

## **Glorious Theophany!**

One of the most interesting subjects in theology is the biblical accounts of Theophanies. A Theophany is a visible appearance of God. Moses, Abraham, Gideon, Paul and other Bible characters were allowed to experience a Theophany.

One of my favorite Theophanies in Scripture is found in Joshua 5:13-15, when God appeared to Joshua as the captain of the Lord's host. There are three important characteristics of the Lord's visitation to Joshua that would benefit all of us to learn.

### 1. At times God shows up unannounced.

Unlike Christ's birth when angels and magi received celestial announcements heralding the coming of the King, our text shows the pre-incarnate Christ showing up without advanced warning. Joshua 5:13 says, "*And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man....*" It is good to live with the knowledge that at any given moment God may manifest His presence. One of God's names is Jehovah-Shamah which means "I am Present." We should live as though God were present everywhere so that anywhere His glorious manifestation occurs He is welcome and we are prepared.

Another characteristic to learn is:

### 2. Find whose side God is on!

According to Joshua 5:13 when Joshua sees his Lord, He is standing facing him with sword in hand. I don't know about you, but if I meet a man on a dark and lonely night with a drawn sword in his hand, I would most definitely desire to know whose side he was on, friend or foe.

Joshua asked, "*Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?*" (Joshua 5:13). It is a frightening experience to not know in your heart whether God is "for us." Even people who know the Scripture that promises God is for (Romans 8:31) have this feeling that our loving Lord acts less than loving toward them.

Christ declared He was captain of the armies of the Lord (Joshua 5:14). As God strengthened Joshua's and Israel's hands to war and worked miracles from Jericho's walls to the sun standing in the midst of the sky to prolong a day of victory, the answer to this servant's probing heart was realized. "*One man of you shall chase a thousand: for the LORD your God, he it is that fighteth for you, as he hath promised you*" (Joshua 23:10). God is on your side!

The final lesson to learn is:

### 3. When God shows up, worship Him.

"*And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship...for the place whereon thou standest is holy*" (Joshua 5:14 and 15). When God shows up, rather than demanding explanation, we should be willing to offer exaltation. When we enter His courts with praise, illumination from His light provides ample explanation. "*For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light*" Psalm 36:9.

- Pastor Pope -

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