

# A Conversation with God

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As recorded in the Bible, there have been many occasions when human beings have conversed with God. However, as Holy Scripture also confirms, there are many gods (I Cor. 8:5). Consequently, it is important to identify which god is involved in any given conversation. For instance, at one stage of the creative account there was a discussion involving at least two gods, with the possibility that other gods might have been aware of, or involved in, this activity as well.

Then God (SHD 430; *Elohim* – plural word, which can be used for rulers, judges, divine ones, angels, gods; inclusive of the Almighty God) said, 'Let **Us** make man in **Our** image, according to **Our** likeness...' (Gen. 1:26a; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted).

Also, the word "Lord" can be used to describe Almighty God, Jesus Christ, or an angel as the following examples confirm.

The **Lord** (Almighty) said unto my **Lord** (Jesus Christ), 'Sit at My right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool.' (Ps. 110:1; cf. Mt. 22:44; Mk. 12:36; 16:19; Lk. 20:42-43; Ac. 2:34-35; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:13; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

And he (Lot) said, 'Here now, my **lords** (two angels), please turn in to your servant's house...' (Gen. 19:2a; cf. 19:18; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added)

As these examples show, it is important to understand the context in which the words "god", "gods", "lord", or "lords" are used. Otherwise, it will be difficult to correctly identify

the individual, or individuals, in any given conversation.

Oh, give thanks to **the God of gods!** For His mercy endures forever. <sup>3</sup> Oh, give thanks to **the Lord of lords!** For His mercy endures forever (Ps. 136:2-3; emphasis added).

Another Biblical principle, regarding who is communicating, involves the delegation of titles and responsibilities that help identify who is speaking. For example, Almighty God placed His name, combined with various responsibilities and titles, upon a spirit-being that would later become known as Jesus Christ. Without this understanding, it is very difficult to know who was speaking to people such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses.

Behold, I (Almighty God) send an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. <sup>21</sup> Beware of him and obey his voice; do not provoke him, for he will not pardon your transgressions; for **My name is in him** (Ex. 23:20-21; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

This delegation of names, titles, and responsibilities is further clarified in the following prophecy regarding Jesus Christ.

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government (of Almighty God) will be upon his shoulder. And his name will be called **Wonderful**, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. <sup>7</sup> Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over his kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this (Isa. 9:6-7; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

It is important to note that one of the descriptive names given to Jesus Christ in Isaiah 9:6 was "Wonderful". Therefore, if this name is found elsewhere in the writings of the First Covenant, and the context is not prophetic, but active, it will identify Christ before he became flesh and blood and died for the sins of the world (Jn. 1:29).

And the Angel of the Lord said to him (Manoah), 'Why do you ask **my name**, seeing it **is wonderful**?' (Jgs. 13:18; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

So, Judges 13:18 identifies a conversation that took place between Manoah and the Angel of the Lord, who identified himself by the descriptive title "wonderful". Therefore, by comparing Isaiah 9:6 with Judges 13:18, we can conclude that the Angel of the Lord mentioned in Exodus 23:20-21 is the spirit-being who would later become known as Jesus Christ. With this in mind, other scriptures with conversations involving the Angel of the Lord should be more clear.

Now **the Angel of the Lord** found her (Hagar) by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur. <sup>8</sup>And he said, 'Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from, and where are you going?' (Gen. 16:7-8a; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

In the case of Hagar, the Angel of the Lord was responsible for communicating the will of Almighty God to her (cf. Gen. 16:9-12). It is very important at this point to note that no human being has seen Almighty God, or heard His voice directly. Instead, He always communicates through angels; the primary one now known as Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:1-2).

And the Father Himself, who sent me (Jesus Christ), has testified of me. **You** (mankind)

**have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form** (Jn. 5:37; cf. 6:46; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

As no human being has seen Almighty God's form, and as Moses saw a form on Mt. Sinai (Ex. 33:19-23), it could not have been Almighty God's. Instead, it would have been His representative, who is now identified as Jesus Christ.

