THE SON WAS ACTIVE BEFORE BETHLEHEM
"Whose goings forth have been from of old" Michah 5:2
I.   He was active before His incarnation.
   A. He shared glory with the Father (John 17:5).
   B. He created by speaking the "let there be" and "let us" statements of Genesis 1.
   C. He was the agent [*dia*] who caused everything to come into existence that has come into existence (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2; Psalm 33:6).
   D. He sustains all creation: visible and invisible (Colossians 1:17).
II. His Old Testament appearances are known as *theophanies* or God appearances, from *theos* – God and *phanos* – appearance or *huiophanies* or Son appearances.
   A. No one had seen the God at any time (John 1:18).
     1. God is anarthrous (without the definite article "the") which normally means the title refers to the quality of being God or the Godhead.
     2. Since, one who is the "special kind of God" has lead out or explained the God, we might understand God to refer to the Father.
     3. However, it is better to understand this to mean that no one had ever seen God in terms men could fully appreciate, i.e. God had never become man until this point.
     4. God had appeared to men numerous times throughout history.
     5. No one had seen the Father, it was Son who revealed Him.
   B. These appearances in the Old Testament were not incarnations.
   C. The Son appeared temporarily to people but He never became man. He may have appeared in a human form but He never was incarnate.
III. He appeared as "the Word of the Lord" (Genesis 15:4; 1 Samuel 15:10; 1 Kings 18:31; 19:9).[1]
   A. He is identified as the Word [*Logos*] in John 1:1 because He was already known by the title "the Word of Jehovah" during OT times.
   B. The expression "the Word of the Lord came" occurs over 200 times in the O.T., though not all are references to the person of God the Son (cf Isaiah 28:13; 39:8).
   C. The Word comes and <u>speaks</u> (e.g. 1 Samuel 15:10; 2 Samuel 24:11; Jeremiah 1:4).
     1. The Word came and spoke with Elijah who identifies the Word as Jehovah "Your covenant...Your altars...Your prophets" (1 Kings 19:9-10).
   D. The Word of the Lord came to Jacob and changed His name after wrestling with Him all night (1 Kings 18:31; Genesis 32:24-30).
   E. The Word came and spoke to Elijah and then Elijah responded to the Word three times with the pronoun "you"[2] (1 Kings 19:9).
IV. He appeared as the Angel of Jehovah. Some of these are in a human form.
   A. The Angel of the LORD (Jehovah) was God.
     1. The word angel means messenger in both Greek and Hebrew.
       a) God created spirit beings who do the work of "messengers."[3]
       b) The word is used of men who were sent as messengers.
       c) The Angel of Lord means God Himself is the messenger.
     2. In the Hebrew language "of the Lord" is a construct state. It was a common Hebrew means of defining or naming someone or something more exactly.[4]
     3. The expression "the Angel of the Jehovah" occurs 57 times in the O.T.
     4. Examples of the Angel of Jehovah.
       a) The Angel stated " I will" (Genesis 16:7-13). Contrast this to Daniel 10:10-21 where an angel spoke for God and he attributed it to God.
       b) Angel of Jehovah talked to Jehovah (Zechariah 1:12).Two distinct persons are Jehovah.
       c) The Angel of Jehovah appeared in fire and called Himself Jehovah (Exodus 3:2, 4, 12-14). His name is "I AM." " I shall continue to be what I used to be."[5]
       d) He appeared to Balaam (Numbers 22:22-35, esp. 31-32).
       e) He appeared to Gideon (Judges 6:12-24, esp. 14-17, 23 "LORD").
V.   He appeared at other times not identified as the above.
   A. The Son appeared in a "human" form on several occasions. "These were appearances, not incarnations. God assumed the likeness of man to communicate with man."[6] He isn't identified as the messenger of Jehovah in these passages.

1. He appeared to Adam and Eve in the Garden (Genesis 3:8). They heard God walking.
2. Enoch walked with God (Genesis 5:24). "Walk" is not a metaphor for a "relationship" with God. The Hebrew word walk is never used metaphorically but of a literal movement of feet on the ground or of travel.
3. God appeared to Abraham accompanied by two angels (Genesis 18:1-3, 10-21).
   a) All looked human.
   b) Abraham had them sit in the shade and even washed their feet.
   c) He gave them food to eat.
   d) Jesus interpreted this event to be about Himself (John 8:58).
      (1) Abraham saw His (the Son's) day.
      (2) Abraham came into existence (*ginomai* γινομαι).
      (3) The Son **is** ("I AM"ʼ *ego eimi* εγω ειμι). He already existed.
   B. He appeared to Moses in the fiery bush that did not burn and then later to Moses with Aaron, Nadab and Abihu (Exodus 24:9-11).
   C. He appeared in the cloud to Israel in the wilderness (Exodus 13:21; 14:19; 19:9).
   D. He appeared to Joshua as a man (Joshua 5:13-15).
   E. He appeared to Ezekiel in a vision (Ezekiel 1:1-4, 26-2:3; cf. Revelation 4:2-3).
VI. His purpose for appearing was often to give revelation.
   A. He appeared to given men revelation.
      1. Sometimes God revealed His plans.
         a) He told Abraham that Eleazar would not be his heir (Genesis 15:4).
         b) He gave Abraham promises (Genesis 22:15-18).
         c) He commissioned (Jeremiah 1:4-5).
      2. Sometimes God revealed instructions for men.
         a) He explained to Joshua what Israel was to do regarding Jericho (Joshua 6:1-5).
         b) He told Abraham not to kill Isaac (Genesis 22:11-12).
         c) He told Nathan to address David regarding building the temple (2 Samuel 7:4f).
   B. He appeared to act.
      1. He refined [A.V. "tested"] Joseph (Psalm 105:19; cf. Genesis 39:2, 3, 21, 23).
      2. He led Israel out of Egypt by going before them in the cloud (Exodus 14:19; 40:37; Numbers 9:19-22; 10:34 "cloud of Jehovah" is a construct – "cloud consisting of...," other passage have "cloud of dust," "...of incense" where dust and incense define).
      3. He destroyed those who did not believe, by keeping them in the wilderness until all who did not believe died (Jude 4-5).
      4. He appeared and killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night to eliminate the threat to Jerusalem (2 Kings 19:35).

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[1] A.C. Gaebelein, *John*, (Neptune, N.J.: Loizeaux 1965, op cit) p. 12.

[2] It is the Hebrew suffix כ/ך.

[3] Biblical evidence supports that these spirits have other functions. Their messenger function is best known to man because they have interacted with mankind in this capacity most often.

[4] The Hebrew construct is described as "Merely formal genitives (...) are those added to the construct state as nearer definitions - of the name," William Gesinius, *Gesinius' Hebrew Grammar* 2nd English, ed. A.E. Cowley, p.416. Emphasis mine.

[5] J. Wash Watts, *Survey of Syntax in the Hebrew Old Testament*, no date p. 74. His Syntax published in 1951 did not list this passage in the section on Consecutive Imperfects. Watt's concluded that "Translated in keeping with the example given above, the statement becomes this: 'I shall continue to be what I used to be' or 'I shall continue to be what I have always been.' This rendering is cryptic but understandable, unusual but powerful, simple yet crowning it context with a statement of Yahweh's faithfulness so brief as to be amazing and so meaningful as to be inspiring."

[6] Robert G. Gromacki, *The Virgin Birth*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Bookhouse, 1974) p. 88.