

DIVINE MEDIATORS

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DIVINE MEDIATORS

“Those God has chosen for an everlasting covenant, to them shall belong the Glory of Adam.”

Qumran Manual of Discipline

SACRED WRITINGS

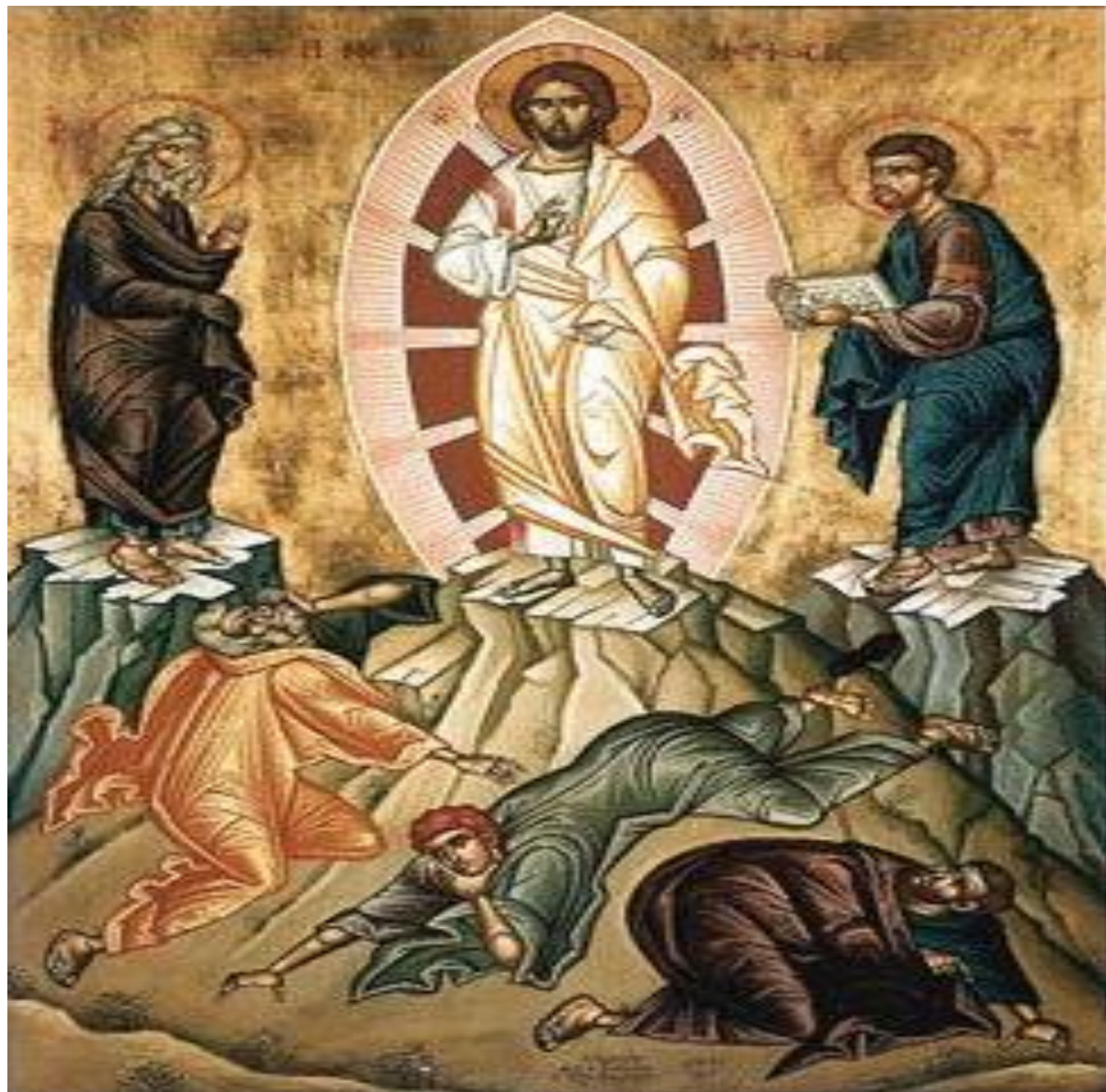
- The Bible developed in stages.
- Genesis through Kings compiled and edited by 562 BC. Northern and Southern traditions blended and refracted through the lens of Exile experience.
- Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles compiled (450 BC). Ezra brings the Pentateuch to Jerusalem.
- Daniel 1-6, Esther, Tobit written in 3rd Century BC. Genesis through Chronicles and the Prophets are reworked.

