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

***No. 3
Colossians 1:4-9

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

The Lord Jesus Christ is the unique person of the universe because He is both God and Man in One Person. Understanding the fact of the deity of Jesus Christ is absolutely essential to a proper relationship to Him. Paul begins this particular section of the book of Colossians in verse 15 by pointing out that Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God. That means that He is exact representation of God, and that He is the manifestation of deity. Anyone who denies the deity of Jesus Christ will also reject Him as the only qualified Savior of mankind. Those who do not receive Jesus Christ as the sinless God-Man are going to be deceived by Satan into seeking salvation through some human good work effort of their own instead of as a gift from God through faith in Christ.

So, this is a very serious matter – that you understand the nature of the person of Christ, and that He is Very God of Very God; that is, He is essential deity. He is absolute God as well as Man. Believers who do not live in the consciousness of the fact that Jesus Christ is God indwelling them for fellowship and for control of their souls, live under the control of the old sin nature in them. That's why it's so important to know (to realize), and have a consciousness that Christ is in you – your hope for eternal glory, the Scripture says. But He's in you as God. If that becomes an automatic frame of reference of your life, I guarantee you it will guide how you act, because you will act with the same respect toward Him, and the sense of being of recoiling from doing what is evil, as you would in the presence of people who could see you do things that you would be ashamed to do. We should infinitely more treat Christ that way. And when we recognize that He is in us as God, our lives are going to be guided accordingly.

A Christian who lives in the conscious presence of Jesus Christ as the God-Man does not feel free to do things that are shameful and evil things. At the end of our campout yesterday, we swung back once more through Fredericksburg. We had about a 45-minute span, and the kids wanted to visit a couple of places. And I went with a gang down to a place called The Fun Shop. And it had all kinds of things in it: little tricks; and, little magic things you could buy. And on the rack, I noticed a bunch of T-shirts. And I got to reading the slogans on the T-shirts. One of them said, "My body is not a temple. It is a recreation center." Would you buy that, and wear that, as a child of God? It was very clear that this was a slam against Scripture that says that the Christian's body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. He lives there. The T-shirt said, "My body is not a temple. It is a recreation center. It is a place for me to do evil. It's a thing for me to use in evil activities."

Another T-shirt said something to the effect of: "Jesus is coming soon. Have all the fun you can." Now, that almost bordered on blasphemy. Would you buy that t-shirt, and wear it, as a child of God (as a Christian)? Then there was another one, and its obscenity and crudity is so great that I wouldn't dream of describing it to you, but it's horrendous of such a crudity. Could you imagine a Christian buying a T-shirt like that, and walking around so that everybody could read what was written on it? And yet Christians do that: "I'm a representative of the living God, Jesus Christ. Therefore, I portray myself in that way.

Whether you you're young or older, without a sense of the dignity of the fact that Christ is God, and He indwells you, there's no telling what you'll become. There is no telling what you'll feel free to do. There is no telling how you will degrade yourself. And worse yet, you won't have the sense, when you see somebody wearing a T-shirt like that, to recoil. You have to be a very stupid young man or young woman to see somebody with some crudity; obscenity; or, a blasphemy such as were on those T-shirts, and you have camaraderie with them as friends, instead of recoiling and saying, "Hey, there's something wrong with this woman. There's something wrong with this man. This person does not understand the deity of Jesus Christ. And you do not receive them as your friend, or take them to your bosom as a companion. If you do, boy, does that tell us something about you? That's one thing these T-shirts do. They do that for us. They tell us something about the person who wears them. And they tell us something about the person who is willing to be in camaraderie with a person who would wear something like that, or make an expression like that, and worse yet, put the things into practice that are on some of these shirts.

Well, it was an education to me to walk around the shop, and take a look at those T-shirts, and the implications of what they were saying. There's a great dignity in remembering the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ in terms of our worship of Him and our service to Him. We will worship Him with an appropriate dignity because of Who He is as God. And we will also serve Him with a great deal of realization that this is serious business. We are serving the Most High God. And I remind you again that the Scripture says He will not forget your laborers of love. Whatever small thing you have done for Christ, He'll never forget it, and you shall be rewarded for that for all eternity. Jesus said at one time that anybody who gives a cup of cold water to one who needs it, that will not go unnoticed in heaven, and he shall receive his appropriate reward. It doesn't have to be the big things. They can be little things. But you will act as per your view of the person of Christ. And when you see Him as God, then you're going to have a much greater capacity to trust Him; to depend upon Him; and, to lean on Him.

