



THE ROYAL MESSENGER

an Ancient Near Eastern Approach

MAL 3:1 “SEE, I AM SENDING MY MESSENGER, AND HE SHALL PREPARE THE WAY BEFORE ME. THEN SUDDENLY THE MASTER YOU ARE SEEKING COMES TO HIS HEKAL, EVEN THE MESSENGER OF THE COVENANT, IN WHOM YOU DELIGHT. SEE, HE IS COMING,” SAID יהוה' OF HOSTS.



Wisdom in Torah

DANIEL MCGIRR
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TOPICS COVERED

1. *The Role of the Royal Messenger*

2. *The Letter of the Royal Messenger*

3. *Ancient Near East Cosmology and Cosmogony*

4. *The Divine Council in the eyes of the Ancients.*

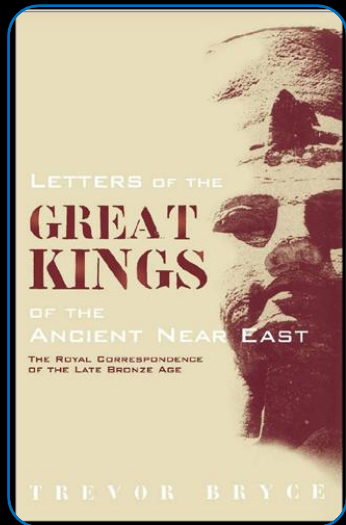


MAIN RESOURCES USED FOR THE FIRST 2 TOPICS

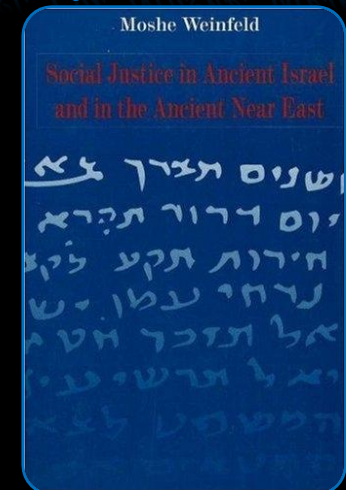
1. The Scriptures/First Century Writings



2. Letters of the Great Kings in ANE-The Royal Correspondence of the Late Bronze Age By Trevor Bryce



3. Social Justice in Ancient Israel and the Ancient Near East By Moshe Weinfeld



The Divine Council?

In Israel, as in the ANE in general, the underlying conception of the heavenly world was that of a royal court. Yahweh was envisioned as a king, and at his service were divine beings who served as counselors, political subordinates, warriors, and general agents. These divine beings were often referred to as a collective group (Gen 28:12; 33:1–2; Pss 29:1; 89:6–9) and were understood to constitute a council (“the council of El,” *‘ădat’ēl*, Ps 82:1; “the conclave of Yahweh/Eloah,” *sôdyhwh*, Jer 23:18; *sôd’ēlôah*, Job 15:8), “the conclave/assembly of the holy ones” (*sôd/qāhālqědōšim*, Ps 89:6, 9).

*FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLE UNDERSTANDING TO THIS
SERIES*

LETTERS OF THE GREAT KINGS IN ANE-THE ROYAL CORRESPONDENCE OF THE LATE BRONZE AGE BY TREVOR BRYCE

Diplomatic missions

WHEN READY FOR DISPATCH, THE LETTERS WERE ENCLOSED IN CLAY ENVELOPES SECURED BY THE SENDER'S SEAL AND ENTRUSTED TO MESSENGERS WHO CONVEYED THEM TO THEIR DESTINATION, ON FOOT OR BY WAGON, OCCASIONALLY ON HORSEBACK AND SOMETIMES BY BOAT. THE LETTERS MAKE FREQUENT REFERENCE TO MESSENGERS, THOUGH IN THIS CONTEXT THE TERM 'MESSENGER', '*mār šipri*, IN AKKADIAN, HAS A WIDE VARIETY OF MEANINGS, RANGING FROM MERE COURIERS OR DELIVERYMEN TO DISTINGUISHED AMBASSADORS, MAGNATES AND CHIEF MINISTERS, WHOSE RANKS SOMETIMES INCLUDED MEMBERS OF THE KING'S OWN FAMILY, *empowered to negotiate with a foreign ruler on their master's behalf*.¹⁰ THE LATTER GROUP SERVED AS REGULAR INTERMEDIARIES BETWEEN THE GREAT KINGS, THEIR ROLE ASSUMING ALL THE GREATER IMPORTANCE SINCE THE KINGS THEMSELVES NEVER MET. 'THOUGH WE GREAT KINGS ARE BROTHERS,' WROTE QUEEN PUDUHEPA TO RAMESSES, 'THE ONE HAS NEVER SEEN THE OTHER. IT IS OUR MESSENGERS WHO COME AND GO BETWEEN US.'¹¹ IN FACT, A LETTER SENT BY A KING TO HIS ROYAL BROTHER WAS GENERALLY ACCOMPANIED BY A NUMBER OF OFFICIALS FROM HIS COURT. ITS DELIVERY BELONGED WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF A DIPLOMATIC MISSION. *Page 57*



