

Darkness, Light, and the Lord: Elements of Israelite Theophanies

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When readers of the Bible think of the divine presence in the Old Testament, the words *glory* and *power* are apt to come to mind. But in what way is this glory depicted? What were the authors of the Hebrew Bible trying to portray in their accounts? A careful study of the language of the theophanic scenes of the Old Testament reveals that after the Genesis accounts, light and “glory” are an important part of divine manifestations. In addition, we also encounter an interesting interplay between luminosity and darkness, or revealing and hiding. These ideas seem to be somehow tied together in the ancient Israelite concept of the presence of God.

While the theophanies¹ of the Hebrew Bible came from several different authors and passed through various redactional stages, there is remarkable uniformity in the elements accompanying the divine presence. Regardless of the source, the imagery of theophany remains the same. When this is not the case, the exception will be noted and discussed. However, even in these exceptions, the basic interplay of light and darkness remains constant. As we explore the textual evidence for theophanies in the Old Testament, we will

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proceed chronologically, and with each divine manifestation we will look at the references to light, called herein luminous references, and the interplay between revealing and hiding. Because we are investigating the physical presence of light and darkness, we will only examine theophanies where the physical presence of God is described or implied. Encounters with God that do not include a corporeal element, such as when Cain hears God's voice but no mention is made of seeing God (see Genesis 4:9), are not discussed in this paper.

Genesis

The first encounter with the divine presence is recorded in the Garden of Eden pericope. However, the scene at the Garden of Eden is not germane to this study, because mankind's relationship with God was different before the Fall. When Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden, they first heard "the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden" (Genesis 3:8).² While it is hard to determine what is meant by a "voice . . . walking," it is clear that the Lord is not before them.³ The Book of Moses account portrays Adam and Eve as the beings that are walking (Moses 4:14). This change resolves the ambiguity of the Genesis phrasing and maintains the idea that in this text, God himself did not appear at this time. A conversation ensues, but never does the text portray Adam and Eve actually seeing the Lord. Thus, there is no description of his appearance in this account.

Similarly, Genesis 5:24 says that Enoch walked with God. It contains no description of God or his presence at all. For the purposes of this paper, there is no information to be evaluated in this encounter, whatever the form of that encounter may have been.

We first read of someone being truly in the presence of God in Genesis 17. Here we have this brief description: "The Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect" (Genesis 17:1). This is one of the most salutary events of the Hebrew Bible, for it was on this occasion that God established his covenant with Abram (whose name was later changed to Abraham). However, the description of God's appearance is nothing more than that quoted above. We simply know that he "appeared." We gain no insight as to what that appearance was like. The Book of Abraham account merely mentions that Abraham spoke with God "face to face" but, consistent with the other Genesis accounts, includes no other information about the Lord's presence (Abraham 3:11).

Abraham's grandson Jacob also saw the Lord. Again we find no significant description of God's presence or physical appearance. In his famous dream, Jacob sees "a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac" (Genesis 28:12–13). This is the full extent of the description of the Lord in this vision.

In Genesis 32:30, it is intimated that Jacob saw God again, but since the appearance is only alluded to, we cannot expect to find a forthright description of that appearance.⁴ Jacob sees God one final time, in the same place he had his first vision, towards the end of his life. Here it is recorded that "God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padan-aram, and blessed him" (Genesis 35:9). We find yet again that there is no description provided of God. All that is mentioned is that he appeared and renewed the covenant.

This lack of description in the Genesis accounts stands in stark contrast to the rest of the Bible. Interestingly, Abraham purportedly comes from Mesopotamian and then Canaanite origins, and descriptions of deities (other than sun or moon gods) in Mesopotamia and Canaan are likewise lacking in luminous references.⁵ It is only after the Exodus from Egypt that the Israelites record a high degree of luminous terms in connection with the appearance of God. In these later descriptions, the Hebrew Bible contains luminous references that resemble those used by ancient Egyptians to describe divine appearances. While it is possible that Israel's cultural milieu was changed significantly while the Israelites were in Egypt, thus producing Egypt-like theophanic descriptions, such a causal relationship would be difficult to explore and lies well beyond the means of this study.⁶ Still, it is fertile ground for some future exploration.

Exodus and Deuteronomy

Beginning in the book of Exodus, divine manifestations fit a pattern that will be followed throughout the rest of the Old Testament. In fact, it is the presence of light that caused Moses to turn aside and come into God's presence:

And the angel⁷ of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. And he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, but the bush was not consumed.

And Moses said, I will turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn.

And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him from the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, behold me. (Exodus 3:2–4)⁸

The description of a bush that burned with fire but was not consumed seems to be a description of a bush that exuded light. The bush caught Moses' attention,⁹ and from there, Moses heard the voice of the Lord and actually saw him "in a flame of fire," or, in other words, filled with light. From this brief account, it is clear that Moses' theophany was essentially luminous and that light was the element that indicated God's presence.

Sometime thereafter, Moses again sees God, as recorded in Moses 1. In this account, Moses makes repeated references to God's glory (see Moses 1:2, 5, 9, 11, 13, 14, 18, 20, 25, 31, 39), but the only reference made specifically to light is when Moses speaks of the "burning bush" (Moses 1:17). Some of the uses of the word *glory* clearly are not referring to light but to God's power and ability to transfigure Moses (see Moses 1:2, for example).¹⁰ However, it is interesting to note that, while Moses uses the same phrase as Abraham when he describes seeing God "face to face" (Moses 1:31), he couples this experience with the glory of God, an idea missing from Abraham's account. We will more fully examine the Hebrew word for glory below.

