



Who is Yeshua the Messiah?
Part 22: The Metaphors, Part 1
Andrew J. Manuse, Pastor
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{NOTE: The actual oral sermon and video recording may vary significantly and even materially from these notes, but this “transcript” gives you a general idea of the direction of the message.}

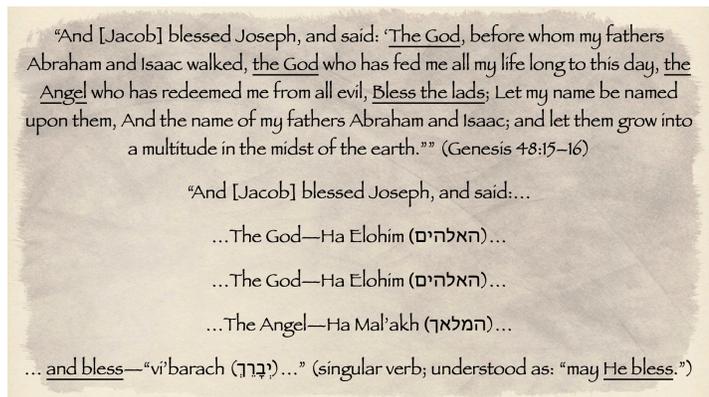
{Title slide—1} Shabbat shalom, brothers and sisters. We’re in Week 22 of our sermon series, “Who is Yeshua the Messiah?,” and today’s message is going to begin an exploration of some remaining “metaphors” the LORD’s prophets incorporated into Scripture that align with our understanding of Yeshua’s identity as God. We’ve already covered several metaphors that point to Yeshua throughout this series within other thematic titles, and we won’t be revisiting those. To review them briefly, recall that we explored Yeshua as “the Word of God” and “the Wisdom of God” earlier on in the series, and then when we focused on Yeshua’s title as the “Great I AM,” we explored Yeshua’s role as the Bread of Life; the Resurrection and the Life; the Light of the world; the Good Shepherd; the Door, the Door for the Sheep; the True Vine; and the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Outside of these metaphors, there are many other ways the LORD describes Himself and His unique nature throughout the Scriptures using deeply symbolic, figurative language. My goal is to explain some of these remaining images today and in the next message or two. We can’t possibly cover every instance of these metaphors, but there are a handful of additional word pictures I want to explain so that you won’t miss them when you go about your studies. In today’s message, I intend to unveil Old Testament appearances of Yeshua as “the Angel.” Next week, we’ll continue into His role as “the Rock,” God’s “Right Hand” or “Arm,” “the Branch,” and “the Bridegroom.” We’re going to rest on the evidence we’ve already laid out in this series relative to Yeshua’s divine identity so we can focus on the prophetic significance of these metaphors over the next several weeks and then move on to other business to close out the series. So, let’s get to it.

{Next slide—2} We briefly covered our first metaphor in Part 3 of this series, which was focused on the complex unity of God. At the end of that message I introduced Yeshua

as “The Angel” of Jacob’s prayer in Genesis 48. In that prayer, the patriarch of Israel asked God to bless Joseph’s sons Ephraim and Manasseh before he died, and he used a very particular and important grammatical structure to describe God’s complex nature. We’re going to start in that passage today, and then un-peel several additional layers of meaning for you to see in other passages. In Genesis 48, verses 15-16, we read: “And [Jacob] blessed Joseph, and said: ‘The God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has fed me all my life long to this day, the Angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; let my name be named upon them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.’”

If you look at the slide on the screen {to the right}, note that I’ve underlined the grammatical structure I referenced. In the plain reading of this passage, Jacob made no distinction between the three manifestations of God that he understood in his days. Instead, he used words to indicate He was describing one God who presented

