

Week 4

Theophanies

When God Appears

6-Day
Devotional

Day 1: Theophanies “AKA God Sightings”

Scripture: Isaiah 43:19 ESV

Reflection: The basic premise of a theophany is God showing up in a tangible way. You might not think of them as theophanies, but rather as God sightings. It's important, as we close this series and move towards Advent, that we recognize God's consistent presence in our lives, His provision and His mercy. God doesn't manifest His presence in every thunderstorm that blows by, but He does reveal His power and lordship through nature and the created order of the universe. God doesn't typically speak to us in an audible voice as He did with Moses, but the indwelling of the Holy Spirit can guide our lives and speak to our hearts. God might not part the seas or descend in a pillar of cloud or fire, but God does work in our lives to bring us into alignment with His will.

Question: What is one big way that God has shown up in your life up to this point? What are the small ways that you experience God's presence on a daily basis?

Day 2: Dreams & Visions

Scripture: Joel 2:28 ESV

Reflection: Within the realm of dreams & visions there are a multitude of purposes behind the appearance of the Lord. Like we spoke about last week and in previous week's, God showing up isn't a happenstance or a coincidence. God shows up with a plan and a purpose in mind. Some dreams and visions are a revelation of the future. Some dreams and visions are used to deliver messages and guide God's people. Other dreams and visions are supernatural experiences with God's presence. In certain circumstances through Scripture, we see multiple functions of a theophany. Even today there are thousands of people testifying to having prophetic dreams and visions of Jesus Christ. Though it may be less common, God still uses dreams and visions to speak to His people. Even vivid thoughts, what Pastor Jon calls “super-thoughts” are a way that God speaks to us.

Question: Have you ever felt a dream impact you deeply? Have you ever felt God try to speak to you using a dream or “super-thought”?

Day 3: The Lord is Supreme

Scripture: Ezekiel 1:26-28 ESV

Reflection: A court theophany is a vision or dream that reveal a physical depiction of the lordship and supremacy of God over all things. This is specifically an important realization, as it was for the people of Israel at the time, that God is Lord over all things. The people of Israel at the time of Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel were under threat of warring nations or outright overthrown by the Assyrians and Babylonians. The people felt weak, crippled, and overshadowed by the power of the earthly kingdoms that had exiled them. We, similarly, feel the pressure of world events, wars half a world away, and the difficulties of life more broadly. This image of the Lord's supremacy described in Isaiah 6 and Ezekiel 1 remind us that God is on the throne and has a plan for the world and our lives more specifically.

Question: How does acknowledging God's supremacy and lordship over all things impact the way we think, speak, and live throughout our lives?

Day 4: A Call from on High

Scripture: Isaiah 6:1-8 ESV

Reflection: Court theophanies often had a call or commission to the prophet that experienced them. Specifically, Isaiah and Ezekiel, received a call from God to act as a messenger to the people and to carry the Word of the Lord to them. This powerful experience in the throne room of the Almighty is made even more impactful when the prophets recognize their role and calling is being given to them in that moment. Surrounded by the glory of the Lord, as well as seraphim in Isaiah's case and cherubim in Ezekiel's case, these sons of man (lowercase) are receiving their call to serve in the Kingdom of God of which they are catching a glimpse.

Question: Be honest, do you sometimes feel your everyday life is lacking in purpose and mission? What can we do (by the Holy Spirit's strength) in our daily lives to impact the eternal Kingdom of God for good?

Day 5: The Coming Kingdom

Scripture: Daniel 7:13-14 ESV

Reflection: The seventh chapter of Daniel is a prophetic vision or dream that reveals the end of time and the everlasting Kingdom of God. The purpose of this passage is not to speculate about symbolism (which kingdom is which beast), but to recognize that ultimately the Son of Man (uppercase) will be given all dominion and authority and power and His Kingdom will never end. Living for eternity can be a challenge especially in times when we feel like we are barely getting by. Be encouraged! The Lord will be exalted on the throne and His Kingdom will never end!

Question: We often fixate on the present and urgent things in our lives. How can we shift our focus to eternity and live like the battle has already been won?

Day: 6 Our Call for Today

Scripture: Matthew 28:18-20 ESV

Reflection: The language of Daniel 7 is repeated by Jesus Christ throughout his ministry. Jesus is the Son of Man that is given all authority and power and dominion. We don't experience the throne room that Ezekiel and Isaiah experienced in their visions of grandeur. Instead, we have a direct word from the Son of Man, God's Son, Jesus Christ found in Matthew 28:16-20. Jesus uses language that directly correlates with Daniel 7 when he says "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." What does that mean? The kingdom work, for the kingdom that will never end, starts now!

Question: The Kingdom of God is built one soul at a time. Who, in your life, is God leading you to invest in, pray for, and disciple even today?

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May you recognize God's nearness this week and be changed by His presence. He is the same God who reveals His glory—and He delights to reveal Himself to you.