit (an Angel?) into the wilderness.

Forty days in the wilderness

The Angel made Jesus hunger.

Jesus was tempted to ask the Angel to provide bread as He did to Israel in their testing.

v. 4 "Man doth not live by bread alone"

## **Considering In The Heart**

Thus Jesus surveyed His own experience in the wilderness, and saw that He could take to Himself personally the lessons given to Israel. The Angel led Israel through the wilderness "to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments or no" (8:2). God Himself knows anyway, so this must be regarding the Angel, seeking to know the spiritual strength of Israel, as Job's Satan Angel sought to know Job's strength. Similarly, Christ's Angel led Him into the wilderness, suffering Him to hunger, to humble and prove Him, to reveal His real attitude to the word of God. His quoting of the word to answer the temptations surely proved this to the Angel, especially since Christ showed Himself so capable of thinking Himself into Scripture, and therefore taking the lessons most powerfully to Himself. Christ was made to realize the importance of His memory of the word, as He would have later reflected that this was the only way He had overcome- that man spiritually lives by "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God". As a result of their wilderness temptations, both Israel and Christ were led to "consider in (their) heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God (the Angel) chasteneth thee". The chastenings of Christ spiritually in the wilderness were therefore arranged by the Angels.

There did not have to be Angels actually tempting Christ in the wilderness temptations- because they can act directly on a man's heart, they can lead us into temptation. The fact we pray for Him not to implies that He does- through the Angels, as He Himself tempts no man (James 1:13), although the Angels tempted Abraham, Israel and Christ among others. In the same way as our spiritual strength is due to our personal effort in studying the word along with the Angel acting upon us, so our temptations come from our own internal lusts, but to some degree the Spirit-Angel is also active here. Thus the Angels may arrange an external stimulus, e. g. the fruit of the tree of knowledge, knowing it must produce certain internal desires within us which tempt us.



The temptation to throw Himself off the top of the temple because of the Angelic care He knew was about Him, was also answered by a quotation which has an Angelic context- "Ye (Jesus) shall not tempt the Lord your God, as ye tempted Him in Massah" (Dt. 6:16). At Massah the Israelites put the Angel to the test by questioning whether He could provide water (Ex. 17:2-7).

## 12-5 "Angels that sinned"?

There seems to be the implication that Christ's sacrifice somehow cleansed the Angels. We have to emphasize that there were no sinful Angels in Haven at the time of Christ's sacrifice, and probably never have been. However, we have to bear in mind that "His Angels He charged with folly" (Job 4:18); "The Heavens are not clean in His sight" (Job 15:15), and also the possibility that the "Angels that sinned" (Jude 6; 2 Peter 2:4) were actual Angels before the present creation. This was a view supported by John Thomas (3); the fact that there are such strong connections between these Angels and the princes associated with Korah's rebellion does not mean that his view is necessarily wrong. Jude's other historical examples are capable of being interpreted with reference to more than one past incident, not all of which are recorded in Scripture. Thus the dispute about the body of Moses (Jude 9) could refer to the Samaritans disputing about the people of Israel or Joshua the High Priest (see Zech. 3), or it could refer equally to Michael the Archangel, the Angel of Israel, who buried Moses body, disputing with a group of Israelites who wanted to have Moses' body travelling with them, as those of Joseph and the patriarchs did (Acts 7:15,16 RV). Similarly Jude 14 talks of an incident concerning Enoch which is not detailed in the Bible (cp. Jannes and Jambres in 2 Tim. 3:8 too). Thus there is no reason why "the Angels which kept not their first estate" of Jude and 2 Peter should not refer to "Angels that sinned" before creation as well as to Korah's company of Num. 16. Psalm 103 is praise for God's forgiveness and mercy to sin. David concludes it by asking the Angels especially to praise God for this (Ps. 103:19-21)- which would be fitting if they too had benefited in the past from God's mercy towards sin. The fact that the Angels had crowns when they are symbolized by the elders in Rev. 4:10 suggests that they had won them through overcoming some kind of tribulation.

## Heaven Itself

These facts enable us to understand the hints made that Christ's sacrifice benefited the Angels. Heb. 9:23 is a key: "It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the Heavens should be purified" (with blood). The tabernacle and Most Holy were the "pattern showed to (Moses) in the mount" (Heb. 8:5) when he was given the details of the tabernacle (cp. Ex. 25:9; 1 Chron. 28:12 etc). These had to be purified by the sprinkling of blood; "but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these". The "blood of bulls and goats" could purify the tabernacle, but that was a replica of Heaven itself, as well as of the spiritual "heavenlies" of Christian believers. "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands (the tabernacle- "the patterns of things in the Heavens" of v. 23), but into Heaven itself" (v. 24). Thus there is a parallelism between verses 23 and 24:

### v. 23

The patterns of things in  
the Heavens

### v. 24

The holy places made with hands  
the tabernacle

Is this talking about the "Angels that sinned"? Notice the stress of v. 24: Christ is "entered into Heaven itself". He did not only enter the spiritual Heavens on His resurrection, but "Heaven itself". Thus "Heaven itself" was cleansed by His blood. This interpretation would fit the context of Hebrews, where one of the major themes is the superiority of Christ over the Angels. The fact that they were cleansed by Christ's sacrifice is surely another proof of this. The Angels knowing "good and evil" (Gen. 3:22) implies they had been on probation previously like us; thus they may have sinned like we do, and yet been forgiven through some system of reconciliation. Such a system would have been similar to the Law of Moses- the system would have depended on pointing forward to the sacrifice of Christ, as it is only through Him that sin can be overcome. Thus as Christ's death was "for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament" (Heb. 9:15), so it was also for the redemption of the Angels' transgressions committed during their probations. Therefore the Angels were not actually 'in sin' at the time of Christ, because their sins were forgiven in the same way as those of people who lived before Christ. The "Angels that sinned" would have been those who "continued in sin" and were condemned, or who committed a particularly sinful act. In the same way, the unworthy in our dispensation are called "sinners" (Is. 65:20; 1 Peter 4:18), although in a sense we are all "sinners" (1 Tim. 1:15; Rom. 5:19).

There are many similarities between the Angels and the Mosaic system- highlighted by the judges under the Law being called 'elohim', and the hierarchical system being a "pattern of things in the Heavens" among Angels. This hierarchical system is again alluded to in Mal. 1:6: "A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master. . . where is mine honour. . my fear? saith the Lord of Hosts (Angels) unto you, O priests. . ", suggesting that the Angels are fathers and masters to the hierarchy of priests beneath them.

Rev. 15:6 is one of several examples of Angels being described in Mosaic terms- "clothed. . in linen" (as priests- Ex. 28:8,27). Similarly, the "morning stars" (Angels) laid the "foundations of the earth"- the same word used about the "pins " of the tabernacle (Job 38:6,7).

If the Angels did not receive their final forgiveness and justification until some time after their 'probations'- i. e. at the time of Christ- it may be that the sinful ones will not receive their final punishment until later- hence we "shall judge Angels" (1 Cor. 6:3- the idea of judging ecclesial elders at the last day seems a bit far fetched!). "The Angels which kept not their first estate. . He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgement of the great day" (Jude 6)- clearly the judgement at the second coming.

## **Reconciling All Things**

In addition to the above suggestions about the "Angels that sinned", Colossians and Ephesians emphasize the reconciling of both Christians and Angels through the death of Christ, perhaps due to the cross taking away the Angel-coordinated Mosaic system which separated man from God and the Angels. "Having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things (a phrase which elsewhere includes Angels- e. g. Heb. 2:8) unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in Heaven" (Col. 1:20). What are the things in earth and Heaven if they are not Christians and Angels? In Christ "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9)- the fulness of Gentiles, Jews and

Angels. "And ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power (i. e. Angels- Col. 2:15)"- 2:10. As Christ is the head of the Angels, so if we are in the body of Christ, He is our head too, and we are therefore with the Angels in the same body. There is thus no need to worship them, nor the Mosaic ordinances they instituted. This seems to be a major theme in Col. 2 "Let no man beguile you of your reward in. . . worshipping of Angels. . . and not holding the Head (Christ), from which all the body (both Christians and Angels, whose head is Christ, v. 10,15) by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together (Angels and Christians!) increaseth (both of us growing in knowledge of God) with the increase of God. Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the elements of the (Mosaic/ Angelic) world, are ye subject to (Mosaic/ Angelic) ordinances. . . ?" (v. 18-20).

The evident similarities between Colossians and Ephesians invite us to interpret Ephesians 1 in the same way: "In the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth (Angels and Christians, Jews and Gentiles). . . in whom we also (as well as Angels- it is hard to understand why Paul, being a Jew, should speak like this about Gentiles also, as well as Jews, obtaining an inheritance) have obtained an inheritance. . . (God) raised (Christ) from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the Heavenly places , far above all principality and power (i. e. Angels- Col. 2:15), and might, and dominion (Angels- Jude 8,9), and every name that is named (Christ "hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name" than Angels- Heb. 1:4), not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things (literally all things- including Angels) under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all" (v. 10,11,20-23).

The reference in Eph. 3:15 to "the whole family in Heaven and earth" probably refers to the Angelic and human parts of the family of God in Heaven and earth respectively being united by the sacrifice of Christ. Christ's parables of the lost coin and lost sheep lend support to this. The woman and the shepherd on one level represent Jesus searching for the lost saint, calling together the friends to rejoice on finding him (Lk. 15:9,29). These friends represent Angels, we are told (v. 10). However, those in the ecclesia are also members of God's household; Christ laid down His life for us His friends; "Ye are My friends. . . I have called you friends" (Jn. 15:13-15). The parables of Luke 15 were initially directed at the Pharisees, implying that they as the shepherds of the ecclesia should be mixing with the weak of the flock to win them back (Lk. 15:2-4; n. b. "which man of you. . ."). Thus Jesus also expected the woman, shepherd and friends to refer to members of the ecclesia on earth. Yet He also specifically says that they have reference to the Angelic household in Heaven. Thus both Angels and earthly believers are part of the same "family in Heaven and earth" of Eph. 3:15.