Himself in three different ways. In the Hebrew text, the prefix “Ha (ה)” is the definite article “the,” and it is used specifically to identify a singular Deity. Notice in Jacob’s prayer, the patriarch asked “the God—Ha Elohim (האלהים)” —who His fathers knew, “the God—Ha Elohim (האלהים)” who provided for him all his days, and “the Angel—Ha Mal’akh (המלאך)” who redeemed him from all evil to bless Joseph’s two sons. Grammatically, “the God,” “the God,” and “the Angel” are set up in a parallel structure and refer to the same subject. What’s even more important is the tense of the word “bless,” which reads “vi’barach (יְבָרַךְ)” in the Hebrew. This is the singular tense of the verb, which literally reads “and bless the lads.” That being said, we might better understand the significance of this section when rendered in English as “may **He** bless the lads.” In other words, this God that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob knew is one in being with “The Angel” Who redeemed them of their sins. And the grammar here isn’t only preserved in the Masoretic text of our Old Testaments, but also in the Greek Septuagint and the Aramaic Targum versions of the same Old Testament passage. The verb “bless” is always singular referring to one God acting to “bless the lads,” and so it is important to recognize that this passage explains grammatically that “the Angel of God” is God. When we look at the whole of Scripture, it’s clear that Yeshua is the One



who has redeemed us from our sins through His blood sacrifice on the cross and His resurrection into incorruptible life. Thus, through a handful of additional examples, we're going to see three things: 1) No one can see God the Father at any time, but the Son of God has revealed Him; 2) God appeared as this Angel many times throughout the Old Testament, and several men saw Him; and 3) Yeshua, our eternal God, is this Angel, the visible expression of God before He came in the flesh.

{Next slide—3} One of the more critical examples of the Angel's appearing was at the Binding of Isaac in Genesis 22. In context, God had asked Abraham to offer his son Isaac as a burnt offering, and just before Abraham was about to kill his son, the LORD called out of heaven to stop him. We're not reviewing this passage for its deeper context today, but for the surface meaning of the text. Here we can see a second time that Scripture has identified this Angel as God. In verse 11, we read: "the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, 'Abraham, Abraham!' So he said, 'Here I am.' And He 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.'" If we only consider the phrase, "now I know that you fear God," we might think that the Angel speaking to Abraham is someone other than God and speaking on His behalf, but when we consider the additional phrase "you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me," these words link the identity of the Angel to God Himself, who had earlier asked Abraham to sacrifice His son. This connection is clarified even further when we consider verses 15-18, where we read: "Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, and said: 'By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son—blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.'" With this language it is clear that the Angel of the LORD is presenting Himself as Yahweh, the one who originally called Abraham to sacrifice Isaac as a test of his faith, the one who stopped him from doing it, and the one who is going to bless him on account of his faith. The Angel has authority to multiply his descendants and to make them victorious over their enemies. Hidden within the text is also the promise of Yeshua's own incarnation. The Angel declared that all the nations of the earth would be blessed by the Seed of Abraham because Abraham obeyed the Angel's voice. Yeshua, when He came in the flesh, would later say that the children of Abraham are those men and women who do the works of Abraham—those of us who obey the voice of the LORD because we trust

in His identity. From the text, we can deduce that the Angel of the LORD is one in being with Yahweh. Additional Scripture ties this Angel in with Yeshua.

{Next slide—4} So now that we can see that the Angel is Yahweh, we also ought to explore how the Angel appears in the form of a Man, as we can see in Genesis 18. In this passage, the LORD appeared before Abraham with two of His divine servants to speak to Abraham, to rescue Lot from Sodom, and to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. Rather than get into all the details of the story, I simply want to explain how the text works so you can identify the LORD in these types of references. We read in verses 1-3, “Then the LORD appeared to [Abraham] by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, and said, “My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant.” If you examine the context here, it’s clear these aren’t regular men, and that one of them is above the others. The story details three spiritual beings who appeared as men, and Abraham called only one of them “Adonai,” which is to say “Lord.” When we look closer, the text explains that Yahweh appeared to Abraham, that Abraham saw “three men,” and that Abraham called one of these men Lord. That man was the Angel of the LORD. As the passage continues, Abraham served the three men a meal of unleavened bread, milk, and meat, and Yahweh spoke to Him during this encounter and prophesied the birth of Isaac. Following the meal, according to Genesis 18:16, we further read: “Then the men rose from there and looked toward Sodom, and Abraham went with them to send them on the way.” The interchange is not with these three men and Yahweh, but rather with Yahweh, who has manifested Himself as one of these three men. In verse 22, this becomes more clear. There we read: “Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD.” The following story explains Lot’s encounter with two of these men, and then how one of them led him and his daughters out of Sodom to safety while the other brought fire and brimstone down on the wicked from Yahweh. It was the Angel of Yahweh who remained with Abraham and conversed with him face-to-face.

