

## CHRISTOPHANIES & THEOPHANIES

“The appearances of God in the flesh in both the Old & New Testaments” *pjm*

Christophanies & theophanies are actual occurrences when God the Father or Jesus the Son walked and talked with human beings taking on some sort of body (or voice?) which looked quite human.

There are no biblical definitions.

Christophanies & theophanies are not visions (*awake*), dreams (*asleep*) or even divine voices speaking to men who are awake. Those also occur. Paul did not see Jesus. He just heard Jesus’ voice. Christophany(?). The Holy Spirit did not manifest Himself as a man in the shape of a pillar of fire in the wilderness = no theophany. Yes, God Himself actually showed up as a human to talk with Abraham and was accompanied by two angels who also looked quite human = theophany.

- In this blog I will not be explaining all of the hundreds of times when God contacts men through dreams, transmitting the Scripture verse by verse or oracle by oracle. We won’t touch on the “still small voice” to Elijah. My only intent is to take a glimpse at some of the more well known occurrences when God, sometimes in the person of Jesus, stepped foot on earth outside the Ministry of the incarnate Jesus.
- Nor will I try to define Jesus’ future ministry in the book of the Revelation. I don’t think His coming to earth as Messiah-King fits into the Christophany genre.
- I will try to be careful as I give my opinion as to my reasons for differentiating between the “-ophanies” since some of these events use the term “the Angel of the Lord,” *capitalization mine*.
- Since Scripture does not give definitions of these words we will always extend charity.
- It is your Job to identify each of the examples given below. Nobody is wrong but you need to be consistent with your definitions.
  - #1. Read all the way through the list of verses
  - #2. Write your own definition of theophany (*or amend my definitions*).
  - #3. Or circle those you feel are consistent with your understanding (below).

God does not explain these appearances as much as we might like, so there are questions which remain unanswered. But Adam took daily walks with God, theophany or Christophany?

### Two Common definitions

#1. A Theophany is any appearance of God on earth, bodily or just voice outside of Jesus’ earthly human ministry.

#2. A Christophany is a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus.

*That is, Jesus shows up in a human body in the Old testament prior to His birth in Bethlehem.*

These are my personal definitions (which agree with many other writers).  
Your definition may differ slightly.

n.b. Some would say God's "appearance" in the burning bush is a theophany. Others might say the burning bush is not a theophany because it is not a human body. Your choice.

Let this brief study begin with a list of many of the well known occurrences when it seems God appeared in a human body or simply conversed with different men and women. These are presented in the order they occur in Scripture. My tentative opinion is recorded with the .

It is your Job to identify each of the examples given below. Nobody is wrong but you need to be consistent with your definitions.

#1. Read all the way through the list of verses

#2. Write your own definition of theophany (*or amend my definitions*).

#3. Go back and **circle** all the letters you feel are consistent with your understanding.

\*  the Angel of the Lord = Father, Son, or Holy Spirit

\*Note that I have capitalized "Angel" in my own body when I believe it to be Jesus Himself.

**Old Testament Theophanies**, God is present **Christophanies**, in a human body

- a.  Gen 3.9-19 Adam (and Eve?) took walks with God
- b. Gen 4.9 the Lord spoke with Cain, Cain answered
- c. Gen 6.13 God said to Noah
- d.  Gen 11.5 the Lord came down at Babel
- e.  Gen 14.18 Melchizedek met Abraham cf. Heb 7.3,4  
see [www.PhilMyersBlog.com](http://www.PhilMyersBlog.com)  
[Melchizedek: Jesus? or Gentile king?](#)
- f. Gen 15.1 Abraham went to Canaan, word of Lord came in a vision (*awake*)
- g.  Gen 16.7-14 the Angel of the Lord found Hagar and they talk
- h.  Gen 17.1,2ff the Lord appeared to Abraham
- i.  Gen 18.13,33 3 men showed up, 2 angels destroy Sodom, Abrahamic Covenant delivered, Sarah laughed, one who stayed = Jesus
- j. Gen 21.17,18 God heard Ishmael, spoke to Hagar 2nd time, from heaven
- k. Gen 22.11-18 the Angel of the Lord stopped Abraham from sacrificing Isaac
- l. Gen 31.11-13 Jacob, speckled & spotted goats, dream
- m. Gen 32.22 Jacob's ladder (*dream*)
- n. Gen 35.9 God appeared to Jacob second time
- o. Exod 3.2-6 burning bush, the Angel of the Lord appeared
- p. Exod 12.29 death angel passed through Egypt
- q. Exod 13.20-22 the Lord went before them by pillar of fire & cloud
- r. Exod 14.19 the angel of God. . .went behind them (at the Red Sea)
- s.  Exod 19.25 10 Commandments, written with the finger of God (Ex 31.18)
- t.  Exod 24.9-11 Moses, Aaron, + 70 elders
- u.  Exod 33.18 God showed Moses His glory
- v. Num 11.25 the Lord came down in a cloud to Moses & 70 elders
- w. Num 12.5 the Lord came down in a pillar of loud, rebuked Miriam & Aaron
- x. Num 20.6 glory of the Lord appeared at the Tabernacle
- y.  Num 22.24 the glory of the Lord stood
- z. Num 24.9 God came to Balaam and said. . . .
- aa. Num 24.10 the donkey saw the Angel of the Lord
- bb.  Josh 5.14 Josh met captain of the Lord's army who accepted Josh's worship
- cc. Judg 1.2 the Lord said to Judah

dd. Judg 2.1	an angel of the Lord said, "I . . .brought you up. . .My covenant."
ee. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Judg 6.11-24	Gideon talked with an Angel of the Lord
ff. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Judg 13.3-22	the Angel of the Lord spoke to Samson's parents
gg. I Sam 3.4	God spoke to Samuel ( <i>awake</i> ), <i>voice only</i>
hh. II Kings 1.3	the Angel of the Lord appeared to Elijah
ii. II Kings 1.15	the Angel of the Lord went down with him
jj. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> II Kings 19.35	God kills 185,000 Assyrians
kk. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I Chron 21.16	David saw. . .the Angel of the Lord
ll. Job 38.1	Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind
mm. Isa 1.8	"I heard the voice of the Lord saying. . . ."
nn. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Isa 6.1	"I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne"
oo. Jer 1.11,13	"Word of the Lord came to me saying. . . ."
pp. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dan 3.25	"I see four! One like the Son of God"
qq. Dan 7.9,10	Ancient of Days. . .night visions. . .sat
rr. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dan 5,5-12	handwriting on the wall
ss. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ezek 8.7	the hand of the Lord fell on me. . .He brought me to. . . .( <i>vision, awake</i> )
tt. Amos 7.1	Lord God showed me
uu. Habakkuk	the Lord answered me and said
vv. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Zech 1.12,19	the Angel of the Lord said, "O, Lord of hosts, how long. . .?"

I'm not at all sure that I'm consistent with my own definitions.

NT passages to think about

Acts 9 Saul's conversion  
 13.1,2 spoke to elders at Antioch  
 16 Holy Spirit told disciples to warn Paul  
 18.9 Jesus speaks to Paul  
 23.11 Jesus assures Paul that he will reach Rome

Gal 1.17,18 Paul spends time with Jesus in Arabia