

Doctrine of the Angel of the Lord

1. The biblical revelation of God is that He is both transcendent and immanent. God is distinct from His universe, and yet, God is immanent with His creation through His providential care of individuals, through His omnipresence, through the person of Jesus Christ, and through His visitation to earth in redemptive history. His presence was manifested in the burning bush which was not consumed.
 - *Exodus 3:2 And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.*

2. The manifestation of these combined attributes of God is united in the appearance of the personage described in the Old Testament as the Angel of the Lord who appeared to Hagar, Abraham, Moses, Balaam, and many others.
 - Hagar. *Genesis 16:9 And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands.*
 - Abraham. *Genesis 22:11 And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I.*
 - Moses. *Exodus 3:2 And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.*
 - Balaam. *Numbers 22:32 And the angel of the Lord said unto him, Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? Behold, I went out to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse before me:*

3. Technically, the presence of the Angel of the Lord is a Christophany as well as a theophany. A theophany is a manifestation of God and a Christophany is a manifestation of Jesus prior to the virgin birth. The word refers to a pre-incarnate revelation of Christ.

4. There are a number of examples of Christophanies in Scripture.
 - Melchizedek (king of righteousness) reflects a Christophany. *Genesis 14:18 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. 19 And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: 20 And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all. 22 And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, 23 That I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich: 24 Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.*

Special Note.

Melchizedek become an important personage to the author of Hebrews as an illustration of how Christ could be a king, from the tribe of Judah, and a priest, not from the tribe of Levi, but after the patter of Melchizedek. *Hebrews 5:6 As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.*

- The burning bush was a Christophany. *Exodus 3:5 And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.*
- The pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire were Christophanies. *Exodus 13:21 And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night:*
- The Captain of the Host of the Lord reflects a Christophany. *Joshua 5:13 And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? 14 And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? 15 And the captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so.*
- The Fourth Man in the Fire reflects a Christophany. *Daniel 3:19 Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego: therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated. 20 And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. 21 Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. 22 Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. 23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. 24 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonied, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. 25 He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. 26 Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, came forth of the midst of the fire.*
- The chariot of fire translating Elijah reflects a Christophany. *2 Kings 2:12 And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces.*

- The wheels within wheels reflect a Christophany. *Ezekiel 1:1 Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. 2 In the fifth day of the month, which was the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity, 3 The word of the Lord came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the Lord was there upon him. 4 And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire.*
5. The Angel of the Lord performed actions associated with God such as providing revelation, engaging in acts of divine deliverance, and administering judgment and destruction.