- Maccabees, Daniel 7-12, Judith, Sirach written in 2nd Century BC at the time of Hellenization.
- Wisdom written in 1st Century BC.
- The canon was not set by the Jews until the 2nd Century AD.
- The rabbis excluded all texts in Greek as well as current Hebrew texts: Maccabees, Judith, Tobit, Wisdom, Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), Baruch, 3 Esdras, and Greek portions of Daniel and Esther. This is the Deuterocanon.

- The Old Latin translation of the Septuagint also includes 4 Esdras. The early Church fathers quoted these books as authoritative scripture.
- The Church made no pronouncements as to canonical Old Testament writings. It was understood that those texts rejected by the rabbis were not to be used in disputes (nor for elaboration of doctrine).
- The Roman Catholic Church defined the Old Testament canon at the Council of Trent (1546 AD), reacting to the Protestant reformers adoption of the Jewish canon.

- The Council of Trent excluded 3-4 Maccabees as well as 1-2 Esdras.
- The Greek Orthodox Church accepts 3 Maccabees and 1 Esdras as canonical; 4 Maccabees stands as an appendix in the Bible.
- The Russian Orthodox Church includes 2 Esdras as canonical as well.
- The Ethiopian Orthodox Church accepts the Book of Enoch (1 Enoch) as canonical.

- Paul quotes the Apocalypse of Elijah in 1 Cor 2:9 as well as in Eph 5:14.
- Jude 14-16 quotes the Book of Enoch.
- Hebrews quotes the Ascension of Moses and the Martyrdom of Isaiah (at 11:35 and 11:37).
- Jewish apocalyptic literature was quite influential in the inter-testamentary period (at the time of Jesus) and strongly influenced Christian theology.
- It remains influential today in Orthodox Judaism.



KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

- Can God be directly perceived by man?
- What is the place of revelation?
- Is there any sure and immediate knowledge, apart from that provided by the senses?
- As a creature, man holds a pre-eminent position in the world; he is the goal of creation, the recapitulation of the creatures of God, sustained by God.

PLATO

- The sense world is conjectural. Appearances are those of belief.
- Acquisition of knowledge is an understanding of the eternal forms and ideas of which the sense world is but a projection. Mathematics, then, is the highest reasoning.
- The soul is the rational part of man, that divine spark imprisoned in the body.
- The soul may perceive and have a share in the eternal forms and ideas, the ultimate values.

ARISTOTLE

- Rejected the idea there are eternal forms.
- Knowledge can be gathered using the senses.
- With analytical reasoning, one can extract meaning from the sensible world.
- Knowledge can be categorized.
- Essence belongs to a specific species or genus. All that participate in that same genus share the same essence.

- All sense objects have a function, a formal cause.
- As that function is understood, a superior organization, a hierarchy could be constructed.
- This implies an agent (efficient cause) working in pre-existent matter (material cause).
- No first cause is implied.
- Introduced the idea of a final cause (telos).

THE GOD OF THE PHILOSOPHERS

- God is utterly transcendent. He transcends even virtue, knowledge, absolute goodness, and beauty.
- God is pure being, absolutely simple and self-sufficient, impassable, and cannot be included in any of the logical categories in which we classify finite beings.
- The philosophers postulated a series of lesser divinities as agents in creation (in Persia these divinities were known as angels). See Acts 14:8.

GOD IN HISTORY

- “In the beginning when God created the Heaven and the Earth, the Earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, the spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters. Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from darkness...And there was evening and there was morning, one day.” (Gen 1:1-5)
- The angels of highest light were formed this one day. (Zohar 1:17b)

- And God said, ‘Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters’...And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.” (Gen 1:6,8)
- The second day is not found “good” by God in the Hebrew, Greek (Septuagint), and Latin (Vulgate) versions of Genesis.
- The second day is the day of the creation and the rebellion of the angels before God. (2 Enoch 29:3-4; Zohar 1: 46a)

- On the sixth day, “God said, ‘Let us make mankind in our image, according to our likeness (luminescence)’...So God created mankind in his image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he formed them. God blessed them.” (Gen 1:26-28)
- On the seventh day, God rested.

