

PRE – INCARNATION APPEARANCES OF THE SECOND PERSON OF THE TRINITY – A STUDY OF THE “ANGEL OF THE LORD” PASSAGES AND RELATED REFERENCES

Introduction

In the Old Testament record we have the Lord Jesus taking human form before His conception and birth through Mary. In these Old Testament references we see Him dealing with His followers just as He would and will deal with us. These references are also a reminder that Jesus is the eternal God, the God of all time. As we do this study we are careful to correctly interpret the references. You will notice that throughout it is Scripture interpreting Scripture. As we study we will also see that there is more of Christ in the Old Testament than a good many assume today.

The Two Words

יהוה

In the Hebrew Old Testament term ‘the Angel of the Lord’ there are two words used. The four letter name for LORD(in English) is above and called the tetragrammaton. This word is only used of the one true God. No other religions used it. This personal name of the Savior God is used of no other god. It is inclusive of all that our Lord is. It occurs at least 5321 times in the OT. It far outdistances any other name used for our God in the OT. When this special, unique name of our God is combined with the following it makes the expression unique and special, as we shall see.

מלאך

This Word is translated as follows according to the English KJV

- Angel – 113 times,
- Messenger – 98 times,
- Ambassador – 4 times.

We will look at this KJV breakdown of the use of the word. Since we are concerned with the appearances and references to the second person of the Trinity, we eliminate all plural uses of the word. All four ‘ambassador’ uses are plural. As to ‘messenger’ there are twenty-four that are in the singular. All of these refer to human messengers except one, Mal. 3:1b. Eliminating all plurals of the ‘angel’ translation, this study then goes into the singular uses that according to Scripture’s interpretation clearly do or could apply to Christ. There are ten plural uses. Of the remaining uses I given them to you. A strong majority of the singular uses are referring to the second person of the Trinity. I positively eliminate as not referring to the Messiah:

- One use contained in a lie – 1 Kings 13:18,

- Thirteen of the twenty uses in Zechariah.

That leaves eighty-nine uses which are definitely or at least likely the Messiah. The references in Gen. 24:7,40 and Ecc. 5:6 are to my view up to my study so far also likely.

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

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

The Five Constructions with (malak) מלאך

- .1 This is usually in translations: 'the angel of the LORD' מלאך יהוה
- .2 'the angel of God' מלאך האלהים
- .3 '(the) angel of God' מלאך אלהים
- .4 'the angel' המלאך
- .5 'angel' מלאכו

This no. 5 includes the word with the pronominal suffixes of 'his' and 'my.' There are eight of these. Those of Mal. 1:1 and 3:1, both with 'my' do not refer to the Messiah as we can see from the context.

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

- If it is an appearance of the malak it stands alone. Example: Gen. 16:7
- If it is an appearance but does not have the word malak in the text it is in brackets. Example: [Gen. 18:1f.]
- If the speaker is the malak with no indication of a visible appearance then it is listed as follows: {Gen. 22:11,15}
- If it is a reference to the malak but not at the time of appearance or speaking then parentheses () are used.
- If there is still some question in my mind that it refers to the Messiah then a question mark ? follows.

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

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

*For your information the plural 'angels' references are as follows: Gen. 19:1, 15, 28:12, 32:1, Job 4:18, Ps. 78:49, 91:11, 103:20, 104:4, 148:2. They are ten in number. Of course the plural form of cherub is cherubim and either form always refers to angels, as does the plural seraphim in Is. 6. While Gabriel and Michael in Daniel are singular, they are created angels.

Chart I

- .1 מלאך ידוה
- Gen. 16:7,9,10,11 to Hagar before Ishmael's birth
 - [Gen. 18:1f.] to Abraham at the Oaks of Mamre]
 - {Gen. 22:11,15 to Abraham on Mt. Moriah}
 - [Gen. 32:24f. to Jacob in the wrestling]
 - Ex. 3:2 to Moses in the burning bush
 - Num. 22:22,23,24,25,26,
27, 31,32,34,35 to Balaam on his cursing mission
 - [Josh. 5:13f. to Joshua before Jericho]
 - {Judges2:1,4 to the people at Bochim under Joshua}
 - (Judges 5:23 in Deborah's song)
 - Judges 6:11,12,21a,21b,22a,22b to Gideon at Ophrah
 - Judges 13;3, 13,15,16a,16b, 17,18,20,21a,21b to Manoah and his wife
 - (Ps. 34:7 –v.8 in Heb- David's psalm when he feigned madness)
 - (Ps. 35:5,6 David referring to the destroying angel)
 - 2 Sam. 24:16 to David after his numbering Israel
 - 1 Chron. 21:12,15,16,18,30 “
 - 1 Kings 19:7 to Elijah in the wilderness
 - {2 Kings 1:3,15 to Elijah in sending to Ahaziah's messengers}
 - (2 Kings 19:35 slaying 185,000 Assyrians before Jerusalem)
 - (Is. 37:36 “)
 - Zech. 1:11,12 in a vision among the Myrtle trees
 - Zech. 3:1,5,6 in a vision with Joshua the high priest and satan before Him
 - (Zech. 12:8 promise of victory and glory with Him before them) total of 56 times
- .2 מלאך האלהים
- {Gen. 31:11 to Jacob in the dream about the goats}
 - Ex. 14:19 in the pillar of fire and pillar of cloud
 - Judges 6:20 to Gideon
 - Judges 13:6,9 to Manoah's wife
 - (2 Sam. 14:17,20 wise woman of Tekoa refers to Him discerning good and evil and having wisdom)
 - (2 Sam. 19:27 – v.28 in Heb- an old saying total of 8 times

- 3 מלאך אלהים
- {Gen. 21:17 to Hagar with her son crying}
 - (1 Sam. 29:9 old saying) total of 2 times
- 4 המלאך
- (Gen. 48:16 Jacob referring to Him in blessing Joseph's sons)
 - 2 Sam. 24:16a,16b, 17 to David after numbering Israel
 - 1 Chron. 21:15a, 15b,20,27 “
 - (Ecc. 5:6 –v.5 in Heb- paying the vow to Him)
 - Zech. 3:3 in a vision as Mediator total of 10 times

5. with suffixes מלאכו

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

Chart II

Here the appearances of the Lord are arranged in the seven Old Testament historical periods. These are the references from Chart I simply rearranged. Only the first verse of a reference is given. It is significant how in every age He appeared and acted for His people.

PATRIARCHS

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

MOSES AND JOSHUA

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

JUDGES

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

THE UNITED KINGDOM

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

THE DIVIDED KINGDOM

1Kings 19:5 to Elijah in the wilderness
 (2Kings 1:3 to Elijah in sending him to Ahaziah's messengers)
 (Hosea 12:4 referring back to Jacob wrestling with Him)
 (2Kings 19:35 slaying the 185,000 Assyrians)
 (2Chron. 32:21 "
 (Is. 37:36 "
 (Is. 63:9 refers back to him in the pillar)
 There is not evidence that
 He appeared, but He acted.

EXILE

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

RETURN

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

The Individual References

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

1. If the very name itself is used this carries the most weight. According to the Hebrew usage, since the malak is in what is called the 'construct' form it is definitely THE Angel of the Lord. Who is THE messenger of the Lord to do the work of bringing the Good News to this world? Jesus!
2. The context of each reference further supports the uniqueness of Him.
3. If divine qualities are ascribed to the Angel, whether the word is alone or in its other constructions, then He must be God. The created angels just like us are His servants and not God Himself.
4. If He does divine works, then it is the second person of the Trinity.
5. If He is worshiped then it can only be the Uncreate Angel of the Lord, our Jesus. In Rev. 19:10 and 22:8 we see clearly that we are not to worship angels. See also Col. 2:18.

Our Lord when He was on earth through the incarnation said that no one can see God. God is a Spirit. The Father spoke from Heaven but was not seen. When we see Jesus, then we see the Father. He is the exact representation of the Father. Heb. 1:3 He and the Father are one. On Pentecost the Spirit was present but not seen. But Jesus who promised He would send the paraclete/comforter was seen on earth and amply so before He ascended after the resurrection appearances. In His Old Testament pre-incarnation appearances He foreshadowed all that He would do as the visible Lord. In each case we will view the evidence for and the purpose of the appearance or reference.

Gen. 16:7,9,10,11 to Hagar before Ishmael's birth

Evidence – This is the first reference in the OT to “the Angel of the Lord.” Since malak is in the construct state as said earlier it is THE Angel. After the Angel of the Lord spoke to her, we read v.13 “So she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, ‘Thou are a God of seeing’; for she said, ‘Have I really seen God and remained alive after seeing Him?’” Hagar says the Angel of the Lord is LORD and God. And she has seen Him. In v.10 it is the Angel of the Lord who says, “I will so greatly multiply your descendants that they cannot be numbered for multitude.” Only God can do this.

