

Study on Theophany

THEOPHANY – Theophanies

Definition: A manifestation or appearance of God to man.

According to McClintock and Strong: "God reveals himself only in Christ (Matt, xi, 27). The theophany is therefore more accurately defined as a Christophany, or an epiphany of God in Christ; and all nature is a storehouse of signs of the divine presence, which uniformly point to Christ (Rom. i, 20; Col. i, 16)" (Volume X, p. 333).

Application to this study:

The fact that Almighty God, the Spirit of God, Father of Jesus Christ, appeared to man is well documented in the Old Testament. On several occasions he temporarily clothed Himself in flesh during these appearances, or theophanies. The difference between the following theophanies and Jesus Christ, is that when the spirit of Almighty God became Jesus Christ it was no longer temporary, but He became a man until [1 Corinthians 15:24-28](#) shall be fulfilled.

I. God appears to Abraham

A. [Genesis 17:1-4, 9-10, 15-16, 22](#)

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless. 2 I will confirm my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers." 3 Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, 4 "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. 9 Then God said to Abraham, "As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you for the generations to come. 10 This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised. 15 God also said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. 16 I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her." 22 When he had finished speaking with Abraham, God went up from him.

Study on Theophany (Continued)

B. [Genesis 18:1-3, 10](#)

The LORD appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day. 2 Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed low to the ground. 3 He said, "If I have found favor in your eyes, my lord, do not pass your servant by. 10 Then the LORD said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son." Now Sarah was listening at the entrance to the tent, which was behind him.

II. God wrestles with Jacob

[Genesis 32:24-30](#)

So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. 25 When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. 26 Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." 27 The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered. 28 Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome." 29 Jacob said, "Please tell me your name." But he replied, "Why do you ask my name?" Then he blessed him there. 30 So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared."

III. God appears to Moses in the burning bush

[Exodus 3:2-6](#)

There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. 3 So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight-- why the bush does not burn up." 4 When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!" And Moses said, "Here I am." 5 "Do not come any closer," God said:

Study on Theophany (Continued)

"Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." 6 Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

IV. The Commander of the army of the LORD appears to Joshua

[Joshua 5:13-15](#)

Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, "Are you for us or for our enemies?" 14 "Neither," he replied, "but as commander of the army of the LORD I have now come." Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, "What message does my Lord have for his servant?" 15 The commander of the LORD's army replied, "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so.

V. The presence of the LORD with the three children in fiery furnace

[Daniel 3:22-25](#)

The king's command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, 23 and these three men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing furnace. 24 Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, "Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?" They replied, "Certainly, O king." 25 He said, "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods."