

# Christology and the Angel of the Lord\*

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The Angel of the Lord is a mysterious being found throughout the Old Testament. We first meet him in the patriarchal narratives of the book of Genesis. He appeared to Hagar in the wilderness (Gen. 16:7-10), and to Abraham when he was preparing to sacrifice his son Isaac (Gen. 22:11-13). Jacob wrestled with the Angel of the Lord all night (Gen. 32:24-30; Hos. 12:4-5). He spoke to Moses in the burning bush and guided the Israelites in their flight from Egypt (Ex. 3:1-8; Ex. 14:19-20; Ex. 23:20-23). Later he confronted Balaam as he prepared to go to Moab to curse Israel (Num. 22:22-35). Joshua encountered him just before the conquest of Jericho (Josh. 5:13-15), and he appeared to Gideon (Jud. 6:11-24) and Samson's parents (Jud. 13:15-23) during the period of the judges.

The unusual feature of the narratives concerning the Angel of the Lord is that he sometimes speaks of God in the third person, clearly indicating that he is His messenger, and at other times he speaks in the first person as if he were God Himself. We are left with the distinct impression that there are two personalities involved, both of whom are God.

It is perhaps not surprising that Trinitarians have seized upon these texts to prove that the Lord Jesus Christ was fully and personally active in Old Testament times. A long line of expositors beginning with Justin Martyr in the second century has claimed that the angel is Christ. Justin was followed by Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Novatian, Hilary of

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Poitiers and in more modern times by the reformers, Hengstenberg and Liddon in the nineteenth century. So important is the angel-Christ identification that denial of it has been regarded as heresy by its advocates.

In the light of such dogmatism it is rather surprising how little proof is offered. The New Testament as we will see does not make the connection between Christ and the Angel of the Lord anywhere. Malachi 3:1 is sometimes cited as proof since Christ is here called “The Messenger [i.e. angel] of the Covenant.” The Hebrew word *malak* means messenger and is used in the Old Testament of any messenger, whether human or supernatural. It is used of the messengers of Jacob (Gen. 32:3), David (2 Sam. 11:4), Jephthah (Jud. 11:12-14) and of the spies sent out by Joshua (Josh. 6:25). The priest is called the messenger of the Lord of Hosts (Mal. 2:7). It is clear therefore that the word *malak* has its ordinary meaning here and cannot be pressed to mean that Christ was the Angel of the Lord in the texts we have mentioned.

The Gospels record the activity of angels during the ministry of Jesus. Angels ministered to him after the temptation in the wilderness (Matt. 4:11; Mark 1:13) and during his agony in the garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:43). The passages which bear the most resemblance to the Old Testament theophanies are those concerning the announcements of the supernatural births of Jesus and John the Baptist in Matthew and Luke. The Angel of the Lord appears to Joseph after Jesus has been conceived (Matt. 1:20). Previously he had appeared to Zechariah the father of John the Baptist and was explicitly named Gabriel. It is clear that there is no way of making any identification here between the Angel of the Lord and Christ, and if we cannot make it here, why should we make it anywhere else?

The letters of the New Testament plainly show that angels are subordinate to Christ. God has “raised him from the dead and seated him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named not only in this age but also in that which is to come” (Eph. 1:20-21). Christ “has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to him” (1 Pet. 3:22). “In him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through him and for him” (Col. 1:16). “In him dwells

all the fullness of the Godhead bodily and you are complete in him who is the head of all principality and power” (Col. 2:9-10).

These texts are sufficient to demonstrate that New Testament writers did not believe that Christ was an angel but the writer to the Hebrews is even more decisive. Jesus has “become so much better than the angels, as he has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they” (Heb. 1:4).

God never declared to any angel, “You are My Son, this day have I begotten you” or “Sit at My right hand till I make your enemies your footstool” (Heb. 1:5, 13). At the second coming of Christ angels will worship him: “But when He again brings the firstborn into the world He says, ‘Let all the angels of God worship him’” (Heb. 1:6). It is true that for a time Jesus was made a little lower than the angels (Heb. 2:9) but the administration of the age to come will not be in the hands of angels but of Christ:

For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels, but one testified in a certain place, saying, “What is man that You are mindful of him or the son of man that You take care of him? You made him a little lower than the angels, you crowned him with glory and honour and set him over the works of your hands. You have put all things in subjection under his feet.” For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him (Heb. 2:5-8).

