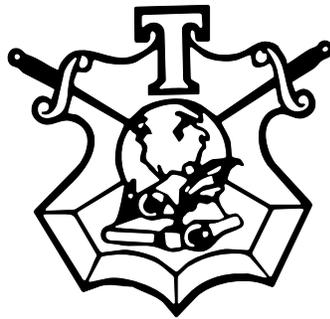


**The
Awesome
Mystery of
GOD**

**The Father, the Logos, the
Messiah, the Mystery of
Christ**

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Shema Israel, YHVH Elohenu, YHVH Echad.

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the
LORD is One.”

“Elijah opened his discourse and said: Master of the
worlds, *You are One but not in the numerical sense.* You
are exalted above all the exalted ones, hidden from all the
hidden ones; no thought can grasp you at all.”

-- *Siddur Tehillat Hashem (Jewish Prayer Book)*

*Baruch attah Adonai Elohenu
Melek ha'Olam
Asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav*

“Blessed are You, O Lord our God,
King of the Universe,
Who has sanctified us
by Your Commandments.”

Chapter 1

*The Genesis Factor***A New Look at the
Mystery of GOD**

Who or what is "God"? What is the Plan of God for human beings? How does Jesus Christ, the "Word" of God, fit into the picture? Here is surprising, mind-boggling TRUTH hidden from mankind's prying eyes for thousands of years -- truth which will dumfound and astound you!

What on planet earth is God Almighty doing?

All people have wondered, at some point in their lives, why they were born -- why God created the human race. As men gaze at the heavens, and see the resplendent stars and far flung galaxies, they muse, "What is life all about?" "Why am I here?" "Why was I born?"

Have these questions ever crossed your mind?

Why did God create man?

A careful study of the Bible reveals some amazing surprises -- the answers to mysteries and riddles that have perplexed and mystified mankind for thousands of years!

"In the Beginning, GOD . . ."

The Hebrew Bible is written in consonants alone; vowels must be supplied by the reader or interpreter. Thus many passages can have alternate translations or meanings, such as the phrase in Genesis 1:1. The expression "*Bereshith bara Elohim ha shemayim va ha eretz*" is usually translated in English (KJV) as "In the beginning (*bereshith*) God (*Elohim*, technically a plural form of the word *El*, and can be translated "Mighty Ones") created (*bara*) the heavens and the earth."

The word *bereshith* is a compound word and literally means *be* ("in") *reshith* ("beginning"), and the article "the" is supplied in the English language for understanding. However, one could just as easily supply the article "a" as the Hebrew contains no article whatsoever, so the expression could read: "In *a* beginning." In other words, *not necessarily the FIRST "beginning"!* Another way to put it would be, "At some point long, long ago," or simply, "Long, long ago," or "In the remote past."

The word interpreted as *reshith* can also be read as *rosh*, the Hebrew word for "head." So the expression in Genesis 1:1 could read, "In the *head* God created the heavens and the earth." Also, the word translated "created" (*bara* in Hebrew) is simply the letters *br* and could also be interpreted as the Hebrew word for "son" (*bar*, as in *bar Jonah*, meaning "son of Jonah"). Thus we could have the alternate reading: "In the beginning (*bereshith*) [was] the SON OF GOD (*bar Elohim*), the heavens and the earth."

One more reading of this enigmatic and pregnant passage of Scripture would be as follows: "In the head [was] the [or, "a"] Son of God."

Why are these variant readings possible? Because of the uniqueness of the Hebrew language, all these meanings can be inferred or obtained from the simple Hebrew letters that comprise the passage. All are possible. Which reading one chooses depends on the context, and the understanding and choice of the reader. Of course, the reason such a form is chosen by the Author in the first place is known only to Him -- but the possibilities are exciting. Clearly, when we compare this with the New Testament, we find several hints right in Genesis 1:1 of the pre-existence of Jesus Christ, the Logos, the "Son of God."

Commenting on this amazing uniqueness of the Hebrew Scriptures of Genesis 1:1, Randolph Parrish, in an article entitled "The Fourth Jewish Sect," in *Messianic Outreach* (1996), observed that the early Jewish-Nazarene Christians were well aware of this fact -- a truth which has been buried and forgotten for almost 2,000 years. He writes of the early Nazarene church:

"It was clear to them that the scriptures talked of nothing else [but the coming of Messiah], quite literally from the very beginning. For example, the opening words of Genesis 1:1 are usually translated as 'In the beginning . . .' But the Hebrew word 'reshith' (beginning) can also have the meaning 'firstborn son.' And so, one could translate this passage as 'In the firstborn son God created the heavens and the earth' . . . Iraneus also translated this as 'The son in the beginning; then God created the heavens and the earth' . . . Hilary said that 'b'reshith' could have three possible meanings: 'in the beginning'; 'in the head'; or 'in the son' . . . The modern French author Danielou noted the comparison between these meanings and Col.1:15-18, where Paul seems to write of the same three meanings: 'He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him were all things created . . . And he is the head of the body . . . he is the beginning and the firstborn . . .' This would suggest, according to Danielou, that there was an already extant rabbinical tradition of explaining the passage in these several ways, which Paul employed" (p.11, *Messianic Outreach*).

Says *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* of the word *reshiyth*, used in Genesis 1:1, the meanings are: "the first, in place, time, order or rank (spec. a *firstfruit*): -- beginning,

chief, (-est), first (-fruits, part, time), principal thing." Thus this passage can mean that God created the heavens and the earth not only "in the beginning," but "in the firstfruits" - - i.e., that is, "in Christ" who IS the "firstfruits." Note that He is called "the firstfruits" (Greek, literally "firstfruit," singular) in I Corinthians 15:23. The passage can also mean that God created the heavens and earth "in the principal one," i.e., in the "one of chief rank or order." Again, this would refer to the One who became Christ, or the "Logos" of God (John 1:1).

Thus we can have in this verse: "In the *firstfruits* [or, *first fruit*, or *principal one*] God created the heavens and the earth."

Gesenius Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon adds to this astounding truth, showing this Hebrew word literally means: "head, chief . . . 1) beginning . . . 2) a former state . . . 3) the *first* of its kind -- with regard to time, *first fruits*, Gen.49:3, 'first fruits of my strength,' i.e., first born . . . first fruits of things created by him, Prov.8:22 . . ." Thus, we can also have: "In the *firstborn* God created the heavens and the earth." And who is the "first born"? The One who became Jesus Christ! Notice!

The Mystery Deepens

In a parallel passage in the New Testament -- John 1:1 -- we find a reprise of this verse with a new slant or interpretation put on it by the apostle John, showing that this enigmatic verse actually refers to none other than the introduction of the Pre-existent "Word" of God who was also the "Son of God." Notice: "In the beginning was *the Word* [Greek, *Logos*], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life . . ."

(John 1:1-4). Verse 14 goes on, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory *as of the only begotten of the Father*,) full of grace and truth."

Thus the "first fruit" or "first born" of Genesis 1:1 was the One who became Jesus Christ!

John refers to the "Word" of God as the "only begotten" Son of God! So the "Word" who was with God in the beginning was the "first fruit" or "first born" Son mentioned in Genesis 1:1, and He was "with God" -- that is, He was with God the "Father."

The Hebrew word for "God" in Genesis 1:1 is *Elohim*, being the plural form for *El*, or "Mighty One." Therefore, *Elohim* literally means "the Mighty Ones." Why the plural form? Because there were TWO INDIVIDUALS who did the Creating -- the Father and His only begotten Son!

Stage Two -- the Creation of MAN

Thus amazing truth is brought out further in the first chapter of Genesis by the expression used of God in the creation of mankind. Notice! God says, in Genesis 1:26, "And God [*Elohim*, "the Mighty Ones"] said, *Let US make man in OUR image, after OUR likeness:* and let them have *dominion* [rulership, that is, to govern the rest of creation!] . . . So God created man *in his own image, in the image of God* created he him; *male and female* created he them. And God *blessed* them" (v.27-28).

The "God" who made Adam and Eve was ONE GOD, but in two Persons -- One was the Father, and the other was His "Son." Mankind was made in the very image of God Himself, only made out of flesh and blood -- the dust of the ground. Nevertheless, we were made with a creative, thinking *mind* like that of God, with powers, abilities and capacities that reflect the Divine, only on a physical, not a spiritual, scale.

We were created to have DOMINION -- that is, to RULE -- just as God Himself rules over His creation. Thus we were created to be His own reflections and likeness -- *ultimately to become like HIM, as His children, His expanded FAMILY, with the purpose of joining Him in ruling over His Creation -- and in adding TO that Creation as the Kingdom of God expands into the infinity of eternity!*

Does this sound unbelievable? What is the purpose of human existence? Why did God create man? Why were *you* born?

According to the Word of God, right in Genesis 1, mankind was created for the purpose of RULERSHIP -- to rule over, govern, and control God's Creation! To do this, we were made -- created -- in His very own image and likeness -- that is, with potentially *DIVINE ATTRIBUTES!*

Stop and think. Look around you with amazement and awe. Which of the animals -- or plants -- life forms God created -- is capable of *understanding*, of *thinking*, of *planning*, and *mentally conceiving* a idea, and then bringing it to pass? Only mankind!

Man, of all God's physical creation, is truly unique!

But just how much did God intend for man to eventually rule? Was it just the life forms on the earth? The truth will boggle your mind!

Why Were We Created?

Let's explore and investigate this "mystery." Why were you and I born? What is the purpose of human life? And how does this purpose involve the Messiah, the Son of God, the One who became Jesus Christ?

This may seem to be a shocking statement, but it is true! The apostle Paul wrote an astonishing thing in the book of Romans which most people seem to just read right over, missing the entire point of what Paul is talking about! He makes an incredible, shocking, mind-bending, juggernaut of a statement. Paul wrote, in the New Testament

book of Romans: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that *we are the children of God*: and if children, *then heirs*; *HEIRS of GOD, and JOINT-HEIRS WITH CHRIST*; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also *glorified together*. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the *glory which shall be revealed in us*. For the earnest expectation of the creature [the whole *creation* that is] waiteth for the *manifestation* [future revealing in awesome glory] *of the children of GOD*" (Rom.8:16-19).

This passage is so vital, so important, that it should be read very slowly, very cautiously, with great deliberation and thoughtfulness. Read it again -- this time v-e-r-y s-l-o-o-o-w-l-y.

Notice this! This is a veritable KEY that unlocks the puzzle of human existence and human purpose. Why did God create man? Not just to rule the earth, as physical beings -- but God created us to BECOME HIS DIVINE CHILDREN! He intends for us to INHERIT ALL THINGS He created -- as His "HEIRS"! That means, in simple terms, He intends for us to inherit, rule over, and govern, eventually, THE ENTIRE far-flung Creation of God -- the stars, the planets, the galaxies in outer space -- in fact, the entire UNIVERSE! He plans for us to accomplish this, when we are ready, as His own Spirit-begotten and Spirit-born children -- as His very own "SONS" -- literal "sons of God"!

This "calling," this "destiny," this "manifest purpose," is far greater and far higher than that of angels! It is the greatest calling and destiny of all God's Creation! He intends for us to be "members" of His very own Divine "Family"!

The Scriptures are literally *full* of this truth -- *replete* with references to this subject! And yet most people -- the vast majority of mankind -- have never even heard of this purpose of God, and if you tried to tell them, they would look upon you as if you were "crazy," demented, or had gone "off your rocker"!

Try it! No, on the other hand, *don't!* I tried to tell this once to a favorite uncle, years ago, and he just laughed at me. His reply was, "Oh, then you believe in many gods -- polytheism!" He did not get the point at all!

If you try to tell this truth to a religious person, or attempt to explain it to a Protestant or a Catholic, chances are they will look upon you as a supreme *heretic!* Why? Because this awesome truth denies the commonly accepted notion that God is some sort of monolithic never-changing TRINITY!

But the truth is, nowhere in the whole Bible will you ever read the word "Trinity," or "Tri-unity," or "Trinitarian." It simply is not there. God is not a "Trinity." He is a FAMILY! As the apostle Paul wrote, "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, *of whom* the WHOLE FAMILY in heaven and earth is named" (Eph.3:14-15). What is the "name" of this "family"? It is the "family of GOD"! The "family" of *Elohim* -- "*the Mighty Ones*"! It is the "family" of YHVH -- that is, Yah, Yahveh, Yahuveh, or Yahu-elohenu, as some of the Hebrew variants of His Name are,

meaning, "The Eternal, Ever-living, Self-Existent Covenant God Who Is, Was, and Always Shall Be, and Who Causes to Be." He is the Great "Being," who "Is," the One who is the "Source" of all life and all creation.

This subject is so awesome, so powerful, that we need to explore it very carefully, and with thoughtful and prayerful, humble and meek, attitudes. This truth is so great that most people simply cannot contain it, or bring themselves to believe it. Yet it is the witness of the entire Scriptures -- the central message of the Bible -- the core of gospel of the Kingdom of God!

Let's understand this!

A New Look at God's Supreme Plan

All God's purpose for mankind is being accomplished in and through Jesus Christ! He was a "Son of God" from the beginning, as Genesis 1:1 implies in its variant reading. God the Father created all things "in the Son."

Paul continues speaking about this sublime, majestic truth in his letter to the Romans. He writes: "For whom he did foreknow, he did also predestinate to be conformed to the *IMAGE of his Son, that HE MIGHT BE THE FIRSTBORN AMONG MANY BRETHREN*" (Rom.8:29).

