

Once in a while we need to just focus our minds on that **One Person Who** has made the greatest contribution that could ever be made to the betterment of man's existence on earth, and thus a hope for a far better life throughout eternity in a place called **Heaven**. Let's set aside the cares of the world that we all have to some degree or another and focus on...

### Just Jesus!

Not just **His** birth, **His** teachings, **His** life, death and resurrection either (*even though those things are of utmost importance*) but also on **His** pre-incarnate existence that so many overlook throughout the inspired written word of **God**, specifically **His** numerous appearances in the Old Testament. The first mention of **Him** as part of the **Godhead** being in **Gen 1:26** where **God** said "Let **Us** make man in **Our** image, after **Our** likeness". **John** would later confirm this fact in **Jn 1:1-4** "In the beginning was the **Word**, and the **Word** was **with God**, and the **Word was God**...All things were made through **Him**..." As a **Member** of the **Godhead**, the **Son** specifically, **Jesus** has always existed and possessed "the glory that [He] had with [His Father] before the world began" (*Jn 17:5*). That said, let's look at some of those passages that reveal **His** pre-incarnate appearances throughout the Old Testament as **He** aided, protected and led certain people to do the **Father's** will...

As the Angel (*Messenger*) of the Lord

Since Sarah had yet to bear children for Abraham because she was barren she offered to him, as a wife, Hagar her Egyptian servant. Such was the idea to Sarah that if she bore children to Abraham by her servant, the servant's child would belong to her.

*"Like so many after her, Sarai ran out of patience. She thought of a plan to achieve the end God had in mind. In the land of the Chaldees, a woman who could not bear children could give one of her slaves to her husband. Any child born of such a union would be counted as the wife's child. If the slave began to think of herself as being her mistress' equal, she could treat her again as a slave but not sell her."*

Gary Hampton

Before Hagar bore Ishmael to Abraham she turned on her mistress Sarah and it became Sarah's choice to "do to her as [she pleased]" and she "dealt harshly with her, and she fled from her" (*Gen 16:6*). But...

**Gen 16:7** The **Angel** of the **LORD** found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur. **8** 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." **9** The **Angel** of the **LORD** said to her, "Return to your mistress and submit to her." **10** The **Angel** of the **LORD** also said to her, "**I will surely multiply your offspring** so that they cannot be numbered for multitude." **11** 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."

- We understand that only **Deity** can multiply offspring since only the **Godhead** was involved in forming "man of dust from the ground" (*Gen 2:7*).

*“The angel of Jehovah. This phrase is especially employed to denote the Lord himself in that form in which he condescends to make himself manifest to man; for the Lord God says of this angel, “Beware of him, and obey his voice; provoke him not, for he will not pardon your transgressions; for my name is in his inmost” [Exo 23:21](#); that is, my nature is in his essence.”* Albert Barnes

**Gen 16:13** 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."

- Thus Hagar gave testimony that the Person she dealt with was God's messenger Who possessed the essence of Deity. So, "when Abram was ninety-nine years old the LORD appeared" to him once again (*Gen 17:1-2*) to restate His promise and give him a new name "Abraham" (*v. 5*).

**Gen 17:9** And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations."

**Gen 17:15** And God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai (*Heb.8297- saw-rah'ee*) your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. **16** I will bless her, and moreover, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her." **17** Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, "Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?"

- God had revealed to Abraham long before that he would have a son, and he believed it, but how could such be possible for Sarah since she was way beyond her childbearing years? Then came the three strangers, One being the Lord Himself, to give Abraham the exact time when such would be fulfilled. Notice the difference between "and God said" (*17:15*) and "the Lord" in *18:1*. The first refers to the Father since, as He would later tell Moses, "you cannot see My face, for man shall not see Me and live" (*Ex 33:20*). But there are examples in the Bible where Christ appears in His pre-incarnate form which was witnessed by those who saw Him, yet lived. As is the case with *Gen 18:1ff*.

**Gen 18:1** And the LORD appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre (*Heb.4471- mam-ray'*), as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. **2** He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth **3** and said, "O Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant. **4** Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, **5** while I bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on--since you have come to your servant." So they said, "Do as you have said."

- Not only did the Lord (*capital "L"*) appear in human form by which Abraham could recognize Him, He told him to prepare the meal as he had said and "they ate" it (*v. 8*).

Gen 18:9 They said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" And he said, "She is in the tent." 10 The LORD said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son." And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him. 11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in years. The way of women had ceased to be with Sarah. 12 So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?" 13 The LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?' 14 Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, about this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son." 15 But Sarah denied it, saying, "I did not laugh," for she was afraid. He said, "No, but you did laugh."

