

## The Trinity 302: Trinity – Patterns in the Testaments



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Brian K. McPherson and Scott McPherson

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### Trinity Addendum: Patterns in the Testaments

In our Trinity study we examined various passages in the Old Testament where God was depicted. One of the interests of that study was to go to passages where more than one Person was depicted, where both were identified or treated as God, and where both recognized their conscious distinction from each another. Another interest of that study was to identify the Person of God who appeared in various texts as the Word of God.

This aspect of our Trinity study was also covered in our History of Judaism study. In that study we saw that the Targums and other Jewish literature from the post-biblical period indicate that the Word of God was the person commonly understood to have interacted with pre-Mosaic patriarchal figures including Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (See History of Judaism Study for references.)

In Gen. 16:7-11, 21:17, 22:11-15, and 31:11 this person is identified as “the angel of God/the Lord (Yhwh).” Beginning in Exodus 3, the person whom Moses interacts with is identified as “the angel of the Lord (Yhwh).” Exodus 14:19 uses the synonymous term “the angel of God.” This is the figure who interacts with Moses and the Israelites from before they leave Egypt through their travels in the wilderness. (This is also the main figure that Balaam interacts with in Numbers 22-24.) This figure is also identified in these texts simply as Yhwh or as the Rock. (For instance, we can compare Ex. 14:17-24 and Deuteronomy 32:3-4, 15, 18, 21 with 1 Cor. 10:1-9. In 1 Cor. 10:1-9, Paul refers to the Exodus events and identifies the pre-incarnate Word as the angel of the Lord/God who was in the cloud and the pillar of fire and who was called the Rock.)

However, in Exodus 23 and 33:1-2 and 12-15, the Word tells Moses that an angel who is his presence and who has his name in him will go with the Israelites as they enter Promised Land and conquer its peoples. A comparison of biblical information helps us identify this “angel of the presence” of Exodus 23 and 33 as the Holy Spirit.

Below we will list several notes which chart related patterns that are biblically apparent regarding these issues and the persons of the Trinity and which help us identify the persons of the Word and the Holy Spirit in Old Testament texts.

**Note One:**

No man has seen God the Father, but the Word of God has testified to mankind about him (John 1:18, John 6:46). As the gospels explain, the incarnate Word spoke what he heard from the Father (John 14:24, 16:13-15). Likewise, the Holy Spirit would speak what he heard from the Word (John 14:26, 16:13-15). However, after his ascension, the Word would be in heaven and would “not be seen any more” until his return. During that time the Holy Spirit would testify of the Word (John 15:26, 16:7-15, Acts 1:9-11, Acts 3:21). This is why Revelation 19:10 states that the testimony of Jesus Christ is spirit of prophecy and why 1 Corinthians 14 speaks of prophecy as a teaching gift for building up the church. Likewise, in John, Jesus states that the Holy Spirit will speak what he hears and that which is Christ’s and that he will tell us about the future. These are the two types of activities associated with prophetic work of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament (again see Revelation and 1 Cor. 14:3-5, 19, 22-24, 29-33).

So, we see that after completing his redemptive work and giving us the new covenant the Word sends the Holy Spirit in his name (John 14:24-26) to be present among his people (John 16:7-15) during his absence. This directly parallels what we see in Exodus 23 and 33 where the Word (the angel of the Lord also identified as YHWH) redeems the people from bondage and gives them the covenant. He then tells Moses that he will send his angel who is his presence (the Holy Spirit) and who also has the name of YHWH God with them as they go into the Land (Exodus 23:20-23, Exodus 33:2, 12-16). (See also Matthew 28:19-20 where Jesus promises to be with the apostles as he promises to send them the Holy Spirit. Also compare the personal possessive connotation of “My angel” in the NKJV of Exodus 23:23, 32:34, 33:2 to a similar possessive in Revelation 22:16-17, which immediately refers to the Spirit, and also to Philippians 1:19, which uses the term “Spirit of Jesus Christ.”)

In summary, in the New Covenant, Jesus sends the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit keeps the church in remembrance of Jesus’ teachings, the Holy Spirit and Jesus are both “Comforters,” Jesus is present among his people through the Person of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps unexpectedly, each of these elements seems to have a potential counterpart when the Law of Moses was given.

