

Exod 04-03-21a

Let's continue our worship this morning by pausing before the study of God's Word to look to the Lord in prayer. We recognize the fact that God is our Heavenly Father, and He gives us that picture. Some people argue with that because they've had a bad experience with their own father, you know, abusive households and things, and they say, well, I don't want to think of God as my father because my own human father didn't do a good job or fell short in some way or was an evil man.

But of course we know what a father should be and what a father can be, and God is the ideal father. He loves us. He cares about us.

He is on our side. And one of the saddest components, there's a lot you can say about Reformed theology and Calvinism and a lot of the misunderstandings of God's Word, but the worst thing to me about Reformed theology is it paints a picture of God as a cold, impartial, and predetermining judge. And you just don't really know what He's about to do because He's inscrutable and unknowable.

And He is a God who is willing to consign millions of people to the lake of fire just because it suits Him. We can't know why. And it's wrong to even ask Him.

Who are you to answer back to God? You better just be glad that He chose you to be one of the elect and don't question Him. And it's a cold and impartial God, and it is not the God of the Bible. God is our heavenly Father.

We are His children. He has adopted us. He has entered us into union with His own precious Son who is uniquely born, who has a unique heritage, a unique privilege, a unique inheritance, has a bright future in fulfilling the plan of God in the millennial kingdom and in the eternal future.

And we, especially in this age, have all of these privileges that belong to royalty and that belong to things that even the angels do not partake of. You read the first chapter of Hebrews. When did God ever adopt an angel and make him His son? When did He ever put him at the center of the history of an entire civilization, an entire race as He has the Lord Jesus at the center of human history? We, in this age especially, are a gift from God the Father to the Lord Jesus Christ.

All of us who believe in this age uniquely belong to Christ. This is a privilege Moses doesn't have, King David doesn't have. Any of the great believers of the Old Testament do not have the privileges that you and I enjoy.

Not to say that they've got a bad deal. It's a wonderful thing to be a member of the Old Testament saint panoply. They have many wonderful covenant blessings from God, and it is no less glorious, but it's different.

The people of Israel, the people of the patriarchal age, the people of the Old Testament belong to God the Father and have a relationship with Him that is unique and special. We have a separate and distinct, we have a new and better covenant founded on new and better promises. We are related to Christ.

We are Christians. We are in Him. We share His sonship.

We share His status as an inheritor, as an heir. We share His priesthood. The Melchizedekian priesthood does not belong to Israel.

It does not belong to Abraham. Abraham shared bread and wine with Melchizedek, the priest of Salem. And Jesus' high priesthood is in that order.

You say, what priesthood? It sounds mystical. Priesthood means your set of guidelines and protocols for access and relationship with God in the area of worship. And it's unique.

It's special. It's what the book of Hebrews is all about. So we have all of these, and one of our great privileges is we can go to God directly and represent ourselves before His throne.

If you read Hebrews chapter 10, we have access. The Lord Jesus has split the veil, symbolically speaking, that walled off the Holy of Holies in the presence of God. He has made a way of entry for us, and this is what we do when we pray.

People think, well, when you pray, you say, oh dear God, help me solve all my problems, help all the people I love. Amen. And sometimes we fail to remember that we are walking into the throne room of the creator of the universe.

That privilege was bought for us with the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Prophets in the Old Testament, as close as they were to God, receiving direct divine communication or communication through angels, fell on their face in the dust and were scared to death when a visitation or a vision of God came. We walk on our two feet, standing up.

We can pray standing up. We stand in the grace of Christ. We stand in the sacrifice that He made for us, and prayer is a great privilege.

God listens to us. God waits for us to come and talk to Him and lay before Him the circumstances of our lives. We have a conversation.

He speaks to us through His word. We speak to Him in response to His word and in seeking to apply His word and lay our life before Him. He's our heavenly Father.

You think about people who, in Esther, in the book of Esther, if the queen were to walk into the throne room uninvited, she could be instantly killed. It was a death penalty offense. The king had a choice.