- Ps 94:11, "the Lord—knows the thoughts of man, that they are but a breath." Sarah didn't get away with her denial that she balked at what she thought would be impossible. And many things would happen that year, between Sarah conceiving and giving birth to Isaac. One of which was when "Abraham journeyed toward the territory of the Negeb... and he sojourned in Gerar" and "said of Sarah his wife, 'She is my sister'" (Gen 20:1-7). He feared what was usually done by foreigners, in whose land they lived, who killed husbands to have their wives for their own. Which shows that even though Sarah was in her nineties she was still of such beauty that men desired her. But even when "Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah" (v. 2) he was approached by God in a dream saying "Behold, you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife" (v. 3). And because of Abimelech's integrity of heart, he was "kept from sinning against [God]" by touching Sarah and was told to "return the man's wife, for he is a prophet" (v. 7). And after questioning Abraham's motive "Abraham said...

Gen 20:11 ..., "I did it because I thought, There is no fear of God at all in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife. 12 Besides, she is indeed my sister, the daughter of my father though not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife."

- At that point Abimelech increased Abraham's wealth by giving him "sheep and oxen, and male servants and female servants" (v. 14) and told Sarah in v. 16 how he gave Abraham "a thousand pieces of silver".

Gen 21:1 The LORD visited Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did to Sarah as He had promised. *(Thus once again showing that One of the three men who visited Abraham was none other than Deity, Christ pre-incarnate.)* 2 And Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age at the time of which God *(denoting the Messenger as Deity)* had spoken to him. 3 Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore him, Isaac.

Later during the life of Abraham when Isaac was a yet a young boy, the Angel of the Lord was employed again when God tested Abraham's faith.

Gen 22:1 After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here am I." 2 He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love,

and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."

- What was going through **Abrahams'** mind? After all he had been through with **Sarah** in having to bear **Isaac** in her old age and having to dismiss **Ishmael** as the child of promise. He understood how **God** had promised to "establish [**His**] covenant with **Isaac**" (*Gen 17:21*) and now he's being asked to sacrifice him? What happened to the promise? Was **God** just testing his faith? But for who's benefit? **God's** or **Abraham's**? In **Abraham's** mind he had to acknowledge that once he took the life of **Isaac**, according to **God's** promise, he understood, through faith, that **God** would raise him from the dead in order to keep **His** word.

**Gen 22:9** When they came to the place of which **God** had told him, **Abraham** built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound **Isaac** his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. **10** Then **Abraham** reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. **11** But the **Angel** of the **LORD** called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here am I." **12** 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.**"

- Since **God** is omniscient, "perfect in knowledge" (*Job 37:16*) and "He knows everything" (*1 Jn 3:20*), who else but for **Abraham's** own benefit was **He** testing him? Concerning the phrase for now I know, does this mean that the messenger of **Jehovah** had no idea as to whether **Abraham** would fail the test of obedience? Wasn't **He** also **God**?

*"E. W. Bullinger notes of this passage: 'God, of course, knew it already; but, in wondrous condescension, He stoops to make Abraham understand'"*

Wayne Jackson- The Christian Courier

- **Jesus** would later speak of **Abraham** to the Jews after having come to the earth in the form of a man, concerning a part of their conversation that's not recorded in **Genesis**. He obviously spoke other things with **Abraham** the prophet, than what we have recorded, or how could **Christ** have truthfully stated the following?

**Joh 8:56** Your father **Abraham** rejoiced that he would see My day. He saw it and was glad." **57** So the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?" **58** Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I Am."

- Thus **Christ** declared **His** Omnipresence along with **His** own Deity. Next we turn to the **Angel** of the **Lord**...

In the wilderness.

Before **God** gave **Moses** the instructions on building the tabernacle and before **He** sent the Israelites away from **Mt. Sinai** into the wilderness **He** told them how **He** would provide a column of smoke by day as their guide which would become a pillar of fire

by night. But there was something about that pillar that made them realize it was no ordinary guide.

**Exo 13:21** And the **LORD** went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night.

- It was **God Who** would lead the **Israelite** nation on their journey through the wilderness and into the promised land. But even before they were to set foot in the wilderness they had to cross the Red Sea. There they were, the Egyptian chariots behind them and the sea before them. Once again, losing their faith after so many miracles were performed by **God** at the hand of **Moses**, they lashed out at **Moses** blaming him for their predicament.

**Exo 14:11** They said to **Moses**, "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? **12** Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: 'Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness." **13** And **Moses** said to the people, "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the **LORD**, which He will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. **14** The **LORD** will fight for you, and you have only to be silent." **15** The **LORD** said to **Moses**, "Why do you cry to Me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward. **16** Lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground. **17** And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they shall go in after them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, his chariots, and his horsemen. **18** And the Egyptians shall know that I am the **LORD**, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen." **19** Then the **Angel of God Who** was going before the host of Israel moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them, **20** coming between the host of Egypt and the host of **Israel**. And there was the cloud and the darkness. And it lit up the night without one coming near the other all night.

- Thus the Israelites were protected by the pillar of fire which kept the Egyptians from them as they crossed "on dry ground".

**Exo 14:21** Then **Moses** stretched out his hand over the sea, and the **LORD** drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. **22** And the people of **Israel** went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. **23** The Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all **Pharaoh's** horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. **24** And in the morning watch the **LORD** in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down on the Egyptian forces and threw the Egyptian forces into a panic, **25** clogging their chariot wheels so that they drove heavily. And the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from before Israel, for the **LORD** fights for them against the Egyptians."