Later, all of Israel also encountered the presence of God. Their first encounter may not be considered a theophany proper, but they definitely experienced Jehovah's presence. As they left Egypt, the Israelites were led by the Lord: "And the Lord went before them daily in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them in the way; and nightly in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by daily and nightly. He did not take away from before the people the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night" (Exodus 13:21–22).¹¹ It is here that we first encounter the seemingly paradoxical appearance of the Lord as a fire and a cloud. This almost antithetical parallel use of the two ideas becomes a common motif of divine encounters throughout the Bible. The two elements signifying God's presence present a small conundrum. Is the Lord's

presence indicative of fire, which connotes light, or of a cloud, which connotes darkness? Can his presence be symbolized by both?

The parallel yet antithetical pairing of these two elements is heightened when the Egyptian army approaches Israel. At this time, “the pillar of the cloud went from before them, and stood behind them. And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness, but it gave light by night: so that the one came not near the other all the night” (Exodus 14:19–20). At this point, the pillar acted as a means of salvation for Israel, the primary role Jehovah takes in the Exodus story.¹² It is striking that the same pillar acted as both fire and cloud, light and darkness.¹³ The text explicitly speaks of the cloud but says that the cloud gave light, implying that the fire element of the pillar was present as well. This idea is again strengthened when in the morning “the Lord looked at the camp of the Egyptians from inside a pillar of fire and cloud” (Exodus 14:24).¹⁴ As it contained the Lord’s presence, the pillar was simultaneously fire and cloud.

This cloud-fire motif is clearly seen in the next divine manifestation that Israel encountered. After the Lord leads them by his pillar to Mount Sinai, he tells them to prepare themselves so that he may “come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai” (Exodus 19:11). For three days, the people prepared themselves, and then,

on the third day in the morning, there were thunders and lightnings, and a heavy cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet was very strong; so that all the people who were in the camp trembled.

And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount.

And all of mount Sinai was smoky, because the Lord descended upon it in fire. And its smoke ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. (Exodus 19:16–18)

In this account, there seem to be four elements associated with the divine presence: smoke, light, thunder, and quaking.¹⁵ The smoke, which would hide the personage of God, seems to be the most salient point of the above passage. This emphasis on smoke is heightened in the Deuteronomy account, which says that the “mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness” (Deuteronomy 4:11). In both texts, fire is associated with smoke. In fact, it seems to be the fire of the Lord’s presence that

causes the smoke—as actual fire does—and in this way, the very light which reveals God also causes the element which hides him.

Another Deuteronomy account is equally explicit, saying that the Lord spoke “out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the heavy darkness” (Deuteronomy 5:22).¹⁶ As the account continues, an interesting comment adds another layer to the topic: “Ye heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness (for the mountain did burn with fire)” (Deuteronomy 5:23). The parenthetical aside indicates that the darkness is a direct result of the fire, much as we have postulated above: just as fire causes smoke, the light of the Lord also causes darkness. It almost seems that the nature of God is so glorious that as it is revealed, it must also be hidden.

I do not confess to understand the nature of God enough to fully explain why he might reveal his presence and simultaneously hide at least part of it. Latter-day scripture more plainly states this exact conundrum. In Moses 1:5, the Lord tells Moses that while he will partially reveal himself to Moses, he will not do so fully, because “no man can behold all my glory, and afterwards remain in the flesh on the earth.” In other words, even when God reveals himself and his glory to mankind, he must withhold, or hide, at least some of his glory. For reasons that seem to be beyond our capacity to understand, God must hide part of his nature even as he reveals himself to us.

It would seem that the Israelites understood that God’s presence is something beyond man’s capacity to withstand because, after “all the people saw the thunderings,¹⁷ and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off” (Exodus 20:18). They informed Moses that they felt God’s presence was too glorious for them to encounter and survive.¹⁸ Instead, they asked him to communicate with God for them (see Exodus 20:19–20). When Moses approached God, he “drew near to the thick darkness where God was” (Exodus 20:21). In both accounts, the whole theophany seems to be an intentional portrayal of God simultaneously surrounded by fire and smoke. It appears to be similar to the combined Amun-Ra, an Egyptian name that denotes a hidden and light-filled god; Jehovah too was both filled with light and hidden. This is not to posit that the Israelites thought of God as Amun-Ra, but it is possible that the lexicon they used to record encounters with God was influenced by the Egyptian tradition of writing about their deities.

This paradoxical light-darkness relationship is not expressed elsewhere in Deuteronomy. Twice Moses refers to the incident of the Lord providing the law without actually describing it. In both of these accounts, light is mentioned without any accompanying darkness: “And he said, The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir to them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousand saints. From his right hand went a fiery law for them” (Deuteronomy 33:2). Also, “he wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the ten words, which the Lord spoke to you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly” (Deuteronomy 10:4). Here only the luminous nature of the experience is stressed. This lack of the element of darkness may be because this is not a description of the Lord’s appearance, only a reference to the reception of the law, which emanated from the Lord and did not itself have to be hidden.

Likewise, in a more private encounter on Mount Sinai, the Lord seems to be accompanied by light and not at all hidden. The description reads: “Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. And they saw the God of Israel. And under his feet it was like a paved work of a sapphire stone; and it was like the body of heaven in its clearness” (Exodus 24:9–10). While light is not specifically mentioned here, it is clear that these men see something beyond the capacity of description. The closest the writer can come to the reality of the scene is to compare aspects of what they saw to a work of sapphire and the body of heaven.¹⁹ The bright blue of sapphire combined with the reference to heaven seems to indicate that the Lord is standing in a luminous sky or heaven.²⁰ There is no mention of clouds, and the Lord is not hidden here.²¹ Perhaps this is because the select group was worthy to more fully come into God’s presence. However, even this account is followed by combined hiding and revealing imagery.