“THE MESSENGER OF THE COUNCIL”

ANCHOR BIBLE DICTIONARY

SINCE THE MAJOR FUNCTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE GODS WAS TO MAKE AND ENFORCE DECREES CONCERNING THE OPERATION OF THE COSMOS, AN IMPORTANT ROLE PLAYED BY CERTAIN MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY WAS THAT OF MESSENGER OF THE COUNCIL. IN THE CANAANITE MATERIALS FROM UGARIT, THE MAJOR GODS ARE DEPICTED AS DISPATCHING MESSENGERS (CALLED *ML'K*, *T'DT*, *ĠLM*; CF. HEBREW *MAL'AK*, *TE'ÛDÂ*, *'ELEM*) WHO DELIVER THEIR ADDRESSES IN A HIGHLY STYLIZED, *FORMULAIC MANNER* (*ṭḥm//hwt*). IN THE HEBREW BIBLE, THE PHRASE *MAL'AK YHWH*, “THE MESSENGER OF YAHWEH” (EXOD 3:2; NUM 22:31; JUDG 13:13, 15, 16, 2 SAM 24:16–17; ZECH 3:1; ETC.; SEE ALSO THE *MAL'AKÊ'ELŌHÎM* OF GEN 32:2–3), IS USED TO DENOTE THOSE DIVINE BEINGS WHO SERVE AS ENVOYS OF YAHWEH AND WHO DELIVER HIS DECREES. *Often confirming their divine commission is the notice that they are “sent” by Yahweh from his council* (GEN 24:7, 40; EXOD 23:20; NUM 20:16; COMPARE JUDG 13:8).

MOSHE BEING “SENT AS A MESSENGER”

EXO 3:6 AND HE SAID, “I AM THE ELOHIM OF YOUR FATHER, THE ELOHIM OF ABRAHAM, THE ELOHIM OF YITSHAQ, AND THE ELOHIM OF YA'AQOB.” AND MOSHEH HID HIS FACE, FOR HE WAS AFRAID TO LOOK AT ELOHIM.

EXO 3:7 AND הוה' SAID, “I HAVE INDEED SEEN THE OPPRESSION OF MY PEOPLE WHO ARE IN MITSRAYIM, AND HAVE HEARD THEIR CRY BECAUSE OF THEIR SLAVE-DRIVERS, FOR I KNOW THEIR SORROWS.

EXO 3:8 “AND I HAVE COME DOWN TO DELIVER THEM FROM THE HAND OF THE MITSrites, AND TO BRING THEM UP FROM THAT LAND TO A GOOD AND SPACIOUS LAND, TO A LAND FLOWING WITH MILK AND HONEY, TO THE PLACE OF THE KENA'ANITES AND THE HITTITES AND THE AMORITES AND THE PERIZZITES AND THE HİWWITES AND THE YEbusITES.

EXO 3:9 “AND NOW, SEE, THE CRY OF THE CHILDREN OF YISRA'ĒL HAS COME TO ME, AND I HAVE ALSO SEEN THE OPPRESSION WITH WHICH THE MITSrites OPPRESS THEM.

EXO 3:10 “AND NOW, COME, *I am sending you to Pharaoh,* TO BRING MY PEOPLE, THE CHILDREN OF YISRA'ĒL, OUT OF MITSRAYIM.”

EXO 3:11 AND MOSHEH SAID TO ELOHIM, “WHO AM I THAT I SHOULD GO TO PHARAOH, AND THAT I SHOULD BRING THE CHILDREN OF YISRA'EL OUT OF MITSRAYIM?”

EXO 3:12 AND HE SAID, “BECAUSE I AM WITH YOU. AND THIS IS TO YOU THE SIGN THAT I HAVE SENT YOU: WHEN YOU HAVE BROUGHT THE PEOPLE OUT OF MITSRAYIM, YOU ARE TO SERVE ELOHIM ON THIS MOUNTAIN.”

EXO 3:13 AND MOSHEH SAID TO ELOHIM, “SEE, WHEN I COME TO THE CHILDREN OF YISRA'ĒL AND SAY TO THEM, *The Elohīm of your fathers has sent me to you,*’ AND THEY SAY TO ME, ‘WHAT IS HIS NAME?’ WHAT SHALL I SAY TO THEM?”

