

## The Comings of Christ.

Together, we have recently enjoyed hearing about the second coming of Christ in Thessalonians, and also during Sunday school, in the book of Revelation. During this part of the year, you no doubt have been thinking about Christ's first coming, His nativity, His incarnation, His being born of a virgin, foretold by the prophet Isaiah, 700 years before it happened, His becoming 100% man, but remaining 100% God.

But let me ask you this. Where in the scripture does it number Christ's comings? Where are we told what His first coming is, and what His second coming is? Is this in the scripture? Have we invented this? Where do these ideas come from? The scripture says:

Jesus is "coming into the world"

The apostles asked, what will be the sign of your coming?

Jesus said, "No one knows the day or the hour of His coming.

His coming will be like lightening.

His coming will be like light appearing from the east, visible in the west.

He will come in clouds with great power and glory.

He will come with angels.

Jesus even tells Caiaphas that he will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven.

In 1 Thess. 5:23 we heard just recently, the prayer of Paul, that the Thessalonians' whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

At the ascension in Acts, we learn He will come back in the same way He was seen going into heaven.

Each of the seven cycles of Revelation mention or allude to the coming of Christ. In all of these places in the scripture, the coming of Christ is never numbered. His coming is mentioned over twenty times in the New Testament. Are you ready for your first chiasm of the day? You can number His "coming's", but His comings are never numbered. The phrase "second coming" is used so much that everyone knows what it means, but never questions where the phrase comes from. The etymology of the phrase, according to Merriam-Webster says the first known use was in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, so this is a newer title, given to the return of Christ around the time of the Reformation.

This made me think of a question Chris brought up the other Sunday night. What was the first miracle that Jesus performed? Some folks assume that Jesus was only in the New Testament, and say, "water to wine." But remember, Jesus was at creation. That was quite a miracle, and Jesus is the Creator. I want to mimic that question, by asking, "What was the first **coming** of Christ"? I hope this question makes you think of the Theophanies and Christophanys found in the Old Testament. Today, I want to examine the many, "comings of Christ", so let's turn in your Bibles to Genesis, and look for more about Jesus.

Kids, I've included a section on the back of the bulletin for you to record the names of some of the people Jesus appears to in the Old Testament, so listen closely and see how many you can get.

I believe the first coming of Christ is in the very first chapter. Turn to Gen 1:28 and look with me. Immediately, after creating man, God (the name for God here is Elohim), Elohim "blesses" them and "says" to them Be fruitful and multiply. This isn't the first math test in the Bible. It is Jesus talking to Adam and Eve. In verses 29-30,

Gen 1:29-30 And God (Elohim) said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so.

In chapter two, verse eight, God's name changes to LORD God (which means Yahweh Elohim).

Gen 2:8 And the LORD God (Yahweh Elohim) planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed.

In verses 16 and 17,

Gen 2:16 And the LORD God (Yahweh Elohim) commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

By chapter three, you have Eve talking to a spiritual being, who we later learn is Satan according to 2Cor 11, and she eats of the tree and gets Adam to do likewise. Then notice chapter 3, verse 8,

Gen 3:8 And they heard the sound of the LORD God (Yahweh Elohim) walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God (Yahweh Elohim) among the trees of the garden.

They (Adam and Eve), heard the sound of Yahweh Elohim walking in the garden, and hid from the presence of Yahweh Elohim. God the Father is spirit, and doesn't have a body like men, yet Yahweh Elohim was walking in the garden and was being hidden from. In chapter three, verse nine it says,

Gen 3:9 But the LORD God (Yahweh Elohim) called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"

The conversation continues until Yahweh Elohim starts handing out curses. Then Yahweh Elohim gives the first gospel message in the Bible.

Gen 3:15 I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

Then Yahweh Elohim names the woman.

Gen 3:20 The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.

Then Yahweh Elohim clothes Adam and Eve.

**Gen 3:21** And the LORD God (Yahweh Elohim) made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

Yahweh Elohim then sends Adam out of the garden in verse 23, and in 24 it says,

**Gen 3:24** He drove out the man

To recap, Yahweh Elohim, blesses them, commands their diet, planted a garden, walks in the garden, called to the man, has a conversation with Adam, Eve, and Satan to hand out curses, proclaims the gospel, names the woman, makes garments of skins and clothed Adam and Eve, sends drives them out of the garden. This has to be the second person of the Trinity at work, present in the garden. So the first coming of Christ was to Adam and Eve. (Hint, time to write kids).

