

Encounters With God

What is God really like? We can tell a lot by what happened in the Bible when people directly encountered God. In our modern culture, we tend to lack the awe and reverence toward God that we ought to have.

Old Testament Encounters with God the Father: In Awe

Then He said, “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.** (Exodus 3:5-6)

Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, **they trembled and stood afar off.** Then they said to Moses, “You speak with us, and we will hear; **but let not God speak with us, lest we die.**” And Moses said to the people, “Do not fear; for **God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin.**” So the people stood afar off, but Moses drew near the thick darkness where God was. (Exodus 20:18-21)

Then Job answered the Lord and said: “I know that You can do everything, and that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You. You asked, ‘Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?’ Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. Listen, please, and let me speak; You said, ‘I will question you, and you shall answer Me.’ I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You. **Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.**” (Job 42:1-6)

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. ... So I said: **“Woe is me, for I am undone!** Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; **for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.**” (Isaiah 6:1, 5)

Like the appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the brightness all around it. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. **So when I saw it, I fell on my face,** and I heard a voice of One speaking. And He said to me, “Son of man, stand on your feet, and I will speak to you.” Then the Spirit entered me when He spoke to me, and set me on my feet; and I heard Him who spoke to me. (Ezekiel 1:28-2:2)

Old Testament Encounters with God the Father: In Sin

And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and **Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God** among the trees of the garden. (Genesis 3:8)

Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and **offered profane fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them**. So fire went out from the Lord and devoured them, and **they died** before the Lord. And Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the Lord spoke, saying: **'By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; and before all the people I must be glorified.'**" So Aaron held his peace. (Leviticus 10:1-3)

Old Testament Encounters with the Preincarnate Jesus Christ

Then the Lord opened Balaam's eyes, and **he saw the Angel of the Lord standing in the way with His drawn sword in His hand; and he bowed his head and fell flat on his face**. And the Angel of the Lord said to him, "Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold, I have come out to stand against you, **because your way is perverse before Me**." (Numbers 22:31-32)

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. (Joshua 5:13-15)

Now Gideon perceived that He was the Angel of the Lord. So Gideon said, "**Alas, O Lord God! For I have seen the Angel of the Lord face to face**." Then the Lord said to him, "Peace be with you; do not fear, you shall not die." So Gideon built an altar there to the Lord, and called it The-Lord-Is-Peace. To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites. (Judges 6:22-24)

And He did a wondrous thing while Manoah and his wife looked on—it happened as the flame went up toward heaven from the altar—the Angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar! When Manoah and his wife saw this, **they fell on their faces to the ground**. When the Angel of the Lord appeared no more to Manoah and his wife, then Manoah knew that He was the Angel of the Lord. And Manoah said to his wife, "We shall surely die, because we have seen God!" (Judges 13:19b-22)

Some Followed Jesus Christ Without Hesitation

And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." **They immediately left their nets and followed Him.** Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. **He called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him.** (Matthew 4:18-22)

As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." **So he arose and followed Him.** (Matthew 9:9)

The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, "Follow Me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "**We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.**" (John 1:43-45)

Others Tried to Accuse and Capture Jesus Christ

Now it happened on another Sabbath, also, that He entered the synagogue and taught. And a man was there whose right hand was withered. So the scribes and Pharisees watched Him closely, whether He would heal on the Sabbath, **that they might find an accusation against Him.** (Luke 6:6-7)

Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM." **Then they took up stones to throw at Him;** but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by. (John 8:58-59)

Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, "Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?" ... **Therefore they sought again to seize Him,** but He escaped out of their hand. (John 10:31-32, 39)

Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters saying: "You are righteous, O Lord, the One who is and who was and who is to be, because **You have judged these things. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets,** and You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due." And I heard another from the altar saying, "**Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments.**" (Revelation 16:4-7)

We Fail to See How Sinful and Unworthy We Are of Jesus

When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net." And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "**Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!**" (Luke 5:4-8)

Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented." And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him." The centurion answered and said, "**Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof.** But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed." (Matthew 8:5-8)

Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads." So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" Then the Lord said to him, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." (Acts 9:4-6)

God Alone is Good; God Alone is Worthy

As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. ... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:10-11, 23)

The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!" (Revelation 4:8)

Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying: "**You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood** out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth." (Revelation 5:8-10)

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