***The Doctrine of the Deity of Christ,***

***No. 2

Colossians 1:4-9

COL-114***

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Our subject is "Hymn in Honor of Christ," segment number four in Colossians 1:15-20.

The apostle Paul is in prison in the city of Rome as he writes a letter to the Christians in the city of Colossae to deal with the heretical teachings of false teachers that have arisen among them. Paul begins dealing with the errors in Colossae by focusing immediately on the deity of Jesus Christ, and to establish the fact that Jesus is not just a super angel. There was a lot of angel worship going around in Colossae. There was a lot of devotion to angels. And Jesus Christ was being presented as some kind of a super angel.

Paul makes it clear that while the Lord Jesus was true humanity, He was also God. He was undiminished deity. Jesus Christ, therefore, is God incarnate, and He is the second person of the Godhead: Father; son; and, Holy Spirit.

Satan deceives people in the world's religions about the fact of the deity of Jesus Christ for the explicit purpose that they would not be saved. If you are wrong about the person of Christ, you won't get to heaven. That has to be right, or nothing else will have a foundation of authority for you. Satan himself knows very well that Jesus Christ is God. You remember in the experience of the wilderness temptations of Christ, how this is pointed out to us very clearly in Scripture, in Luke 4:3, for example. Satan is trying to get Jesus Christ to treat him as a god, and to deal with him as someone who should be worshiped.

In Luke 4:3, the devil approaches Jesus on the fact that He's hungry. He has been fasting for 40 days, so He is hungry. So the devil says to him, "If you are the son of God, tell this stone to become bread." Now those of you who have been around here a while know that the word "if" in English has four different meanings in Greek. And we won't go into those now, but this "if" is what we call the first-class condition "if," and it is not something which is in doubt. It is something which is true. Therefore, you translate it to make that clear by the word "since." Now that makes it very different. And the devil said to Him, "Since you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread. He wasn't doubting it. He knew very well that He was the Savior, and that He was deity.

In Luke 4:9, we have the same thing: "And he led Him to Jerusalem, and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, 'If you are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here.” And again, it's a first-class condition: "Since you are the Son of God." The devil didn't play around. He didn't make a fool of himself by pretending that there was any question about the fact that Jesus Christ was deity.

Now, many of Satan's agents today question Christ's deity, but the devil never questions His deity. He knows who it is that he's dealing with. And in all three of the temptations that Satan proposed to the Lord, you may remember that there was only one solution for Christ, in His humanity, to meet the temptation. And that was that He quoted the appropriate Scripture. In each temptation, he fell back upon the doctrine that answered the devil's temptations. Every time Satan brought something up, because Jesus was versed in the doctrines of Scripture, He knew how to respond.

So, Satan has to deceive people about the deity of Jesus Christ. Otherwise, that would put a whole new context on the person of Christ. You'd stop using Him as a curse word. You'd look upon Him with some degree of solemnity. You'd suddenly realize that the day that God has set apart called "the Lord's Day" should be a day for getting acquainted with this person. That's what worship means. It's the old English word from "worthship," meaning the worthiness of this person that you will esteem. And the only way you get to esteem Christ is to get to know about Him.

So, all these people who do not respect Jesus Christ have no problem saying: "I will not use the Lord's Day for Him. I'll use it to keep my business open. I'll use it for recreational things, I'll use it for all kinds of other things," which in themselves are not forbidden, but they're not the way to honor Christ on the Lord's Day, if He is God.

By mankind as a whole, Jesus is simply viewed as a very good person. He is seen as an exemplary role model. And in heaven's name, we certainly need role models today – not the kind that the world is throwing up to us. But, nevertheless, they viewed Jesus, though a good role model, as nothing but a Man who was filled with human errors; imperfections; and, with the misconception of His day. How often have we read that? "Jesus was an ordinary man Who carried the mistakes of the beliefs of His day?" No, that is not true. He is an exemplary role model, because He is God as well as Man.

