

THEOPHANIES OR CHRISTOPHANIES

Appearances of the Pre-Incarnate Christ in Old Testament

Theophanies, or Christophanies as they are sometimes called, are appearances of God or Christ in human form in the Old Testament. Biblical scholars identify “*The angel of the Lord,*” “*the Angel of the Covenant,*” “*the angel of His Presence,*” as Christ, the Son of God, in his pre-incarnate form. The way we know the difference between a normal angelic visit and one of Jesus Christ is the way in which he is perceived by the person being visited. If they worship him, if they call him God or by God’s name or if he speaks as God himself, then he is not just an angel but God revealing himself to men in human form.

- ◆ No man has seen God at anytime...*dwelling in light no man can approach, invisible*
- ◆ Jesus said...the Son has declared Him...John 1:18
- ◆ He that has seen the Son has seen the Father...John 14:8-9
- ◆ He is the brightness of His glory and the exact image of His Person... Heb. 1:2-3

- To Abraham – Genesis 18:1/ 22:11-13/ 26:2,5,2,,25
Genesis 22:11 And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here *am* I. Genesis 22:15 And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time,
Exodus 6:3 And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by *the name of God* Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.

- To Hagar – Genesis 16:7-14
Genesis 16:10 And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude.

- To Jacob – Genesis 28:/ 32:24-32/ 48:15-16/ Hosea 12:4-5
Genesis 31:11 And the angel of God spake unto me in a dream, *saying*, Jacob: And I said, Here *am* I. ... 13 I *am* the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, *and* where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred.

- To Moses – Exodus 14:2,6,14/ 23:20-21, 33-34 Acts 7:38
Exodus 3:2 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush *was* not consumed.

- To Joshua – Joshua 5:13-15 “Captain of the host of the Lord”
Joshua 5:14 And he said, Nay; but *as* captain of the host of the LORD *am* I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? 15 And the captain of the LORD’S host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest *is* holy. And Joshua did so.

- To Manoah – Judges 14:15-23 Is 9:6
Judges 13:16 For Manoah knew not that he *was* an angel of the LORD. 17 And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, What *is* thy name, that when thy sayings come to pass we may do thee honour? 18 And the angel of the LORD said unto him, Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it *is* secret?... 20 For it came to pass, when the flame went up toward heaven from off the altar, that the angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar. And Manoah and his wife looked on *it*, and

fell on their faces to the ground. 21 But the angel of the LORD did no more appear to Manoah and to his wife. Then Manoah knew that he *was* an angel of the LORD.

- To Isaiah – Isaiah 6:1-13/ John 12:39-41/ Ez 1:1-28/ Is 63:8-10
Isaiah 6:1 In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. ... 5 Then said I, Woe *is* me! for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.
- To Shadrach, Meshach, Abendigo Dan 3:24-25
Daniel 3:24 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, *and* spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. 25 He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

Moses – Exodus 33:18-23 – My Face May Not Be Seen

Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory." 19 And the LORD said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. 20 But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live." 21 Then the LORD said, "There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. 22 When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. 23 Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen."

John 14:8-11

Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." 9 Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. 11 Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves.

So What

It was thus not impossible for the Jewish mind to conceive of God coming in the form of a man. It had happened in the past as seen in His Old Testament appearances. The invisible God cannot be looked upon by human eyes, so he veils himself in flesh, to be seen and to communicate with men. The Jews had viewed the Torah (the Law) as preexistent with God, so also the author of John viewed Jesus, but Jesus came to be regarded as the personified source of life and illumination of mankind.

He is Immanuel, God with Us. – Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:23