The next coming of Christ surprised me. In chapter four, Adam and Eve have a son, Cain. In verse three, Cain “brought” to Yahweh an offering of the fruit of the ground. You have to be somewhere for someone to bring you something. In verse 5, Yahweh has no regard for Cain and his offering. No blood in those turnips and broccoli. Cain gets mad, and in verse six, “Yahweh said to Cain”. He is talking to these humans again. He speaks to Cain again in verse 9 and 10 concerning his murdering Abel. Then Yahweh curses Cain. So far, human depravity is four for four, one murdered and three cursed. In first part of verse 14, Cain says to Yahweh,

**Gen 4:14a** Behold, you have driven me today away from the ground, and from your face I shall be hidden.

In verse 15, Yahweh puts a mark on Cain. In verse 16,

**Gen 4:16** Then Cain went away from the presence of the LORD and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

Wait a minute, “Away from the presence of Yahweh.” A moving truck gets you out of His presence? I had never noticed this before. The pre-incarnate Lord Jesus allows sacrifice to be brought to Him, talks to Cain, just like He talked with Adam and Eve. He curses Cain, just like He did Adam and Eve. He drives Cain away, just like He did Adam and Eve. And we are left with the sad summary, “Then Cain went away from the presence of Yahweh”. So Christ came to Cain.

In Gen chapter five, we read that Jared has Enoch, the seventh from Adam.

**Gen 5:22** Enoch walked with God (Elohim) after he fathered Methuselah 300 years and had other sons and daughters.

**Gen 5:23** Thus all the days of Enoch were 365 years.

**Gen 5:24** Enoch walked with God (Elohim), and he was not, for God took him.

Both the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> verse of chapter five, say “Enoch walked with God (Elohim)”. The word “walked” is the same word used in chapter three when Adam and Even hear Elohim walking in the garden. On top of this, verse 24 says Elohim took him. Just as Jesus can ascend to heaven and descend to the earth, I picture Jesus ascending and taking Enoch with Him. So Christ came to Enoch.

In Gen. six, after the sons of God (sons of Elohim) came down and married women and had the giants, Yahweh, in verse five,

Gen 6:5 The LORD (Yahweh) saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

We are told in the book of Enoch that the sons of Elohim came down in the days of Jared. So in just three generations from Enosh to Jared (6<sup>th</sup> from Adam), things have gone south again. Turn to chapter six, verse eight.

Gen 6:8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD (Yahweh).

Gen 6:9 These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God (Elohim).

Notice how “Noah walked with Elohim”, just like we read about Enoch. Not only that, but in verse 13,

**Gen 6:13** And God (Elohim) said to Noah, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

Elohim is speaking to Noah. It sounds like He is talking person to person, just like with Adam and Eve. Elohim continues the discussion by giving directions on how to build the ark, and says that He will bring a flood and everything that is on the earth shall die. So Christ came to Noah.

Turn to Genesis chapter nine, verse one,

**Gen 9:1** And God (Elohim) blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.

Elohim blessed Noah and his sons just like he blessed Adam and Eve. Then in verses eight and nine,

Gen 9:8 Then God (Elohim) said to Noah and to his sons with him,

Gen 9:9 "Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you,

The “blessing” and the “speaking” by Elohim, are more actions from a person. Notice that the scripture doesn’t describe this speaking as a voice from heaven. Even though Bill Cosby describes it that way during his stand up comedy routine about Noah, the Bible doesn’t. God speaking from heaven doesn’t happen until Genesis chapter 21. It is also not described as a dream. The word dream isn’t mentioned in the Bible until Genesis chapter 20, in the time of Abraham, which is 1,600 years after Noah.

Elohim continues the conversation in verse 12-13, by telling Noah and his sons that the sign of the covenant is the bow in the cloud (rainbow). There is a great little chiasm in verses 12-13 with the center being the bow in the cloud, sandwiched between the “sign of the covenant”.

Gen 9:12 And God (Elohim) said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations:

Gen 9:13 I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.

9:12 sign of the covenant

9:12 bow in the cloud

9:13 sign of the covenant

This is part of a larger chiasm in verses 9-17. The outside of the chiasm is the establishment of the covenant with their offspring in verses 9-10, and 17. The next repeated theme is the rainbow in verses 12-13, and 16-17. The center of the chiasm is in verse 15, as Elohim is still speaking to Noah and his sons, and promises never to again flood the earth to destroy all flesh.

9:9-10 Establish my covenant with you/your offspring/and every creature

9:12-13 This is the sign of the covenant/bow in the cloud

9:15 I will remember my covenant and never again flood to destroy all flesh

9:16-17 bow in the clouds/This is the sign of the covenant

9:17 Covenant established between me and all flesh that is on the earth

This promise was made to Noah and his sons. I believe Jesus was talking to all of them.

In Genesis 10, the sons of Japheth, Ham, and Shem are listed by their clans, their languages, and their nations. Out of these 70 nations, Yahweh chose Abram. Turn to Genesis 12, verses one and two.

**Gen 12:1** Now the LORD (Yahweh) said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.

Gen 12:2 And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.

Yahweh "said" to Abram, I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless thee. Remember how Elohim blessed Adam and Eve, and Noah and his sons. Yahweh continues speaking in verse three,

Gen 12:3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

This echoes of Jesus cursing Adam, Eve, Satan, and Cain, people who had been in His presence.

Speaking of His presence, in verse seven,

**Gen 12:7** Then the LORD (Yahweh) appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the LORD (Yahweh), who had appeared to him.

Yahweh appeared

Abram built an altar to Yahweh

Yahweh appeared

Notice the mini chiasm as “appeared” is in the first and last part of the verse, strangely repeated. In the center, Abram builds an altar to the Lord (Yahweh). The center is foreshadowing the gospel of Christ’s needed death on the cross as a sacrifice for sins. From Gen.12 to Exodus 3, there are 11 more times that the scripture will use the phrase, the LORD (Yahweh) “appeared”. An appearance is something that you see. Christ was coming down to earth and appearing. I listed all 13 of these appearances in the appendix. So Christ came to Abram.

Turn to Genesis chapter 13, verse 14.

Gen 13:14a The LORD (Yahweh) said to Abram,

This coming of Christ is after Abram settled in the land of Canaan. Yahweh promised to make his offspring as the dust of the earth. The scene ends with Abram building an altar to Yahweh at Hebron.

The next chapter, 14, begins the giant wars, five kings against four. After Abram takes 318 servants and rescues Lot to save the line of Christ which is Ruth, the Moabitess, King David’s great grandma, Abram meets Melchizedek. Four times during their meeting, God is called by a new name, God Most High (El Elyon, El being a shortened form of Elohim). Let’s read Gen. 14:18-22.

Gen 14:18 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.(El Elyon)

Gen 14:19 And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High (El Elyon), Possessor of heaven and earth;

Gen 14:20 and blessed be God Most High (El Elyon), who has delivered your enemies into your hand!" And Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

Gen 14:21 And the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the persons, but take the goods for yourself."

Gen 14:22 But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have lifted my hand to the LORD (Yahweh), God Most High (El Elyon), Possessor of heaven and earth,"

I wouldn’t include Melchizedek as a coming of Christ, but I would say that Melchizedek was one of the Elohim, God’s created spiritual beings, that he sent down from heaven to meet Abram. But, watch how the story continues even though there is a chapter break.

**Gen 15:1** After these things the word of the LORD (Yahweh) came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great."

The Hebrew word for “things” and “word” are the same word, “daw-bawr”. The text is saying after these words (dawbawr), the Word (dawbawr) of Yahweh came to Abram in a vision. By the way, this is the first time in the Bible a “vision” is used to describe a coming of Christ. As Michael Heiser said recently, “a vision is something that you see”. Christ reveals more about Himself, by telling Abram He is his shield and exceeding great reward. In Chiasm, the middle being the gospel, Christ is our shield of faith and our exceeding great reward.

The Word of Yahweh language should make you remember John chapter one, where the scripture tells us about Christ:

**Joh 1:1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Joh 1:2 He was in the beginning with God.

I looked up how many times we find the phrase “the Word of Yahweh came”. I was shocked. After appearing only twice in Genesis, here in chapter 15 verses one and four, the phrase becomes common place. In the books of Samuel, it is used three times as the Word of Yahweh came to Samuel, Nathan, and the prophet Gad, David’s seer. (1 Sam. 15:10, 2Sam 7:4, 2 Sam. 24:11). In the Kings and Chronicles, “the Word of Yahweh came”, to Solomon in (1Kings 6:11), to a prophet who was never named, but was called the man of God (man of Elohim) 1 Kings 13. The Word of yahweh came to Jehu in 1 Kings 16. The Word of Yahweh came to Elijah the Tishbite seven times in , 1 Kings 17, 18, 19, and 21. The Word of Yahweh came to Isaiah in 2Kings 20, to Nathan in 1Chron 17, to King David 1 Chron 22, to Shemaiah, the man of Elohim in 2 Chron 11&12. In these books of history, the phrase comes twenty times to eleven men that saw the coming of Christ, the Word of Yahweh who came.