**The Doctrine of the Deity of Jesus Christ**

The doctrine of the deity of Jesus Christ, then, is what we have been following here to explain exactly what Paul meant: He is the image of the invisible God. And we have covered a few points.

1. **The Godhead**

First of all, we have shown that Jesus Christ is shown in the Bible to be a member of the Godhead. That means that He is part of the Trinity: Father; Son; and Holy Spirit. That immediately confirms beyond any question that He is God. And yet you should understand that this is challenged all the time. Great, great numbers of people in the religions of the world, even among those who claim to be Christian groups, deny the fact that Jesus Christ was actually deity, and something more than just a Man. But he has shown in the Bible to be a member of the Godhead.

1. **Creation**

We pointed out that the pre-incarnate work of Jesus Christ as the Creator of the universe indicates His pre-existence, and therefore, His deity.

1. **The Claim in Scripture**

We also pointed out that the Lord Jesus Christ claims to be God, and others who observed his life and works confirmed this claim. No one could challenge His sinlessness. And no one can be sinless (good, in that sense) except God Himself.

So these are three significant points that identify Jesus Christ indeed as deity.

1. **The Angel of the Lord**

Then we came to the very interesting person that keeps reappearing in the Old Testament called the Angel of the Lord. And we reminded you that every time you will see this word "LORD" in Scripture, that stands for the sacred, four-letter, Hebrew name for God, the most sacred name for God, which is "Yehowah." In the Hebrew, it is just four consonants ("YHWH"), and that name is the name that is associated with God in giving the moral law, and making covenant agreements. So, it's always like this in the Bible, spelled in capital letters. So, when you read in your Bible, and you come across this word "LORD," and it's all capitals, you know that it's this sacred name, "Yehowah" in the Old Testament.

He is called the Angel of the Lord in the sense that the word "angel" refers to "a messenger." He is the messenger of God. And the word "LORD" is a word that comes from the verb "to be," in the Hebrew, and therefore, it means it's conveying a constant presence, which is trying to convey that God has no beginning and no ending. And, actually, the word "Yehowah" means "He who is." This covers the eternality of the Lord. It is a way of expressing that He has always existed.

Now, for someone to be called "the Angel of Yehowah" ("the Angel of the Lord") shows that He has some kind of a specific relationship to God. And as we have shown you, this is term, "the Angel of the Lord," refers to the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ. When you get to the New Testament, you don't have the Angel of the Lord anymore. The Angel of Lord doesn't come to do this, and come to do that. He doesn't exist anymore.

Now, this is important information. In one of our discussions on our camp out, the subject came up, and I made a quick point of the fact that Jesus Christ is God. He has always been God. And we asked a couple of questions, and one of our high school girls came right back snapping with the answers. I mean she knew the Tetragrammaton. She knew "Yehowah." And she told us exactly how it's pronounced. Well, she's been sitting here and paying attention, and that has given her a great edge over everybody else in her peer group, because she has an understanding of the eternal person of Jesus Christ as God. So our kids, I can assure you, do learn.

The Angel of the Lord is identified, as we have seen, as God in several passages in the Old Testament. These are called theophanies. He is identified not only as a Messenger of God, but Himself as God. Very briefly, we won't go into these details, but this is so important that I'm going to remind you once more.

First of all, there's the one in Genesis 16:13. In verse 7, we have the expression: "Now the angel of the Lord found her by a spring of water." This is referring to Hagar, Abraham's Egyptian wife. Verse 13: "Then she called the name of the LORD (see the capital letters) Who spoke to her: 'You are God who sees.' For she said, 'Have I even remained alive here after seeing Him?'" Now you can connect verse 13 with verse 7. Verse 7 says, "The Angel of the Lord spoke to her." And she connected the speaker with the name "Yehowah" (the "LORD"), and she says, "I have seen God, and it's a wonder I'm still alive." This is a clear declaration that the Angel of the Lord is not just an ordinary angel, but He is a divine person.