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

Gen. 18:1f. to Abraham at the Oaks of Mamre

Evidence – The term angel in its five constructions does not occur in this text. But there can be no doubt that the Angel of the Lord appears to Abraham. In v.1 it is the LORD who appeared. In v.2 Abraham sees three men. In v.22 the men turned toward Sodom; “but Abraham still stood before the LORD.” The Lord then talks to him. In chap. 19:1 the two angels came to Sodom. Putting this together it is clear the Lord was the third man.

Both before and after the two angels left it is the Lord who talks with Abraham as a man. In v.10 the Lord said, "I will return..." In v.33 "And the LORD went His way..." In the same human form as the two angels the Lord promises the Son of promise.

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

Gen. 21:17 to Hagar with her son crying

Evidence – While here it is the Angel of God, it is still God Himself. It was the Angel of the Lord who appeared to her earlier and this would be the same person. When in v.18 the Angel of God says, "I will make him a great nation," the evidence is conclusive. He said this before repeating it again for her comfort. He it is alone who can do this, not a created angel.

Purpose – God does not forget his promises even though we might. He repeats Himself for Hagar's sake. He heard the crying of the child and again from his merciful heart reaches out. His mercy is great to all. If only it would lead them to acknowledge Him! His sun rises on the evil and on the good; His rain falls on the just and the unjust.

Gen. 22:11,15 to Abraham on Mt. Moriah

Evidence – In v.11 it is the Angel of the Lord who calls from heaven. In v.12 He says "... for now I know... seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." In vv.15-16 it is the Angel of the Lord who called from heaven a second time saying, "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD..." It is the Angel speaking. He is the LORD. He furthermore gives the promise, v.17 "I will indeed bless you, and I will multiply..." As he would multiply Ishmael so He would multiply Isaac.

Purpose – The savior who would come from that multiplied number here gives the promise to Abraham who would trust in the unseen. Absolute trust is not disappointed, but rather rewarded. To Jesus we owe our dearest just as Abraham was willing to sacrifice his dearest.

Gen. 24:7,40 promise to Abraham's servant

Evidence – In both verses Angel is in the singular. So far in Genesis Angel in the singular refers to the second person of the Trinity. The word in the plural refers to the created angelic spirits, Gen. 19:1,15. The term here is just Angel. Yet throughout Genesis the singular is for the Christ. In these two verses Angel has attached to it a pronominal suffix 'his.' There are eight times in the OT when the word malak has a pronominal suffix attached to it. They are as follows with the first six referring to Christ and the last two referring to others:

- Gen. 24:7 His Angel
- Gen. 24:40 His Angel
- Ex. 23:23 My Angel
- Ex. 32:34 My Angel
- Dan. 3:28 His Angel

- Dan. 6:22 His Angel
- Mal. 1:1 Malachi means his angel/messenger
- Mal. 3:1 his messenger(angel) who is John the baptizer

I think it likely that the six refer to Jesus. In the other twelve uses of malak which I have listed the evidence seems strong for it referring to Jesus. These two that do not refer to Jesus, fall into that category referring to others. In 1 Kings 13:18 and the 13 uses in Zechariah refer to created angelic spirits.

Purpose – The Angel had appeared at Mamre guaranteeing a son. He had stayed Abraham’s hand on Mt. Moriah. It would seem natural that he also would see to it that the son of promise would have a wife to fulfill the promise of multiplied descendants. As He goes with Abraham’s servant guaranteeing success, so he goes with all His servants guaranteeing success. In our earthly task, Jesus will direct and perfect.

Gen. 31:11 to Jacob in the dream about the goats

Evidence – The Angel of God said, v.13 “I am the God of Bethel...” This is enough for me. But at this point it would be good to compare the other references where angels speak. They do not speak as God but for God. This is an important distinction. We know that in the prophetic writings there will be situations when the speaker will change from the writer to God and then back again. This is indicated by the change in pronoun from the narrator referring to God in the third person with the change to God speaking in the first person. It is not the same here. It is the “Angel of God said” The created angels speak separate from God. Gabriel does not speak as God but for God. Dan. 8:15-17 In Isaiah the voice of the Lord is separate from that of the angels. In Gen. 28:12 the angels ascended and descended, while it is the Lord who spoke.