What then is the significance of the Angel of the Lord? Does the New Testament throw any light on the subject?

It is a commonplace doctrine of the New Testament that God is invisible. Jesus said to the Jews, “You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His shape” (John 5:37). Paul wrote that “since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead” (Rom. 1:20). Jesus is “the image of the invisible God” (Col. 1:15). The writer to the Hebrews says that Moses “forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible” (Heb. 11:27). Paul describes God as “the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honour and everlasting power” (1 Tim. 6:15-16).

These texts and particularly the last one rule out the possibility that the Angel of the Lord can possibly be a member of the Godhead. He has been seen on many occasions and therefore is not invisible. Since he is not God Himself nor an appearance of Jesus Christ we are driven back to the only conclusion possible: that the Angel of the Lord really was an angel, one of the class of supernatural beings employed to carry out the will of the invisible God.

We will now look at four New Testament passages which support that contention. Hebrews 13:2 says, "Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels." The writer may have several incidents in mind. Gideon and Manoah the father of Samson were both visited by the Angel of the Lord whom they apparently did not recognize as such. Both "entertained angels unawares" and were alarmed to discover that they had been speaking to angels (Jud. 6:11ff; Jud. 13).

The remaining three passages concern the role played by angels in the giving of the law. Paul says that the law was "appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator" (Gal. 3:19). Hebrews 2:2 refers to the law as the "word spoken by angels." Stephen reminded the judges at his trial that an angel had spoken to Moses and the fathers in the wilderness, and he bluntly told them that they had "received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it" (Acts 7:38, 53).

We will now look at a number of Old Testament passages about the Angel of the Lord to see what we can learn from them. It will be important for our investigation of these passages to notice particularly when God is the speaker and when He is spoken about and also to pay attention to the uses of the second person singular and plural. The latter point is lost in modern English usage. "You" stands for both singular and plural and therefore modern translations of the Bible are not at all suitable at this point. Our quotations will therefore be taken from the American Standard Version which renders the second person singular as "thou" and the plural as "you." This version also renders the divine Name as Jehovah, an incorrect pronunciation certainly, but it will help us to see the distinctions which are brought out in the text.

We begin in Genesis 16. Hagar has fled from Sarah and found herself in the wilderness.

And the angel of Jehovah found her . . . by the fountain in the way to Shur. And he said, Hagar, Sarai's handmaid, whence camest thou? and

whither goest thou? And she said, I am fleeing from the face of my mistress Sarai. And the angel of Jehovah said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands. And the angel of Jehovah said unto her, I will greatly multiply thy seed, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. And the angel of Jehovah said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son; and thou shalt call his name Ishmael, because Jehovah hath heard thy affliction . . . And she called the name of Jehovah that spake unto her, Thou art a God that seeth (vv. 7-13).

The angel who speaks to Hagar speaks as Jehovah — “I will multiply thy seed” — and yet maintains a separate identity. This will be found to be characteristic of many of the Angel of the Lord passages in the Old Testament.

Genesis 18 and 19 does not use the term Angel of the Lord but it does illustrate perfectly the principles we wish to emphasize. The account opens with a visitation to Abraham as he sat in the door of his tent:

And Jehovah appeared unto him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; and he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood over against him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself to the earth, and said, My lord, if now I have found favor in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant: let now a little water be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree (18:1-4).

Jehovah then appears to Abraham represented by three men and Abraham greets them with the hospitality which was customary, offering them food and rest. Note that he greets them as *adonai*. Abraham begins by using the singular form of address, recognizing the preeminence of one of the visitors before reverting to the plural form of address.

When the meal is completed the men ask where Sarah is (v. 9). One of the visitors then begins to speak as Jehovah:

I will certainly return unto thee when the season cometh round; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son . . . Jehovah said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, who am old? Is anything too hard for Jehovah? At the set time I will return unto thee, when the season cometh round, and Sarah shall have a son (vv. 10, 13, 14).

In verse 16 the visitors are again called men as they turn towards Sodom. At this point Jehovah reveals to Abraham His purpose regarding that city: "Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I 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" (vv. 20, 21). Two of the men now go to Sodom while Abraham intercedes with Jehovah for the safety of the righteous living there.