We also saw this in Genesis 22:15-16. Here we have the Abrahamic Covenant being confirmed. And verse 15 says, "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 only son from Me.'" This was on the occasion when he was going to sacrifice the boy as per God's direction. Verse 15 says, "The angel of the Lord calls to him." And then verse 16 says: "'By myself,' the Lord says, 'I have declared,'" very clearly connecting once more the Angel of the Lord with God.

Then we pointed out to you Genesis 31:13. In verse 11, we read, "And the Angel of God (which is another term for this same concept – 'the Angel of the Lord') said to me (Jacob) in the dream, 'Here am I.'" Then in verse 13: "I am the God of Bethel" – the Person Who, in verse 11, says that He is the Angel of God, or the Angel of the Lord." In verse 13, He says, "I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar where you made your vow to Me," and so on. So here again, the Angel of the Lord is clearly declared to be a divine person.

We also pointed out Genesis 48:16 to you. He read about: "The angel who has redeemed me from all evil." Here, Jacob is blessing his sons. He gets down to Joseph, and he makes this expression. In verse 15, we read, "And he blessed Joseph and said: 'The God, before Whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked.'" In verse 16, he says, "The angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads." So, here, Jacob switches from speaking about God, in verse 15, and then continues speaking about the same person, and calls him "the Angel Who has redeemed him." Now, what messenger of God has been the source of redemption for mankind? This is, obviously, Jesus Christ.

Let's look at Exodus 3:2. Moses sees the burning bush: "And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a blazing fire from the center of the bush." Then look down at verse 4: "When the Lord saw that he turned aside to look, God called him from the bush." So, here in verse 2, it's the Angel of the Lord that appears. And in verse 4, the Angel of the Lord is now called the Lord. So, here again you have these same terms being switched between these two, indicating that the angel of the Lord is deity.

In Acts 7:30-31, in the New Testament, it refers to this incident as "the Angel of the Lord," or as "the voice of the Lord."

Now in Judges 6:11, we pointed this one out to you: "And the Angel of the Lord came and sat under the oak that was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash, the Abiezrite, and his son Gideon was beating out wheat," and so on. Here's the Lord appearing to Gideon. He comes as the Angel of the Lord. Now, notice verses 22 and 23: "When Gideon saw that He was the Angel of the Lord, he said, 'Alas, O 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.'" When Gideon realized that the person who was talking to him, telling him how he was going to be used by God to free them from the Midianite oppression, he goes into a terror, when he recognizes this person as the Angel of the Lord. What is he so upset about? Other people see angels, and they don't think they're going to die. It's because the Angel of the Lord is not just an ordinary angel. He's God Himself. Therefore, it is a pre-incarnate Christ, and he says, "I have seen the Angel of the Lord," and he's afraid he's going to die. God says, "Yes, you have seen God. Peace to you. Do not fear you shall not die."

Now, I want you to follow with me in Judges 13. We have one more. And this is a great example of the fact that the angel of the Lord is the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ. This has to deal with Samson's father and mother. This is a very sad situation in that family. No children had been born to Samson's father and mother. Judges 13:2: "And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah. And his wife was barren and had no children. Then the Angel of the Lord appeared to the woman and said to her, 'Behold, now you are barren, and have borne no children. But you shall conceive and give birth to a son. Now therefore, be careful not to drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing.'" Now, in the Old Testament, the words for "wine" are a variety of words. In the New Testament, you have just one word ["oinos"] that is the Greek word for wine, but we never know whether it's grape juice or fermented juice. But in the Old Testament, it's distinguished. There is a big difference. What people ordinarily drank in New Testament time was not fermented juice. It was just straight grape juice. Therefore, he says to this future mother: "Don't drink wine (that's grape juice), and strong drink (that's alcoholic juice).” There is a very clear difference: "Nor eat any unclean thing."

Now, in the Scripture, wine is associated with what is evil. And here's a symbolic use that this mother (who was about to give birth to a very special son who is going to become a judge over Israel) is not to drink any wine because he is going to be a Nazirite child all his life. To be a Nazirite means to be set apart, especially to God, all of your life. We have only three of them in the Bible: Samson; Samuel; and, John the Baptist. Others could take a Nazirite vow for a period of time. And when they did that, they could not even eat raisins or grapes, let alone to drink the juice. They couldn't even drink plain straight grape juice, let alone alcoholic beverages.

