

Genesis 32:22–32 N.I.V

Jacob Wrestles With God

22 That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two maidservants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. 23 After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. 24 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, [a] **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, [b] saying, "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared."

31 The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, [c] and he was limping because of his hip. 32 Therefore to this day the Israelites do not eat the tendon attached to the socket of the hip, because the socket of Jacob's hip was touched near the tendon.

Daniel 3:15–30 (New International Version)

15 Now when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music, if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?"

16 Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. 17 If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. 18 But even if he does not, we want you to

know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."

19 Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and his attitude toward them changed. He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual 20 and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace. 21 So these men, wearing their robes, trousers, turbans and other clothes, were bound and thrown into the blazing furnace. 22 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."**

26 Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!"

So Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire, 27 and the satraps, prefects, governors and royal advisers crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them.

28 Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God. 29 Therefore I decree that the people of any nation or language who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be cut into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble, for no other god can save in this way."

30 Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

Daniel 6:21–28 (New International Version)

New International Version (NIV)

21 Daniel answered, "O king, live forever! 22 **My God sent his angel,** and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, O king."

23 The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

24 At the king's command, the men who had falsely accused Daniel were brought in and thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children. And before they reached the floor of the den, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.

25 Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations and men of every language throughout the land:

"May you prosper greatly!

26 "I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel.

"For he is the living God

and he endures forever;
his kingdom will not be destroyed,
his dominion will never end.

27 He rescues and he saves;
he performs signs and wonders
in the heavens and on the earth.
He has rescued Daniel
from the power of the lions."

28 So Daniel prospered during the
reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus
[a] the Persian.

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Genesis 18:1–15 (New International Version)

The Three Visitors

1 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, [a] do not pass your servant by. 4 Let a little water be brought, and then you may all wash your feet and rest under this tree. 5 Let

me get you something to eat, so you can be refreshed and then go on your way—now that you have come to your servant."

"Very well," they answered, "do as you say."

6 So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah. "Quick," he said, "get three seahs [b] of fine flour and knead it and bake some bread."

7 Then he ran to the herd and selected a choice, tender calf and gave it to a servant, who hurried to prepare it. 8 He then brought some curds and milk and the calf that had been prepared, and set these before them. While they ate, he stood near them under a tree.

9 "Where is your wife Sarah?" they asked him.

"There, in the tent," he said.

10 Then the LORD [c] 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. 11 Abraham and Sarah were already old and well advanced in years, and Sarah was past the age of childbearing. 12 So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, "After I am worn out and my master [d] is old, will I now have this pleasure?"

13 Then the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Will I really have a child, now that I am old?' 14 Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return to you at the appointed time next year and Sarah will have a son."

15 Sarah was afraid, so she lied and said, "I did not laugh."

But he said, "Yes, you did laugh."

Exodus 33:15–23 (New International Version)

New International Version (NIV)

15 Then Moses said to him, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. 16 How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?"

17 And the LORD said to Moses, "I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name."

18 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 1:1–18 (New International Version)

New International Version (NIV)

John 1

The Word Became Flesh

1In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2He was with God in the beginning.

3Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4In him was life, and that

life was the light of men. 5The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood[a] it.

6There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. 7He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. 8He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. 9The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.[b]

10He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. 11He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. 12Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—
13children born not of natural descent,[c] nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

14The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only,[d] who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

15John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.' " 16From the fullness of his grace

we have all received one blessing after another. 17For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only,[e][f]who is at the Father's side, has made him known.

PREINCARNATE APPEARANCES OF OUR LORD

Scripture supports the fact that our Lord was intimately involved on the earth with humanity throughout history:

[1 Cor 10:1-4]:

(v. 1) "For I [Paul] do not want you [fellow Jews] to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers [our ancestors: Jews – believers – who lived in the Exodus generation when they escaped out of Egypt] were all under the cloud."

