

Understanding God

Jer 9:23 Thus says the LORD: "Let not the **wise man** glory in his wisdom, Let not the **mighty man** glory in his might, Nor let the **rich man** glory in his riches;

Jer 9:24 But let him who glories glory in this, **That he understands and knows Me, That I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth.** For in these I delight," says the LORD.

CoG Truths of Scripture

1. Jesus Pre-existed
2. Jesus is "the God of the Old Testament"
3. **However**, the above statement needs some clarification.

4. Why the "oneness" of God is important
5. Handling "difficult scriptures" regarding God
6. Who is The "Angel of the Lord" ?
7. Concluding comments



1. Jesus Pre-existed

- **Joh 1:1-3** In the **beginning** was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.
- **Joh 1:14** 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.
- **Joh 17:5** And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You **before the world was**.
- **Php 2:5-11** Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but **made Himself** of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled ("emptied"-NASV) Himself and became obedient to *the point of death*, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
- **Rom 8:3-4** For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by **sending His own Son** in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.
- Mat 22:41-45 While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?" They said to Him, "*The Son of David.*" He said to them, "How then does David in the Spirit call Him 'LORD,' saying (Ps 110): 'THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, TILL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES YOUR FOOTSTOOL" '? If **David then calls Him 'LORD,' how is He his Son?**"

(Answer: Jesus is **both** a descendant of David, who **also** pre-existed as "the Lord")

2. Jesus is "the God of the Old Testament"

- **John 8:56-59** Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw *it* and was glad." Then the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and **have You seen Abraham?**" Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, **before Abraham was, I AM.**" Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.
- **1Cor 10:4** and all (Israel) drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. (God is called a Rock *dozens* of times in OT ... eg Ps 18:2 The Lord is my Rock & my fortress)
- **Col 1:15-17** 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. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

3. However, the above statement needs some clarification.

From CGI's booklet ... The Q&A Book

Q You have said that the One who became Christ was **the God of the Old Testament**, but Hebrews 1:1 says that God (not Jesus) at sundry times and manners spoke to the prophets of the Old Testament—but now in these last times He has spoken to us by His Son, Jesus. Doesn't this suggest that the Father spoke to the prophets and that Jesus did not speak to the prophets or us at any prior time?

A We have stated many times that the Person of the Godhead who became a flesh-and-blood human being was **"the God of the Old Testament."** However, this statement needs some **clarification**. First, the word God can be used in reference to the Godhead (the Father and the Son together). It can also be used in reference to either Person of the Godhead. **Thus, the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Family consisting of Father and Son is God.** When we say that the Person who later became Jesus Christ was "the God of the Old Testament," we mean that the Member of the God Family (or Godhead) who appeared to and spoke with the ancients was the One who later came in the flesh. **Actually**, it is also correct to say that **God the Father was the God of the Old Testament**. The Logos, or "Word" (John 1:1), served as His Agent, or Spokesman, who acted on behalf of the Supreme Sovereign. That **both were involved** in creation is seen in Genesis 1:26 and in John 1:1–3. Genesis 1:26 states, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness..." John 1:1–3 states: "In the beginning was the Word [the Logos], and the Word was with God [the Father], and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made." Thus, **both** divine Persons participated in creation. Both are "God," though they differ functionally. Notice that Hebrews 1:1 says that God spoke to the prophets "in divers manners." One of the "diverse manners" in which the Father spoke to the prophets was through the One who later came in the flesh. When God sent His Son, the Son spoke to His disciples directly, without the use of prophets.

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A few more scriptures to show the Father is also shown (in scripture) as "the God of the Old Testament"

- **Act 3:13** The **God** of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, **glorified** His Servant **Jesus**, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *Him* go.
- **Act 3:22-26** For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'THE LORD YOUR GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM YOUR BRETHREN. HIM YOU SHALL HEAR IN ALL THINGS, WHATEVER HE SAYS TO YOU. AND IT SHALL BE THAT EVERY SOUL WHO WILL NOT HEAR THAT PROPHET SHALL BE UTTERLY DESTROYED FROM AMONG THE PEOPLE.' Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'AND IN YOUR SEED ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH SHALL BE BLESSED.' To you first, **God**, having **raised up His Servant Jesus**, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one *of you* from your iniquities."
- **Act 4:24-28** So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: "**Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea**, and all that is in them, who by the mouth of Your servant David have said: 'WHY DID THE NATIONS RAGE, AND THE PEOPLE PLOT VAIN THINGS? THE KINGS OF THE EARTH TOOK THEIR STAND, AND THE RULERS WERE GATHERED TOGETHER AGAINST THE LORD AND AGAINST HIS CHRIST.' For truly against **Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed**, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done.



4. Why the "oneness" of God is important

Many Scriptures emphasize this...