## 12-6 Angels And The Law

### ANGELS AND THE END OF THE LAW

We have seen how Angels were associated with the giving of the Law and were responsible for the running of the Mosaic system while it operated in Israel. Given their limited understanding, it is not unreasonable to suspect that they would have had some difficulty comprehending the demise of the Law. It is now suggested that the "war in Heaven" of Revelation 12 describes the massive changeover in the Heavenly organisation during the period when the Law was finally replaced. We have suggested that this resulted in one group

of Angels replacing another in the analysis of Dan. 8:8-12 in Chapter 11. As orthodox opponents are quick to point out, there seems a clear parallel between "the prince of this world" being cast out and the devil of Rev. 12 being cast out. I have shown elsewhere (4) that the New Testament devil and satan very often refers to the Jewish as well as Roman system, and that the casting out of the "prince of this world" refers to the ending of the Jewish system and Law of Moses.

### *The Ending Of The Law*

Although technically Christ ended the Law at His death on the cross, there is ample evidence that there was an interim period until AD70 when the Law could still be kept, but at that date it was done away with the destruction of the temple and Jewish aion in the full sense:

- The letter of Acts 15 clearly allowed the Jewish Christians to keep large chunks of the Law; the record is framed to read as if it was a concession that Gentiles did not need to keep the Law in the same way.
- Paul's vow and desire to keep the feasts is more readily understandable if the Law was still in force to a certain extent.
- The impression that Christians maintained fairly free fellowship with the synagogues is hard to accept if the keeping of the Jewish Law was totally against the spirit of Christ.
- Paul generally respected no man's person in standing up for what he believed was Biblical. But in the matter of meat he bent over backwards, despite arguing that Christ had freed us from such legal restraints, "while the (Jewish) world standeth" - i. e. until the Law, which was intrinsically part of the Jewish world, was fully done away with in AD70.
- Col. 2:22 says that the using of the (Mosaic) laws "are to perish" - in the future, i. e. AD70.
- Romans 14 speaks of keeping the Sabbath as a matter of opinion; yet to do so is totally contrary to the spirit of freedom in Christ which we have now the Jewish system has ended. Observing Sabbath days is described as being in bondage to "the weak and beggarly elements" of the Mosaic Law (Gal. 4:9,10; the Greek for "elements" is always used concerning the elements of the Mosaic Law).

### **Olivet Prophecy**

It is the latter part of this period of transition which is outlined in Revelation 12. The key to this passage is found in Matthew 24:7-10. The political instability around Palestine before AD70 heralded "the beginning" of birth pains. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for My name's sake". A woman in labour followed by an immediate affliction and persecution after the delivery appears again in Rev. 12. Such symbology is too specific for there to be no connection between the two accounts. The 'killing' of Matt. 24:9 implies persecution rather than actual death of the child or mother, seeing that the rest of the chapter goes on to describe how the elect will be saved, taken away, endure to the end, etc. The parallel passage in Luke 21 defines these persecutions as coming from "the synagogues". Rev. 12 describes the mother/ baby persecutor as the satan-dragon, whom we have defined as the Jewish system. The mention of

the serpent and devil together in Rev. 12 invites comparison with Christ's description of the Jews as a generation (gendered by) snakes, and therefore of their father the devil (John 8:44).

## 12-7 The Devil's Angels

This devil-dragon has Angels. The devil's Angels of Matt. 25 describe those who expect to be in the Kingdom by being justified by their works, although placing little value on serving others. Such a description fits the first century Jews well. The other parables of Matt. 25 also seem relevant to those who felt justified by the Jewish system; the foolish virgins who thought that they of themselves had enough oil, and the one talent man who thought he didn't have to do anything with his talent. We have shown that Angels frequently refer to physical Angels and also to the often evil men whom they control. Obviously, some of the actions attributed to the 'Angels' in their human manifestation are the result of the evil desires of men, not of the Angels; although overall their actions are used by the Angels behind them to bring about their will. The Angels associated with the Jewish satan system can thus represent the Jewish persecutors of the seed of the woman, the early church, as well as the actual Angels associated with the Law. These Angels fought with Michael, the great Angel personally representing Jesus, and His Angels. The idea of Angels fighting has been seen in Daniel, and in Zech. 1:20,21 (see notes on this in Chapter 11).

The use of the language of physical violence does not necessarily imply sin or hate. Jesus "spoiled principalities and powers" (the Angels associated with the Law) and led them away captive in His victory train (Col. 2:15) when He died on the cross. This is the same battle between Michael and His Angels and the 'Mosaic' Angels which is described in Rev. 12. The condemnation of men for worshipping Angels in Col. 2:18 following straight on from the reference to Angel "principalities and powers" instituting the Law implies that the Judaizers worshipped Angels in their own right because of their evident association with the Law. Thus Paul begins his treatise in Hebrews about the inferiority of the Mosaic system compared to Christ by stressing the inferiority of the Angels to Christ. These Mosaic Angels would have been relatively ignorant of the spirit of Christ, and the church of united Jews and Gentiles made known to the Angels "the manifold wisdom of God" in the opening of salvation to the Gentiles (Eph. 3:9,10 cp. Rom. 11:33). Similarly "God was manifest in the flesh (of Christ). . . seen (perceived/ understood) of Angels" (1 Tim. 3:16), as if they understood more about God through reflecting on Christ's work. We have seen that the Angels gave the promises and others gave the Law - it was these two groups that were in 'opposition' in AD70.

Is the mention of a third of all the Angels being associated with the dragon imply that a third of all Angels were used to institute and run the Mosaic system? Or does the third being cast down imply that a third of all Christians were overcome in various ways by the Jewish satan and therefore 'lost' their Angels? The dragon losing his "place" in Heaven may refer to his physical position in the court of Heaven- those Angels were no longer needed in that position of accusing to God those who failed to keep the Law. Now in Christ "Who is he that condemneth?" (Rom. 8:34). The increasing intensity of the dragon's fighting against the woman's seed as he sensed his end was coming perfectly fits the situation in the first century context. As the Jews saw the impending doom of Judaism due to Christianity and the growing Roman intolerance of their religion, so their persecution of the Christians increased. However, with the destruction of the temple in AD70 the main persecutors of the Christians were the Romans as opposed to the Jews.

Rev. 12:6 describes the woman fleeing into the wilderness (the Gentiles? Ez. 20:35). This would describe the Jewish persecution of the Christians leading to the scattering of the massive Jerusalem and Judean ecclesias throughout the Roman world, thus laying the basis for the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles. It would be fitting if that started in earnest after the destruction of the temple in AD70. The woman was to be fed in the wilderness for 1,260 days (3½ years). This recalls Elijah's experience of being fed in a wilderness for the same period by the ravens. This experience was to teach him that the Law was not supreme, seeing that ravens were an unclean bird and he was led to be dependent on them for his life. This would fit the context of the Law's supremacy being ended in Rev. 12.

## "War in Heaven"

The "war" in Heaven of Rev. 12:7 implies that there was a period of time in which the Law was thrown out. Presumably this war started at the crucifixion of Jesus, although in prospect even then He led the Law-Angels in His victory train, as if the war had been fought and ended. The casting of the star-Angels of Heaven to the earth by the dragon / devil's angels in v. 4 is therefore either the same as or part of the "war in Heaven" of v. 7. Notice how the temple is often described as Heaven (1 Kings 8:30; 2 Chron. 30:27; Ps. 20:2,6; 11:4; Heb. 7:26; 2 Cor. 12:2); the Star-Angels of Heaven are therefore further connected with the Mosaic system which was ended with the temple's destruction in AD70. Jesus described the judgements on the Jewish system in AD70 as Him coming with the Angel armies of Heaven to destroy the city. Mat. 24 prophesies His coming in AD70 with His Angels- implying there were others who were not to come with Him. These would be the Angels who fought with the dragon's Angels. 2 Peter 3 makes it clear that as the figurative Heavens and earth at the time of the flood were destroyed, so the Mosaic heavens and earth were to be destroyed finally in AD70. The Angels brought the flood originally, and also brought about the end of the Mosaic heavens and earth. The Mosaic "heavens" have a slight reference to the Angels of which the Mosaic system was a pattern. These Angelic/Mosaic Heavens were to be ended by other Angels. "The Lord of Sabaoth" (Hosts- of Angels, James 5:4) was to bring the judgements on Jerusalem. James 5:9 may allude to the Angel standing at the door in Sodom: "The judge standeth before the door", as if the Angel (the Michael Comforter Angel) was about to judge Jerusalem. Sodom typifies Jerusalem in Is. 1:10; Jer. 23:14 etc. Jn. 16:11 describes the Comforter Angel as judging the Jewish world. Hence "the judge" standing before the door was this same Angel.

## 12-8 The Judaizers

### The Jewish Satan

Rev. 12:10,11 tells us that the satan was cast out by the blood of Jesus- which the Mosaic Law was. "They overcame him by the blood of the lamb". This seems another allusion back to the upper room discourse- "I have overcome the (Jewish) world" (Jn. 16:33); as if as Jesus overcame the Jewish system, so they too overcame that system as represented by the dragon. "Now is come salvation"- a system of salvation rather than condemnation- "and the Kingdom of our God", which the Church was constituted as in prospect through the work of Christ (Col. 1:13). "Salvation" was apocalypsed in "the last time"- i. e. AD70 (1 Peter 1:5). 1 Thess. 5:9 is also relevant here: "God hath not appointed us to wrath ("the law worketh wrath", Rom. 4:15) but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ". Perhaps this last phrase implies 'at



the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in AD70<sup>1</sup>- which is the repeated theme of Thessalonians. "Salvation" was thus to be obtained in a sense when the Law was ended and at the AD70 coming of Christ- just as in Rev. 12.

Rev. 12:9 stresses that the dragon was a deceiver, as the Law also was; it offered life, but it was impossible to obtain. The Judaizers deceived the hearts of the simple (Rom. 16:18; Eph. 5:6; 1 Jn. 3:7; 2 Peter 2:13). Sin took occasion by the commandment of the Law to deceive men (Rom. 7:11). Eve, representing the ecclesia, was deceived by the serpent, representing the Judaizers. The dragon accused men as guilty to God "day and night" before the Law was cast out- every moment it was brought to God's attention by the Angels administering the Law that man was disobeying it. We learn from Heb. 12:20-28 that when the Jewish heavens ended there was to be a repeat of the scenario at Sinai, with Angels very much in evidence (v. 22), and "we receiving a Kingdom which cannot be moved" (v. 28), like Israel's was (Ez. 21:25-27). This connects with Rev. 12 saying that when the Angels had ended the Law, the believers would recognize that "now is come. . the Kingdom of our God"; in prospect the ecclesia was constituted the Kingdom of God then.