If she came busting in without an invitation, without being asked, he had a scepter in his hand.

And unless he extended the scepter and said, come on forward, the guards would seize her, take her off, and execute her. And Esther had to risk her life to go uninvited to talk to Xerxes on behalf of the people of Israel who were about to be slain by decree because of the plot of Haman.

Well, you think about a little child running into the throne room. Do you think the king would tell the guards to seize his little five-year-old son or five-year-old daughter who came running into the throne room and say, execute her, execute him? They didn't have an invitation? No, the king is going to smile and beckon them forward and set them in his lap. This is the standing we have with the God of the universe because of Jesus Christ.

It is extraordinary. The angels look at it and marvel that God has that love for us. He loved us so much that he sent Jesus to die for us and rescue us from a lost and hopeless condition.

So this time of prayer should not become routine. It shouldn't just be kind of a knee-jerk, send a few words up, and then listen to the Bible lesson. Every time we pray, we exercise a privilege that angels would just long to have.

In eternity past, their access to God was brokered through the guardian cherub of the throne room who was Lucifer, Satan. Before he fell, that was his job. He restricted access to God even for the angels.

We have no such restriction. Anytime we choose, anytime we want, we go to the Lord in prayer. So we pause at the beginning of Bible class because we, with our Heavenly Father, have conversation.

We speak to him. He speaks to us. He's about to speak to us through his word.

We speak to him. It's a two-way street. So let's go to the Lord in prayer as we prepare to study.

Father, thank you for giving us another day. Thank you for the many provisions that you make through us in nature. We have aspects of climate and weather, the change of the seasons, the renewal of things in the spring.

We see the trees bursting forth with buds and with new life. We see everything turning green around us, and we recognize your mercy as it is reflected and expressed in nature. We know that you renew us.

You restore our souls. You cleanse us. You give us a new opportunity each day.

Your mercies are renewed every morning. And this morning we thank you for the Lord Jesus Christ who has come and made a way of entrance to you. He is the truth.

He is our life. And through him we have access to you and this grace in which we stand. We thank you for your word and for preserving it for these many years so that even thousands of years after the original manuscripts were penned, we can see and hear and learn from your

dealings with the patriarchs, with the nation of Israel, with the Lord Jesus, with the apostles and the early church.

We thank you for those men who down through the generations have risked and in some cases given their very lives so that we can have our own copy of your word and it is available today as it never has been before. We ask your blessing on us now as we seek to study your word. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will minister it to our souls.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. For the last week or so we've been looking at the angel of the Lord.

We've come through the initial delivery of the law through Moses to Israel on Mount Sinai. You remember the picture? They've come across the Red Sea, across the wilderness. Manna has started falling.

They went to Elim. They went to the place of springs and they've come through. God has provided for them a time or two when they thought they were out of everything.

And they're in their early stages. It reminds you of a little infant that has grown to the point where it's starting to kind of stand on its legs and for the first few times you have a period of weeks there where you hold it by the hand and its little legs stagger around and bend and it's all flexible and won't hardly stand up. But you keep holding it by the hands until it starts kind of getting its balance and then you can let go and it can stagger a few steps and then it falls on its face and you pick it up.

This is not an unpleasant experience. It is inevitable that something that is new, born, and in its early stages of life, you have to give it a lot of help and a lot of guidance and a lot of encouragement before it can begin to stand up and walk on its own. This is what we see happening in these first 18 or 19 chapters of Exodus, is God with this newborn nation, with people who have been slaves and have had no experience of God to speak of for a couple of hundred years, learning to walk, learning to trust God.

And of course they're miserable at it in the beginning, but God is patient. And now they're at the point where they can stand up, they can walk. And so you don't sit your little six-month-old infant in there, rockaroo, and say, now let me tell you about the rules of the house.

We don't open the door and leave it open and let the pets out. I mean, you don't give newborns and toddlers a big basket of legislation for your house and then expect them to live up to it. Now I'm going to tell you this one time and I expect you to remember it.

