

# The site and establishment of the temple

Readings: 2 Sam 24:1-25; 1 Chron 21:1 - 22:16

There is great value in understanding the historical background to the establishment of the first temple in Jerusalem. The setting is the story of David's failure late in his reign and what followed. This failure is attributed to Satan in 1 Chronicles 21:1 but the overriding cause was God's decreed plan, as revealed in 2 Samuel 24:1, much like the trials of Job.

## Historical background

First, it is helpful to explain some factual background to set the scene. The temple was built on the eastern of the two hills on which Jerusalem was situated, which is called Mt Zion or Mt Moriah (2 Chron 3:1). The actual site was where Ornan (or Araunah) had a threshing floor. This was where David built an altar to thank God for the halting of the plague which killed 70,000 people (1 Chron 21:22; 2 Chron 3:1). Today this place is held to be the sacred rock, *es-sakhra*, on which the 'Dome of the Rock' (the Mosque of Omar) stands. This is, traditionally, where the altar stood and the temple was erected to the west of it, though some dispute this. The summit of the hill had to be levelled to form a foundation for the temple building and the lower parts built up with substructures (Josephus, *Ant.*, VIII, iii, 9; XV, xi, 3; *BJ*, V, v, 1), which modern excavations have confirmed.

However, what are important are the facts that scripture mentions as the antecedents to the temple construction on this site, and these all have great spiritual value.

## Note: the value of cross-referencing

It is always vital in reading scripture to fully appreciate the context and the context always includes parallel passages. By comparing 1 Chron 21 with 2 Sam 24 we learn a great deal more than by just reading one passage. For instance: only by reading both passages do we fully appreciate the sovereignty of God in allowing Satan to tempt David to sin. If one simply read 1 Chron 21:1 we would presume that this was an independent action of the enemy, but by also reading 2 Sam 24:1 we learn that God's sovereign purpose was behind this temptation. Nothing is an accident; everything is predetermined by the Lord to suit his eternal purpose. Thus the sin of David in numbering the people was not just succumbing to the temptation of pride, but had a predetermined purpose in the establishment of God's temple. This is similar to the sin of David with Bathsheba, which gave rise to the birth of Solomon and the lineage of Jesus.

Also note the mention of the 'Angel of the Lord' (2 Sam 24:16 etc.). A survey of scripture shows that this is always a pre-incarnate manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ, the revealer of God. In this case, this is confirmed by reference to 2 Chron 3:1, where the angel that David saw is referred to as 'God'.

## What is the typology of the temple?

When we consider the factors regarding the Jewish temple we must bear in mind, at all times, what the various symbols mean and learn from these illustrative images. The word 'type' is derived from the Greek term *tupos*, which occurs 16 times in the New Testament. A type is a symbolic form that represents the truth of a later antitype. It can be translated as 'likeness', the type being similar to the thing it represents. Thus the burnt offering is a type of the offering of Christ upon the cross. Features of this blood sacrifice point to aspects of

the yielding up of Christ unto death. As we study these features we can learn more about the character and value of Christ's offering of himself.

The temple is a multi-faceted type, with various sub-types. The temple as a building stands for one thing while the vessels and compartments stand for other things within the general framework. The basic principles of the typology of the temple are previously found in the typology of the Tabernacle, which is presented with more information. Drawing lessons from types requires self-discipline so that the student does not runaway with obscure observations that have no scriptural validity. However, within the confines of scriptural revelation, types must be interpreted to get the best meaning out of them. In this way the Lord himself revealed to his disciples how all what Moses and the prophets wrote referred to himself.

The chief symbolic factor residing in the type of the temple is the dwelling place of God. It is in the temple that God dwells with Israel, and especially upon the Ark of the Covenant in the centre of the temple. When considering the temple, the central feature is the dwelling of God. For this reason, the antitype of the temple is first the Lord Jesus Christ, the true dwelling-place of God, the man in whom God dwelt fully. However, in a secondary sense all the elect are together the temple of God since they are in Christ, the body of Christ. Thus the local church is the temple of God, the place where God dwells on Earth (1 Cor 3:16-17, 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16).

The temple is also the place where atonement is made, where judgment has ceased and where the redeemed are established. It is a holy place where only the sanctified dwell. It is where God is seen in the face of Jesus Christ. The truth of these things is clearly understood in the New Covenant reality of the church. However, we can also learn from the typology seen in the history of the establishing of Israel's temple.