["under the cloud" = the cloud which led them to freedom from Egypt and then through the wilderness as a guide by day, (Ex 13:21). This cloud that was present at the Red Sea when the Exodus generation of Jews came to the shore of that sea and were going to

cross – this cloud was the evidence of the glory of God – of His Almighty power. The Jews described this as the shekinah glory of God in their commentary writings on the Old Testament called the Targums.

[Ex 13:21–22]:

(v. 21) "By day the Lord went ahead of them [the escaping Israelites] in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night.

(v. 22) Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people."

The Jewish people became identified with the shekinah glory of God – of Jesus Christ, (I Cor 10:4) – day and night, night and day. That cloud was a manifestation of the Lord God Himself – His visible glory. The Jews called this God's shekinah glory. The shekinah glory of God, the manifested glory of God, was identified with God's Chosen People Israel:

[Ro 9:4]:

"The people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the DIVINE GLORY [the shekinah glory of God], the

covenants, the receiving of the Law, the temple worship and the promises."

[1 Cor 10:1-4 cont.]:

(v. 1 cont.) "For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the [Red] Sea" [to freedom]

(v. 2) and all were baptized [identified] into Moses in the cloud [in the glory of God] and in the sea;"

"baptized with Moses" = means that they were identified with Moses. Identified with what respect?

"and all [the Jews] were baptized into Moses in the cloud [in the glory of God] and in the sea =

This is obviously not water baptism because the Israelites did not get wet when they were baptized in the cloud nor when they "passed through the sea". Nor is it Spirit baptism because they were all baptized into Moses and not into the Holy Spirit.

The Greek word "ebaptisauto" = "were baptized" = comes from the Greek verb "baptiso" = to immerse, to be identified with. In this case – the Israelites were identified, 'baptiso'd' – with God's purpose for Moses – to cross the 'Red

Sea' to freedom from the Egyptians and into the Promised Land as God's Chosen People with with God's chosen man, Moses, as their leader.

All the Jews of the Exodus generation were identified with Moses as God's chosen people and God's chosen man to lead them. Moses and the Exodus generation Jewish people were baptized in the cloud and the sea – identified with God in His manifestation of Himself as the cloud and they were also identified with Moses leading them through the sea in the event of their escaping through it from the Egyptians.

Dr. John Danish states it this way, (op cit):

"[The Jews were] identified with the glory of God which was present there among them. While passing through the miracle of the Red Sea, they were identified with Moses in the experience of walking dry shod through that sea and escaping the approaching attacking forces of Pharaoh."

The Jews were identified with the shekinah glory of God as our Lord Jesus Christ led them by day manifesting Himself in the cloud and by night manifesting Himself in the pillar of fire:

[1 Cor 10:1–4 cont.]:

(v. 2) "They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.

(v. 3) They all ate the same spiritual food

(v. 4) and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, [that Rock Who was the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night] AND THAT ROCK WAS CHRIST"

"and drank the same spiritual drink..." = what follows this part of verse 4 indicates that it was the Lord Jesus Christ Who was "the Lord" in Ex 13:21-22 Who was with them every step of the way, He was the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by day:

(v. 4 cont.) and [the Israelites] drank the same sprirtual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock [acconpanying] them, AND THAT ROCK WAS CHRIST."

["accompanying" = "akolouthousen " = genitive, singular, feminine - modifying the feminine noun "petras " = "rock", ("they" is masculine). This word is a present active, participle = "accompanying"]

[Compare Ex 13:21-22:

(Ex 13:21) By day the Lord.....

["Lord" = "yhwh" = "yahweh" =

THE ONE AND ONLY JEHOVAH GOD WHO IS THE LORD JESUS CHRIST]

(Ex 13:21 cont.) By day the Lord.....

[Jesus Christ] went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. (Ex 13:22) Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people."

[Gen 18:1-33; 19:24]:

(v. 24) "The Lord God [Jesus Christ] reigned down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gommorrah...from the Lord God [the Father] out of the heavens."

