

Sermon to the saints of God assembled at Topeka – Sunday, Feb. 10, 2019

It appears that the one subject upon which men preached in the apostolic age was Jesus Christ. The tendency of man, if left alone, is continually to go further and further from God, and the Church of God itself is no exception to the general rule. For the first few years, during and after the apostolic era, Christ Jesus was preached, but gradually the Church departed from the central point, and began rather to preach ceremonials and church offices than the person of their Lord. So has it been in these modern times: we also have fallen into the same error, at least to a degree, and have gone from preaching Christ to preaching doctrines about Christ, inferences which may be drawn from his life, or definitions which may be gathered from his discourses . . . In the days of Paul it was not difficult at once, in one word, to give the sum and substance of the current theology. It was Christ Jesus. Had you asked anyone of those disciples what he believed, he would have replied, "I believe Christ" . . . I would propose that the subject of the ministry of this house, as long as this platform shall stand, and as long as this house shall be frequented by worshippers, shall be the person of Jesus Christ . . . if I am asked to say what is my creed, I think I must reply: "It is Jesus Christ" . . . the body of divinity to which I would pin and bind myself for ever, God helping me, is . . . Christ Jesus, who is the sum and substance of the gospel; who is in Himself all theology, the incarnation of every precious truth, the all-glorious personal embodiment of the way, the truth, and the life. - Charles Spurgeon – March 25th, 1861

Last week, we took a close look at a few pre-incarnate appearances of Christ – which theologians and expositors have long called ‘Christophanies’ – with an eye toward first refreshing our spiritual memories, before moving on toward a larger analysis and proposition. We read of Christ appearing unto Adam and Eve in the Garden, pronouncing His curse for all of fallen man and simultaneously showing forth, therefore, every son and daughter of Adam’s need for salvation from their own depraved, sinful nature. Christ appeared to and spoke with Abraham on several occasions; making manifest His covenant with Abraham’s seed, showing forth His wrath and power at the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and typifying His salvation through Abraham and Isaac upon a mountain, and thereby providing an example of the heart of a man that, through trials, sees God in them and cleaves unto His promises:

By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: 19 Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure. – Heb. 11:17-19

Christ appeared unto Jacob in the desert, and He wrestled with the desperate man all night – typifying His sovereignty, help and blessings upon all those who earnestly contend for the faith. He revealed himself through His commandments of the Captain of the host to Joshua by Jericho.

Christ showed forth a type of His salvation, deliverance and sovereignty to a foolish, vain king, His presence being the complete and utter salvation of His sheep inside of the burning, fiery furnace. Christ also appeared as the Angel of the LORD unto Hagar, Gideon and Manoah and his wife, as well as several others, including:

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. 3 And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. 4 And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. 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. 6 Moreover he said, I am the God of thy 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. 7 And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; 8 And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey... - Ex. 3:2-8

The angel of the Lord is Christ, here – just as He is in the other instances of the angel of the LORD appearing unto men. The burning bush was not, itself, the appearance of the LORD. He appeared unto Moses **in a flame of fire out of the midst of the bush**, and He **called out unto Moses out of the midst of the bush**. Moses wasn't afraid to look upon the fire – the marvel of the bush burning and yet not being consumed is what drew his attention in the first place. It was not until the LORD Jesus Christ told Moses who He was that he hid his face and was afraid to look upon God. But the LORD Jehovah made clear His plan for the deliverance of His people, and spoke to Moses face to face, as unto a friend, when He spoke to His servant.

John Owen: *He is expressly called an "Angel" – namely, the Angel of the covenant, the great Angel of the presence of God, in whom was the name and nature of God. And He thus appeared that the Church might know and consider who it was that was to work out their spiritual and eternal salvation, whereof that deliverance which then He would effect was a type and pledge. The text speaks of one and the same person throughout without any alteration; and this was no other but the Son of God.*

The angel of the LORD, or *malak Jehovah* (messenger of the "Existing One," or the "I AM") is God. He is one with God. He is in substance, very God of very God. But He is God being sent forth *from* God, condescending to be clothed and manifest in the visible earthen realm and become obedient unto God, in order to reveal the image of the invisible God to those who walk in darkness.