## **Implications**

There are of course implications of these suggestions for our understanding of other parts of Scripture. The whole of Rev. 12 is couched in terms of the fall in Gen. 3, with the dragon-serpent temporarily wounding the woman. Compare the casting out of water from his mouth with a serpent hissing. The comment "woe to the inhabitants of earth and sea" in Rev. 12:12 refers to the Judaizers / Jewish persecution of the ecclesia both in Israel (the "earth"-land) and the sea of nations. This would lead us to interpret the three woes of Rev. 8:13 and Rev. 9 as primarily describing the Jewish persecution of the saints in the first century.

Taking up the connection between Heaven and the temple, the "man of sin" sitting in the temple of God in 2 Thess. 2 would appear to be primarily Jewish; "the son of perdition" (2 Thess. 2:3) must be a connection with Judas, who was an epitome of the Jewish satan (see Jn. 6:70,71 cp. 8:44), and probably connected in first century thought with the Judaizer false teachers (e. g. 1 Jn. 2:18 describes them in Judas language). The Judaizers were in the 'heavenly places' of the church. The "mystery of iniquity" preached by the man of sin contrasts with the revealed mystery Paul frequently speaks about, that both Jews and Gentiles had equal access to God through Christ. The mystery of iniquity stood in direct opposition to this, by saying that only by the Law could men have access to God, and even that was mainly for Jews. The coming of Jesus in AD70 is associated in 2 Thess. with Angels- see 1:7,8; 2:8

### *Revelation 12*

We are now in a position to see how Revelation 12 complements the chronological details of the destruction of the Jewish system seen in Mt. 24 and 2 Thess. 2.

### *Matthew 24*

1. False claims of Christ's coming
2. Be not deceived
3. Wars, birth pangs, delivered up

4. False prophets - the Judaizers- deceive many; love of many believers for the truth shall wax cold
5. Gospel to all the world
6. Abomination of desolation in the temple
7. False signs and wonders
8. Coming of Christ
9. Tribes (of Israel) mourn

### *2 Thessalonians 2*

1. "Be not soon shaken. . . by word. . . as that the day of Christ is at hand" (v. 2)
2. "Let no man deceive you" (v. 3= Mt. 24:4)
6. Man of sin revealed in the temple; the mystery of iniquity; that wicked revealed
7. Lying signs by the Judaizers
8. Brightness of His coming

### *Revelation 12*

3. Birth pangs, delivered up- tribulation for Jewish Christians in the land
5. Woman to the wilderness (Gentile world)
6. War in Heaven, resulting in the Judaizers / the dragon in the temple/Heaven being thrown out
8. "Now is come. . . the Kingdom of our God" (v. 10); rejoicing amongst Angels and Christians
9. Woe (mourning) to all believers in earth (land of Israel) and sea (Gentile world) because of the second wave of dragon persecution- in the immediate aftermath of AD70. From now on the dragon increasingly takes on its Roman role (note that the 'devil' and satan refer to both Jewish and Roman systems).

Item 6 being mentioned in all three passages would indicate that the abomination of desolation largely had reference to the spiritual desolation the Jews made of the temple rather than any Roman sacrilege there. The final horrors committed by Simon and the Jewish leaders in the temple just before and during the siege would seem a more likely reference. The desolation is described in 2 Thess. 2 as sitting in the temple self confidently- hard to apply to the Roman desecration of the temple.



## 12-9 Principalities And Powers

Another passage which now opens up is Eph. 6:11-13: "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places". The devil here is the Jewish system with its associated Angels. The same phrase "Principalities and powers" is used in Col. 2:15 concerning the Angels who gave the Law. The phrase "wiles" is only used again in 4:14 ("Lie in wait") regarding the Judaizer-devil circulating false doctrine. The rulers of the Jewish heavenlies were both literal Angels and the Judaizers whom they represented in the court of Heaven. Eph. 6:13 warns of a forthcoming battle: "Take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day"- the spiritual battle between the Law of Moses and that of Christ which is detailed in Rev. 12. Paul could see that in the final conflict against the Judaizers, he would need courage to speak out as he should: "Pray. . . for me. . . that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel" (v. 19)- a phrase often used in connection with Gentiles and Jews having equal standing with God through Christ.

The Greek for "wrestle" in Eph. 6:12 is the same word as "cast out" . The battle of the Christians then was not to cast out men- "we wrestle not against flesh and blood". This is a real difficulty for any 'explanation of difficult passages' that tries to make this refer to human rulers alone. It was the Jewish devil that needed casting out, and the Angel principalities and powers which co-ordinated it. There is no doubt that "principalities and powers" does also refer to Jewish and Roman authorities (Lk. 12:11; 20:20; Mt. 7:29 etc). This is to be expected once we understand that the devil and satan of the New Testament often refers to both Jewish and Roman systems and the Angels behind them. Remember that the Angels rule the world. God's system of manifestation remains constant. In the same way as the "pattern of things in the Heavens" in the Angelic organization there was repeated on earth through the organization of the tabernacle and the "elohim" of Israel's judges and priests, so that Heavenly system is maybe also reflected through the judges and leaders of the world, every one of whom is controlled by an Angel. Hence the identical language used for both Angels and worldly rulers- in the same way as Angel-Cherubim language is used concerning both Angels and earthly armies, e. g. of Babylonians, who fulfilled their will.

This passage seems a footnote to the epistle: "Finally, my brethren. . ." (v. 10). This is similar to the footnotes begun in Phil. 3:1; Gal. 6:12 and 1 Tim. 6:20, all of which warn against the Judaizers - indicating the immense importance Paul attached to the coming struggle with the "Principalities and powers" .

## CHAPTER 13: The Comforter: An Angel?

The point has been made by several expositors<sup>(1)</sup> that as Israel were led by a special Angel through the wilderness, whom Isaiah 63 associates with God's Holy Spirit, so the new Israel were led by a Holy Spirit Angel, the Comforter, who was sent to the church by Jesus after His assuming of all power over the Angels on His ascension. A summary of the reasons for thinking this is now attempted:

- Is. 63:7-11 describes the Angel that guided Israel through the wilderness as the "Holy Spirit"- which is the Comforter.

- The Comforter was sent in God and Christ's Name (Jn. 14:26)- the Angel was sent in God's Name (Ex. 23:21)

- The Comforter would teach (Jn. 14:26), guide (16:13), be a judge (16:8) and prophesy (16:13); the Angel guided Israel through the wilderness, taught them God's ways, judged Egypt and the Canaanites, gave prophecies, and represented God to Israel as the Comforter represented Jesus to His people. As the church began a new Exodus and was constituted God's Kingdom in prospect as Israel were at Sinai, it was fitting that it should also have an Angel leading them, representing God to them.

- The Comforter would "shew you things to come" (Jn. 16:13)- fulfilled by the Angel giving the Revelation to John.

- The Angel testified to the churches (Rev. 22:16)- "the Comforter. . shall testify of Me" (Jn. 15:26).

- The references in Acts to the Holy Spirit as a person are now easier to understand - e. g. "The Holy Spirit said, Separate Me Barnabas. . ." (Acts 13:2). Similarly the frequent occurrences of the ideas of God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit together fall into place if the Holy Spirit has some degree of reference to a personal being in the form of an Angel. The error of the doctrine of the trinity is not in identifying the three common forms of God manifestation (i. e. through God Himself, Jesus and the Holy Spirit Angel), but in the blasphemous inter-relationships between them which it proposes. This idea is worth applying to our understanding of the baptismal formula.

- The work of the Comforter Angel may have been confined to the first century, in the same way as the Angel was particularly evident to the ecclesia in the wilderness during the initial Exodus period. Thus the words 'Angel' and 'Spirit' are obviously interchangeable in the book of Acts (e. g. 8:26,29; 10:3,19,20).

- In the same way as the angel of Israel dwelt in the temple after delivering them, so perhaps it is through Christ's Comforter Angel that He dwells in the spiritual temple of the New Israel.

- The Angel in Revelation "like the son of man" (i. e. representing Him but not Him personally) was this same Comforter Angel representing Jesus (Rev. 1:11 cp. 22:13,8,16). He carried the titles of Jesus, who carried the titles of God- e. g. "Alpha and Omega".

- We have seen that our prayers are presented to God through Christ by an Angel (Rev. 8:4) and that God answers prayer through commanding His Angels (Num. 20:16; Dan. 9:20,21). This perhaps allows us to interpret the 'Spirit' of Rom. 8:26,27 as having some reference to Jesus manifested in the Comforter Angel; whilst remembering that Jesus is ultimately the only mediator (1 Tim. 2:5) it may be that the mechanical presentation of the incense of our prayers to Him is done by the Comforter Angel.

- The Comforter is called "the spirit of truth" (Jn. 14:17; 15:26; 16:13). In the Qumran Dead Sea Scrolls literature, this phrase describes an Angelic Spirit who is the leader of the "good forces" and 'in whom' the righteous walk [*Testament of Judah* 20, 1-5]. The Aramaic translation of Job, and the targums on it, uses the term *prqlyt* to describe the Angelic

spokesman [the *malak melis*] who makes a testimony in Heaven in Job's defence (Job 16:19; 19:25-27; 33:23).

- Otto Betz, *Der Paraklet* (AGJU, 1963), brings out many connections between the Comforter and the Angel 'Michael the Spirit of truth' in contemporary Jewish writings.

- When we read of the "spirit of the Lord" snatching away Philip, it seems logical to interpret this as the same Angel already mentioned earlier in the chapter (Acts 8:26,29,39). But this Angel is defined as the Lord's Angel- and the Lord in Acts is nearly always the Lord Jesus. Clearly we are led to understand the Lord Jesus as being associated with a specific Angel.

### **Additional Implications**

The following are some additional implications which may follow from this idea:

- If there is only one Comforter Angel, this has a bearing on the previous discussion about how many Angels led Israel in the wilderness.