Don't be sticking your finger in the wall socket. Don't be unscrewing the light bulbs and sticking your hand down in there. Don't be touching the hot stove and then stand back and spank them every time.

I mean, they're just not ready for that. But there is a point at which they are. And at this point,

God says, you people in the nation of Israel have had enough experience of God and of His mercy and of His provision, His supernatural watch care, that you're ready for these instructions.

And so God is giving them through Moses on the mountain. And we saw that this breaks down into 12 parts, which is kind of a nice number when you're dealing with Israel. Twelve is a good number, but there are 12 sections.

We saw those 12 aspects of what is given here in these chapters. And now as the 12th section begins, now I've reviewed those enough, you don't need me to review them again. Do you have the 12 sections? Probably not.

Just in case, beginning in chapter 20, the end of chapter 20, what is involved in worship? This is the most important thing, right? God comes first. He is the author and the originator of the nation. He's their God.

So then we went down through servants. What is a capital offense? Different kinds of injuries. What about property? What about seduction, both physical and spiritual? Then we went back to capital offenses related to paganism, where the first set was related to violence.

Talking about the poor and afflicting people. Don't be persecuting and afflicting people. God's against that.

Reverence and dedication. Truth and justice. This last section we just finished was sabbaths and feasts.

A reiteration of the commandment regarding the seventh day. And the three feasts of assembly. Now we're in section 12, 2320 and following.

We've got 13 verses here. This is the concluding section of this delivery of the law in its summary form. And this is the promise of conquest.

And in that, God says, among other things, I will send my angel before you. And so we stopped and took a look at the concept of the angel of the Lord. Now, many, many people.

I'm starting a new paragraph here, so if I lost you, this is a new paragraph. This is the subject of the angel of the Lord. You find him cropping up here and there in the Old Testament.

The angel of the Lord appeared to Hagar. The angel of the Lord appears to Gideon. The angel of the Lord appears to Manoah, the father of Samson.

He shows up here and there. Well, who is he? Is he an angel? Is it the Lord Jesus Christ? Most people in the sort of wing of the modern church in which we find ourselves, most people think this is Christ before he actually came. It's Christ in a pre-incarnate form.

Incarnate means when he was born and walked in human flesh. Before that, the angel of the

Lord. Why do they think that? Well, because of a concept of what the job of the different members of the Trinity is.

Jesus, God the Son, is the revealed member of the Trinity. So if you're seeing God, you must be seeing Christ. No man has seen the Father at any time.

Can't see the Spirit. Jesus told Nicodemus in chapter 3, can't see the Spirit. So if you can't see the Father, can't see the Spirit, and you're seeing God, who must you be seeing is the logic.

It must be God the Son. But this assumes that the angel of the Lord is God, which the Bible does not say. And so last time, we looked at many passages and many statements that are made about and concerning the angel of the Lord that indicate to us that he is in fact an angel, a messenger from God, but he speaks in the first person, communicating from God.

Now you say, boy, I just don't know. Sam, that just sounds a little like you're kind of twisting the Scripture. I mean, if he says, I will do this, and I will do that, and if he... Burning Bush.

The angel of the Lord is in the Burning Bush, but he says, I am that I am. My name is Jehovah, this, that, and the other. And he's talking to the Israelites.

That sure sounds like that's God. Put off thy shoes from off thy feet. You're standing on holy ground.

So it must be God. Why would it be holy ground unless God is there? Well, these are good arguments. And you can see how people could take it that way.

And if they believe it, God bless them. But they're wrong. And this is why.

We're going to finish up our study of the angel of the Lord idea here. Because angel, angelos in the Greek, malach in the Hebrew, means messenger. And it is a proven, demonstrable, biblical fact that messengers in the ancient Semitic world that we are studying would speak in the first person on behalf of the one they represent.

You didn't have a telephone. See, today, if I want to talk to somebody in Milwaukee and see how my beer factory is doing, I can pick up the telephone and talk. Now, am I in the room with the person? I'm not.