{Next slide—5} In another example, we read how Jacob wrestled with “a Man” in the wilderness as he was approaching his brother Esau, who last time he checked, wanted to kill him. Jacob was afraid and he took steps to protect his family from his brother’s attack, but his shrewdness was not enough to win the spiritual battle. He would ultimately need to face his fears and the LORD would need to fight for Him in the spiritual realm. As Jacob went to wrestle with the Man prior to his encounter with Esau,

we should note that this was the same Man who had met with Abraham earlier who had promised Him a Seed through which all the nations of the earth would be blessed, and now Jacob was seeking that same blessing. This Man was none other than the Angel of Yahweh that Jacob later referred to in His prayer, who redeemed him from all evil. In Genesis 32, starting in verse 24, we read: “Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day.” The Man said to Jacob: “Let Me go, for the day breaks.’ But [Jacob] said, ‘I will not let You go unless You bless me!’” Let's stop here for a moment and explore the context, because this example is going to further reveal the Angel of the LORD's identity. To begin, please understand that it's important to read this passage and understand Jacob's struggle with the Man in a positive light. And if we're going to read into this wrestling match positively, we have to explore why the Angel would try to get away from Jacob. Why is it that Jacob would not let go of the Angel without first receiving the blessing? This was most certainly a scenario where God was testing Jacob's faith, much like He did by asking Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. This time, the test involved facing Esau. In doing this, the Angel foreshadowed the earthly ministry of Yeshua, the Angel of God who had come in the flesh. How many times did Yeshua test His servants to see if they would continue to follow Him? Read the Gospels and you will find many. For now, consider the episode in Matthew 8 when Yeshua saw the multitudes following Him and gave a command to depart from them. Yeshua has never been interested in crowds; He has always been interested in disciples who would do His will. In Matthew 8, a disciple said to the LORD, “Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go.” This disciple lacked faith, which is evident in the name by which he addressed Yeshua. He didn't call Him LORD—He called Him Rabbi. He didn't believe in Yeshua's identity as God, and thus he had not been saved. Because of this, Yeshua replied, “Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.” He didn't say “no” to the man, but in common parlance, He said: “let me go”—or, in other words: My Kingdom is not of this world. Yeshua challenged the disciple to give up everything he had to follow Him, or otherwise go his own way. The text leaves that man's fate hanging in the balance to challenge you and me to contemplate our own faith in Yeshua's identity. The next man Yeshua encountered was known to be a disciple, and He acknowledged Yeshua's identity, calling Him LORD, but this second man wasn't willing to go with Yeshua for a very specific reason. He said, “let me first go and bury my father.” Now, to be clear, the disciple's father wasn't dead. This was a turn of phrase that meant, “after my father dies, I will follow you.” In other words, after I have my inheritance on earth, I will follow you toward Heaven. As we know from the rest of Yeshua's ministry, it is impossible to serve the LORD and to seek after worldly treasure, whatever way we might define it. Yeshua's response, “let the dead bury their

dead," makes it clear that the spiritually dead seek after such worldly treasure, while those who are spiritually alive will leave everything they have to follow Him. The words of this disciple in Matthew 5 were not serious; they were the words of a spiritual coward. Similarly, after hearing Paul preach about righteousness, self-control and the coming judgment, three important features of the New Covenant walk with Yeshua, Governor Felix said in Acts 24:24-25: "Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you." We never hear from Felix again—he didn't want to change his ways to follow Yeshua. His position, power and wealth were too much to give up. And so we're challenged yet again in this passage to consider whether this second disciple and even Felix himself decided to follow Yeshua. Those who choose to follow Yeshua have to be willing to leave everything else behind. Now, if we return back to Matthew 8, verse 23, the very next verse demonstrates that there was a group of people who made the right choice. We read: "Now when Yeshua got into a boat, His disciples followed Him." Those who were willing to drop everything, got into the boat. Ostensibly, those who were not His disciples stayed back. The lesson here is straightforward: We cannot let Yeshua go until He blesses us. We have to get into the boat that leaves the world behind and follow the LORD, overcoming our fears, no matter where He leads us, because we believe in His identity as the Son of God.