- "Ye have an unction from the Holy One (the Comforter/ Holy Spirit), and ye know all things" (1 Jn. 2:20) is clearly alluding to the promise of the Comforter in Jn. 14:26; but "Holy One" is Angelic language, as if the Holy One was also an Angel.

- The Comforter is 'one called alongside'- is this a reference to the literal, physical presence of the Angel?

- Heb. 3:7-11 reminds the early church of how Israel had provoked the Angel which led them through the wilderness by tempting and proving Him (God cannot be tempted, so this must refer to the Angel). The writer then goes on to warn them "wherefore. . . harden not your hearts", and exhorts them not to be like Israel in tempting God- in their case, a primary reference to the Comforter Angel which was leading them?

- The language of personification of the Spirit is found in 1 Cor. 2:10,11, suggesting reference to this Comforter Angel: ". . . God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit (the Comforter Angel): for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God. . . even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. . . comparing spiritual things (in the word) with spiritual". If the Spirit here refers to the Comforter Angel, then we have a summary of much New Testament teaching on the present work of the Spirit: individual effort of our own freewill ("comparing") is required, for which we will be blessed by the help of the Spirit-Angel in our understanding even more.

- The tongues sitting like flames of fire on the apostles at Pentecost was an Angelic manifestation; the Angels can be made "a flame of fire".

- God "Granted repentance unto life"- the record does not say that He 'granted forgiveness', as if to suggest that this softening of the heart to repent was granted by the grace of God. This is an example of God in tandem with men's spirituality, which we have suggested in chapter 8 He does through His Angels. It is interesting that this action of God is described as being due

to "the hand of the Lord"- an Angelic phrase- being with the people, encouraging them to believe (Acts 11:18,21).

- Paul seems to have conceived of God in terms of an Angel; not surprising, if he appreciated the doctrine of the Comforter Angel. This is implied by his exhortation on the deck of the ship: "The Angel of God, whose (i. e. the Angel's?) I am, and whom I serve. . . I believe God (i. e. the Angel), that it shall be even as it was told me" (Acts 27:23,25).

- "Why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which. . . we were not able to bear?" (Acts 15:10) is surely language of limitation, as if God was tempted to make the Mosaic law obligatory for all believers again. Surely God Himself would not consider doing so; perhaps an Angel could?

- Jude 5 reminds the new Israel of the first century that Israel of old had been condemned due to their provoking of the wilderness Angel- a warning that takes on special power once it is recognized that the very same Angel was leading the early church.

- Stephen's speech in Acts 7 contains many references to the Angel of Israel. He uses examples from Israel's history in which they rejected those who were types of Jesus- e. g. v. 9,10,22,25. It follows then that v. 35 must refer to this same aspect of Moses as a type of Christ being rejected. "This is Moses whom they renounced. . . even him God sent to be a ruler and a redeemer with the hand of that Angel which appeared to him in the bush" (Diaglott). Israel resisted the work of the Angel supporting Moses, and so years later they were also rejecting the support of the same guardian Angel for the teachings of Jesus and His disciples, the greater than Moses. So v. 51 stresses "ye do always resist the Holy Spirit (the title of the Comforter Angel in Is. 63): as your fathers did, so do ye". Their fathers resisted the Angel of the presence which went with them; and so the Jews of the first century were doing just the same.

- If the Hebrew phrase "the living God" means, as suggested by some, 'the God of the living ones', then "the living God" would refer to the great Angel who dwelt between the Cherubim "living ones". 1 Tim. 3:15 then appears in a new light: "The church of the living God"- the church dwelt in by the mighty Angel of the Old Testament Cherubim. The Angel dwelling and walking in the ecclesia in the wilderness is linked with God- the same Angel? -living and walking in the Christian ecclesia (2 Cor. 6:16). It was because of the presence of this and other important Angels in the ecclesia that Paul could charge Timothy "before. . . the elect Angels" (1 Tim. 5:21), who were present physically at the ecclesia's meetings. Indeed, this may be the very reason why he asks sisters in Corinth to have covered heads at ecclesial meetings "because of the Angels", i. e. their especial presence there. This is how important and pressing is the reality of their presence; and sisters' headcoverings, their dressing with an appropriate modesty and sobriety which a head covering signals, is to remind us all of this ever present reality.

"He, the Spirit (Angel) of truth. . . will guide you into all truth; for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come" (John 16:13). As the present writer understands it, the work of the Holy Spirit Comforter was initially achieved through the miraculous gifts, and now through the spiritual strength we receive from the written word. Thus nearly all the statements made about the Comforter are also made concerning the written word (e. g. Jn. 15:26; 16:13 cp. 17:17; 16:8 cp. 2 Tim. 3:16; 4:2; Titus 1:9; 16:8 cp. 12:40). The Angels being closely associated with

inspiration, notably of the Revelation, the Comforter Angel now largely achieves His aims through the written word He has inspired. "Things to come" were shown us by the Comforter Angel inspiring Revelation, the ultimate prophecy of the future. The Comforter was to make known everything that was told Him. It therefore follows that even the mighty Comforter Angel only has the same words of prophecy to study regarding the future unfolding of God's purpose as we have. Therefore they with us earnestly look into these things, and search "what manner of time" must elapse before the final fulfilment of God's word.

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### Note

(1) Notably in Ray Walker's series 'Angels' in *The Bible Student*, vol. 4 (1973).

## CHAPTER 14: ANGELS IN THE FUTURE

### 14-1 Angels And Christ's Return

#### ANGELS AND CHRIST'S RETURN

The immediate build up to Christ's return will be a result of much Angelic activity among the nations. We have earlier suggested that the references to "seducing" and "evil" spirits in Scripture may well refer to Angels in some way. The three spirits that gather the nations to Armageddon may well refer to Angels (Rev. 16:14). They are also described there as 'demons', language which some have sought to apply to Angels of evil (1). All this notwithstanding, Is. 13 describes God's "sanctified ones. . . My mighty ones. . . that rejoice in My highness" as being "the Lord of Hosts (of Angels) mustering the host of the battle. They come from a far country, from the end of Heaven, even the Lord" (Is. 13:3-5). Despite the primary reference to the Persians, these verses have so much Angelic language that they must refer to the work of the Angels behind whatever human instruments they use to bring about the gathering to Armageddon. The Angels are again identified so closely with those on earth that they represent- as in the case of Job's satan. That Is. 13 concerns the last days is shown by the many links here with Joel's prophecy; v. 8,10 with Luke 21; and v. 16 with Dt. 28, to list just a few.

The chronology of events around the second coming of Christ makes a fascinating study. At present there are two broad schools of thought:

One school suggests that the Angels gather the responsible to judgement in Sinai, from where the worthy march with Christ through the wilderness repeating the route of Israel on the Exodus. After defeating some opposition along the way, they reach Jerusalem at a time when Jerusalem is surrounded by armies. The Jews ask "Who is this that cometh from Edom?" (Is. 63:1) and then accept Christ who then destroys all opposition at Armageddon.

The other approach analyses the passages used to prove the 'march of the rainbowed Angel' (Ps. 68; Dt. 33; Hab. 3; Mic. 7:15) and concludes that they are allusions to the Exodus, but do not necessitate an exact repetition of it. John Thomas embarks on his exposition of the march to explain how the 'rainbowed Angel' of Rev. 10:1 attained His position (2). But this passage is concerning an Angel, not Jesus and the saints. Most references to Angels in Revelation can be applied to literal Angels. The evidence for judgement at Sinai is at best tenuous, and seems to contradict a host of passages indicating judgement at Jerusalem (e. g. Matt. 25:31; Ps. 133:3; 87:5; 132:16; Is. 4:3; 25:6-8). Gog's invasion of Ez. 38 is placed after the return of Christ, due to Israel dwelling "in peace and safety", a phrase often about the Kingdom.

The present writer finds problems with both, not least because there does seem to be some indication of Divine activity outside Jerusalem and approaching Jerusalem at the time of the end. It seems hard for there to be a judgement in Jerusalem if there is to be a presence of "saints" in the Bozrah/ Sinai area marching to liberate Jerusalem. The presence of God's people in Jerusalem, either natural or spiritual Israel, looking for deliverance from outside is hinted at several times, not least in the record of the deliverance of Hezekiah and his people from the Assyrian invasion.

## 14-2 The Gog Invasion

An analysis of the last days from an Angelic viewpoint helps clarify some of these things. Ezekiel 38 and 39 speak of the Gog invasion in very similar language to prophecy concerning Assyria. The following connections are quite well known:

<i>Gog in Ezekiel</i>	<i>Assyria in Isaiah</i>
38:4	37:29
38:8	24:21,22 (this concerns "the kings of the earth" in the Gog confederacy)
38:9	28:2
38:11	37:24
38:12	10:6
38:19	30:27
38:19,20	29:6; 30:25
38:22	29:6 RV; 30:30
39:10	33:1-3

## Angels And Assyria

The primary reference of the Isaiah passages is to the Assyrian invasion under Sennacherib. We have seen ('Angels and the Assyrian invasion', Chapter 10) that it was the Angels who both led the Assyrians to Jerusalem and also destroyed them there. Afterwards the Jews under Hezekiah went out to spoil the Assyrians, as frequently prophesied in Isaiah. This will also happen to Gog: "They that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall set on fire and

burn the weapons" (Ez. 39:9). The fact the Angels lead Assyria/Gog to invade Israel in the last days suggests that the "spirits" of Rev. 16:13-16 which gather the nations (notably the Gog confederacy) to Armageddon have something to do with Angels, perhaps through controlling other factors which act as influencing spirits on the nations.

One cannot miss the emphasis in Ezekiel 38 on the many "horses and horsemen", and the type of armour described ("Bucklers and shields", 38:4) gives the impression of many well armed cavalry men. Notice Ez. 38:15 too: "All of them riding upon horses". Why this emphasis on cavalry? The Angels are described as horse riders in Zechariah and Revelation; the horses in the chariots of Zech. 6 are also Angels (see Chapter 11), and there is the obvious connection with the Angel-cherubim chariot. Further Angelic language is found in 38:20 "My presence"; 39:7 "The Holy One".