So, here, this child is going to be very special child. He is going to be set apart all of his life to God's service. Therefore, he is not even before he is born to be contaminated by something that is a symbol of the world's evil. Verse five explains that. Judges 13:5: "For behold, you shall conceive and give birth to a son, and no razor shall come upon his head, for the boy shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb. And he shall begin to deliver Israel from the hands of the Philistines." The hair in Scripture was a symbol of power. Therefore, this was going to be a person of great power, set aside, with his whole life as a special mission to God. That's all He lives for – nothing else. That's why he's a Nazirite from the moment of his conception. And a Nazirite did not cut his hair.

Now, ordinarily, a Nazirite says, "I'm going to take a Nazirite vow for 30 days." He does not eat anything that is a product of the vine. And he does not cut his hair. At the end of that time, his hair is taken off, and as he makes his final, special series of sacrificial offerings, his hair would be placed upon that offering and burnt as a sign that his power is from God. The hair was a sign of power. And therefore, this child, lifelong, was not to have his hair cut.

"Then a woman came and told her husband saying, 'A man of God came to me, and his appearance was like the appearance of the Angel of God" – another form of the expression "the Angel of the Lord:" "This was very awesome. And I did not ask him where he came from, nor did he tell me his name." She goes and tells her husband what has happened.

Verse 7: "But he said to me, behold, you shall conceive and give birth to a son. Now you shall not drink wine nor strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing, for the boy shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb to the day of his death.

Verse 8: "Then Manoah (that is, her husband) entreated the Lord and said, 'O Lord, please let the man of God whom You have sent come to us again, that he may teach us what to do for the boy who is to be born.'" The husband wants a little more information. They do respect that this is a very special person from God. But at this point, they haven't grasped that he is God Himself that is speaking to him – the pre-incarnate Christ. They only see that this is a man from God. Therefore, they take this instruction seriously: "And God listened to the voice of Manoah, and the Angel of God (that is, the Angel of the Lord) came again to the woman as she was sitting in the field, but Manoah, her husband, was not with her. So, the woman ran quickly and told her husband, 'Behold the man who came the other day has appeared to me.' Then Manoah rose and followed his wife. And when he came to the man, he said to him, 'Are you the man who spoke to the woman?' And he said, 'I am.' And Manoah said, 'Now, when your words come to pass, what shall be the boy's mode of life and his vocation?'" He never questioned the truth of this message, but he said, "I want a little more information on how we should rear this boy. This is an amazing thing. He's going to be a Nazirite all his life. How are we going to rear him? What's the objective?"

"So, the angel of the Lord said to Manoah, 'Let the woman pay attention to all that I said. She should not eat anything that comes from the vine, nor drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing. Let her observe all that I commanded.' Then Manoah said to the Angel of the Lord, 'Please, let us detain you so that we may prepare a kid for you.' And the angel of the Lord said to Manoah, 'Though you detain me, I will not eat your food. But if you prepare a burnt offering, then offer it to the LORD.'" And you see these capital letters: "Offer it to 'Yehowah' – God in His highest, most dignified name, for Manoah did not know that He was the Angel of the Lord." Up to now, it's just an agent from God. He still doesn't know that he's speaking to deity.

Then, in verses 17-18: "And Manoah said to the Angel of the Lord, 'What is your name, so that when your words come to pass, we may honor you? But the Angel of the Lord said to him, 'Why do you ask My Name, for it is wonderful.'" And the Hebrew word there means that it's incomprehensible. You wouldn't be able to grasp My Name if I told you.

Now, you know that in the Old Testament a name signified what a person was. He is the Angel of "Yehowah." That is everything that God is. He said, "You wouldn't be able to comprehend what God is. You wouldn't be able to comprehend me if I were to give you My Name in all of its explicit meaning."