1. Deuteronomy 4:35,39 — Unto thee it was shown, that thou mightest know that the LORD he is God; **there is none else beside him.** (39) Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the LORD he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else.

2. Deuteronomy 6:4 — Hear, O Israel: **The LORD thy God is one LORD.** [Note in Mark 12:28-34 how Jesus and a Jewish scribe he encountered understood this text.]

3. Deuteronomy 32:39 — See now that I, even I, am he, and **there is no god with me:** I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand.

4. 2 Samuel 7:22 — Wherefore thou art great, O LORD God; for there is none like thee, **neither is there any God beside thee,** according to all that we have heard with our ears.

5. 1 Kings 8:60 — That all the people of the earth may know that the LORD is God, **and that there is none else.**

- 6. 2 KINGS 5:15** — And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him: and he said, Behold, now I know that **there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel**; now therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant.
- 7. 2 Kings 19:15** — And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said, O LORD God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, **even thou alone**, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth.
- 8. 1 Chronicles 17:20** — O LORD, there is none like thee, **neither is there any God beside thee**, according to all that we have heard with our ears.
- 9. Nehemiah 9:6** — Thou, even **thou, art LORD alone**; thou has made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee.
- 10. Psalm 18:31** — For **who is God save the LORD?** or who is a rock save our God?
- 11. Psalm 86:10** — For thou art great, and doest wondrous things: **thou art God alone**.
- 12. Isaiah 37:16,20** — O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, that dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, **even thou alone**, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou has made heaven and earth. (20) Now therefore, O LORD our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the LORD, even thou only.
- 13. Isaiah 43:10,11** — Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: **before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me**. I, even I, am the LORD; **and beside me there is no savior**.
- 14. Isaiah 44:6,8** — Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; **I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God**. Fear ye not, neither be afraid; have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any.
- 15. Isaiah 45:21** — Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time: who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and **there is no God else beside me**; a just God and a Savior; there is none beside me.
- 16. Isaiah 46:9** — For I am God, and **there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me**.
- 17. Hosea 13:4** — Yet I am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but me; for **there is no savior beside me**.
- 18. Joel 2:27** — And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that **I am the LORD your God, and none else**: and my people shall never be ashamed.
- 19. Zechariah 14:9** — And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one.
- 20. Mark 12:29-34** — And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; **The Lord our God is one Lord**: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: **for there is one God; and there is none other but he**: And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question.
- 21. John 17:3** — And this is life eternal, that they might know thee **the only true God**, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.
- 22. Romans 3:30** — Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.
- 23. 1 Corinthians 8:4-6** — As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and **that there is none other God but one**. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) **But to us there is but one God**, the Father, of whom all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.
- 24. Galatians 3:20** — Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, **but God is one**.
- 25. Ephesians 4:6** — **One God and Father of all**, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.
- 26. 1 Timothy 1:17** — Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, **the only wise God**, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.
- 27. 1 Timothy 2:5** — **For there is one God**, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.
- 28. James 2:19** — Thou believest that **there is one God**; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

Another clue lies in understanding the meaning of the word translated “one” in Deuteronomy 6:4. Interestingly, this verse (known as The *Shema* is used **more than any other verse** to “prove” that God is one Person. The verse states, (Deuteronomy 6:4) “Hear O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD.”

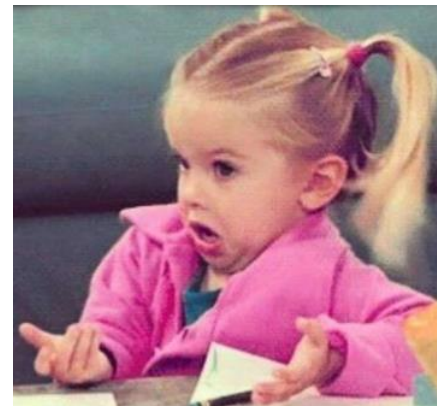
In Hebrew, the word for “one” is *echad*, which is often used as a *compound* “one” rather than an absolute “one.” The two persons, Adam and Eve, were to come together as “one [*echad*] flesh” (Genesis 2:24).

In this case, **one plus one equals one.** (Matt 19:6 Jesus says they are no longer two ... but one ... Joined)

The *Shema*, then, does not prove that God is one Person.

The Hebrew terms (*Elohim* and *echad*) allow for **more than one Person** while confirming that God is one—just as Adam and Eve, though distinct, were “one flesh.”

Apparently, those who reject the belief that God is more than one Person do so because, to them, the concept smacks of Polytheism, or belief in many “gods.” But if we understand “one” in the sense of *composite unity*, then we can easily see how the one God can be more than one Person.