[The angel of the Lord Who was present with Abraham along with two angels was none other than the Lord Jesus Christ]

[Christ appeared to Ezekial]:

[Ex 1:25-28]:

Whom Ezekial, having fallen face down on the ground, worshipped Him.

[Cp Dan 7:13-14 & Rv 1:13-17]

This could only be Jesus Christ in all three passages.

So the baptism of Moses was a baptism that identified the Exodus generation of Jews with Moses with respect to the freedom to which they were being led and it identified them with the leadership of the Lord Jesus Christ in the form of the shekinah glory cloud – He was their God and they were His people:

[Ex 6:6-7]:

(v. 6) " 'Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, 'I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage. I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments.

(v. 7) THEN I WILL TAKE YOU FOR MY PEOPLE, AND I WILL BE YOUR GOD;

and you shall know that I am the Lord your God, Who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians."

The Preincarnate Son of God

By Rev. Rock LaGioia

How do we know that Jesus existed prior to the Incarnation? What was His role? Was He active or passive? The Word of God answers these questions. Speaking to the Jews, Jesus said:

“Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see My day and he saw it and was glad”
(John 8:56)

The Jews were stunned because Jesus was only in His early thirties. How could He possibly have been alive in Abraham’s day?

“The Jews therefore said to Him, ‘You are not yet fifty years old, and have You

seen Abraham?’ Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am” (John 8:57–58).

One commentator notes, “The difference between the two verbs applied to Abraham and Himself, in this great saying, is to be carefully observed, ‘Before Abraham was brought into being, I exist.’ The statement, therefore, is not that Christ came into existence before Abraham did – it is that He never came into being at all, but existed before Abraham had a being; which, of course, was as much as to say that He existed before all creation, or from eternity” (Jamieson, Fausset & Brown, A commentary Vol. 3, p. 406). The Jews understood Jesus to be equating Himself with the eternal “I AM.” Verse 59 says,

“Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him...”

The eternality of Jesus is clearly stated in the Old Testament also. In Micah 5:2, Jesus is spoken of as One whose

“going forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity.”

Where was Jesus at the beginning of time?

“He was in the beginning with God.”
(John 1:2)

Jesus was directly and actively involved in the creation of the universe.

“All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.” (John 1:3).

Jesus was directly and actively involved in the creation of man. Indeed God said,

“Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness...” (Genesis 1:26)

As early as Genesis 3:15, there is a prediction of Christ's redemptive work on the cross:

“And I will put enmity between you (the serpent) and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise Him on the heel.”

“The Savior would come through the woman's progeny (the Messianic line to Christ). ‘The Seed of the woman’ comprehends the children of God, and ‘the seed of the serpent’ denotes the wicked unregenerate segment of the race (Matt. 23:33; John 8:44; 1 John 3:8). But since ‘the Seed of the woman’ focuses on an individual, whose miraculous birth gave Him a preeminent title to be called ‘the seed of the woman’ (see Gal. 4:4), the designation constitutes the first great prophecy of the coming virgin-born, incarnate Son of God and Savior” (Merrill F. Unger, Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament Vol1, p.19).

In Genesis 16:17–13, the Preincarnate Son of God (manifested as the Angel of the Lord) interacts with Hagar.

“Now the Angel of the Lord found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur. And He said, ‘Hagar, Sarai’s maid, where have you come from and where are you going?’ And she said, ‘I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai.’ Then the Angel of the Lord said to her, ‘Return to your mistress, and submit yourself to her authority.’ Moreover, the Angel of the Lord said to her, “I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they shall be too many to count.’ The Angel of the Lord said to her further, “Behold, you are with child, and you shall bear a son; and you shall call his name Ishmael, because the Lord has given heed to your affliction. And he will be a wild donkey of a man, his hand will be against everyone, and everyone’s hand will be against him; and he will live to the east of all his brothers.’”

Who has been speaking to Hagar? The Angel of the Lord, of course. But verse

13 tells us that it was the Lord who spoke to her.