Notice! Jesus Christ was the **FIRST** begotten Son of God -- born of God the Father. But it is God's intention that He be the "firstborn" among "**MANY BRETHREN**"! What does that tell us? It shows that we are to be like Him -- born of God, and very "God," even as He is very "God"! We are to be "sons" of God even as HE is the "Son of God"!

Originally, the One who became Christ was Himself "created" or "pro-created" by God the Father, at a time before the Universe was formed. He was "the first fruits," the "first born," of all things. We will see much more proof of this shocking statement later. But once He was Himself "created," as the "Word" of God, then God the Father worked with Him in the creation of the rest of the Universe. Therefore He was "with God" at the beginning, and also "was God." At that time He was known as the "Logos" or "Word" of God. He has now added the name "Jesus Christ," (Hebrew, *Yeshua Ha Moschiach*), which means "Saviour, The Anointed One," of God, or "The Saviour Messiah."

What does all this show? God has His divine Plan in mind *from the very beginning of CREATION!* He has not been "improvising" as He goes along! God has "chosen us *in him from the foundation of the world*" (Eph.1:4). God has "made known unto us the *mystery of his will*, according to his good pleasure which he hath *purposed in himself*" (Eph.1:9).

God the Father has called us to a tremendous, mind-boggling calling and destiny, if we prove faithful and loyal, obedient and loving.

The apostle Paul also wrote, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened that ye may know what is the *hope of his calling*, and what the riches of the *glory of his INHERITANCE in the saints*, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which *he wrought in Christ . . . and set him at his own right hand* in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put *all things under his feet, and gave him to be the HEAD over all things to the church, which is HIS BODY, the fullness of him that filleth all in all*" (Eph.1:17-23).

All things were created in Christ, the Logos, at Creation, and all things that are to be created also will be "under his feet," under His dominion and control, that He will be "all in all."

The Origin of the "Word" of God

When, or how, did the "Logos" come into being? Paul wrote to the Hebrews, "God . . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, *whom he hath appointed heir of all things, BY WHOM also he made the worlds [the entire universe!]; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express IMAGE of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high*" (Heb.1:1-3).

Christ, the Logos, was the FIRST one made "in the IMAGE" of God the Father -- at Creation -- before the "beginning" of everything else -- for He was used by the Father in creating everything else! What is an "image"? Look at yourself in the mirror. You will see your "image" or "likeness" reflected there. An "image" is a visible likeness or representation. But notice! An "image" is NEVER THE ORIGINAL! It is always a "copy" that is "patterned" after the "original." Since Christ is here plainly called "the IMAGE" of God's person, He is of necessity the COPY of the person of God the Father! Thus *the Logos was not the original*. He himself was "patterned" or "made" into the "image" of God the Father!

We also, today, are being conformed and shaped, by human testing, trials, and experiences, into conformity to that *very same image!* We are being "TRANSFORMED," by the renewing of our mind (Rom.12:2). Christ's own character is being formed IN us -- as Paul wrote, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until *Christ be formed IN you*" (Gal.4:19).

What Do You Mean, "ALL THINGS"?

Jesus Christ is "the firstborn among MANY BRETHREN" (Rom.8:29). As Paul wrote to the Hebrew Christians, "For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the

world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is MAN, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? . . . Thou hast put ALL THINGS in subjection under *his feet*. For in that he put all in subjection under him, *he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see NOT YET all things put under him*" (Heb.2:5-8).

What does this strange passage of Scripture mean? What does God mean, "All things"? Is it really possible? Does He REALLY mean, "ALL things"?

If we take God at His Word, literally, then it should be obvious that "All things" means EVERYTHING! And "Everything" means THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE -- ALL CREATION!

Even the very angels, cherubim, seraphim, and archangels themselves!

Most "Christians" have assumed that God's purpose with mankind is just to "restore" man to some sort of "Garden of Eden" existence, before the "fall" of Adam and Eve. Many have believed that God's plan is for mankind to eventually just become "like the angels" in heaven. But if God wanted us to become "angels," then *why didn't He create us as angels in the first place? Why make us HUMAN first?*

Does that really make any sense? Of course not!

Paul himself puts the lie to this belief. He shows its utter falseness and foolishness and emptiness. Paul wrote to the Corinthian church, "Know ye not that *we shall JUDGE ANGELS?*" (I Cor.6:3). If we are destined eventually to "JUDGE" the angels, *then in our ultimate calling we must be OVER them in authority and greater than angels in POWER!*

Therefore, take another look at exactly what God says in Hebrews, chapter 2. Remember, this passage is actually quoted from the words of David in Psalm 8. Paul quoted, "Thou has put ALL THINGS under his feet . . . But now we see not yet all things put under him" (Heb.2:8).

"All things" therefore must include the very angelic beings in heaven!

But we do not yet see "all things" under our feet -- this "inheritance" is yet FUTURE! We must qualify, overcome, endure to the end, persevere, and THEN we will "inherit all things" (Rev.21:7). "He that endureth to the END shall be saved" (Matt.24:13).

All this is being done through Christ, the Messiah! Paul continued in Hebrews, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing MANY SONS UNTO GLORY, *to make the captain of their salvation perfect through*

sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are ALL OF ONE [all one Family, all of God the Father, all CHILDREN of God!]: for which cause he [Christ] is not ashamed to call them *brethren*" (Heb.2:9-11).

Truly, this calling is a calling to "GLORY"! We will share in the very "glory" of God Himself! Imagine that, if you can!

Jesus Himself wrote of His pre-existent glory with the Father, as the Logos of God. He declared in His final prayer before His execution on the stake: "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son may also glorify thee. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee THE ONLY TRUE GOD, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, *glorify thou me with THINE OWN SELF with the glory which I had with thee before the world was*" (John 17:1-5).

The Logos shared in the "glory" of God the Father before the world, before the Creation of the universe. Notice that He, the Logos-become-Jesus-Christ, referred to the Father as "the ONLY TRUE GOD." Even Christ, as the firstfruits of God, His firstborn, *worships God the Father as His own Creator-Father!*

But what about this awesome "glory" which He had?

Jesus goes on, in this very prayer: "Keep through thine own NAME those whom thou hast given me, that they may be *one as we are*" (John 17:11). He went on, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that *they may all BE ONE; as thou, Father, art IN ME, and I IN THEE, that they also may be ONE IN US*" -- that is, all joined together in perfect unity and harmony in the GOD FAMILY, God's Spirit indwelling each one of us even as it dwells in the Father and Christ! (v.20-21).

Christ continued, "And the *glory which thou gavest me I have given them: that they may be ONE, even as WE are one: I in them, and thou in me; that they may be made PERFECT IN ONE*" (John 17:22-23).

We will, as the very SONS of God, like Christ, SHARE HIS ETERNAL GLORY ITSELF -- *THE GLORY OF GOD!* We will radiate that glory, we will SHINE forth, we will dazzle the Universe with our resplendent eye-blinding glory!

Isn't this really awesome? It is so simple. It is the truth. The world and its religious folk may deny it, and think of it as "heresy," but that is because they are BLINDED to the truth of God, and don't understand the true gospel message that Jesus Christ brought!

We need to get a grip on these things, and never forget them -- never let them go!

Christ -- Firstborn and Creator Both

Paul adds more pieces to this intriguing puzzle. He writes of the pre-existent Christ, who is also the "head," as well as the "Son" of God, alluded to in Genesis 1:1, in his letter to the church at Colossae, as follows:

"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the *inheritance* of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear *Son* . . . *Who is the IMAGE of the invisible God, THE FIRSTBORN [the first to be brought into existence in time primordial] OF EVERY CREATURE [the firstborn of every thing God has made!]: For BY HIM [Christ, the Logos, the "Son," the "Head"] were ALL THINGS CREATED*, that are in heaven, and that are in earth . . . *ALL THINGS WERE CREATED BY HIM, AND FOR HIM: And he is BEFORE ALL THINGS [that is, He was created, or "pro-created" by the Father, FIRST OF ALL!], and by him all things consist. And he is the HEAD ["rosh" in Hebrew, the "first"] of the body, the church: who IS the beginning*, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that *IN HIM should all fullness dwell*" (Col.1:12-19).

Notice! Here is further confirmation that Christ Himself was "created" -- that the Logos was the "firstborn" or "firstfruit" of ALL CREATION (Col.1:15). He was first "born" of God -- and then "by him were all [other] things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible" (v.16).

The real "mystery" is why so few people understand this truth! The vast majority believe that Christ ALWAYS existed, as a member of the Godhead. But *that is not what this passage says!* He Himself was *born* of God, before the rest of creation was created!

Truly, the mystery of Genesis 1:1 contains a spectacular message -- a three-fold message -- that not only did "God" create the heavens and the earth "in the beginning," but He did it "in the Son," and in the "Head" -- who is the Son, the First of all creation.

Message to the Laodicean Church

Jesus Himself acknowledged this amazing truth when He declared to the Laodicean church, "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, *The beginning of the creation of God*" (Rev.3:14).

The Greek word *arche* translated "beginning" here means exactly that -- the "first in a series," as well as "first in time order," and "first in rank" or position. Christ is *FIRST in every respect over all God's Creation* -- first to be created, first in time order, first in rank, and first in position -- except for the Father Himself, of course!

It is peculiarly interesting that Jesus uses this truth in His message to the end-time, final church era of His true Church -- to the *Laodicean* church, which He says thinks a lot of itself, is proud of its supposed spiritual riches and knowledge, and ye He

says of this final remnant generation of His Church: "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will *spue thee out of my mouth*. *Because thou sayest, 'I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked'*" (Rev.3:16-17).

Jesus introduces His message of blistering rebuke to the Laodicean church era/age with the words and revelation that He "is the BEGINNING of the creation of God"! Thus He tells them right up front that He was the "firstfruits," the "firstborn" of ALL God's Creative works of old -- and that therefore He Himself has a beginning, an origin, in and from the Father!

Yet the end-time remnant churches of God today, the various splinter groups and split-offs, ALL WITH ONE ACCORD, in *unison*, *have to this very day rejected this simple and yet profound truth of God!*

History and experience shows that the vast majority will not listen. They have closed their ears. They have put their hands in front of their eyes. They are blinded to this truth. No wonder Jesus Christ specifically calls them "BLIND"!

What about you? Are you, also, "blind"? Is the truth of God still "hidden" from your view and closed to your understanding?

Paul wrote, "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world [Satan the devil!] has BLINDED THE MINDS of them which believe not, *lest* the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, *who is the IMAGE of God*, should shine unto them" (II Cor.4:3-4).

Are you also "blinded"?

The Sender or the One Sent -- Who Is Greater?

Strangely, even the remnant churches of God, who know the "Trinity" is a false, pagan idea that comes out of ancient Babylon, are still blinded to the truth, however. They still think that the "Word" of God or "Logos" not only helped the Father create the Universe, but they believe He ALWAYS EXISTED -- as the "Second Member" of the Godhead! Proof? They have none. They have just ASSUMED it to be so! Since the "Word" is acknowledged by John to be "with God" and "was God" (John 1:1-3), they have *simply assumed* that this must mean that He eternally existed alongside the Father, and that there were in effect "two beings" or "two Gods" from all eternity!

This is impossible, however, for if they were both co-equal and co-eternal, then *WHY would One be called the FATHER and the other One be called the SON? What did they do, "flip a coin"? Who decided who would be which?*

Jesus Himself said over and over, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of HIM WHO SENT me" (John 6:38). He said, "As the living Father

hath SENT me, and I live by the Father" (v.57). He declared, "And this is the will of him that SENT me (v.40). He added, elsewhere, "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do" (John 5:19). "For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth" (John 5:20). And, "He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which SENT him" (John 5:23).

As the Italians would say, "Capiche"? Do you understand? Jesus explained further, "For as the Father hath life in himself, *so hath he given to the Son* to have life in himself" (John 5:26). In fact, Jesus said "I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father, which hath sent me" (v.30).

The One who sends another one is Greater than the one sent! A "King" sends a "messenger" to His people. Which is greater? The King, who sends the messenger? Or the messenger? The answer ought to be obvious!

Jesus Himself admitted, and confessed, without any hesitation, to His disciples, "My Father *is greater than I*" (John 14:28).

Alluding to His true origin, Jesus told His disciples, "I came out from God" (John 16:27). He reiterated, "I came forth *from the Father*" (v.28). The disciples got the message. They understood. He wasn't speaking in riddles. They replied, "Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now we are sure that thou knowest all things . . . by this we believe that *thou camest forth from God*" (v.29-30).

To the unbelieving Jews, Jesus explained, "If God were your Father, ye would know that *I proceeded and came forth from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me*" (John 8:42).

Why is this so hard for people to understand? People seem to go to one extreme, or the other. Either they believe, falsely, that Christ as the Logos ALWAYS existed and was (and is) "CO-EQUAL" with the Father as a sort of Trinity, or else a "BINARY" God -- or else they believe He was not "God" at all, but just a human being who "made good," and became a human "messianic figure" -- or else they don't believe in Him at all!

But the truth is so plain and so simple that even a little child can understand it!

Consider this typology: When God created "Man" in His own image, how did He do it?

1) *He created ADAM -- one being!* "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen.2:7). But the man was "alone." So God decided to make an "help" for him (Gen.2:18). Therefore,

2) *He created EVE -- out of Adam!* "And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead

thereof; and the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, *made he a woman*, and brought her unto the man" (Gen.2:21-22).

Even so, by analogy, or typology, the FATHER came *FIRST* -- and then, out of Himself, His very own being, He took part of Himself and made THE LOGOS, to be His "helper," His divine "Companion"!

What could be more simple to understand?

Who Is Really the Greatest in the Kingdom?