So, since the deity of Jesus Christ is denied, His position as the only mediator between God and man for salvation is also rejected. And that's exactly what Satan wants to do. The reason we need to understand what the Bible teaches about the deity of Christ is because if He is not God, then that changes the whole picture completely. Then we cannot say that He is the only way to God. Suddenly, the Muslims have a chance to go to heaven. Suddenly, the Orthodox Jews have a chance to go to heaven. Suddenly, the Hindus can get to heaven. Suddenly, the Buddhists can get there. Suddenly, all the cults can get there, who deny the deity of Jesus Christ, because they have some other mediator.

However, 1 Timothy 2:5-6 declare to us: "For there is one God and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself as a ransom for all – the testimony born at the proper time." There is one God and One Mediator. And Who is that one God? The man Christ Jesus. Who is that One Mediator? The God-Man, Christ Jesus. There's no other way. John 14:6, of course, makes that very clear: "I am the Way, the Truth, and, the life. No man comes unto the Father, but by Me."

It is commonplace in the entertainment media to denigrate and to blaspheme the Lord Jesus Christ. They too fall into the world's low view of Him. I viewed a tape this past week. I don't know if I should show it to you or not. It is pretty gross in some respects. But it has taken some of the most recent movies that have been made about Jesus Christ, and about Christians, and about ministers of the Word of God. And when you get through watching it, you realize: what is there out there to entertain Christians at all in the entertainment media? That is because the blasphemy and the ridicule of Christians, especially biblical Christians, is so blatant, and so open, that it makes you fear the wrath of God upon these people who are blind, and know not what they're doing. The portrayal of Jesus Christ in these movies is always as a frail human being Who's trying to do right, and not sure what's going on. And when people go to movies like that, what you see is what you believe. That is the way with people.

So, here is this blasphemy that is rampant in our society as Satan's people are not in awe of Jesus Christ, because they don't think that He is God. Therefore, they do not fear him. Romans 3:18 says, "There is no fear of God before their eyes. And the verses before this describe the horrible things that human beings do in their degradation and their sin. And they're not afraid of God when they do it. Why? Because they don't think He's really there. And they don't think that Christ is deity.

Now we can all readily agree that that is the state. But here's another factor that we need to consider. When genuine Christians fail to remember, and to act in the light of the deity of Jesus Christ, they too fall into the world's low view of Him. They too lose their fear of Him. They too lose their awe of Him. And this is why Christians can do such horrendously sinful things – just beyond what we think anybody would even dream of doing. And you sit down, and you say, how can they do this? Why did they do this? And remember that the Bible is very clear that: "What you sow, that you reap." The Bible says that if you sow to the Spirit, you reap good things. If you so to the flesh (the sin nature), you reap bad things.

Now, why would anybody want to say, "Well, I'll go for the bad things?" It is a Christian who has a low view of the God-Man, Jesus Christ, because He's forgotten the deity of Christ. What Christians forget is the fact that a marvelous relationship was established between them and the person of Christ at the point of their salvation. This is described for us in John 14:20: "'In that day,' Jesus says, 'you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you:'" "In that day you will know (the day of the departure of Jesus Christ to be in heaven), you will know that you are in Me, and I in you."

What a tremendous relationship in those few words: "You in Me, and I in you!" What this verse is telling us is that every Christian has a personal union with Jesus Christ from the point of salvation. And this union is established by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We are baptized by the Spirit of God automatically at the point of salvation into Christ, and He in us. 1 Corinthians 12:13: "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body; no matter your race – whether Jews or Greeks; and, no matter your social status – whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit; that is, we are all indwelt by one Holy Spirit.

At the point of salvation, when you trust in Christ as Savior, God the Holy Spirit baptizes you into Christ, and Christ enters into you. Now you have an eternal union with the Son of God, and you have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. If you do not have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, you are not a Christian. Romans 8:9 says, "However, if you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you, but if anyone does not have the spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him."

I want you to notice the interchange of words here. The Spirit of God dwells in you. The spirit of Christ dwells in you: the Spirit of God; and, the spirit of Christ. Here's another one of those indications that Jesus is deity. You couldn't call Him the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ. This is speaking of the Holy Spirit, and He is the Spirit of Christ, because Christ also is deity. You and I are not in the flesh. We're not in the sin nature. We're not dominated by that. But we are in the Spirit; and, the Spirit of God is in us: Christ in us; and, we in Christ. This is an enormously wonderful realization of the intimacy that we have with the living God.

