

Message Eleven

**The Angel of Jehovah
for His People to Take Possession
of the Promised Land**

Scripture Reading: Exo. 23:20-33

- I. **The title *the Angel of Jehovah* in Exodus 3:2 refers mainly to Christ, the Son of God, as the One sent by God (cf. John 8:42) to save His people from their situation of suffering (cf. Judg. 6:12-22; 13:3-22):**
 - A. According to Exodus 3:2 and 6, the Angel of Jehovah, the sent One, was Jehovah Himself, the sending One (cf. Zech. 2:6-11), and Jehovah is the Triune God (Exo. 3:6, 15).
 - B. For the purpose of calling and sending Moses, God, the sending One, appeared to him as the sent One—cf. John 20:21; Acts 7:30-31.
- II. **“The Angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them”—Exo. 14:19:**
 - A. The Angel of God in Exodus 14:19 is the Angel of Jehovah who called Moses; the Angel of Jehovah is Christ as God’s sent One—3:2, 4.
 - B. The fact that God’s sent One went before the camp of Israel indicates that Christ was the One who was leading the people.
 - C. When the Angel of God moved, the pillar moved also, showing that the Angel and the pillar were one; Christ and the leading Spirit cannot be separated—John 14:17-20; 16:13; 2 Cor. 3:17; Rev. 5:6.
- III. **The Angel of Jehovah in Judges 2:1 is God Himself in His Divine Trinity serving His elect as a Servant (cf. Heb. 1:14):**
 - A. The embodiment of the Triune God is Christ, and Christ is the Angel of Jehovah, who took care of Israel as Jehovah in action in the Old Testament.
 - B. For Christ to be the Angel of Jehovah means that God has appointed and commissioned Himself in His Divine Trinity to act in caring for His people.
 - C. Because Israel did not act as a proper wife, the very Jehovah who was the Husband, the Head, and the King of Israel became a Servant to His wife:

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1. He came to her not as a Husband, Head, or King but as the Angel of Jehovah, who was sent by Jehovah—Zech. 2:9-11.
2. Since Israel did not regard Jehovah as the Head, He became a Servant to serve her; His word to Israel in Judges 2:1-3 was not a rebuke or a command but the admonition of a servant.

IV. Christ is the Angel of the covenant in Malachi 3:1:

- A. Christ's coming suddenly as the Angel of the covenant will be to execute upon Israel the covenant that He enacted through His death—Matt. 26:28.
- B. In His first coming Christ came in the way of an Angel, a serving one (cf. Heb. 1:14), to serve God in forming the new testament (Mark 10:45).
- C. When He established His table on the night in which He was betrayed, He enacted the new covenant (Luke 22:20), in which God is obligated to forgive our sins and to dispense Himself into our being to be our life, our law of life, and our everything as our inward content that we may live Him (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:8-12).
- D. As the Angel of the covenant, Christ in resurrection executes the new covenant as its surety, making it real to us by assuring us that our sins have been forgiven and by dispensing the riches of the covenanted Triune God into us—7:22; Jer. 31:31-34.

V. In the book of Revelation Christ is another Angel in His work in the divine administration—7:2; 8:3; 10:1, 5, 9; 18:1:

- A. In the book of Revelation He is called "another Angel," the unique, special Angel, because He is the One sent by God to carry out His economy.
- B. As another Angel, Christ takes care of God's people, both the sons of Israel and the believers:
 1. In 7:2-8 He takes care of the chosen remnant of Israel and is unveiled as another Angel in relation to "a hundred and forty-four thousand, sealed out of every tribe of the sons of Israel"—v. 4.
 2. In His work as another Angel, Christ takes care of the believers, the redeemed saints of the church, preserving them throughout all the tribulations—vv. 9-17.