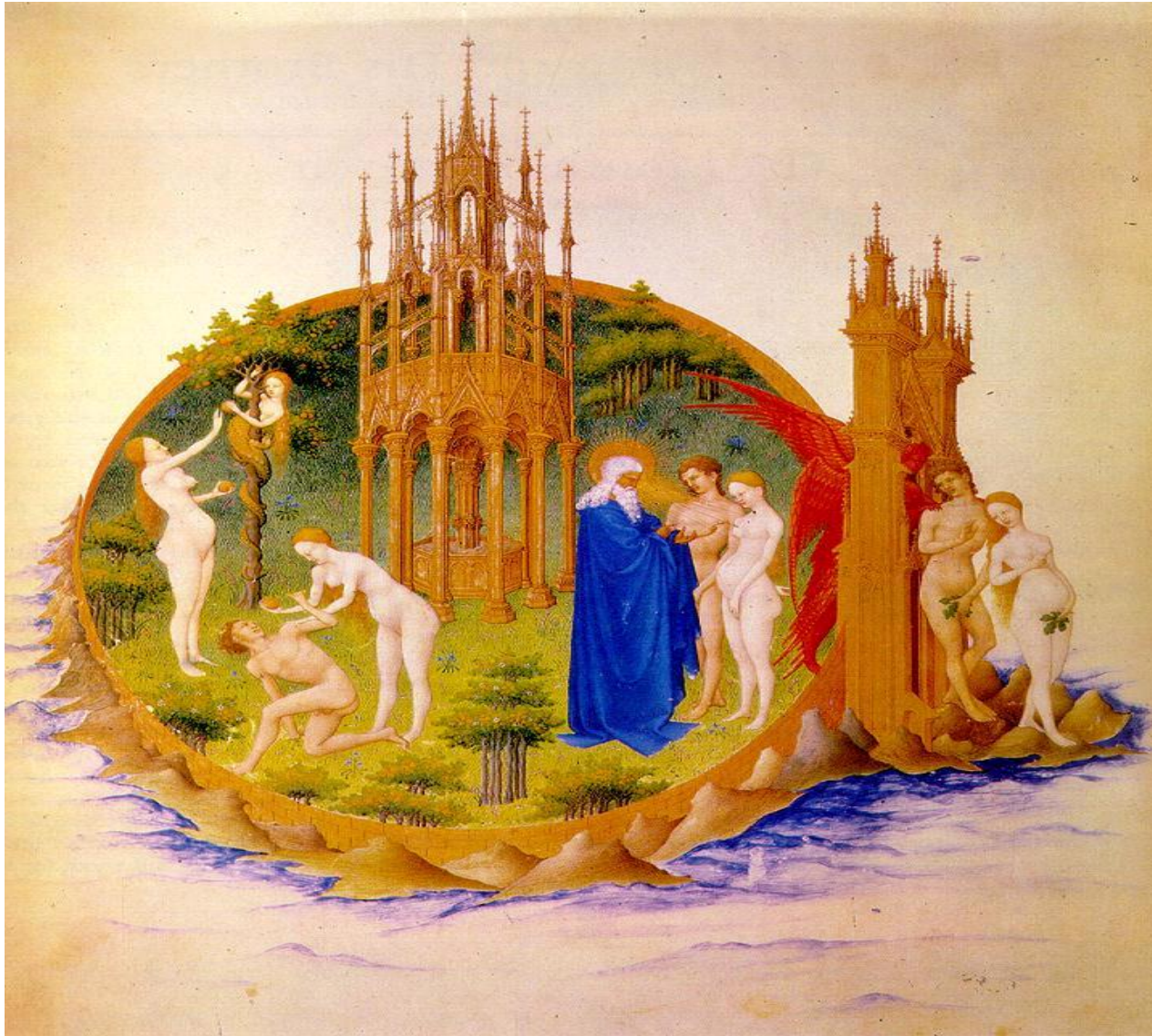
- “The Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being.” (Gen 2:7)
- “And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden (Jerusalem), from the beginning, and there he put mankind whom he had formed. Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” (Gen 2:8)

- The problem in Eden was knowledge. The tree of life, Wisdom (Prov 3.18), was rejected. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil (2 Sam 19:35) was chosen.