Purpose – Jacob had to face his Laban as we do today. What a comfort to know our Lord works all out to good then and now. For assurance the Lord referred Jacob back to what He had told him at Bethel. We must refer back to the Word of God over and over again for the same assurance.

Gen. 32:24f. to Jacob in the wrestling

Evidence – There is no question that the man here is the second person. Over 1100 years later Hosea states that Jacob wrestled with the malak. God changed Jacob’s name to Israel, one who wrestles with God. Jacob acknowledges that in v.30 “I have seen God face to face...” He names the place Peniel accordingly. Here as before God grants blessing.

Purpose – We like Jacob must cling to Jesus and be persistent in prayer. This brings blessings.

Gen. 48:16 Jacob referring to Him in blessing Joseph’s sons

Evidence – Having just looked at Gen. 32, who is it who redeemed Jacob from Esau’s wrath? The Angel of the Lord. Who can redeem for all evil: The Angel of the Lord. Again it is God who blesses. Jacob seeks this for his grandsons. The redeeming Angel is the Redeemer of Job 19:25.

Purpose – Jacob knew his Redeemer. In this first of the references to ‘the’ Angel He is aptly distinguished as the one who redeems, ransoms, recovers by paying back.

We know Him as our Redeemer from all evil. Had He not, no blessing could come to us.

Ex. 3:2 to Moses in the burning bush

Evidence – The Angel of the Lord appeared in the flames of fire. V.2 God the Lord calls to Moses from the bush and speaks to him. The Angel of the Lord and God seem to be one and the same. In the exodus from Egypt the Angel of the Lord figures prominently in the pillar of fire and of cloud giving deliverance. It begins here.

Purpose – The Lord seeks out Moses to deliver his people. Still today God gives us leaders to show us the way. The Angel of the Lord delivered His people from captivity in Egypt and from captivity in sin.

Ex. 14:19 in the pillar of fire and pillar of cloud

Evidence – Here like in Gen. 31:11 it is the Angel of (the) God. This is very definite. In v. 19 it is the LORD in the pillar. Likewise in chap. 13:21 it was the LORD in the pillar. The Lord and the Angel of the Lord are God.

Purpose – Here He protects His people from the Egyptian army. He stands between His people and their enemy. It is ever so. He is present with us. Were he not between us and our adversaries, woe to us. In the pillar He led and guided His people. Today, he has told us, Lo, I am with you always.

Ex. 23:20,23 promise of Him going before the people

Evidence – God promises to send an Angel before his people in v.20. In v.23 ‘my’ Angel will go before his people and blot out the enemies. In v. 20 we have reference to the Angel of the Lord in the pillar of fire and of cloud. In v.23 we are reminded of the commander of the armies of the Lord with Joshua before Jericho. In v.21 we read “Give heed to Him and hearken to his voice, do not rebel against Him, for He will not pardon your transgression; for my name is in Him.” This reminds of the Father’s testimony at the Transfiguration “This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to Him.” If the Son is not obeyed, if there is not the obedience of faith, then there is not the possession of pardon for transgressions. Who has the name of God within, in the midst of Him, but the Son?

Purpose – To whom shall a believer of any age go but to the Messiah who has the words of life?

Ex. 32:34, 33:2 this is the same as above

Num. 20:16 at Kadesh on the border of Edom

This also has reference to the above, but now at the border of Edom. God promised and now Moses reflects back over how he fulfilled the promise with the Angel.

Num.22:22,-27, 31,32,34,35 to Balaam on his cursing mission

Evidence – Ten times it is the Angel of the Lord. In vv. 23, 31 we read the Angel of the Lord had a drawn sword in His hand. It is the exact same wording as in Josh. 5:13. This is not the same as at Eden where the cherubim had a flaming sword. Gen. 3:24 The Joshua reference with this one point to the Angel of the Lord. In v.32 the Angel says,

“...your way is perverse before Me...” to Balaam. It is the Lord who is the judge before whom right and wrong is decided. Balaam fell on his face v.31, and says in v.34 “if it is evil in Thy sight...” Only to God do we confess our sin. In 1 Chron. 21:16 the exact same wording of a drawn sword in his hand is attributed to the Angel of the Lord. In v.35 the malak says Balaam is to speak the “word which I bid you...” In v. 38 Balaam says “The word that God puts in my mouth, that I must speak.” The malak is God. (We have this same form of proof of the Holy Spirit as God in Acts 5:3-4.)