But wait, there is more. Look at the Major Prophets. In Isaiah, the Word of Yahweh came to Isaiah in chapter 38:4. Then hold on to your hat, “the Word of Yahweh came” phrase appears 24 times in the book of Jeremiah. My favorite is Jeremiah 34:12-13.

Jer 34:12 The word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah from Yahweh:

Jer 34:13 "Thus says Yahweh, the God (Elohim) of Israel: I myself made a covenant with your fathers when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, saying,

24 times, so we have the winner, right? Not even close. Here comes the word of Yahweh to Ezekiel, count them, 50 times! As I read through these 50 occurrences, you quickly notice a pattern. Ezekiel says “the word of Yahweh came to me saying, “Son of man, thus says the Lord GOD.”” God calls Ezekiel, “Son of man”, a name Christ uses for Himself in the New Testament. Then He calls Himself, Lord GOD. This isn’t Yahweh Elohim which you find in Genesis. This is Lord GOD, which means Adonnai Yeh-ho-vee. Adonnai is a name that is almost always used for Christ Jesus. This brings us full circle, back to our text in Genesis 15.

**Gen 15:1** After these things the word of the LORD (Yahweh) came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great."

Gen 15:2 But Abram said, "O Lord GOD (Adonnai Yehhovee), what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?"

This name for God is first used by Abram, and later Ezekiel will use “Adonnai Yehhovee” 219 times. There is no doubt in my mind that Jesus appeared to Ezekiel.

The phrase, “the word of Yahweh came” is also found in seven of the Minor Prophets. Hosea, Joel, Jonah(2), Micah, Zephaniah, Haggai (five times), and Zechariah (nine times). That takes our count of Christ’s comings to nine people in Genesis, 11 people in the Books of History, three in the Major Prophets, and seven in the Minor Prophets, for a total of 30 from Adam to Zechariah. But there are more comings. Kids, you should be running out of lines by now ☺

Just as chapter 15 has a coming of Christ to Abram and new revealed names used for the first time in the Bible, so does chapter 16. God had promised Abram an offspring in chapter 15, so Sarai and Abram cook up a plan to have children via Hagar, Sarai’s Egyptian servant. The two women are at odds with one another being married to the same man. Big shocker! Sarai drives Hagar away, and we pick up the story in chapter 16, verse seven.

Gen 16:7 The angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur.

Gen 16:8 And he said, "Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?" She said, "I am fleeing from my mistress Sarai."

Gen 16:9 The angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress and submit to her."

Gen 16:10 The angel of the LORD also said to her, "I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude."

Gen 16:11 And the angel of the LORD said to her, "Behold, you are pregnant and shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael, because the LORD has listened to your affliction.

Gen 16:12 He shall be a wild donkey of a man, his hand against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he shall dwell over against all his kinsmen."

Gen 16:13 So she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, "You are a God of seeing," for she said, "Truly here I have seen him who looks after me."

Jesus is called El Roi, the God that sees. The pattern of Christ coming and revealing another of His names, continues in chapter 17, verse one.

Gen 17:1 When Abram was ninety-nine years old the LORD (Yahweh) appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty (El Shaddai); walk before me, and be blameless,

Gen 17:2 that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly."

Gen 17:3 Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him,

Gen 17:4 "Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations.

Gen 17:5 No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations.

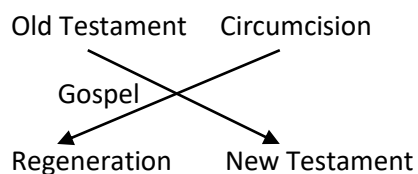
So in three chapters, we learn five new names of God: "the Word of Yahweh", "Addonai Yehhovee, Lord GOD", "the angel of Yahweh", "El Roi, the God who sees", and "El Shaddai, God Almighty". In chapter 17, Sarai and Abram get their new names as well, Sarah and Abraham.

Yahweh goes on to announce the covenant of circumcision. In the New Testament circumcision is of the heart meaning regeneration. Notice the interesting chiasm with circumcision as you go from an Old Testament Jew with circumcision of the flesh, to the gospel, to the New Testament Jew and circumcision of the heart, as Romans 2:28-29, and Galatians 6:15 say:

Rom 2:28 For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical.

Rom 2:29 But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.

Gal 6:15 For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.



Next, in Genesis chapter 17:21, Yahweh promises to establish His covenant with Isaac saying,



Gen 17:21 But I will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this time next year."

Gen 17:22 When he had finished talking with him, God (Elohim) went up from Abraham.

"Elohim went up from Abraham." The beginning of the chapter says Yahweh, but the end says Elohim. He ascended. He came and He went. So you have this ascension before Christ's resurrection. This is another chiasm with the gospel at the center. Ascension, gospel, ascension.

In chapter 18, we have the fifth appearance of Christ to Abraham, and first to Sarah, which makes three ladies who have seen Christ.

The comings of Christ continue with Isaac in Genesis chapter 26, verse two.

Gen 26:2 And the LORD (Yahweh) appeared to him and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; dwell in the land of which I shall tell you.

And again in verse 24,

Gen 26:24 And the LORD (Yahweh) appeared to him the same night and said, "I am the God (Elohim) of Abraham your father. Fear not, for I am with you and will bless you and multiply your offspring for my servant Abraham's sake."

Twice it says "appeared". So Christ came to Isaac.

Isaac's son Jacob would refer to both his father and grandfather in a similar way in chapter 32, verse nine.

Gen 32:9 And Jacob said, "O God (Elohim) of my father Abraham and God (Elohim) of my father Isaac, O LORD (Yahweh) who said to me, 'Return to your country and to your kindred, that I may do you good,'

The coming of Christ to Jacob comes in a strange way in verse 24. It is the famous wrestling match.

Gen 32:24 And Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day.

Gen 32:25 When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched his hip socket, and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him.

Gen 32:26 Then he said, "Let me go, for the day has broken." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."

Gen 32:27 And he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob."

Gen 32:28 Then he said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed."

Gen 32:29 Then Jacob asked him, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And there he blessed him.

Gen 32:30 So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel (Pen-e-el), saying, "For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered."

Christ wrestles with Jacob, touches his hip out of joint, talks to him during the wrestling match, renames Jacob from deceiver to Israel, meaning "struggled with God", and blesses him. The place is even renamed "face of God". What doubt can there be that this coming was the Lord Jesus Christ to Israel?

Turn to Genesis chapter 35. This appearance has a couple of elements we have seen in previous comings of Christ. Let's read the text and see if you catch them. Beginning is verse nine:

Gen 35:9 God (Elohim) appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Paddan-aram, and blessed him.

Gen 35:10 And God (Elohim) said to him, "Your name is Jacob; no longer shall your name be called Jacob, but Israel shall be your name." So he called his name Israel.

Gen 35:11 And God (Elohim) said to him, "I am God Almighty (El Shaddai): be fruitful and multiply. A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come from your own body.

Gen 35:12 The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you, and I will give the land to your offspring after you."

Gen 35:13 Then God (Elohim) went up from him in the place where he had spoken with him.

Gen 35:14 And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he had spoken with him, a pillar of stone. He poured out a drink offering on it and poured oil on it.

Gen 35:15 So Jacob called the name of the place where God (Elohim) had spoken with him Bethel (house of El).

Did you catch the repeated themes? You have Elohim giving a blessing; you have the name change repeated as it was given at the wrestling match; you have the announcement of God's name, El Shaddai repeated, but only the second time God has used this name for Himself. You also have another ascension of Christ back to heaven; "Elohim went up from him." So Christ came to Israel.

This coming of Christ was so unforgettable to Jacob, that he recounted it to Joseph while Jacob was on his death bed in Genesis 48:3.

Gen 48:3 And Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty (El Shaddai) appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me,

After blessing Joseph and the rest of his sons, Jacob gives a command about where he is to be buried in Gen. 49:29-31.

Gen 49:29 Then he commanded them and said to them, "I am to be gathered to my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite,

Gen 49:30 in the cave that is in the field at Machpelah (mak-pay-law), to the east of Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field from Ephron the Hittite to possess as a burying place.