“Then she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, “Thou art a God who sees;’ for she said, ‘Have I even remained alive after seeing Him?’”

Not only did Hagar hear the Preincarnate Son of God, but she also saw Him!

Recorded in Genesis 18:1–33, is the appearance of the Preincarnate Son of God to Abraham.

“Now the Lord appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, while he was sitting at the tent door in the heat of the day. And when he lifted up his eyes and looked, behold, three men were standing opposite him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and said, ‘My Lord, if now I have found favor in your sight, please do not pass your servant by’” (vv. 1–3).

One of these men was the Lord. Instead of addressing all of them, Abraham spoke to the one who seemed to be the leader. Upon Abraham's invitation, the men stayed for a meal.

“Then they said to him, ‘Where is Sarah your wife?’ And Abraham said, ‘Behold in the tent.’ And He (the leader) said, ‘I will surely return to you at this time next year; and behold, Sarah your wife shall have a son.’ And Sarah was listening at the tent door, which was behind him.” (vv. 9–10).

First, the men inquired of Abraham. Then, the leader made a promise to Abraham. Later, in Genesis 21:1, we are told who the leader is.

“Then the Lord took note of Sarah as He had said, and the Lord did for Sarah as He had promised.”

The leader who spoke was the Lord Himself. But, because of her old age,

Sarah laughed at the Lord's promise.
The Lord responded,

“Is anything too difficult for the Lord?
At the appointed time I will return to
you, at this time next year, and Sarah
shall have a son” (V. 14).

In verse 10, the leader of the men
promised to return a year later. But, in
verse 14, the Lord promised to return a
year later. The leader and the Lord are
one and the same.

“Then the men rose up from there and
looked down toward Sodom; and
Abraham was walking with them to
send them off. And the Lord said, ‘Shall
I hide from Abraham what I am about
to do...’”(vv. 16–17)

Abraham was walking with the three
men in the direction of Sodom when
the leader (the Lord) spoke to him.

“Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, while Abraham was still standing before the Lord” (v.22).

There seems to be a problem. If the three men left for Sodom and the Lord remained with Abraham, is not the Lord really a fourth person? Our answer is found in the first part of Genesis 19:1.

“Now the two angels came to Sodom...”

If two angels went to Sodom, then the third angel (or man) remained with Abraham. The third angel was the Preincarnate Son of God. Jesus did see Abraham (John 8:56–58).

In Genesis 32, we have the story of a man wrestling with Jacob. After wrestling, the man said to Jacob,

“Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel (he who strives with God); for

you have strived with God and with men and have prevailed” (v. 28).

Jacob’s wrestling partner was more than a man!

“So Jacob named the place Peniel (the face of God), for he said, ‘I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been preserved’”(v. 30).

Jacob wrestled with the Preincarnate Son of God.

As he was pasturing Jethro’s flock, Moses encountered the Preincarnate Son of God at Horeb, the mountain of God.

“And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush...” (Exodus 3:2).

But in verse 4,

“God called to him from the midst of the bush...”

After God identified himself,

“...Moses hid his face for he was afraid to look at God” (v. 6).

The Lord commanded Moses in verse 16,

“Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, ‘The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, has appeared to me...’”

Merril Unger observes, “The appearance of the Angel of the Lord (the Preincarnate Christ) out of the flaming bush indicates God’s people are preserved by divine power. Moses received this great revelation as a shepherd, a vocation the Egyptians despised, showing that he shared the reproach of Christ (Hebrews 11:26)” (Unger’s Commentary on the Old Testament Vol. 1, p. 107).

Joshua also encountered the Preincarnate Son of God. In Joshua 5:13-14,

“...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?’ And 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?””

Alexander Maclaren asserts, “We have here not a record of the appearance of a created superhuman person, but that of a preliminary manifestation of the Eternal Word of God, who, in the fullness of time, ‘became flesh and dwelt among us.’” (Expositions of Holy Scripture Vol. 2, p. 118). The language of verse 15 is a further indication of the identity of the Captain of the host of the Lord:

“And 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.’”