Purpose – Salvation and deliverance for God’s people means defeat and destruction for their enemies. The drawn sword in His hand is clear. With Balaam we see that, do what the enemy may, God will protect and preserve his own. To the ass in the common place, the dusty road, so He comes. To us in our common everyday crude conditions He comes and is with us. Remember also how He was laid in that animal-slobbered manger as our Redeemer.

Josh. 5:13f. to Joshua before Jericho

Evidence – While the Angel of the Lord is not mentioned here and there is not a cross reference with angel used (such as with Gen. 32:24 and Hos. 12:4) yet this is the second person of the Trinity. We have just considered the Exodus and numbers references to the Angel of the Lord from the commissioning of Moses to deliver His people until their coming to the brink. Now at Jericho the commander of the army of the Lord appears to give Joshua instructions on victory. In Ex. 33:2 and 23:23 the Angel is promised in connection with the conquest of Canaan. Here He is. He has the drawn sword in His hand as in the two other references. Joshua worships Him v.14. Angels are not to be worshiped. Rev. 22:8 In v.15 we read that the Commander told Joshua “Put off your shoes from your feet; for the place where you stand is holy.” The place is holy because the Lord is there not a created angel. It is the same as he said to Moses, Ex. 3:5. In chap. 6 the instructions to Joshua are recorded as from the LORD. This is a continuation of the Commander of the Lord’s army discussion with Joshua.

Purpose – To give Joshua the instructions and the courage He appeared. By the instructions it would be clear that God gives victory and the praise should go to Him. The great Commander still leads us from victory unto victory.

Judges 2:1,4 to the people of Israel under Joshua

Evidence – At Bochim we see that it is the Angel of the Lord, God Himself in the second person of the Trinity. The Angel says, “I brought you up from Egypt... which I swore to give... I said... I will never break My covenant with you.” V.1 God testifies here that He is the Angel who brought them up just as here He speaks.

Purpose – Sadly, the Angel of the Lord testifies here to His faithfulness in the face of Israel’s faithlessness. The people had not broken down the heathen altars as they were supposed to. So the heathen would be a thorn in their side. There is only one mediator between God and man. Jesus is the way, the life, and the truth. Compromise with the world denies us His abundant blessing.

Judges 5:23 in Deborah’s song

Evidence – It is the Angel of the Lord here. All that has been seen in the use of that expression bears upon this brief reference.

Purpose – Though Meroz may have been a little town in or near Jezreel, yet it opposed the Lord's will and his people. He who is not with Me is against Me. We never want to forget that the Lord is also judge of all the earth.

Judges 6:11,12,20-22 to Gideon at Ophrah

Evidence – Six times it is the Angel of the Lord and once the Angel of God. Here he appeared. The Angel of the Lord and the LORD are used interchangeably as the speaker to Gideon. Both are the same. In v.22 Gideon sees it is the Angel of the Lord and acknowledges Him as "Lord God!" Having seen the face of the Angel of the Lord he fears he will die.

Purpose – The Angel of the Lord imparted to Gideon strength for his task. He encouraged him. And by His direction deliverance was accomplished. Still today through His Word we gain strength and deliverance and courage and this upon the basis of deliverance won by Him on Calvary.

Judges 13:3,6,9,13,15-18,20,21 to Manoah and his wife

Evidence – Ten times he is the Angel of the Lord and twice the Angel of God. In v.6 His countenance was "very terrible." He appears as a man. In v.18 the Angel of the Lord says His name is "wonderful." This is the same word as in Is. 9:6. In v.20 as the Angel ascends in the flame it reminds of His presence in the burning bush and the pillar of fire and in the fiery furnace. Manoah upon knowing that they had seen the Angel of the Lord said v.22 "We shall surely die, for we have seen God."

Purpose – In answer to the cries of the people for deliverance the angel appears to give promise of one to be born.

The Old Saying

In Judges 13:6 we have the first reference to what I have labeled 'an Id saying.' It is found also in 2 Sam. 14:17,20, 19:27, 1 Sam. 29:9. In Judges it is "like the countenance of the Angel of God," 1 Sam. "s blameless in my sight as the Angel of God," 2 Sam. 14:17 "like the Angel of God to discern good and evil," v. 20 "like the wisdom of the Angel of God to know all things that are on earth," 2 Sam. 19:27 "like the Angel of God." This simile in its uses credits the Angel with attributes of God. Even if the Judges reference is not the first, the others being in first and second Samuel and phrased similarly all hold together.

