

Judges 2:1-Angel of the Lord

///Review///

Genesis 16:1-16 Angel of the Lord sees a need and fulfills that need:Hagar

Genesis 16:1 Now Sarai, Abram's wife had borne him no children, and she had an Egyptian maid whose name was Hagar.

We will quickly review what was covered last week in Genesis 16.

The narrative in this verse sets up the situation. Sarai and Abram have not yet been renamed by God. Abram does not yet have a male heir. That happens in the next chapter (Genesis 17:5, 15). Hagar is a maid from Egypt.

Hagar was an Egyptian maid. Egyptians were descendants of Ham. Abram is a descendant of Shem. There is prophetic information in the table of nations in Genesis chapter 10. That will not be covered here.

Maid. The same word is used of Hagar here in Genesis 16:1 as is used in Genesis 12:16 for the maidservants given to Abram by Pharaoh. This is not the word used for a slave. Bruce Waltke says, "Hagar was possibly among the maidservants Abraham acquired under Pharaoh's patronage. (12:16)."

Genesis 12:16 Therefore he (Pharaoh) treated Abram well for her (Sarai) sake; and gave him (Abram) sheep and oxen and donkeys and male and female servants and female donkeys and camels.

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Had borne him no children. Had borne...children is a single word, a verb meaning to have a child. Abraham was wealthy and did not want someone outside of the family to inherit.

Genesis 15:2 Abram said, “O Lord God, what will You give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?”

Genesis 15:3 And Abram said, “Since You have given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir.”

It appears from this text, that Abram blames God for not having an heir. But God promised Abram that he would have an heir from his own body (Genesis 15:4).

Back to Genesis chapter 16.

Genesis 16:2 So Sarai said to Abram, “Now behold, the Lord has prevented me from bearing children. Please go in to my maid; perhaps I will obtain children through her.” And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai.

Now...Please. These are translated from the same Hebrew word. It is an interjection (a word or phrase used in exclamation).

The Lord has prevented me. She is saying “it is God’s fault.” First Abram blames God, now Sarai blames God. She understands what God can do. But she decides to by-pass God’s plan. She is sinning. In the customs of the time, it was apparently allowed for a man to take the maid of a wife, even having multiple wives. Jacob did that. But in this case, she is not trusting God.

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I will obtain. According to Bruce Waltke it is literally, “I can be built.” Again, she has decided to take matters into her own hands.

And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. Listened in this context means he followed her orders. We have seen this before in Genesis 3:17 when God said to Adam as he curses him, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife...” What Abram should have done is tell his wife, wait for God’s plan.

Genesis 16:3 After Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Abram’s wife Sarai took Hagar the Egyptian, her maid, and gave her to her husband Abram as his wife.

Abram listened to his wife and acted on her instructions. They both sinned by disregarding God’s promise.

In my understanding, Sarai is taking a legal action which has implications for inheritance. Since Sarai did not have any children and hence no heirs, by making Hagar Abram’s wife, the son of Hagar now can claim legal right to the inheritance. Law is being invoked here by Sarai. She has disregarded God’s Grace. This is emphasized in Galatians chapter 4. We will get to that, just not yet.

Genesis 16:4 He went in to Hagar, and she conceived; and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her sight.

Despised. In the context, the baby was Hagar’s. But, Sarai wanted to “make” children of her own through Hagar. If you have watched Police TV shows, you may have seen a case of a surrogate mom not wanting to give up a child once it is born. It is hers. But, Hagar had mental attitude

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sins against Sarai. So, no one in the context is free from sin. All sinned. Only God can fix this.

Genesis 16:5 And Sarai said to Abram, “May the wrong done me be upon you. I gave my maid into your arms, but when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her sight. May the Lord judge between you and me.”

So now Sarai blames Abram for following her instructions. There was an employee cartoon at a company I worked for many years ago that showed a person angry with the caption, “Oh no! You did what I told you to do!”