Gen 49:31 There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife. There they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife, and there I buried Leah—

Gen 49:32 the field and the cave that is in it were bought from the Hittites."

The chiasm of field and cave point us to the middle verses, telling us who was buried there. Why would this be important? Joseph gives the same command to be buried in the family cave in Gen. 50:25. It seems they all wanted to be together, for when Christ would come again. But, did you notice who is missing? You have Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah, and even Joseph. Who isn't there? The answer is the beautiful one.

Gen 29:17 Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was beautiful in form and appearance.

Rachel was the younger daughter that Jacob married. Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah. Why didn't Jacob bury her in the family graveyard? Everyone else is there. The answer comes right after the appearance of Christ to Jacob at Bethel, in Genesis 35:19.

Gen 35:19 So Rachel died, and she was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem),

Her burial place had a deep and sad connection to the first coming of Christ as a human; a connection to His incarnation found in Matthew 2:16-18.

Mat 2:16 Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men.

Mat 2:17 Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah:

Mat 2:18 "A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more."

Before leaving Joseph and Genesis, let's look at Gen 50:24-25.

Gen 50:24 And Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die, but God (Elohim) will visit you and bring you up out of this land to the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob."

Gen 50:25 Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, "God (Elohim) will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here."

Notice the chiasmic book ends of "Elohim will surely visit you." Joseph, on his death bed, not only thought about where He would be buried, but told his brothers that Elohim was coming to see them. They were to look for the coming of Christ.

Let me name a few more folks that Christ came to, but this is certainly not an exhaustive list:

Moses at the burning bush. Ex 3, Acts 7:30 3:2, 3:16, 4:5, 6:3

Moses at his death, Duet. 31:15

Joshua meets the commander of the army of the LORD Jos. 5:13

Balaam Num 22 Children of Israel Judges 2 Gideon Judges 6:12

Manoah's wife, known as Samson's mom in Judges 13:3, 10, 21

This brings my new count of Christ's comings in the Old Testament to at least 40 different people.

How can knowing about these comings of Christ be helpful in the Christian life? Just this past month I heard the question, "How did they decide which books should make up the Bible?" One answer can be that these books are the ones that talk about Jesus and tell of his comings. If the books aren't about Jesus or don't agree with the other books of the Bible without error, then they should not be included.

Please turn to John 11:25. The context is Martha talking to Jesus about her brother Lazarus dying.

Joh 11:25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live,

Joh 11:26 and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

Joh 11:27 She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world."

She believed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, who would come into the world.

Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ? That He is the Son of God, who is coming into the world? He commands all men everywhere to repent. Why? Because He has chosen a day on which Jesus will judge the world in righteousness. He has appointed Jesus to do this at His second coming. What is the proof of this? He has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead. (Acts 17:30-31)

We have looked at the comings of Christ to men, but what about the chiasm of that? Let's consider how men should come to Christ. Jesus said,

Matt. 11:28 "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Coming to Christ is the great need of mankind. Are your sins heavy upon you? Coming to Christ is the only hope you have in this world, to have your sins forgiven. Coming to Christ isn't done with the physical act of walking up front in a church building. It is a spiritual coming due to a spiritual awakening (regeneration). Coming to Christ is done by admitting you're a sinner and that you need a Savior. Coming to Christ is done by praying to God to ask Him for forgiveness. You can pray to Him right where you sit today. Coming to Christ is repentance towards God, and faith in what the Lord Jesus Christ did on the cross to forgive sinners. It is faith in what the Lord Jesus Christ did in coming out of the tomb on the third day. It is obedience to Jesus' command to be baptized. It is obedience to Christ's command to take the Lord's Supper; to declare His death until He comes again. I pray you will come to Him today. Amen.

Appendix:

Gen 12:7 Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.

Gen 17:1 When Abram was ninety-nine years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless,

Gen 18:1 And the LORD appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day.

Gen 26:2 And the LORD appeared to him and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; dwell in the land of which I shall tell you.

Gen 26:24 And the LORD appeared to him the same night and said, "I am the God of Abraham your father. Fear not, for I am with you and will bless you and multiply your offspring for my servant Abraham's sake."

Gen 35:1 God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there. Make an altar there to the God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau."

Gen 35:9 God appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Paddan-aram, and blessed him.

Gen 48:3 And Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me,

Exo 3:2 And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed.

Exo 3:16 Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, "I have observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt,

Exo 4:5 "that they may believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you."

Exo 6:3 I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself known to them.