Chapter 19 opens with the arrival in Sodom of the two men and we learn for the first time that they are angels: "And the two angels came to Sodom at even" (v. 1). The two angels now begin to assume the role of Jehovah taken by their companion in chapter 18. Their role as messengers of Jehovah appears in verse 13: "We will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxed great before Jehovah; and Jehovah hath sent us to destroy it." But later Lot addresses the men as if they were God using the singular form:

And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my lord: behold now, thy servant hath found favor in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy lovingkindness, which thou hast showed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest evil overtake me, and I die: behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one. Oh let me escape thither . . . and my soul shall live (vv. 18-20).

Speaking now in the first person as God, one of the angels replies, "See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing" (v. 21).

The Angel of the Lord features prominently in the narrative of the book of Exodus:

And the angel of Jehovah appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will turn aside now, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when Jehovah saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I (Ex. 3:2-4).

The angel now speaks to Moses in the first person as God: "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God" (v. 6).

The most significant mention of the Angel of the Lord in Exodus occurs in 23:20-23:

Behold, I send an angel before thee, to keep thee by the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Take ye heed before him, and hearken unto his voice; provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgression: for My Name is in him. But if thou shalt indeed hearken unto his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries.

The voice of the angel is the voice of God. God's Name is in him which means that he acts with the full authority of God.

The twentieth chapter of Exodus records the giving of the Ten Commandments to Israel by Jehovah. The people are so frightened at hearing the words of God that they plead with Moses that God should not speak to them anymore (v. 19). Stephen recalls this incident during his trial recorded in Acts. "This is he [i.e. Moses] that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel that spake to him in the mount Sinai, and with our fathers; who received living oracles to give unto us" (Acts 7:38). The angel spoke to both Moses and the people. The only occasion in which the people heard a divine voice was during the giving of the Ten Commandments. On the authority of Scripture therefore we can say that the speaker in Exodus 20 was an angel. From the same text in Acts we can say that the being who spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai was also an angel. This is true also of the incident recorded in chapters 33 and 34 of Exodus when Moses was shown the glory of God.

In several incidents the Angel of the Lord appeared as a man and the people who saw and spoke to him did not recognize at first to whom they were speaking. One such case is found in Joshua 5:

And it came to pass . . . that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as prince of the host of Jehovah am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? And the prince of Jehovah's host said unto Joshua, Put off thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy . . . . And Jehovah said unto Joshua, See I have given into your hand Jericho and the king thereof (Josh. 5:13 – 6:2).

These texts reveal that angels speak for God and yet are God in the very same context. This may be confusing to the western mind but would have been understood perfectly by the ancient Hebrews. The role of messengers in biblical times is examined in detail by A. R. Johnson in a monograph entitled “The One and the Many in the Israelite Conception of God.” His basic thesis has been summarized as follows:

In Hebrew thought a patriarch’s personality extended throughout his entire household to his wives, his sons and their wives, his daughters, servants in his household and even in some sense his property. The “one” personality was present in the “many” who were with him. In a specialized sense when the patriarch as lord of his household deputized his trusted servant as his *malak* (i.e. his messenger or angel) the man was endowed with the authority and resources of his lord to represent him fully and transact business in his name. In Semitic thought this messenger-representative was conceived of *as being personally* — and in his very words — the presence of the sender.<sup>1</sup>

A good example of this is found in the narrative concerning Joseph and his brothers:

And when they were gone out of the city, and were not yet far off, Joseph said unto his steward, Up, follow after the men; and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good? Is not this that in which my lord drinketh and whereby he indeed divineth? Ye have done evil in so doing. And he overtook them, and he spake unto them these words. And they said unto him, Wherefore speaketh my lord such words as these? Far be it from thy servants that they should do such a thing. Behold, the money, which we found in our sacks’ mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan: how then should we steal out of thy lord’s house silver or gold? With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, let him die, and we also will be my lord’s bondmen (Gen. 44:4-9).

The last words of the sentence are about Joseph who was not personally present. The steward, as Joseph’s representative, is regarded here as if he were Joseph. His reply demonstrated a further example of this: “Now also let it be according unto your words: he with whom it is found shall be my bondman” (v. 10).