Genesis 16:6 But Abram said to Sarai, “Behold, your maid is in your power; do to her what is good in your sight.” So Sarai treated her harshly, and she fled from her presence.

What is good in your sight. Not what is good in God’s sight. The same kind of thinking we find in Judges later:

Judges 21:25 In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

In fact, that is what the whole book of Judges is about. Everyone does what is right in his own eyes without considering God’s grace provision. This kind of thinking got the children of Israel in trouble with God. Now it gets Abram and Sarai in trouble with God. God’s reprimand is not recorded in Genesis.

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Treated her harshly. Really? So Sarai treats Hagar “harshly.” This is in the Piel of the verb meaning it is intense. Because Hagar despises Sarai, Sarai treats Hagar harshly. This was a continuous action on Sarai’s part. At some point, Hagar had enough. She left.

Genesis 16:7 Now the angel of the Lord found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur.

The Angel of the Lord comes to Hagar’s rescue. Here we see the tremendous compassion of God for Hagar. She is the first person to encounter Him in the Bible. Here is the Love of God in action. She has been wronged by Abram and Sarai, although she is not guiltless. So He comes to the rescue. But, perhaps, not in the way you might expect. God “delivers” Hagar from a bad situation. We are not given the details.

Shur. Per Bruce Waltke, “The name means “wall,” probably a reference to the Egyptian border forts along the line of the isthmus of Sues in order to protect Egypt from the incursion of Asiatics (see 25:18; 1 Sam. 15:7). Hagar was fleeing toward her home in Egypt.”

Genesis 16:8 He said, “Hagar, Sarai’s maid, where have you come from and where are you going?” And she said, “I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai.”

Fleeing. From the TDOT, “To be sure, it means “to flee” in these instances, but it hardly refers to flight from a threatening battle or an acute danger, but rather to evasion of and escape from continuing, unpleasant, dangerous situations, e.g., tensions and tragedies within the tribe.” Just what our context says. Sarai continuously mistreated Hagar.

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Genesis 16:9 Then the angel of the Lord said to her, “Return to your mistress, and submit yourself to her authority.”

From the context, and knowing that Abram and Sarai are believers, God will address the issue in some way to Abram. Abram and Sarai created this problem. Hagar didn't make it any better. But God in his gracious lovingkindness towards Hagar is solving the problem and blessing her. What did she do to deserve this blessing? NOTHING. It is grace! God saw a need. God filled that need through the manifestation of the second person of the Trinity called “the Angel of the Lord.”

Keep in mind two things: 1) Sarai gave Hagar as his wife (literally woman), and 2) As such, this is Abram's firstborn. But you are thinking, how can Abram's second born be given the covenant blessings while Ishmael is not? Who was Adam's firstborn? Able. But he didn't live long enough to inherit. Who was Isaac's firstborn? Esau. But he didn't inherit the covenant blessings. Who was Jacob's firstborn? Reuben. He didn't inherit the covenant blessings. So God chooses who will inherit. From a Christian perspective, we inherit from Christ because we believed in Him. Faith is the key.

Genesis 16:10 Moreover, the angel of the Lord said to her, “I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they will be too many to count.”

This blessing is not something Hagar could have anticipated. This is on a par with God's blessing to Abram in Genesis 15.

Genesis 15:4 Then behold, the word of the Lord came to him (Abram), saying, “This man will not be your heir; but one who will come

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forth from your own body, he shall be your heir.”

Genesis 15:5 And He took him outside and said, “Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.”

Even the non-chosen one from Abram receives a “seed” blessing.

Genesis 16:11 The angel of the Lord said to her further, “Behold, you are with child, And you will bear a son; And you shall call his name Ishmael, Because the Lord has given heed to your affliction.