## **Factors leading up to the establishment of the temple.**

### **Occasioned because of sin (David's census)**

God allowed Satan to tempt David into numbering the people. There are various reasons suggested for this judgment, perhaps the rebellion of Absalom, but no one can be sure. What is certain is that it was in God's predetermined plan for the temple to be established as a result of the sin David committed. This sin is hubris and failure to comply with Mosaic Law. God was the Lord of the theocracy in Israel and a king had been allowed due to the clamour of the people; God's prophet warned that the king would tax the people and establish his own authority, but the people saw no objection. Numbering the people, or rather a census of the men of war, was both a means to establish later taxes and also a matter of domestic pride in proving that a king had a bigger army than a neighbouring territory.

Under law, the numbering of the people had to be accompanied by redemption money (Ex 30:12; cf. Num 3:42ff). This money was used for divine purposes in connection with the Tabernacle worship, and was not a governmental tax for the king's purposes. David sinned, both in using the census for pride, boasting about the size of his army, and also in the probable purpose of setting up a permanent system of taxation for the monarchy. David knew this was evil and furthermore ignored the warning of Joab, a man not known for his religious integrity.

The sin occasioned by this census resulted in the death of 70,000 people, a number symbolic of the fulness of divine perfection expressed in condemnation.

Note that the book of Samuel closes with this incident and the description of the staying of judgement, the establishment of an atoning sacrifice. Notice also the cost of the sacrifice – 50 shekels of silver; this was paid for the floor, oxen and wood. Fifty symbolising grace and divine fulness; silver representing redemption. In 1 Chronicles 21:25 the larger sum of 600 shekels of gold was for the whole hill site. This figure represents the cost of mankind, 6 x 10 x 10; gold represents what is of God. The symbolism is that God made a payment of his own substance to effect the redemption of the fulness of the elect out of the world.

The temple, then, arises after the expression of divine condemnation against sin. The temple comes after sin has been committed, recognised, judged and dealt with. Righteous men do not need a temple, a place where atonement is made, but sinners do. In order to deal with sin and rescue his chosen people, God establishes a dwelling-place with men on earth which is a place of redemption, atonement and worship. This is grace. Just as David received grace and forgiveness for his sin, and was confirmed in the lineage of the Messiah, so the elect receive grace and forgiveness in the place where God dwells.

“Out of the eater comes forth meat.” It was upon occasion of the terrible judgment inflicted on Israel for the sin of David that God gave intimation of the setting up of another altar, and of the place where he would have the temple to be built, upon which David was excited with great vigour to make preparation for that great work, wherein, though he had long since designed it, it should seem, he had, of late, grown remiss, till awakened by the alarm of that judgment. ... There is a great deal of difference between the frame of David's spirit in the beginning of the former chapter and in the beginning of this. There, in the pride of his heart, he was numbering the people; here, in his humility, preparing for the service of God. There corruption was uppermost (but the well of living water in the soul, though it may be muddied, will work itself clear again); grace here has recovered the upper hand. [Matthew Henry, on 1 Chron 22:1.]

### **The temple was built where the Lord had appeared to David.**

We have earlier established that the Angel of the Lord is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ in a pre-incarnate form. The Angel that David saw is none other than God himself, not some angelic divine messenger (2 Chron 3:1). [See appendix.]

It is only Christ that reveals God, no one else. The Son is the very stamp of the divine nature, the exact representation and the express image, of the Godhead (Heb 1:1-3). Only Jesus could say that ‘he who has seen me has seen the Father’ (Jn 14:9).

**No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared *Him* (Jn 1:18).**

It is Jesus who reveals God. Any revelation of God in the Old Testament is done by Jesus as the Son; even the revelation of God in the burning bush. Thus the Angel of the Lord is Yahweh, or Christ in pre-incarnate form.

As a result of David's sin there is a divine judgment enacted by this Angel; when the judgment ceases, there David sees the Lord and hears from God. David is justly terrified; but also spurred on to contrition, fear and worship. The place where he sees and communes with God is declared to be holy and a place where an altar should be built. It is where God appeared and dwelled for a time. When this land is secured, it is seen to be eminently fitting as the place where God's temple should be built.

The temple is where God is revealed in the form of Jesus Christ the Son.

### **The temple was built where God answers prayer (1 Chron 21:28)**

God's house is always a house of prayer (Matt 21:13); indeed, the antitype is a house of prayer for all nations, not just Israel (Isa 56:7). The officiating leaders in the temple are priests and the main function of a priest is to represent men to God. In Israel, without the intercession of the priests, especially that of the High Priest on the Day of Atonement, there would have been no forgiveness of sins. It is entirely appropriate that the site of the temple is a place where intercession for forgiveness was successful.