Now, if you know that, are you ready to live like a pig? Are you ready to live like a dog? Christ in me. The hope of glory. He's there as my Friend. He's there as my Counselor. He's there when I have a big decision to make, and I say, "Lord Jesus, take my soul now, which is my mind; my emotions; and, my will, and you direct it. Run me. Conduct me. I want to make a decision here, and I want to be a winner when I make it." The unbeliever cannot call upon supernatural power like that. You can. And the Spirit of God is there to guide your thinking toward the doctrines that you need to help you to make the decision, if you've been taught them in the first place.

So, here's this wonderful relationship, and you want to live for the devil? The believing sinner's dead human spirit is regenerated to life by the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit then indwells us, along with Christ. Romans 8:10 says, "If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness." If Christ is in you, you're going to live forever in heaven. Your body is still going to have death in it, but you're going to live forever, because you have His righteousness.

The indwelling presence of God the Holy Spirit is the identifying mark of a genuine believer in Jesus Christ. There are a lot of religious people in the world who are not going to heaven. Why not? Because Christ does not indwell them. 1 John 3:24 puts it this way: "And the one who keeps His commandments abides in Him." Can you explain that? You should be able to: "And the one who keeps His commandments." What's another word for commandments? Bible doctrine: "abides in Him." What does the word "abide" mean? Temporal fellowship. The one who is positive to doctrine obeys it and has temporal fellowship: "And He in him:" "And we know by this that He abides in us by the Spirit Whom He gave us." It is God the Holy Spirit that convicts our spirit that we are the children of God, on the basis of our faith in Christ.

Then there is 1 John 4:13 that says, "By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because he has given us His spirit." So, if God the Holy Spirit were not indwelling us, neither would Christ. But because we have the Spirit of God upon the baptism of the Holy Spirit at point of our salvation, then Christ indwells us, and the Spirit of God indwells us. And if the Holy Spirit indwells us as a person, so does Jesus Christ indwell us for fellowship, and to enable us to live our life in the pattern of Christ.

Now, when a Christian loses sight of the deity of Christ and the indwelling of Christ within us, this is when we start to live like the unsaved world. We lose our respect and our fear of Jesus Christ. So, we descend into living like dogs and pigs. And you may recoil and say, "Not I. I won't do that." I remind you of Paul's admonition: "Let him that thinks he stands take heed, lest he fall." There is no one in this room now who's not capable of doing the most degraded sin that has ever occurred to the mind of man. All you have to do is lose your connecting respect for the deity of Christ, and your awe for Him as Very God of Very God, and the fact that He is there within you.

If you do, Proverbs 26:11 says this is what you will become: "Like a dog that returns to its vomit is the fool who repeats his folly." You'll keep doing the sinful thing over and over again. Your life will get all busted up. You'll be in pain. You'll be in agony. You'll have the residue of the results of the sin there on your hands. And what will you do? You'll go back to your folly, and you'll do it all over again. This is the nature of the Christian who has lost sight of the deity of Christ, and that that God-Man in dwells us.

You know that if people were watching you, there are many things that you would not do. They're wrong. They're filthy. They're evil. They're gross. If people were standing there, you wouldn't do it. But Christ in you? He, Who is your hope for glory, and Who determines your eternal destiny, and you will do it in His presence? Not if you keep yourself aware – a consciousness that He is there right at hand. Just turn and look. He's there in your presence, because He indwells you.

2 Peter 2:22 quotes this verse from Proverbs and adds a little twist to it. He is quoting the verse in Proverbs: "As it has happened to them, according to the true proverb, 'A dog returns to his own vomit, and the sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire." We have this condition – that there is no shame in His presence. We act without a sense of shame. So, we are willing to disobey Christ's commandments, and we are willing to satisfy the lusts of the sin nature. If we remember who He is, our sense of shame will not be jaded.

Now, for young people, this is very hard. Every place in our society, evil is being dignified. But from the 1960s, there has been a generation of rebellion who has systematically and deliberately pursued one objective, and that is to make everything that the Bible condemns as sinful, normal. And I heard recently that there's a pressure on military chaplains to see to it that they do not preach on the subject of homosexuality or lesbianism, because they will make people think that that is not normal. The Bible says that it's not normal. Now, where would they get the idea that that's the way to that they should see to it that military personnel think that it's normal. It's because of this systematic determination to make what is sinful, normal and acceptable in American society.