Ishmael. Literally, “God hears.” As we will see, not only does God hear, he also sees. This leads us to Herman’s description of love: “Love sees a need; Love tries to fulfill that need.” In this case, God “heard” as well as saw. I want you to understand what you are reading. This is the love of God in action. That is why we are studying the Angel of the Lord. He is the second person of the Trinity that eventually became man and loved in the power of the God the Holy Spirit. This is a love that we can express through the power of God the Holy Spirit because of faith.

Genesis 16:12 “He will be a wild donkey of a man, His hand will be against everyone, And everyone’s hand will be against him; And he will live to the east of all his brothers.”

Perhaps this prophecy is still playing out today in the Middle East.

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Genesis 16:13 Then she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, “You are a God who sees”; for she said, “Have I even remained alive here after seeing Him?”

Bruce Waltke comments that “This is the only instance in the Bible where a human being is represented as conferring a name on God. Hagar gives God a name that expresses his special significance to her. She responds to the person, not to the promise. She no longer gloats that she is pregnant but marvels at the Lord’s care for her.” God touched her life and changed it. She responded. Wow!

“The name is a pun, meaning either “the God who sees me” (so NIV), which fits the context, and/or “the God I see,” which fits her explanation. The former speaks of his care for her; the latter, of her experiences of God’s manifestation.” (Waltke).

Let us expand on that a bit. The only reason she says the God that “sees” is that He acted. So, what does Herman say? God’s Love sees a need; He tries to fulfill that need. Because God acted in Love, she recognizes who He is. His seeing represents God’s Love in action. Remember, the Hebrews express events differently than Westerners do. James in the New Testament challenges us to “show” our faith (James 2:18), not just say we have faith. In the Old Testament, the people are characterized by what they did. Here, God expressed His Love by seeing her need and acting from that Love.

Genesis 16:14 Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered.

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Beer. This is a well of water, not beer. Waltke indicates this is the same source of water previously (16:7) called a spring.

Lahai-roi. “The Hebrew means “belonging to the living one, my seeing one,” thus referring to the same pun (cf. Gen 24:62; 25:11)” (Waltke).

**Genesis 16:15 So Hagar bore Abram a son;
and Abram called the name of his son, whom
Hagar bore, Ishmael.**

Now Abram has a legal heir. But here we have the basis of the problem to come. God will fulfill His promise in grace in spite of Sarai and Abram trying to by-pass God with human law. There will be two heirs: one from the flesh (Ishmael) and one from grace (Isaac).

**Genesis 16:16 Abram was eighty-six years old
when Hagar bore Ishmael to him.**

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Now for the rest of the story which also includes the Angel of the Lord.

We are skipping from Genesis chapter 16 to chapter 21. In the interim, God changed Abram's name (exalted father) to Abraham (father of a multitude) and changed Sarai's name (my princess) to Sarah (princess). Waltke does not like to translate Sarai as "contentious." But Thieme and other conservatives so translate her name. It doesn't make a lot of sense to change a name from my princess to princess. I will go with Thieme on this one.

Genesis 21:9 Now Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, mocking.

Saw. Just a reminder that in this narrative, there is an emphasis on seeing and hearing, but not just on the fact but on the impact or result of that seeing and hearing.

Son of Hagar. Ishmael was given a name previously. But here the emphasis is that this is the son of Hagar, not Sarah. And the name "Ishmael" is not mentioned in this chapter. Not even once! He has been disinherited. He is now "the boy."

Hagar the Egyptian. Previously mentioned, Hagar was likely a maid servant obtained while Abraham was in Egypt in Genesis 16:1/ Genesis 12:16. Remember, the people of Egypt were descendants from Ham, the son of Noah.

She had borne. The whole affair with Hagar was one in which Abraham and Sarah disregarded God's promise. They decided to fulfill it on their own. They sinned in not trusting God. Now, they had the real thing and there is a conflict. Careful what you ask for. You might get it. Keep in mind that Ishmael is the first born. If Hagar is considered just a maid, then her child cannot inherit. But, if Hagar is considered a wife of Abraham then he could inherit as the first born. It was Sarai in chapter 16

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that gave her maid Hagar to Abraham as his wife (woman). The point was to have a male heir. Now there are two: One from Law and one from Grace.