When God's Plan is completed, Paul tells us in I Corinthians 15, that even Jesus Christ will be under the final authority of God the Father. This would be ridiculous, of course, IF He were a member of a Trinity, and always was EQUAL with the Father!

However, we read the words of the apostle Paul, who stated plainly: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ will all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the *firstfruits* [Greek, singular, *firstfruit*]; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have *delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father* . . . For he hath put *all things* under his feet. But when he saith *all things* are put under him, it is manifest that *he is excepted*, which did put *all things* under him. And when *all things* shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be *subject unto him* that put *all things* under him, that GOD may be *all in all*" (I Cor.15:24-28).

How plain! God the Father is the GREATEST in the Kingdom of God! He is the Supreme Ruler. Under Him is Jesus Christ, the Logos. And under Him, directly, will be the Church, the "bride of Christ" (Rev.19:7-9). As the "bride" of Christ, obviously, then, we will also have to be VERY GOD, AS HE IS GOD!

Stop and think of this mystery! Do men marry animals? Did you ever see a man marry a duck? or a chicken? or a goose? or a pig? or a dog? or a cat? or a giraffe? or a monkey? Of course not! Men should and by definition only ought to "marry" A HUMAN BEING -- A WOMAN, designed and equipped to be a "help" to him in his life, who can bear his children, and be a "helpmate" for him!

Men don't marry animals! Any man who would think to do so would be considered "crazy" -- and rightly so!

Therefore, this fact alone also proves that when we are in the Kingdom of God, and born of God at the coming of Christ, at the resurrection, we will be just like God -- on the SAME DIVINE PLANE OF EXISTENCE. God could only marry another "God" being! So Christ will "marry" the Church, His affianced "Bride" -- because she will be "God," even as He is "God" -- a member of the divine, Univese-ruling God FAMILY!

But -- when Christ marries His bride -- *who is going to perform the Wedding?*

Why, the *Father, of course!*

It should be clear, the Father is Supreme; then comes Christ; and then the "Church," at Christ's coming. And then the rest of mankind will be judged. They will be "as children" of the Bride and the Groom, and brought along to salvation from that time forward!

Generations and generations will be brought into the Kingdom-Family of God!

The Overwhelming Mystery

This is such an overwhelming mystery! The "Christian" religions of this world have missed this sublime truth. They dwell in ignorance and spiritual darkness, with hardly a glimmer of this marvelous truth penetrating through to their consciousness. In fact, to most of them this awesome truth is nothing short of heresy -- fanaticism -- foolishness! But it is the TRUTH!

The apostle Paul understood it. This was no problem to his understanding. It did not cause him any sense of "confusion." But many are confused, today, even among the so-called "remnant" churches of God that keep the Sabbath, the holy days (as best they understand), and who think they teach the "whole counsel of God." O how ignorant they are! They deny this plain and simple truth of the origin of the Word of God, this truth about the mystery of the Godhead!

Paul, however, understood it perfectly. He wrote: "But to us there is but ONE GOD, *even the Father, of whom are all things* [including the "Logos," then], and we in him; and ONE LORD *Jesus Christ, by whom are all things* [the rest of creation], and we by him" (I Cor.8:6).

Paul goes on, "Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge" (v.7). O how true! This knowledge, today especially, seems to be lost and hidden from view -- obscured by centuries of false teachings concerning the pagan "Trinity" doctrine foisted upon the world by the decadent and apostate Roman Catholic church and her daughter-whore churches!

"The Deep Things of God"

No doubt many will have a hard time believing these things. They have been taught error for too long. They have imbibed error; they have drunk it to their fill; and they are totally convinced that they must be right; and no amount of argument, proof, presentation, Biblical texts, or Scriptural evidence will sway them from their preconceived ideas and superstitions!

As Herbert Armstrong used to say, over and over again, "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink." Also, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks." And, "It is tens times harder to *unlearn error* than to learn new truth."

He was right. Absolutely right! If he were alive today, he might have a lot to say to those ministers who claim to be following him, and walking in his footsteps, but who reject proven and verifiable new truth!

What a mystery it is!

The apostle Paul exclaimed: "But we speak the wisdom of God in a *mystery*, even the *hidden wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him*. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the *deep things of God*" (I Cor.2:7-10).

These teachings are truly the "deep things of God." Is this deep enough for you?

Truly, God's plan for mankind is breathtaking in its scope, breadth, depth, height, and expanse!

The Hebrew Letter "M"

This awesome plan of God is also hinted at in the Hebrew language itself. The Hebrew letter "mem" -- the equivalent of our English "M" -- stands in the middle of the Hebrew alphabet. It is the middle letter of the Hebrew word "emet" -- meaning "truth." Jesus Christ announced, "I am the way, the *truth*, and the *life*: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

The word "emet" ends with the letter "tau" -- or "T" in English. This is the LAST letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The word "emet" begins with the letter "aleph" in Hebrew -- this is the FIRST letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Thus Jesus Christ is the BEGINNING and the END, and also the MIDDLE of all things -- of "truth."

He declared, "I am Alpha [first letter of the Greek alphabet, or Aleph in Hebrew] and Omega [the last letter of the Greek alphabet, which would be Tau, in Hebrew], the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which IS, and WAS, and which IS TO COME, the Almighty" (Rev.1:8). He asserted, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the FIRST AND THE LAST" (Rev.22:13). The word "emet," or "truth," contains the first, middle, and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and also REPRESENTS CHRIST! He is the Aleph (the First), and He is the Tau -- the Last!

Paul said of Christ, "Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, today, and forever" (Heb.13:8). He is the Word of God, the Truth, which endures forever (I Pet.1:25) -- the beginning, the middle, and the end!

The letter "mem", or "M," also stands for Christ. It is the middle letter of the

Hebrew alphabet. It also represents the "womb" of a woman. As a normal letter, the "mem" is always "open" at the lower left hand corner, except when it is the final letter of a word, when it is always "closed." Thus Christ is the "prince of peace" (Isa.9:6) and the "King of peace" (Heb.7:2) -- the word "peace" being *shalom* in Hebrew -- a word *ending* with the "closed mem." Christ is also "*king* of righteousness" and "King of peace" (Heb.7:2) -- and the word "king" in Hebrew is *melek*, with the *first* letter an open "mem."

A "Peek" into Eternity

In Isaiah 9:6 we read of the promised Messiah, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder: And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of peace."

This passage shows the Messiah was to be born of a woman, and be a child who would grow up to become the Messiah. This is a Messianic passage predicting the Christ or Anointed One of God would be born of a human woman. Isaiah 7:14 shows this woman would be a virgin daughter of Israel: "Therefore the LORD himself shall give you a sign; Behold, *a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel*" (Isaiah 7:14).

Then, in Isaiah 9:7, we read, "Of the *increase* of his *government* and *peace* there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."

The word "increase" in Hebrew is #4768 in *Strong's Concordance* and is *marbiyth*, meaning "a multitude, offspring, greatness, increase." *Gesenius Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament* defines the word as "multitude, magnitude (II Chron.9:6; 30:18), very great part (I Chron.12:29), progeny, increase of a family (I Sam.2:33), interest, as if the increase of the principal (Lev.25:37)."

Notice that this is referring to the production of offspring -- Messiah would have unlimited, or limitless multitude of offspring -- that is, sons whom He brings to salvation. Of the growth and increase of His "progeny" there would be "NO END" -- that is, no limit, no stopping -- in other words, the increase of His Family will *CONTINUE TO INCREASE AND EXPAND FOREVER, WITHOUT ENDING!*

THIS IS TALKING ABOUT THE FAMILY OF GOD!

The word "government" here is *misrah* and means "empire." It is from the root word *sarah* meaning "to prevail, have power, as a prince."

The word for "peace" is *shalom* and means much more than just "peace," as we think of it in English. It is a comprehensive Hebrew word meaning: "peace, completeness, welfare, health" (*Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*, "peace," p.173).

Says Vine's:

"*Shalom* is a very important term in the Old Testament and has maintained its place in Mishnaic, rabbinic, and modern Hebrew. In Israel today, people greet the newcomer and each other with the words *ma shlomka*, ('what is your peace?', 'how are you doing?') and they ask about the 'peace' ('well-being') of one's family.

"The use of *shalom* is frequent (237 times) and varied in its semantic range. The first two occurrences in Genesis already indicate the changes in meaning: 'And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace' [*shalom* in the sense of 'in tranquility,' 'at ease,' 'unconcerned']; thou shalt be buried in a good old age' (Gen.15:15); and 'that thou wilt do us no hurt, as we have not touched thee, and as we have done unto thee nothing but good, and have sent thee away in peace [*shalom* with the meaning of 'unharm'd' and 'unhurt'] . . .' (Gen.26:29). Yet, both usages are essentially the same, as they express the root meaning of 'to be whole.'"

Therefore, when we put this all together, we have a picture of an idyllic kingdom or empire which will prevail everywhere, and will bring true wholeness, peace, well-being, tranquility, and prosperity everywhere. And it will continue multiplying and increasing in government and peace FOR EVER -- *without any ending!*

This pictures a constantly increasing and expanding kingdom throughout eternity, with MORE AND MORE GOD-BEINGS -- members of the family of God -- being REPRODUCED for ever and for ever . . . always increasing, multiplying, more progeny, more increase and more multitudes added to the family -- the Family of God! Thousands of generations!

Isn't it amazing?

God's Plan will go ON FOREVER!

The Hebrew word for "end" in Isaiah 9:7 is 7093 in *Strong's*, or *qets* (pronounced *kates*) and means "(utmost) border, end, (in-)finite." *Gesenius* adds, "end, extremity, whether of space (Isa.37:24; Jer.50:26), or of time." The term "no end" therefore means God's Kingdom will continue expanding without any limit or extremity, forever, with no end in either time or space -- the Universe will keep expanding to infinity, and will God's Kingdom will endure to eternity -- an infinity of time and space. It will always grow!

And think of it -- we have the opportunity to get in on the action -- on the ground floor -- as the "firstfruits" of God and of Christ, at His coming!

An allusion to this is found in Genesis, where God declares, "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease" (Gen.8:22). The "harvest" of new sons for the Kingdom of God will never "cease."

In Deuteronomy, we read: "Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep

his commandments *to a THOUSAND GENERATIONS . . .*" (Deut.7:9).

How long is a "thousand generations"? Since Adam and Eve were created about 6000 years ago, and since there are 40 years to a generation (Num.14:34), since Adam and Eve there have been only 150 generations of mankind. If one generation is 40 years, then one thousand generations is 40,000 years!

And that is just a "drop in the bucket" compared to the concept of *ETERNITY!*

God is Reproducing His Family -- Himself

Indeed, God IS reproducing Himself -- through His Son, Jesus Christ the Messiah! God the Father and the Logos made mankind "in their image," after their own "likeness" -- in effect, after their own "KIND" of being! That is their ultimate intention. But, for now, we are created out of the dust of the ground, physical, flesh and blood human beings, capable of death.

We are now being "tested," to see if we love God with all our hearts and mind, and whether we are willing to OBEY His commandments and never go astray!

God is going to continue the process of reproducing Himself, as the Fountain of Life, as the Source, expanding His Kingdom and multiplying His children, grand children, and great-great grandchildren, *for all eternity.*

Interestingly, the word for increase in Isaiah 9:7, *marbiyth*, begins with the Hebrew letter "mem." But this is the only word in the Hebrew Old Testament text that begins with a "mem" which *violates the laws of Hebrew grammar* -- that is, in this case the first letter of the word, the "mem," is a CLOSED MEM! In all other words where a "mem" is at the beginning or middle of a word, it is always an "open mem." According to rabbinical exegesis, the "mem" symbolizes the "womb" of a woman. Why then did God inspire this particular word to have a CLOSED MEM in its construction?

This strange anomaly of Scripture tells us first of all, that the Messiah would be born of a VIRGIN -- A WOMAN WITH A "CLOSED WOMB"! The "increase" of God's Kingdom, then, would be accomplished MIRACULOUSLY -- supernaturally -- by God's divine POWER, the Holy Spirit (see Luke 1:30-35).

This unusual fact also tells us that ALL the "increase" in the Family and Kingdom of God would come through Christ, the Messiah! The increase of God's Kingdom is accomplished miraculously, by divine power -- acting upon the "closed mem." All the increase must come through Jesus Christ, the Messiah born of the human virgin. He is the "first begotten" and He is the "only begotten" of God in that special way (John 1:14; Col.1:15). Therefore, the "mem" is closed.

However, through Him the family of God will continue to "increase" --

FOREVER! The pattern has been set. The template has been perfected. And now it but remains for the rest of us to "get on board," and get with the process, and repent of our sins and short-comings, turn to God, accept Christ as our Saviour, and receive His Holy Spirit (Acts 2:28; 5:32). And then we must overcome, and endure to the end, serving and obeying God and keeping His commandments, growing in love and the fruits of His Spirit (Gal.5:22-23), till the process is perfected, until we reach "ripeness" and spiritual "maturity" so we are ready to be "harvested" into God's Kingdom!

Reproduction of the family of God both begins and ends IN CHRIST! The "mem" is closed, meaning not only was He born of a virgin, with a closed womb, but that none other will be born of God in exactly the same way He was -- begotten of the Spirit of God the Father in the womb of a woman (compare Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:18-23). All others must come to God through Him! He alone is the Saviour, whose name is YESHUA (Matt.1:20-21). "He shall save his people from their sins" (same verse).

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Jesus said, "I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that more abundantly" (John 10:7-10).

Jesus alone is Saviour and Redeemer. As Peter and John announced in the book of Acts, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for *there is none other name under heaven* given among men whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Are you ready to get to know the one and only Messiah?