- At that point “Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal course” (v. 27) thus drowning the Egyptian army. The apostle Paul would later comment on this incident referring to it as a sort of covenant relationship between Moses and the children of Israel.

1Co 10:1 For I want you to know, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, 2 and all were **baptized into Moses** in the cloud and in the sea, 3 and all ate the same spiritual food, 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual **Rock** that followed (*Gk.190- to be in the same way with, to accompany*) them, and the **Rock** was **Christ**.

- Their being “baptized into **Moses**” shows their relationship to him and the law that he would later be connected to, thus connecting them to it as well. Verse 4 is another reference to the **Christ** being in the cloud that accompanied them.

Exo 23:20 "Behold, I send an Angel before you to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place that I have prepared. 21 Pay careful attention to Him and obey His voice; do not rebel against Him, for **He will not pardon your transgression**, for My name (*Heb.8034- authority*) is in Him.”

- How can an angel forgive sins unless **He** is of the same nature as the only **One Who** can? Only **Deity** can forgive sins as **Jesus** noted in **Mat 9** when raising the paralytic telling him his sins were forgiven in front of those who doubted **He** was the very **Christ**.

**Mat 9:6 But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins**--He then said to the paralytic--"**Rise, pick up your bed and go home.**"

- Thus showing that **God's Angel** in the pillars of smoke and flame were in fact **His Messenger, the Son of the Godhead**. And there were even still others that **Christ** appeared to in leading the weak against the powerful enemies of **God**.

#### To Gideon

Jdg 6:11 Now the **Angel** of the **LORD** came and sat under the terebinth (*Heb.424- oak or other strong tree*) 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**. 12 And the **Angel** of the **LORD** appeared to him and said to him, "The **LORD** is with you, O mighty man of valor."

- Now, **Gideon** was perplexed, of course, that he of all people would be chosen to lead **Israel** against the **Midianites** stating that his “clan [was] the weakest in **Manasseh**, and [he was] the least in [his] father's house” (v. 16). But the **Angel** of the **Lord** told **Gideon** that **He** would be with him and that he would “strike the **Midianites** as one man”. So it was at that point that **Gideon** asked to prepare a meal for his **Visitor** and was granted permission to do such.

Jdg 6:19 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. 20 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. 21 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. 22 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." 23 But the LORD said to him, "Peace be to you. Do not fear; you shall not die."

- Was Gideon remembering what Moses had written concerning seeing God face to face? Obviously this was not God but a "theophany"- an appearance of God in some physical form. And there are other passages of note where Christ is manifested in like manner but suffice it to say there wouldn't be enough time in this hour to mention all of them. But, what happened to the Angel of the Lord...

#### In the New Testament

Remarkably, there's no mention of "the" Angel of the Lord once we come to the New Covenant because....

Gal 4:4 ... when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

- The O.T. law that Christ "set aside, nailing it to the cross" (Col 2:14) has been forever replaced with His New Will.

Heb 9:16 For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established. 17 For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive.

- Jesus died to establish God's New Covenant with man. But, the difference is, He didn't stay dead and His will is still in effect. And not just for the Jews anymore. To all who are justified by the faith of Abraham.

Gal 3:7 Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. 8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed."

Gal 3:26 for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

- Just as the children of Israel were immersed into the law of Moses, we now can be in a covenant relationship with Christ by being immersed into Him.

As Jesus would tell John at His baptism, that even though He “knew no sin” (2 Cor 5:21), His being baptized was “to fulfill all righteousness” (Mat 3:15) in order for Him to become “the Son of man [Who had] nowhere to lay His head” (Mat 8:20). Doing that was God’s way of fulfilling His promise to Abraham that of his “offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed”, thus Christ fulfilled His duty as the Old Testament Messenger of God. But not that His message or ministry was quite yet complete. He still had another message of hope and love to deliver in the form of the gospel, the good news of salvation for **all** people. In Acts 3 after Peter and John met the lame man and healed him, Peter, having the attention of those who witnessed it, began to explain what had just happened.

Act 3:22 Moses said, 'The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to Him in whatever He tells you. *(Like what God said to the Israelites before their trek into the wilderness, “Pay careful attention to Him and obey His voice”.- Ex 23:21)* 23 And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that Prophet shall be destroyed from the people.' 24 And all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those who came after him, also proclaimed these days. 25 You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.' 26 God, having raised up His servant, sent Him to you first *(speaking to the Jews)*, to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness." *As Paul would later confirm...*

Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, **to the Jew first** and also to the Greek.

When Jesus led Peter, James and John to the mount of His transfiguration, there they saw “Moses and Elijah, talking with Him”. Then...

Mat 17:5 ...a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with Whom I am well pleased; listen to Him."

We now are no longer under the covenant relationship the Israelites had with the law of Moses. We now are commanded to be in a New Covenant relationship with Christ by being baptized into Him as the Israelites were immersed into the Mosaic law through Moses. So, “Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts” so that you too might enter into a “rest for the people of God” (Heb 4:7, 9).

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