So he says, "All right, I won't eat your food, but go ahead and make the sacrifice. And in verse 19, Manoah proceeds to do that: "So, Manoah took the kid with the grain offering, and offered it on the rock to the Lord, and He performed wonders while Manoah and his wife looked on. For it came about when the flame went up from the altar toward heaven that the Angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar. When Manoah and his wife saw this, they fell with their faces to the ground." Why? Because now it hit them right between the eyes. This is God. An angel would not go up in a sacrificial smoke being offered in honor to God in worshipful respect. An angel wouldn't do that, but the Angel of the Lord would do that, because he is God. And suddenly, they realized that this was God. They didn't understand Him as we do – as the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ, but they recognized that this was deity that they were dealing with.

So, here's the fearful response of Manoah in verse 21: "Now the Angel of the Lord appeared no more to Manoah or his wife. Then Manoah knew that he was the Angel of the Lord (not just an ordinary person sent by God). So Manoah said to his wife, we shall surely die, for we have seen God.'" Now, do you need anything more explicit to confirm that the Angel of the Lord was deity? "We shall surely die."

Verse 21 says that Manoah knew that it was the Angel of the Lord. He now had the person identified. Verse 22 says, "We shall surely die, for we have seen God." There is no doubt about it that the Angel of the Lord was not an ordinary angel, but He was deity.

Fortunately, Manoah's wife had better perception and better logic upon this point, because she points out to him in verse 23: "But his wife said to him, 'If the Lord had desired to kill us, He would not have accepted a burnt offering and a grain offering from our hands, nor would he have shown us all these things, nor would he have let us hear things like this at this time.'" And Manoah says, "Oh yeah, that's right." Fortunately, his wife was better oriented to doctrine. Manoah was so distracted by all this that he didn't even realize that: "If God kills us, how's he going to bring this judge for Israel?" All logic has slipped away from him. But we can be sympathetic, in the awesome presence of God, that he just wasn't thinking straight.

So, here is a very clear declaration that the angel of the Lord is God.

The next point about the Angel of the Lord is that the Bible makes it clear that the Angel of the Lord is distinguished from God Himself. The Angel of the Lord and Yahweh are two different people. They're two different persons. Genesis 24 illustrates this, because I want to make it clear that the Angel of the Lord is just not another mode by which God is appearing. These are two different persons. In Genesis 24:7, Abraham is looking for a wife for his son Isaac: "And the LORD ('Yehowah') the God of heaven, Who took me from my father's house, and from the land of my birth, and Who spoke to me, and Who swore to me saying, 'To your descendants, I will give this land.'" This is Abraham speaking. "He will send His angel before you, and will take a wife for my son from here." He will send His angels. 'Yehowah' will send His angel, the Angel of the Lord (two different persons). The Lord is sending His messenger, Jesus Christ.

Genesis 24:40 also adds to this: "And he said to me, the Lord before Whom I have walked will send His angel with you to make your journey successful. And will you will take a wife for my son, from my relatives, and from my father's house." Abraham is explaining the mission to his servant that he is sending to find this wife for his son Isaac, from back there from the family, so that it comes from their own family line. And he says, "God, the Lord, is going to send His Angel of the Lord to guide you in selecting the right woman for him."

Turn over to the book of Exodus 23:20-22: "Behold, I am going to send an Angel before you to guard you along the way, and to bring you into the place that I have prepared." Here is the conquest of the Promised Land – Israel is coming into their land. God says, "I'm going to send an angel before you to guide you along the way. Beyond your guard before Him, and obey His voice. Do not be rebellious toward Him, for He will not pardon your transgressions since My Name is in Him." This is the Angel of the Lord bearing the name of the Lord. And He bears that name because He is God Himself.

Verse 22 says, "But if you will truly obey His voice, and do all that I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies, and an adversary to your adversaries. Exodus 32:34: "But go now. Lead the people where I told you. Behold, My Angel shall go before you. Nevertheless, in a day when I punish, I'll punish them for their sin." Here again, God is sending His angel before them. Jehovah sends the angel of Jehovah to guide them in their Promised Land journey.

Then there is 1 Chronicles 21, distinguishing between the Lord and the Angel of the Lord. In 1 Chronicles 21:15, David has broken a law (a regulation of God). That is the background of this passage. David wants to know how many first-line military men he has in his army. God says, "Do not number them David," because God does not want David to be having his confidence in the number of his troops, but to have his confidence in God, Who can make those troops win. The hand of God is always the ultimate decider in military matters. And that's the first thing a military leader has to learn.