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<sup>1</sup> W. G. Macdonald, “Christology and ‘The Angel of the Lord,’” *Current Issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpretation*, ed. Hawthorne, Eerdmans.



Another passage from the book of Judges illustrates the same thing:

And Jephthah sent messengers [*malakim*, angels] unto the king of the children of Ammon, saying, What hast thou to do with me, that thou art come unto me to fight against my land? And the king of the children of Ammon answered unto the messengers of Jephthah, Because Israel took away my land, when he came up out of Egypt, from the Arnon unto the Jabbok, and unto the Jordan: now therefore restore those lands again peaceably (11:12, 13).

The Ammonite king speaks to Jephthah's messengers as if he were speaking to Jephthah in person.

This principle of representatives actually becoming in a sense the one who sends them throws light on some passages in the Gospels. There are two versions of the healing of the centurion's servant recorded in Matthew 8:5-13 and Luke 7:1-10. Luke's version records that the centurion sent a number of Jewish elders to Jesus to ask him to come and heal his servant. When Jesus was close to the house the centurion again sent friends to him with another message. Matthew's version represents the conversations as taking place directly between the centurion and Jesus. It would seem that the messengers fit in to the pattern we have been seeing so far. They *are* the centurion for the purpose of their mission, and Matthew leaves out any mention of them; his Jewish readers would probably have inferred their presence from his narrative.

The mother of James and John seems to have occupied a role similar to the Jewish elders in the foregoing account. In this case Mark's account leaves out mention of the intermediary. He represents James and John requesting Jesus directly that they be granted prominent positions in the Kingdom. Matthew records that it was actually their mother who made the request to Jesus (Matt. 20:20ff; Mark 10:35ff).

This principle of representation goes beyond the activities of angels. Several passages show that the prophets can be regarded as extensions of God's personality.

The first is from the book of Deuteronomy and concerns Moses who was the greatest of the Old Testament prophets:

And Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them, Ye have seen all that Jehovah did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land; the great trials which

thine eyes saw, the signs, and those great wonders: but Jehovah hath not given you a heart to know, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day. And I have led you forty years in the wilderness: your clothes are not waxed old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxed old upon thy foot. Ye have not eaten bread, neither have ye drunk wine or strong drink; that ye may know that I am Jehovah your God (Deut. 29:2-6).

Note the oscillation between the singular and the plural in the address to Israel. But even more significant is the fact that Moses begins by speaking of God in the third person but ends by speaking of Him in the first person as if he were Jehovah himself. This is shown by the closing words of our quotation: "that ye might know that I am Jehovah your God."

Two examples from the prophet Isaiah confirm that this passage is not unusual. The first concerns Shebna:

Thus saith the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, Go, get thee unto this treasurer, even unto Shebna, who is over the house, and say, What doest thou here . . . that thou hast hewed thee out here a sepulchre? hewing him out a sepulchre on high, graving a habitation for himself in the rock! Behold, Jehovah, like a strong man, will hurl thee away violently; yea, he will wrap thee up closely. He will surely wind thee round and round, and toss thee like a ball into a large country; there shalt thou die, and there shall be the chariots of thy glory, thou shame of thy lord's house. And I will thrust thee from thine office; and from thy station shalt thou be pulled down. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah: and I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand (22:15-21).

In a similar way to the passage in Deuteronomy, Isaiah also begins by speaking about God in the third person and ends by speaking as God in the first person. Another example from Isaiah is found in the seventh chapter. God commanded Isaiah to meet King Ahaz to encourage him in the difficulties he was facing. Verse 10 represents God speaking directly to Ahaz but it is certain that the words were actually spoken by the prophet.

These passages show clearly that there is a certain plurality in the way in which the Old Testament speaks about God. It is not a plurality within the Godhead, however, but rather a plurality in the way in which God manifests Himself. Several passages show the existence of a heavenly court consisting of angels who are themselves referred to as *elohim* or

sons of God: “Ascribe unto Jehovah, O ye sons of the mighty (*bene elim*), Ascribe unto Jehovah glory and strength. Ascribe unto Jehovah the glory due unto His name” (Psalm 29:1, 2).