Jacob (Israel) gives further evidence of his understanding of who the angel of the LORD was and is, and of robust, heartfelt understanding of the redemptive power of Christ, long before the salvific sacrifice was executed on the earth:

And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth. – Gen. 48:15-16

Gill: *this is not to be understood of a created angel he wishes to be their guardian, but of an eternal one, the Son of God, the Angel of God's presence, the Angel of the covenant; the same with the God of his father before mentioned, as appears by the character he gives him, as having "redeemed [him] from all evil"; not only protected and preserved him from temporal evils and imminent dangers from Esau, Laban, and others; but had delivered him from the power, guilt, and punishment of sin, the greatest of evils, and from the dominion and tyranny of Satan the evil one, and from everlasting wrath, ruin, and damnation; all which none but a divine Person could do, as well as he wishes, desires, and prays, that he would "bless" the lads with blessings temporal and spiritual, which a created angel cannot do; and Jacob would never have asked it of him.*

Now let us please consider another category of the appearance of the LORD Jehovah (Christ) that happened throughout the Old Testament. We have clear, plain evidence that runs the whole course of scripture that one of the names that expresses part of the essence of the LORD Jesus Christ is the Word. We see clearly that by tying John 1:1 to John 1:14, The Word of God, or Christ, was from the beginning – and was with, and was, God:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not...14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. – John 1:1-5,14

The phrase “The Word of the LORD” appears in scripture 255 times and the phrase “the word of God” appears 48 times. Just the word “word,” when used in the context of God delivering a message to a servant, also appears many times, but I didn’t count the precise number, as there are many other times the word “word” is used, but *not* in the context of describing a message from the LORD. What I mean here is examples like this:

And the LORD said unto Moses, Is the LORD'S hand waxed short? thou shalt see now whether my word shall come to pass unto thee or not. – Nu. 11:23

There are also other variants, such as “the words of the LORD,” but you get the idea. These are several ways that the LORD’s delivering of His commandments, the giving of commissions and detail related to the carrying out of those commissions is expressed throughout scripture. In the Old Testament, there are three Hebrew words that are rendered as ‘word’ in this context. The first is *dabar* (daw-baw’), which means: speech, word, speaking, utterance. Here are examples of this sort:

After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. – Gen. 15:1

Then the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah the prophet, after that Hananiah the prophet had broken the yoke from off the neck of the prophet Jeremiah, saying... - Jer. 28:12

The word* that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. – Isa. 2:1

*the Hebrew word used in Isa. 2:1 is also *dabar*, but here it is being used to describe the occurrence of a vision (or, speaking to the mind’s eye - in this instance, a vision of the enlargement of Christ’s kingdom and interest). The second – *peh* – means: mouth, commandment, speech.

And Moses numbered them according to the word of the LORD, as he was commanded. – Nu. 3:16

And the third is *imrah*, which means: word, speech, utterance or commandment.

For the word of the LORD is right; and all his works are done in truth. – Ps. 33:4

The word of the LORD, regardless of how it is phrased, comes unto a host of servants in the Old Testament, including:

Then came the word of the LORD to Isaiah (Isaiah 38:4) . . . Jeremiah . . . to whom the word of the LORD came in the days of Josiah (Jeremiah 1:1-2) . . . The word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1:3) . . . The word of the LORD that came unto Hosea (Hosea 1:1) . . . Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah (Jonah 1:1) . . . The word of the LORD that came to Micah (Micah 1:1) . . . In the second year of Darius the king . . . came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet (Haggai 1:1) . . . In the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD unto Zechariah (Zechariah 1:1).