- When Adam and Eve chose the earthly, they were no longer clothed in garments of light (Gen 3:21), no longer could speak with the animals, nor did they see God face to face. “The Lord sent him forth from the garden of Eden...He drove out the man; and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim (who drove Satan from Heaven, Ezek 28:14-16) and a sword flaming and turning to guard the way to the tree of life.” (Gen 3:23-24)

- When David reached the Jordan following the death of Absalom, he offered Barzillai the Gileadite a home with him in Jerusalem as a reward for siding with him. Barzillai's answer is the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil:

“How many years have I still to live, that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem? Today I am eighty years old; can I discern what is pleasant and what is not?” (2 Sam 20:32-36)



Limbourg brothers The Fall and Expulsion from Paradise
Musée Condé, Chantilly
<http://www.wga.hu>

- God created the 10 choirs of Angels.
- Angels of the Presence move freely in and out of the Heaven of Heavens to serve the Ancient of Days (1 Enoch 7:15ff)
- Their place is on each of the four sides of God's throne
- "...the Holy One, blessed be He, does nothing in His world without first taking their counsel." (3 Enoch 28)

- The Seven Archangels “have entry into the presence of the glory of the Lord.” (Tob 12:15)
- Always in the proximity of God and are the ones always called upon to carry out tasks of special significance for the world.
- Five are named in 1 Enoch 20:1; all are named in 3 Enoch 17:1
- Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, and Uriel are also Angels of the Presence and are named in 1 Enoch 40:9

- Uriel (2 Esdras 4) leads the angelic host and guards the underworld. His is the Prince of Light.
- Raphael (Tob 3:16; 12:12,15) is in charge of the spirits of humans
- Raguel (1 Enoch 20:4) is the Angel of Justice
- Michael (Jos 5:13-15; Dan 10:13, 21; 12:1) watches over Israel
- Gabriel (Dan 8:16; 9:20,21;15:16) rules Paradise
- Jeremiel (4 Ezra 4:38) guards the souls of the underworld

- Suriel (2 Esdras 5:19) is the Angel of Death. He carried the souls of Adam and Eve away from Satan to the Cave of Treasures (Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan 31:6), carried Enoch to Heaven, taught Noah, carried the soul of Moses to Heaven, and rescued John the Baptist at the time of the massacre of Innocents.
- One of the choir fell because of arrogance. These are the Grigori, whose prince is Sataniel (2 Enoch 18:3).

- (Guardian) angels of God descended to Earth to teach men to do what is just and upright upon the Earth. (Jub 4:15; 1 Enoch 6:6)
- Some violated their oath on Mt. Hermon and had intercourse with the daughters of men. The nephelim were their children. (Gen 6:1-4) Azazel and other angels taught humanity heavenly secrets (Jub 6:1-2) The children of Cain are credited with the advances and evils of civilization (Gen 4:17-24)

- These actions violate the appropriate place of each order in creation. The Flood was the result of this disorder. (Jub 5:9-21)
- Four of the Watchers of Heaven (Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel), named in 1 Enoch 9:1, will punish the Grigori as well as those angels who violated their oath on Mt. Hermon and corrupted the race of men (1 Enoch 56).
- Those angels who fell are named in 1 Enoch 69:2

- Enoch was the father of Methusaleh. He walked with God (Gen 5:21). Enoch was taken to Heaven and testified as to the actions of the angels on Earth. He was granted a vision of the divine plan and permitted to instruct the righteous in that plan.
- At three hundred sixty-five years of age, “Enoch walked with God; then he was no more because God took him.” (Gen 5:24; Wis 4:9-15).

- Enoch is in Heaven where he serves as a high priest before the throne, bears the Name of the Lord, and receives obeisance by the angels. He is called Metatron (3 Enoch).
- They Angels of the Presence rank beneath Enoch in importance (3 Enoch 14)
- Enoch was the great grandfather of Noah.
- Noah is the one who kept God's commandments (Gen 6:9). His first action after leaving the ark is to build an altar and offer an atoning sacrifice to redeem the Earth polluted by the sins of men (Gen 8:20) committed with the angels and under the instruction of the angels.