Romans 13:11-14 says: "And this do: knowing the time that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep. For now, salvation is nearer to us than when we believed." Here you have somebody who's been a Christian for a long time. Every day that goes by, you come closer and closer to the fulfillment of your salvation carrying you into heaven. And suddenly, you fall asleep spiritually. What is that talking about? You lose track of the presence of the Spirit of God within you, and of the person of Jesus Christ indwelling you, fully observing and fully listening. They are there for what reason? To help you to be able to enable you to live in the image of Christ, and to be everything that you, as a real man and a real woman, can be.

Romans 13:12: "The night is almost gone;" that is, the night of this world dominating with evil: "And the day is at hand." This is the approach of the Millennial Kingdom where spiritual enlightenment will be what is upheld in society: "Let us therefore lay aside the deeds of darkness, and put on the armor of light." This is speaking here now to Christians: "Let us behave properly, as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy." This is speaking to Christians? Do you have to tell Christians this? Yes. That's exactly what Christians do, isn't it? They're behaving improperly. They're behaving as people who belong not to the light of Christ of the day, but to the night of Satan. They're carousing. They're in drunkenness. They're in sexual promiscuity. Sensuality governs. The senses are satiated. That's all they live for. They're in strife. They have mental attitude sins like jealousy that are shot through their spirit, and through their very being in every way. They're shot through with mental attitude sins like jealousy. And the result is someone, as a Christian, who has simply lost his orientation to the presence of Christ in him – the hope of glory.

Romans 13:14 says, "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regards to its lust." There's a pattern of lust in the sin nature. The Bible says, "Don't indulge it." You cannot say this to an unsaved person. He can't help himself. He has to do the dirty, wrong thing. Only occasionally he can pull himself up to some human good. But he can't live a life of morality very long. But for a Christian, you can say "No" to the sin nature. You can turn your back upon this evil thing. You can simply dismiss its authority in your life through the Word of God, by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, and the presence of Christ controlling your soul.

There is a simple little reality that a lot of us are going to get to heaven and say, "Why on earth did I not live my daily life with constant calling upon Jesus Christ to control my soul? That's it. My soul is myself. That's my personality. That's who I am. And if Christ were controlling my soul, I wouldn't do these things. The sin nature would not be controlling it.

Then there is Galatians 5:16: "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh." Can you interpret that? Yes, you can. "Walk by the Spirit" means "stay in temporal fellowship," so that He will guide you, and you'll become very much aware. It'll become such a thrill for things to be brought to your attention, and for things to fall together. I'm always amazed when it happens – that God lines things up in your life. You have something that you're ready to do. All kinds of things have to be brought together. And finally, you have a decision to be made. And all those things come into your hand. And you realize that Christ in you is guiding. And the Spirit of God is giving enlightenment.

So, is it important to understand the fact of the deity of Jesus Christ? You betcha it is – to understand that He is God almighty, and that He is present within you. It will determine your obedience to His moral laws in all your conduct. Your awareness of His deity will govern your loyalty to Him, as you face the hostile, evil world which insults Him. To this evil world which is beckoning you, you'll say, "Get lost," if Christ is functioning, and the Spirit of God is in you. And the evil world really beckons in our society very powerfully, and very often externally.

I remember in World War II when I landed in Shanghai, China. In walking down the street, I could not walk ten feet without some pimp coming up and inviting the marines to a house of prostitution ("cat houses," they were called), and to some place of fun. And I mean it was one after another after another as you walked down the block. And you'd reach over and shove them aside, and say "No." Then you would walk another ten feet, and there's another one – every opportunity.

One time, I had the occasion to be looking for a marine that had wandered off. And I walked into a cat house, and this lady came up. She was the madam. And I said, "I'm looking for one of our marines," and I named him: "Is he here?" Her eyes open; she ran to the stairs; and, she yelled up something in Chinese up there, giving them the signal to clear out, because she thought I had a bunch of shore patrol guys behind me, and that we were going to move in and search the place. And she went into panic, and a lot of fun and games got busted up upstairs, I imagine, when she went screaming like that up the stairway. But here was this wonderful place of fun and entertainment. And all you had to do was forget Christ in me – the God-Man, with the Spirit of God, and I'm a prince in the royal family. And you would start acting like a pig and a dog.