I submit to you, beloved, that just as all instances of the angel of the LORD appearing unto men are in fact appearances of Christ, or the LORD Jehovah (The Existing One), that instances of the

word of the LORD, the Word, or the word of God are also Christ – everywhere those phrases appear in the context of the LORD delivering messages, or appearing unto, His servants. And as we see the LORD manifest Himself as the Word, we also begin to see other attributes of the of the Word become more clear - thereby both expanding our understanding of Christ in that role and in seeing Him as *the* key figure in the law, the prophets and the psalms. The Word, or Christ, is not only the voice of God in the OT, the Word is also the Creator, which was from the beginning:

All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not....10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. – John 1: 3-5, 10

Barnes (v. 3): *In this place it is affirmed that creation was effected by the Word, or the Son of God. In Gen. 1:1, it is said that the Being who created the heavens and the earth was God. In Ps. 102:25-28, this work is ascribed to Jehovah. The Word, or the Son of God, is therefore appropriately called God. The work of creation is uniformly ascribed in the Scriptures to the second person of (the Triune God). By this is meant, evidently, that (Christ) was the agent, or the efficient cause, by which the universe was made. There is no higher proof of omnipotence than the work of creation; and hence God often appeals to that work to prove that He is the true God, in opposition to idols (or the mere 'work' of men's hands).*

For the word of the LORD is right; and all his works are done in truth. 5 He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD. 6 By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. 7 He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses. – Ps. 33:4-7

But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. – 1Cor. 8:6

Barnes: *By whom – or by whose agency; or through whom, as the agent. The word "by" stands in contradistinction from "of" in the former part of the verse; and obviously means, that though "all things" derived their existence from God, as the Fountain and Author, yet it was "by" the agency of the Lord Jesus. This doctrine, that the Son of God was the great agent in the creation of the world, is elsewhere abundantly taught in the Scriptures.*

And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: 10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, 11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: - Eph. 3:9-11

Gill (v. 9): *who created all things by Jesus Christ; not as an instrument, but as a co-efficient cause: and this is to be understood, not of the new creation, but of the old, and of all things in it; for without Christ, was not anything made that is made.*

Barnes (v. 9): *the sentiment is, that the Son of God — the Second Person of the Trinity — was the great and immediate Agent in the creation of the universe.*

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: 13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: 14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: 15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. – Col. 1:12-17

The thrones, dominions, principalities and powers most likely refers to BOTH all authority on earth AND all the mechanisms of the spiritual world.

(Gill): *These seem rather to be said of the invisible things in heaven, and to be an explanation of them, angels may rather be thought to be intended; and are so called, not as denoting different orders and degrees among them, which some have rashly ventured to describe, but because of the use that God makes of them in the government of the world, and the executions of the various affairs of Providence relating to particular persons and kingdoms.*

And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness (that is, Christ), the beginning of the creation of God; - Rev. 3:14

Gill: *The beginning of the creation of God; not the first creature that God made, but the first cause of the creation; the first Parent, producer, and efficient cause of every creature; the author of the old creation, who made all things out of nothing in the beginning of time; and of the new creation, the everlasting Father of, everyone that is made a new creature; the Father of the world to come, or of the new age and Gospel dispensation; the Maker of the new heaven and new earth; and so a very fit person to be the Judge of the whole world, to summon all nations before him, and pass the final sentence on them.*

That Christ is described here as the faithful and true witness is an expression of His exclusive witnessing of God the Father and of the Triune God throughout *all* the scriptures.

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; 3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and

the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; - Heb. 1:1-

3

His own word making it clear unto us - we see that God has been seen and heard in a variety of ways and at many times in delivering messages unto faithful men and messengers – always through the LORD Jesus Christ, who is clearly identified by His own word as the Creator.

In addition to the proposition already presented that all instances of the angel of the LORD and the word of the LORD are indeed referring to Christ, I further submit to you, beloved, that in all appearances of the LORD in visions and dreams revealed unto His servants, that the images displayed and the voices heard were instances of the personage of the LORD Jehovah, or Christ – as a preview of some aspect of the LORD in glory.

Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz: 6 His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude. – Dan. 10:5-6

Scripture makes it clear that all appearances of the LORD, whether visual or audible, whether by vision, dream or by corporeal, actual occurrence, are appearances of the LORD Jehovah (the unchanging, existing One, the Alpha and Omega) - the Lord Jesus Christ:

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. – John 1:18

And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. 5 For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ. 6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: 7 Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. 8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. 9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. – Col. 2:4-9

I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; 14 That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: 15 Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; 16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen. – 1Tim. 6:13-

16

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. – John 4:24

It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. 46 Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father (Christ). – John 6:45,46

No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. – 1John 4:12

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen. – 1Tim. 1:17

Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: 14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: 15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: - Col. 1:13-15

If I bear witness of myself (that is, alone, as a man standing before you now), my witness is not true. 32 There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. 33 Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. 34 But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved. 35 He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. 36 But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. 37 And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me*. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. 38 And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. 39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. - John 5:31-39

Gill (in part) on verse 37: “And the Father himself, which hath sent me, etc.” Not only the works he gave him to do, and which he did, but he himself in person: “hath borne witness of me;” not only in the writings of Moses, and the prophecies of the Old Testament, but by an audible articulate voice from heaven, at the time of Christ’s baptism, (see Mt 3:17); which was a full testimony of the sonship of Christ, and of the Father’s well pleasure in him; and which was repeated at his transfiguration on the mount, (see Mt 17:5); and the sonship of Christ is the grand thing which the three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, testify of, (see 1Jo 5:7); “ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape;” for the voices that were heard, and the forms that were seen under the Old Testament dispensation, from the first of this kind in Eden’s garden, to the incarnation of Christ, which are ascribed to God, or to a divine person, were either by the ministry of angels, or they were voices uttered by the Son of God, or forms assumed by him, who often appeared in an human form, as a prelude of his incarnation; so that it was unusual, and wonderful, and remarkable, that the Father should

bear a testimony to the sonship of Christ by a voice from heaven (at both Christ's baptism and on the Mount of transfiguration); and which therefore ought to be attended to, and received as a sufficient and valid testimony.

The Father's bearing witness of Christ being spoken of here is precise, remarkable, and an absolute watershed spiritual moment in the history of the LORD's revealing himself unto fallen man, from Adam until the last man. What is being made reference to, here, is the two times (once having already happened, and the other to soon fall upon its heels) where the voice of God from heaven *is* the Father's – in that God the Father is speaking to men *about* God the Son – the LORD Jehovah – while they are in the very presence of Christ!

And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: 17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.
– Mt. 3:16-17

And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, 2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. 3 And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. 4 Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. 5 While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. – Mt. 17:1-5

It is indeed remarkable that the voice of the Father was heard of men – seeing as though none had *ever* heard such a thing previously. And the command given at the end of the verse is not a commandment for just those three men to hear Christ concerning those things which he will say next! The commandment is for all men (who have ears) to hear Christ speaking at all times, and in all circumstances, and in all contexts that He has spoken. He is THE faithful and true witness spoken of at Rev. 3;14, which witness is the entirety of the scripture! All revelation since the fall has come through Jesus Christ, who is the Jehovah of the Old Testament. The Father has never appeared to men, except to introduce and bear record of the Son.

Yet this is no denigration of the Triune God nor of any of His persons! In every verse of scripture, it is merely the precise manner in which God chose to reveal, typify, prophesy of, command, instruct, warn and nurture man of Himself.

I and my Father are one. – John 10:30

Poole: *My Father and I are one, not only in counsel and will, but in nature, power, and essence;*

for it is plain that our Saviour here ascribes the preservation of his sheep, not to the will, but to the power of his Father: None is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. And it is plain by what follows, that the Jews thus understood our Saviour. Some eminent protestant interpreters expound this of a oneness in consent and will, doing the same things, and driving the same design, both agreeing to preserve the sheep unto eternal life; but (with all respect unto them) I think the context implies more, though this be not excluded.

And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. – John 17:11

There Aren't Two Different Bibles. There is one. Christ is the "I AM." Before Abraham was, He is. He is Creator. He was from the beginning. He is the Word, speaking of God the Father throughout the scripture, in order to Reveal the Father. The entire Old Testament was a schoolmaster which brought us to Him. Christ is the entire Old Testament in physical, visible form. He is both *IN* the Old Testament, as well as the physical fulfillment *OF* the entirety of the Old Testament. Everything in Scripture pertains to Christ – the malak Jehovah – the Word – God Almighty. It all leads to Him and is all fulfilled in Him. All power, honor, glory and majesty is His. He is the deliverer of all of the revealed will of God – the scriptures – and the overarching subject of all of it is Christ, and Him crucified.