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- The sexual prohibitions of Lev 18 refer to those actions of the angels and men.
- The provision of cities of refuge in Num 35 (33-34) is an attempt to limit the pollution of the Earth caused through shedding of blood.
- “For your own lifeblood...I will demand an accounting; from every animal I will demand it, and from man in his regard to his fellow man, I will demand an accounting for human life.” (Gen 9:5)



Peter Paul Rubens
The Meeting of Abraham and Melchizedek
Ringling Museum
<http://www.wga.hu>

- Melchizidek is “without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life,” (Heb 7:1-3) though rabbinic lore names him a descendant of Noah and the teacher of Isaac (who instructed Levi).
- Melchizidek is the king of Salem, priest of the Most High God (Gen 14:18) ...who remains a priest forever (Heb 7:3); who blesses Abraham (Gen 14:19) and receives tithes from Abraham. (Gen 14:20; Heb 7:4)

- He acts on God's behalf in judgment and salvation: "Elohim (Melchizidek) will stand up in the assembly of YHWH, in the midst of the assembly he judges." (Ps 82:1)...It is Melchizidek who condemns Belial (Ps 82:2).
- "Let the assembly of the peoples be gathered about you, and over it take your seat on high; YHWH judges the people." (Ps 7:8-9)

- Melchizidek delivers the chosen ones from the power of evil. (Is 66:12)
- The angelic king of Israel reigns (Is 52:7-8)
- He will bring the great year of Jubilee which culminates in the final Day of Atonement. (Is 61)



Sanzo Raffaello Sacrifice of Isaac
Fresco Stanza di Eliodoro, Palazzi Pontifici, Vatican
<http://www.wga.hu>

- God appeared to Abraham at Shechem (Gen 12:7) in human form (Gen 16:7,13; Gen 17:1).
- At Mamre, Abraham was granted a vision of the triune God (Gen 18).
- Abraham intervened with God for Sodom (Gen 18:16).
- God appeared to Hagar (Gen 21:17).
- God tested Abraham with Isaac (at Golgotha) and appeared to Abraham and blessed him for his moral surrender (Gen 22).

- God appeared to Isaac at Beer-sheba (Gen 26:24).
- “Jacob departed from Beer-sheba and proceeded toward Haran. When he came upon a certain shrine, as the sun had already set, he stopped there for the night. Taking one of the stones at the shrine, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep at that spot. Then he had a dream: a ziggurat rested on the ground with its top reaching to the heavens; and God’s messengers were going up and down on it. And there was the Lord standing beside him” and

- blessing him...When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he exclaimed, 'Truly the Lord is in this spot...How awesome is this shrine! This is nothing else but an abode of God, and that is the gateway to Heaven'...He called that site Bethel." (Gen 28:11-22).
- At Peniel, Jacob wrestled with God and received the name "Israel." (Gen 32:25-31). Peniel or Phanuel or Uriel is the name of an Angel of the Presence.
- There is a heavenly Jacob and an earthly Jacob.

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Ladder
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- “The Lord said to Moses, ‘See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet. You shall speak all that I have commanded you.’” (Ex 7:1-2)



- “Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Come up to the Lord...and worship...’ Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord...built an altar...(and) offered burnt offerings and...offerings of well-being to the Lord...Moses took the blood and sprinkled the people...the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you. Then Moses and Aaron...(and) the elders of Israel went up, and they saw the God of Israel...They beheld God, and they ate and drank.” (Ex 24:9,11)

- “The appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire...Moses entered the cloud...” (Ex 24:17-18) and was instructed by the Lord. Moses descended with the two tablets of the covenant in his hands (Ex 32:15). He judges the people (Ex 32:26) and offers himself as atonement (Ex 32:32).
- Moses re-ascends and is shown God’s goodness and hears proclaimed the Name of the Lord (Ex 33:17). God’s essence is unknowable (Ex 33:20). God’s attributes were proclaimed (Ex 33:6-7).

- Moses descended to lead the children of Israel to the promised land. The skin of his face was shining; to accommodate the fear of the people, Moses was veiled. (viz 1 Cor 1:9)
- As with Paul, who ascended to Heaven (2 Cor 12:2), those still of the flesh are fed with milk, not solid food (1 Cor 3:2).

- The divine Moses is bidden first of all to purify himself...and, after all purification, he hears the many-voiced trumpets, he beholds many light lightening with pure and many streaming rays. Then, when he has separated from the many and from the chosen priests (Ex 24:10ff), he attains to the summit of the divine ascents. And yet in these he still meets not with God, for he sees not Him...but the place where He dwells...and then...he enters into the truly secret darkness of unknowing...united by the cessation of all knowledge to Him who is ... unknowable.”