The temple of the Lord today, the church, is also a house of prayer, a place where prayer continues and dwells. Prayer is the lifeblood of the body; it is the stream of communion between believers and God; it is like blood flowing in the body. Without this stream of constant prayer there is no life. Churches that do not involve much prayer as part of their normal body life are empty cisterns. We are not talking about formal prayer meetings here but prayer as a significant and constant part of ordinary meetings. Prayers of thanksgiving, of praise, of worship, of consecration, as well as petitions for needs, should be a constant of normal church life.

### **The temple was built where God is feared (1 Chron 21:30)**

The fear of God is a factor that is conspicuously absent from many supposed churches today. And yet the fear of God is not only the beginning of wisdom and knowledge (Ps 111:10; Prov 1:7, 9:10) but is the foundation of true godliness. Without a genuine fear of God there is no submission and an ever-present danger of the uprising of pride.

The temple is a place where God is feared and the Temple in Israel was erected in the place where David greatly feared the Lord. This is not some gentle reverence we are talking about; David, the man of war, was scared! Godly fear is not superficial or formal, it is a genuine fear of offending God in any way. The Greek word used by the apostles is not a superficial word but *phobos* (meaning: fear, dread, terror); yes, basis of the word we use today for the condition where certain things terrify people ('phobia').

The Jews had become over-familiar with the formalities surrounding temple duties and had lost all sense of fear of God in Jesus' day. This irreverence was combined with a lack of real prayer to God, which was replaced by outward rituals and worthless ceremonies. For this reason Jesus drove out the moneychangers and the paraphernalia of commercial forces that had ruined the temple precincts in Jerusalem. Sadly, many modern churches are no better, being a place of commercial enterprises coupled with a lack of godly fear and over-familiarity with God. They should be fearful that the Lord will also come to them with a whip of cords and drive them out.

### **The temple was built on a threshing floor (a place of separation)**

What is a threshing floor? It is a place where the wheat is gathered and then threshed with instruments (or sometimes crushed by the feet of cattle) in order to separate out the precious wheat from the useless chaff. The instruments of threshing were sometime flails or sticks (Ruth 2:17; Isa 28:27), or a specifically designed threshing instrument (Isa 41:15; Amos 1:3), called a 'moreg' by the Jews. The Romans had a similar instrument called a 'tribulum' (which gives meaning to our tribulations). After threshing, the grain was winnowed by being thrown into the wind (Jer 4:11) where the heavier grain fell to the ground but the chaff was blown away, being later gathered up and burned.

This is a clear picture of the separation of sheep from goats, of sinners from elect, of good from evil. The temple is a place of separation, a place separate from the world; a mystery to it. It is where the separated elect are gathered as God's harvest from the world, and for this reason they are called 'saints', separate or sanctified ones.

The point of discipleship is to learn about separation. The Christian life is one long education of learning how to please and serve God, and this is founded upon discerning good from evil (Heb 5:14). This is why true Christians are known by their fruit and why superficial 'Christians' are shown to be false; if there is no development in righteousness, there is no eternal life present. The temple, or church, is the place where true believers are gathered and separated from the world.

**The temple was built on the place where judgment against sin ceased.** 1 Chron 21:15  
The sin of David resulted in judgment being meted out upon Israel. 70,000 people died, but the judgment against sin stopped at the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. This was the place chosen for the temple to be erected.

The temple is a place where sin is defeated and judgment ceases. Within the temple of God there is no judgment against sin because sin has been dealt with by the altar outside. Those serving God as priests within the temple serve as resurrected people, living a new life, not as in the flesh, which is judged. In the same way those in the church are those who have had their lives judged and their sin dealt with by Christ's atonement and serve God within his body in righteousness. The basic requirement for being in the body of Christ is that one is a new creation, a person who is now free from condemnation and judgment and able to serve God in justified righteousness.

The remaining judgment is outside the church. The world, the flesh and the devil will all be judged at the Last Day and will receive condemnation. The elect are spared condemnatory judgment through the merit of Christ, though they too are examined for their faithfulness. Rewards are given for faithful service, but there is no condemnation. Outside the safety of the church, the body of Christ, there is nothing but judgment and a fearful condemnation.