## **Angel Armies**

We have seen that human armies are often described in Angelic language because there are Angels controlling them. This is also the case here with the Gog invasion, which is fitting seeing that Angels were behind the initial Assyrian invasion which is the prototype of that of Gog. They are described as "a great company, a mighty army" (Ez. 38:15)- reflecting the mighty Heavenly host. "Gomer. . . Togarmah. . . and all his bands" may refer to the Angels of those lands bringing forth their Angel-armies, in the same way as there was an Angelic "prince of Persia" in Dan. 10:13. Yet it is also so that all aspects of true spirituality have their antithesis in the false system of the world. Thus the real Christ is aped by an anti-Christ; and the armies of Heaven are matched by the armies of the earth, who are described in the same outline language.

It is also emphasized that the invasion came from "the north". Whilst not in any way questioning the geographical reference here, "the north" is also a reference to Heaven. The word implies a hidden place, and a closely related word is translated "hidden" in Ps. 83:3: "They. . . consulted against Thy hidden ones". Other examples include:

- "He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing" (Job 26:7)- the north seems to refer to the Heavens, a place void of man's presence.

- Lucifer said: "I will ascend into Heaven I will exalt my throne above the stars of God I will also sit upon the mount of the Congregation in the sides of the north... above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High" (Is. 14:13,14). This shows the connection between the north and Heaven, both literally and the figurative Heaven of the temple against which Lucifer aspired, and in which the "Most High" (an Angelic title) dwelt.

- "I have raised up one (Jesus) from the north" (Is. 41:25)- a reference to Christ's Heavenly origin?

- "The secret place of the most High" (Ps. 91:1) refers to the tabernacle- which is the "Heavenlies" (we have earlier mentioned the connections between Heaven and the temple/tabernacle).

- The believers coming down from 'Heaven', a place void of man's human presence and where they cannot be harmed by man (1 Thess. 4:14; Rev. 6:9-11;21:2; Matt. 6:20; Heb. 12:23) is perhaps connected to the idea of the believers as the Cherubim in Ez. 1 coming from the figurative north.

- The offerings were slain on the north side of the altar (Lev. 1:11)- because the north represented God's presence?

## Gog Revisited

Gog was to "be visited" (38:8). This is Angelic language. The parallel passage in Is. 24:21-23 also speaks of the Gog confederacy: "And it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall punish (Heb. 'visit') the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered together in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited. Then. . the Lord of Hosts (Angels) shall reign". There are clear parallels with Gog's confederacy being visited by God, after they have been 'imprisoned' by Gog in order to support Gog's invasion. Gog is to be a "guard"- 'a prison' (s. w. Gen. 42:19)- to the other nations (38:7). "The host of the high ones that are on high (Heaven), and the kings of the earth upon the earth" refers to both the Angels and their earthly charges. The Isaiah passage implies a gathering together of the confederacy associated with a first Angelic 'visiting', followed by a "many days" period after which there will be a second Angelic visiting and the final invasion. The phrase "many days" does not necessarily imply a very long period of years- "Jacob. . mourned for his son many days" (Gen. 37:34)- not more than twenty years at the outside. A woman could have "an issue of her blood many days" (Lev. 15:25). "Ye abode in Kadesh many days" (Dt. 1:46). Shimei "dwelt in Jerusalem many days" (1 Kings 2:38).

These two Angelic visitings are spoken of in Ez. 38 too: "I (the Angels) will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth". And secondly "After many days thou (Gog) shalt be visited" by the Angels; "things (shall) come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought: and thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages. . "(v. 10,11). This thinking was a result of Angelic visiting of Gog- to achieve their purpose of making both Assyria and Gog invade Israel, the Angels acted and will act directly on the hearts of the leaders of those nations.

Is. 10 speaks of the same "day of visitation"- not just on Israel but on the hearts of the Assyrians to effect that punishment: "O Assyrian, the rod of Mine anger. . I will send him against a hypocritical nation. . . I will give him a charge to take the spoil. . howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few" (v. 3,5-7). Thus it was in his heart to punish Israel and other nations; "howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so". It therefore follows that the Angels must have put the thought into his heart, as of himself he did not think that way. The rest of Isaiah 10 has much Angelic language. Several times it is explained that because Assyria thought he had got success because of his own hand, he would be punished; implying he should have recognized that it was God's hand that enabled his success. The hand of God is Angelic language. Because of their pride in their own achievement, as they thought, it was "as if the rod should shake itself against them (the Angels) that lift it up" (v. 15). "Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of Hosts (Angels), send among the fat ones leanness; and under his



glory He shall kindle a burning like the burning of a fire (this is Angel-cherubim language). And the light of Israel shall be for a fire (referring back to the Angel in the wilderness giving light in the night due to the fire in which He dwelt), and his Holy One (Angelic language) for a flame"(v. 16,17). The Angels are made "a flame of fire" (Ps. 104:4). There follow a further four references to the "God of Hosts" in Isaiah 10, along with "the God of Jacob" and the "Holy One" again.

Thus Ez. 38:7 is the Angels speaking to Gog: "Be thou prepared, and prepared for thyself, thou, and all thy company that are assembled unto thee, and be thou a guard (prison) unto them".

Returning to the similarities between Assyria and the Gog invasion, remembering the prototype of the Assyrian invasion, the two invasions of Gog (or three? Ez. 38:4,8,10; or four if v. 4 implies two invasions: "I will turn thee back. . and bring thee forth"-again) find their basis in Assyria coming up several times before the final onslaught on Jerusalem. It seems evident to the present writer that there is only one coming of Christ- not a coming to the saints which is an invisible coming to the rest of the world, followed by a public "coming". This seems to rest on a misapplication of the coming of Christ with the suddenness of a thief on the unworthy saints; it also leads to advocating a kind of invisible 'parousia' almost identical to that believed in by Jehovah's pseudo witnesses.

At the coming of Christ the responsible will be gathered to judgement at Jerusalem. The plain Biblical evidence for this is too hard to go against. With Hezekiah in Jerusalem were "the sinners in Zion" (Is. 33:14), who would equate with the unworthy who are also gathered into Jerusalem. We will see later in this chapter that it is largely through the Angels that the judgement is ministered; and so it was in Hezekiah's time. In the context of describing the punishment of these "sinners in Zion" we read: "The Lord will come with fire, and with His (Angel) chariots like a whirlwind (Angelic language), to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire". This is alluded to (quoted?) in 2 Thess. 1:7,8 concerning the Angelic punishment of the unworthy at the judgement: "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty Angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance. . ". That those punished are renegade saints who "know not God (any longer), and that obey not the Gospel" is evident from the fact that they are punished "from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power". In common with much of Thessalonians, Paul is alluding back to Matthew 24 and 25, here to the passage in 25:31-34 regarding the responsible being gathered to the judgement before "the throne of His glory". Only the responsible come into the personal presence of Christ. The description of the judgement in Jude 24 chimes in too: "The presence of His glory".

The context of Is. 66 being concerning the "sinners in Zion" must be remembered. They are described as "the men that have transgressed against Me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched". This is quoted in Mk. 9:44 concerning Gehenna, the place of punishment for the unworthy saints. If the judgement is to be at Jerusalem, it would fit into place if the unworthy are punished literally in the physical location of Gehenna. This would make more sense of Christ's repeated allusions to it when talking of the judgement. The repeated reference to fire being used to punish the unworthy (remember the Angels can be made a flaming fire) implies their punishment will be within a defined period of time- probably very short, seeing God has no pleasure in punishing sin- and if fire is to be used, it would be logical if it was in a confined location. A punishment in literal Gehenna fits in <sup>(3)</sup>.

## 14-3 The Millennium

### Isaiah 65

The only spanner in these works may be Is. 65:20: "The sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed". Firstly, how can this be reconciled with a punishment of the wicked by fire? And most importantly, Is. 65:17-25 is describing the state of the mortal people during the Millennium. The passage makes no reference to the state of the saints. The people are described as being obedient, blessed and righteous. But the fact that some will be rejected at the second judgement at the end of the Millennium shows that not all will be like this; even during the Millennium the sinner will not receive the blessings of long life, and will be "accursed". Thus there will be a more public divide between the seeds of the woman and serpent, as there was in early times (so Genesis and the nature of the discussion in the book of Job implies).

Is. 66:24 concludes that the rejected "shall be an abhorring to all flesh"- the Hebrew text of Dan. 12:2 concerning the punishment of the responsible at judgement suggests some allusion to this: "some to shame and everlasting contempt".

Thus we have Biblical justification for seeing the Angel-controlled punishment of the "sinners in Zion" in Hezekiah's time as pointing forward to the punishment of the unworthy by the Angels at Jerusalem. With the unworthy out of Jerusalem, the Kingdom starts to be established. Seeing that there will still be mortal Jews in Jerusalem, it is worth speculating whether the judgement will take place in the old city of David ("Zion")- where Christ will sit on David's throne. The Arab invasions prior to the Lord's return of Zech. 14 will have wiped out a fair proportion of the natural Jews in the area, so the problem of there being many mortals in the vicinity is not significant.

There is much evidence that the Kingdom starts initially in Jerusalem and then spreads worldwide slowly. Many of the prophecies concerning it are addressed to "Jerusalem" and "Mount Zion". The stone of Daniel 2 hits the earth and grows from there to cover the earth. It is logical if it hits the earth at Jerusalem, where all the kingdoms of men represented by the metals will be present, gathered together against Jerusalem. It appears that the unworthy having been destroyed, a colony of saints is established around Jerusalem, living in Kingdom conditions. They live in "the land of unwalled villages. . . dwelling safely all of them. . . without walls, and having neither bars nor gates" (v. 11)- Kingdom language. The Angels give Gog the "evil thought" of invading the "land of unwalled villages", apparently after the invasions of the land as a whole. The people living there are "gathered out of the nations"- capable of reference to the saints (Mt. 25:31-34) who have just been gathered from all nations. The great wealth which attracts Gog must be due to the Kingdom conditions there- the Arab invasions of Zech. 14 (which must be before the second coming, seeing that Jerusalem is ransacked) will have devastated the land of its present wealth. The sudden prosperity reported around Jerusalem will no doubt intrigue the world, and prove a fatal attraction. "The desolate places that are now inhabited" (v. 12) probably refers specifically to the temple area/old city of Jerusalem which will have been the scene of much bitter Israeli/Arab fighting.