Chapter 2

The Greatest Mystery of All Time!

IS GOD *REPRODUCING* HIMSELF?

All living things on earth reproduce themselves. One of the definitions of a "life form" in biology is an entity that grows, moves, and reproduces. God tells us He is the "Living God." The classic Greek definition of God is as the omnipotent and omniscient being who is static and unchanging. But the Bible reveals a totally different and startling concept and revelation concerning God! In this article, we reveal what is perhaps the greatest mystery of all concerning the "mystery of God"!

Few people who begin reading Genesis, chapter one -- the first chapter of the Bible, the revealed Word of God -- really stop to consider and understand just what they are reading. Of course, anyone reading this chapter immediately sees an unfolding drama of creation -- with various objects and creatures being created on different days.

The drama begins in verse 1 where we read, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen.1:1). How long ago that remote "beginning" was the author of Genesis does not say -- just "in the beginning." Verse 2 describes some event that caused the earth to become "formless and empty" -- *tohu* and *bohu* in the Hebrew -- desolate and waste. We read: "Now the earth *was* formless and empty" (v.2). Yet Isaiah the prophet declares, "For this is what the LORD says -- he who created heavens, he is God; he who fashioned and made the earth, he founded it; he did NOT create it to be EMPTY, but formed it to be inhabited" (Isa.45:18).

The original earth was not chaotic and empty, but somehow *became* that way. The word translated "was" in Genesis 1:2 is the same word translated "became" in Genesis 19:26: "But Lot's wife looked back, and she *became* a pillar of salt." Apparently the earth became a desolation back in that primordial time because of sin -- the rebellion of the angels, led by Lucifer, who became Satan (Isa.14:12-14; Ezek.28:12-17).

Some time after this primordial rebellion, when apparently one third of the angels followed Lucifer into challenging the rulership of God, attempting to take over His divine Throne (Rev.12:3), God set out to re-establish life and order on the surface of the earth. The remaining verses of Genesis 1 detail that new time of creation, long after the original heavens and earth themselves had been created (verse 1).

The rest of this chapter takes place from the standpoint of one standing on the earth's surface. The earth has become dark -- "darkness was over the face of the deep" (verse 2). Sunlight had been cut off from the earth. So God re-established sunlight, saying, "Let there be light," and light broke through and the clouds disappeared. This occurred during "the first day" (Gen.1:3-4).

The second day God created an "expanse" separating waters on the earth from waters in the sky -- this expanse became the earth's new atmosphere (Gen.1:6-8). The third day God separated the waters on the earth from the continents, raising the dry ground which had been inundated (verses 9-10). He then said:

"Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various KINDS. And it was so. The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seeds according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning -- the third day" (Gen.3:11-13).

The fourth day God produced the lights in the expanse of the sky -- to serve as signs, marking the days, seasons and years. He made the sun, moon and stars to appear (Gen.1:14-19). The sun and stars must have been created much earlier (Gen.1:1) as they constitute the "heavens" of verse 1. Also, they are the objects which produce "light" (verse 3). Without them there would have been no "light." However, as long as clouds covered the surface of the earth, they could not be seen visibly. The earth's atmosphere may have been much like that of the planet Venus, very thick and cloudy, at that time. But on Day Four, God caused the atmosphere to clear up sufficiently so that the sun, moon and stars could be clearly seen and observed by the naked human eye, so that they could henceforth be used as "signs" to determine seasons of the year, and days and months.

Each After Its Own KIND

The fifth day arrives. God continues His creation. Now He creates LIVING CREATURES in the seas and in the air -- living species that each reproduce AFTER THEIR OWN KIND!

"And God said, 'Let the waters teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky.' So God

created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, *according to their kinds*, and every winged bird *according to its kind*. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them and said, 'Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth.' And there was evening, and there was morning -- the fifth day" (Gen.1:20-23).

The sixth day arrives. Having established the principle that each living thing is to reproduce after its own KIND, or Genesis "species," God continues His creation along the same manner.

"And God said, 'Let the land produce living creatures ACCORDING TO THEIR KINDS: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, EACH ACCORDING TO IT KIND.' And it was so. God made the wild animals *according to their kinds*, the livestock *according to their kinds*, and all the creatures that move along the ground *according to their kinds*. And God saw that it was good" (Gen.1:24-25).

Notice! All the life forms that God created on earth, in the seas, and in the air -- every form of life He created was created to REPRODUCE ITSELF after its own kind of life! This fact is very clearly emphasized and repeated, as if it is VERY IMPORTANT! This is not just a passing commentary, but a clearly emphasized and stressed observation that we are to take special note of as we read it.

And now we come to the creation of Man. Notice very carefully what God says about this unique creation. We read these intriguing words:

"Then God said, 'Let US make MAN in OUR image, in OUR LIKENESS, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground. So God created man IN HIS OWN IMAGE, in the IMAGE OF GOD he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground. . . . God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning -- the sixth day" (Gen.1:26-31).

Throughout this chapter, God creates. On the fifth day He creates the denizens of the deep, each after its own kind, and the fowl that fly in the sky, each after their own kind. Now, on day six, He creates the animals of the land, each after their own kind. And finally, He creates MAN -- in his OWN image and likeness -- and gives him instructions to RULE OVER God's creation -- just as God Himself rules over His creation! He gives mankind authority to rule as HE rules!

Yes, there is a difference. Man is created mortal, of the dust of the earth. We read, "The LORD God formed the man from the DUST of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life [air, containing oxygen], and the man became a living being" (Gen.2:7). Man was made in the very express "image" of God - but he was made out of dirt -- dust -- mortal. God, however, is composed of immortal SPIRIT! "God is spirit," Jesus told the woman at the well (John 4:24). God is immortal (I Tim.6:16). Thus, although man was made in God's very own likeness and image, there is a striking and all-important DIFFERENCE!

Why does God spend so much time in the opening chapter of the Bible telling us all about how animals, fish and birds all REPRODUCE THEMSELVES after their own KIND? And then, in the very next breath, tell us that GOD made man in HIS own image, after HIS likeness? Isn't this telling us that we are made after GOD'S OWN KIND, except that we are mortal, fleshly, of the dust, whereas God is eternal Spirit? Yet, we are to RULE like God, only on a much smaller scale; we think and create like God, only on a much more limited scale. But what is the POINT of all this?

Isn't God telling us, right off the starting point, so to speak -- right off the mark -- that HE IS REPRODUCING HIMSELF, through man, IF we qualify and overcome and eventually become SPIRIT like He is? Isn't God telling us that even as human beings reproduce and multiply and grow into families, that we have the potential of becoming members of the GOD FAMILY?

WHY ELSE would God spend so much time in His holy Word to discuss and point out the fact that all life on earth REPRODUCES ITSELF AFTER ITS OWN KIND -- and then tells us that God made MAN in HIS OWN IMAGE and LIKENESS?

What an awesome, staggering, incredible thought to contemplate!

Hidden from Traditional Christianity

The doctrine that human beings on earth are destined to become God-kind -- to be made into the same nature and substance as God, though remaining individual beings as distinct sons of God --- and thus to become very God in nature, attributes and abilities, as part of the Supreme Universe Ruling Family of GOD -- related individual beings at the very highest order and apex of the Universe -- may seem at first glance a preposterous thought. And yet in Romans 8:29 we read that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was the "first born among many brethren."

This is a soaring, electrifying thought and message. It is truly incredible to think that although the Bible speaks of "sons of God," and being "born again," and being created in "God's image," nevertheless almost nobody has thought of these terms as being LITERAL, and meaning exactly what they say. Yet, the Bible promises that Christians are to inherit everything that Christ Himself has inherited. At the return of Christ, at the resurrection, the Bible says that true Christians -- those who have been

begotten of God by the Holy Spirit -- will literally become fully BORN "sons of God," on the very "God plane" of existence, as His sons in a growing divine Family! Like a woman's egg fertilized and impregnated by the husband's sperm, or "seed," so Christians are in the "womb" of the spiritual Mother, the Church, are growing toward parturition -- the time when they will become fully BORN as spiritual "sons of God"! Spiritual birth occurs at the resurrection, when transformation will be complete - - we will metamorphose from physical fleshly beings into spiritual, glorious beings. Just as a caterpillar becomes a beautiful butterfly, it is our destiny, as future sons of God, to inherit and rule over the entire Universe!

The very concept seems blasphemous to traditional Christianity. It is viewed as rank "heresy" by those who are immersed in traditional, orthodox "Christianity," which stems from the fourth century after Christ. Nevertheless, it is a sweeping theology, one which causes you to marvel and wonder and glorify God as you look out upon the myriads of stars twinkling on a clear, cloudless night. It seems so incredible, so unsearchable, so divinely mysterious and beyond human grasp and comprehension.

So often millions read right over the Scriptures, never contemplating what they actually say or mean. We read the expression "sons of God," and go on as if it had no meaning whatsoever to us. Yet we know what "sons" are when we look at the human family. It is quite clear that "sons" are just like their parents in looks, attributes, and abilities -- although differing slightly in exact looks and abilities and personality -- yet human "sons" are just as fully HUMAN as their parents. Even so, the term "God" is a generic term for the Creator of the Universe. The Hebrew word translated "God" is Elohim, and literally means "The mighty ones." However, it is a uni-plural word, much the same as the English word for "family," "church," or "group." It can include one or more members.

Scripture reveals two divine individuals who are now "God" in the full sense of the word. One is the Father, whom Jesus Christ came to reveal. The other is the Messiah, Jesus Christ Himself, who before His incarnation in the womb of the virgin Mary, his mother, was the Logos or Word of God -- the second member of the divine God family (John 1:1-3). It was these two individuals who said, in Genesis 1:26, "Let US make man in OUR image, after OUR likeness." God was not like the absent-minded professor, talking to Himself! One member of the God family was talking to the other member!

Jesus Christ Is Also GOD

The entire universe was created by "God" (Gen.1:1). In Genesis this God is revealed as Elohim, "The Mighty One" or "Mighty Ones." But in the gospel of John, we read: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning" (John 1:1-2). Here we find another personage, called the "Word," who was with "God" in the beginning, and who was also "God." The original Greek word here is Logos, and means, "Word," "Spokesman," "Reasoning," "Divine Expression." John is speaking of this entity clearly as if he or it

were another Person, who was also "God." He is not talking about some vague, abstract mental notion merely in the mind of the Father; the whole expression here clearly suggests a second personality and individual existence!

Speaking of this "Word," John continues: "Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it" (verses 3-5).

John this explains, elucidating this mystery of the Logos or Word: "The Word BECAME FLESH and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (verse 14).

Paul writes about this mysterious individual who became Christ Jesus, the Messiah: "He is the IMAGE of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him [the Logos] all things were created [this proves beyond reasonable doubt the divine pre-existence of Christ!]: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; ALL THINGS were created BY him and FOR him [Christ the Messiah]. He is BEFORE all things, and by him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fulness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven . . ." (Col.1:15-20).

Clearly, the one who became Christ is not the same individual as the Father, but clearly he also pre-existed and is also Divine. Paul speaks of the pre-existent one as a person, a powerful being -- not merely as an abstract "thought" of the Father!

In Hebrews Paul elucidates this matter even further, saying: "In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed HEIR OF ALL THINGS and through WHOM he made the universe" (Heb.1:1-2). The Moffatt translation has verse 2, "a Son whom he has appointed HEIR OF THE UNIVERSE, as it was by him that he created the world."

Going on, Paul writes: "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the EXACT REPRESENTATION OF HIS BEING, sustaining all things by his powerful word" (verse 3).

Is Christ also God? Paul himself says, "After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So he became as much superior to the angels as the NAME HE HAS INHERITED is superior to theirs" (v.4). What is the name He has inherited? It is the name of GOD! Paul continues, "For to which of the angels did God ever say, 'You are my SON; today I have become your FATHER'? Or again, 'I will be his Father, and he will be my Son'? And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, 'Let all God's ANGELS worship him'

(Heb.1:5-6).

The Father says about the Son, Jesus Christ: "Your throne, O GOD, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy" (Heb.1:8-9).

Traditional Christianity admits that Christ is the Logos, or Word -- very God. But they claim that He is EQUAL with the Father, as part of some sort of divine Trinity of beings who compose a singular and static and closed Godhead, together with the Holy Spirit, which they also say is a Person. However, in this passage we see that Christ Himself regards God the Father as HIS very own "God." He also said, in the gospel of John, "The Father is greater than I" (John 14:28).

The truth is the Scriptures do NOT reveal a closed "Godhead" or static God, like the closed triangle. Rather, they reveal God is a divine FAMILY. God the Father is in charge over all, and always has been. The Logos is under the authority of the Father, but also God, and is now become Christ the Son, who is to be the "firstborn of many brethren."

Paul explained, "For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. . . . For he 'has put everything under his feet.' Now when it says that 'everything' has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject TO HIM who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all" (I Cor.15:22-28).

Thus there is no competition between the Father and the Son. Both are God, but the Father is Supreme in authority, and the Son is obedient in all things -- yet He also is "God" (Heb.5:7). The relationship between the Father and Christ is perfect unity -- perfect love -- complete coordination and teamwork. They act in concert, in effect as "one." In fact, in His last formal prayer to the Father, before His crucifixion, Christ prayed, "Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name -- the name you gave me -- so that THEY MAY BE ONE AS WE ARE ONE" (John 17:11).

When Phillip asked Christ to show them the Father, Jesus replied, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father" -- remember, Jesus was the "express image" and "stamp impress" of the Father (Heb.1:1-2). Jesus went on, "Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or at least believe me on the evidence of the miracles themselves" (John 14:9-11).