People are confused about God and the oneness of God because:

- Preconceived ideas about the Trinity ... lead people down the wrong path
- “God” usually means the Father, but can *also* mean the Son, or both (the God family) – scripture clearly shows that **God chooses** to reveal Himself via “family terms that we can understand (Father, Son, adoption/sonship, brethren)
- Pronouns can be confusing. It is correct to call God “He” ... and correct to use “They” (Let “us” make man...). You need to see the context to understand how God is being referenced

- **Joh 10:22-39** Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch. Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, "How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me. But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of My Father's hand. **I and My Father are one.**"

Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him.

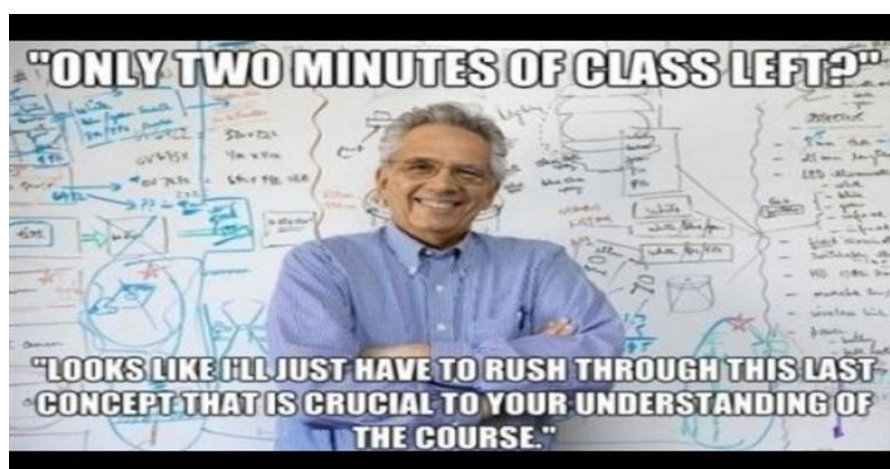
Jesus answered them, "Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?" The Jews answered Him, saying, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God." Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, 'I SAID, "YOU ARE GODS" '? If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that **the Father is in Me, and I in Him.**"

Therefore they sought again to seize Him, but He escaped out of their hand.

(Ps 82:6)

Joh 17:11 Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they **may be one as We are.**

Joh 17:20-23 "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that **they all may be one**, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also **may be one in Us**, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that **they may be one just as We are one**: I in them, and You in Me; that they may **be made perfect in one**, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.



5. Handling “difficult scriptures” or concepts regarding God

- **Question - Can Mere Mortals See God?**

(<http://vancestinson.blogspot.ca/2004/11/>)

The apostle Paul says that only God “has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see” (1 Timothy 6:16), and Jesus affirms, “No one has seen God at any time” (John 1:18). Yet, Moses and others with him “saw the God of Israel” (Exodus 24:9). On one occasion, God permitted Moses to see His back as He passed by, but would not allow him to see His face (Exodus 33:23). Did Moses see God or not? If so, does this mean that Jesus and Paul were wrong?

Reply: God is Spirit; He is not a material being. He is not composed of tiny particles, does not reflect light, and does not dwell in this or any other dimension of material reality. He is wholly other than the universe, not a part of it. He inhabits eternity—He *is* Eternity—and is not bound by the space-time continuum or the laws that govern this universe. It’s a mistake to say He is one of many beings; He is Being itself. He is incomprehensible, unapproachable, untouchable, and even unknowable. No one has seen God at any time—that is, no one has seen the divine *essence*. (*JF-John 3:8 Nicodemus, Jesus describes spirit as “wind”*)

Yet, Scripture plainly declares that Moses saw God. Indeed, he did. But Moses did *not* see God in His essence; he saw a manifestation of God—but it was God nonetheless. It was God in a form Moses was able to see.

I believe the fourth-century Cappadocian fathers were on to something when they distinguished between the “**essence**” and “**energies**” of God. God, being wholly other than any created thing or the sum total of created things, is unknowable *in His essence*. But **we may know Him in His energies**—the ways in which He comes down to us, touches us, and reveals Himself to us. Timothy Ware explains, “These energies are not something that exists apart from God, not a gift which God confers upon humans; they are God Himself in His action and revelation to the world. God exists complete and entire in each of His divine energies” (*The Orthodox Church*, 1997, Penguin Books, p. 68).

We may know God, in a limited way, by looking at His awesome **creation**. We may know Him by considering His marvelous works as described in Scripture. **But the most profound knowledge of God comes to us through His Son.**

The Son of God is **not** merely the most perfect creature God made. At best, such a creature could only tell us *about* God through a secondhand revelation, while God remains far away and impersonal. But in the Son—Jesus Christ—the incomprehensible God comes to us *as one of us!* **Through Jesus, we can know God intimately** and experience His love in the most profound way.

This is what Jesus had in mind when He said, “No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him” (John 1:18).