Thus the final onslaught of Gog and his followers occurs, this time with Christ and the redeemed in Jerusalem, thus fulfilling Psalm 2: "The kings of the earth (cp. Is. 24:21) set themselves. . . against the Lord, and against His anointed (Christ). . . yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion". Any who find it hard to imagine Christ and the saints temporarily giving ground to Gog and allowing themselves to be besieged in Jerusalem by him should reflect that an almost identical situation will occur at the end of the Millennium, when another (how different?) Gog and Magog will push the saints back into Jerusalem with Christ, until He breaks out upon them again.

#### 14-4 Latter-day Sennacherib

As in the prototype with Sennacherib, the destruction of Gog at the second coming will be by Angelic means under the command of Christ. The enigmatic Mic. 5:5 maybe refers primarily to Hezekiah's influence of Angelic forces in leading to the destruction of the Assyrian invader. This would point forward to Christ's use of the Angels to destroy Gog: "This man (Hezekiah/ Jesus) shall be the peace, when the Assyrian (Gog) shall come into our land. . . then shall we raise against him seven shepherds (an Angelic title in Ps. 80:1 and Is. 63:9-11; cp. the seven eye-Angels of Zechariah and Revelation), and eight princes of men"- another Angelic reference, seeing that "the prince of Persia" in Daniel was an Angel. Maybe this implies that the Angels will use other nations as a means of defeating Gog. The primary reference may be to Rabshakeh hearing a rumour of foreign invasion (e. g. by Tirhaka of Ethiopia) and having to return to his own land (Is. 37:8,9). This will be repeated in the last days by the northern invader hearing disturbing tidings from the east and north (Dan. 11:44). It seems hard for these tidings to be about Christ and the saints, who will have come to Jerusalem; in any case, how can the body of Christ be in two places at once? It would be more fitting if they referred to tidings of human armies; perhaps those of the Western bloc? Some schools of prophecy have seen similarities between Britain and Ethiopia (the particular nation mentioned as creating bad news for the original Assyrian king of the north).

The natural Jews in Jerusalem will mirror those in Hezekiah's time exactly- they will have experienced the humiliation of past defeats, will be prone to the taunts of the invaders about not trusting in their unproven Messiah (as they were taunted about Hezekiah), and they will be torn between the temptation of capitulating to the offers of a part in a new communist state of Israel (cp. Is. 36:16,17 and the Assyrian policy for conquered areas), and having total faith in Christ. Due to the spiritual effect of their previous trials at the hands of the Arabs (Zech. 13:8,9), they will make the right decision. The description in Is. 63 of the natural Jews looking warily out of Jerusalem to the saviour Angel coming to save them now falls into place. The saviour that comes up from fighting in Edom and Bozrah, having judged (the figure of the winepress, v. 3) both the saints and the enemies of the Jews, is defined in v. 8-13 as the Angel that led Israel through the wilderness. In the same way as the Angel's kindness and unjustified love at that time was so glorious, so Is. 63 captures the same spirit of supreme thankfulness that will be amongst the Jews as they witness such great salvation yet again.

As the Jews of Hezekiah's time went out of Jerusalem to a revitalized land and started to receive the tribute of the surrounding nations (the primary application of Isaiah's Kingdom prophecies), so the saints will pour forth from Jerusalem to establish the Kingdom worldwide. "Ye shall go out (from Jerusalem) with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and hills shall break forth before you into singing. . . " (Is. 55:12). After the surrounding of Christ in Jerusalem and the defeat of Gog, Ps. 2 describes the establishment of

the Kingdom worldwide: "I shall give the heathen for thine inheritance. . . kiss the son, lest He be angry. . ." (v. 8,12).

## **Suggested Chronology**

Thus we can summarize our findings chronologically:

- Arab invasions of Israel- Jerusalem ravaged (Zech. 13); destroy land; unless this is part of the early Gog invasions (see next item).
  
- Angels "visit" Gog to inspire first invasion of Israel (Ez. 38:4; Is. 24:21 AVmg. ) and then turn him back (cp. Assyria's several invasions). It is at this time that the "King of the north" successfully invades Israel and takes Jerusalem, erecting a blasphemous system of worship in Jerusalem (Dan. 11:40-45).
  
- Second Angelic visiting of Gog some years (? "many days") later to provoke another invasion. It could equally well be at this time that Gog and her Arab nations make the invasion just described.
  
- Return of Christ; responsible gathered to Jerusalem
  
- Angels come physically to Jerusalem to minister judgement in conjunction with Jesus
  
- Rejected punished in Gehenna
  
- Kingdom conditions evident around Jerusalem- the little stone of Dan. 2 has landed
  
- Angels inspire the "evil thought" of Gog invading this colony of the redeemed (Ez. 38:10,11)
  
- Natural Jews in Jerusalem area win battle of faith to believe in Christ in face of the biggest onslaught yet
  
- Angel appears from Edom/ Bozrah area having executed judgements (the figure of the winepress, Is. 63:3) there, provoking comparison with the love and pity of the wilderness Angel for reprobate Israel (Is. 63)
  
- Angel destroys Gog with help from Christ within Jerusalem. Micah 5:5 implies that the Angels will use other nations to effect this, perhaps the actions of the western bloc causing Gog to retreat from Jerusalem to his final destruction.
  
- Saints and Jews pour out of Jerusalem to establish the Kingdom worldwide.

Therefore the key to reconciling the two different schools of thought regarding latter day prophecy may be to recognize that some prophecies are concerning Christ and the saints, whilst others are concerning the Angels, who are operating in geographically separate areas to Christ. Thus the concept of a march of a rainbowed Angel may not be totally wrong; the

main error seems to be in thinking that the Angel is Christ and the saints, rather than a literal Angel. Once this is grasped, there is no need to argue for a judgement of believers in Sinai.

One final question; both the prototype in Hezekiah's time and the descriptions in Dan. 11 and Ez. 38 require there to be a personal leader of the northern invasion. Rabshakeh and latter day Sennacherib equate with Daniel's "King (not 'power') of the north", and Ezekiel 38's specific reference to a "rosh" [might one, chief prince] and use of the personal pronoun "thee": "turn thee back. . . thy jaws. . . thine army. . . be thou prepared. . . thy company" etc. All this emphasis needs some explanation. If the prototype of latter day Sennacherib Rabshakeh is to be closely followed, this individual need not be a nation, but a young, headstrong, powerful army commander that mirrors Rabshakeh. To make the clues more exciting, remember that Rabshakeh was probably an apostate Jew (note his references to the covenant name, and evident knowledge of conditions inside Jerusalem). "The man of sin" that is to sit in the temple of God in the last days would seem to have reference back to the "abomination that maketh desolate" and to the planting of the king of the north's tabernacles "between the seas in the glorious holy mountain"- i. e. in the temple area of Jerusalem (Dan. 11:45). This "man of sin" points to an individual.

## **Other Connections**

As a footnote to all this, the following familiar latter day prophecies also have Angelic connections:

- Christ's approach to Jerusalem is described in Ps. 24:10: "Who is this King of glory? The Lord of Hosts (Angels), he is the King of glory". Thus Christ, the Lord of glory, will be especially clearly associated with the Angels as He approaches Jerusalem. He comes with all the Holy Angels with Him, with "saints", i. e. Angels, to relieve the invasion of the latter-day Sennacherib.

- "Thither cause Thy mighty ones (cp. 'Elohim') to come down" (Joel 3:11) speaks of God manifestation through Angels to destroy the latter day invader, the latter-day Sennacherib.

- "God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. His glory covered the heavens. . . his brightness was as the light, he had horns. . . burning coals went forth at his feet" (Hab. 3:3-6) is full of Angel-cherubim language, implying that the people of Israel were led by the Cherubim through the wilderness, even if not fully visible to them. Thus the Angel leading Israel out of Egypt is a type of Christ's second coming, as the sun of righteousness. This passage is painting the picture of a sunrise (see NIV)- which fits in with the picture of Christ's return in Mal. 4:2.

- "I will encamp about mine house because of the army of him that passeth by [the latter-day Sennacherib], and because of him that returneth. . . the Lord of Hosts (Angels) shall defend them" (Zech. 9:8,15) is all the language of Jacob under threat from Esau, being Angelically camped around.

## 14-5 The Book Of Life

Jesus will return to earth for judgement with His Angels, as we are told in His parables concerning the judgement. In the parable of the wheat and tares the point is made that the Angels do not just come to gather the harvest, but also to separate the wheat from the tares. Thus it would seem that the actual process of judgement will be largely associated with the Angels. We are told in 1 Thess. 4:17 that "we which are alive and remain shall be caught up . . . in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air". The clouds must be the clouds of Angels with which Jesus returns, and may even represent the figurative "air" in which we meet Him first of all, as if He is manifested through the Angels which He sends to gather us to judgement (although it is quite possible to take the 'air' literally too). The *elohim* under the Old Covenant were the judges, ruling over different numbers of God's people and judging them, referring them up to more senior *elohim* and finally to Moses (6). Similarly, at the judgement it may be that we are judged by our guardian Angel- ideally suited to discuss our lives with us- and then referred to Christ Himself. Daniel 10:9-11 describes in parabolic form the judgement, with Daniel representing the saints, rising from the grave (as he rose from "deep sleep" on the ground) in great fear and sense of unworthiness, but being comforted by the Angel with news of how pleasing we have been to them ("O Daniel, a man greatly beloved"). This again indicates that the Angels will have a large part to play in the judgement.

### **The Book of Life**

When Christ opens the books of His people (Rev. 20:12; as if each saint has a book written about him recording his life), He does this through discussing with our guardian the details of our life. Perhaps the Angels will have literal books with them; we pointed out earlier that the Angels do seem to use their facility for reading and writing.