How many churches today understand and teach the real meaning behind the expression, "sons of God"? How many understand that the term "sons of God" is to be taken and understood *literally*?

Heirs of God, Joint-Heirs with Christ

In Hebrews, chapter 1, we found that Christ is to be worshiped by even all the angels, and that He is called "God" (Heb.1:8) and sits on a throne. Also, we found that He is the "HEIR OF THE UNIVERSE" (Heb.1:2, Moffatt translation).

In Hebrews, chapter 2, Paul then transfers his topic from Christ, the Son of God, to mankind, and says, "It is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking. But there is a place where someone has testified: 'What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor and put EVERYTHING under his feet.' In putting EVERYTHING under him, God left NOTHING that is not subject to him" (Heb.2:5-8). Did you get that? "Everything" means just that -- "EVERYTHING" -- "ALL THINGS"! Paul made this truth abundantly clear, because he explained that "God left *nothing* that is not subject to" mankind.

Let your mind roam and wander a bit. When you think of everything, what do you think of? Write your answers down on a sheet of paper. Let your children assist you in this project. Write down EVERYTHING you can think of!

Give yourself plenty of time. Remember, you are to leave out NOTHING!

Okay, time's up. Let's see -- did you write down the earth, the skies and atmosphere, all the animals and plants and birds and fish? Did you think of listing all the features and products and minerals of the earth?

But wait a minute. "Everything" includes far more than the earth! Did you write down the moon? The sun? The planets -- Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, Pluto, and all their moons?

But that's not all, either! What about the Milky Way Galaxy, our own galaxy of 100,000,000,000 stars? That's one hundred BILLION stars! But then there are BILLIONS of galaxies, each one with millions and billions of stars! And what about the mysterious pulsars, quasars, and other galactic objects in space which we haven't even found or discovered yet!

Moffatt translates "everything" as THE UNIVERSE! Does that mean that in His own time-table, God Almighty, the Father, has determined that MANKIND SHALL RULE THE UNIVERSE?

Let's just read -- and believe -- the words of the apostle Paul again: "In putting

everything under him, God left NOTHING that is not subject to him. YET AT PRESENT we do not see everything subject to him" (verse 8). No, at this present moment, mankind is still limited somewhat to this planet earth, although he may send missiles and spacecraft on journeys to other planets, their moons, comets, or even the sun! But we are still limited to our own tiny little neck of the Universe, and can scarcely even peer into the remote corners of space with our most advanced and humongous telescopes! We will no doubt discover far more when the new gigantic multi-lens telescopes in Hawaii are finished -- but even they will not show us "EVERYTHING"!

At present, we can only catch the briefest glimpse of the GLORY and MAJESTY and POWER that one day will be ours, along with Christ, our elder brother! Paul goes on, in this majestic train of thought: "But [now] we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. IN BRINGING MANY SONS TO GLORY, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering. Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of THE SAME FAMILY. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them BROTHERS" (Heb.2:9-11).

How awesome is the plan and purpose of GOD!

Those who qualify for the resurrection from the dead, and immortality through Christ, will literally belong to the SAME FAMILY -- Jesus, who is very GOD, will call them His BROTHERS!

Can your mind comprehend this staggering, incredible truth?

The apostle Paul further clarifies this amazing truth in his letter to the Romans. He writes, "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that WE ARE GOD'S CHILDREN. Now if we are children, then we are HEIRS [just as human children are heirs of their human father and mother, so as the spiritual children of God, we are also His "heirs"!] -- HEIRS OF GOD and CO-HEIRS WITH CHRIST, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory" (Rom.8:16-17).

We are "CO-HEIRS WITH CHRIST"!

And Christ is "HEIR OF THE UNIVERSE"!

Could anything be plainer? There it has been, right under our noses, all these years and yet few have every stopped to consider what these words really mean! Few have stopped to ponder and analyze them in their depth and width and breadth and height! Most have quickly passed the thought off as unbelievable and foolishness, if they have even given it a moment's consideration -- it is just too awesome to contemplate, or for the mind of mere man to comprehend!

The truth of God is so incredible that Paul was compelled to quote Isaiah, "'No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him' -- but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God" (I Cor.2:9-10).

Jesus Christ is very God. We are to become very God. Jesus has been given a glorious body. We will be given a glorious body like His. Paul wrote, "And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will TRANSFORM our lowly bodies so that they will be LIKE HIS GLORIOUS BODY" (Phil.3:20-21).

In its glorified state, Jesus' face shines like the sun in its strength. "His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. . . His face was like the SUN shining in all its brilliance" (Rev.1:12-16). The apostle John tells us in his first epistle, "Dear friends, now we are the children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure"(I John 3:2-3).

This mind-boggling truth is so stunning and so incredible that one can scarcely take it all in. It makes one dizzy to even think about it! God is a Person, a Group of Persons, with Two Members at the present time -- and God is a Growing FAMILY -- and it is OUR POTENTIAL DESTINY TO BECOME PART OF THAT UNIVERSE-RULING DIVINE, GLORIOUS *GOD-FAMILY!*

Yes, the Scriptures are plain enough -- GOD IS REPRODUCING HIMSELF! This truth is illustrated by and confirmed by the lesson we see all around us of all life forms in this earth which also REPRODUCE AFTER THEIR OWN "KIND"! There is far more to the first chapter of Genesis than millions of deceived people have ever believed!

Strange as it may seem, however, this truth is not really a "new" truth or end-time discovery, at all. This truth was KNOWN to the earth church fathers! It was the "trinitarian" view of the Godhead which was the "new kid on the block," as it did not make its appearance and become codified as "Christian dogma" until the fourth century after Christ!

A Historical Perspective of the Trinitarian View of God

The doctrine of the Trinity was not widely believed or universally observed until the Council of Nicea, in AD 325, and the Council of Constantinople in AD 381, and finally the Council of Chalcedon in AD 451. Trinitarians claimed that Jesus Christ was equal with and of the same substance as God the Father, in a sense that human beings could not attain. The Holy Spirit was given status as a Person almost as an afterthought. The main issue of these Church Councils of the early Catholic Church

was the divinity of Christ as opposed to the Arian view, which has been widely misrepresented.

Arian said that Jesus Christ, even though having attained the full glory of divine sonship through obedience, was nonetheless subordinate to God the Father. Arian said further that because of Christ, humans could now attain to the same divine stature or status as Christ, along with Him!

In the Trinitarian view, God, in the form of the Son, temporarily descended to take on human limitations to redeem fallen mankind. The possibility that Christ could have failed was, to them, unthinkable and heresy. Arian, however, said that Christ, the first of God's primeval creations, acted as a perfect example for the rest of God's creation, and that Christ could have failed, but through his faithfulness prevailed, making it possible for the rest of mankind to attain to divine status as well.

For hundreds of years wars raged between the followers of the Trinitarian view and Arian's followers. Eventually, the Trinitarians, led by the Church at Rome, prevailed, and became established as orthodoxy, and the Arian view became branded as the ultimate "heresy."

But were the Arians really heretics? Joseph T. Lienhard, in "The 'Arian' Controversy: Some Categories Reconsidered," tells us that what is known of Arian beliefs comes to us through the highly filtered lenses of fourth century opponents. It was only in 341 that Eastern bishops of the church even learned that they were being called "Arians" (see *Theological Studies*, 48, 1987, p.415-437; Robert C. Gregg and Dennis E. Groh, *Early Arianism -- A View of Salvation* ; and Gregg, ed., *Arianism: Historical and Theological Reassessments*, 1985).

Gregg and Groh argue convincingly that the really central issue with the Arians was their view of how mankind became saved. They believed that salvation meant that we became deified like Christ who paved the way and made it possible. To them, "divine sonship differs in degree but not in kind; therefore the Christ was *representative* Son, but *by no means only possible Son*" (Gregg and Groh, p.30, emphasis theirs). Athanasius accused them of blasphemy and arrogance, yet they merely carried on a traditional belief that is clearly found in the Scriptures! Said Athanasius, "Thus hearing that men are called sons, they hold themselves equal to the true and natural Son. . . . They are so arrogant as to suppose that as the Son is in the Father, and the Father in the Son, so will they be" (Athanasius, *Or. c. Ar.* 3, 17).

If God were indeed a "Trinity," then why is the concept completely foreign to the Bible, both Old and New Testaments? Nowhere does the Bible speak of "one God in three Persons"! The concept of a divine "Trinity" is simply nowhere found in the Biblical text. The one text some have quoted as referring to a "Trinity," I John 5:7, is spurious and was inserted into the text by copyists after the Trinitarian controversy arose. Adam Clarke in his Commentary points out that this verse was omitted in every manuscript before the invention of printing -- that is, 112 manuscripts -- except one

found at, would you believe it, *Trinity College* in Dublin, Ireland! All the old Bible manuscripts omit it and even the best versions of the Vulgate. All the ancient Greek fathers omit it, and even most of the Latin. There has been more controversy over this one verse than any other in Scripture, but there can be no doubt that it is not genuine and was added by a later hand, possibly as late as in the sixteenth century. It was lacking in the first edition of Erasmus, AD 1516. All the German translations of Martin Luther omit it. Trinitarians have gone to great lengths, even lying egregiously, in their attempt to justify this passage (see Adam Clarke's treatment). Clarke himself says the passage in question "stands on a most dubious foundation," and concludes, "In short, it stands on no authority sufficient to authenticate any part of a revelation professing to have come from God." It is undoubtedly spurious.

In fact, in early Church history there is NO clear and unambiguous reference to the trinity doctrine until the FOURTH CENTURY, and the time around the Nicean Council! And it was only in the last quarter of the fourth century that "what might be called the definitive trinitarian dogma 'one God in three persons' became thoroughly assimilated into Christian life and thought" (*New Catholic Encyclopedia*, "Holy Trinity").

Made in the "Image of God"

Churches that reject the Trinity doctrine find great difficulty in being accepted by orthodox, mainstream Christianity, even today. Catholic and Protestant orthodoxy consider the doctrine that man can become "equal with God," or on the same plane of existence, as blasphemous, and equate it with Eve's desire to be "like God" (Gen.3:5). Of course, Satan can and does misquote Scripture to gain his own objectives, so his words to Eve prove nothing.

However, man is even now in God's image (Gen.1:26), and we are called the "children of God" (I John 3:1). God's invisible nature and deity are known by the things which he has made (Rom.1:20; Gen.1:26). God desires that men become "perfect" (Matt.5:48). Eventually, we are to be changed, and be in God's likeness (I Cor.15:49-54; Phi.3:21; I John 3:2). Eventually, we are to rule over all things, even as God does (Psalm 8:4-6). The Scriptures even speak of men as "gods" (Psalm 82:6; John 10:34-35).

The Phillips Translation has, "All who follow the leading of God's Spirit are God's own sons . . . you have been adopted into the very FAMILY CIRCLE OF GOD and you can say with a full heart, 'Father, my Father.' The Spirit himself endorses our inward conviction that we really are the children of God. Think what that means. If we are his children, we share his treasures, and all that Christ claims as his will belong to all of us as well! Yes, if we share in his sufferings we shall certainly share in his glory" (Rom.8:14-17).

God literally is "our Father" (Matt.6:9; John 6:27). We have become "partakers of the divine nature" -- God's very own nature (II Pet.1:4). Phillips says we "share

God's essential nature." How can you do that, and share God's own essential divine nature, unless you are also like Him -- very God, the same substance and condition? Phillips translates a passage in I John, "For yourselves, I beg you to stick to the original teaching. If you do, you will be living in fellowship with both the Father and the Son. And that means SHARING HIS OWN LIFE FOR EVER, as he has promised" (I John 2:24).

We will share in Christ's glory (Rom.8:17). Jesus prayed, "Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began" (John 17:5). But, He added, significantly, "I have given them the glory that you gave me" (verse 22). Christ is equal with God. Paul wrote, "Who, being in very nature GOD, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped" (Phil.2:5). Phillips has this verse, "For he, who had always been God by nature, did not cling to his prerogatives as God's equal . . ." The Jews tried to kill Christ because "he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God" (John 5:18). And we are to be LIKE HIM (I Cor.15:49). "And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being TRANSFORMED INTO HIS LIKENESS" (II Cor.3:18). We are eventually to "become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the FULNESS OF CHRIST" (Eph.4:13).

We are to have the very mind of Christ -- the mind of God (Phil.2:5). The Phillips Translation says, "For you are SONS OF GOD NOW; the live, permanent Word of the living God has given you HIS OWN INDESTRUCTIBLE HEREDITY" (I Pet.1:23). That is, if we are begotten by God's own Holy Spirit, we have received of His own HEREDITY -- His own genes, chromosomes, DNA, through the Spirit of God -- we are now in the process of being CHANGED, METAMORPHOSED, TRANSFORMED from human flesh to DIVINE SPIRIT!

Angels cannot be worshipped (Rev.19:10; 22:8-9). Only GOD should be worshipped! Yet Christian overcomers WILL BE WORSHIPPED (Rev.3:9). We will become "pillars" in the Temple of God, is the promise to the Philadelphia Church of God. "Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God," Jesus said (Rev.3:12) -- yet we are also told there is not new Temple EXCEPT GOD HIMSELF! John records, "I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple" (Rev.21:22). Since we are promised to become "pillars" in that new "temple," and the temple is God, how plain that we will also become GOD!

God declares, "He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son" (Rev.21:7).

Jesus Christ Himself is very God. Christ is to marry the Church at His coming (Rev.19:6-9). The Church is composed of all true believers who have overcome. Would "God" TAKE AS HIS BRIDE SOMEONE WHO IS LESS THAN "GOD"? Would a man marry an animal? Would a human being ever "marry" a dog, or a cat, or a cow, or a horse? The idea is patently ridiculous! Even so, when Christ marries the Church, the Church must be composed of DIVINE BEINGS -- THOSE WHO HAVE

BECOME VERY GOD!

How awesome, then, is the stupendous plan of God! Hidden from mankind through the devious deceptive plot of Satan the devil, mankind's true potential has been rejected, ignored, and ridiculed by well-meaning but ignorant men and theologians.

Nevertheless, the truth will become known to all mankind, eventually. As the prophet Isaiah foretold, "And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations" (Isaiah 25:7).

When people finally learn their true awesome potential, they will cry, and weep for joy and shame for their ignorance and sins, and turn to God with all their heart. As Isaiah continues: "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation" (Isaiah 25:8-9).

How great is our God -- the true God, Creator of heaven and earth -- who has begotten us in His very own image and likeness, and predestined that we should become His own glorious divine Children, members of His own Universe-creating and Universe-ruling Family!

As Isaiah also wrote: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

"Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be NO END, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this" (Isa.9:6-7).

The Kingdom of God is not as the Greeks viewed it. The nature of God is not as a stone -- a classic unchanging monolith. Rather, our God is a LIVING BEING! Our supreme heavenly Father has decreed that He would have A DIVINE FAMILY -- that He would bring forth CHILDREN -- and those children would qualify for and be given God-level powers and positions of authority, to rule the Universe, under His overall direction and control -- under Christ, the Messiah, our Saviour and King.

The Kingdom of God is dynamic, living, growing, and self-sustaining. It will "grow" forever! The extent of His "government" will "INCREASE" throughout all ages and eternity. There will be NO ENDING of the "increase" and of the "peace" of His Kingdom. God has decreed this, and He will bring it to pass. His Universe-ruling Family, therefore, will GROW AND MULTIPLY, *as the very nature of "LIFE,"* for all Eternity, throughout Infinity!

Can the human mind even begin to comprehend this fathomless and incredible truth? Can our feeble minds, by comparison, begin to grasp this mind-boggling and spirit-soaring foundational revelation concerning the plan and purpose and nature of the true GOD?

As king David wrote in the Psalms, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? . . . Thou madest him to have *dominion over the works of thy hands: thou hast put ALL THINGS [the Universe!] under HIS feet*" (Psalm 8:4-6).

David, sensing our human destiny, wrote further, "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well" (Psa.139:14). As joint-heirs with Christ -- ruling the farflung works of God! Entering into the very Family of God, as joint-Creators and rulers of all things! How incredible!

How awesome -- how majestic -- how stupendous, it is!

Will you become a part of that Universe-ruling divine Family? It is up to you!

Chapter 3

The Greatest Mystery of the Ages

The Mystery of GOD!

Who -- or What -- is "God" -- and what is His purpose in creating human life? Why were YOU born? What is God's purpose behind human existence? Why were we made "in His image" and what does that mean? Herbert Armstrong's greatest books, *The Incredible Human Potential* and *Mystery of the Ages* were quietly removed from circulation and publication by his successor, Joseph W. Tkach. Why? Did they contain incredible divine revelation which Tkach has abandoned? Or has Tkach proven that they were in dire error? Read, in this article, about the GREATEST mystery of all ages -- and how Satan the devil is now attempting to blind the eyes of even God's own people to the TRUTH about their "incredible human potential"!

In a recent radio interview on a Christian broadcasting station, Michael Snyder, spokesperson for the Worldwide Church of God, "It is not really an appropriate label to call God a person. That is a physical construct, and the nature and divinity of God, as being all-Powerful, would not necessarily fit that." Snyder went on to state,

"We believe that when we die we will be in the kingdom of God, but we don't say now that we will be complete equals with God and inherit every attribute that He has, because that would be impossible."

The interviewer brought up the booklet written by Herbert W. Armstrong, entitled "Why Were You Born?", and quoted Herbert Armstrong as writing, "You are setting out on a training to become creator, to become God." He then commented, "That's language you would not want to use any more."

Replied Snyder:

"Well, we would say that we would share in the glory of God,

but the exact title and rank or whatever we will have and the form of divine life that we will possess is not fully revealed in the Bible. We believe that we will be with God and with Christ and we believe it will be in the Kingdom of God."

In addition to these remarks, Michael Snyder indicated that there is considerable re-thinking going on in the Worldwide Church of God as to the nature of God, the Trinitarian view of God, and when told that Herbert Armstrong had called the doctrine of the Trinity "a heresy," he replied, "Well, we affirm that God is one. We affirm that the Holy Spirit is divine, and we don't use language any more as [you] previously described."

What's going on here? Herbert Armstrong called the "Trinity" concept a rank HERESY -- yet Michael Snyder, chief spokesman for Joseph Tkach and the Worldwide Church of God, in a public radio interview, said "we don't use language any more as previously described"! Has the Worldwide Church of God even abandoned one of the chief doctrines which set it apart from mainstream Protestantism? Has the doctrine of God gone by the boards? Has the Church and its leadership now repudiated the very LIFE'S WORK and major theological discoveries of Herbert W. Armstrong, the founder of the Church?

Who is right? What is the TRUTH? Just who -- or what -- is "God," anyway?

What is the TRUTH about the divine GODHEAD? And what is the TRUTH about human destiny? Why on earth were YOU "born"?

The Abolition of Truth for Error

Strangely, Joseph Tkach himself, the day that Herbert Armstrong died, wrote members of the Church and co-workers, saying, "Even in the last year of his life, with declining strength, he completed with God's help, HIS MOST POWERFUL AND EFFECTIVE BOOK, *Mystery of the Ages*." Three days later, January 19, 1986, Tkach wrote Church members and once again referred to "Mr. Armstrong's FINAL AND MOST IMPORTANT BOOK, *Mystery of the Ages*."

In the November-December 1986 *Plain Truth*, the "Personal from the Publisher," Tkach once again asserted, "Shortly before he died, he [Herbert Armstrong] said he had understood more in the last 10 years of his life than in all the previous decades. *Mystery of the Ages* is the product of that understanding. Mr. Armstrong did not underestimate the importance of this last work, for it contained vital keys to understanding the plan of God as revealed in the Bible. *Mystery of the Ages* in a very real sense was a last will and testament, to be passed on to those who would value it. As we come to the last installment of this remarkable book, we gratefully acknowledge our indebtedness to Herbert W. Armstrong, and his dogged search for the truth."

Strange words, indeed, coming from the very man who scrapped and ceased publication of *Mystery of the Ages* just three years later! How much did Joseph Tkach

himself really "value" what he himself called "the last will and testament" of Herbert W. Armstrong?

Less than three years after his death, Joseph Tkach and his ministerial team have discontinued and abolished what some have regarded as "THE VERY HEART OF CHRIST'S WORK" through Herbert W. Armstrong!

How soon we forget! How little we seem to remember! What is really going on behind closed doors and in editorial offices of the Worldwide Church of God? The entire book and booklet and article list is in the process of being revised and changed, and old articles and materials are abandoned and rejected and discouraged for use. This includes the book *The Incredible Human Potential*, as well as the *Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong*, itself!

Why Mystery of the Ages Was Discarded!

Mystery of the Ages was completed in 1985, the year before Herbert Armstrong's death. It was finalized under very difficult circumstances, while Herbert Armstrong was weakened physically, and suffering near loss of eyesight. In the author's statement, in the beginning of the book, Herbert Armstrong states:

"Time may prove this to be the most important book written in almost 1,900 years. Not because of literary excellence or flowery language of scholarship that it has purposely avoided, but because of its plainness of speech in clarifying the most important knowledge ever revealed from the supreme source of understanding of that which has mystified all humans since man first appeared on earth.

"This world's humanity has been blinded to who, what and why man is -- how man appeared on earth. Man has been mystified by his inability to solve his problems, or find answers to the perplexing questions of mankind and the world he inhabits.

"All these mysteries were long ago revealed by the one supreme authority of all knowledge, but in a coded message not allowed to be revealed and decoded until our time.

"The Church was infiltrated during the first century with another gospel. Many false teachings and false churches under the name of 'traditional Christianity' arose. As God reveals in Revelation 12:9, the whole world has been deceived. These basic truths have been kept a mystery" (p.xii).

In this epochal book, Herbert Armstrong goes on to discuss the nature of God, the divinity and pre-existence of Christ, the Logos of God, and shows that the Hebrew word "Elohim," a plural form of the word "El," yet normally used in a singular sense, is the same sort of word as "family church, group -- one family consisting of two or more members -- one church composed of many members -- one group of several persons" (p.50).

Says Herbert Armstrong,

"IN OTHER WORDS, GOD IS NOW A FAMILY of Persons, composed so far of only the TWO -- God the Father and Christ the Son. But IF the Holy Spirit of God dwells in someone, and he is being led by God's Spirit, then (Rom.8:14), he is a begotten son of God. But, at the time of Christ's return to earth in supreme power and glory to set up the KINGDOM OF GOD, restoring the GOVERNMENT OF GOD abolished by Lucifer, then all being filled and led by God's Spirit shall become BORN sons of God. The GOD FAMILY will then RULE ALL NATIONS with the GOVERNMENT OF GOD RESTORED!" (p.50).

Herbert Armstrong continues:

"The Trinity doctrine limits God to a supposed three Persons. It DESTROYS the very gospel of Jesus Christ! His gospel is the good news of the now soon-coming KINGDOM OF GOD -- the only hope of this world and its mixed-up mankind!

"The Trinity doctrine, by contrast, is the doctrine of the great false religion called in Revelation 17:5: 'Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.'

"By that doctrine, along with others, Satan has DECEIVED all traditional Christianity" (p.51).

Now do you begin to perceive WHY Joseph Tkach and his brood have determined to abolish and throw out Herbert Armstrong's monumental work *Mystery of the Ages* ? It directly and flatly contradicts the very essence of the massive CHANGES which Tkach and Company are instituting in the doctrines and beliefs of the Worldwide Church of GOD!

Tkach doesn't want people to really know or understand how COMPLETELY he disagrees with all the fundamental and foundational concepts, beliefs and teachings of Herbert W. Armstrong! Therefore, first he PULLS the books *Mystery of the Ages*, and *Incredible Human Potential*, and destroys them -- virtually "burns" them -- and then proceeds with great subtilty and cunning to replace them with his own strange brew of unscriptural doctrine and mainstream Protestant beliefs and teachings!

Tkach has not only changed peripheral doctrines, such as the Church teaching on birthdays, make up, and the like, but he has also struck at the very HEART AND CORE of the teachings of Herbert W. Armstrong during his ministry -- including the very doctrine of GOD and the PURPOSE of human existence!

This should strike many of you as shocking, dumfounding, incredible -- Oh, how the Devil, that master strategist, has pulled the wool over the eyes of thousands of God's people, and blinded and deluded them to the TRUTH!

Herbert Armstrong described it this way:

"Satan has deceived the entire world in regard to the very nature of WHO and WHAT God is -- as well as of Christ and the Holy Spirit. Also of the GOVERNMENT OF GOD, based on the spiritual LAW OF GOD. And further, of WHAT and WHY man is, what salvation is, how it is received, what is the true gospel, what and why the church is and what of the future!" (p.54).

Just what is man, and why was he created? Armstrong answers that probing, perplexing question in his remarkable book, filled with inspired insights. In a chapter entitled "The Mystery of Man," Herbert Armstrong shows that mankind was created mortal, physical flesh and blood, with no "immortal soul" abiding within him, and that he will DIE unless he receives the gift of salvation and eternal life!

What is the purpose, then, of human life? Armstrong declares, unequivocally:

"In MAN, God is reproducing Himself! The word for God in Genesis 1:1 is Elohim in the original Hebrew. It is a name, like church or family or group. God said: 'Let US' -- not ME -- 'make man in OUR image.'

"WHY is man? God created man on the earth to build in us what the finish the creation of the unfinished UNIVERSE! But, for NOW, we still live in this deceived world led by Satan" (p. 135).

"VERY GOD," Herbert Armstrong wrote. But Michael Snyder, a chief spokesman for the Worldwide Church of God, denies that we are to become "very God." He very pointedly stresses that we will be LESS than "God" -- that we will NOT have "complete equality with God." He flatly states, with total dogmatism,

"We don't say now that we will be complete equals with God and inherit every attribute that He has, because *that's impossible.*"

Impossible? Says who? Jesus Christ Himself said to His disciples, "With God ALL THINGS are possible" (Matt.19:26). Why does Michael Snyder now insinuate and even dogmatically state, under the auspices of Joseph Tkach, that some things are IMPOSSIBLE, even for God, and that God is NOT "reproducing Himself," as Snyder puts it, "because that's impossible!"?

Who is kidding whom?

No wonder Joseph Tkach and his sycophants have ABOLISHED the greatest book Herbert Armstrong ever wrote! It puts the LIE to their invidious CHANGES to and PERVERSIONS of the true Gospel!

In the *Mystery of the Ages* book, Herbert Armstrong also writes very plainly about the fact that Jesus Christ was beaten for our Healing (page 211-212). This is another doctrine that Tkach and company have rewritten and revised!

What Do You Mean, "Born Again"?

Also, in this monumental work that was the capstone of his life, Herbert Armstrong wrote about the "Born Again" question. He explained how Jesus explained to Nicodemus that a man must be "born again" in order to see the Kingdom of God. Writes Armstrong:

"But Nicodemus did not understand this. He knew that being born was an actual BIRTH -- parturition from the womb of the mother. Today's Savior constitutes being born again. In this, Satan has deceived them and in turn they have deceived millions of others" (p.224).