This language is almost identical to that in Exodus 3:5 and it implies the presence of Deity. After the parenthetical statement in Joshua 6:1, the narrative continues in verse 2:

“And the Lord said to Joshua, ‘See, I have given Jericho into your hand...’”

We can conclude from the evidence that the Captain of the host of the Lord and the Lord are the same Person.

We are treated to a fascinating glimpse of the Preincarnate Son of God in Judges 13. The Angel of the Lord appeared to Manoab’s wife. He promised her that she would conceive and give birth to a son.

“Then the woman came and told her husband, saying, ‘A man of God came to me and His appearance was like the Angel of God, very awesome. And I did not ask Him where He came from, nor did He tell me His name’” (v. 6).

The Angel of the Lord appeared a second time to Manoah’s wife. She immediately called her husband.

“Then Manoah said to the Angel of the Lord, “Please let us detain You so that we may prepare a kid for You.’ And the Angel of the Lord said to Manoah, “Though you detain Me, I will not eat your food, but if you prepare a burnt offering, then offer it to the Lord.’ For Manoah did not know that He was the Angel of the Lord” (vv. 15–16).

Burnt offerings are to be presented to God only! Still not realizing that he was in the presence of Deity, Manoah asked the Angel of the Lord,

“...What is Your name, so that when Your words come to pass, we may

honor You?’ But the Angel of the Lord said to him, “Why do you ask My Name, seeing it is wonderful?” (vv. 17–18).

The word “wonderful” means absolutely and supremely ineffable– a description reserved for God alone.”

“So Manoah took the kid with the grain offering and offered it on the rock to the Lord, and He (the Lord) performed wonders while Manoah and his wife looked on” (v. 19)

It was the Lord who performed the wonders. The wonders are described in verse 20:

“For it came about when the flame went up from the altar toward heaven, that the Angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar. When Manoah and his wife saw this, they fell on their faces to the ground.”

After learning that the Lord performed wonders, now we learn that the Angel of the Lord performed wonders. They are the same person – the Preincarnate Son of God. Manoah and his wife fell on their faces in worship to Him.

“Now the Angel of the Lord appeared no more to Manoah or his wife. Then Manoah knew that He was the Angel of the Lord (i.e. Deity). So Manoah said to his wife, ‘We shall surely die, for we have seen God’” (vv. 21–22).

While there are certainly many more examples, we will conclude with an Old Testament appearance of the Preincarnate Son of God which is corroborated by the New Testament, Isaiah 6:1.

“In the year of King’s Uzziah’s death, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple.”

Isaiah saw the Preincarnate Son of God with his own eyes! Angelic creatures

called Seraphim stood above the Lord and called out,

“Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory” (v. 3).

After seeing the glory of the King of Kings, Isaiah sensed his own sinfulness.

“Then I said, ‘Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts’” (v. 5).

How can we be sure that Isaiah is referring to the Preincarnate Christ and not to God the Father? After quoting Isaiah 6:9–10 in John 12:40, John comments in verse 41,

“These things Isaiah said, because he saw His (Jesus’) glory, and he spoke of Him.”

The Apostle John, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, authoritatively answered our question.

But what about the other passages that we have considered? How do we know that the Angel of the Lord is the Preincarnate Son of God and not God the Father? The Apostle John answers our question again.

“No man has seen God (the Father) at any time; the only begotten God (the Son), who is in the bosom of the Father, He (the Son) has explained Him (the Father)” John 1:18.

Jesus Christ had an active role in God’s program prior to the Incarnation.

May 8, 2001
by Wayne Jackson

Was Melchizedek the preincarnate Christ?

No, Melchizedek was not the same person as Jesus, contrary to a rather popular notion that stems from a misunderstanding of certain passages in Hebrews 7.