They've got a little device with a speaker in it. And my voice emanates from the speaker. And I speak in the first person.

They hear me in the first person. But I am not the telephone. Right? Well, angels are God's telephone.

And when he starts speaking through them, they are just reproducing God's speech, but they are not God. This is the idea. Okay? Well, some people say, I understand your analogy, but I still don't think that's what's happening in Scripture.

So for our Scripture reading this morning, I want to just point something out in the Word of God. Turn with me to Luke chapter 7. Luke chapter 7. We've been through the Gospel of Luke. Wonderful book.

And if you went through that study, you may remember when we reached this point. Jesus has just given a half a chapter of teaching. This is the Sermon on the Plain.

Some people think it's the same as the Sermon on the Mount. It's not. The Sermon on the Mount is over in Matthew chapter 5 and following.

This is the Sermon on the Plain. It is not the same occasion. It is not the same sermon, although there is a lot of material that is similar.

We know how this is. We've got motivational speakers that travel the country motivating corporations or speaking. There are preachers who travel around doing conferences and revivals.

There are evangelists who go around giving. Do you think they ever use the same material over and over? Of course they do. Well, Jesus did the same thing.

Different crowd, different area, different occasion. So slightly different words, slightly different illustrations. And the order in which he gives it may change.

And if you compare Matthew 5 with Luke 6, you can see many similarities. You can also see differences. And some people have pointed to it and said, See, these are contradictions and errors in the Word of God.

Here it says he says this, and there it says he said that. Well, it's two different things. You can tell that's the Sermon on the Plain.

If you have a red letter edition, last 29 verses of Luke 6 is all in red ink because Jesus is teaching. Now, verse 1 of chapter 7 of Luke. Now, when he concluded all his sayings in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum.

Remember Capernaum? It's the biggest town up in the region where Jesus grew up, up in the Nazareth area. Up by the northern, northeastern, northwestern corner of the Sea of Galilee. He's up in that region.

Went to Capernaum, and a certain centurion servant who was dear to him was sick and ready to die. Now, the word servant here is Pais. P-A-I-S.

Pais. And a related word is Pidos. P-A-I-D-O-S.

This is kind of the root form, Pidos. There is a coming forward of this word into English in Pidea, which is an educational concept where you take children and the way you teach them is like you would train children in the ancient world. Homer and Virgil, and when you have Socrates and

Plato and the Platonic.

Trust me, Pidea has come down as a way of inculcating instruction into someone who is sort of a pseudo-son. They are a follower, they are under instruction. Could be a son, could be a servant.

They are someone who is in the mode of being trained up in the way that they should go. This is what Pidos has at its root. So you can use the word of a servant who is like a son to you, a protege, or it could be your actual son.

It is someone who is in that role, who is being mentored, I guess. I don't really like the word mentor, but there it is. So, this is a centurion's Pidos.

Could be a son, could be a dear servant. Who is sometimes translated just boy, lad, youth. Who is dear to him, sick and ready to die.

When he heard about Jesus, he sent elders of the Jews to him, pleading with him to come and heal his servant. So this is a Roman centurion, but obviously he is on good terms with the Jews, because these leading citizens, these big shots among the Jews, influential men high in society, perhaps wealthy, perhaps in the religious structure, have been sent. So he is not just sending some slouch servant with holes in his robe saying, Hey Jesus, I got a problem over here.

These are influential leading citizens of the Jews. The centurion figures, well, these men will be able to gain a hearing and be able to speak on my behalf. Pleading with him to come and heal his Pidos, his servant.

When they came to Jesus, they begged him earnestly. This is an interesting thing, because you don't typically think of leaders of the Jews begging anyone. You could see them coming in in their purple robes and saying, Well, you raggedy Nazarene rabbi, I've got a really important man over here and you really need to do this.

But these are unusual men among the leadership of the Jews, in that they don't have a Pharisaic attitude. They are not supercilious. They are not holier than thou, better than thou, looking down the nose.