Then the Lord came down in the pillar of cloud (I Cor. 10:1-4; cf. Ex. 14:19-20) and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam. And they both went forward. <sup>6</sup>Then he said, 'Hear now my words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, make myself known to him in a vision, and I speak to him in a dream. <sup>7</sup>Not so with my servant Moses; he is faithful in all my house. <sup>8</sup>**I speak with him face to face**, even plainly (appearing), and not in dark sayings (riddles); **and he sees the form of the Lord...**' (Nu. 12:5-8a; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added)

Therefore, it was the spirit-being, Jesus Christ, who proclaimed the law and commandments at Mt. Sinai and spoke with Moses directly. In many cases, this spirit-being was referred to as "Lord", "the Angel of the Lord (Almighty)", and "God". As mentioned previously, this interchangeability of names was used by King David to describe both Almighty God and His son, Jesus Christ.

**The Lord** (Almighty) **said to my Lord** (Jesus Christ), 'Sit at My right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool (Ps. 110:1; cf. Mt. 22:41-46; Heb. 1:13; Ed. notes in parentheses).

In the writings of the Second Covenant, Jesus Christ is also referred to as the Word of God, which is appropriate because he speaks only as his heavenly Father directs (cf. Jn. 8:28, 38; 12:50; 14:10).

He (Christ) was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and his name is called **The Word of God** (Rev. 19:13; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

And **the Word** became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth (Jn. 1:14; emphasis added).

During the time of the First Covenant, when the Angel of the Lord conversed with human beings, he imparted the words of his Father perfectly. However, this does not mean he was prevented from expressing his own thoughts, feelings, and even frustrations from time to time.

And the Lord said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and indeed it is a stiff-necked (stubborn) people! <sup>10</sup> Now, therefore, let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume (destroy) them. And I will make of you a great nation.' <sup>11</sup> Then Moses pleaded with the Lord his God, and said: 'Lord, why does your wrath burn hot against your people whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? <sup>12</sup> Why should the Egyptians speak, and say, 'he brought them out to harm them, to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from your fierce wrath, and relent from this harm to your people. <sup>13</sup> Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, to whom you swore by your own self, and said to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of I give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.'" <sup>14</sup> So the Lord relented from the harm which he said he would do to his people (Ex. 32:9-14; Ed. notes in parentheses). It's not as if the people didn't deserve to be punished for their ongoing sinful conduct, and it's not as if they were unaware that the Angel

of the Lord had authority from Almighty God to do just that,

Beware of him (the Angel of the Lord) and obey his voice; do not provoke him, for **he will not pardon your transgressions....** (Ex. 23:21a; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

However, as the Angel of the Lord was taught by his Father, he learned to be merciful even when his patience was being tested.

He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities (Ps. 103:10; cf. Ezra 9:13; Lam. 3:22).

At this point it is important to stress that the Angel of the Lord was not omnipotent and omniscient like Almighty God. Instead, there were things he did not know until they occurred. For instance, he did not know in advance whether Abraham would go through with killing his son Isaac until the very last moment.

But the Angel of the Lord called to him (Abraham) from heaven and said. 'Abraham, Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' <sup>12</sup> And he (the Angel) said, 'Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for **now I know that you fear God**, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.' (Gen. 22:11-12; cf. **Gen. 18:21**; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Any direct communication between a human being and the Angel of the Lord involved divine intervention for the purpose of fulfilling specific aspects of Almighty God's plan at any point in time.

Then **the Lord opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the Angel of the Lord** standing in the way with his drawn sword in his hand; and he bowed his head and fell flat on his face. <sup>32</sup> And

the Angel of the Lord said to him, 'Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold, I have come out to stand against you, because your way is perverse (contrary) before me (Nu. 22:31-32; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

In the scripture above, the Angel of the Lord had his sword drawn. A similar situation occurred when the Angel of the Lord spoke with Joshua.

And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, **a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn** in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, 'Are You for us or for our adversaries?' <sup>14</sup> So He said, 'No, but as Commander of the army of the Lord I have now come.' And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to Him, 'What does my Lord say to His servant?' <sup>15</sup> Then the Commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua, 'Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy.' And Joshua did so (Jos. 5:13-15; emphasis added).