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Added Scripture (*Seeing the Father doesn’t involve seeing the Father?!?*)

- Joh 14:6-11 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. **No one comes to the Father except through Me.** If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on **you know Him and have seen Him.** Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us. Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me **has seen the Father**; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that **I am in the Father, and the Father in Me**? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own *authority*; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I *am* in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.



Question – Is God the Father “far away” and Mankind only deals with Jesus? (Is He too Holy to deal with Sinful man?)

- The Father was not “Too Righteous” to keenly follow His Son on Earth
Joh 5:37 And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither **heard His voice** at any time, nor **seen His form**.
Yet ... At Jesus baptism - Mark 1:11 - Voice from Heaven – “Beloved Son”
Matt 17:5 – Transfiguration – Voice from a cloud – “Beloved Son”
- And to Call us, and to hear **our prayers** and **our repentance** when we pray to Him (the Father)

The God of Abraham , Isaac & Jacob ... and King David (Ps 139) “is there” wherever we call on Him and knows our hearts and thoughts and activities – He is very involved with His Plan and Creation and we have access to Him through His Son.

6. Who is The “Angel of the Lord” ?

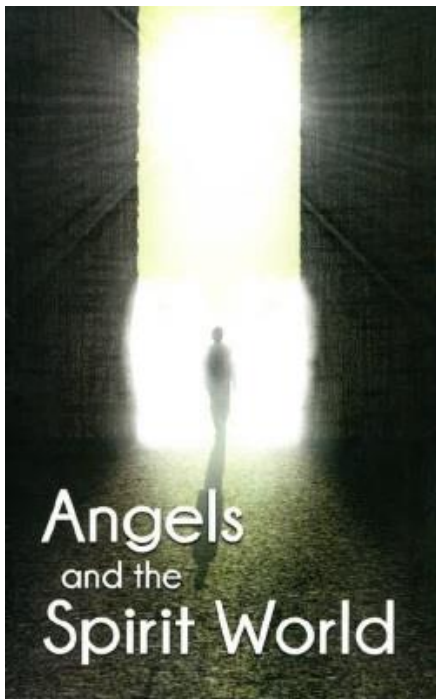
Q Zechariah 14:4 is used by many groups to picture the return of Jesus to this earth. The term Lord is used to represent Jesus in the context. Yet, “Lord” is used literally thousands of other times in Scripture (including New Testament quotes from the Old) in reference to the Almighty God, whom Jesus said was His Father. Can you explain?

A The name Lord, or Yahweh (YHVH), applies to God the Father throughout the Bible. But this name, like all other divine names and titles, is also used in reference to the Second Person of the Godhead—the One who became Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament, He is often called the “**Angel of the Lord.**” The term angel simply means “messenger,” and can refer to created spirit beings, to human messengers, or to the divine manifestations mentioned frequently in the Old Testament.

The “**Angel of the Lord**” who appeared to Hagar is called “the Lord who spoke to her” and “the-God-Who-Sees” (Genesis 16:7–13). Jacob equated “the God who has fed me all my life” with “the Angel who has redeemed me from all evil” (Genesis 48:15,16). The “**Angel of the Lord**” who appeared to Moses in the burning bush identified Himself as “the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,” and said His name is “i am who i am” (Exodus 3:2,6,14).

These are just a few of the many scriptural examples showing that the term Lord, or Yahweh, can be used in reference to the Almighty God who dwells in heaven as well as to the Angel (Messenger) who appears on earth and speaks on His behalf.

In Zechariah 12:8, “God” is synonymous with “the **Angel of the Lord.**” This, along with the examples above, sheds light on Zechariah’s description of the “Lord” who “will go forth and fight,” and whose “feet will stand on the Mount of Olives” (Zechariah 14:3,4). He is none other than the divine Messenger who always appears, speaks, and acts on behalf of the Heavenly Father. He is the Second Person of the Godhead, the divine Logos (“Word”) who “was with God” and “was God” (John 1:1). He is Jesus Christ!



See also ... Lloyd Cary’s 2017 new booklet on Angels ... Lloyd was at the Collingwood Feast last year.

<http://www.cgicanada.org/media/literature/img/ASW-AngelsAndTheSpiritWorld.img.pdf>

7. Concluding comments ...

- Opening Scripture

Jer 9:23 Thus says the LORD: "Let not the **wise man** glory in his wisdom, Let not the **mighty man** glory in his might, Nor let the **rich man** glory in his riches;

Jer 9:24 But let him who glories glory in this, **That he understands and knows Me, That I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth.** For in these I delight," says the LORD.

- Appreciate God as he reveals Himself in the Family of God -- rather than speculations of what “non physical” might be
- 1Jn 3:2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has **not yet been revealed** what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall **be like Him**, for we shall see **Him as He is**.