These men have genuine humility. They genuinely care about the centurion and his problem, and they are willing to humble themselves on the centurion's behalf. These are good men.

These are the way the Jews were supposed to be. They respect the Lord Jesus. They come, they treat him with respect, and they beg him.

They ask him earnestly. They sacrifice their dignity and their high and mightiness on behalf of the centurion, who is their friend and whom they represent. So they came to Jesus, begged him earnestly, saying that the one for whom he should do this was deserving.

And then you have a quote here. He loves our nation. He has built us a synagogue.

So he is sympathetic with, he believes in the God of Israel. So much so that he has invested heavily. It is no cheap thing to build a synagogue.

And this man has spent his own personal money to provide a place of worship for the God of Israel, and for the people who care about God. He built this synagogue. So Jesus went with them when he was already not far from the house.

Again, representatives. Centurion sent friends to him, saying to him, Lord, do not trouble yourself. I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof.

Now, the speech is coming in the first person, isn't it? Do not trouble yourself. I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof. Now, who is speaking here? The centurion? Indirectly, the friends are delivering the speech of the centurion, right? Therefore, I did not even think myself worthy to come to you, but say the word and my Pidas, my servant or son, my boy, will be healed.

I also am a man under authority. Having soldiers under me, I say to one, go, and he goes. Another comes, and he comes.

To my servant, do this, and he does it. Jesus heard these things. He marveled at him.

Turned around and said to the crowd that followed him, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel. And those who were sent, returning to the house, found the servant well, who had been sick. Okay, pretty clear picture of what happened there, right? Now, turn to Matthew chapter 8. Matthew chapter 8, verse 5. This is the same event, the very same occurrence.

Now, when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, pleading with him, saying, Lord, my Pidas, my servant, is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented. Jesus said to him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that you should come under my roof, but only speak a word and my Pidas will be healed.

For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. I say to this one, go, and he goes. To another, come, and he comes.

And to my servant, do this, and he does it. When Jesus heard it, he marveled and said to those who followed, Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel. And I say to you that many will come from east and west and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.

But the sons of the kingdom will be cast into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then Jesus said to this centurion, Go your way, and as you have believed, so let it be done for you.

And his servant was healed that same hour. You see the way the scripture treats the

conversation with the centurion in this instance. It was, in fact, a conversation that was carried through messengers.

The elders of the Jews came and beseeched the Lord Jesus. Runners went back and said, The Lord Jesus is coming. And as he's on the way, the centurion sends servants, friends, a second set of messengers.

The elders are probably returning with the Lord Jesus. The second set of messengers come and say, No, Lord, you don't need to come under my roof. Just say the word.

In Matthew, this is simplified, and it is as though the centurion is present. If you only had the Matthew account, you wouldn't know that this was actually brokered through two different sets of messengers, the elders of Israel and the friends. But, in fact, that's the way it happened.

And the scripture presents it as though it is the centurion speaking in the first person. So, I hope this helps us understand that in the Semitic mind, we have such a technical, scientific, slice-and-dice, draw-and-quarter, pin-everything-down mind. And in the Semitic mind, this doesn't make a difference.

It's not an important detail in the telling of Matthew's account. In Matthew's narrative, that detail doesn't pertain. He is more interested in including part of what Jesus said that Luke leaves out.

Luke doesn't tell us about those who are going to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. Instead, there's a slightly different emphasis in Luke. And this is why we have four Gospels, because each of them gives us a little different aspect, a little different view, different things come into play.

So, this is basically what is going on with the angel of the Lord. He is God's mouthpiece, his spokesman. One other example I would like to give you here is in Joshua 5. Joshua 5. We'll start in verse 10.

I would like to just go back and start in 1-1 and read all the way forward. It's a fascinating book. But, while the sons of Israel, this is Joshua 5-10, the sons of Israel camped at Gilgal.