EXO 3:14 AND ELOHIM SAID TO MOSHEH, “I AM THAT WHICH I AM.”¹ AND HE SAID, “THUS YOU SHALL SAY TO THE CHILDREN OF YISRA'EL, *I am has sent me to you.*’

EXO 3:15 AND ELOHIM SAID FURTHER TO MOSHEH, “THUS YOU ARE TO SAY TO THE CHILDREN OF YISRA'ĒL, ‘הוה' ELOHIM OF YOUR FATHERS, THE ELOHIM OF ABRAHAM, THE ELOHIM OF YITSHAQ, AND THE ELOHIM OF YA'AQOB, HAS SENT ME TO YOU. THIS IS MY NAME FOREVER, AND THIS IS MY REMEMBRANCE TO ALL GENERATIONS.’

Exo 14:14 “יהוה does fight for you, and you keep still.”

Exo 14:15 And יהוה said to Mosheh, “Why do you cry to Me? Speak to the children of Yisra’el, and let them go forward.

Exo 14:16 “And you, lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, and let the children of Yisra’el go on dry ground through the midst of the sea.

Exo 14:17 “And I, see I am hardening the hearts of the Mitsrites, and they shall follow them. And I am to be esteemed through Pharaoh and over all his army, his chariots, and his horsemen.

Exo 14:18 “And the Mitsrites shall know that I am יהוה, when I am esteemed through Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen.”

Exo 14:19 *And the Messenger of Elohim*, who went before the camp of Yisra’el, moved and went behind them. *And the column of cloud went from before them and stood behind them,*

Exo 14:20 and came between the camp of the Mitsrites and the camp of Yisra’el. And it was the cloud and the darkness, and it gave light by night, and the one did not come near the other all the night.

Exo 14:21 And Mosheh stretched out his hand over the sea. And יהוה caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea into dry land, and the waters were divided.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

HEBREW WORD USED FOR CLOUD IS ANAN

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ʿĀNĀN

BDB DEFINITION:

1) CLOUD, CLOUDY,
CLOUD-MASS

1A) CLOUD-MASS (OF *theophanic
cloud*)

1B) CLOUD

WHAT IS THEOPHANY?

THEOPHANY, FROM THE ANCIENT GREEK(ῆ) (*THEOPHANEIA*, MEANING "APPEARANCE OF GOD"), REFERS TO THE APPEARANCE OF A DEITY TO A HUMAN OR OTHER BEING. IT REFERS TO THE MANIFESTATION OF GOD TO MAN; THE SENSIBLE SIGN BY WHICH THE PRESENCE OF GOD IS REVEALED.

ONLY A SMALL NUMBER OF THEOPHANIES ARE FOUND IN THE HEBREW BIBLE.

EXAMPLES INCLUDE THE BURNING BUSH, *pillar of fire/cloud* AND MT SINAI

YAHWEH CAME UPON A "CHARIOT OF CLOUD ((ANAN))" AT SINAI, A FAMILIAR MOTIF ASSOCIATED WITH GOD AT SINAI AND THEN ALSO HIS PRESENCE AT THE TENT OF MEETING, THE TABERNACLE, AND THE TEMPLE. AT UGARIT (ANAN WAS A DIVINE MESSENGER, NOT JUST A VAPOROUS CLOUD." IN HABAKKUK 3, ONE OF THE SO-CALLED "MARCH FROM THE SOUTH" PASSAGES CONCERNING YAHWEH'S GEOGRAPHICAL ORIGINS, YAHWEH MARCHES TO SINAI WITH HIS HEAVENLY RETINUE, WHICH, AS HAS ALREADY BEEN NOTED, CONTAINS THE NAMES OF OTHER DEITIES

QUOTE TAKEN FROM MICHAEL HEISER'S THESIS ON THE DIVINE COUNCIL.

**MAT 23:37 "YERUSHALAYIM, YERUSHALAYIM, KILLING
THE PROPHETS AND STONING THOSE WHO ARE SENT TO
HER! HOW OFTEN I WISHED TO GATHER YOUR CHILDREN
TOGETHER, THE WAY A HEN GATHERS HER CHICKENS
UNDER HER WINGS, BUT YOU WOULD NOT!**

**MAT 23:38 "SEE! YOUR HOUSE IS LEFT TO YOU LAID
WASTE,**

**MAT 23:39 FOR I SAY TO YOU, FROM NOW ON YOU
SHALL BY NO MEANS SEE ME, UNTIL YOU SAY, 'BLESSED**

IS HE WHO IS COMING IN THE NAME OF יהוה
*EVERY SINGLE PROPHET IN THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES WAS SENT AS A
ROYAL MESSENGER TO ISRAEL AND HAD MORE AUTHORITY THAN
ANYONE ELSE ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH.*

YESHUA "SENT" AS THE MESSENGER OF THE COVENANT

LUK 4:16 AND HE CAME TO NATSARETH, WHERE HE HAD BEEN BROUGHT UP. AND ACCORDING TO HIS PRACTICE, HE WENT INTO THE CONGREGATION ON THE SABBATH DAY, AND STOOD UP TO READ.