We had our trip to the Nimitz museum. It was a splendid tour that started with Pearl Harbor, and just led us right through all the great events of the South Pacific, and the chain of battles that finally led to the climactic battle on Okinawa that finally was the last operation of the amphibious nature. But the turning point was the battle of Midway. And Admiral Nimitz, when he was handed command after Pearl Harbor, had a terrible mess on his hands. By an act of the grace of God, the carriers were out at sea, so they were not damaged. Had they been damaged as the battleships were in Battleship Row on Fort Island, the United States west coast would have been extremely vulnerable to the Japanese. And the Japanese decided, after the attack of Jimmy Doolittle and his B-25s he used that came off the carrier the Hornet that they were on, and bombed Tokyo just a few months after the war started, the Japanese up to this time believed that the Kamikaze, the sacred wind that had saved them in the Middle Ages from the destruction by the Orientals that came against them. At that time they were doomed, and this wind came and destroyed the enemy's fleet. And the tradition then grew that Japan is invulnerable: "We can attack the United States. The divine wind will always protect us." So, they were sure that they could not be hit.

Well, Doolittle's raid put the fear into them that they were not protected by a divine wind. So, Admiral Yamamoto of the Japanese fleet, who had designed the whole Pearl Harbor operation said, "We're going to go in, and we're going to finish off the American fleet. Then we'll be free to hit Hawaii; establish there; and, we'll be ready for California and the west coast." So, they put together the biggest and the best of what the Japanese had. And it was awesome in naval power. And we did not have anything compared to that. What happens?

There's a lieutenant commander who always like to work wearing a smoking jacket and slippers. And he was an intelligence officer. He was a genius. And he broke the Japanese code, so that we knew what they were sending out, and what they were saying. And Admiral Nimitz now had to make a decision: where was he going to fight this battle? The battle of the Coral Sea had to be fought immediately. And immediately after that came the battle of Midway. And Nimitz had to make his decision. If he fought the Battle of the Coral Sea, which had to be won, or we would not have held Guadalcanal, the first jumping-off point for the Pacific War back to Japan, he could not have also fought the Japanese at Midway if he didn't know exactly where they were going to hit.

Well, this old intelligence officer . . . who was so clever, said, "Admiral, I think they're going to hit Midway." They knew that the Japanese code for Midway was "A F." So, he suggested to the admiral, "We have to know where they're going to hit, or we will not survive the Japanese fleet." Well, in comes the hand of God, and gives his intelligence office a very clever plan, and Admiral Nimitz says, "Set it in motion." And they sent out a message in the clear that the desalinization plant on Midway has broken down, and they only have two weeks of water left, and they need to get something done. And the Japanese pick it up, and there is another act of God. They believed it, and they sent out, on their message to their people, "'A F' has only two weeks of water left." They knew that "A F" was Midway. And because of that, Nimitz was able to handle the naval forces, so that with an infinitely less powerful force at that time, he was able to beat the Japanese.

The Japanese sent four of their major carriers. The first bombing mission on them, when they were finally discovered (and I won't go through a series of divine factors, they were looking for the carriers, and the one that could have spotted them was something like 30 minutes late getting started. He had mechanical problem. So, he was always behind, and they never did spot him. So, Yamamoto thought he was in the clear.

The first group that the Americans sent out (something like 16 men in that particular squadron), every one of them was killed except one officer). His last name was Gay. I forget what his first name was. But he flew over the Japanese. He was the only one that was able to drop his torpedo, and then they hit him. But he survived for a day-and-a-half. He took the cushion off of the seat of his plane, which floated, and he held it over his head. This battle fought was fought all around him. For a day-and-a-half, he's there, and they never spot him, and they're picking up Japanese that are in the water that have been dropped. And the result is that the word now got back where they really were. It was at great cost to us. And then the American aircraft came back a second time to the consternation of Yamamoto: "Where are these planes coming from? There are no American carriers in this area." And three carriers went to the bottom – zip! (And I think he was a commander:) Commander Gay was sitting there watching all this, while he was floating in the water.

Well, Nimitz gets the word. He said, "I want that fourth carrier." So, they go back, and they get that one. With that, the back of the Japanese was broken from then on for naval military operations. They could never pull it together again. That was their moment, and they had to get it.