They observed the Passover on the evening of the 14th day of the month on the desert plains of Jericho. Where is Jericho? Which side of the Jordan? It's on the west side. It's on the Jerusalem side of the Jordan.

In fact, it's just down the road from Jerusalem. There's a steep road that goes from Jerusalem to Jericho. This is the setting, by the way, for the parable of the Good Samaritan.

There's a man passing from Jerusalem to Jericho. And you have the priest and the guys passing on the other side and then the Samaritan. On the day after the Passover, we know what this day is, don't we? We just studied the three assembly feasts in Israel.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread begins on the day after, doesn't it? In the crucifixion week, the first day is Friday. On that very day, they ate some of the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. Unleavened cakes, right? It's the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Even though they're not yet taking possession of the land, they're observing the feast that we are studying now. The manna ceased on the day after they had eaten some of the produce of the land, so that the sons of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate some of the yield of the land of Canaan during that year. So, the occasion of the ceasing of the manna is the second day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

This, by the way, is the last day that the Lord Jesus spent in the grave, which is Saturday of crucifixion week, right? You have 14th Nisan, which is Thursday. Jesus is crucified on Thursday. First day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which is a high Sabbath.

That's why they had to get the bodies down from the crosses Thursday night. Everybody thinks it was a Friday crucifixion because they had to get the bodies down before the Sabbath. It's not a Saturday Sabbath.

It's the Feast of Unleavened Bread Sabbath, which on that year, I think 31 AD, occurred on a Friday. So then the next day, which is a regular weekly Sabbath, Saturday, this is the second day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This is here, the second day after Passover, the manna ceased, the day after they had eaten some of the produce of the land.

That's the day the manna ceases. Well, manna ceased on Saturday every week, right? There was no manna on Saturday. And so, when would they have been expecting manna again? Sunday, the first day of the week.

But now they're eating the produce of the land. This is the new life. This is the new sustenance.

Then you have the Lord Jesus Christ resurrected on Sunday morning. So there's a great picture there. Verse 13, now it came about when Joshua was by Jericho.

Now you remember, when they're coming across the Jordan, they're coming into the land, this is the first town they have to take. It's the first obstacle in the path. This is the stronghold where the Canaanites live.

And so they've got to take it. So Joshua was by Jericho. He lifted up his eyes and looked.

And behold, a man was standing opposite him with his sword drawn in his hand. If you look in your New King James, that's got a capital M on it, doesn't it? It's suggesting that this is the Lord Jesus. This is how the New King James translators take it.

A man stood opposite with his sword drawn in his hand. Joshua went to him and said to him, Are you for us or for our adversaries? So Joshua does not recognize this man as the Lord at first glance. Because he knows the Lord is for them, right? He wouldn't be asking God, Are you for

us or are you for the Canaanites? I mean, stupid question.

God hasn't brought you through the wilderness for 40 years and parted the waters of the Jordan so that you could be destroyed at the first city you come to. So obviously, in asking this question, Joshua does not recognize this man standing with a sword in his hand as the Lord, or even as the Lord's representative. He's just a man with a sword in his hand.

He is obviously dressed up in something that would appear to be a general's uniform or something regal, because if it was a single guy, Joshua might just whip out a sling or a spear or something and say, Well, obviously we're in a foreign land here and you're no Israelite, so I'm going to slay you. You're supposed to slay everybody in the land. But he recognizes him as a representative of something important.

So he says, Well, which side are you on? Are you an ally or are you an enemy? And the fact that he asks the question indicates that this is no poorly dressed guy. This is somebody who's obviously a big shot. For us or for our adversaries? So, verse 14, he said, No, but as commander of the army of the Lord, I have now come.

The word translated commander here is sar, S-A-R. This is the word that was used of Saul when he was initially anointed in Israel by Samuel. I'm anointing you as sar over the people of Israel.

It's the best translation, bringing it into more modern cultures and times, would be prince. The word in Russian for their old-time leader a hundred years ago or more, T-S-A-R, has its roots in this same word. The tsar or the tsar, this is sar.