**Note Two:**

“The angel of the presence” with the name of God goes with the people as they go to conquer the Promised Land. The entrance into and conquest of Canaanite Land begins in Joshua 6 with the destruction of Jericho. Just before this, in Joshua 5, Joshua encounters a figure identified in the text as “the captain of the host of the Lord” whom Joshua worships. The entire account parallels Moses’ encounter with the Word (as “the Angel of the Lord”) in Exodus 3, including Joshua being told to remove his sandals because the ground was holy. (Compare Exodus 3:5 with Joshua 5:15). The immediate appearance of the captain of the host of the Lord as the Israelites enter the Promised Land along with Joshua’s worship of him strongly indicate that this is “the Angel” who is God’s presence and who has God’s name that the Word previously promised Moses would accompany them in

their conquest of the land. Accordingly, the phrase “the Lord of hosts” begins to be used in Old Testament texts from this point forward in regular connection with God’s presence in the land among the people. We can rightly conclude that the phrases “the captain of the host of the Lord” and “the Lord of hosts” are synonymous with one another.

Similarly, beginning in the Book of Judges the Old Testament starts to use the term “the spirit of the Lord (Yhwh)” with great frequency in order to denote God’s empowering men to deliver Israel from and conquer the Canaanites. The terms “spirit of the Lord” and “spirit of God” are used with greater frequency (33 of 41 total combined uses) after the Israelites enter the Promised Land. This trend associates the Holy Spirit with the “Angel of the presence” mentioned in Exodus 23 and 33 who would be God’s presence among the people in the Promised Land.

Passages like 1 Samuel 16:13 and 2 Samuel 5:10 confirm that the terms “the Lord of hosts” and “the Spirit of the Lord” were both used to refer to the same person of the Trinity. In 1 Samuel 16:13 we are told that “the Spirit of the Lord” was upon David from the day of his anointing as king by Samuel the prophet. Likewise, 2 Samuel 5:10 states that when David was king “the Lord of hosts” was with David.

These manners of reference in the Old Testament provide confirmation that the Holy Spirit is the Person of God who was present among God’s people after the Word of God redeemed them from Egypt and gave them the Covenant. Similarly, in the New Testament it is the Holy Spirit who is sent to the apostles and early church as they go out into the world (John 16:7-15, Acts 1:8) declaring Christ’s redemptive work and the new covenant which he established.

**Note Three:**

The angel of the presence (Exodus 23:20-23, 33:2) with the name of God in him will not forgive the Israelites trespasses against him (Exodus 23:20-23). This may be conceptually familiar with the New Testament assertion that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven (Matthew 12:31, Eph. 4:30, Acts 7:51, 1 Thess. 5:19).

**Note Four:**

Moses was distinct from other prophets after him in that he received words plainly from the Word of God face to face (Ex. 33:11, Deuteronomy 5:4, 34:10, Numbers 12:5-8). As a general rule, the Israelite prophets received words from God by seeing the Word of God dimly as in a mirror, through visions, through angelic emissaries, and through hard to understand words (Numbers 12:5-8). Paul repeats this concept directly when he states that we currently prophecy in part and see dimly as in a mirror, but will see face to face (when Christ returns). This covers the period while the Word incarnate (Jesus Christ) remains in heaven (1 Cor. 13:9-12).

**Note Five:**

After the Exodus and after the Israelites enter the Promised Land, there are occasions when men (such as Joshua in Joshua 5:14-15, Gideon in Judges 6, Samson's parents in Judges 13, David and Jerusalem in 2 Samuel 24 and 1 Chronicles 21) are visited by a Person of God who is simply identified by the title "Angel of God/YHWH." Because of the timeframe this title could here be used to refer to the Holy Spirit, just as the New Testament also gives the title "Angel of God" to the Holy Spirit in recognition of his role after Christ's ascension and Pentecost. (See Acts 8:26 and 29 for an instance when the Holy Spirit is identified as the Angel of the Lord.)