Now who did that? It was the hand of God. And the fact is that when they picked up Commander Gay, they brought him to Nimitz, and Nimitz says, "I don't know what's going on. We have no information out there." He says, "You've been there. Tell me about it. What took place? You've been sitting there watching the whole show. And that's how they found out how miraculous were the American aviators off those carriers that they were able to do this.

So, here is God who is the deciding force of victory. And David hasn't learned that. He said, "I'm going to number my troops." And God was so angry at him for doing that, because his confidence was now in men, and in his armaments, and his weapons of war instead of his confidence being in God, Who could make a little bit (like in Gideon's case) achieve a very great victory.

So, that's the background here. Verse 15: "And God sent an Angel to Jerusalem to destroy it, but he was about to destroy it. The Lord saw, and was sorry over the calamity and said to the destroying angel, 'It is enough now. Relax your hand. And the Angel of the Lord was standing by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. Then David lifted up his eyes and saw the Angel of the Lord standing between earth and heaven, with his drawn sword in his hand, stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders covered with sackcloth, and fell on their faces.

"And David said to God, 'Is it not I who commanded to count the people? Indeed I am the one who has sinned and done very wickedly. But these sheep, what have they done? Oh Lord my God, please let the hand be against me and my father's house, but not against the people, that they should be plagued.'" David said, "I called the wrong play. I should not have disobeyed you because that was frightful looking out in space, and there is Jesus Christ, the pre-incarnate Angel of the Lord, with a sword in his hand, raised over Jerusalem, about ready to destroy it." And David says, "God, please, I'm the one that you should be exercising judgment on. Here are your sheep in Israel. They were not the ones who did wrong. This was my fault."

The picture here is God sending another person, the Angel of the Lord. These are two different people engaged in this operation, so that they are to be distinguished. Verse 18: "Then the angel of the Lord commanded Gad to say to David that David should go up and build an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. So, David went up at the word of Gad, which he spoke in the name of the Lord."

I'm going to skip over some of this section. That's the main section. David now is faced with the Angel of the Lord, going to bring judgment upon them. And David has to perform the sacrifices and so on to show his obedience now to God, and that's what he does.

One more: the Angel of the Lord and the Lord are two different persons. Zachariah 1:12-13: "Then the Angel of the Lord answered and said, 'O Lord of Hosts, how long will You have no compassion for Jerusalem and the cities of Judah with which You has been indignant these 70 years?'" The 70 years of punishment upon Israel were now coming to an end. They'd been enslaved captives in Babylon. This was because, for 490 years, the Jews would not observe the sabbatical seventh year. God had said, "You will let the land rest. You'll let it rejuvenate itself. I'll give you twice the crops in the sixth year that'll carry you through. You won't have to work the seventh year." They thought they could make more money, and enrich themselves by working the land the seventh year also. 490 years had gone by without a sabbatical year being observed. Now, God said, "I'm going to take all those 70 years at once. The land is going to get its rest. And you guys are going to go and find yourselves as slaves in Babylon." That's the background of this.

Now the time is over, and of all things, the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ speaks to His Father, the Lord: "How long are we going to continue this indignation?' And the Lord answered the Angel who was speaking with me with comforting words. So, here you have again, as the passage goes on again, the Angel of the Lord speaking, and the Lord speaking to Him. So, the two are distinctively different.

So, here is a very clear, dramatic example that Jesus Christ did not just come on the scene at Bethlehem when He was born, but that He had been there as a member of the Godhead (a member of the Trinity), and that He was deity pre-incarnate before the time of Bethlehem. And this Angel of the Lord relationship is one of the great examples of the fact that He is the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ deity, but separate from the Father Himself.

Now, there are a few more points to conclude this confirmation that Jesus Christ is God. And it is important that that be very clear to you, again, not from what somebody has told you. This is the problem. I'm still amazed that people believe that what they're born in religiously, that's what's true. And they cannot grasp that unless it's in the Bible, it is not true at all. One of the films on the campout that I show the children was about John Wycliffe. John Wycliffe was called the morning star of the Reformation. He was the first glimmer of light of salvation by the grace of God. And he began preaching that kind of a doctrine. And the Catholic Church came down on him with both feet. And they finally condemned him to death. And the reason for it was that he was teaching people that what is not in the Scripture has been invented by man, or ecclesiastics, or church rulers and so on.

