

The Angel of the LORD in Judges

The term "Angel of the LORD" or "Angel/Messenger of YHWH" nearly 60 times in the OT. One-third of these occurrences (18 of them) are in the Book of Judges.

The related expression "Angel of God" clearly refers to the same Being. There are 9 references to this term in the OT, 3 of them are in Judges.

"The Angel of YHWH", "The Angel of the LORD"

1. Judges 2:1, 4
2. Judges 5:23
3. Judges 6:11, 12, 20, 21, 22 (2x)
4. Judges 13:3, 13, 15, 16 (2x), 18, 20, 21 (2x)

"The Angel of God"

1. Judges 6:20
2. Judges 13:6, 9

In each of the appearances in the book of Judges, the Angel of the LORD (1) appears abruptly, and (2) functions as the representative of the Lord.

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| 1. | Judges 2:1–5 | — | The Angel of the LORD, who had previously been at Gilgal, went to Bochim to rebuke the people for their covenant disobedience. The startling claim is made here that it was He who made the covenant with Abraham (Genesis says that the covenant was made by Yahweh ; cf. Gen 15:18, etc.). |
| 2. | Judges 5:23 | — | The Angel of the LORD pronounced a curse upon Meroz (a city in Naphthali that refused to help the army of the Lord). This is an allusion in the Song of Deborah—not an appearance. |
| 3. | Judges 6:11–24 | — | He appeared to Gideon at Ophrah, gave him the commission to rid the land of the Midianites, and performed a sign with an offering. |
| 4. | Judges 13:1–5
13:9–21 | — | He appeared to Manoah and to his wife, foretold the birth of Samson, commanded him to be a Nazirite, refused to divulge His Name, and performed a sign—He ascended to heaven in the flame of an offering. |

ARGUMENTS FOR "THE ANGEL OF THE LORD" BEING CHRIST

PEOPLE FEARED THAT THEY WOULD DIE BECAUSE THEY SAW GOD:

- A. Exod. 33:20 "You cannot see my face, for a man shall not see me and live."
- B. In Judges 6 and 13, those who saw the Angel of the LORD feared that they would die because they had seen God.
 - 1. Judges 6:22–23 Gideon "saw that it was the Angel of the Lord" (6:22), and he feared for his life.
 - 2. Manoah "knew that it was the Angel of the Lord" (13:21) and he also feared for his wife's life and his own life (13:22)

HE IS DESCRIBED AS BEING "AWESOME":

- A. Judges 13:6
- B. Manoah's wife described him as "a man of God"

HE IS BOTH YHWH AND A REPRESENTATIVE OF YHWH:

- A. Judges 6:14 & 16 — YHWH
- B. Judges 6:12 — Distinguished from YHWH
- C. Judges 2:1–3 — YHWH
- D. Manoah states very clearly that having seen the Angel of YHWH, he and his wife saw God Himself (13:22).

WHO IS "THE ANGEL/MESSENGER OF YHWH"?:

- A. No one but the Pre-Incarnate Lord Jesus Christ fits the description.
- B. The term "**The** Angel of the LORD" disappears after the Incarnation.
- C. The "Angel of the LORD" is frequently mentioned in the context of God dwelling with and intervening on behalf of man.
- D. Christ is the "sent One" who served as the messenger of YHWH in the OT as well as NT.

WHAT WE LEARN FROM THE "ANGEL OF THE LORD" PASSAGES

These passages reveal to us One who

The "Angel of the LORD" appearances were to prepare the people of God for the coming of One who would:

The "Angel of the LORD" appearances were preparatory for the coming Incarnation of the promised Messiah. We learn many important truths from these Old Testament preparatory appearances.

- 1. He represents God and will be sent from God.
- 2. He will be a man
- 3. He is truly God

4. He will intervene decisively on behalf of man
5. He will be the ultimate realization of the OT ideal of "Immanuel"—"God with us"

And what is the significance of His presence?

- a. His presence guarantees the success of whatever He commissions (the Great Commission in the New Testament)
- b. His presence ensures adequate resources for everything and is a reason for avoiding all covetousness (Hebrews 13:5). This is especially appropriate for this time of year when society promotes excessive consumerism and materialism.
- c. His presence is the Biblical motivation for avoiding fear and approaching life with a sanctified boldness (Hebrews 13:6; Isaiah 41:10).
- d. His presence is the reason that all who are in a right relationship with Him have the right to be confident in a continued relationship with Him throughout all eternity.

Material based on notes from Marc Mueller: Theology Notes, The Master's Seminary.
Some additional material in this handout adapted from David M. Howard Jr., *An Introduction to the Old Testament Historical Books*, pp. 113–115.