Melchizedek is first mentioned in Genesis 14. Abram (later called Abraham), returning from the rescue of his nephew (Lot), encountered this ancient dignitary who was king of Salem (early Jerusalem; cf. Psa. 76:2). In addition to being king, he was described as “priest of God Most High” (Gen. 14:18). His stature is revealed in that he “blessed” Abraham (the greater always blesses the lesser), and to Melchizedek the patriarch paid tithes, i.e., gave to the king–priest a tenth of his spoils (the lesser tithes to the greater).

The writer of Hebrews uses this incident (together with a prophecy from Psalm 110), to demonstrate the superiority of the priesthood of Christ to that of the Levitical system (Heb. 7:4–10). Beyond that, there were some similarities between Melchizedek and Christ, so that it may be said that the former was a “type” (a picture or symbolic preview) of Jesus. That does not mean, however, that they were the same person. In fact, the sacred text indicates otherwise.

1. Christ was said to be a priest “after [kata] the order [taxis] of” Melchizedek (Heb. 5:6,10; 6:20; 7:11). The Greek term taxis (order) suggests a similar

“arrangement.” For example, just as Melchizedek was both a king and priest simultaneously, so Christ is as well (cf. Zech. 6:12–13; Heb. 1:3). The preposition *kata*, used with the accusative case, suggests the sense of “in accordance with, corresponding to” (Daniel Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996, p. 377). Hence a comparison is being drawn.

2. Melchizedek was “without father, without mother” (Heb. 7:3a). The meaning is this: his divine role was not genealogically derived, not handed down from his parents. So, neither was Jesus’ priesthood determined by a physical lineage, as in the case of the Aaronic priests (Ex. 28:1; Num. 3:10).

Among the Tel el Armarna tablets (discovered in Egypt in 1887), there are several letters written to a Pharaoh from one Ebed-tob, who is called “king of Uru-Salim.” The Canaanite king tells the Egyptian ruler that he did not receive his reign from his father and mother, but it had been conferred upon him by “the Mighty King.” This helps to illustrate the phraseology in the book of Hebrews (see A.H. Sayce, “Melchizedek,” *Dictionary of the Bible*, James Hastings, Ed., Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1908, III, p. 335).

3. Melchizedek’s administration was without “beginning of days” and “end

of life” (Heb. 7:3b). Again, the meaning is that his priesthood was not for a fixed term (as in the case of the Levitical priests). Under the Old Testament regime, priests began their service at the age of 30, and the Levites served from age 30 to 50 (cf. Num. 4:3ff; 8:24–25).

Apparently, however, there was no chronological limitation with reference to this “priest of Most High God” who reigned in Salem. Again, in this regard he foreshadowed Christ, who serves continually as our priest throughout the Christian age.

4. That Melchizedek was not the same person as Jesus is evident in that he is said to be “like unto” the Son of God (Heb. 7:3c). The participle *aphomoioo* denotes a comparison (e.g., a “copy” or “facsimile” – J.H. Thayer, *Greek–English Lexicon*, Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1958, pp. 89–90). The term becomes irrelevant if the two persons were the same in identity.

The point is made again in verse 15 – Jesus is a priest after the “likeness” of Melchizedek. D.W. Burdick observes:

“The verb *aphomoioo* always assumes two distinct and separate identities, one of which is a copy of the other. Thus Melchizedek and the Son of God are represented as two separate

persons, the first of which resembled the second” (“Melchizedek,” The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia – Revised, G.W. Bromiley, Ed., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986, Vol. 3, p. 313).

5. A distinction between Christ and Melchizedek is vividly seen in Psalm 110, where Jehovah addresses David’s “Lord” (Jesus) in the second person, while the reference to Melchizedek is in the third person (v. 4). [Note: See Matthew 22:42–44 for Jesus’ application of this psalm to himself.]

Accordingly, one should not make the mistake of identifying the ancient king-priest of Salem as Jesus Christ.

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