Mocking. This is a participle from the word that can mean mocking and laughing and other things. It is in the Piel which is intensive. It is also from the same root as laugh as Sarai laughed at the thought of having a child in her old age. So this is a play on words. Sarai laughed when God told her she would have a child whom she named laughter, Isaac. Then Abraham's first son laughs at the second son, Isaac/Laughter. This is one of several threads running through chapters 16 and 21. First Sarai laughs in disbelief. Then she laughs for joy as she names her son "Laughter." Now the son of Hagar laughs in a pejorative way at "Laughter" because Ishmael sees himself as the heir of Abraham's riches.

Here is Robbie Dean's take on this: "So he (Ishmael) is having that sort of smart-alec laughter towards Sarah. It is a word that means to toy with, to trifle with someone in a deceptive way with intent to harm them."

Bruce Waltke makes a point to bring out the Galatians 4:21-31 passage which refers back to this passage in Genesis. Please, let us read the Galatians passage.

**Genesis 21:10 Therefore she said to Abraham,
"Drive out this maid and her son, for the son
of this maid shall not be an heir with my son
Isaac."**

Drive out. In Judges chapter 1, Judges 2:4 and here in Genesis 21:10 are two different words translated the same in English: "drive out" In Judges chapter 1, the word is *yarash* meaning to "destroy someone so that someone else can possess his property, ..." However, in both Genesis 21:10, here, and in Judges 2:4 the word *garash* is used meaning simply to drive out.

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This is a difficult passage to fathom in the context of Western and specifically American culture. Abraham sinned and made a mistake at the behest of his wife. In American culture, the father is required to pay child support at a minimum. But this is ancient culture. There is a threat to Isaac's inheritance from Ishmael since Hagar could be considered to be Abraham's wife and mother of his first born. In this case, God provided for Hagar and Ishmael similarly to what He did for Abraham and Isaac. From our Christian perspective, we must be mindful of the consequences of sin. In many cases, the outcome will be difficult to bear for all concerned.

Genesis 21:11 The matter distressed Abraham greatly because of his son.

Indeed, the matter distressed Abraham greatly.

Distressed. The Hebrew is *ra'a*. The basic meaning is evil. In context plus the word "greatly" leads us to understand this as intense emotional turmoil caused by his previous sin.

Have you ever done something wrong and got yourself in a pickle? And then you wish you could go back and make it right. But you can't. You are stuck with trying to fix something broken. All you can do is say sorry. But that is not enough. Only God can truly fix things.

Obviously, Abraham did not want to get rid of his first born son. Yet, Isaac is the heir designated by God. Law versus Grace.

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Genesis 21:12 But God said to Abraham, “Do not be distressed because of the lad and your maid; whatever Sarah tells you, listen to her, for through Isaac your descendants shall be named.

Not be distressed. There are two words for “not” in Hebrew. There is the objective no. The answer is NO. But, the subjective no is often used with a command. It can allow for some wiggle room for human volition. That is the word here. Maybe Abraham will, maybe he will not.

Listen to her (Sarah). What!? Abraham is probably thinking, when I listened to and obeyed my wife Sarah before, I did wrong. Now you want me to listen and obey and it is OK? But God explains that He is solving this human caused problem in His Grace.

Through Isaac your descendants shall be named. Name is important to the Hebrews. A person’s essence is expressed through their name.

Genesis 21:13 And of the son of the maid I will make a nation also, because he is your descendant.”

Son. Again, Ishmael has been disinherited from Abraham and so is not named.

I will make a nation. Nation is the Hebrew word “goy.” It is usually used of a non-Jew today.

Let me quote something from the TDOT: “Since the OT does not contain any ordered or consistent doctrine of nationhood, we find that there is no precise definition of what constitutes a *goy*. Instead we find that the three

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major aspects of race, government, and territory all contribute features of their own toward a comprehensive picture.”