{Next slide—6} That being said, let's return to Genesis. With the parallel passage I've explained in Matthew 8, we ought to understand that Jacob's wrestling match with the Angel was his moment to choose Yeshua over his own way. When the Man—the Angel—said to Jacob, "Let Me go," Jacob said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me." This is exactly the type of mindset we ought to be looking for in true disciples of Yeshua. According to Matthew 7, verses 7-8, Yeshua said: "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened." When Jacob said, "I won't let you go until you bless me," we ought to recognize that this is exactly what the LORD did for him. The LORD blessed Him, saying, "your name shall be Israel," which means, one who strives after God. He wasn't striving against God; He was striving to follow God—the very same thing Yeshua was looking for from His disciples in Matthew 8. As we read in Romans 11 and Ephesians 2, among other places, we must be grafted-in to Israel through the blood of Messiah Yeshua in order to be saved. We have to develop the mindset of Jacob, who desired the blessing of Yeshua above all else. We ought to respond the same way Jacob did. The text shows that in the process of Jacob's struggle, the Man actually touched the socket of Jacob's hip and put it out of joint. After the wrestling match, Jacob actually limped away from the scene and continued to limp for the rest of his life. This wasn't a physical injury; it

was a spiritual transformation. Whenever we have a true encounter with Yeshua and leave everything behind to follow Him, we will walk differently from that point forward—we ought to walk the Way that He walks. When we accept Yeshua's sacrifice for us, He changes our life forever by putting His finger on our hip, which is to say He puts His Holy Spirit inside of us and begins to do His work in us. A true encounter with the LORD ought to change us so that we never live the same way again. To bring things full circle, then, it's clear that Jacob had a true encounter with the Angel of God, described here as a Man, the pre-incarnate Yeshua. And because of this, Jacob named the place "Peniel," which means "face of God," because, as he said himself, "I have seen God face-to-face, and my life is preserved." Now this is a statement that requires a closer look.

{Next slide—7} Jacob's encounter with the Angel of God here was confirmed in Genesis 35, which describes another meeting. In this second witness, Yahweh came to Jacob and confirmed the blessing He had given earlier. We read in verses 9-13, "Then God appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Padan Aram, and blessed him. And God said to him, 'Your name is Jacob; your name shall not be called Jacob anymore, but Israel shall be your name.' So He called his name Israel. Also God said to him: 'I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body. The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac I give to you; and to your descendants after you I give this land.' Then God went up from him in the place where He talked with him." Because Jacob clung to Yeshua and would not let Him go without a blessing, Jacob was blessed. This blessing was not simply temporal. In Hebrews 11, verses 9-10, the Holy Spirit explained what land the LORD was referring to in Genesis 35. We read: "By faith [Abraham] dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Like Abraham, Jacob waited for the Kingdom of God by giving up every worldly pursuit to trust in the LORD. Jacob's wrestling match with God was actually His salvation, and after He had endured in the faith, God returned a second time to confirm the blessing He had given earlier. This is the God and the Angel that Jacob later referred to in His prayer over Ephraim and Manasseh, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who redeemed Him from all evil.

{Next slide-8} To confirm this, take a look at the Prophet Hosea's take on the encounter, which we read in Hosea 12, verse 3-6: "He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and in his strength he struggled with God. Yes, he struggled with the Angel and prevailed; He wept, and sought favor from Him. He found Him in Bethel, And there

He spoke to us—That is, the LORD God of hosts. Yahweh is His memorable name. So you, by the help of your God, return; observe mercy and justice, and wait on your God continually." Jacob waited on God to deliver Him from Esau, and God indeed delivered Him. Jacob, encouraged by the LORD, continued with his plan to offer gifts to his brother, displaying great love for his spiritual enemy. He sought mercy rather than vengeance, for vengeance belongs to the LORD and He shall repay. As the story continues, we can see that Esau sought to lead Jacob into Edom, which represents the pursuit of the world and of the flesh that leads to death, but Jacob resisted this invitation and went his own way into the Promised Land, where he dwelt in tents, awaiting the Kingdom "which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God." It was Jacob's encounter with Yeshua, ultimately, that gave Him the strength to endure until the end. Like Jacob, we too ought to cling to the LORD and never let go. This Yeshua appeared to Jacob as a Man, the Angel of the LORD, and the Scripture confirms this Truth.

