

February 11, 2018 - Ex. 23:20 – 24:18 - An Angel before thee, Moses ascends Sinai
Torah reading: Exodus 23:20 – 24:18 - An Angel before thee, Moses ascends Sinai
Psalm 58 again
Haftarah: Ezekiel 18:17-23, 30

The “Angel of the Covenant”

Exodus 23:20-21 - "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him."

Many scholars see this Angel as representing Christ in his pre-incarnational form as the Eternal Son, the Word/Logos of God. Angelic beings were created, but the Angel/Messenger in this instance is uncreated.

He has the power to pardon transgressions (although He will not, it is said, in this instance)

Mark 2:7 - "Who can forgive sins but God only?"

"my name is in him" - In the Hebrew, it means "in his inward parts." Not given to him, but in him. God never puts his name on or in a human. God and his Name are almost interchangeable. The Angel here contains God's name, character and authority.

The Targum of Onkelos has, "for in my name is his word," i.e."he is my ambassador and speaks in my name."

See **Isaiah 30:27** - "Behold, the name of the LORD cometh from far, burning with his anger, and the burden thereof is heavy: his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire"

Some rabbis said this Angel must be Moses (?) or the Torah; others that it is the Ark of the Covenant (see Numbers 10:33).

Philo ("De migratione" Abraham, p. 415.) applies the word unto the divine Logos, and says, "He (God) uses the divine Word as the guide of the way; for the oracle is, "behold, I send my Angel."

Other Rabbis say this is Metatron, whose name is "as the name of his master"; Metatron, by gematria, is numerically the same as Shaddai, which signifies almighty or all-sufficient, and is an epithet of the divine Being; he is said to have a "Name like his Master." And Metatron seems to be a corruption of the word "mediator": The Zohar (Gen. fol. 124. 4.), says this is the Angel that is the Redeemer of the world, and the keeper of the children of men.

In the pseudepigraphal work of 3 Enoch, Metatron is the name Enoch received, after his transformation into an angel:

"This Enoch, whose flesh was turned to flame, his veins to fire, his eye-lashes to flashes of lightning, his eye-balls to flaming torches, and whom God placed on a throne next to the throne of glory, received after this heavenly transformation the name Metatron."

In the "Apocalypse of Zerubbabel," Metatron is not identified as Enoch. Instead he is identified as the archangel Michael.

The Latin word Metator (messenger, guide, leader, measurer) also occurs in Greek as mitator – a word for an officer in the Roman army who acted as a forerunner. Using this etymology, one scholar suggests the name may have come about as a description of "the angel of the Lord who led the Israelites through the wilderness: acting like a Roman army metator, guiding the Israelites on their way."

Paul indicates Christ was with Israel in the wilderness:

1 Corinthians 10:9 - "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents."

Christ serves the same purpose as the Angel for believers:

John 14:2 - "I go to prepare a place for you."

This same imagery was used for Jesus and his forerunner John the Baptist:

Malachi 3:1-2 - "Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts. But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears?"

Jesus says this describes John.

Matthew 11:10 - "For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee."

But it also describes Christ and his mission as "messenger (angel) of the covenant":

Hebrews 12:24 - "And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant...."

Isaiah 63:9 - "... and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old."

The Angel of the Lord seems synonymous with the Pillar of Cloud, or at least inhabits it: See **Exodus 14:19** - "And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them"

Possibly also the Angel Jacob wrestled with (**Genesis 32:24-30**), the angel who

confronted Balaam (**Numbers 22:31**) and the "captain of the hosts of the Lord that Joshua meets (**Joshua 5:13**).

The mission of the Angel of the Lord was to bring Israel into the Promised Land, to confront their enemies, with a promise that the Angel would "cut them off."

"Cut them off" = *kâchad* - An unusual word, meaning to cover over, conceal from view, smear, disown, deny, destroy. (Picture Haman having his face covered and taken away for execution - **Esther 7:8**)

A Spiritual Lesson

The outline for Israel's inheriting the land is a blueprint for all believers inheriting God's promises and spiritual victory over sin and idolatry within.

A warning - don't imitate the Canaanites' idolatry, make no deals with them, nor allow them to remain.

A promise of blessing - Health, wholeness, long life and prosperity.

A process - Little by little

A full victory - The boundary of the whole land is set out.

Exodus 23:27 - "I will send my fear before thee, and will destroy all the people to whom thou shalt come, and I will make all thine enemies turn their backs unto thee."

Exodus 23:30 - little by little

Why? Compare Jesus on demons:

Matthew 12:44 - "Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they go in and dwell there; and the final plight of that man is worse than the first."

"until thou be increased, and inherit the land." - *parah* - to cause to bear fruit, to increase, grow.

Internally, the fruit of the Spirit takes over the territory formerly inhabited by and used for idolatry, as we grow in grace.

The salvation is digital - "it is finished." We are translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his dear Son. But events "on the ground" occur through a process, the inheritance is acquired little by little.

The hornets -

Rashi - a kind of flying insect, which would strike them [people] in their eyes, inject venom into them, and they would die (Tanchuma 18).

Compare the stinging locusts of **Revelation 9:10** - "And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months."

Wisdom of Solomon 12:8 - "Nevertheless even those thou sparedst as men, and didst send wasps, forerunners of thine host, to destroy them by little and little."

Moses and the Elders Ascend Sinai and Commune with God

Moses is the type of Christ here, mediating between God and Israel.

Exodus 24:3 - "And Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the LORD hath said will we do."

The people agree, and with burnt offerings and peace offerings, the Covenant is ratified.

(Similar to sacrifices made by Noah and Abraham at their covenants.)

Exodus 24:10-11 - "And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink."

Before Israel sinned, before any law was broken, the elders (representing the whole nation of Israel) communed in peace and ease with God, eating and drinking together, seeing into the realm of Heaven as depicted in Revelation and by the prophets in visions. But this was not a vision, it was a real meeting - a remarkable precursor to the disciples with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration (**Matthew 17**).

Rashi - "He did not lay His hand": This indicates that they deserved that a hand be laid upon them.

"saw" = *châzâh* - contemplate (with pleasure)

Rashi - "and they perceived God": They gazed at Him with levity, while [they were] eating and drinking.

Later we learn that "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!" (**Exodus 33:20**) The sacrifice of the burnt offering indicated their death, or the willingness to give up their life, as it did for Noah and Abraham. It also clothed them in type with Christ's righteousness, so that God "laid not his hand" on them. He communed with them as with His own Son.

[Note that Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu also experienced this scene, but later acted in

pride and presumption and were killed by God (**Leviticus 10**). Previous high and mystical spiritual experiences do not guarantee present faith or obedience.]

Exodus 24:12 - "And the LORD said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them."

Rashi - All 613 mitzvot are included in the Ten Commandments.

Exodus 24:16 - "And the glory of the LORD abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud."

Rashi - It teaches you that whoever enters the camp of the Shechinah requires six days separation [seclusion from society] (Yoma 3b).

The seventh day also pictured ceasing from one's own labors.

Exodus 24:18 - "And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights."

Rashi - within the cloud: This cloud was a kind of smoke, and the Holy One, blessed is He, made a path (another version 'A canopy') within it. -[From Yoma 4b]

Moses' ascent up to the Mount is a type of Jesus ascension after his resurrection.

Before Moses comes down again in Chapter 32, the glory and meaning of the Tabernacle will be set forth.