Mal. 3:16 describes the acceptable attitude of the minority after the restoration from Babylon in the midst of the general apathy to the work of fully restoring the Kingdom that Malachi, Ezra, Nehemiah and Haggai decried. "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him (i. e. in His presence- the Angels) for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name". Note the numerous examples of Angelic language in Malachi 3, not least in the allusions to the wilderness Angel. This "book" (singular) therefore contains a record of our individual works, or good words in the Malachi context. There are other indications that the book contains a record of our individual works and ways: "The dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works" (Rev. 20:12). "I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the Gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life" (Phil. 4:3). Notice how being in the book of life is associated with certain works committed by those in it. This "book of life" was written from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8; 17:8), although it contains the records of our individual works. "The works were finished from the foundation of the world" (Heb. 4:3)- the works and actions that comprise each saint were finished from the beginning, written by the Angels in God's book. The statement in Gen. 1:31 that at the end of the natural creation "God saw everything that He had made. . ." may imply that He saw then everything He would ever make- "the works were finished from the foundation (creation?) of the world". Notice again how the unfathomable system of predestination and foreknowledge is in the hands of the Angels.

The Angel wrote the book initially- Moses pleaded with the Angel on Sinai in Ex. 32:32 "Blot me, I pray thee, out of Thy book (of life), which Thou hast written" (from the foundation of the world). Heb. 12:23 implies the same "The general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are enrolled in Heaven. . the spirits of just men made perfect". We have seen earlier that these "spirits" are the guardian Angels of the righteous. These Angels enrolled the names of the responsible at the beginning of the world, but they are capable of removal from the book. It is as if God informed the Angels of all those they would be dealing with during human history, and they subsequently have kept a record of the works of each of them as they guide them through life. Ps. 56:8 may explain things a bit more: "Thou tellest my wanderings (through life); put Thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in Thy book?", as if to imply that David knew that God had a record of what he was presently going through "in Thy book" already, but wanted the Angel to make a special note of it now: "put Thou my tears into Thy bottle", which seems to be equated with "Thy book".

If the Angels write the book of life, then it is to be expected that references to "blotting out" also refer to the Angels:

- Num. 5:23 "The priest shall write these curses in a book, and he shall blot them out with the bitter water". The priests represented the Angels as the whole Law was a "pattern of things in the Heavens". They are both called 'Elohim' at times; see also Mal. 2:7. The priest writing the curses in a book recalled the Angels pronouncing the curses on Israel, and having the capacity to blot out their sins.

- Dt. 9:14 "Let me alone, that I may destroy them, and blot out their name from under Heaven (the Angels?): and I will make of thee (Moses) a nation mightier and greater than they". This was the Angel talking, seeing that He later altered His purpose concerning this.

- Dt. 29:20 "All the curses that are written in this book (of life- by the Angel) shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under Heaven".

- Neh. 4:5 "Let not their sin be blotted out from before Thee"- both good and bad works are written in the book of life.

- Ps. 51:1,9 "Have mercy upon me. . according to Thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions". Mercies and truth are often references to the promises to Abraham- to bless his seed with forgiveness of sins (Acts 3:25,26). The Angels made these promises, and were therefore the ones to blot out the sins in fulfilment of them. "Hide Thy face (presence- an Angelic title) from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities".

- Col. 2:14 "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances. . . spoiling principalities and powers". If "blotting out" has an Angelic reference here, we have further proof that one group of Angels blotted out the Law.

- Rev. 3:5 "I will not blot out his name out of the book of life"; is this the Angel who was identified with Jesus speaking? ("The Spirit" Angel, "one like the son of man"- not the Son of man Himself).

## **Angels And The Rejected**

The ministering of judgement on the unworthy will no doubt be supervised by an (the?) Angel of evil, in the same way that it appears an Angel of evil ministered the curses of the Law: "The Lord shall separate (Hebrew: sever) him (the disobedient man) out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the words of the covenant" (Dt. 29:21). In the same way the Angels "sever the wicked from among the just" (Mt. 13:49) at the judgement. "They shall drive him (the rejected) from light into darkness, and chase him out of the world" (Job 18:18). Who else can the "they" be but the Angels at the judgement seat? Lk. 12:48 also implies that a group of beings will require an account of an individual at judgement day: "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more". The Angels at judgement would equate with the "men" of this passage. The use of the word "require" in this context leads us back earlier in the same chapter: "Thou fool (the rejected), this night thy soul shall be required of thee"- as if to some extent the judgement starts to take place at death, when the Angel starts to consider our lives. The 'requiring' process begins then, so that when the individual is resurrected the Angels know what to "require of" him. Is this part of the answer to the statement that "after death the judgement" (Heb. 9:27)? "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31) may well refer to this Angelic punishment, as the hands of God is Angelic language, and "the living God" may well carry the idea in Hebrew of 'God of the living ones', i. e. the Angel-cherubim.

## 14-6 Angels At The Judgment Seat

### Parable Of The Pounds

The parable of the pounds also comments on the Angels' relationship with the unworthy. Jesus "said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. . . and they (i.e. that stood by) said unto Him, Lord, he hath ten pounds" (Lk. 19:24,25). "Them that stood by" must surely be a conscious reference by the Lord to Zechariah's prophecy of the Angels as "these that stand by" Christ (Zech. 3:4,7); note that he too speaks in a judgment/reward context. If our Lord is referring to the Angels, then we have a fascinating picture of them taking away the opportunities given to the unworthy and granting them to the accepted. Their query of the amount of reward being given fits in with what we know about their limited knowledge, and the fact that our reward will be far greater than their present status (Heb. 1,2). Hence their reverent questioning of the extent of reward being given.

Rev. 14:18-20 provides what appears to be another picture of the judgement; an Angel with power over fire throws the apostate vine branches outside the city, where they will be trodden. That these are the responsible is clinched by the similarity with the Lord's description of the rejected being branches broken off from the true vine, because of their lack of spiritual fruit (Jn. 15:2). Thus it would appear that there is one Angel responsible for co-ordinating the punishment of the rejected, which he does with fire just outside Jerusalem. This suggests that the rejected will be punished by literal fire in the locality of the historical Gehenna.

### Angels At The Judgment Seat



Paul's warning in 1 Cor. 10:10 not to "murmur as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer" (i. e. the destroying Angel) implies that the unworthy among the "Israel of God" will also be destroyed by Angelic means if we make the same mistakes Israel of old made. The fact that the Angels will personally minister the condemnation of the unworthy (Mt. 13:49 "the Angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire") when in their lives those Angels gave their charges every chance to repent and to grow spiritually, preserving them from physical danger, is surely a heart rending thought; and a motivation to respond acceptably to the trials God brings into our lives through His Angels.

The idea of threshing is often associated with the judgement; the unworthy will be "as chaff before the wind: and let the Angel of the Lord chase them. . let the Angel of the Lord persecute them" (Ps. 35:5,6). The Angels are made spirit (the same word Hebrew word as 'winds') and are being likened to the wind in this threshing process, driving the unworthy away, as Adam, typifying the rejected, was chased out of Eden by the Angels. "As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more; but the righteous is an everlasting foundation" (Prov. 10:25) appears the basis of the parable of the house on the rock, making the whirlwind correspond to the second coming in judgement. "The whirlwind" is Angel cherubim language; as if it is by that means that the wicked will be destroyed. Note that "the wicked" and "the fool" in Proverbs often refer to those who are responsible.

#### Angels At The Judgment Seat: **Ministering Salvation**

But in the same way as the Angels minister condemnation, they also joyfully give eternal life to their faithful charges, on Christ's command at the judgement- "him shall the Son of man also confess before the Angels of God" (Luke 12:8). This is perhaps the fact alluded to in 2 Cor. 10:18: "not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth (at the judgement)". To be commended implies to be commended to somebody- the Angels? So it seems that when Christ first comes, He sends HIS Angels to gather us (Matt. 13:41), and it is also His Angels which punish the wicked (Matt. 13:41); however it is GOD'S Angels which reward the righteous (remember the distinction we drew earlier (between the Angels of God and of Christ). The Angels of Christ bring us to Him with their report on us, and He then makes the decision- those same Angels are told to arrange the destruction of their charge if unworthy, whilst the worthy are confessed to the Angels of God for glorification.

The fact is, we can look forward to at last meeting our guardian in the day of judgement, and maybe only then coming to realize the tremendous part that Angel has played in our eternal destiny. No doubt only then at the end will we perceive how great their presence has been. Similarly it would seem that only at the end of his days did Moses recognize the extent of the Angelic presence. The fact that the cloud that they followed was actually composed of thousands of mighty Angels seems only to have been recognized by Moses in his blessing of the people "before his death" in Dt. 33:1,2. There he says in an ecstasy of praise to God for His greatness and closeness to His people, "The LORD came from Sinai and rose up from Seir unto them; He shined forth from Mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of His saints (Angels): from His right hand (i. e. the Angels- they ministered the Law) went a fiery law for them"; whilst earlier we only read "And the children of Israel took their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran" (Num. 10:12). The passage in Dt. 33 almost seems a direct comment on this earlier description.

## Language

In a sense, the Angels deal with men according to men's own perceptions of themselves, and with what can only be described as a certain spiritual culture. They do not "speak evil of dignities" (2 Pet. 2:10,11), as exemplified in the way the Angelic voice from Heaven addressed the wicked Nebuchadnezzar whom they were about to depose as "O king Nebuchadnezzar" (Dan. 4:31). This isn't only an example to us of not being abrasive to people even if we know them to be seriously in the wrong. It's an example of how we should seek to deal with people within the terms of their own perceptions. It makes one wonder whether at the judgment, the Lord will address those who were known in their lives as 'Doctors' or 'Reverends'... obviously making the point, as the Angel was to Nebuchadnezzar, that human advantage means so absolutely nothing before the ultimate analysis and set of values of His judgment.

## 14-7 Angels In The Kingdom Of God

### ANGELS IN THE KINGDOM.

Jesus will return to earth with His Angels, and this means that throughout eternity there will be Angels with us on the earth. This is something to take into account in our visions of the Millennium and Kingdom age. It appears that they are more prominent in the setting up of the Kingdom, and that we will take over their role later on. We have seen that they are the "reapers" sent forth to gather the saints, and that they will be responsible for punishing the nations (2 Thess. 1:7,8). Initially, the Angels and Jesus will be physically together in the judgement of the world- the unrepentant worshippers of the beast "shall be tormented. . in the presence of the holy Angels and in the presence of the Lamb" (Rev. 14:10). Presumably the individual beast worshippers will be brought together to one locality for this judgement- the literal location of Gehenna, where the unworthy saints will be punished? This gathering process will be by the Angels, as was that of the saints and of the nations to Armageddon (Rev. 16:16).