However, biblical precedent uses "the Angel of the Lord" as a title for the pre-incarnate Word throughout the books of Moses beginning in Exodus. So, it is certainly possible that these encounters beginning in Joshua and Judges are occasions in which the Word (not the Holy Spirit) appears to people in the Promised Land. If this is the case, passages such as Numbers 12:5-8 might only pertain to prophetic or revelatory occasions and would, therefore, still allow for the pre-incarnate Word to actually visit men face to face in the form of the Angel of YHWH from time to time. Another possibility is that Numbers 12 isn't really describing a restriction regarding the number or content of visits from the Word of God at all, but merely denoting that only Moses had been visited by God in his fully glorious form. Consequently, Numbers 12 would merely present a limitation on the form of the Word of God's visitation, not the frequency or revelatory subject matter. (See Exodus 33:11-34:8 and Deuteronomy 34:10.) These explanations would fit well with the majority of the Old Testament prophets who commonly denote their reception of a vision or message from God with phrases equivalent to "the Word of the Lord came unto me."

In addition, the possibility that the term (or even the role) "Angel of God" could apply at different times to either the Person of the Word of God or the Person of the Holy Spirit also fits into Jesus' description in John 14. When speaking of his impending departure to the Father in John 14, in verse 16 Jesus promises to send "another Comforter" who will remain with his people on a more permanent basis. This phrase "another Comforter" is comprised of the Greek words "allos" (243) and "parakletos" (3875). "Parakletos" means "called to one's side or aid," but, perhaps more importantly on this point, "allos" means "another" which means that the Word was the first and the Holy Spirit is the second Person of God "called to" dwell among God's people.

**Note Six:**

Further explorations of the significance of the name of YHWH can be considered. For instance, Gen. 4:26 indicates that men first began to "call upon the name (08034) of the Lord (03068)" at the time of Seth's son Enoch. Genesis 3 and 4 present information that may be related to making intercession, prayer, and offerings before God on behalf of other men (even predecessors.) The phrase ("call upon the name of the Lord") is used in similar ways wherever it occurs in

Genesis. Genesis 12:8, 13:4, (possibly by comparison to others: 21:33,) and 26:25 all record instances of intercession, offering, and prayer. Other passages using the same phrasing and conveying the same idea include: 1 Kings 18:24 (Elijah with the prophets of Baal,) 1 Chron. 16:8 (David,) Psalm 99:6, 105:1, 116:13-17, Isaiah 12:4, Joel 2:32, Zephaniah 3:9, and Zechariah 3:9. See also Deuteronomy 18:5-7 where the concept of ministering to the name of the Lord is given as the task of the Levitical priests who stand before the Lord. (The same statement is applied also to the two candlesticks in Zechariah 4 and Revelation 11 which also involve work to rebuild the Temple. See also Deut. 10:8, 2 Chron. 29:11, Jeremiah 15:19, and also 1 Kings 18:15 where Elijah is said to stand before the Lord.) There is then an early biblical association of the name of the Lord with these tasks. (For a fuller discussion of these points please see section four of our “Priesthood and the Kinsman Redeemer” study.)

Related to this is Deuteronomy 12:5, 11, 21, 14:23-24, 16:2, 6, 11, and 26:2 which repeatedly assert that when the Jews entered into the Promised Land God would select one place to put his name and that that location alone was where the Jews could worship God. Likewise, the first commandment may be especially related to this in its prohibition against taking the name of the Lord in vain (Ex. 20:7, Deut. 5:11, Lev. 18:21, 19:12, 22:2, 32, 24:16, etc.) The angelic figure with the name of the Lord is said not to forgive rebellion (see discussion of Ex. 23 below.) This may parallel statements in Ex., Deut., and Lev. that the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

Later David and Solomon built the Temple at the location where the Lord placed his name, which was within the city of Jerusalem. 2 Chronicles 6 records the prayer of Solomon upon dedicating the Temple. The passage records that this was the place God had chosen and where God would hear the prayers of his people (see specifically verses 20-26) and where his eyes would watch. These same eyes are mentioned in relation to the Temple’s rebuilding in Zechariah 3:9 and 4:10. And they are presented in Revelation 4 and 5:6 as well. At the end of Solomon’s prayer fire comes down from heaven (2 Chron. 7:1-4) and offerings commence. Likewise, in 2 Chron. 7:11-15, God tells Solomon that he will do as Solomon had asked. The Book of Nehemiah (chapter 1) records a prayer after the Jews have returned from exile. The prayer is offered with an appeal in reference to Solomon’s prayer in 2 Chronicles 6. Psalm 74 also mentions the place where God has put his name as well as the defilement of the sanctuary there. Isaiah 18:7 and Ezekiel 43:7 speak similarly of the Temple as the place of God’s name. (See also Jeremiah 3:17.) Jeremiah 7:12-14 refers to Shiloh as the first place where God’s name was set before from the time of Joshua (Joshua 18:1, 8-10, 19:51, 22:12, Judges 21:12, 19, 1 Sam. 1:3, 3:21, 4:3-4) until the time of Eli (1 Sam. 4-7:1.) Later David moved the ark to Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6) and Solomon built the Temple there.