Remembering the deity of Christ will drive us to the high and the holy ground of walking in the Lord's steps as His children. And He is the basis of our hope for eternal life in heaven. Colossians 1:27 is the verse I've been referring to: "To whom God will to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among you (among the Gentiles), which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." This was a mystery. A mystery is something that was not revealed in the Old Testament. What is the mystery here? That the Messiah Savior would live inside your body. That's what he's talking about: "Whom God will to make known (he's revealing it now – in New Testament times) what is the richest of the glorious position of this which has been a secret in ages past: Gentiles, not Jews, are going to be the hope of glory through Jesus Christ. The Jews expected that Christ the Messiah would be their hope of glory, and that it would be Christ. But they never dreamed of the Messiah in them. They never dreamed about God indwelling them. That was never spoken of in the Old Testament.

Suddenly, here in the New Testament, it is not only that Christ is in a human being, but of all things, in Gentiles. And we treat that privileged position as pigs and dogs?

**The Doctrine of the Deity of Christ**

Well, we've been looking at the summary of the doctrine of the deity of Christ:

1. **The Godhead**

Jesus Christ is shown in Scripture to be a member of the Godhead: Father; Son; and, Holy Spirit.

1. **Creation**

The pre-incarnate work of Jesus Christ in the creation of the universe necessitates His pre-existence to do that, and thus His deity.

1. **Declaration of Deity**

The Lord Jesus Christ in the Bible is declared to be deity by Himself, and by those who observed Him.

1. **The Angel of the Lord**

I want to introduce you to what the Bible refers to as "the Angel of the Lord." This expression is repeatedly found in the Old Testament Scripture, and it refers to the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ. It refers to the second person of the deity. And we'll see in a moment why that is evidenced. And if it refers to Jesus Christ before His incarnation, that indicates His preexistence, and that indicates His deity – deity especially by this word "Lord."

The term "Angel of the Lord" does not refer to any ordinary angel of God. This is to a spirit. The word "angel" is used in terms of a spirit, not a human being, and also in terms of a messenger. You remember that the seven letters in the book of the revelation are addressed to whom? To the angel of the church in Ephesus. Who was that? The angel of the church. There it's not used in terms of a spirit being. There it's used in the meaning of the messenger. It is referring to the pastor-teacher of the church in Ephesus. You may address me as "Angel John" if you wish. It would be very fitting – kind of nice when I think of it. And the idea is the communicator – the messenger of God. So here is a messenger of the Lord.

The Hebrew word for "Lord" looks like this: Y E H O W A H (yeh-ho-vaw') ("YHWH"). This is the word that is often pronounced as "Jehovah." Really it should be "Yehowah," or more properly, really "Yahweh." What this word comes from is the Hebrew word "to be," and that is the word "Ehyeh." And "Ehyeh" developed "Yehowah." The reason for this is that this is an attempt to describe the eternity of God – that God never had a beginning; that God never had an end; and, that God is always present. So they use this word "to be," and this is the most sacred name of God. It is translated as "LORD," but always with capital letters in your Bible. Because it is so sacred, they want you to understand who it is that is being spoken of here. This "LORD" indicates to you that you're dealing with God in His covenant promises – the God Who promises, and the God Who will not lie, and Who will not fail to keep His promises.

Let's look at the use of this name in Exodus 3:13-14. God has come to Moses at the burning bush. He has given instruction to Moses to go to the Jewish people and say, "God has come and talked to me. And God is telling me that He's going to lead you out of slavery.

Verse 13: "Then Moses said to God, 'Behold, I'm going to the sons of Israel, and I shall say to them: 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' Now, they may say to me: 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?' And God said to Moses, 'I Am Who I Am,'" using this word here: the verb "to be" – "I Am Who I Am:" "And He said, 'Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel: 'I Am has me to you.''" So, the answer that God gave Moses was the answer: "I am." That's why the Jews always understood that the expression "I Am" (if anybody says "I am," that it) was claiming deity. It's claiming to be divine, because God said, "I never had a beginning; I never had an ending; and, I express that by the word "I am." That was incorporated in the word "Yehowah," which is based upon the concept of "I am." The word "Yehowah" means "He who is."