God is solving the problem with a blessing directly from Him, not Abraham. God’s grace. Why?

Because he is your descendant. Literally, he is your seed. God is blessing Ishmael as a result of Ishmael’s relation to Abraham. And He is fixing the problem that Sarai and Abram caused. God is rectifying a problem with a grace blessing. God is implicitly guaranteeing Ishmael’s life.

Genesis 21:14 So Abraham rose early in the morning and took bread and a skin of water and gave them to Hagar, putting them on her shoulder, and gave her the boy, and sent her away. And she departed and wandered about in the wilderness of Beersheba.

Abraham gets up early and outfits Hagar with bread and water for the journey. But this is like giving someone a fish for a day instead of teaching them to fish.

This has to be symbolic of being disinherited. But I don’t have any authoritative source to back this up. Just an observation on my part.

In the wilderness of Beersheba. Was Hagar trying to make it to Egypt and got lost in the Negev desert? Or was she looking for the well of Beersheba. So what was Beersheba?

Beersheba

1. Name: Beer = well; sheba = seven or oath. Named by Abraham later in this chapter (Genesis 21:31). Abraham’s people dug this well. Apparently, there is something relating the number 7 to oath. When Abraham makes a covenant with Abimelech, Abraham gave

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Abimelech seven ewe lambs to be a witness that he dug this well. If he dug the well some time in the past, it is possible this is the well in verse 19. Did Hagar know about this well and was trying to use it as a way station? Maybe.

2. Location: In the Negev desert. Water is the most valuable commodity in the desert.
3. Impact on Lives: (Bible.org) “God used this unassuming place to shape some of the most significant lives in the Bible.”
 - a. Abraham makes a peace treaty (covenant) with Abi Melech here. Genesis 21:22-34
 - b. Isaac built an altar here.
 - c. Jacob makes a peace treaty (covenant) with Abi Melech here. Genesis 26:23-33.
 - d. Jacob had a dream about a stairway to heaven after leaving Beersheba. Genesis 28:10,15 & 46:1-7.

Genesis 21:15 When the water in the skin was used up, she left the boy under one of the bushes.

Abraham’s supplies were only temporary. They are exhausted. Now there is no hope.

Genesis 21:16 Then she went and sat down opposite him, about a bowshot away, for she said, “Do not let me see the boy die.” And she sat opposite him, and lifted up her voice and wept.

Sat down. Hagar has given up. No hope.

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A bow shot away. This phrase presents an interesting question. Why use this phrase related to archery? The Bible doesn't idly throw in vocabulary without a reason. Consider that in verse 20 below, Ishamel becomes a great archer. She had acquired a bow and arrow from somewhere! Perhaps God had supplied it. Or there are other sources. But she perhaps she actually figured out how to shoot an arrow and decided to shoot one far enough away that she could not see the boy suffering but close enough that she could detect if the boy had died.

It also begs the question about the boy's current health. Why did she put him under a bush to die? There are other instances when someone sits under a tree to die. Elijah in

1Kings 19:4 But he himself [Elijah] went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree [or broom tree]; and he requested for himself that he might die, and said, "It is enough; now, O Lord, take my life [soul], for I am not better than my fathers."

How many other of the words in this passage are embedded with meaning that we have not deciphered? Does the bread and water have special significance? And the tree? And the well itself?

Do not let me see the boy die. Was this one of those silent prayers we sometimes pray? She did not address this to God, but we know that he hears. The next verse says so.

Genesis 21:17 God heard the lad crying; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "What is the matter with you,

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Hagar? Do not fear, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is.

Lad crying. Again, was the lad so weak? He is approximately 16 years old.

Angel of God. This is another version of the Angel of the Lord. In this case, the angel, the Lord, did not appear before her, but called from heaven. She heard Him but did not see Him.