There are indications that the Angels will still have a distinct role in the Kingdom. Isaiah 19:18 describes the cities of Egypt swearing "to the Lord of Hosts" when Egypt and Assyria will be blessed by "the Lord of Hosts" (v. 25). If these "Hosts" are redeemed saints, one would expect the name Yahweh Elohim to be used. Similarly, every man shall sit "under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for (because) the mouth of the Lord of Hosts (Angels) hath spoken " (Micah 4:4)- i. e. because of the Angels' instituting the Kingdom, none can oppose it. And it may be possible that when "all people will walk every one in the name of his God" (v. 5), their personal 'god' may be an Angel.

"The God of Jacob" has been shown to be a fairly clear reference to an Angel or Angelic power. In the Kingdom "Many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob" (Bethel), Is. 2:3. The "mountain of the Lord's house" is the temple, and it was God's house in the sense that the Angel lived there- as Bethel was the "house of God" by reason of the Angels being there. Does all this imply that the Angel will literally dwell in the temple again during the Kingdom? In the same way as the glory-Angel departed from the temple as described in Ezekiel, so He will return,

along with Christ. The many references later in Isaiah to the Lord returning to Zion would then fit it. In what sense can Jesus be said to return to the temple?

God's great desire is that all His people should be one. Eph. 1:9,10 makes it seem that God's subsequent desire to unify us and the Angels is a bigger part of His ultimate purpose than we often recognize: "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which he hath purposed in Himself: that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven (Angels) and which are on earth (us)". Isaiah 48 in describing the fullness of the new creation has the same idea- "Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and My right hand hath spanned the Heavens: when I call unto them they stand up together. . they are created now and not from the beginning (i. e. a new creation)" (v. 13,7). When the "call" goes forth, Angels and saints will "stand up"-i. e. be glorified- together.

### **Taking over of the Angels' role in the Kingdom.**

We have said that the Angels are described as most active in the setting up of the Kingdom, but that in time we take over their roles. It is to help us visualize our part in that age that so much has been revealed to us about how the Angels operate now. We have said that the Angels are reapers; the descriptions of the final judgements on Israel in Revelation indicate that we start to take over this role as the time of judgement for the world draws to a close. "Behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of Man (n. b. like the Son of man-i. e. the saints), having on His head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another Angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat upon the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe; and he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped" (Rev. 14:14-16). The "earth" here is probably 'the land'- of Israel. The saints are commanded by an Angel that the time has come to reap the spiritual harvest of repentant Jews now accepting Christ. There are other references indicating the part of the saints in welcoming repentant Israel- e. g. Jer. 3:15. Perhaps this Angel is Palmoni, the "wonderful numberer" of Dan. 9:13, in whose hands the overall control of the timing of God's purpose is held. This would indicate that the saints will co-operate with the Angels, each playing different roles, in the execution of God's purpose. This is exactly how the Angels operate in this age. In this case, the basic Heavenly organisation and ways of working would remain unchanged, but the size of the elohim would be increased by our joining their ranks. Alternatively, in view of the fact that the world to come has not been put into the hands of the Angels but of us, it may be that only during the setting up of the Kingdom are we under such direct control of the Angels.

At present it is the Angel-cherubim's job to "keep the way of the tree of life". They have been given this charge, and yet they chose men to fulfil it who will keep the way pure- thus the Angels decided concerning Abraham, "I know him, that he will command his children. . and they shall keep the way of the Lord" (Gen. 18:19). It will be our duty to take over as the way keepers from the Angels, although we should have had good practice in this life. Thus we will say to the mortal population "This is the way, walk ye in it" (Is. 30:21).

It would even appear that to some degree a repentant natural Israel take over the role of the Angels as God's eyes walking up and down and to and fro in the earth (land?). This follows from Zechariah describing the Angels as walking to and fro in the earth (1:10;6:7) and 10:12 describing Israel doing the same once they have been regathered and start to carry the name of God.

## CONCLUSION

We have shown that the Angels do not possess ultimate power and knowledge, and therefore they need to find out our true spiritual state through the trials they bring upon us. However, God works through such weakness, as he does with us the prospective elohim, in order to bring about His very finely planned purpose. He allows Himself to be limited by the Angels, and it appears from our own experience of Him working through us that this is one of His most sublime characteristics. "The LORD is in His Holy Temple; the LORD's throne is in the Heaven: His eyes behold, His eyelids try, the children of men" (Ps. 11:4). Apparently a Hebraism is being used here which implies God is squinting at us. To squint implies limitation of vision; God's eyes are the Angels, and so He, the great God in Heaven, allows Himself in some way to be limited by them.

The Angels have a degree of independence in how they execute that purpose, and to this end they talk to one another and co-operate in love and meekness to bring about that purpose. All this sets a great example of how we should operate, and points us forward to the glorious days of unity ahead in executing God's purpose. May the readers of these words enthusiastically apply themselves to copy the Angels' great example of zeal in doing God's will, that they may be merged with them "in the dispensation of the fullness of times".

## APPENDIX 1: ISAIAH'S PROPHECIES OF THE RESTORATION

It has been clearly shown <sup>(1)</sup> that much of Isaiah had a detailed fulfilment in Hezekiah's time. However, there would seem no reason to doubt that the number of allusions to Isaiah's prophecies of the restoration are significant, particularly in the second half of the prophecy, and indicate that there was an albeit dimmer fulfilment of parts of Isaiah in this period. We have already seen the principle of God describing what can be if His people show adequate spirituality, but deferring it if they do not. It seems that far greater blessings could have been experienced at the Restoration, but they have been deferred until the Kingdom- in the same way as Ezekiel's prophecy of the restoration of the temple was not fully realized, but deferred until the second coming. There are many connections between the restoration prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah and the latter chapters of Isaiah <sup>(2)</sup>. It is possible to interpret the "servant" of these chapters as referring to Zerubbabel; he is described as "My servant" in Hag. 2:23.

40:1 "Comfort ye, Comfort ye"- Nehemiah= 'Comfort of Yah'. Is. 40 has many links with Zech. 3, which is a prophecy of the restoration.

40:29 "He giveth power to the faint"- very relevant to the great physical effort that had to be made by the handfull who first set about the rebuilding.

41:6,7 "They helped every one his neighbour; and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage. So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith. . . ". This refers to the different types of people working together to build Jerusalem. Where exactly does this fit in to the Hezekiah context?

41:11,12 "All they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: and they that strive with thee shall perish. . . they that war against thee shall be as nothing". The Samaritans provide a clear fulfilment of all this.

41:14 "Fear not. . . ye few men of Israel; I will help thee, saith. . the Holy One of Israel" (AVmg. ). The few Jews rebuilding Jerusalem aided by the Angel surely correspond to this.

43:12 "Thou wilt not call upon me, O Jacob; thou wilt be weary of me. Thou hast not brought me the small cattle of thy burnt offerings"- the same ideas are repeated in Mal. 1:13; 2:17 regarding Israel's state after the restoration.

43:28 "I have profaned the princes of the sanctuary"- put forth "as polluted from the priesthood" (Ezra 2:62).

44:26 "That confirmeth the word of His servant (Jeremiah). . . that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited".

44:28 "Cyrus. . . shall perform all My pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, thou shalt be built".

45:18 "The Lord that created the Heavens; God Himself that formed the earth. . . He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited". If "the earth" is 'the land' of Israel and "the Heavens" refer to the temple (see 1 Kings 8:30; 2 Chron. 30:27; Ps. 20:2,6; 11:4; Heb. 7:26; 2 Sam. 15:15 etc. ) then God is saying that if the temple and land remained uninhabited, His creation of them would be in vain- hence His plan of restoration. The references in Isaiah's prophecies of the restoration to God being the creator of Heaven and earth would therefore be reminders that it was equally in His power to create the new Heavens and earth of the people of Israel/the temple.

46:10 "Declaring the end from the beginning". The emphasis on this (e. g. 41:26) is understandable seeing that such a specific prophecy regarding the 70 years captivity was to be given and fulfilled.

49:4 "My reward is with my God"- cp. "Remember me, O my God, for good" (Neh. 13:31; "my God" is a common theme in Ezra and Nehemiah).

49:16 "Thy (broken down) walls are continually before me".

50:10 "Who is among you that feareth the Lord. . his God?" cp. Ezra 1:3.

51:7 "Fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings"- the Samaritans.

52:12 "Ye shall not go out (from Babylon) with haste, nor go by flight: for the Lord (Angel) will go before you", so that they went with the King's blessing and not in panic.

54:5 "The Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth"- a phrase used in Zechariah regarding the Angel co-ordinating the restoration.

54:7,6 "For a small moment (70 years) have I forsaken thee. . . as a woman forsaken. . . and a wife. . . refused"- cp. our comments showing that it was the Angel who married Israel, becoming 'The God of Israel', and then forsook her.

56:2,5 "Blessed is the man. . . that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it. . . unto them will I give in Mine house and within My (rebuilt) walls a place. . .". There was a problem with Sabbath abuse during the restoration.

57:19 "Peace to him that is far off (in Babylon), and to him that is near" (in the land).

58:12 "Build the old waste places. . . raise up the foundations. . . and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in" (and 58:13=Neh. 13:22).

64:10,11 "Jerusalem a desolation. . . our beautiful house. . . is burned up with fire".

66:1 "Where is the house that ye build unto me?. . . to this man will I look. . . that. . . trembleth at My word"- as a few did at the restoration (Ezra 9:4; 10:3), although the majority were more concerned with the physical work of the temple than truly responding in the right spirit to God's word. Similarities with us?

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### Notes

(1) See J. W. Thirtle, *Old Testament Problems*; H. A. Whittaker, *Isaiah* (Cannock: Biblia, 1988).

(2) A whole catalogue of connections between the restoration prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah and Isaiah's prophecies of the restoration is to be found in E. G. Walker, 'The Latter Chapters Of Isaiah', *The Bible Student*, Vol. 22 p. 8.