Pseudo-Dionysius

- Joshua, who ascended the mountain with Moses (Ex 24:13), who did not leave the tent of the meeting (Ex 33:11), is told by the Lord, “As I was with Moses, so I will be with you.” (Jos 1: 5). He is present with Joshua at the siege of Jericho (Jos 5:13-15).
- Gideon saw the Lord (Jdg 6:22-23).
- Micaiah (1 Kgs 22:19) saw the Lord in His assembly.
- Elijah ascended the mountain and was in the Lord’s presence, and heard a speaking silence (1 Kgs 19:12; Sgs 2:14).

- “I slept, but my heart was awake. Listen! My beloved is knocking...I had put off my garment, how could I put it on again;...My beloved thrust his hand into the opening, and my inmost being yearned for him.” (Sgs 5:2-4)
- Elijah was taken to the Lord’s throne in a chariot of fire and horses of fire and in a whirlwind. (2 Kgs 2:11)



Η ΟΥΣ ΕΙΣ ΤΗΝ ΣΤΑΝΗΝ
ΠΡΟΒΗΚ ΑΝΑΒΑΙΝΕΙ
ΤΗ ΑΓΙΗ ΠΝΥΤΗ ΗΑΙΟΣ

THE BODILY ASCENT OF
THE PRINCE OF LIFE AS IT WERE
INTO HEAVEN

- Isaiah “saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple.” (Is 6:1...”Heaven is my throne and Earth is my footstool.” Is 66:1)
- “Seraphs were stationed above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered (their feet), and with two they flew. And one called to another and said, ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Sabaoth; the whole Earth is full of His glory.’” (Is 6:2-3)

- “The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke (viz Ex 19:16-19). And I said, ‘Woe! I am lost...for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Sabaoth. Then, one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal (viz Zech 3:3) that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. The seraph touched my mouth with it and said, ‘Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out.’ Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send and who will go for us?’ And I said, ‘here I am, send me!’” (Is 6:4-8)

- Ezekiel saw a stormy wind coming out of the abode of God; “a great cloud with brightness around it and fire flashing forth continually, and in the middle of the fire, something like gleaming amber. In the middle of it was something like four living creatures (female)...They were of human form. Each had four faces, and each of them had four wings”... and hands. Their legs were straight; their soles like the sole of a calf’s foot; and they sparkled like burnished bronze. Their faces and wings touched each other and moved as one (in the Spirit). (Ezek 1:4-12)

- In the midst of these cherubim “there was something that looked like burning coals of fire, like torches moving to and fro...the fire was bright and lightning issued from the fire.” (Ezek 1:13-14)

- “I saw a wheel on the earth beside the living creatures...the rims of all four were full of eyes all around.” (Ezek 1:15,18) ... all created things were the points of light within her wheels (Ezek 10:12); those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, Rev 7:14) “Above her was the likeness of the firmament and above this there was throne on which was a human form, the likeness of the Glory of the Lord. (Ezek 1:22,26)... The Name of the Almighty” (Ezek 1:24).

- Ezek 10 offers a similar vision (also Rev 4).
- When the chariot throne returns to Paradise it rests at the tree of life and all the flowers come into bloom. (2 Enoch 8:4)
- Ezekiel tells us of the resurrection (Ezek 37:7) and the return of the Glory of the Lord to the (heavenly) Temple. (Ezek 43:26-44:3)
- Ezekiel's determination to prophesy (Ezek 3:4-9; viz Jer 1:18) must be stronger than Israel's refusal to hear (viz Amos 7:10-17; Jer 20:7-18).

- It is a personal responsibility as God's watcher. (Ezek 3:16-21; Ezek 18:1-32; viz Jer 6:17; Hos 9:8)
- "Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you...Behold, you shall conceive in your womb and bear a son...(who) will be called the Son of the Most High...The Holy Spirit will...overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God." (Lk 1:26-35)
- "No messenger or angel; it was His presence that saved them." (Is 63:9)

Christology

- The pre-exilic royal cult in Jerusalem identified the Davidic king with YHWH. Early christology applied this pattern of the royal cult to Jesus.
- Jesus is the only mediator figure in the Judaism of his time to receive worship in a cult, even though others may have been deified in some sense. The Jesus cult that gave birth to Christianity is the result of a still very imperfectly understood "binitarian mutation" within Judaism.

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