After seeing God and eating and drinking, Moses left the rest of the group and went into the mount to visit with God. As Moses went further, “the cloud covered the mount” (Exodus 24:15). After this brief mention of God’s presence being covered by a cloud, the interplay of light and darkness is further developed: “And the glory of the Lord tabernacled on mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days; and he called to Moses on the seventh day from the midst of the cloud. And the glory of the Lord appeared as a consuming fire on the top of the mount in the sight of the children of Israel” (Exodus vv. 16–17). Again we are presented with the image of God being

surrounded by light, which is surrounded by darkness.²² While the image seems paradoxical, it is, in fact, the scriptural language, and thus our task is to try to understand it.

The next divine encounter contains very little reference to light, fire, clouds, or darkness, but it does continue the interplay between the Lord being revealed and hidden. It starts by saying that as Moses entered the newly constructed tabernacle, “the cloud pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and he [the Lord] talked with Moses” (Exodus 33:9, translation mine). It is then that “the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend” (v.11). Strangely, shortly after this specific description of face-to-face conversation, the Lord informs Moses:

You are not able to see my face: for no man will see me and live. And the Lord said, Behold, there is a place by me, and you will stand upon the rock. And it shall come to pass, when my glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with my hand until I have passed by. And I will take away my hand, and you will see after me. But my face shall not be seen. (Exodus 33:20–23)

The Joseph Smith Translation changes this passage to say that Moses cannot see God’s face “at this time” because of God’s anger (Joseph Smith Translation, Exodus 33:20). Even with this change, these are difficult texts to reconcile.²³ How can Moses both see the Lord face-to-face and yet not see his face, or why could he see it one moment and then soon thereafter be told he could not? Many have explained this seeming contradiction by positing one of the accounts as a later addition or as coming from a different source. Whether this is true or not, it cannot be ignored that the seeming paradox fits well into the larger interplay between light and darkness, seeing and hiding, which accompanies the Lord’s presence throughout the book of Exodus and even later in the Hebrew Bible. It seems that with each divine encounter, the writers struggle with describing this dual essence of the divine presence. The Lord reveals himself, yet at the same time, his glory is too great to be fully revealed. Frequently, this conundrum is expressed by light revealing the Lord while darkness hides him. Here it is expressed by Moses seeing the Lord’s face yet shortly thereafter only being allowed to see the back of him because of man’s fallen and sinful actions. Clearly, this duality was difficult for the ancient writers to deal with. In some ways, this

particular set of encounters with God highlights how God can reveal himself to us but also how our fallen natures and actions can prevent it.

Shortly after this incident, Moses again ascended the mount, where “the Lord descended in the cloud” (Exodus 34:5). After this encounter, it is Moses who is filled with light, which causes him to veil his face (Exodus 34:33–35). It seems that some of the Lord’s qualities have now been transferred to Moses and that Moses is now so full of light that others could not fully behold him; he had to hide that light in much the same manner that the Lord does.

In the final chapter of the book of Exodus, we see the imagery of light and darkness again. The glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle, which was simultaneously covered by such a cloud that even Moses could not enter (Exodus 40:34–35). The tabernacle was covered by a cloud by day and fire by night, in a manner to which Israel was now accustomed (Exodus 40:38). The cloud preventing Moses from entering the tabernacle serves as a powerful image of the darkness motif protecting or hiding the image of the Lord.

There is one final account of the divine presence during the Exodus story. While in the wilderness, Aaron and Miriam complain that Moses has taken too much power upon himself. On this occasion, the Lord instructs the three to approach the door of the tabernacle. There “the Lord came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle” (Numbers 12:5). Here only the hidden essence of the theophany is mentioned. This account continues the paradox well: even though Moses and Aaron seem to have beheld the unveiled presence of the Lord before,²⁴ here the Lord’s personage is seen by no one. He is completely hidden. Interestingly, this concealing occurs as some are again exercising their fallen natures. This account serves to highlight that there are times when the Lord may reveal himself to us, but times where our fallen natures and actions cause him to be hidden from us.

Samuel, Psalms, and Kings

As we move on in the biblical story, one of David’s psalms of praise describes the presence of God, though it is unclear whether David is speaking of an actual appearance to him or is just creating a poetic account based on the language of texts he was familiar with that described the presence of God. In his poetic praise, David says that when he called on God, “There went up a smoke out of his [God’s] nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also, and came down; and darkness

was under his feet" (2 Samuel 22:9–10).²⁵ Whether David is describing a real appearance of God or not, it is clear that he conceives of God's presence as being attended by fire, smoke, and darkness.

Another psalm speaks of God's presence in terms of both light and darkness. "Clouds and darkness are round about him [God]; righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about. His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth" (Psalm 97:2–5). While no singular appearance of God is described here, this psalmist clearly felt that God sent forth light but was surrounded by darkness.

Similarly, while no one saw God in person at the dedication of Solomon's temple, there is no doubt that he was present. After the priests deposited the ark of the covenant in the Holy of Holies, "the cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord. Then spake Solomon, The Lord said that he would dwell in the thick darkness" (1 Kings 8:10–12). Because the glory of the Lord appeared on Sinai and at the tabernacle as a "fire," most likely this description from the temple dedication refers to the same aspect of the Lord's glory. If this is the case, then we again see God's presence denoted by light, which was associated with a cloud and thick darkness.

Isaiah

Isaiah contains one of the most famous accounts of biblical theophanies. In a description of his call to serve as Jehovah's prophet, Isaiah recorded his experience.

In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.

Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

Then said I, 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 mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.²⁶

Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:

And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. (Isaiah 6:1–7)

So many elements of this pericope are pertinent to our study that we must examine them one at a time. We start with the opening line. It is clear that Isaiah sees the Lord himself sitting on his heavenly throne in the heavenly temple. Accompanying these facts is the description that he is elevated²⁷ and that his “train” fills the temple. The train is a royal garment, not unlike what we currently call the train of a bridal gown.²⁸ It is unlikely that the garment is so big that it fills the entire temple, therefore not leaving room for any of the other elements which are, in fact, present in the temple. This phrasing seems, instead, to be an attempt at describing the idea that the Lord’s majesty filled the temple by saying that an insignia of royalty, such as the royal train, filled the temple.

Above the throne stood the seraphim. While we do not know precisely what these creatures are, we can discern some idea about their nature by examining their appellation. It comes from the root word *seraph*, which means “to burn.”²⁹ Derived from the plural participle of *seraph*, *seraphim* is a plural noun meaning “burning ones,” or perhaps “fiery ones.”³⁰ This makes it clear that light or fire was a part of the seraphim’s very nature³¹ and thus was a part of this theophany.³²

As a part of the praise they give to God, the seraphim say that “the whole earth is full of his glory” (v. 3). The Hebrew word for glory, *kâbôd*, is very complex. We cannot fully explore the connotations of this word here, but some comment is necessary for us to understand how the word impacts our topic. The primary meaning of the word is connected with weight and heaviness.³³ Symbolically, this weight was also connected with social status and power. However, in many of its uses, *kâbôd* is also somehow tied up with fire or light. For example, in Isaiah 60, Zion is told, “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall

come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising” (Isaiah 60:1–3). In this passage, light and glory are used in parallel twice:

- a: thy light is come
- a': the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee
- and
- a: the Lord shall arise upon thee
- b: his glory shall be seen upon thee
- a': the Gentiles shall come to thy light
- b': kings to the brightness of thy rising

In both of these parallel patterns, we see glory compared to light or brightness. A few verses later, a similar meaning is conveyed: “The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory” (Isaiah 60:19). Again we see the parallelisms:

- a: the sun shall be no more thy light by day
- b: neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee
- a': but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light
- b': and thy God thy glory

As before, we see that glory is clearly equated with fire, light or brightness. A host of other references provides the same connotation for this Hebrew word that normally denotes heaviness.³⁴

This ambiguity leaves us wondering whether the Isaiah 6 reference to the earth being full of the Lord’s glory has connotations of light or not. In the absence of parallelism to tie glory to light, and since most of the references to the Lord’s presence within this passage have to do with power, weight, or heaviness, we must assume that light is not implied here, though we cannot do so conclusively.

Continuing with the Isaiah 6 pericope, we next are informed that the posts of the door moved, reminiscent of Mount Sinai quaking. We also read that “the house was filled with smoke” (v. 4). We know that an incense altar

is present, which may account for the smoke.³⁵ However, even if this is so, it does not take away from smoke being listed as an essential quality of the experience. Coupled with the multiple smoke references of the Exodus story, we cannot dismiss the possibility that Isaiah's reference to smoke is integral to the Lord's presence.

Isaiah then bemoans that he is in an unclean state, as symbolized by his unclean lips. This problem is alleviated by the application of a live coal from the altar (presumably the incense altar present within the temple) is applied to his lips, which purges his sins. Here the fire in the theophany is a sanctifying element. It is likely that the fire of the altar makes Isaiah able to withstand the fire of the Lord's presence, though the fire of the Lord is not specifically mentioned here.

Throughout this description, Isaiah paints the picture of the Lord in a setting full of smoke, fire, and glory. In this pericope, these elements seem to be the integral aspects of coming into the Lord's presence.

Ezekiel

Ezekiel contains two descriptions of seeing the Lord in his heavenly temple, both of which are similar in many aspects to the Isaiah account. Ezekiel's book opens with his vision of the Lord. He first sees four fantastical beings with various human and animal features. In describing them, Ezekiel says, "The likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living creature was as the colour of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above" (Ezekiel 1:22). While it is impossible to understand completely what Ezekiel is describing, the idea of a terrible crystal of firmament seems to be an attempt to describe a bright, refracting light above their heads, such as would emanate from a crystal held up to a bright sky. With this as background, Ezekiel goes on to describe the setting in which the creatures are found:

And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it.

And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about.

As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. (Ezekiel 1:26–28)

Here we read of the Lord—for so the man is identified at the end of the passage—sitting on a throne like sapphire, a description discussed above.³⁶ The upper half of the Lord has the appearance of amber—a fiery red—and fire. The lower half of the Lord³⁷ is also compared to fire, this time a bright fire—probably white as opposed to red. Then Ezekiel brings in the cloud element of Old Testament theophany in a surprising way. He is still attempting to describe the brightness of the Lord and compares it to a rainbow, which comes from rain, which is typically associated with a cloud. Even this simile cannot avoid the combination of cloud and light. While Ezekiel does not describe darkness as a part of his vision, he still carries the dichotomy into his account by use of this simile, possibly because the combination of cloud and fire as part of the divine presence was well ensconced in his mind.

All of this description of brightness is then said to be “the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord” (v. 28). Thus Ezekiel combines the *kābôd* of the Lord with light, fire, and brightness again. It would seem that in his mind, the power, weight, and status of the Lord are inextricably connected with light.

Ezekiel later sees another vision of the Lord. Apparently the same creatures are present, though now they are referred to as “cherubims.”³⁸ Since it has been suggested that cherubim are symbolic of thunderclouds³⁹ and seraphim of lightning,⁴⁰ the attendance of either cherubim or seraphim in the Lord’s presence adds to the fire-cloud motif. Of this vision, Ezekiel records that he saw the Lord and a man in white linen. After some conversation, he saw:

In the firmament that was above the head of the cherubims there appeared over them as it were a sapphire stone, as the appearance of the likeness of a throne.

And he [the Lord] spake unto the man clothed with linen, and said, Go in between the wheels, even under the cherub, and fill thine hand with the coals of fire from between the cherubims, and scatter them over the city. And he went in my sight.

Now the cherubims stood on the right side of the house, when the man went in; and the cloud filled the inner court.

Then the glory of the Lord went up from the cherub, and stood over the threshold of the house; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the Lord's glory. (Ezekiel 10:1-4)

Again, several elements of this description should be discussed. Elements from other theophanies that reappear here include the sapphire throne, a cloud that fills the inner temple, and the coals from the altar, which seem to be elements of light or fire.⁴¹ After this, the description tells us that the glory of the Lord "stood over the threshold of the house [temple]" (v. 4), and then we find the cloud, brightness, and glory all used together in a parallel pattern.

a: and the house was filled with the cloud

b: and the court was full of the brightness of the Lord's glory

Here we see glory and brightness⁴² combined and used in conjunction with the cloud, one filling the court and the other the house. Apparently, the presence of the Lord is accompanied by both elements. While at Sinai it seems that the light was around the Lord but that both were hidden by smoke. Here we see that the temple, where the Lord is, was filled with the cloud and surrounding that was brightness. The arrangement of clouds and light may change, but the one comes with the other consistently.

Finally, Ezekiel sees a vision of a future temple, wherein he again sees the Lord's presence:

He brought me to the gate, even the gate that looketh toward the east:

And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory.

And it was according to the appearance of the vision which I saw, even according to the vision that I saw when I came to destroy the city: and the visions were like the vision that I saw by the river Chebar; and I fell upon my face.

And the glory of the Lord came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east.

So the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the glory of the Lord filled the house. (Ezekiel 43:1–5)

Ezekiel explicitly compares this vision to those he had seen before.⁴³ Indeed, it has many similar elements. Glory is associated with light as it comes from the east, and instead of quaking, we have a voice “like a noise of many waters,” a sound similar to that of thunder.⁴⁴ The Lord’s glory “shined” on the earth, a connection that again equates glory with light.⁴⁵ This happens again when we see the glory entering the house from the eastern gate and filling the house.⁴⁶ There is little additional information in this vision. Instead, it provides an emphasis and reification of the essential theophanic elements discussed above.

Amos

The last account of seeing the Lord we’ll consider, in the book of Amos, is similar to the Genesis accounts. Amos recounts, “I saw the Lord standing upon the altar” (Amos 9:1). There is nothing more concerning the actual appearance of the Lord. However, even this brief description is not devoid of references to either light or smoke. By simply saying that the Lord is standing “upon the altar,” Amos brings in imagery of the fire and coals present there, as well as the smoke which was naturally a part of the incense altar. This interpretation assumes that it is the incense altar Amos sees; the altar he mentions is inside the temple, and the presence of an incense altar would parallel other accounts. Thus, this far into the theophanic tradition, even the briefest descriptions contain references to light and clouds as a part of theophany.

Indirect Presence

There are several biblical accounts which some have construed as indicating the physical presence of the Lord, and all of these accounts involve the consumption of offerings by fire. However, in none of these accounts is the Lord explicitly or necessarily present, and none even allude to his presence. We will examine them briefly.

In Genesis 15, Abraham is instructed to lay out a sacrifice and keep it from being consumed by animals. “It came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that

passed between those pieces” (Genesis 15:17). This account does include both smoke and light, but it does not necessitate that the Lord himself is present. Instead, it is likely that his power is present, not his actual personage.

Similarly, Gideon is instructed by an angel to present an offering which is then consumed by fire (Judges 6:21), and Samson’s parents offer a kid which is consumed by fire in the presence of an angel (Judges 13:19–20). In neither of these cases is the angel equated with the Lord, and indeed, in Judges 13, the angel specifically states that the offering should not be made to him but to the Lord (Judges 13:16).

Elijah also calls down fire to consume offerings (1 Kings 18:38). Again, Elijah calls to the Lord, and it is the Lord’s power that is manifest in the fire that licks up even the dust and water of the offering, but nowhere is it intimated that the Lord himself is present.

Conclusion

Little can be said of the theophanic accounts in Genesis, since little is said in these accounts about the countenance of God. However, the descriptions of the divine presence in the rest of the Old Testament contain many elements in common. Theophanies frequently contain references to loud noises or shaking. Both of these elements are indicative of power. Theophanic accounts also generally have a luminous element to them. Whether this is a description of the shining sky, of fire, of light, of coals, or of burning creatures, light or fire seems to be intrinsically connected to God’s personage.

Surprisingly, this luminous presence is also connected with a dark element. In the preceding accounts, we also see either smoke or a cloud, which often hides the presence of the Lord. Thus Jehovah seems to simultaneously break forth in light, or reveal himself, and cover himself in a cloud or smoke, or hide himself. This tension between revealing and hiding is furthered by Moses’ both being allowed to see the Lord’s face and later not being allowed to see it. The various accounts paint for us a picture of the duality of the Lord’s nature, something echoed in such natural elements as fire and its accompanying smoke or clouds and their accompanying lightning and rainbows.

The accounts which speak of both light and darkness seem to be attempts to grapple with an important problem in man’s experience with God. Our loving Father wants to reveal himself to us and bring us back to his presence, but in our current fallen state, this cannot happen (see Moses 1:2). Even if we

were transfigured, God's nature would still be so much more glorious than ours that he could not fully reveal himself to us (see Moses 1:5). Apparently, full communion with God must wait for our natures to more substantially and permanently change. In the meantime, God reveals himself to us as much as we are prepared for it (see Alma 12:9–10). The simultaneously competing and complementary images of light and darkness, fire and smoke, glory and cloud, symbolically convey this idea.

The power of the Lord seems to have been particularly hard for the biblical writers to convey. This difficulty may account for the ambiguous use of the term *k~bôd*. As has been noted, this term usually conveys the meaning of weight, or heaviness. However, it sometimes is associated with light, and this is frequently the case in theophanic accounts. Glory is often equated with light in divine manifestations, both of which are likely symbols of God's power and might. In any case, the term *k~bôd* may very well carry within itself the dualistic nature of God. God's glory is simultaneously heavy and full of light. The heaviness of his glory is sometimes symbolized by a train or cloud—two elements of hiding—but sometimes by light and shining—elements of revealing. It is this word, with its multiplicity of connotations, which may best describe the presence of the Lord, something so out of the experience of this world that it can only be described by similes, metaphors, and paradox.

Notes

1. For the purposes of this paper, a theophany is defined as God's physical presence being revealed or detectable.

2. Unless otherwise specified, all translations are from the King James Version.

3. For a possible context of the Lord's voice walking in the Garden of Eden, see Donald W. Parry, "Garden of Eden: Prototype Sanctuary," in *Temples of the Ancient World: Ritual and Symbolism*, ed. Donald W. Parry (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994), 144.

4. Andrew C. Skinner, "Jacob in the Presence of God," in *Sperry Symposium Classics: The Old Testament*, ed. Paul Y. Hoskisson (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005), 128–29, argues that Jacob saw God there.

5. After searching dozens of texts myself, I also consulted with Giorgio Buccellati, who studied this topic as well and who found the same results I did.

6. For a brief introduction to the topic of Egyptian influence on Israelite culture, see "Egypt and the Bible: An Interview with Kerry Muhlestein," *Religious Educator* 11, no. 3 (2010): 78–93.

7. It is clear later that it is the Lord speaking to Moses, but here the text states that an angel is in the bush. Walter Brueggemann, "Exodus," in *The New Interpreter's Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 711, is certain that this is a theophany but believes that an angel is present as well. William H. C. Propp, *Exodus 1–18, A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, ed. William Foxwell Albright and David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Bible 2* (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 198, notes that the mention of the angel may be a result of "Judaism's tendency to avoid direct reference to God, especially to his physical manifestations." However, he seems to be more convinced that the angel is acting on behalf of God and therefore speaks as if he were God. This is somewhat confusing since just paragraphs above, Propp asserts that while an angel was present, "God himself is within the bush." In either case, a theophany is occurring, since if it is an angel acting on behalf of God, he is playing the full part, with accompanying effects. Brevard S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary*, ed. Peter Ackroyd and others, *The Old Testament Library* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), 79n2, believes it is an angel of Yahweh "who assumes the form and speech of Yahweh himself." Childs also believes this to be a theophany.

8. In the Exodus and Deuteronomy section of this paper, all translations are my own, based closely on the King James Version.

9. Brueggemann, "Exodus," 711, and Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, 199, both believe that the initial light and the angel caught Moses' attention. After this, Moses communicated with the light-filled Lord.

10. For a Latter-day Saint discussion on glory and God in this context, see Daniel Belnap, "'Where Is Thy Glory?' Moses 1, the Nature of Truth, and the Plan of Salvation," *Religious Educator* 10, no. 2 (2009): 163–79. See also Rodney Turner, "The Visions of Moses (Moses 1)," in *Studies in Scripture: The Pearl of Great Price*, ed. Robert L. Millet and Kent P. Jackson (Salt Lake City: Randall Press, 1985), 46–49.

11. Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, 489, believes that this is the same pillar, which transforms itself from fire to cloud at the appropriate time. Childs, *Book of Exodus*, 224, also feels this way.

12. This is the first of many times that light is connected with the salvation of Jehovah. See Sverre Aalen, "'ôr," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, vol. 1, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. John T. Willis (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974), 160, who connects light in general, and specifically the term for light, 'ôr, with salvation because of how such incidents connect light with God. Aalen maintains, however, that studies which connect Israelite worship with the sun have fallen out of acceptance in current scholarship (165).

13. Childs, *Book of Exodus*, 227, notes that as the Israelites flee into the sea, the Lord terrifies the Egyptians with the pillar of fire, and the Egyptians cry out that Jehovah is fighting for Israel. The Egyptians would have been particularly sensitive to gods that fought with fire, since this idea was such a part of Egyptian culture. Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, 498, writes that perhaps this happened at nightfall, as the cloud was turning into fire, or that it may mean that the pillar was dark by day and light at night.

14. Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, 499, again speculates that since it is morning, the pillar is in the process of turning from fire to cloud.

15. Brueggemann, "Exodus," 836, believes that the description of fire, smoke, and quaking is an attempt to convey the unconveyable. While this may be true, this description must still indicate that some sort of light, darkness, movement, and sound were present.

16. The word used for "heavy darkness" here, or "thick darkness" in Exodus 20:21 and Deuteronomy 4:11, is *arafel* or *ʿrāpel*. While the etymology of this word is not completely understood, its closest cognates in other languages mean "to cover or wrap up." See Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, vol. II, ed. and trans. M. E. J. Richardson (New York: E. J. Brill, 1995), 888, who list these cognates and define the word as either "thick darkness" or "God's covering." While we may not fully understand this word's meaning, because it is often used in parallel with darkness, we can be sure that it has something to do with a darkness that covers or conceals. See also M. J. Mulder, "ʿrāpel," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, vol. 11, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 371–75. Mulder says that in each of the cognates, the word "suggests something like 'thick clouds, darkness'" (371). Mulder discusses the use of the phrase in the Exodus and Deuteronomy Sinai pericopes on pages 372–73.

17. John Day, "Echoes of Baal's Seven Thunders and Lightnings in Psalm XXIX and Habakkuk III 9 and the Identity of the Seraphim in Isaiah VI," *Vetus Testamentum* 29, no. 2 (1979): 143–51, notes the kinship between Jehovah's possessing both thunder and lighting and Baal's possession of the same. J. C. L. Gibson, *Language and Imagery in the Old Testament* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998), 104, makes this same point, drawing on his vast experience as translator for most of the available Ugaritic literature. J. Glen Taylor, *Yahweh and the Sun: Biblical and Archaeological Evidence for Sun Worship in Ancient Israel*, ed. David J. A. Clines and Philip R. Davies, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 237, believes that "the admixture of sun and storm language" may have conveyed an understanding that the Lord was identifiable as both a sun god and a storm god.

18. On the theological implications of this, see Kerry Muhlestein, "Israel, Exodus, Atonement, and Us," in *Covenants, Prophecies, and Hymns of the Old Testament*, ed. Victor L. Ludlow (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2001), 89–100.

19. Brueggemann, "Exodus," 881, notes that the pavement was not sapphire, but was like it; the paved work was actually impossible to describe. Childs, *Book of Exodus*, 506–7, believes that lapis lazuli is being referred to here but makes the same point, that it is only "an approximate analogy to the reality itself."

20. U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (London: Magnes Press, 1967), 314, believes that the word here translated as "clear" is related to an Ugaritic cognate which describes the brightness of sapphire. This adds another luminous element to the account.

21. Childs, *Book of Exodus*, 506–7, comments that this account softens the actual beholding of God in this scene by using terminology usually associated with a vision. Thus God's presence was not necessarily hidden here, since he wasn't truly seen. In this way he "softens" the perceived textual difficulty of these men seeing God while later God says that he cannot be seen (see Exodus 33, treated later in this article). I do not think there is a tremendous difference between seeing God in a vision or in some other way.

22. Childs, *Book of Exodus*, 508, notes the relationship between Exodus 19 and 24: “The terrifying God of Ex. 19 who appeared in his theophany has not changed. He returns at the end of ch. 24 once again in majesty and awe-inspiring terror. What has changed is his relation to Israel.”

23. Menahem Haran, *Temples and Temple Service in Ancient Israel* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1985), 267–68, speculates that in the first vision, Moses beheld the Lord only through the fabric of the tabernacle and that in the second, the cleft of the rock acts like the veil in the tabernacle which protects the sanctity of the Holy of Holies. While this interpretation solves many problems, it seems to ignore the explicitness of the phrase “face to face.”

24. See discussions above on Exodus 24.

25. Psalm 18:9 contains a parallel account.

26. Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, “Jehovah Sabaoth—The Heavenly King on the Cherubim Throne,” in *Studies in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays: Papers Read at the International Symposium for Biblical Studies*, ed. Tomoo Ishida (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1982), 125, suggests that the “hosts” spoken of here are the seraphim, who form a part of Jehovah’s heavenly council. They would then constitute the “us” in verse 8, not quoted above. His argument is particularly convincing. Gibson, *Language and Imagery*, 106, also makes this point.

27. Herbert G. May, “Some Aspects of Solar Worship at Jerusalem,” *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 55, no. 4 (1937b), 275, sees in the language of the lifted-up throne, and other aspects of the vision, evidence that Isaiah is referring to rites associated with enthronement and the equinox. See also F. J. Hollis, “The Sun Cult and the Temple at Jerusalem,” in *Myth and Ritual: Essays on the Myth and Ritual of the Hebrews in Relation to the Culture Pattern of the Ancient Near East*, ed. S. H. Hooke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1934). While others, such as Gibson, *Language and Imagery*, 123, would agree that this is a Jehovah enthronement ceremony, there is no consensus that such a ceremony took place on the equinox.

28. Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951), 1002, list the meaning of the Hebrew word translated as “train” as the skirt of a robe, such as a high priest’s robe. Because the Hebrew word is plural, more than one garment, hem, or robe is implied.

29. Donald W. Parry, Jay A. Parry, and Tina M Peterson, *Understanding Isaiah* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1998), 65, assert that a good translation would be “burning ones,” or “bright shiny ones.” See also Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 976–77, who list the meaning of the root as “burn,” with connotations of the ability to destroy by burning. See also B. Langer, *Gott als “Licht in Israel und Mesopotamien.” Eine Studie zu Jes 60:1–3.19f* (Klosterneuburg: Österreichisches Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1989); and T. N. D. Mettinger, “Seraphim,” in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, ed. Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst, 2nd ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 742–44.

30. Day, “Echoes of Baal’s Seven Thunders and Lightnings,” 149, among others, believes that the seraphim are the personification of lightning, which would explain why the foundations shook when they spoke. R. B. Y. Scott, “The Book of Isaiah,” in *The*

Interpreter's Bible, vol. 5, ed. Nolan B. Harman (New York and Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1956), 208, believed that seraphim personified lightning in contrast to cherubim, which personified thunderclouds.

31. In this and other elements the *seraphim* have been thought of as Egyptian in origin. See Karen R. Joines, "Winged Serpents in Isaiah's Inaugural Vision," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 86, no. 4 (1967), 410–15; and Karen R. Joines, *Serpent Symbolism in the Old Testament* (Haddonfield, New Jersey: Haddonfield House, 1974), 42–60; and Day, "Echoes of Baal's Seven Thunders and Lightnings," 150.

32. Day, "Echoes of Baal's Seven Thunders and Lightnings," 149, believes that some of Jehovah's theophanic characteristics have here been "split off on" the *seraphim*.

33. The word comes from the root *k~bôd*. See C. Dohmen and P. Stenmans, "Kâbêd," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, vol. 7, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, trans. David E. Green (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 13, wherein they show the meaning of this word in all Semitic languages as "be heavy." They demonstrate that the meaning of being heavy can refer to weight, burden, disability, social status, and honor. See also 17–19. The word *k~bôd* is in the nominal case. See Moshe Weinfeld, "Kâbôd," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, vol. 7, 22–38, who examines the most common use of the word, namely as "weight." He also demonstrates its use as depicting power and might. Weinfeld ties its use as the glory of God to crowns and fire (27–31). See also Brown, Driver, Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 458–59, who link the meaning of heaviness to "abundance, honour, glory." The typical interpretation is similar to that of John Eaton, *Mysterious Messengers: A Course on Hebrew Prophecy from Amos Onwards* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1997), 22, who speaks of *k~bôd* for glory as meaning "an incomparable weight of excellence, a unique majesty," and yet admits that "although the Hebrew term has a basic sense of 'heaviness' rather than 'brightness,' the weight and worth of God's person are felt, as it were, to create a tremendous aura, more than enough to fill the whole earth."

34. See Exodus 24:15–17; Leviticus 9:23–24; Numbers 11:1; Deuteronomy 5:24–25; 2 Chronicles 7:1–3; Psalm 97:3–5; Isaiah 58:8; 60:1, 19; Ezekiel 1:28; 3:23. This list is an amalgam of passages found by Weinfeld, "Kâbôd," 31, and me.

35. Scott, "Book of Isaiah," 207, shares this point of view.

36. Herbert G. May, "The Book of Ezekiel," in *The Interpreter's Bible*, 74, believes that the sapphire here is lapis lazuli, which agrees with the scholars quoted above in the Exodus discussion.

37. Susan Niditch, *Ancient Israelite Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 44–45, notes that Ezekiel seems to be so nervous about seeing and describing God that he speaks of the "likeness" of God and describes the different parts of his body in separate ways, as if he could not look upon the entire presence of God at once.

38. David Noel Freedman and M. P. O'Connor, "Kerûb," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, vol. 7, 307–19, believe that the word *cherubim* is semantically related to praying and blessing or to praising. See also T. N. D. Mettinger, "Cherubim," in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, 189–92.

39. See Scott, "Book of Isaiah," 208. Freedman and O'Connor, "Kerûb," 318, note that cherubim have wings and are a counterpart to seraphim. They speculate that the

latter may be flying birds while cherubim are flying animals. They make no mention of the idea of thunderclouds, though since seraphim are typically strongly associated with lightning, it would seem logical that their counterpart version should have some sort of counterpart symbolism. Brown, Driver, Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 500–501, who find the word *cherubim* so enigmatic that they define it as “cherub”; they discuss the things it seems to be and the things it probably is not but provide no real definition. They do say that it is possible that the thundercloud underlies their conception. Since in Exodus 25:22, Jehovah says he will converse with Moses from between the two cherubim who cover the ark of the covenant with their wings, it seems that they must perform some sort of veiling or hiding function. Haran, *Temples and Temple Service*, 252, presents much convincing evidence that part of the nature of the cherubim was to cover things.

40. See discussion above.

41. Herbert G. May, “The Departure of the Glory of Yahweh,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 56, no. 4 (1937): 319, sees in this imagery evidence for solar and solstice rituals. See also May, “Book of Ezekiel,” 109, 117; and May, “Aspects of Solar Worship,” 270–73.

42. Taylor, 158, *Yahweh and the Sun*, sees this as evidence for the glory of the Lord being connected to the sun. He does not seem to allow that there could be a source of light other than the sun.

43. May, “Aspects of Solar Worship,” 279, sees in this vision, and hence in Ezekiel’s other visions, evidence which he believes points to rites associated with the equinox. See also J. Morgenstern, “The Gates of Righteousness,” *Hebrew Union College Annual* 6 (1929).

44. Mark S. Smith, “‘Seeing God’ in the Psalms: The Background of the Beatific Vision in the Hebrew Bible,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 50 (1988): 180, believes that like the Babylonian god Marduk, Jehovah here is exalted by attributing to him different natural powers. He does not discuss the possibility that the attributions are attempts to use familiar items to describe the unfamiliar.

45. Taylor, *Yahweh and the Sun*, 158, again believes that this shining of the glory of the Lord is associated with the sun.

46. See May, “Book of Ezekiel,” 300.