

References to the Deity of Christ in the Old Testament

By Rev. Arthur Allen

JEHOVAH is the transliteration of the most sacred word in the Hebrew language, and, of course, it is used for "GOD." The Hebrew scribes wrote it so that it could not be pronounced, the English letters forming the word would be: JHVH=JEHOVAH. There is also another Hebrew word used for God, and it is also translated in the English, JEHOVAH, the word is ADHONAI. There is yet another Hebrew word for God, ELOHIM, and it is generally translated God.

In the Greek New Testament the Hebrew words, JHVH=JEHOVAH, and ADHONAI are translated by the Greek word KUIPIOS, and we translate Kupios in our New Testament by the word LORD.

In Genesis 16:7, we have the record of the angel of the Lord appearing unto Hagar, after she had fled from her mistress Sarai: "And the Angel of the Lord found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way of Shur," and in the 13th verse we read, "And she called the name of the Lord (JHVH=JEHOVAH) that spake unto her, Thou God seest me." Hagar calls the Angel that spoke unto her JEHOVAH. In the 10th verse, the Angel of the Lord promised to do what JEHOVAH alone could do. "And the Angel of the Lord said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude."

In the 22nd chapter of Genesis, God commands Abraham to offer up Isaac as a sacrifice, and in the 11th verse we read that. "The Angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, "Here am I," verse 12, "And he said: Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me." It is clear from this passage that the Angel of the Lord identifies Himself with JEHOVAH. "And the Angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time. And said, By Myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son" (verses 15, 16). Here we have God, JEHOVAH, and the Angel of the Lord, names given to one person; and the blessings in verses 17, 18 are given in the name of the Angel of the Lord. When Jacob lay down to sleep in Bethel, he dreamed a dream that is recorded in the 28th chapter of Genesis: "And the Lord spake unto Jacob saying, "I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed." Here we have a re-statement of the promise given to Abraham by the Angel of the Lord.

In Exodus, chapter 3, we read of Moses being arrested by a great sight, a bush that burned with fire and was not consumed; in verse 2 we read: "And the Angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of the bush." And after warning Moses that the ground upon which he stood was holy, the Angel of the Lord (JEHOVAH) said: "I am the God of thy father Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God" (verse 6). We could not have a clearer statement that the Angel of the Lord (JEHOVAH) is identical with JEHOVAH.

When we speak of the Angel of the Lord and JEHOVAH as being identical, we mean that they are identical in essence, equal in power and glory, or, as the Shorter Catechism puts it (Answer 6): "There are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory." The Angel of the Lord (JEHOVAH) and JEHOVAH are two distinct persons, but of the same substance.

The distinction of persons is brought out more forcefully in the 23rd chapter of Exodus. "Behold, I send an angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of Him, and obey His voice, provoke Him not; for He will not pardon your transgressions; for my name is in Him." The Apostle Paul, writing to the Corinthians, identifies "the

Angel of the Lord" as Christ. "For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ." (1st Cor. 10: 4).

The glory of the Lord of Hosts is described in the 6th chapter of Isaiah. The temple was ablaze with the glory of God, with the seraphims in attendance crying., "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory" (v. 3). What Isaiah saw was the glory of Christ, the Messiah; this is clear from the Apostle John's application of the words in verse 10 to Jesus Christ (see John 12: 40), and the apostle continues: "These things said Isaiah when he saw His glory and spake of Him" (verse 41). This verse presents us with a distinct reference to God, the Son. Birks, commenting on Isaiah's vision, makes the following remarks: "The lofty throne answers to the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies. There He sat in kingly majesty, who "covereth Himself with light as with a garment" and the skirts of this robe of dazzling light "filled the temple." The person seen, as St. John declares, is the Son of God, the Eternal Word, by whom alone the Father is revealed."

If we turn to Isaiah, chapter 45:21, we read: "Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? Have not I the Lord? and there is no God else beside me: a just God and a Saviour: there is none beside me. Look unto Me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by Myself, the word is gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return. That unto Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear" (verses 22, 23). The Apostle Paul, writing to the Philippians, applies these words to the Lord Jesus Christ: "That at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

In the book of Joel we find this prophecy: "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered." (Joel 2:32). In the Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 2, Peter calls attention to the fulfilment of this prophecy, verse 16: "And this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel" and in verse 21, Peter quotes Joel 2: 32, "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

It would take up more time than is available to comment on the outstanding texts that refer to the Deity of Christ, so, after a brief reference to the Psalms, we shall give a number of texts from the Old Testament, which, studied in the light of what has already been said, and by the illumination of the Holy Spirit, will reveal Jesus Christ as JEHOVAH, the Messiah, the centre of all history, to the glory of God the Father.