What is the matter with you? Literally, what to you? Look at John 2 when Mary, Jesus' mother asks Him to do something about the lack of wine. Jesus' response is literally from the Greek, "Woman, what is it to you and to me." This is perhaps a Hebrew idiom. We say something similar in English, "What is it to you?"

Genesis 21:18 Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him by the hand, for I will make a great nation of him."

The lad is apparently weak as mentioned above.

Great nation. Let me quote something from the TDOT: "Since the OT does not contain any ordered or consistent doctrine of nationhood, we find that there is no precise definition of what constitutes a *goy*. Instead we find that the three major aspects of race, government, and territory all contribute features of their own toward a comprehensive picture."

Today, many in the Arabian peninsula consider themselves descendants of Ishmael. And of course, there has been intermarriage between the descendants of Ishmael and Esau and Ammon and Moab. So many of the Arabs are descendants from Abraham and Lot.

Genesis 21:19 Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water; and she went and

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filled the skin with water and gave the lad a drink.

Opened her eyes. How many times have we looked for something and not immediately found it? Then said a little prayer to God. And all of a sudden you find it. And you had been looking straight at it and didn't recognize it! When she was expecting to die of thirst in the desert, she couldn't see the well that was nearby. God provided.

Genesis 21:20 God was with the lad, and he grew; and he lived in the wilderness and became an archer.

God was with the lad. Was he a believer? The Bible does not say, although he was circumcised indicating he was under the Abrahamic covenant.

Genesis 21:21 He lived in the wilderness of Paran, and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

Watlke makes an interesting comparison between this narrative about Ishmael and the narrative of Isaac's sacrifice in the next chapter:

1. Journey into the unknown at the command of the Lord;
2. Provision for the journey;
3. Child at the point of death;
4. Intervention of God's messenger (Angel of the Lord);
5. Parent's sighting of the way out;
6. Promise of future blessing

Note that in both cases, it is the Angel of the Lord that shows up to deliver the child from death.

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Judges 2:1 Now the angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim. And he said, “I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the land which I have sworn to your fathers; and I said, ‘I will never break My covenant with you,


Now. Literally, “and.” But remember, the Hebrew word “and” can mean many things depending upon the context. Some translations, like the NIV, don’t translate it. Others like the Young’s Literal Translation translate it as “and.” In any case, it is both a continuation from chapter 1 and a break in the narrative of occupation to an analysis of what happened in chapter 1 and a prelude to further problems yet to be encountered.

Angel of the Lord. This is the Pre-Existent Christ, the second person of the Trinity, the manifest person of God. We already dealt in detail with this term.

Gilgal

1. Gilgal was located about halfway between the Jordan river and Jericho.
2. “Gilgal was especially important because its heap of twelve stones was a symbolic reminder of the nation’s unity and God’s miraculous power and ability to fulfil his promises to his people (Josh 4:20-24).” (Chisholm p 138)
3. “At Gilgal a new generation of Israelites renewed the nation’s covenantal commitment to the Lord through circumcision, observed the Passover, and tasted the fruit of the promised land for the first time (Josh. 5:2-12) (Chisholm p138)
4. It was where the army of the people camped when they crossed the Jordan, Joshua 4:19; 10:15, 43 (Robbie Dean/Chisholm p138)

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5. Gilgal becomes Joshua's command and control center. It is to Gilgal that the army always returns in the book of Joshua. (Robbie Dean)
6. “The commander-in-chief that is set up over the armies of Israel is the angel of Yahweh, and He directs all the actions of the army of Israel from Gilgal.” (Robbie Dean)
7. “So the movement from Gilgal to Bochim in Judges 1:1  indicates the cessation of holy war. The commander-in-chief of the armies of Yahweh has left the command and control center. There will not be holy war again in human history until Jesus Christ returns at the second advent at the battle of Armageddon. “ (Robbie Dean)

Points based upon notes from Robbie Dean and Chisholm.



Location of Gilgal relative to Jericho

(From Biblos.com/FreeBibleImages.or)