

Christ in his O.T. Appearances

The Angel of the Lord



WEST SOUND COMMUNITY CHURCH

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After the crucifixion, burial, and resurrection, Jesus veiled his face and walked with two of his followers to a town called Emmaus

“That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, ‘What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?’ And they stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, ‘Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?’ And he said to them, ‘What things?’ And they said to him, ‘Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see.’

‘O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?’ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.” Luke 24:13-27

Did you notice that last line...”*And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself?*” The phrase “Moses and all the Prophets” was a shorthand way of saying all the scriptures. At that time, this would mean the whole of the Old Testament. So, Jesus shared with these folks what their “Bible” had to say about him. What Old Testament prophecies predicted about him. What historical typologies taught about him. And, for this lesson’s purpose, how Christophanies confirm the work of the Son of God throughout history.

First, let’s begin with a couple technical terms.

Theophany: a compound word meaning God-appearance. Theos/God + Phainein/show, appear, bring to light.

Christophany: a compound word meaning Anointed One-appearance. Christ/Anointed + Phainein/show, appear, bring to light.

Yup, you got it. A Christophany was an appearance of the Son of God (the second member of the Trinity) before his incarnation as the infant of Mary...the betrothed of Joseph. Jesus of Nazareth did not “receive” a Christ anointing. He did not become the “Chosen One...the Messiah.” He was, is, and ever shall be the Christ.

Second, let's look at three of these appearances.

1. The Son of God is THE Angel of the Lord...and the meaning of angel is messenger.

A. His appearance to Hagar. Genesis 16:7-14

"The angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur. And he said, 'Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?' She said, 'I am fleeing from my mistress Sarai.' The angel of the LORD said to her, 'Return to your mistress and submit to her.' The angel of the LORD also said to her, 'I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude.' And the angel of the LORD said to her, 'Behold, you are pregnant and shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael, because the LORD has listened to your affliction. He shall be a wild donkey of a man, his hand against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he shall dwell over against all his kinsmen.' So she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, 'You are a God of seeing,' for she said, 'Truly here I have seen him who looks after me.' Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; it lies between Kadesh and Bered."

As we have seen many times, the word LORD, with "ord" in capital letters, found in this context, is the personal name for God in the Old Testament. It is the word we usually pronounce as "Yahweh." As you can see, it is used several times in conjunction with the phrase "the angel of the" and twice independent from the phrase...while in every instance referring to the same person.

B. His appearance to Abraham. Genesis 22:11-18

"But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, 'Abraham, Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' He said, 'Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.'" And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called the name of that place, 'The LORD will provide'; as it is said to this day, 'On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided.' And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven and said, 'By myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.'"

This passage is taken from the well known historical account of the Lord testing Abraham's faith by asking him to sacrifice his son. While it was never the Lord's intention to take the life of Abraham's son, it was his intention to help Abraham with his walk of faith. During the transaction of this event Abraham interacted with God the same way Hagar had done. The Angel of Yahweh gave instructions to Abraham. Abraham obeyed. Abraham knew that in responding to the Angel of Yahweh he was responding to Yahweh.

C. His appearance to Gideon. Judges 6:11-24

"Now the angel of the LORD came and sat under the terebinth at Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the winepress to hide it from the Midianites. And the angel of the LORD appeared to him and said to him, 'The LORD is with you, O mighty man of valor.' And Gideon said to him, 'Please, my lord, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all his wonderful deeds that our fathers recounted to us, saying, 'Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?' But now the LORD has forsaken us and given us into the hand of Midian.' And the LORD turned to him and said, 'Go in this might of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian; do not I send you?' And he said to him, 'Please, Lord, how can I save Israel? Behold, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.' And the LORD said to him, 'But I will be with you, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man.' And he said to him, 'If now I have found favor in your eyes, then show me a sign that it is you who speak with me. Please do not depart from here until I come to you and bring out my present and set it before you.' And he said, 'I will stay till you return.' So Gideon went into his house and prepared a young goat and unleavened cakes from an ephah of flour. The meat he put in a basket, and the broth he put in a pot, and

brought them to him under the terebinth and presented them. And the **angel of God** said to him, 'Take the meat and the unleavened cakes, and put them on this rock, and pour the broth over them.' And he did so. Then the angel of the LORD reached out the tip of the staff that was in his hand and touched the meat and the unleavened cakes. And **fire sprang up from the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened cakes.** And the **angel of the LORD vanished from his sight.** Then Gideon perceived that he was the angel of the LORD. And Gideon said, 'Alas, O **Lord GOD!** For now I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face.' **But the LORD said to him, 'Peace be to you. Do not fear; you shall not die.'** Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and called it, *The LORD Is Peace.* To this day it still stands at Ophrah, which belongs to the Abiezrites."

Here we find the famous encounter between Yahweh and Gideon. Along with the same pattern of interaction between God and Hagar and God and Abraham we find a couple more incredible clues.

- In one instance, the Son of God is referred to as "the angel (messenger) of God."
- In another instance, the meat and unleavened cakes are miraculously consumed by fire.
- In yet another instance, the angel of the Lord vanished.
- In still another instance, the title Lord GOD follows the pattern of LORD for Yahweh. When the translators utilized all capital letters for God they demonstrated that, rather than the normal Hebrew word for God, it was actually the personal name for God—Yahweh. Thus, it meant the same thing as *LORD*, *angel of God*, and *angel of the LORD*. In this event between the Son of God and Gideon, four distinct means were used to convey the identity of the One interacting with Gideon!

2. The proof that the Son of God is the Angel of the Lord.

A. He is clearly identified as Yahweh. (See all the above.)

B. He makes authoritative claims only God can claim. Genesis 16:10; 22:15-18

- "The angel of the LORD also said to her, 'I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude.'"
- "And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven and said, 'By myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.'"

C. He possesses attributes only God possesses. Genesis 16:13; Judges 6:21

- He is omniscient (all-knowing) as demonstrated in his conversation with Hagar. This is why she referred to him as "You are a God of seeing."
- He is his omnipotent (all-powerful) as demonstrated in his power to vanish before the very eyes of Gideon.

D. He accepts worship. Judges 6:20,21, 24

- "And the angel of God said to him, 'Take the meat and the unleavened cakes, and put them on this rock, and pour the broth over them.' And he did so. Then the angel of the LORD reached out the tip of the staff that was in his hand and touched the meat and the unleavened cakes. And fire sprang up from the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened cakes. And the angel of the LORD vanished from his sight."
- "Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and called it, *The LORD Is Peace.*"

Application

1. What difference does it make for you that the Lord Jesus, in his pre-incarnate state, appeared to his people so long before he became a man?
2. It should go without saying the O.T. appearances of the Son of God overwhelmingly add to the truth that God loves to interact with us. This being so, it also goes without saying regarding the work of atonement provided in the birth, life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and intercession of the Savior. What are you doing to reciprocate this love?
3. For personal study pour over the following passages of Scripture. Read them several times. Read them in context. Ponder them. Pray as you read and ponder. Only then answer this questions...

What do we learn about the Angel of the Lord in these passages?

What applications can you begin to practice in your life based on these passages?

Numbers 22 (esp. vss. 22-38)

Judges 2 (esp. vss. 1-3)

Zechariah 1 (esp. vss. 12-21)

Joshua 5 (esp. vss. 13-15)