In the New Testament, we have this same concept of the eternity of God used by Jesus in John 8:58-59: "Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you: before Abraham was born, I Am.'" Wooh! Did the Jews understand what He was saying, "You betcha." Look at the next verse: "Therefore, they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple." That was blasphemy for a human being to say "I'm God." And that's what He said: "I am." He says, "I'm God." How did he say it? He said: "Before Abraham was, I was already there, because I was God pre-incarnate. I was the Son of the Godhead before I took it on a human body." And they knew what He was saying. And the penalty for blasphemy was stoning – execution.

"He Who is." This is made up of actually four, four Hebrew letters (Consonants). The Hebrew language is all consonants. And it has these little dots and specks that are the vowels. It's "YHWH." This is the sacred four-letter name for God – the most sacred name of God in the Old Testament. It's called the sacred Tetragrammaton. "Tetragrammaton" means "four letters." This name is so holy that the Jews will not pronounce it as they read Scripture. When they come to "YHWH," they say "Adonai," which is another word for LORD. And they don't pronounce this name at all in reading Scripture. This sacred name for God is related to His covenant, and His promises revealed to Israel – in fact, revealed to Israel as His special people. When he said to the Israelites, "You are going to forever be my very special people," this was the name he used. He didn't the other name "Elohim: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. That's the name of God of "Elohim" there. "Elohim" is using in terms of His creation. But when God makes promises, you're dealing with "LORD" (capital letters) – the sacred Tetragrammaton "YHWH" (yeh-ho-vaw').

Here in Exodus 20:2: "I am the LORD." Do you see the capital letters? "I am 'YHWH,' your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery." This is how God's special relationship was expressed to the Jewish people.

Now, there are certain things to know about this name of God. The angel of the Lord is identified as "Yahweh" Himself. Let's look at a few verses in Genesis 16. Now, we won't finish this today. So be sure you bring your Bibles next time, if you don't have them this time, because (like good Bereans) you have to see that these things are true, otherwise you shouldn't believe them.

Genesis 16:7: "Now the Angel of the Lord (see the capital letters 'LORD') found her by a spring of water." Now this is referring to Hagar. This was Abraham's wife, who gave him Ishmael. And when Sarai found that she was pregnant, she drove her out. And the woman is now distressed: "And the Angel of the Lord found her (Hagar) by a spring of water in the wilderness by the spring on the way to Shur. And he said, 'Hagar (Sarai's maid), where have you come from, and where are you going?' And she said, 'I'm fleeing from the presence of my mistress, Sarai.' Then the Angel of the Lord (the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ) said to her, 'Return to your mistress and submit yourself to her authority.' Moreover, the Angel of the Lord said to her, 'I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they shall be too many to count.' And the Angel of the Lord said to her further, 'Behold, you are with child, and you shall bear a son, and you shall call his name Ishmael, because the Lord has given heed to your affliction. And he will be a wild donkey of a man. His hand will be against everyone.'" From Ishmael came the Arabs, and you can see the conflict that was created here in Abraham's own family between the sons of Ishmael and the sons of Isaac, the Jews: "'And everyone's hand will be against him, and he will live in the east of all his brothers.' 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?'"

Hager says, in fear, "I've been talking to God. So, here the Angel of the Lord is identified as God, and He is called the Angel of "Yahweh." . . . Verse 13: "'You are a God who sees.' For she said, 'Have I even remained alive here after seeing Him?'" And by that she meant: "Is it possible that I won't die now that I've spoken to God?" Whom did she speak to? The angel of the Lord – the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ.

Look at Genesis 22:11: Here is the offering of Isaac. Abraham is about to slay the son: "But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, 'Abraham, Abraham.' And he said, 'Here I am.' And he said, 'Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him. For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son (your only son) from me.' Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place 'The Lord will provide,' as it is set to this day: 'In the Mount of the Lord, it will be provided.' Then the Angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven and said, 'By Myself, I have sworn,' declares the Lord, 'because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son (your only son). And indeed, I will greatly bless you. I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is on the seashore. And your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. And in your seed, all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.'"