{Next slide—9} Next, let's consider a few of Moses's encounters with the Angel of God. In Exodus 3, verses 2-6, we read: "And the Angel of the LORD appeared to [Moses] in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed. Then Moses said, 'I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn.' So when the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, 'Moses, Moses!' And he said, 'Here I am.' Then He said, 'Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.' Moreover He said, 'I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God." When we read this passage plainly, it may seem confusing, much like many of our New Testament passages that interchangeably use the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This writing is intentional. Scripture is nothing if not consistent. Was it God or was it the Angel of God that appeared to Moses? The answer is "yes." The Angel of God appeared before Moses and spoke to Him, just as He had appeared before Abraham and Jacob. Moses saw this Angel in front of Him and feared; and the Angel is indeed one-in-being with the Father, who cannot be seen. Because we know that Yeshua was with God before creation, the only conclusion we can make that is consistent with the text is that this Angel, the visible form of the invisible God, is the pre-incarnate Yeshua. Take a look again at how Paul described Yeshua in Colossians 1, verses 15-16, where we read: "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him 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.” How do we explain that Yeshua Himself was born as a Man in the flesh, and these appearances before Abraham, Jacob and Moses predate His incarnation? Well, in theological terms, the Angel of God is known as a “theophany” or more accurately, a “Christophany.” Not all students of the Bible see things this way, but I believe it is the only possible explanation for what otherwise presents itself as a clear contradiction in Scripture. When Yeshua told the Jewish leaders in John 8:57 that “Abraham rejoiced to see My day” and in verse 58, “Before Abraham was, I AM,” He was referring to these deep spiritual realities. Before Yeshua came in the flesh, He manifested Himself as The Angel of God, and He spoke concerning God’s ultimate plan of redemption that would be given to all men through His Name. Scripture gives us accounts of this reality repeatedly.

{Next slide—10} Years after the burning bush experience, we can see the same construction in the account of the nation of Israel’s journey from Egypt through the wilderness toward the Promised Land. In Exodus 13:21, we read: “And Yahweh went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night.” Was the pillar of cloud and fire representative of the invisible Father? Was it the Holy Spirit? Yes! Later, Yahweh promised to Moses in Exodus 33:14, “My Presence will go with you.” We can contemplate what all these metaphors represent another day, but for now we ought to contemplate how the Angel of God appeared to Moses in the midst of a burning bush, and this same Truth is also represented in Exodus 14:19, where we read: “And the Angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud went from before them and stood behind them.” The way the text reads, the Angel of God and the pillar of cloud operate separately while also operating together. This text is meant to express the complex nature of our God, who is clearly One, and yet He expresses His identity in different ways, even at the same time. The Word of God doesn’t present these metaphors to confuse us, but to give us clarity. And while our God is so much bigger than our understanding, He still works to explain Himself to those of us who are willing to seek for Him through our faith. The most important thing for us to do, as we read in Hebrews 11:6, is to “believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” Without faith it is impossible to please Him. Take a look at Jude’s rendition of these truths in verses 3-5, where we read: “Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only LORD God and our LORD

Messiah Yeshua. But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the LORD, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.” In other words, we ought to understand that the LORD God and our LORD Messiah Yeshua are one, just as the Angel of God and the pillar of Cloud, both representing God, are one. The Father gave us Yeshua to make atonement for our sin so that we can walk in righteousness along with Him all the way into the Promised Land. God also gave us the example of Israel’s salvation from Egypt to point forward to our own salvation from sin. And God gave us the example of the wilderness struggle to show us that only those of us who endure in our faith and follow the LORD will make it into the Kingdom of God. We have to beware of those men and women who try to lead us away from these truths, for the end of such deception is death.

{Next slide—11} There are so many other parallels I’d like to show you, but we simply don’t have time to detail them all. That being said, there remains three critical examples that require a brief mention before we close for the day and move on next week. First, let’s take a look at Exodus 23, verses 20-23, where we read: “Behold, I send an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. Beware of Him and obey His voice; do not provoke Him, for He will not pardon your transgressions; for My name is in Him. But if you indeed obey His voice and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries. For My Angel will go before you and bring you in to the Amorites and the Hittites and the Perizzites and the Canaanites and the Hivites and the Jebusites; and I will cut them off.” In other words, when we listen to the Angel of God, who speaks the Word of the Father, He will destroy all of our enemies before us and we will dwell with Him in peace. When we do not listen to His words, we will be destroyed along with the adversaries of God. Yeshua is this Angel, whom the Father would send into the world. Whoever believes in Him will inherit eternal life in His Kingdom, but whoever rejects Him rejects the Father who sent Him. As we know, Yeshua said in John 14:6, “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, and no one comes to the Father but through Me.” In John 12, verses 48-50, Yeshua said: ““He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak.”” To remind you, the Son said in John 5:22-23: “the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.” These types of linguistic constructions are

intended to show us the complex unity of God, so that we know to look for Yeshua in all of the Scriptures as the visible actor in the world who interacts with His people and makes a way back for us into the Kingdom of God. It is faith in this Truth that literally opens the narrow gate for us.