LUK 4:17 AND THE SCROLL OF THE PROPHET YESHAYAHU WAS HANDED TO HIM. AND HAVING UNROLLED THE SCROLL, HE FOUND THE PLACE WHERE IT WAS WRITTEN:

LUK 4:18 "THE SPIRIT OF יהוה¹ IS UPON ME,¹ BECAUSE HE HAS ANOINTED ME TO BRING THE GOOD NEWS TO THE POOR. *He has sent Me* TO HEAL THE BROKEN-HEARTED, TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SEND AWAY CRUSHED ONES WITH A RELEASE, FOOTNOTE: ¹ISA. 61:1-3.

LUK 4:19 TO PROCLAIM THE ACCEPTABLE YEAR OF יהוה¹.

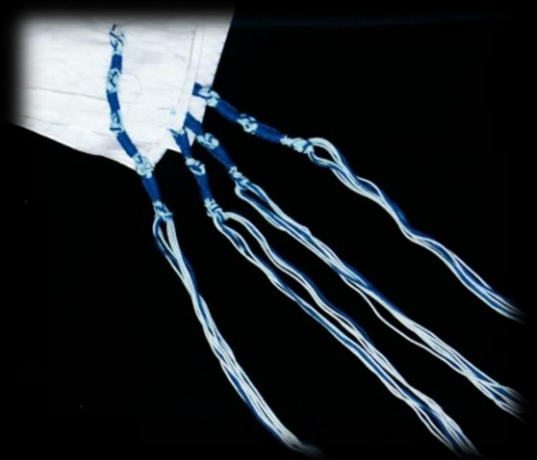
LUK 4:20 AND HAVING ROLLED UP THE SCROLL, HE GAVE IT BACK TO THE ATTENDANT AND SAT DOWN. AND THE EYES OF ALL IN THE CONGREGATION WERE FIXED UPON HIM.

LUK 4:21 AND HE BEGAN TO SAY TO THEM, "TODAY THIS SCRIPTURE HAS BEEN FILLED IN YOUR HEARING."

LETTERS OF THE GREAT KINGS IN ANE-THE ROYAL CORRESPONDENCE OF THE LATE BRONZE AGE BY TREVOR BRYCE

The role of the chief envoy

HIS MAJESTY'S CHIEF REPRESENTATIVE MAY HAVE HAD A NUMBER OF ITEMS ON HIS AGENDA FOR DISCUSSION WITH HIS HOST.¹³ BUT NO DOUBT MUCH OF HIS BRIEF HAD TO DO WITH THE CONTENTS OF THE LETTER ENTRUSTED TO HIS CHARGE, AND IN THE FIRST INSTANCE HE PROBABLY CONFINED HIMSELF LARGELY TO A PRESENTATION OF ITS SALIENT POINTS, OR TO MATTERS ARISING DIRECTLY FROM IT. WHILE HE MUST HAVE BEEN ALLOWED SOME LATITUDE BY HIS KING IN HOW HE WENT ABOUT HIS TASK, THERE WERE OBVIOUS LIMITATIONS ON WHAT HE COULD SAY. *He had to be sure that it was consistent with his overall brief—and with what the letter itself actually said.* NO DOUBT THERE WERE SCRIBES PRESENT TO TAKE DOWN HIS WORDS AS HE SPOKE THEM, SO THAT THEY COULD BE CHECKED AGAINST THE LETTER'S CONTENTS. ONCE HANDED OVER AND ITS TAMPER-PROOF SEAL REMOVED, THE LETTER WOULD HAVE BEEN TRANSLATED INTO THE LOCAL LANGUAGE (IF NOT AKKADIAN) BY THE RECIPIENT'S OWN SCRIBES SO THAT ITS CONTENTS COULD BE CAREFULLY SCRUTINIZED. INITIALLY, THIS PROVIDED THE MEANS OF CONFIRMING STATEMENTS, PROMISES OR REQUESTS WHICH THE FOREIGN ENVOY HAD MADE IN HIS ADDRESS. *page58*



THE PRAYER OF YESHUA

READ JOHN CHAPTER 17