

Reference: VARIOUS

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# Christ in the Old Testament 7 – Theophanies

Purpose: To review some of the appearances of Christ in the Old Testament

## 1 Introduction

Continuing series on Christ in the OT

What are the 5 ways to look for Christ in the OT?

Prophecy, Theophanies, Symbols, Types, Ceremonies

Have finished prophecy

This week – the appearances of Christ in the OT as a man

He was not a man – had not taken flesh

But it is clear that he took human form when he appeared

Let's look at his appearances, see what can be learned from them

## 2 Abraham - Gen 18

The LORD appeared to Abraham

3 men approached to his tent

How can we know that one of them would have been Jesus?

Because one is called LORD but no-one can see God and live

And because Jesus is the One who reveals & represents God to us

John 1:18 No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained *Him*.

Appears to announce the birth of Isaac – the child of promise

And the destruction of the ungodly at Sodom and Gomorrah

These things, we are told in NT, were written as examples for us

Remarkable intercession of Abraham for righteous in those cities

In prayer series, saw Lot in Abraham's mind – see later in Genesis

What do you think we might learn from this appearance?

Why might God have caused it to be recorded here?

## 3 Jacob - Gen 32:22-31

Genesis 32:22-31 Now he arose that same night and took his two wives and his two maids and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. 23 He took them and sent them across the stream. And he sent across whatever he had. 24 Then Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until

daybreak. 25 When he saw that he had not prevailed against him, he touched the socket of his thigh; so the socket of Jacob's thigh was dislocated while he wrestled with him. 26 Then he said, "Let me go, for the dawn is breaking." But he said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." 27 So he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." 28 He said, "Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel; for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed." 29 Then Jacob asked him and said, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And he blessed him there. 30 So Jacob named the place Peniel, for *he said*, "I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been preserved." 31 Now the sun rose upon him just as he crossed over Peniel, and he was limping on his thigh.

God has told Jacob to return

He has to face his brother Esau – much afraid

Note – **a man** wrestled with him

A man of clearly superior power – touched his hip

A change takes place in the contest

Now Jacob seeks the blessing of the man

“And without doubt, the lesser is blessed by the greater” (Hebrews)

What was the nature of the blessing he received?

The man changed Jacob's name to Israel

From “supplanter/heel grabber” to “he who prevails with God”

A man who wouldn't reveal His name, or expected Jacob to know

A man whom Jacob recognized was God (vs 30)

Why should we have this account?

Why would God appear at this time? What was He doing?

What might we learn from this for our walk with God?

#### **4 Balaam - Num 22:21-35**

Here is Balaam on his way to see whether he can curse Israel

The Angel of the LORD opposes him and blocks his way 3 times

Each time he beats the donkey. Then the donkey speaks!

But Balaam doesn't seem to see anything strange in it!

Finally, Balaam sees the Angel, drawn sword in hand

Note – you shall speak only the word that I give you

The Angel assumes the right and the place of God.

Why might Angel have appeared at this time? What was He doing?

Defending God's people from forces of darkness.

## 5 Joshua - Joshua 5:13 - 6:5

Joshua 5:13-6:5 Now it came about when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing opposite him with his sword drawn in his hand, and Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you for us or for our adversaries?" 14 He said, "No; rather I indeed come now as captain of the host of the LORD." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and bowed down, and said to him, "What has my lord to say to his servant?" 15 The captain of the LORD'S host said to Joshua, "Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so. 1 Now Jericho was tightly shut because of the sons of Israel; no one went out and no one came in. 2 The LORD said to Joshua, "See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king *and* the valiant warriors. 3 You shall march around the city, all the men of war circling the city once. You shall do so for six days. 4 Also seven priests shall carry seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark; then on the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. 5 It shall be that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and the people will go up every man straight ahead."

Note this is again a man

Note his answer – whose side is He on?

He is not on Joshua's side, Joshua is on His side!

Again, he carries a drawn sword

Note the simalaity of the command to remove sandals – Moses

6:2 this is the LORD – Joshua pays him homage and he receives it.

Why would Jesus appear now?

On the very eve of the conquest of the Land promised to Abraham

When Joshua was trembling at the thought of the Anakites

## 6 Gideon - Judges 6:11-24

Judges 6:11-24 Then the angel of the LORD came and sat under the oak that was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite as his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the wine press in order to save *it* from the Midianites. 12 The angel of the LORD appeared to him and said to him, "The LORD is with you, O valiant warrior." 13 Then Gideon said to him, "O my lord, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, 'Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?' But now the LORD has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian." 14 The LORD looked at him and said, "Go in this your strength and deliver Israel from the hand of Midian. Have I not sent you?" 15 He said to Him, "O Lord, how shall I deliver Israel? Behold, my family is the least in Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my father's house." 16 But the LORD said to him, "Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat Midian as one man." 17 So Gideon said to Him, "If now I have found favor in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You who speak with me. 18 Please do not depart from here, until I come *back* to You, and bring out my offering and lay it before You." And He said, "I will remain until you return." 19 Then

Gideon went in and prepared a young goat and unleavened bread from an ephah of flour; he put the meat in a basket and the broth in a pot, and brought *them* out to him under the oak and presented *them*. 20 The angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened bread and lay them on this rock, and pour out the broth." And he did so. 21 Then the angel of the LORD put out the end of the staff that was in his hand and touched the meat and the unleavened bread; and fire sprang up from the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. Then the angel of the LORD vanished from his sight. 22 When Gideon saw that he was the angel of the LORD, he said, "Alas, O Lord GOD! For now I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face." 23 The LORD said to him, "Peace to you, do not fear; you shall not die." 24 Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and named it The LORD is Peace. To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

Israel in decline again – the laughing stock of their enemies

Hiding in caves and holes in the ground

Reduced to famine and desolation through their sin

The Angel of the LORD

Note Gideon calls him Lord and makes an offering to Him

Note the Angel accepts it and causes the fire that consumes it

Note vs 22-23 Gideon was fully aware that he had seen God

Why might Jesus have come at this time?

What might we learn from it concerning him?

## **7 Samson - Judges 13:1-25**

How can we tell this is God? What events?

The Angel of the LORD again

He looked very awesome and did not give His Name

He requested an offering be made to the LORD

He said His name was wonderful (incomprehensible)

Rose in the flames of sacrifice – mediated between earth & heaven

Manoah realized this was God!

His wife points out that nonetheless he will not die.

Why would Christ appear again now?

Israel was again in sin –under the oppression of God’s enemies

Again He comes to announce and commence the deliverance

## **8 Conclusions**

What have we learned?

At key moments in history Christ appears

He appears on behalf of God’s people

He appears to confirm His promises (birth of Isaac)  
To judge the wicked but save the righteous (Lot)  
He appears to encourage when fearful (Jacob)  
To lead them into battle against His enemies (Joshua)  
To defend them from forces of darkness (Balaam)  
To deliver and save them when they have fallen (Gideon, Samson)  
He is intimately involved with His people  
Is that less the case now?  
He is appointed Head over all things for the church! (Eph 1:22)  
Doesn't He do all of these things for us, His children?

So Christ was very active throughout the OT on behalf of God's people  
The comfort is that He has done even more for us and is no less active now.

Next time, symbols, then types, then ceremonies.