{Next slide—12} Second, take a look at Judges 6, where Israel had fallen into sin—they were doing “evil in the sight of the LORD”—, so the LORD sent the Midianites and Amalekites against His people to judge them just like He said He would. Israel had become slaves again to the point that they couldn’t even thresh their grain in the open, because it would be stolen away. Metaphorically speaking, the Word of God does not do us any good when we are living in sin—the enemy keeps us from bearing fruit when we are stuck in the bondage of our flesh. But the LORD does not want His people to remain in bondage, and so He looks for a man whose heart is humble to use for His purposes. The LORD perfects His strength in our weaknesses. Such was the case here. In verses 11-13, we read: “Now the Angel of the LORD came and sat under the terebinth tree which was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress, in order to hide it from the Midianites. And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him, and said to him, ‘The LORD is with you, you mighty man of valor!’” This was a man who was hiding the Word in His heart, a man who was working around the oppression of the enemy and seeking to bear fruit for the LORD despite the sin all around Him. This is the moment when Yeshua came to free him from his bondage. As Paul wrote in Romans 5:8, “While we were yet sinners, Messiah died for us.” Continuing in Romans 5:10, we read: “if, while we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of the Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through His life.” This Angel of God, our pre-incarnate Messiah Yeshua, was giving the same opportunity to Gideon here that is available to us today. We ought to rejoice in God through our LORD Messiah Yeshua, because He has come to free us from bondage and reconcile us to God as the Angel was demonstrating prophetically here.

{Next slide—13} As we continue, Gideon responded with additional humility leading to a predictable response from the LORD. According to Judges 6:15, Gideon “said to [the Angel of the LORD], ‘O my LORD, how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house.’” With this kind of humility, the outcome becomes predictable. In James 4:10, we read: “Humble yourselves in the sight of the LORD, and He will lift you up.” This is a promise of God that we can be assured of. Because this Angel of the LORD is none other than God Himself, we read in Judges 6:16, “And the LORD said to [Gideon], ‘Surely I will be with

you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man.” At this point, Gideon had a choice: believe the Word of the LORD for victory and overcome the oppression of the enemy, or disbelieve the Word of the LORD and perish. We have the same choice in our own lives. The story of Gideon continues through Judges 8. We read how Gideon tested the Angel to determine whether it was truly from God, how he eliminated the sin from Israel and convinced his brethren to repent, and then how, with the LORD’s help, he led Israel to victory over their enemies. There’s a sad twist at the end, where Gideon fell back into sin, but this setback was meant to demonstrate how Messiah Yeshua had still not come as promised, and how we, as His followers today, must remain diligent in our faithfulness in order remain in the victory of our reconciliation with God. The spiritual warfare lessons are worth studying in more detail, but I want to show you the main reason for this example. After Gideon interacted with the Angel the first time, He gave an offering of a young goat and unleavened bread, which the angel consumed with fire. In Judges 6, verses 21-23, we read: “Then the Angel of the LORD put out the end of the staff that was in His hand, and touched the meat and the unleavened bread; and fire rose out of the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. And the Angel of the LORD departed out of his sight. Now Gideon perceived that He was the Angel of the LORD. So Gideon said, ‘Alas, O LORD GOD! For I have seen the Angel of the LORD face to face.’ Then the LORD said to him, ‘Peace be with you; do not fear, you shall not die.’” Why did I bring you here? Because of the long-standing perception that man cannot look at the face of God and live, and this is a true statement. The LORD wouldn’t have to reassure these men that their lives would be preserved if there wasn’t a Scriptural Truth that said otherwise. The Truth of the matter is the point I want to finish with today.

