

Judges 2:1-5-Angel of the Lord

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,

There are many questions raised in this first verse of chapter 2.

1. Why was the Angel of the Lord at Gilgal?
2. How did he travel from one place to another?
3. Who is in His audience?
4. Which covenant is He talking about?

But, before addressing these questions, I prefer that you have an understanding of who the Angel of the Lord is. And not just a list of points, but to see Him in action.

The Angel of the Lord. Malak Yahweh = messenger of God. This is the pre-existent Christ. The Angel of the Lord makes appearances to solve specific human problems motivated by God’s love. First let us deal with the subject of the Angel of the Lord by points. Then let’s look at the rich history of His appearances.

I am giving you some points. I consider them incomplete which is why I am calling them “draft.” When we get to Gideon, I hope to have a better list of points. The one which I call draft is primarily from one at the Portland Bible Church. I give the link below.

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1. Definition and Description

- a. The Angel of the Lord is a title for a theophany of the second person of the Trinity. In the Old Testament, this is the pre-existent Christ. After the incarnation, there are no more appearances of the Angel of the Lord.
- b. There are other titles given for different theophanies of the second person of the Trinity.
- c. The Angel of the Lord is a divinity: Gen 16:7-13; 21:17; 22:11, 12, 15-16; Gen 31:11, 13; Judges 2:1-4 with Ex 20:2; Zech 12:8
- d. The Angel of the Lord manifests the works of the Godhead. Gen 22:11-18; 48:15-16; Num 22:22ff; Isa 63:8, 9; Zech 3:1-4; Mal 3:1-3; and others.

2. Terminology

- a. Angel of the Lord (Malak Yahweh) Genesis 16:7
- b. Angel of God (Malak Elohim) Genesis 21:17; 31:11; 21:17; Exodus 14:19; Judges 6:20)
- c. The Angel (who has redeemed me) Genesis 48:16
- d. Angel of His Presence (Face) Isaiah 63:9
- e. Angel of the Covenant (Malachi 3:1)
- f. The Destroying Angel 1 Chronicles 21:15; 2 Samuel 24:16
- g. Others

3. Other Pre-Incarnate Appearances

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- a. “The Lord God (Jehovah Elohim) walking in the garden...”
Gen 3:8
- b. “...a man wrestled with him (Jacob)...” (Genesis 32:24-32)
- c. “...a man ...with his sword drawn...” Josh 5:13-15; 6:1, 2;
compare: 1 Chron 21:5...

For expansion of some of these points see

<https://portlandbiblechurch.com/wp-content/uploads/DOCTRINE-OF-THE-ANGEL-OF-JEHOVAH.pdf>

What was missing in the studies on the Angel of the Lord I found on the Internet was “the reason for” and “the function of the Angel of the Lord.” Why did God choose to manifest Himself in this manner at this time? If there are different kinds of manifestations of the Second Person of the Trinity, why is one manifestation present in one situation and a different manifestation in another situation?

History: Summary of the passages to be considered:

Isaiah 63:7-19 Panorama of God’s Lovingkindness

Genesis 16:7-16 Hagar runs away

Genesis 21:9-12 Hagar is kicked out of the house

Isaiah 63:7 I shall make mention (remember) of the lovingkindnesses (chesed) of the Lord (Yahweh), the praises of the Lord (Yahweh), According to all that the Lord (Yahweh) has granted us, And the great goodness toward the house of Israel, Which He has granted them according to His compassion And

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according to the abundance of His lovingkindnesses (chesed).

Isaiah 63:8 For He said, “Surely, they are My people, Sons who will not deal falsely.” So He became their Savior.

Isaiah 63:9 In all their affliction He was afflicted, And the angel of His presence (literally, His face) saved them; In His love and in His mercy He redeemed them, And He lifted them and carried them all the days of old.

Isaiah 63:10 But they rebelled And grieved His Holy Spirit; Therefore He turned Himself to become their enemy, He fought against them.

Isaiah 63:11 Then His people remembered the days of old, of Moses. Where is He who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of His flock? Where is He who put His Holy Spirit in the midst of them,

Isaiah 63:12 Who caused His glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses, Who divided the waters before them to make for Himself an everlasting name,

Isaiah 63:13 Who led them through the depths? Like the horse in the wilderness, they did not stumble;

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Isaiah 63:14 As the cattle which go down into the valley, The Spirit of the Lord gave them rest. So You led Your people, To make for Yourself a glorious name. “You Are Our Father”

Isaiah 63:15 Look down from heaven and see from Your holy and glorious habitation; Where are Your zeal and Your mighty deeds? The stirrings of Your heart and Your compassion are restrained toward me.

Isaiah 63:16 For You are our Father, though Abraham does not know us And Israel does not recognize us. You, O Lord, are our Father, Our Redeemer from of old is Your name.

Isaiah 63:17 Why, O Lord, do You cause us to stray from Your ways And harden our heart from fearing You? Return for the sake of Your servants, the tribes of Your heritage.

Isaiah 63:18 Your holy people possessed Your sanctuary for a little while, Our adversaries have trodden it down.

Isaiah 63:19 We have become like those over whom You have never ruled, Like those who were not called by Your name.

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Genesis 16:7-16 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.

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.

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 it.

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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.

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.

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

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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.

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,

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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.

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

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

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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.

Now we get to the part I want to emphasize.

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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).

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

Beer. This is a well of water, not beer. Previously (16:7) this was 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.

So now Abram has a legal heir. But here we have the basis of a problem to come. God will fulfill His promise in grace in spite of Sarai and Abram trying to by-pass God with human law.

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**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.

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

Saw.

Son of Hagar. Ishmael was given a name previously. But here the emphasis is that this is the son of Hagar, not Sarah.

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. 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.

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 first son, Laughter.

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. Among 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 and Judges 2:4 the word garash is used meaning simply to drive out.

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 r’aa. 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.

Obviously, Abraham did not want to get rid of his first born son.