Here, the Angel of the Lord repeats the promise that God is going to make a great nation of the Jewish people. But it was very distinctly the Angel of the Lord, the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ.

In Genesis 31:11, the Angel of the Lord is identified as God Himself – as "Yahweh." Jacob is fleeing, seeking to escape the wrath of his brother Esau: "Then the Angel of God (which is another phrase for the same thing – the angel of the Lord) said to me in the dream: 'Jacob?' And I said, 'Here I am.' And he said, 'Lift up now your eyes and see that all the male goats which are mating are striped, speckled, and mottled, for I have seen all that Laban has been doing to you. I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar where you made a vow to Me. Now rise. Leave this land and return to the land of your birth.'" He's having problems with his Uncle Laban at this point. So, God has said, "Now the time has come for you to leave. Take your wives with you and get out."

In Genesis 48:15-16, this instruction came from the Angel of the Lord, who is God: "And He blessed Joseph, and said, 'The God before Whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God Who has been my shepherd all my days to this day, the angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads. And may My name live on in them. And the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac, and may they grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.'" Here, Jacob is blessing his sons, and he has a special blessing for Joseph. And he points out that the Angel has redeemed him from evil, referring to the Angel of the Lord that has been dealing with him.

Here's another good one, in Exodus 3:1. Here, Moses is pasturing the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, the priest of Midian: "And he led the flock to the west side of the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush. And he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed." And here, Moses had that dramatic experience with God, which told him what was going to happen to him now. He was going to be the leader of the Israelites, to take them out of the slavery in Egypt. And it is the Angel of the Lord that appears to him.

"When the Lord saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush, and said, 'Moses, Moses.' And he said, 'Here I am.' Moses saw this bush burning, and it didn't burn. He went to look at it, and who is it that speaks to him? "God calls to him." Who is calling? The angel of the Lord. And He tells him: "This is holy ground."

Let's look at one more before we finish. Here's a dramatic one with Gideon, in Judges 6:11, "Then the Angel of the Lord came and sat under the oak that was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, as his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the winepress in order to save it from the Midianites. And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him, and said to him, 'The Lord is with you, O valiant warrior.' Then Gideon said to him, 'O, my Lord. If the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us, and where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about? Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt? And now the Lord has abandoned us and given us into the hands of Midian?' And the Lord looked at him and said, 'Go in this, your strength, and deliver Israel from the hand of Midian. Have I not sent you?' And he said to him, 'Oh Lord, how shall I deliver Israel, because my family is the least in Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my father's house?' But the Lord said to him, 'Surely, I'll be with you, and you shall defeat Midian as one man.'

"So Gideon said to Him, 'If now I have found favor in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You Who speaks with me. Please do not depart from here until I come back to You and bring out my offering and lay it before You.' And he said, 'I will remain until you return.' And Gideon went in and prepared a kid in unleavened bread from an ephah of flour. And he put the meat in a basket, and the broth in the pot, and brought them out to Him under the oak, and presented them. And the Angel of God said to him, 'Take the meat and the unleavened bread, and lay them on this rock, and pour out the broth.' And he did so. Then the Angel of Lord put out the end of the staff that was in His hand, and touched the meat and the unleavened bread, and the fire sprang up from the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. Then the Angel of the Lord vanished from His sight. When Gideon saw that He was the Angel of the Lord, he said, 'O yes, so Lord God! For now I have seen the Angel of the Lord face-to-face.' And the Lord said to him, 'Peace to you. Do not fear. You shall not die.'"

Gideon realized, as he saw that Angel rising up in this offering to God, that it was God Himself that he was speaking to. So point number four here is that the angel of the Lord is identified as God Himself (as deity). He's more than just an ordinary angel – Christ in you, the Hope of Glory.

Father, we thank You for the realities of the deity of Jesus Christ, and of His tremendous works performed in the Old Testament to reinforce our understanding that He is the eternal God. And though we will someday see Him face-to-face in His human body, there was a time when He could not be seen because He was Very God of Very God. We thank You that this God now indwells us, along with the Spirit of God, who empowers us to do right. And we pray that we shall develop a great sense of shame to do wrong.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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