He met one woman on the way. And she was in great turmoil because she'd had a little child die. And her priest told her that children who die without being baptized, as did hurt a little boy (he was not sprinkled, which isn't baptism anyhow), but he had not received the official baptism of the church, because the father was too poor to pay the price that was required for the baptism, at which John Wycliffe really exploded. But she said, "And now the priest has told me that my little child is out there floating around as a firefly, which is one of the things they taught him in the middle ages – that these unbaptized children are in limbo, neither heaven nor hell, and he's out there and is a firefighter: "And every time I see one I think maybe that's my child." Well, what if you stomp a firefly? That sounds like reincarnation, doesn't it? Whose idea do you think that is? That's the devil himself. And Wycliffe comes to her and says, "Madam, I have lived a long time. I've spent my whole life studying the Bible, and I know it well, and I can assure you that there is no such thing in Scripture." And he just comforted this lady, and dried the tears, and brought the joy to her heart.

Then, what does he do? He follows up consistently. And it was so impressive to the kids, because I had a chance, as we discussed this afterwards – this doctoral principal. He goes to David, and said, "David with an act of immorality, you conceived the child with Bathsheba." And when the child was born, he was deadly sick. And David pled with God to let this child live. And Wycliffe is explaining all this to the lady. And the servants were trying to get David to eat something, and to change his clothes, and to wash up, and he wouldn't. And finally, the baby dies. They give him the word, and he orders some new clothing; washes up; and, orders a meal. And the servants say, "We don't understand this. When the child was alive, you would not do anything but grieve, and you would not eat. But now the child is dead, and you should be grieving, but instead now you're eating; you're washed up; and, you've changed clothes." And David makes that dramatic statement: "He cannot come to me, but I shall go to him." Who is David? The man after God's own heart. Where was David going to go in eternity? To heaven. Where was the baby? In heaven.

Well, one of our kids caught on very quickly – all these aborted children are in heaven. That's one silver lining. Many of their mothers will be in the lake of fire for all eternity. But the grace of God covers the child before his age of accountability, when he can make that choice.

So, it is the Word of God that has the answers that guide us for what we believe. And Wycliffe did a great job of making that clear – that the Bible is where it's all at.

Well, the church decided to finish Wycliffe off. And he had the bad taste (would you believe it?) to die on them? He died on them before they could execute him. So, they buried him. But what he taught kept getting spread around. John Huss of Bohemia started reading what Wycliffe had taught. And it was Huss that then caught the vision of justification by faith. That was a hundred years before Martin Luther. And when he went to the Pope to discuss this, as they made Wycliffe do, they let Wycliffe go back to his home. But Huss, they double-crossed him, and they killed him. And they burned him at the state. A hundred years later, Martin Luther was accused of being of Hussite because he was teaching the same thing. And Huss had gotten it back from Wycliffe.

Well, finally the Roman Catholic Church said, "This is enough. John Wycliffe is being made a hero, and out to be a man of God." So, on the movie, (and I'm glad they showed this), they dug up John Wycliffe's bones. That's how the movie opened – with all these shovels digging in the dirt, pulling out these big pieces of bone. And they had created a fire, and they burned his bones to ashes. And there's a river by there called River Swift, and they threw his ashes on the River Swift. And the film made the point that the ashes spread to several rivers. And they gave the chain of where that thing went out to the ocean and covered the world. And the message of Wycliffe symbolically covered the world in time, just like did his ashes. Naturally. Wycliffe was very disappointed. He sat in heaven, and saw his bones being burned. It crushed the poor guy. . . But what a travesty. All for what? Because he said, "This book (the Bible) – that's where it's at. So we learned about who Christ is, not from some guesswork, but from the Word of God. And it is important that we understand who He really was: Very God of Very God.

Our Father, we thank You so much 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. We pray that we shall develop a great sense of shame to do wrong. And we pray that, therefore, we have Paul's letter to the Colossians telling us that Jesus is God, and he had seen Him in His eternal glory.

Now we come to an interesting evidence that we will begin with next time. You've heard about the angel of Jehovah throughout the Old Testament. Who was the angel of Jehovah, and what does that tell us about Jesus of Nazareth?

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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