All of this connects quite well with Zechariah 1-2 where we have two persons of Yhwh presented in the unfolding events. The passage begins with Zechariah’s declaration that “the word of the Lord” came unto him (Zech 1:1 and 1:7). This is a possible reference to the Person of the Word of Yhwh. In this passage, the Lord

(Yhwh) speaks to Zechariah and tells him what to say to the people of Israel. In these instructions the Lord repeatedly tells Zechariah to declare what the Lord of Hosts says. In this way the Lord who speaks to Zechariah refers to the Lord of hosts in the third person suggesting a distinction between the Lord of hosts and the Lord who is speaking to Zechariah. The person who is speaking to Zechariah is also identified as the Angel of the Lord (Zech. 1:9-12). At times throughout the passage, the “Angel of the Lord” is referred to simply as the Lord (Zech. 1:19-21 and 2:1-6). In verses 11-12, the “Angel of the Lord” speaks to “the Lord of hosts” indicating again a distinction between the two figures. And finally, in Zechariah 3:1-2 we have “the Angel of the Lord” speaking of satan being rebuked by “the Lord who has chosen Jerusalem” whereas in verses 5-7 the figure identified as “the Angel of the Lord” himself makes reference to “the Lord of hosts.” If we follow the account, we can see that the interchangeability of the terminology can easily be understood to refer to the Word and the Holy Spirit with the Word being referred to as “the Angel of the Lord” (or sometimes just as “the Lord) and the Holy Spirit being referred to as “the Lord of hosts” or “the Lord who has chosen Jerusalem.”

The latter term speaks of the Lord of hosts dwelling in Jerusalem, the place where God chose for his name to dwell. Passages like Deuteronomy 12:5-14, 14:23-25, and 16:2-7 (just to name a few) speak of this future day in which the Lord would choose a particular location in the promised land where His name would dwell and where they would offer their sacrifices. One likely scenario is that these statements in Deuteronomy were stated by the Person of God known as the Word of God describing how Jerusalem would be chosen, not by the Word, but by the Angel of God’s Presence who bears God’s name and would accompany the Israelites into the Promised Land in Exodus 23 and 33. As we have seen, the phrase “Lord of hosts” (“Lord of the Sabaoth”) is introduced in Joshua 5 as the Israelites enter the Promised Land. And this is why it is the Lord of hosts who is identified as the figure who has chosen Jerusalem (Zechariah 1:12-17, 8:3-4, 22) and who dwells in Jerusalem and is concerned about the Temple (Isaiah 3:1, 24:23, 31:5, 37:32, Jer. 26:18, 27:18-21, 29:4.)

#### **Note Seven:**

Additionally, the Lord of hosts is featured in Zechariah as the speaker of prophecies pertaining to the rebuilding of the Temple. Zechariah 1 also has the Lord of hosts jealous for Jerusalem. In the Pentateuch it is said that the name of the Lord is jealous (Ex. 34:14) and in Zechariah that the Lord of hosts is jealous for Jerusalem. These may relate to New Testament passages wherein the saints are the Temple of the Holy Spirit and iterations about the Lord being jealous. There is interplay between the terms “spirit of the Lord” and “the Lord of hosts” in 1 Sam. 16:13 and 2 Samuel 5:10 which seem to speak of the same figure. Likewise, there may be correspondences between the Word of Yhwh who was with Moses and the Israelites in the wilderness, visited them in the tabernacle, and established the Covenant of Moses and the Word incarnate as Jesus who tabernacle among his people Israel and gave a new covenant. Similar parallels may exist between the fact that the angel of the presence (the Holy Spirit) is

associated with a more permanent dwelling in Jerusalem among God's people in the Promised Land and the concept of Christians as the Temple of the HS in the New Testament.