Herbert Armstrong goes on:

"I repeat again and again, GOD IS REPRODUCING HIMSELF!

"The popular teaching in churches today is that THE CHURCH is the kingdom of God. But 'flesh and blood [mortal humans] cannot inherit the kingdom of God' (I Cor.15:50)" (*ibid.*, p.226).

Have you noticed that even this truth is being disregarded and abolished by the new leadership of the Worldwide Church of God?

That's right! Contrary to the plain and clear teaching of Herbert W. Armstrong, and the Bible, the new mountbanks and sycophants of religious hypocrisy have decreed that the Church of God IS the kingdom of God -- that the Kingdom of God is here on earth, through the Church, RIGHT NOW!

Herbert Armstrong wrote:

"That kingdom will NOT be composed of mortal humans! It is NOT composed of mortal flesh-and-blood persons who have 'accepted Christ' and joined a church of their choice! Yet millions of church members are deceived about that today" (ibid.).

The emphasis in the above paragraph was Herbert Armstrong's own. But Joseph Tkach has rewritten this basic, fundamental doctrine, as well. He now teaches that the Church IS "the kingdom of God on earth"! Do you see? *NO WONDER he had to get rid of Herbert W. Armstrong's final and most important book!*

JOSEPH W. TKACH IS A SPIRITUAL "FRAUD"!

Joseph Tkach writes in the May 13, 1991 "Personal from the Editor" column in the *Worldwide News*:

"We are even now inducted into and ruled by the kingdom of God through the Holy Spirit as Christ lives in us.

"Yes, the Church IS, in a special sense, even NOW THE KINGDOM OF GOD. But the Church is certainly not now the fulness of the kingdom,

and certainly not all that the kingdom will yet become in the future, when Jesus Christ returns" (p.7, emphasis MINE!).

Who will you believe -- Joseph Tkach? Or Herbert Armstrong? Herbert Armstrong backs up his teaching with the powerful Scriptures of John 3 and I Corinthians 15. Tkach uses no Scriptural exegesis at all, but a lot of human reasoning and misquoting of Herbert Armstrong. Although Armstrong sometimes compared the church to the Kingdom of God "in embryo," that is NOT the same thing as calling it the Kingdom of God! That which is "in embryo" is NOT YET BORN -- not yet realized -- it is in a pre-birth state -- therefore it is NOT YET the "Kingdom of God," just as Herbert Armstrong so clearly wrote!

But Joseph Tkach is up to his old tricks, deceiving and being deceived!

Herbert Armstrong wrote:

"Then in God's due time -- though the person may die meanwhile -- by a resurrection, or by instantaneous CHANGE to immortality at Christ's coming, he shall be BORN of God -- into the KINGDOM OF GOD -- because GOD *is* that kingdom! He is no longer material flesh from the ground, but composed of spirit, even as God is a Spirit (John 4:24).

"HOW WONDERFUL is the TRUTH OF GOD!

"Yet, by his dastardly deceptions Satan has DECEIVED THE WORLD -- has blinded humanity to the fact that God IS this KINGDOM -- Jesus proclaimed -- and that WE may be *born* as spiritual individuals -- as part of that divine FAMILY -- as part of the GOD KINGDOM!

"How precious is GOD'S TRUTH! God designed reproduction to picture His truth in physical manner and to KEEP US CONSTANTLY IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIS WONDERFUL PLAN OF SALVATION!"

But obviously, Joseph Tkach and his new "team" don't think this is such wonderful truth after all -- because they have REJECTED IT, and ABOLISHED it, and not only claim that the "church IS the kingdom," in Tkach's own words, but that it is NOT God's Plan for us to literally be born of Him and to become VERY GOD! THEY DON'T BELIEVE IT AT ALL!

Again, I say to you -- NO WONDER they had to "get rid of" the book *Mystery of the Ages*, and *The Incredible Human Potential*, as well as virtually ALL the writings of Herbert W. Armstrong, himself -- OR RE-WRITE THEM, WITHOUT ADMITTING TO THE CHANGE IN AUTHORSHIP! Since Herbert Armstrong is dead and buried, there is precious little that he can do about it!

Our Incredible Human Potential

Joseph Tkach and Michael Snyder and their co-horts claim

". . . we would share in the glory of God, but the EXACT TITLE and

RANK OR WHATEVER WE WILL HAVE and the FORM of divine life that we will possess is not fully revealed in the Bible" (Snyder radio interview, quoted at length in April 1991 *Prophecy Flash*).

Is this what Herbert Armstrong taught?

No, it isn't. Nor is it what the Bible teaches, either! On the exact contrary, God does reveal in His Word the EXACT TITLE WE WILL HAVE -- that of "GOD." He also reveals the "rank" we will have -- since God is a Family, and is over ALL the creation, we, too, will be over all the Creation of GOD!

How soon Michael Snyder and his fellows forget!

Or have they deliberately expunged the truth and suppressed it?

Herbert Armstrong explains this fact thoroughly in "Mystery of the Kingdom of God," the last chapter in his remarkable book *Mystery of the Ages*. Notice his words:

"This revealed knowledge of God's purpose for mankind -- of man's incredible awesome potential -- staggers the imagination. Science knows nothing of it -- no religion reveals it, so far as I know -- and certainly higher education is in utter ignorance of it. . . .

"But now let's see what is said in this passage in Hebrews . . . 'Thou hast put all things in subjection under his [man's] feet. For in that he [God] put all in subjection under him [man], he [God] left NOTHING that is not put under him' (Heb.2:8).

"Is it possible God could mean what he says ('all things')? *Nothing* excluded?

"In the first chapter, the Moffatt translation of the Bible renders the Greek word translated 'all things' as 'the universe' (verse 8).

"In other words, for those willing to believe what God says, he says that he has decreed the entire universe -- with all its galaxies, its countless suns and planets -- *everything* -- will be put under man's subjection.

"But *wait a moment!* Before you disbelieve, read the next words in the same eighth verse: 'But now we see *not yet* all things [the endless universe] put under him [man].' Remember (verse 5), this is speaking of the 'world to come' -- not today's world. But what do we see now, today? But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels [or, 'for a little while lower'] for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor.' Man, other than Christ, is NOT YET 'crowned with glory and honor.'

"But see how Christ is already crowned with glory and honor. Continue: 'For it became him, for whom are *all things* [the entire universe] and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings . . . for which cause he [Christ] is not ashamed to call them brethren' (verses 10-11).

"In other words, Christians having God's Spirit are joint heirs with Christ to INHERIT all that Christ already has inherited. He is now in glory! He has already inherited the entire universe. He *sustains* it by his power. Man, if he is converted, having God's Holy Spirit (Rom.8:9), is now only an HEIR -- *not yet* a possessor" (*Mystery of the Ages*, p.356-357).

Does that sound like we don't know the "exact title" or "rank" or "form of divine life that we will possess" in the Kingdom of God? Nonsense! Herbert Armstrong points out that the living Christ already sustains the entire universe by his limitless divine power. He then puts this together with what is revealed in the eighth chapter of the book of Romans. Gradually, Scripture by Scripture, the whole incredible, vast story of God's plan for mankind begins to unfold!

Notice! Herbert Armstrong writes in his plain and clear and easy to understand style:

"Here it speaks of Christ as God's Son: ' . . . that he might be the *firstborn* among many brethren' (Rom.8:29). Humans, having God's Holy Spirit, are *heirs* of God and joint-heirs with Christ -- who, alone of all humans, has already been born as God's Son by a resurrection from the dead (Rom.1:4). He is the FIRST of the human family to be born into the family of God -- the kingdom of God. He is our pioneer who has gone on before. We shall follow at the resurrection of the just at Christ's return to earth in supreme power and glory . . .

"Now continue: 'For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. . . . The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. . . also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us . . .' (Rom.8:14-18). . . .

"What an amazing, marvelous revelation of knowledge!

"No more amazing, awesome, eye-opening passage could be written!

"It is so astonishingly revealing, one doesn't fully grasp it just reading

How Incredibly Fast Truth is LOST!

Stop and consider! Just four short years after the death of Herbert W. Armstrong, some of the most amazing truths which God revealed to Him are once again being suppressed by wicked men and are vanishing out of sight of the very Church which he was led of Christ to found over fifty years ago!

This whole truth about the destiny of man, and God's reproduction of Himself, and the incredible human destiny, is the subject of Herbert Armstrong's book *The Incredible Human Potential*, published in 1978. But that book, too, has been relegated to the dust heap by the successors of Herbert W. Armstrong, and by the one to whom he thought he handed the "baton" of Church leadership!

Since that epochal moment, that sepulchral time, the Church of God has been going steadily downhill and into retrograde motion away from the plain truth of GOD! Everything Herbert Armstrong lived and died for is being buried and interred with him. The truth is being re-written and revised and thrown out the window! Error is no longer creeping into the Church, but is being embraced wholesale, in huge gulps and vast doses. The Church is becoming spiritually drugged, and desensitized, and put into a spiritual "coma" by Tkach and his mendicants of menace.

Are you, too, asleep -- drugged by the narcotic of false doctrine? Are you, too, "under the influence" of Joseph Tkach's spiritual cocaine and heroin? Are you, also, becoming a spiritual "dope addict," and too far gone, spiritually, to recognize the truth when you see it?

May God help you to SNAP OUT OF IT, and WAKE UP, before it is too late!

Chapter 4

Was Jesus Christ the “LORD” of the Old Testament?

Who was the "LORD" or the "YHVH" of the Old Testament? Is there proof in the Old Testament that the One who became Jesus Christ "pre-existed," and that He was also "God"? Just what do we mean by the term "GOD," anyway?

From the very beginning of the Church, during New Testament times, a struggle arose concerning the identity and definition of "God." From the beginning it was fundamental, basic doctrine that there was and is "only one God." Yet, Christians worshipped Christ, and Christ said He came to reveal the "Father." Obviously, two individuals were being worshipped as "God" -- the Saviour and Redeemer of Mankind, whose very name, "Immanuel," means "God with us" (Matt.1:23) -- and remember, God names people according to WHO OR WHAT THEY ARE -- and the One whom Jesus addressed as the "Father."

Jesus Himself said, "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does" (John 5:19-20). Jesus also declared, "No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father" (John 6:46). If these words are literally true -- and they must be -- then the One whom Moses saw, and the seventy elders of the children of Israel, could not have been the divine Father (Exodus 24:9-10; 33:15-23). Who, then, could it have been?

Jesus said to the Jews, "I am not here on my own, but he who sent me is true. You do not know him, but I know him because I am from him and he sent me" (John 7:28-29). Jesus actually claimed, many times, that He came from God. He said, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven" (John 6:41, 51, 58). The One who send another is greater than the One who is sent. Even so, Jesus acknowledged to His

disciples, "The Father is greater than I" (John 14:26).

Was Jesus Christ, in His pre-existent form, the God of Israel who revealed Himself to Moses at the burning bush, and said His name was the "I AM," the LORD, the YHVH, "Yahveh"? Was Jesus Christ the One who led Israel out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, who as a "man of war" overthrew Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea, and who gave the Ten Commandments to Israel and entered into a covenant with them?

What other conclusion can we come to? Jesus was the Word, or "Logos" of God, who came down from heaven and became mortal, to suffer and die for our sins, that we might be reconciled to the Father (John 1:1-3). The apostle Paul wrote, "For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and THAT ROCK WAS CHRIST" (I Cor.10:1-4).

Here Paul plainly alludes to the fact that Jesus Christ was the "Rock" who led Israel out of Egypt. How could this have been true if Christ had no pre-existence, as some say? The term "Rock" is a designation which is applied only to God, the YHVH. David wrote in the Psalms, "The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock in whom I take refuge" (Psalm 18:2).

Was the One who became Jesus Christ the GOD of ancient Israel?

The Saviour and Redeemer of Israel

A number of Scriptures in the Old Testament show that YHVH would come to save Israel Himself -- that YHVH would dwell with Israel personally -- and that YHVH would be the Messiah.

Isaiah declared, "In that day they will say, 'Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the LORD [YHVH], we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation" (Isa.25:9).

The prophet also wrote, "Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way; say to those with fearful hearts, 'Be strong, do not fear; your GOD WILL COME, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you" (Isa.35:3-4). It is Christ who will fulfill this Scripture (Rev.19:11-16). This Scripture is a prophecy of the returning Messiah, who is here plainly called "God."

"And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken" (Isa.40:5). This also is talking about the Messiah. As Matthew wrote, "They will SEE the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and GREAT GLORY" (Matt.24:30).

"See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power, and his arm rules for him. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. He tends his flock like a shepherd: he gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart. He gently leads those that have young" (Isa.40:10-11). This is also a clear reference to the returning Christ. John

writes in Revelation, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever. And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying, 'We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign. The nations were angry; and your wrath has come, the time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great -- and for destroying those who destroy the earth" (Rev.11:15-18).

Christ is here called the "Lord God Almighty." He will begin to reign at His second coming. He will project His wrath upon the wicked nations, judge the dead, and reward His servants. This duty the Father has given into the hands of the Son (Luke 19:12-27; Matt.25:14-30; Matt.25:31-46). Jesus said to His disciples, "I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. And he has given him AUTHORITY TO JUDGE because he is the Son of Man. Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out -- those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned" (John 5:24-29).