**The temple was built on place of atonement** 1 Chron 21:22, 26

The most important event in the rituals that took place in the Tabernacle and the temple was the Day of Atonement. On this day the sins of the nation were atoned for as the High Priest stood for the people and represented them before God in front of the Ark. As well as this, all the different blood offerings throughout the year each represented different aspects of the full atonement achieved by Christ upon the cross. Indeed, the Lord tells Solomon that the chief purpose of the temple was as a house of sacrifice:

**I have heard your prayer, and have chosen this place for myself as a house of sacrifice.** 2 Chron 7:12

The temple was where a great deal of blood was shed to cover sin. Indeed, at the dedication of the temple there must have been so much blood that the precincts would have flowed with it and the place must have stank of blood, gore and burned flesh.

**Then the king and all the people offered sacrifices before the LORD. King Solomon offered a sacrifice of twenty-two thousand bulls and one hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the people dedicated the house of God.** 2 Chron 7:4-5

The vast number of slain animals was necessary to show two things: the first was the cost of sin to the nation. Sin was a huge affair in God's sight and the cost of cleansing it was high. The second, and more important, matter was the symbolic reference to the value of the sacrifice of Christ. The blood of Christ is the most precious thing in the whole universe. It is where God took on human form and attached it to his person, then sacrificed this life of infinite value for the sake of his creatures. The blood is the value of Christ's life given up in sacrifice. The typology of this must be represented by huge numbers of slain animals when the temple is dedicated.

The site of the temple was chosen as the place where atonement was made for the people to avert the plague of God's judgment. Ornan's threshing floor was where David built an altar to present offerings to the Lord, and there God answered him and ended the plague caused by sin. This is excellent typology to illustrate the basis of the spiritual temple of God in the church. The church is where atonement has been made for sin and where God answers prayer for repentance. Those gathered are the ones who have sought God for atonement in the cross and God answered them with justification by faith.

For this reason the centre-piece of the local church is the Lord's Supper, which is always a looking back to proclaim the Lord's death until he come and consummate what it represents. As the centre-piece of the Jewish temple was the sacrificial offerings, so the focus of the church is the Lord's Supper. Both turn our eyes to the value of the life of Christ given up in sacrifice for us. God's house is a place of sacrifice, not a place to party!

#### *Payment for a sacrifice*

A further note should be made regarding the full cost of the place of sacrifice and the animals sacrificed. Ornan was a Jebusite, not naturally a member of the covenant God made with Israel but accepted as an alien within the community. David ensured that the full cost of the animals, the wood and the whole temple area was made at the proper valuation. Sacrifice always costs the one offering; an Israelite presenting an offering had to give the best of his flock or herd, the animal had to be without blemish and was of great value. Sin costs. Though Ornan was prepared to give David what he asked for it was impossible that David should accept this, especially after causing the judgment in the first place. The offering and area had to be paid for at full cost. In this aspect of typology I believe that David represents God as the king paying for the sacrifice to atone for the people suffering judgment.

When dealing with sin, God was prepared to make the full cost for our sins himself because we have nothing of value to give. None of our works have any spiritual value because we are dead in sins. If God had not met the cost of sin in his own person, there would have been no atonement.

## Conclusion

No doubt we could continue delving into details of the typology surrounding this great event in Israel's history. Since God is so great, and since this event is of such spiritual importance, there are probably many more facets which we have not uncovered. But enough has been shared to incite believers to study God's word and search for the importance of typological events to assist their worship and understanding.

## Appendix

### Theophanies: The pre-incarnate revelations of the Son

#### Only the Son reveals God

Christ, as the eternal Son, is the revealer of God; he manifests God to men. He is the light of God and the one who formed the universe as a testimony to God's glory. No revelation of God is made by anyone but the Son. No angel can manifest God, but only act as a messenger and repeat God's words or effect God's decree.

You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live. Ex 33:20

Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father. Jn 6:46

Il things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and *the one* to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*. Matt 11:27

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. Col 1:15

[God] who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. 1 Tim 6:16

No one has seen God at any time. 1 Jn 4:12

#### The Son is sent to men

In order to reveal himself, God sends the Son. Whenever God is manifested, it is through a sending of the Son. The superlative sending is when the Son was incarnated as a man and sent to active salvation for men (Jn 6:40; 1 Jn 4:9, 14).

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

#### The theophanies

These are appearances of God in OT times and are always a manifestation of the Son, sent to men for various reasons in the plan of salvation.

