

## MORE THAN ONE ARCHANGEL? - alias WHO IS “THE ANGEL OF THE LORD”?

It's time to revise many apocryphal “Christmas cards” (*sic*)! According to Holy Scripture, there are not several archangels all of whom are creatures - but only one Archangel alias Leader of the created angels. And that Archangel is the uncreated God the Son Himself.

‘The Angel of the Lord’ is the pre-incarnate Second Person of the Trinity. This is the Christ-exalting doctrine of the **infallible Word of God**. See Genesis 18:2 to 19:27 & 32:24-30; Exodus 3:2-14; 13:21f; 19:3 to 20:19; Joshua 5:13-15f; Isaiah 63:8-13f; Daniel 3:25; 7:13f; 12:1f; Zachariah. 3:1; Malachi 3:1 & 4:2 *cf.* Acts 7:30-33 & First Corinthians 10:1-4 & Galatians 3:19.

It seems the Ante-Nicene Fathers agree. Thus the Latin Church's Irenaeus observes in *Against Heresies* IV:10:1 regarding Moses that “the Son of God is implanted everywhere throughout his writings - at one time, indeed, speaking with Abraham when about to eat with him; at another time...bringing down judgment upon the Sodomites [Genesis 18:2-33 & 19:1-27]; and again when He becomes visible and directs Jacob on his journey [Genesis 31:11 & 32:24-30], and speaks with Moses from the bush [Exodus 3:2-4].” Also Tertullian in his *Against Marcion* (III:9:1) says that “Christ...did Himself...in...the flesh appear to Abraham [Genesis 18:2 to 19:27].”

Also the Greek Father Eusebius in his *Church History* I:2:1-13 remarked: “In Christ, there is a twofold nature.... Who, beside the Father, could clearly understand the Light Who was before the world - the intellectual and essential Wisdom Who existed before the ages; the living Word Who was in the beginning with the Father; and Who was God?....

“The Lord God...appeared as a common man to Abraham while he was sitting at the oak of Mamre [Genesis 18:1f]. And he, immediately falling down, although he saw a man with his eyes, nevertheless worshipped Him as God and sacrificed to Him as Lord and confessed that he was not ignorant of His identity when he uttered the words: ‘Lord, the Judge of all the earth, will You not execute righteous judgment?’ [Genesis 18:25]....

“Moses most clearly proclaims him...Lord...when he says: ‘The Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord’ [Genesis 19:24]. The divine Scripture also calls Him ‘God’ - when He appeared again to Jacob in the form of a man.... Therefore also Jacob called the name of that place ‘Vision of God’ - saying: ‘For I have seen God face to face’ [Genesis 32:28-30]....

“You will perceive also...that this was None Other than He Who talked with Moses...and said to him: ‘I am the God of your fathers!’ [Exodus 3:2-6].... Also Joshua the successor of Moses calls Him, as Leader of the heavenly angels and...rule over all, ‘Captain of the host of the Lord’ - although he did not see Him otherwise than again in the form and appearance of a man [Joshua 5:13-15].” Also see, to the same effect, the A.D. 165 Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho* (62).

Even after the A.D. 325 Council of Nicaea, at least for a while Augustine too seems to have held this view. Also the A.D. 450 Church Father Theodoret of Cyrrhus agreed with it. Theodoret's words (*in Exodum* 3) are: “The whole passage shows that it was God Who appeared to him [Moses].

But he called Him an 'angel' [alias a 'messenger'] in order to let us know that it was not God the Father Whom he saw - for whose 'angel' could the Father be? - but the Only-begotten Son, the Angel of great Counsel" alias Christ as the 'Angel' or Messenger of the Covenant in Malachi 3:2.

It was only with and after 'Pope' (?) Gregory the Great (who died in 604), that later Scholastics such as Thomas Aquinas systematized an alternative view. Thus it became the view of the mediaeval **Deformed** Church that 'The Angel of the Lord' was merely a created archangel called Michael - and not the divine Michael-Christ as the one and only Archangel and uncreated Leader of all created angels (as in Daniel 12:1, First Thessalonians 4:16, Jude 9 and Revelation 12:7f).

So the dominant **Pre-Mediaeval** view was that the Second Person of the Triune God Himself is 'The Angel of the Lord' mentioned in infallible Holy Scripture. This mainline traditional view of the Early Church was rediscovered by the **Protestant Reformation** and stressed also by Calvin (and later by Matthew Henry, Haevernick, Keil, Delitzsch, and Hengstenberg, *etc.*).

Rightly did Cincinnati's Lane Theological Seminary's Church History Professor Rev. Dr. A.C. McGiffert then comment in the Eerdmans edition of the *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* on Eusebius's *Church History* (at its I:2:8): 'Eusebius accepts the common view of the early Church that the theophanies of the Old Testament were Christophanies; that is, appearances of the Second Person of the Trinity. [The A.D. 400f] Augustine seems to have been the first of the Fathers to take a different view, maintaining that such Christophanies were not consistent with the identity of essence between Father and Son - and that the Scriptures themselves teach that it was not the *Logos* but an angel that appeared to the Old Testament worthies on various occasions (compare *De Trinitate* III:2). Augustine's opinion was widely adopted [in the subsequent **Romish phase** of the **Deformed Church**], but in modern times [since the **Protestant Reformation** of the Deformed Church] the earlier view which Eusebius represents, has been the prevailing one. See Hodge's *Systematic Theology* I:490 and Lange's article *Theophany* in Herzog."

Even the angelodoulic Roman Catholic website <http://ic.net/~erasmus/RAZ16.HTMT/> (Angels and Demons) says that the ancient view that God the Son is 'The Angel of the Lord' - while 'not common in Catholic circles' - certainly 'is not heretical.' The *Catholic Bible Encyclopedia* too states: 'It will be seen that this 'Angel of the Lord' often speaks and acts as Yahweh Himself.'

Also Pre-Christian Judaism agrees. This is reflected in its *Targum* on Genesis 32:25; its *Midrash* on Exodus 18:5; its *Book of Jubilees* 1:27 & 2:1; and its *Apocalypse of Moses* 1f.

Great then is the culpability of the Judaistic leaders who rejected the Angel of the Lord and God's Angel of the Covenant - when He became flesh and dwelt among them! Great too is the culpability of modern Churchfolk who would attribute to mere created angels and alleged archangels - that which our Sole Archangel, Michael the Son of God, claims solely for Himself! *Mi ka 'El* means: 'Who is like God?' Who indeed? - save he Who **is** God. *Post tenebras - fiat Lux!*

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