**Jacob and the Angel of Yahweh**

It is in Jacob’s story that we first find a great focus on “the Angel of Yahweh”. Below are encounters Jacob had with the Angel of Yahweh and words of Jacob and other Scriptures giving light to the records and showing that it was indeed the Angel of Yahweh that Jacob was having direct relations with.

**A. In a Dream At Bethel**

Jacob first saw the Angel of Yahweh in his stairway dream at Bethel [Gen 28:12-15]

1. Although the account itself does not refer to the Yahweh Jacob saw as the Angel of Yahweh we learn that he is later on.
2. In this account, the Angel of Yahweh calls himself “Yahweh”, “I am Yahweh, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac.” [Gen 28:13].
3. And in this dream, the Angel of Yahweh speaks as God, the God of Abraham and of Isaac making promise to Jacob [Gen 28:13-15].
4. An often missed point
   1. It is not an often recognized fact that Jacob anointed the Angel of Yahweh who appeared and spoke to him in the Stairway dream at Bethel.
   2. When Jacob anointed the Rock he had rested on [Gen 28:18], he was really anointing Yahweh, the Angel Yahweh he had just seen and heard in his dream. The Rock that Jacob anointed was representative of the Angel of Yahweh—Jacob was anointing Yahweh. Jacob later refers to him as his Rock [Gen 49:24].
   3. In fact, this is the first person in Scriptures to be anointed *with oil*.

**B. In a Dream At Paddan Aram**

While in Paddan Aram, the Angel of Yahweh spoke in a dream to Jacob [Gen 31:11-13]

1. In this dream the Angel of God refers to himself as the “El of Bethel” where Jacob anointed a Pillar and made a vow. In other words he is referring himself as the Yahweh that Jacob saw in his dream at the top of the stairway.

**C. Wrestling At Peniel**

Jacob had a physical encounter with the Angel of Yahweh at Peniel as a man who wrestled with him till day break [Gen 32:24-30].

1. The man calls himself “God” [Gen 32:28] and Jacob as well calls him “God” [Gen 32:30]
2. The man name’s Jacob Israel and blesses him [Gen 32:28-29]
3. The Prophet Hosea writes of this encounter [Hos 12:3-5] from him we learn that
   1. The man with whom Jacob wrestled was an angel [Hos 12:4], the Angel who bears the Name of Yahweh, the Angel *of Yahweh* [Exo 23:20-21]
   2. The God-man’s name, according to Hosea, is “Yahweh,” “Yahweh Elohim Sabaoth” [Hos 12:5]
   3. This Angel was the One who later appeared to Jacob at Bethel after he had left Laban’s house [Hos 12:4 *cf.,* Gen 35:9-13]
   4. Hosea confirms that this man is God [Hos 12:3]
   5. Isaiah also writes of the Angel of Yahweh’s Presence [Isa 63:9,11]
4. So, this man is the Angel of Yahweh, “God” and “Yahweh”.

**D. At Bethel for a Second Time**

Yahweh appeared Jacob again at Bethel where Jacob returned to fulfill his vow [Gen 35:9-13].

1. According to Hosea, this was the Angel of Yahweh appearing to Jacob at Bethel [Hos 12:4]
2. Prophet Hosea also confirms to us that this is the same man who had wrestled with Jacob till daybreak [Hos 12:3-4]. We have confirmation in the account for just as the Face/Presence of God had changed Jacob’s name to “Israel” at Peniel, so too Yahweh again renames Jacob “Israel” [Gen 35:10].
3. Some observations must be made
   1. **First**, His going up from Jacob after speaking with him [Gen 35:13] is the same as God did with Abraham when he made the Covenant of Circumcision with him [Gen 17:22].
      1. Therefore, it is through this angel that God made his covenant with Abraham. It was this Angel that Abraham as well had to relate with. He was God to Abraham.
      2. *This means that the One the Patriarchs saw was the Angel of Yahweh, the same person who appeared to Moses in the flames of the Burning Bush.*
   2. **Second**, the command to Jacob to be fruitful and increase in number is as God commanded Adam [Gen 1:28] and Noah [Gen 9:1,7].
      1. This points to the Angel as being the same person through whom God gave those commands to Adam and Noah.

**E. In Blessing Ephraim & Manasseh in Egypt**

Jacob, in blessing Ephraim and Manasseh, refers to the Angel whom he called “Peniel” *(or the face of Yahweh)*, as “the Shepherd who has delivered me from all harm” [Gen 48:15-16 *cf.,* Gen 31:11-13; Gen 49:22-25].

1. Clearly, Jacob has a specific angel in mind and is not thinking of angels in general.
2. The title of “Shepherd” which he gives this Angel connects back to his vow when he first has an encounter with Yahweh at Bethel.
   1. Now, protection and care—feeding, clothing—are the duties of a Shepherd towards his sheep.
   2. Therefore, when Jacob prays, “If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear…” [Gen 28:20], he is basically asking Yahweh, the One he saw in his stairway dream, to be his Shepherd.
   3. Yahweh is in fact the one who first makes the promise to Jacob that He would be his Shepherd, “I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land” [Gen 28:15]
   4. Now, since the One Jacob asked to be his Shepherd was the Yahweh he saw in his dream and who spoke to him, yet he calls his Shepherd “the Angel”, then it means that Jacob considered the One he had seen and heard at Bethel to be the Angel of Yahweh.
   5. In other words,
      1. Since Jacob’s Shepherd is the Yahweh of Bethel. And
      2. Sine Jacob’s calls his Shepherd “the Angel” *of Yahweh*. Then
      3. The Angel *of Yahweh* is the Yahweh of Bethel.
      4. It was the Angel of Yahweh that Jacob saw at Bethel.
   6. Something we can learn from this is that Jacob did not simply consider the Angel of Yahweh as delivering messages from Yahweh to him, but considers that he was personally involved in his life and family.
3. Isaiah calls the Angel of Yahweh’s Presence the Shepherd of Israel [Isa 63:11,7-14]
4. In reality, the office and role of “**Shepherd of Israel**” the same as “**Captain of the Hosts Yahweh**” *(i.e., Israel)* [Jos 5:14-15,12-15]. Consider 2Sa 5:2.

**F. In Blessing Joseph in Egypt**

1. In blessing Joseph, Jacob refers to the One whom he had earlier addressed as “the Angel” as the
   1. The Mighty One of Jacob [Gen 49:24]
   2. The Shepherd [Gen 49:24]
   3. The Rock of Israel [Gen 49:24]
   4. Jacob’s God *(your father’s God)* [Gen 49:25]
   5. Shaddai [Gen 49:25]
2. Since Jacob had earlier identified his Shepherd as the Angel of Yahweh, then these titles all apply to him.

**Conclusion**

For Jacob

1. The Angel of Yahweh is Yahweh,
2. The Angel of Yahweh is God,
3. To see this Angel is to see God—the Angel of Yahweh is the Face/Presence of God,
4. The Angel of Yahweh is Jacob’s Shepherd,
5. The Angel of Yahweh is above other angels of *Yahweh* God. We can see this from the fact that he stood at the top of the Stairway in Jacob’s dream at Bethel.
6. The Angel of Yahweh was symbolically anointed by Jacob.
7. The Angel of Yahweh is the One through whom God revealed himself to Abraham and Isaac and even the Noah and others before them.
8. Jacob so aware of this Angel and so cherished him that he blessed Joseph’s sons in the name of this angel, “…the Angel who has delivered me from all harm—may he bless these boys” [Gen 48:16]