

## Primal Parousia

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Genesis 3:8 describes the approach of the Lord God following the fateful disobedience of the man and the woman in the garden. Judgment was the purpose of God's coming and he proceeded at once to prosecute his lawsuit against the covenant-breakers and to pronounce the damnation of their tempter.

How then are we to picture this coming of the Lord? One would expect that the theophany would have been fashioned to express the ominous design of the divine mission. Customary renderings of Genesis 3:8a do not convey such an impression, however. The familiar version of it, "and they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day," suggests something rather more casual. It is the hope of the present essay to show that the kind of epiphany that the historical situation calls for is what the original text actually does depict—an advent of the Lord in his awesomely fearful judicial Glory. And if this is so, Genesis 3:8 turns out to be an account of a primal parousia, a record of the beginnings of what is known later in the Scriptures as the day of the Lord.

The exegesis of Genesis 3:8 to be recommended here emerged in connection with the development of an interpretation of "the Spirit" in Genesis 1:2 as the Shekinah-Glory, the theophanic cloud that meets its again in the exodus history of Israel.<sup>1</sup> The Glory-Spirit was then identified as the specific referent in the creation of man in God's image (Gen 1:26 and 2:7) and as the sheltering divine Presence over the holy garden in Eden.<sup>2</sup> This reading of Genesis 1 and 2 prepares for the recognition of the

theophanic Glory elsewhere in this context, and the discovery of such an additional instance of this theophanic phenomenon in Genesis 3:8—will in turn serve to confirm our earlier identification of the Glory-Spirit.

### The Voice of Yahweh

"They heard the voice (qôl) of Yahweh God" (Gen 3:8a). It is generally agreed that the "voice" here is not that of the Lord's speaking, as though he was heard conv...

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