It is important to note that the spirit-being who spoke with Joshua is also described as appearing like a man. This dynamic occurs throughout scripture and is another key to identifying who is speaking to whom. For example, three men appeared to Abraham in Genesis 18:1-2, but they were angels; with one of them being described as "the Lord". This "Lord" is also described as "the Son of Man",

For the **Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath** (Mt. 12:8; cf. Neh. 9:14; Eze. 20:20; emphasis added).

So the Angel of the Lord had a sword drawn in Numbers 22:31 and the "man" speaking with Joshua had a sword drawn, and a sword is used

symbolically to represent the Word of God which is another descriptive title of Jesus Christ.

And take the helmet of salvation, and **the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God** (Eph. 6:17; emphasis added).

For **the word of God is living** and powerful, and sharper than any (physical) two-edged sword... (Heb. 4:12a; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

He (Jesus Christ; cf. Rev. 1:13) had in His right hand seven stars (symbol of angels; cf. Rev. 1:20), **out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword...** (Rev. 1:16a; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

It was the Word of God who defeated Satan by correctly using scripture in the conversation that took place in Matthew 4:1-11.

But he (Christ) answered (Satan) and said, it is written, '**Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.**' (Mt. 4:4; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Therefore, the Angel of the Lord, the Son of Man, the Lord of the Sabbath, and the Word of God are all descriptive titles that identify Jesus Christ and various aspects of the work his heavenly Father has given him to fulfill. As "Lord of the Sabbath", the spirit-being that became known as Jesus Christ proclaimed the law and commandments of his Father at Mt. Sinai. Following that event, these same laws and commands were presented to Moses in a written form (Ex. 31:18).

**You made known to them Your holy Sabbath, and commanded them precepts, statutes and laws,** by the hand of Moses Your servant (Neh. 9:14; emphasis added).

It must be stressed that the Sabbath law was observed by those spirit-beings who were involved in the creative activity mentioned in the first chapter of Genesis. Again, the word "God" (SHD 430) is plural and often refers to more than one individual. As Almighty God is a delegator, there could have been millions or billions of angels involved in this event (cf. Job 38:4-7). Therefore, these same numbers of spirit-beings would have ceased working on the Sabbath as mentioned in the following scripture.

And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. <sup>3</sup> And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made (Gen. 2:2-3).

While on this subject, it is important to point out that the owner of everything is Almighty God, but His work of creating was delegated to the spirit-being that later became known as Jesus Christ. This scenario could be compared to an owner/contractor relationship, with Jesus Christ as the contractor responsible for Almighty God's creation project.

For by him (Jesus Christ) all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, **visible and invisible**, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through him and for him (Col. 1:16; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Going back now to conversations between God, angels, and mankind, we saw Jesus Christ communicating with Satan, who is a fallen angel (Isa. 14:12-15), in Matthew 4:1-11, and conversations between the Angel of the Lord and Abraham, Moses, Balaam, and Joshua. Now we will examine a conversation between a spirit-being, described as both a "man" and "the Lord",

and two loyal angels who are described as "men".

Then the men rose from there and looked toward Sodom, and Abraham went with them to send them on the way. <sup>17</sup> And the Lord said (to the two angels), 'Shall **I** hide from Abraham what **I** am doing?' (Gen. 18:16-16; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Prior to this, three men appeared to Abraham, as mentioned in Genesis 18:2, and two of them were later referred to as angels (cf. Gen. 19:1), and 'lords' by Lot (cf. Gen. 19:2, 19). Therefore, even the words "man" and "men" can refer to spirit-beings, depending on the context in which these words are used. This principle needs to be considered, especially in the book of Revelation which is misunderstood by those who claim they can decipher its true meaning.

So "the Lord", who is also described as a "man", and the two angels, who were also described as "men" and "lords" spoke with each other, as well as communicating with Abraham and Lot. Again, Almighty God does not speak directly to human beings. Therefore, any communication from the spirit realm to mankind comes through angels.

Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing **some have unwittingly entertained angels** (Heb. 13:2; emphasis added).

Unfortunately, anti-God propaganda can also be communicated to the human mind via fallen angels. The question then comes up, 'Why would a loving God allow this?' The answer is, 'Because Adam rejected the word and authority of the Lord, who communicated directly with him, his family is now subject to the spirit-being he was commanded to avoid (Gen. 2:17; see study "Spirit-beings and Trees in Scripture). Therefore, all Adam's physical descendants are affected by communications from fallen angels,

and these angels are influenced by the anti-law values of their leader, Satan (Jn. 8:37-44). These values are broadcast to the carnal mind and are contrary to Almighty God's law and commandments (Rom. 8:7).

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against **the rulers of the darkness of this age** (Gal. 1:4), **against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places** (Eph. 6:12; Ed. note in parenthesis).

It (the gospel) is veiled to those who are perishing, <sup>4</sup> whose minds **the god of this age** (Satan) has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God (cf. Gen. 1:26), should shine on them (2Cor. 4:3b-4; Ed. notes in parenthesis; emphasis added).

And you (who repented of sin) He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, <sup>2</sup> in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to **the prince of the power of the air**, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience (Eph. 2:1-2; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Because Satan deceives as skillfully and thoroughly as he can, there is no human being who understands God's truth completely and accurately. In other words, even those who seek to understand God's truth will be deceived to some degree.

And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. <sup>15</sup> Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works (2Co. 11:14-15).

So the great dragon was cast out (Isa. 14:12-15; Jn. 12:31), that serpent of old (Gen. 3:1), called the Devil and **Satan, who deceives the whole world**; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him (Rev. 12:9; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Satan's anti-God, and anti-law, propaganda will not cease until he is bound at Christ's return.

And he (a loyal angel) cast him (Satan) into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished... (Rev. 20:3a; Ed. notes in parentheses).

After Satan is dealt with, there will be positive and open communication between loyal spirit-beings and those who are ready to receive God's truth.

For the people shall dwell at Jerusalem; you shall weep no more (Rev. 21:4). He will be very gracious to you at the sound of your cry; when He hears it, **He will answer you.** <sup>20</sup> And though the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and water of affliction (oppression), yet **your teachers will not be moved into a corner anymore, but your eyes shall see your teachers.** <sup>21</sup> **Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, 'This is the way, walk in it,'** whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left (Isa. 30:19-21; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Currently, those who are called out of this present evil age, hear their Master's voice and respond by obeying God's word and resisting the wiles of Satan.

Everyone who is of the truth hears my (Christ's) voice (Jn. 18:37b; cf. Ex. 23:21; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Resist the devil and he will flee from you (Jas. 4:7b).

Therefore, Jesus Christ communicates with anyone that God the Father gives him.

**No one can come to me** (Christ) **unless the Father** who sent me **draws him** (or her; cf. Gal. 3:28) ... (Jn. 6:44, 65; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Christ communicates through the power of his Father's Holy Spirit, which is given to those who have repented of their sins and are baptized (Lk. 24:46-47; cf. Ac. 2:38). Following these steps, God's people can continue to receive the word of God, understand it, and build upon it progressively (2Pet. 3:18; cf. Isa. 28:9-10).

But the helper, **the Holy Spirit, which the Father will send in my name, it will teach you all things**, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you (Jn. 14:26; emphasis added).

**If anyone loves me** (Christ), **he will keep my word**; and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him (Jn. 14:23b; Ed. note in parenthesis).

He who does not love me (Christ) does not keep my words; and **the word which you hear is not mine but the Father's, who sent me** (Jn. 14:24; Ed. note in parenthesis).

**If you love me** (Christ), **keep my commandments** (Jn. 14:15; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

So communication from Almighty God to His people occurs as Jesus Christ utilizes his Father's Holy Spirit to open understanding of scripture to those who seek to obey the law and commandments (Mt. 19:17b). Obviously,

communication is a "two way street" and God's people can pray to their Father in heaven at any time, and they will be heard (Jn.15:16).

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