{Next slide—14} When the LORD was with Moses on the mountain, according to Exodus 33:20, He said to Moses: "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live." So how does this work? If no one can see God's face and live, how is it that Gideon, Manoah and his wife, which I'll show you in a moment, and even Moses, see the LORD face to face and live? Exodus 33:11, which I don't have up on the screen, explains, "So the LORD spoke to Moses face-to-face, as a man speaks to his friend." The key is found in John 1:18, where the Apostle wrote: "No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him." The Angel of God, as we noted earlier, was the visible manifestation of the invisible God. He was the pre-incarnate Yeshua, who declared the image of God to humankind. In Matthew 11:27, Yeshua said Himself: "All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him." You see, the

Son has always had the power and authority to reveal the Father to those whom He wills. Before He came in the flesh, He did this as the Angel of the LORD.

{Next slide—15} There is one other example of this point that I want to share with you before we close. In Judges 13, the Angel of the LORD appeared to Manoah's wife and explained to her that she would bear a son who would save Israel from bondage to the Philistines. Again, we're not going to get into the details of the story today other than to explain that the promised son Samson, while he did redeem Israel from the Philistines, did not fulfill the ultimate promise of the coming Messiah. Like so many others, he was a prophetic template, but not a final fulfillment. To the point of today's message, Manoah's wife told Manoah about her encounter and he did not believe her. He prayed that this Angel of the LORD would appear to him also, and the LORD listened to his request. When we pray to the LORD without doubting and according to His will, He will answer our prayers. The LORD desires us to seek Him, and He desires us to know Him. When Yahweh answered Manoah's prayer and showed Himself again, we find a common question, starting in Judges 13:17, where we read: "Then Manoah said to the Angel of the LORD, 'What is Your name, that when Your words come to pass we may honor You?' And the Angel of the LORD said to him, 'Why do you ask My name, seeing it is wonderful?'" Let's stop here for a moment so I can remind you of what we studied earlier in the series from Isaiah 9:6. We read: "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." I hope you can see what I see. Yeshua, the Son of God who was born into the world much later on, appeared to Manoah and his wife as the Wonderful Angel of God. Continuing in verse 19, we read: "So Manoah took the young goat with the grain offering, and offered it upon the rock to the LORD. And He did a wondrous thing while Manoah and his wife looked on—it happened as the flame went up toward heaven from the altar—the Angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar!" Again, we have the Angel of God appearing together with a flame of fire. When we have faith in the Son of God, who is the visible manifestation of our invisible God, He connects us with God through His Holy Spirit, and His flame of fire carries our prayers up to the throne on high and brings God's purifying and healing spiritual touch into our hearts. When we understand the power of this relationship, it ought to bring us to our knees in praise, and this is just what we see in the text. In the second part of verse 20, we read: "When Manoah and his wife saw this, they fell on their faces to the ground." YES! This also ought to be our reaction to the presence of God in our lives! Continuing, we read: "When the Angel of the LORD appeared no more to Manoah and his wife, then Manoah knew that He was the Angel of the LORD. And Manoah said to his wife, 'We shall surely die, because we

have seen God!’ But his wife said to him, ‘If the LORD had desired to kill us, He would not have accepted a burnt offering and a grain offering from our hands, nor would He have shown us all these things, nor would He have told us such things as these at this time.’” Manoah's wife was right. What was this burnt offering and grain offering that the LORD accepted from their hands? It was their prayerful, verbal acknowledgment of the Angel's identity as their LORD and their God and their faith in His Word, which represents a heart that desires to live according to God's instruction and trust in His promises. This is ultimately what allows anyone to look upon God, and not die.

{Next slide—16} And this is the point I'm going to leave you with today. When we look upon Yeshua, the Angel of the LORD who became flesh, who taught us how to live, who died for our sins, and who rose from the dead to sit at the Right Hand of God, and we desire to follow after Him by building an intimate relationship with Him through His Spirit, we too become among those men and women who can look upon God and live. In the wilderness, according to Numbers 21, when the children of Israel sinned against God through faithlessness, the LORD sent fiery serpents into their camp and many were killed from the venom of these animals. Then God instructed Moses to make a bronze serpent and put it on a stick, so that anyone who was bitten by a fiery serpent and looked upon this symbol would live. ... [fill in]

Yeshua made this point Himself in John 3, verses 14-18, where we read: “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. 'He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.’”

[fill in]

He also said in John 6:38-40, where we read:

“For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.’” (John 6:38–40)

[fill in]

Shabbat Shalom.