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3. Christ as God's Angel controls the whole universe, directing the other angels to carry out God's judgment upon the earth—vv. 2-3.
 - C. In 8:3-5 Christ as another Angel executes God's administration over the earth by ministering to God as the High Priest with the prayers of His saints:
 1. The incense altar (the golden altar) is the executing center of God's administration.
 2. The golden censer signifies the prayers of the saints (5:8), and the incense signifies Christ with all His merit to be added to the saints' prayers.
 3. When the prayers of the saints ascend to God with the incense of Christ, God carries out His administration—8:5:
 - a. God's administration needs the saints' prayers, which are their response to Christ's heavenly ministry; as we pray, He administers, and as He administers, we pray.
 - b. Christ first offers our prayers to God and then pours out God's answers; the pouring out of God's answers to our prayers equals God's universal administration.
 - D. In 10:1-2 Christ comes as another Angel to take possession of the sea and the land:
 1. His having one foot on the sea and the other on the land signifies that He is coming to take possession of the whole earth—v. 2b.
 2. Although the earth and the sea have been usurped by God's enemy, one day Christ will no longer tolerate this usurpation, and He will come to claim His rightful inheritance—Psa. 2:8; 24:1.
 - E. In His work as another Angel, Christ will come to declare God's judgment over Babylon the Great and to appear in glory to make the whole earth the kingdom of God—Rev. 18:1-2; 11:15.
- VI. "I am now sending an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared"—Exo. 23:20, cf. vv. 21-33:**
- A. That the decree of the law concludes with a portion regarding the Angel and the good land indicates that the purpose of the decree of the law is that those who received the law would enter into the good land—vv. 20-33.

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- B. The Angel of Jehovah typifies Christ as the One sent by God to keep His people in the way and to bring them into the good land, and the good land typifies Christ in His all-inclusiveness as the allotted portion of God's people—Deut. 8:7; Col. 1:12.
- C. Thus, Christ as the sent One brings God's people into Himself as the good land; the goal in God's purpose is to bring His people into the full enjoyment of Christ as the all-inclusive land.
- D. Regarding the Angel of Jehovah, Exodus 23:21 says, "My name is in Him"; the name of Jehovah is identical to His person, indicating that the Angel of Jehovah is Jehovah Himself.
- E. Christ, the sent One of God, speaks for God within us; if we would take possession of Him, we must learn to obey His voice; that the Angel's voice was Jehovah's speaking proves strongly that the Angel and Jehovah are one—vv. 21-22.
- F. The various pagan tribes that occupied the land signify the different aspects of our natural life—v. 23:
 - 1. The gods (idols) of the pagan tribes (v. 24), with the demons behind them (cf. 1 Cor. 10:20), represent the spiritual forces of evil (Eph. 6:12).
 - 2. Behind our natural life are the forces of evil (cf. Matt. 16:23), who utilize, manipulate, and direct the aspects of our natural life to frustrate us from taking possession of the all-inclusive Christ and enjoying His riches.
 - 3. History shows that the pagan tribes in the land were the source of Israel's sin against God (cf. Exo. 23:33); this indicates that our natural life is the source of our sins.
 - 4. In the sight of God, those who live according to the natural life are sinning continually, whether they do good or evil; because the natural life frustrates us from possessing Christ and enjoying Him, we must hate it (Luke 14:26) and, as we grow in Christ, be willing to drive it out.
- G. The blessings in Exodus 23:25-26 signify spiritually that God will give us bread (the Word—Matt. 4:4) to nourish us and water (the Spirit—John 7:37-39) to satisfy us, will cause us to grow and be fruitful, and will take away our sicknesses that we would not suffer a premature death (cf. 1 Cor. 11:30; 1 John 5:16) but would grow in the divine life to maturity, to full age (Eph. 4:13; Col. 1:28), in order to gain the all-inclusive Christ as our possession for our enjoyment (Phil. 3:8).

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- H. God will not cut off our natural life, signified by the pagan tribes, all at once, because this would leave us inwardly vacant and in danger of being taken over by demons, signified by the animals of the field—Exo. 23:29; cf. Matt. 12:43-45:
 - 1. God cuts off our natural life gradually, little by little, according to the degree of our growth in the divine life—Exo. 23:30; cf. Col. 2:19.
 - 2. The more Christ increases in us, the more He will replace our natural life.
- I. “I will set your border from the Red Sea even to the sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness to the River; for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you shall drive them out from before you”—Exo. 23:31:
 - 1. The seas and the river in verse 31 signify the waters of death, and the wilderness signifies barrenness.
 - 2. That the promised land, an elevated land full of life and the abundance of fruit (Deut. 8:7-8), was surrounded by water and wilderness indicates that outside of Christ, the reality of the good land, there is nothing but death and barrenness.
 - 3. Making a covenant with the pagan tribes signifies compromising with, tolerating, our natural life—Exo. 23:32.
 - 4. God promised to drive out the pagan tribes, but God’s people had to cooperate with Him by taking the initiative in destroying them; the more Christ increases in us, the more we will be able to cooperate with God in driving out the natural life—vv. 29-33; cf. Rom. 8:13; Gal. 5:24; Col. 3:5; Phil. 2:12-13; 1 Sam. 15:9, 15, 23 and footnotes.