For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. - 1 Corinthians 2:2

For had you believed Moses, you would have believed me: for he wrote of me. - John 5:46

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ . . . – Gal. 3:24

And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not. 25 Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: 26 Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? 27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. - Lk. 24:24-27

John Owen: *It was so represented and made known under the Old Testament, in his personal appearances on various occasions unto several eminent persons, leaders of the church in their generations. This he did as a præludium to his incarnation. He was as yet God only; but appeared in the assumed shape of a man, to signify what he would be. He (need) not create a human nature and unite it unto himself for such a season; only by his divine power he acted the shape of a man composed of what ethereal substance he pleased, immediately to be dissolved. So he appeared to Abraham, to Jacob, to Moses, to Joshua, and others; he was the divine person who*

dwelt in and dwelt with the church, under the Old Testament, from first to last... And, indeed, after the fall there is nothing spoken of God in the Old Testament, nothing of his institutions, nothing of the way and manner of dealing with the church, but what hath respect unto the future incarnation of Christ.

When John wrote of the four beasts describing the eternal presence (Alpha and Omega, The Existing One) and thereby giving glory and honor unto Christ, they were not just speaking of the 'was' as in his 3.5 years on earth during his ministry, leading up to his crucifixion, that is depicted in the Gospels – the 'was' of Christ goes back to Genesis 1:1 (and the "was, is and is to come" equates with the "I AM THAT I AM" and Jehovah, or "Existing One"):

And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. 9 And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, 10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created. – Rev. 4:8-11

At the start of this analysis last Sunday I mentioned that I thought the distinct difference put, amongst Bible scholars, between "appearances of the preincarnate Christ and of God the Father is neither meaningful nor accurate, and that much by way of revelatory fruit can be gleaned by looking more closely at this blessed subject." I hope that I've pointed to clear evidence throughout the scriptures for such a proposition. I was asked by a dear brother what we are supposed to take away from looking at the appearance of Christ in the Old Testament. My answer to that has two parts. First, once a person steps into the brighter light that the Lord Jesus Christ didn't just make a few "as Himself" cameos *in* the Old Testament, but was *the* physical and audible manifestation *of* God and *all* messages delivered by Him (save messages delivered by created angels), then that person's whole perspective will begin to change as to what to seek and glean *in* the Old Testament. Outside of that light, its not hard to suppose that many earnest believers, through the ages, have tended to "fill in the blanks" for themselves in the overwhelming number of appearances of God in the OT. And those blanks can only be filled with more vague, less crisp conceptions of God if we don't see Christ – Jehovah – in each and every one of them. Second (and this is certainly the case with me), so much of the New Testament explodes with potency in such a light! By tying concepts afresh from the OT to the New, many places in scripture can be read anew, with some verses seeming more powerful and pregnant with fresh, augmented meaning! The questions that arise are many! But they are very good questions, asked by men who seek the face of God in earnest.

The quest to intimately know Jesus Christ, to be found in Him, to win Him, to comprehend, understand, and intimately behold His work, to know the power of His resurrection, to know the fellowship of His sufferings, and therefore be brought to true humility in service unto Him is the study of a godly man's life. To deliberately make "Christ and Him crucified" the great centerpiece of a man's thoughts, both practical and moral – that it would become the magnetic fixation of all reasoning in life, and the central doctrine and interpretive key to all life and truth, is, I think, the example of a singular focus (or single heart) given to us by our dear brother Paul:

Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, 9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: 10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; 11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. 12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. 13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. 15 Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. 16 Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. – Php. 3:8-16

If anyone has any questions about any of what I've said here, please ask. At current, my private studies will continue down this road, Lord willing – and I will certainly share what comes of it, if anything. I hope that something said or looked at today and last Sunday both edifies and refreshes your spirits.

I love you all!