In Judges it definitely applies to the second person of the Trinity. The reference in 2 Sam. 19:27 also we see in the context that it applies to God. Mephibosheth is humble and worshipful before Him. He is dependent upon Him and knows that He may do what He will. The comparison of the king to the Angel of the Lord fits far better than to a created angel.

Purpose – This simile in daily life in the four Samuel references apply interestingly enough to David, the ancestor of our Savior, who appeared in OT times as the Angel of the Lord. Those in authority over us in the spheres of home, church and government are

operating in God's stead. Respect to them is respect to God. Oh, that those in authority would pattern their lives after that of the Highest Authority!

Psalm 34:7 David's psalm when he feigned madness

Evidence – In Gen. 32:2 we have the angels in the plural as God's army. Here it is the Angel of the Lord who encamps around those who fear Him. Do we stand in awe of angels? Maybe, but of God above all. He delivers In v.8 it is the LORD who is good. In v.9 we are told to fear the LORD. The context as well as the phrase, Angel of the Lord show it is the Savior.

Purpose – This seems to refer historically to the Angel of the Lord's work in the exodus. He is Savior and Judge.

Psalm 35:5,6 David referring to the destroying Angel

Evidence – Except for these two Psalms all other references in the book are to angels. Coming as these two do close together in adjacent Psalms it appears they would refer to the same Angel. This the Angel of the Lord. All the previous references to that phrase have to be taken into account. Here we look back at his work of judgment in the exodus and forward to his destroying work at Jerusalem. This fits the context.

Purpose – David appeals to Him for deliverance from his enemies. Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord. Finally on the last day He will carry out that final judgment on our enemies who refuse to repent. This work of our Savior is pictured in references like these. It is Jesus who will come the second time to judge the world when the time of grace has ended.

2 Sam. 24:16-17, 1 Chron. 21:12,15-18,20, 27,30 to David after numbering Israel

Evidence – These both refer to the same thing. In 1 Chron. 21:12 it is the Angel of the Lord “destroying throughout all the territory of Israel.” In 2 Sam. It is the Angel, understood as then he who was by the “threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.” In 1 Chron. 21:16 we read, “And David lifted his eyes and saw the Angel of the Lord standing between earth and heaven, and in his hand a drawn sword...” This same picture of the Angel of the Lord we have had already in Joshua 5:13 and in Num. 222. In both those cases it was the Lord. In 1 Chron. 21:16 David and the elders fell upon their faces before the Angel of the Lord, in the position of humble worship. In v.17 David speaks to God and in v.18 the Angel of the Lord responds. In its natural context it seems they are one and the same. When the LORD speaks to the Angel of the Lord in the text it is the Father speaking to the Son. I take all Angel references as applying to the second person. This is based upon the cross references and the narrative flow.

Purpose – The Angel of the Lord comes to see to David's repentance. By His work he draws from David a confession of sin and (as previously with Abraham) has David intercede for the people.

Ecc. 5:6 paying the vow to Him

Evidence – A vow is made to God and to Him the vow is paid. All around this verse it is God to whom the words are spoken. It seems that this “the Angel” is also God. It is possible, but not likely, that a created angel is mean. Up to this point nearly all the

singular uses have been referring to the Lord in a very conclusive manner. This otherwise would be the exception.

1 Kings 19:5,7 to Elijah in the wilderness

Evidence – It is the Angel of the Lord both times.

Purpose – The persecuted prophet is watched over by his Lord. The Lord Himself comes to His individual servant to encourage him. See how full of care the Lord is here. So with us, he will never leave nor forsake.

2 Kings 1:3,15 to Elijah in sending him to Ahaziah's messengers

Evidence – Both citations are the Angel of the Lord. By now to read this expression in the chronological development of Scripture should be to read it as the Savior.

Purpose – The Lord encourages Elijah to speak against the idolatry of the king. He is instructed in what to say. So it is for us that we have His Word and through it are encouraged and instructed in what to say.

Hosea 12:4 referring back to Jacob's wrestling

Evidence- Hosea refers to the man as the Angel. The evidence for Genesis 32 is valid for this cross reference. Hosea says he "sought His favor." Surely not the favor of a created angel but of the Savior.