It's just S-A-R. Sheen, the Star Trek deal you do with your little Vulcan funny symbol that Leonard Nimoy got because he's Jewish and he saw the priest do it or the synagogue guys do it in the worship. That's where he got that whole thing because when they stand up and say the Shema, everybody bow your heads and shut your eyes and then they say the thing.

And the Kohanim will make that symbol with their hands. I can't remember what it looks like now. What is it? Yeah, like this.

Like that. Okay. So that's a sheen.

That's the letter S or S-H in Hebrew. Now, pretend like this is a sheen on paper. If you put the dot as you look at it on this side, on the right as you look at it, over the rightmost little prong, that tells you pronounce it S-H.

If there's a dot on the left side, you pronounce it as a hard S. And that's what we have here. Sar begins with the letter sheen, but it's a hard S. S and then there's a vowel point. In the ancient scripts, there was no vowel points.

And then you have Resh, which is the letter R. It just looks like an upside-down letter L with a round corner. All right. So Sar is the word here.

Sar is translated as prince. When Balak sends representatives to Balaam and says, Come over here, we'll pay you a lot of money if you'll curse Israel, the men that were sent are Sarim. They are princes from Balak's kingdom.

They're his high and mighty cabinet officers. They're high-ranking guys. So, as commander or captain of the army of the Lord, I have now come.

Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to him, What does my Lord say to his servant? Then the captain or commander, the Sar of the Lord's army, by the way, Lord's army here is Saba. This is Yahweh Sabaoth or Jehovah Sabaoth that you hear about as one of the names of God. Well, Saba means host, Sabaoth.

Im is kind of the plural for a masculine noun. O-T-H, ot is the plural for a feminine noun. And for whatever reason, the word army in Hebrew is a feminine word.

And so instead of saying Sabaim, you say Sabaoth. So, Lord of hosts is Yahweh Sabaoth. This is the Sar of the Saba, which is the host, the Lord's host, captain of the army of God.

When you go to Daniel chapter 10, Daniel 9, we looked at that last week, where the angel Gabriel comes and speaks to Daniel and says, I've been fighting and no one helped me, but I was fighting against the prince of Persia, but then the prince of your people came. Sar is the word. And he is a peer or a contemporary, a like being with Gabriel.

So, who is this that's standing here? Now, the Bible says, man, if you're woodenly literal, you have to say, well, he's a homo sapiens. But they put a capital H on it, they say, no, it's the Lord Jesus. Well, you look at the word Sar, you look at Daniel 9 and 10, and we say this is the angel, specifically one who is captain of the Lord's army.

He fights on the spiritual plane with the principalities and the powers. It's not the Lord Jesus. It is an office that he holds.

He is the captain of the Lord's host. But look at what he says in verse 15, take your sandal off your foot, the place where you stand is holy. So we learn from this in the burning bush that the place of meeting can be holy ground because this is as close as you're getting to God.

The grounds of the tabernacle, the grounds of the temple are holy ground, and yet it's just priests and people walking around there. You don't have the actual living, glowing presence of God there every day, but it's still holy ground. This means you're getting the word from God, and even the place where the messenger stands is holy ground.

Respect it. Treat it as though the Lord himself is here, is the idea. And so when Joshua falls down and worships, he's not worshipping the captain of the host.

He's worshipping God. When he takes his sandal off his foot, just like Moses at the bush, it is out of respect for God, not necessarily for the angel. And you find other places where men fall

down in front of angels, like in Revelation or Ezekiel, and he says, no, stand up.

Don't worship me. Worship God. Don't get me confused with the Lord God.

Well, I hope this has shed a little bit of light and given us a sense, as we read through the word of God, of understanding the way God communicates. Sometimes distinguishing the messenger is important. Other times the messenger is completely transparent.

Hopefully the truth of God's word enters our soul, and the messenger is more or less not an issue. Well, let's pause here and take a break. When we come back, we're going to continue our study in Exodus chapter 23.