The Angel of the Lord – Christ BC

Intro: have a close look at this series of verses. (TWO) John 1:18; 5:37; 6:46; 1 Tim. 6:14. It seems to be clear that no person has come into direct contact with God the Father or seen Him. Yet… He appears many times in the Old Testament. How do we reconcile this? Look at these verses: (THREE) 1 Cor. 10:1-3.

Today we are going to find out something very important: Christ did not come to the earth for the first time 2000 years ago in Bethlehem. Today we are going to see the stunning import of John 1:1-4. (FOUR)

I. The Angel of the Lord

A. The Aramaic translations of Scripture (targums) reveal more to us about this angel than do most English versions. Let's track Him through the Old Testament.

B. In Genesis, God says "let us make man in our image and after our likeness." We see a group effort even this early stage. When God makes appearances in the Old Testament, He usually does so in the form of The Angel of the Lord.

C. Genesis 16:7-13 – (FIVE) He appears to Hagar – someone outside the covenant, a woman in distress. He promises her many children and a great legacy which will never perish. She understands that it is God who has spoken to her… and sees her!

1. The Targums phrase this a different way. V.13 – "And she gave thanks before the Lord whose WORD spake to her" or, in a different targum, "And Hagar gave thanks and prayed in the Name of the Word of the Lord who had been manifested to her."

2. (SIX) Revelation 19:11-13 – this great God, this warrior King, is the Word of God.

D. Genesis 18:1 – (SEVEN) God appears to Abraham in front of his tents and tells him about the coming birth of Isaac and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. He sends the two angels on as he explains it all. "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?"

E. Genesis 22 – (EIGHT) it is the Angel of the Lord who stops Abraham from sacrificing Isaac on the mountain where he will one day die. The Jerusalem Targum says in verse 8 "The Word of the Lord will prepare for me a lamb."

F. Genesis 32:24ff – (NINE) who wrestled with Jacob? He said it was God. The targums say "The Angel of the Lord." When Jacob blesses his sons in (TEN) Genesis 48:15-16, He refers to God as the Angel who has delivered me.

G. Exodus 3 – (ELEVEN) it is the Angel of the Lord who speaks from the burning bush, and the name given to Him in that entire passage is "God."

1. Stephen (Acts 7) refers to this being as the messenger of God. Isaiah says that Jesus would be called the "Messenger of Great Counsel" (Septuagint)
2. This Angel gives Moses His Name: I AM. (TWELVE) John 8:58 – Jesus says that is His name.
3. He goes before them in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night – the Angel of the Lord. (Exodus 13:21)
4. He is the Angel of God's Presence. (Isaiah 63:9)
5. He is the express image of God. (THIRTEEN) (2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15; Hebrews 1:3) Remember 1 Corinthians 10:9.

II. What Is This Angel Like?

A. Remember that His first appearance was to a woman outside the covenant. (FOURTEEN) When Jesus walked among us He sought out the Samaritan woman, He spoke with and blessed the Syro-Phoenician woman.

B. (FIFTEEN) He stepped in to stop the sacrifice of Isaac, but placed himself there later.

C. (SIXTEEN) He appears in Judges 6:11-22 to little, insignificant Gideon and makes him a mighty warrior.

D. (SEVENTEEN) In 2 Samuel 24 and 1 Chronicles 21 David's sin brought a terrible plague upon the people. It was the Angel of the Lord who stopped the plague,

standing between heaven and hearth with a sword drawn.

E. (EIGHTEEN) The Angel of the Lord appeared three times during Elijah's ministry. He was there to comfort him, giving him food and drink, after the battle on Mount Carmel. He sent him to deliver a death sentence to King Ahazaiah. When Ahazaiah sent soldiers to kill Elijah, fire fell from heaven to destroy them. A captain of one group of soldiers asked Elijah to spare their lives. God did so, but told Elijah that he had to go ahead and pronounce the sentence on Ahazaiah. (1 Kings 19; 2 Kings 1)

F. (NINETEEN) The Angel of the Lord promised the returned exiles that restoration and salvation would, in fact, be delivered from on high. (Zechariah 3:4; 12:8)

G. (TWENTY) This Angel received worship, which mere angels are not allowed to receive. He is called the Commander of the Army of the Lord (Joshua 5:13).

H. (TWENTY ONE) He is God's messenger to us – now and even way back then. He is our promise: the presence of God. He is God with us.

Advent is more than building anticipation for Christmas. It is recognition that God is on the move and is about to appear among us. The good news is that, when He came to us, He declared "Peace on Earth, good will toward mankind."

And He meant it. He still does.