Sometimes these appearances are in the form of a man (Gen 18:1-2), but sometimes in other forms (Num 22:28) or merely through speech and dreams (Gen 18:33, 20:3, 31:24). Since the Son is the revelation of God to men, these are all appearances of the pre-incarnate Christ.

#### The angel of the Lord (or the Angel of the Covenant)

'The' Angel of the Lord is a different person to references of 'an' angel of the Lord. In many places the Angel of the Lord is shown to be a manifestation of God, and is thus an appearance of the Son.

Note a few occasions:

Now the Angel of the LORD found her [Hagar] by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur. ... Then the Angel of the LORD said to her, 'I will multiply your descendants exceedingly, so that they shall not be counted for multitude.' ... Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees; for she said, 'Have I also here seen Him who sees me?' Gen 16:7-13

Here this 'angel' decrees what only God can decree and is stated to be God speaking.

But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, 'Abraham, Abraham!' So he said, 'Here I am.' And He said, 'Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only *son*, from Me.' Gen 22:11-12

The Angel of the Lord here attributes to himself what is of God.

And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush *was* not consumed ... God called to him from the midst of the bush ... 'Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand *is* holy ground.' Moreover He said, 'I *am* the God of your father -- the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. And the LORD said.... Ex 3:2-7 (cf. Acts 7:30-38)

Here is a clear statement that the Angel of the Lord is actually God.

'Angel' means messenger. The army of God's angels are his messengers to do his bidding, but the Angel of the Lord is God's personal messenger who is distinct from the host of heaven. This is the pre-incarnate Christ who manifested God personally to men.

#### *Occurrences:*

- Gen 16:7 - the angel and Hagar.
- Gen 18 - Abraham intercedes with the angel for Sodom.
- Gen 22:11 - the angel prevents the sacrifice of Isaac.
- Gen 24:7, 40 - Abraham promises the angel's protection.
- Gen 31:11 - the angel appears to Jacob - "I am the God of Beth-el".
- Gen 32:24 - Jacob wrestles with the angel.
- Gen 48:15 ff. - Jacob identifies the angel as God.
- Ex 3 (compare Acts 7:30) - the angel appears to Moses in the burning bush.
- Ex 13:21; 14:19 (cf. Num 20:16) - the angel leads Israel out of Egypt.
- Ex 23:20 - the people are commanded to obey the angel.
- Ex 32:34 - 33:17 (cf. Isa 63:9) - Moses pleads for the presence of God with His people.
- Josh 5:13 - 6:2 - the angel appears to Joshua.
- Jdg 2:1-5 - the angel speaks to the people.
- Jdg 6:11 - the angel appears to Gideon.

Though perhaps not much should be made of this, the mentions are 14. This symbolises both divine perfection and testimony, which is exactly what these appearances are about.

#### *Some characteristics of this angel*

- The angel leads Israel into the Promised Land and they are to obey him since God's name is in him (Ex 23:20).
- This angel can forgive sin, which only God can do (Ex 23:20).
- God's character (name) and authority are in this angel.
- God's presence is with the angel (Ex 32:34-33:17).
- In ordinary angels one can see something of God's character through what they say of do in testimony of God; but in the angel of the Lord God is fully present as the God of the covenant, outworking God's redemptive purposes with men.

#### *Suggestions as to the identity of the angel of the Lord*

1. This angel is simply an angel with a special commission.

2. A momentary descent of God into visibility.
  3. The Logos, a temporary pre-incarnation of the Second Person of the Trinity.
- Since God's name is associated with this angel and he is a personal, authorised representative of the covenant of God with man, only the third suggestion has validity since no one has ever seen God except in the Second Person.

### Some significant appearances of God to men

Then the LORD appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw *them*, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, So the LORD went His way as soon as He had finished speaking with Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place. Now the two angels came to Sodom. Gen 18:1,2, 33, 19:1

Here is a clear appearance of God to Abraham in the form of a man, not an angel. However, with the Lord are two angels who also appeared in human form. Abraham not only has a long conversation with God face-to-face, but shares a meal with him and intercedes for Sodom. It is a most amazing example of a man fellowshiping with God and an example of God's grace in lowering himself to our level in order to develop and communicate the covenant he has with us.

Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him. And He said, 'Let Me go, for the day breaks.' But he said, 'I will not let You go unless You bless me!' So He said to him, 'What *is* your name?' He said, 'Jacob.' And He said, 'Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed.' Then Jacob asked, saying, 'Tell *me* Your name, I pray.' And He said, 'Why *is* it *that* you ask about My name?' And He blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel ['the face of God']: 'For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.' Gen 32:24-30 (Cf. Hos 12:4-5)

This amazing incident has spawned many comments. That the man who wrestled Jacob is God goes without saying since it is plainly stated. What this teaches us is God's grace in stooping down to our level in order to deal with our characters and change us according to his pattern. God draws us into close dealing with himself. Nothing of value in the Christian life comes without genuine dealings with God. In Jacob's case this was done very literally. Note that it was only after this event, after Jacob's name was changed, that he became a blessing to men, and even able to bless kings. The strength of Jacob's cunning life (symbolised by his hip) had to be taken away by God's discipline before he could be any spiritual use. Forevermore Jacob is seen as a crippled man in the flesh, but a spiritual one in imparting blessing. He has changed from the supplanter or deceiver, the self-reliant, to being the one who leans on his staff and worships, the dependent one. This is a true picture of Christian discipleship; changing from being self-focused into being spiritually dependent people. Dealings with God lead to increased self-denial and trust in God's sufficiency.

And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood 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?' So He said, 'No, but *as* Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come.' And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him,

'What does my Lord say to His servant?' Then the Commander of the LORD's army said to Joshua, 'Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand *is* holy.' And Joshua did so. Now Jericho was securely shut up because of the children of Israel; none went out, and none came in. And the LORD said to Joshua: 'See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, *and* the mighty men of valour.' Jos 5:13-6:2

This is the Son again in human form, but here as a man of war. After identifying himself as the 'Commander of God's army', Joshua realises that this is God himself, and thus falls on his face and worships him, taking off his sandals. No angel can ever accept worship, and this also reveals that this person is the Son. Then the text specifically states that the Lord spoke to Joshua, clearly identifying the man as God in human form. The power of this man's decree is seen in his giving over the mighty fortress of Jericho to Joshua's army.

It is notable that the Son is here declared to be a man of war and the Commander of God's troops. He authorises Joshua's campaign of genocide against the Canaanite tribes (who's sin before God was ripe for judgment) and hands over Jericho for destruction. This destroys the speculation of all those modernist theologians who strive to separate the OT and NT revelation, or who seek to put distance between the 'harsh' God of the OT from the meek 'Jesus' of the NT. Jesus Christ is the same God as the one who spoke to Moses declaring himself to be YHWH. YHWH (or the popular but false term 'Jehovah') of the OT is Christ. Indeed judgment is committed to Christ at the Last Day (Acts 10:42, 17:31; Rm 14:10-12; 2 Cor 5:10; Jude 1:14-15); it is he who will pass condemnation and judgment upon sinners. There is no separation in the revelation of the Old and New Testaments. They are the revelation of the same God.

Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste and spoke, saying to his counsellors, 'Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?' They answered and said to the king, 'True, O king.' 'Look!' he answered, 'I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.' Dan 3:24-25

It is Daniel who first uses the title, 'Son of Man' for the Messiah (Dan 7:13). This became Jesus' favoured title for himself on Earth. However, in the story of the fiery furnace the Second Person of the Trinity is seen fellowshiping with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, and is described as the 'Son of God' but in the form of a man. In other words, the shekinah glory of God rested upon this man in the fire, demonstrating that he was God. In the midst of their great trial the Son of God came directly to them to comfort them in their faith and secure their deliverance. This was no angel, this was the pre-incarnate Christ.

Though Nebuchadnezzar may have meant an ordinary angel (often called a 'son of God' by heathens, Dan 3:28) since the Chaldee does not use the definite article, it is also possible that he may have understood something of the promised deliverer from Daniel. Even so, that this is Christ not an ordinary angel is made more likely by the divine promise of Isa 43:2-3, 'When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you. For I am the LORD your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Saviour'. God often uses men in authority to utter spiritual truths beyond their comprehension and records it as scripture (see: Caiaphas Jn 11:49-52, the centurion Matt 27:54, or Pilate, Jn 19:19).

## Summary

Only the Second Person of the Trinity, the Son, manifests God to men; God the Father is never seen by men since he is invisible and full of glory. In the fulness of time, the Son is finally revealed as God in the form of man, having taken on humanity in addition to his

divinity; thus he is still one person but exists in two natures. This was necessary in order to perform the work of redemption for men. However, before the incarnation, the Son frequently manifested God to men as part of the Father's covenant purposes. His most common appearance is in the form of the Angel of the Lord. It is helpful to understand that this person is the pre-incarnate Christ as it enables us to better interpret the covenantal implications in each incident.

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