And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O Jehovah; thy faithfulness also in the assembly of the holy ones. For who in the skies can be compared unto Jehovah? Who among the sons of the mighty is like unto Jehovah, a God very terrible in the council of the holy ones, and to be feared above all them that are round about him? (Psalm 89:5-7)

We catch a fascinating glimpse of the heavenly assembly in action in 1 Kings 22:19-23. Micaiah said:

I saw Jehovah sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. And Jehovah said, Who shall entice Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-Gilead? And one said on this manner and another said on that matter. And there came forth a spirit, and stood before Jehovah, and said, I will entice him. And Jehovah said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt entice him, and shalt prevail also; go forth, and do so. Now therefore, behold, Jehovah hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets.

We are reminded of the first two chapters of the book of Job where again the heavenly council is in session. “Now it came to pass on the day when the sons of God came to present themselves before Jehovah, that Satan also came among them” (1:6).

These passages provide the background for the following four Old Testament passages which appear to ascribe plurality within the Godhead:

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness (Gen. 1:26).

And Jehovah God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever — therefore Jehovah God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden the Cherubim and the flame of a sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life (Gen. 3:22-24).

And Jehovah said, Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is what they begin to do; and now nothing will be withholden from them, which they purpose to do. Come, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech (Gen. 11:6-7).

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and His train filled the temple. Above Him stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly . . . And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said, Here am I; send me (Is. 6:1-8).

The plural pronouns here indicate that God is conferring with His heavenly council. In two of these passages, in Genesis 3 and again in Isaiah 6, the presence of angelic beings is specifically mentioned. There is no evidence for Trinitarianism here, only further evidence of the heavenly angelic court.

The evidence we have looked at so far, then, shows that Scripture often represents God as speaking and acting through His messengers, who can be either angelic or human, and that the messengers can be given divine names or titles when they are carrying out their commission. The word *elohim*, God, is applied several times to men who carry out the functions of God. Moses is called God and the judges of Israel are also called by this title.<sup>2</sup>

All of this has great significance for Christology, for the New Testament frequently applies divine names, titles and functions to Jesus. Scriptures which, in the Old Testament, are about God are quoted in the New Testament of Christ.

Typical of these is Isaiah 8:13-15: "Jehovah of hosts, Him shall ye sanctify; and let Him be your . . . dread. And He shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem." Peter's application of this to Christ proves that Christ is the one through whom this verse will be fulfilled (1 Pet. 2:8).

Jesus is the perfect manifestation of God. The Lord himself said this to Philip when he asked for a revelation of the Father. "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip? He that hath seen

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<sup>2</sup> Ex. 7:1; 21:6; 22:9; Psalm 82:1, 6.

me hath seen the Father” (John 14:9). “For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in him should all the fullness dwell” (Col. 1:19). “For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2:9).

We will close with a look at a favorite Trinitarian proof text found in John. Thomas exclaimed to Jesus, “My Lord and my God” (John 20:28). It is certainly a remarkable confession but in the light of what we have learned it is not a statement of the deity of Christ. Thomas’ confession is akin to all of those Old Testament passages where God’s representatives were addressed as if they were God. The titles “God” and “Lord” are applied to angels and men in Scripture and can be regarded in that light. Thomas’ statement should be examined in the light of the context. He had expressed doubt about the resurrection and claimed that he would not believe until he could put his hand in the imprint of the wound in Jesus’ side.

Could Thomas have been thinking of the prophecy of Zechariah at this point? Chapter 12:10 contains a prophecy of the piercing of Christ: “And I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look unto Me whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son.” God Himself is pierced in the person of Christ. Later in the prophecy the second coming of Christ is described as a coming of Jehovah: “Then shall Jehovah go forth and fight against those nations as when He fought in the day of battle. And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives . . . and Jehovah my God shall come, and all the holy ones with thee” (14:3-5). Zechariah calls Christ prophetically “Jehovah my God.” Thomas calls him “my Lord and my God.”

Let us not imagine that this examination is only an interesting academic exercise which does not affect our lives. For many years I believed in the deity and personal preexistence of Christ and I can testify that my appreciation for the Lord Jesus increased dramatically as a result of the new understanding of him as God’s human representative. Our view, disregarded by most and despised by many, is the heart of the good news of salvation. May we all learn to love and serve him more and more until the day we share with him in his Kingdom.