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Steven Ritchie · Jun 5, 2017 · 3 min read

The Angel of His Presence, Isaiah 64:8-14



NO CREATED ANGEL OF GOD CAN BE THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD

A Trinitarian wrote to inform me that the angel of His presence is the Holy Spirit rather than an created angel in Isaiah 63:9-10. "In all their affliction He was afflicted, **And the angel of His presence** saved them; In His love and in His mercy He redeemed them, And He lifted them and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled and **grieved His Holy Spirit**; Therefore He turned Himself to become their enemy, He fought against them..."

Some have taught that the angel of God's presence is one of the two alleged members of the Trinity as the Son or the Holy Spirit. But how could an angel of God's presence actually be another God Person of a three person Trinitarian Deity? For an "angel OF His presence" could not be a coequally distinct true God Person while being called an "angel OF" God.

Barnes Commentary says, "And the angel of his presence saved them - This angel, called 'the angel of the presence of God,' is frequently mentioned as having conducted the children of Israel through the wilderness, and as having interposed to save them Exodus 23:20, Exodus 23:31; Exodus 32:34; Exodus 33:2; Numbers 20:16. The phrase, 'the angel of his presence', (Hebrew, מַלְאָכְיָהּ male'ākpanāy, 'angel of his face', or 'countenance'), means an angel that stands in his presence, and that enjoys his favor, as a man does who stands before a prince, or who is admitted constantly to his presence (compare Proverbs 22:29). Evidently there is reference here to an angel of superior order or rank, but to whom has been a matter of doubt with interpreters. Jarchi supposes that it was Michael, mentioned in Daniel 10:13-21. The Chaldee renders it, 'The angel sent (שְׁלִיחַ sheliyach) from his presence'."

The Trinitarian Hebrew scholar who commented on Isaiah 64:9 affirmed that the angel of His presence was an angel and not a God Person of an alleged Trinity. I am unaware of any major Christian group (Arian, Socinian, or Trinitarian) who would hold a view that the Holy Spirit is an actual angel's presence. Since only God's Holy Spirit fills the heavens and the earth, no created angel can be like God in filling the heavens and the earth as God. For Jeremiah 23:24 informs us that only God's Spirit "fills heaven and earth".

David wrote, in Psalms 139:7-10, "7Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? 8If I ascend to heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there. 9If I take the wings of the dawn, if I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, 10Even there Your hand will lead me, And Your right hand will lay hold of me".

How can any of the angels be the Holy Spirit of God when angels are "messengers" sent by God? Jesus and Paul affirmed that God the Father is the Holy Spirit (*John 4:23-24; Ephesians 4:3-6*). If a Trinitarian Son or Holy Spirit was sent around before the incarnation as an angel then that Son or Holy Spirit could not be a coequally distinct true God Person. For it was only after the Holy Spirit came down from heaven to become incarnate as the human child born and son given that the man Christ Jesus was sent by God. Thus, it is sensible to believe that He who sends is greater than he who is sent and that the angel [angel means "messenger"] OF God's Presence could not be a coequal member of an alleged Trinity.

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