2 Kings 19:35, Is. 37:36, 2 Chron 32:21 slaying the 185,000 Assyrians before Jerusalem

Evidence - In two of the three parallel references it is the Angel of the Lord who slew.

Purpose – In answer to Hezekiah's prayer for the sake of His people extending their time of grace He slays the adversary army. As before He shows Himself as judge of the wicked world. He acts in behalf of His people. The Assyrians would not conquer Jerusalem. Later He would call forth the Babylonians to exile a recalcitrant people.

Is. 63:9 refers back to Him in the pillar

Evidence – Who could the Angel of His presence or the Angel of His face be but the Messiah? Time and again in the OT witnesses stated in awe that they had seen God face to face when they beheld the Angel of the Lord. The Angel of the Lord is the one who has saved time after time.

Purpose – The second half of the verse gives the purpose and the cause of the Angel of the Lord, "in His love and in His pity he redeemed them; He lifted them up and carried them all the days of old." See Ex. 33:14 "My presence(My face) will go with you and give you rest

Dan. 3:28 saving the three

Evidence – here we have the Chaldee or Aramaic synonym for Angel with the pronominal suffix 'His.' To me the suffix here as in the other five places gives more the personal than the possessive idea. Angel in the singular by now should be regarded as the Angel of the Lord unless the context points otherwise. In v.25 the fourth one in the furnace was seen to be "like a son of the gods," by Nebuchadnezzar. In Daniel the angel

Gabriel is referred to in the form of man. The one in the furnace has a superior description.

Purpose – In every fiery furnace of affliction who is it that walks with His people to sustain them?

Dan. 6:22 saving Daniel

Evidence – Daniel states that his God sent ‘His Angel.’ Because this is the same word with the same pronominal suffix in the same book in connection again with the saving act I treat it as with Dan. 3:28 referring to the Angel of the Lord.

Zech. 1:11,12,3:1,3,5,6,12:8 in a vision among the Myrtle trees, in a vision with Joshua and satan, the promise of victory and glory with Him

Evidence – The Angel of the Lord is in six verses. In 3:3 it is Angel. The Angel of 3:3 says in v.4 “...I have taken your iniquity away from you and I will clothe you with reich apparel.” Only God can forgive sins. There is a narrative angel here as we also read of in Revelation. The created angel has thirteen references. It is possible that the “other Angel” of 2:3 is the Lord. That would change the ratio to 8:12. In 12:8 with Hebrew parallelism of “like God, like the Angel of the LORD, at their head,” points out how the Angel of the Lord is God. (In Zech. 3:4 ‘angel’ is not in the Kittle text and not in the KJV and NASB. They use ‘he.’ But the RSV and NIV translate ‘angel.’)

Purpose – Zechariah is a book for the end times. It also comes towards the close of OT times. Here the singular use of angel applies some thirteen times to a created angel. This is in preparation for this use in NT times. Yet here we also have distinctly the OT Angel of the Lord. He is the one to take away sin. He is pictured as Mediator in chapters one and three. In chapter twelve He is the Head of His people granting them victory and glory.

Mal. 3:1 the promise of the coming of Him of the covenant

Evidence – In v.1 the second messenger/angel is parallel with the Lord. He is then further described as the righteous judge in v.2f. The Lord who is coming is the Angel of the covenant, our Jesus who brings us the Good News of fulfillment of all OT Law and Prophecy.

Summary

In 56 out of 58 times the phrase Angel of the Lord refers to our Lord Jesus. Twice it refers to humans (and that in two very late books, Haggai and Malachi. The phrase is definite, THE Angel of the Lord, due to the word angel in the construct state. All of these 56 references would likely be acknowledged as referring to the second person of the Trinity through applying the criteria I stated at the beginning. In the four constructions of the singular malak either by the criteria or by cross reference they too are seen to be referring to the Lord and not to a created angel. We may justifiably write THE Angel of the Lord.

In OT times his purposes were the same as in NT times in appearing and speaking, with the added reason in OT times of the prophetic prefigurement of His incarnation. His

purposes gleaned from these studied references are: mercy, promise, testing, guidance, blessing, faith, redemption, holiness, protection, pardon, instruction, warning, encouragement, judgment, wisdom, humility, direction, life, salvation, victory, glory hope – in one word summaries.

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

With All Praise to Him.