The Deity of Christ Declared in the Psalms

Dr. Benjamin B. Warfield, speaking of Professor E. W. Hengstenberg, said: "He was one of the most searching expounders of the Scriptures that God has yet given His Church." Dr. Hengstenberg writes: "A human king (and all the strictly Messianic Psalms have to do with the Messiah as a king), even of the most glorious description, could never accomplish what the idea of the Kingdom of God imperiously requires, and what had been promised even in the first announcements respecting Messiah, namely, the bringing of the nations into obedience, blessing all the families of the earth, and acquiring the sovereignty of the world. In Psalm 2:12, the Messiah is presented simpliciter (without comment) as the Son of God, as He, confidence in whom brings salvation, whose wrath is perdition. In Psalms 45:6-7, He is named God Elohim. In Psalms 72:5, 7, 17, eternity of dominion is ascribed to Him. In Psalm 110:1, He at last appears as the Lord of the community of saints and of David himself, sitting at the right hand of the Almighty, and installed in the full enjoyment of Divine authority over heaven and earth" (*Princeton Review*, 1916).

William Binnie, in his work on the Psalms, writes: "The truth is that, if a man rejects the eternal Godhead of Christ, he must either lay aside the Psalms or sing them with bated breath. The Messiah

whom they celebrate is fairer than the sons of men, one whom the people will praise forever and ever - Psalm 45:2, 17. The ancient Jews understood the particular Psalms now quoted to refer to Messiah; and no one who heartily believes in the inspiration of the Psalter will be at loss to discern in it more testimony to the proper Divinity of the Hope of Israel than could well have been discovered before His incarnation and death lighted up so many dark places of the ancient Scriptures. It will be sufficient for our purpose to indicate a single example. The coming of Jehovah to establish a reign of righteousness in all the earth is exultingly announced in several lofty Psalms. It may be doubted, indeed, whether the ancient Jews were able to link these to the person of Messiah; but we are enabled to do it, and have good ground to know that it was of Him that the Spirit spoke in them from the first. The announcement is thus made in the Ninety-sixth Psalm:

"Let the heavens rejoice and let the earth be glad;
 Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof;
 Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein;
 Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy.
 Before Jehovah: for He cometh, for He cometh to judge the earth:
 He shall judge the world with righteousness,
 And the peoples with His faithfulness."

We know whose advent this is. No Christian can doubt that the proper response to the announcement is that furnished by the Book of Revelation, "Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus."

The Lord Jesus Christ, in His final interview with His disciples before His ascension said unto them: "These are the words which I spoke unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning Me." (Luke 24:44). In the 45th Psalm we read from verse 6:

"Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever:
 The sceptre of Thy kingdom is a right sceptre.
 Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness:
 Therefore, God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

The above verses are quoted in Hebrews 1:8, following the words "But; unto the Son, he saith. Thus we have the Deity of Christ declared by the choirs of Israel in their worship. It was Christ Who was anointed with the oil of gladness, and in the Psalm He is distinctly called God. "Thy throne, O God, and again, "God, even thy God, hath anointed thee. We must not confuse the anointing with the descending of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove at His baptism by John, and for clearness of expression we quote from Augustine: "Neither truly was Christ anointed with the Holy Spirit then when it descended upon Him as a dove at His baptism; for then He condescended to bear the figure of His body, that is, the Church, in which they that are baptised receive the Holy Spirit. But He must be understood to be anointed with that mystic and invisible unction then when the Word of the Lord was made flesh, that is, when the human nature, without any preceding merit of good works, was united to God, the Word, in the Virgin's womb, so as to become one person with Him. For this reason we confess Him to be born of the Holy Spirit, and the Virgin Mary."

We make mention of the baptism of Jesus by John here; later we shall have reason to return to it. We wish to avoid any confusion between the anointing and the baptism.

The title, "Angel of Jehovah," is used in the following texts:

Genesis 16:7, 9, 10, 11.

Genesis 22:11, 15.

Exodus 3: 2.

Numbers 22:22, 23, 24, 26, 31, 32, 34, 35.

Judges 2:1, 4.

Judges 5:23.
Judges 13:3, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21.
1 Kings 19:7.
2 Kings 1:15.
2 Kings 19:35.
1 Chronicles 21:16, 30.
Isaiah 37:36.
Zechariah 1:11, 12.
Zechariah 3:1, 6.
Zechariah 12:8. "My (His) Angel."
Genesis 24:7, 40.
Exodus 23:23.
Malachi 3:1.

References to Christ in the Book of Isaiah:-

7:14.
9:2, 6, 7.
11:1-10.
35:5-10 (see Matthew 11:4, 5).
42:1-7.
49:6.
52:13-15.
53 - whole chapter.