Only ONE "Saviour"

Jesus Christ is plainly called the Saviour in many passages. An angel told Joseph at the conception of Christ, ". . . you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins" (Matt.1:21). Christ is "the Savior of the world" (John 4:42). Paul preached, "God has brought Israel the Savior Jesus, as he promised" (Acts 13:23). Paul goes further, in his letter to Titus, and exclaims, ". . . while we wait for the blessed hope -- the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13). Here he clearly calls Jesus not only our Savior but also "our great God." It is Jesus whose appearing, or return, that we await with bated breath and anxious yearning.

Are there two Saviors? Not according to your Bible! There is only ONE Savior - and that is Jesus Christ! The Father has given that responsibility to Christ. The apostles clearly taught, "Salvation is found in NO ONE ELSE, for there is NO OTHER NAME under heaven given to men by which we *must* be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Now notice what Isaiah wrote: Quoting the LORD YHVH, Isaiah declared, "I, even I, am the LORD, and *apart from me there is NO savior*. I have revealed and saved and proclaimed -- I, and not some foreign god among you" (Isa.43:11-12). Clearly, then, there is only ONE Savior -- the YHVH, the One who BECAME Jesus

Christ!

Again, Isaiah quotes God as saying, "And there is no God apart from me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none but me. Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am GOD, and there is no other" (Isa.45:21-22). The reason the One who became Christ says, here, that only He is God and there is no other is not because the Father did not also exist, but because the Father had not been revealed to the world at this time. The Father's identity and existence had been hidden, and was not to be revealed until Christ came and revealed Him!

Isaiah continues along this theme, "The LORD has made proclamation to the ends of the earth; 'Say to the Daughter of Zion, "See, your Savior comes! See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him"" (Isa.62:11).

Notice also the plain and clear statement in Jeremiah: "The days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the NAME by which he will be called: The LORD Our Righteousness" (Jer.23:5-8; see also Jer.33:14-16). What could be clearer than this? Christ is plainly called "The LORD [YHVH] Our Righteousness," and God always names individuals *what they are!*

Jeremiah also tells us, "Yet their Redeemer is strong; the LORD Almighty is his name" (Jer.50:34). In many Scriptures the LORD is referred to as our Redeemer (Isa.41:14; 43:14; 44:6, 24; 47:4; 59:20; 60:16, etc.). Who is our Redeemer? The disciples said to Jesus, whom they did not recognize, after His resurrection, about Christ: ". . . and they crucified him, but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to REDEEM Israel" (Luke 24:20-21). Jesus Christ "redeemed us to God" by His shed blood (Rev.5:9). He is therefore YHVH, the Redeemer!

Ezekiel the Prophet Tells Us Plainly

The prophet Ezekiel explains that the new Temple which is to be built after the return of the Messiah will have an outer gate facing eastward. Ezekiel was told, "This gate is to remain shut. It must not be opened; no one may enter through it. It is to remain shut because the LORD, the God of Israel, has entered through it" (Ezek.44:2). Christ will enter His Temple when He returns (Mal.3:1). The Father will still be in heaven at this time. Therefore, it should be crystal clear that Ezekiel is here calling Christ, the Messiah, who returns to the Temple, "the LORD, the God of Israel."

Interestingly, at that time the city of Jerusalem will also have another name. Ezekiel says, "And the name of the city from that time on will be: THE LORD IS THERE" (Ezek.48:35). Which "LORD" or YHVH will be there at that time? Christ the Messiah!

Joel is also very explicit in referring to the returning warrior-king, the Christ, as the YHVH or LORD. This prophet exclaims, prophetically of the second coming, "Come quickly, all you nations from every side, and assemble there. *Bring down your warriors, O LORD!* Let the nations be roused; let them advance into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I will sit to judge all the nations on every side" (Joel 3:11-12). This clearly refers to Christ returning at the head of a huge army of angelic warriors, the same as we find described in Matthew 24:30-31 and Revelation 19:11-16.

Jude also referred to this truth, when he wrote: "Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: 'See, the LORD is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him'" (Jude 14-15).

The Messiah as YHVH Personally

Isaiah foretold, "A voice of one calling: 'In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God'" (Isa.40:3). John the Baptist fulfilled that role, crying in the deserts of Judea, preparing the way for Christ (John 1:23, 29-30). Therefore, Christ and the LORD must be identical!

In Isaiah 9:6 we also read: "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called, Wonderful, Counselor, MIGHTY GOD, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." This child obviously refers to Jesus Christ -- and He is here identified as "Mighty GOD." Compare this statement with Isaiah 10:21 -- "A remnant will return, a remnant of Jacob will return to the Mighty God."

In Micah 5:2 we read further: "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, *whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.*" Paul wrote to the Colossians, "For in Christ all the FULLNESS OF THE DEITY lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority" (Col.2:9-10).

The Throne of YHVH

Isaiah records that he actually saw the LORD. He declared, "In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: 'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.' At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. 'Woe to me!' I cried, 'I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and MY EYES HAVE SEEN the King, the LORD Almighty'" (Isa.6:1-5).

The apostle John tells us that no one has seen the Father at any time (John 6:46). John also wrote, "No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known" (John 1:18).

Putting these verses together, then, it becomes perfectly clear that the LORD Almighty whom Isaiah says he clearly saw, was none other than the One who became Jesus Christ!

The writers of the New Testament applied many classic passages in the Old Testament which referred to YHVH directly to Christ. Both YHVH and Christ are the "shepherd" (Psalm 23:1; Isa.40:1-11; John 10:1-14; Heb.13:20; I Pet.2:25, 5:4). Both YHVH and Christ are referred to as the JUDGE at the last day (Psalm 50:1-6; II Thess.1:7-10).

Both YHVH and Christ are referred to as leading captives (Psalm 68:15-18; Eph.4:8). Both are also regarded as the "stumbling stone" or "rock of offense" (Isa.8:12-15; I Peter 2:8). Both YHVH and Christ are identified as bringing their reward with them (Isa.40:9-11; 62:11-12; Rev.22:12). Both are known as the "Holy One" (Isa.43:3; Acts 3:14). Both YHVH and Christ are called "the first and the last" (Isa.44:6; Rev.1:7-8, 17-18; 2:8; 22:13).

Both the LORD of the Old Testament and Christ are also known as "the searcher of the mind and heart" (Jer.11:20; 17:10; 20:12; Rev.2:23). Both are also known as the "branch" (Jer.23:5; Zech.3:8, 6;12). Both are also known as the "messenger of the covenant" (Mal.3:1-2; Matt.11:10). Both are also identified as the one whom we are to call upon their name for deliverance (Joel 2:32; Rom.10:9-15).

Zechariah's Plain Proof!

Perhaps one of the most striking proofs that Christ is to be identified with YHVH of the Old Testament is found in comparing Zechariah's prophecy with a prophecy found in the book of Acts. In Zechariah 14 we read: "A day of the LORD is coming when your plunder will be divided among you. I will gather all nations to Jerusalem to fight against it; the city will be captured, the houses ransacked, and the women raped. . . . Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations as he fights in the day of battle. *On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem,* and the Mount of Olives will be split in two . . ." (Zech.14:1-4).

In Acts, chapter 1, we read that the disciples watched as Jesus ascended to heaven. After Jesus gave them final instructions, "he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood before them. 'Men of Galilee,' they said, 'why do you stand here looking up into the sky? *This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.*' Then they returned to Jerusalem from the hill called *the*

Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city" (Acts 1:9-12).

Jesus arose to heaven from the Mount of Olives. He will return to the Mount of Olives, when He comes down from heaven, to fight against His enemies and take over His Kingdom. So will the LORD YHVH, according to the prophecy of Zechariah! Clearly Christ and the YHVH must be One and the same!

The "I AM" According to Jesus

Did Jesus confirm the truth of this identification in His own words? Jesus said to His disciples, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world" (John 8:23). He added, "If you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins" (verse 24). In verse 58 of this same chapter, Jesus makes it perfectly plain: "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, '*before Abraham was, I am!*' At this they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds" (John 8:58-59).

Also, in Jesus' encounter with those who came to take Him prisoner, He asked them, "Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, *I am*. . . . Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they answered, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered them, I have told you that *I AM*: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none" (John 18:4-9). Although the King James Version has "I am *he*," notice that the "he" is in italics, meaning it was supplied by the translators. In the original Greek, Jesus simply replied to them, "I AM."

This name, "I AM," is the very name, of course, by which YHVH revealed Himself to Moses at the burning bush! "Moses said to God, 'Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, "The God of your fathers has sent me to you," and they ask me, "What is his name?" Then what shall I tell them?' God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you' " (Exodus 3:13-14).

Jesus plainly, then, on suitable occasions, referred to Himself as the "I AM," the YHVH of the Old Testament! He was the One who inter-acted with the patriarchs, and who sat down to dinner with Abraham and Sarah (Gen.18:1-15) and who spoke with Abraham about the future of Sodom and Gomorrah (verses 22-33). He is the One who wrestled with Jacob until his thigh was out of joint 24-29). Jacob called the name of that place Peniel, saying, "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life has been spared" (Gen.32:30).

All of these Scriptures point in the clear direction of identifying the YHVH of the Old Testament as the same person and being as Jesus Christ of the New Testament! Only rarely does the term YHVH in the Old Testament refer to the Father, whose identity remained obscured and hidden from view. One such example is Psalm 2:7 where we read: "I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, 'You are my

Son; today I have become your Father." Another such Scripture is Psalm 110:1, where we read: "The LORD says to my Lord: 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.' The LORD will extend your mighty scepter from Zion; you will rule in the midst of your enemies. . . . The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind: 'You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek'" (Psalm 110:1-4). These Scriptures do mention the Father also as YHVH, but the Jews did not understand them (Matt.22:41-45).

The Monotheism of Israel

In the vast majority of cases, the YHVH of the Old Testament, of Israel, was not the Father, but the pre-existent One known as the Logos (John 1:1-3) who became Jesus Christ, the Messiah. Jesus was the YHVH before His human birth.

Does this concept destroy or do violence to the Monotheism of Israel? Does it fly in the face of the commandment, "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have NO OTHER GODS before me" (Exodus 20:1-2). In Deuteronomy 6:5 we read: "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is *ONE*. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength" (Deut.6:4-5).

Christ said He and the Father are One. They are perfect in UNITY. Yet they are two separate individual beings. This wonderful truth does not make the Monotheism of Israel any less true, for the Father was unknown and beyond the scope of the knowledge of the children of Israel, only vaguely alluded to in a few Scriptures. The instances where the New Testament writers equate YHVH with the Father is easily explained -- the YHVH who became Christ always acted as an agent of the Supreme God beyond Him, as the Spokesman of the Father -- even though the Father was "invisible" and had not yet been revealed. The New Testament writers wrote from their own now enlightened understanding that God the Father, through YHVH-Christ, had actually been behind the scenes all along and running the show through Him.

Revelation is progressive. God revealed more about Himself in Moses' time than He had in Abraham's time. In Christ's time, much more revelation was added to the picture. Even more clarification was added when John was inspired to write the book of Revelation, around 90 A.D. And God is still revealing more about His Word and His prophecies in this End-time generation, just as Daniel the prophet foretold (Daniel 12:9).

When YHVH was Israel's Supreme Deity, so far as they were given knowledge, the Father was unknown in those times (John 1:18; 14:26). Therefore, the Israelites worshiped directly only the YHVH revealed to them -- the One who became Christ, and He was the revealed Supreme Deity. But when Yahveh became a human being, and became humanly incarnated as the Christ, He delivered up the title "God" and "YHVH" to God the Father, whom He progressively began to reveal. YHVH became human and

revealed to humanity the previously unknown Father as God. Thus Israel's LORD YHVH is identified with the One who became the Messiah, Jesus Christ, and not with the Father, in the vast majority of Old Testament Scriptures.

Jesus addressed God as *abba*, or "Father," and taught His disciples to do so also (Luke 11:2). The word *abba*, however, doesn't just mean "Father." It is the very intimate, informal, familiar form of address reserved for members of the intimate family circle. It could be translated "Dad" or "Papa." Jesus Himself said to the women who saw Him after His resurrection, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God'" (John 20:17).

New Testament Terminology

Interestingly, now that Jesus has become the human Savior, and Redeemer, the tendency in the New Testament, in order to distinguish between Him and the Father, is to generally speak of the Father as "God" and Christ as the "Lord" and "Messiah." Paul writes, ". . . yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live" (I Cor.8:6).

In Galatians 1:1 Paul speaks of "Jesus Christ and God the Father." And to the Ephesians he wrote of "one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all" (Eph.4:4-6). To the Philippians, Paul wrote, "Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil.1:2). Also, to the Thessalonians, Paul addressed his letter, "To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thess.1:1). This is standard, normal New Testament usage.

In New Testament, now that the Father has been revealed, the name of "God" is generally used in application to Him, and Christ is referred to as our "Savior," "Lord," coming "King," and elder "Brother." Does this prove that Jesus is not "God," as some would have us believe? Not at all. Now that the Father has been REVEALED, who is indeed the Supreme Head of the God Family, we should ALL look upon Him as our GOD! Jesus said very clearly that we should address our prayers to the Father, even as Christ Himself did. Jesus said, "This, then, is how you should pray: 'OUR FATHER in heaven . . .'" (Matt.6:9). Our prayers are to be directed to the Father, in the name of Christ -- not directed to Christ Himself!

Christ Himself set us this example. He prayed, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours, be done" (Luke 22:42). He addressed His prayers to the Father, setting us an example to follow (I Pet.2:21; I John 2:6). Obviously, the Father is greater than Christ, even though both are clearly "God" and the name YHVH applies to both of them. When the plan of God is finished, "Then the end will come, when he [Christ] hands over the kingdom to God the Father" (I Cor.15:24). God the Father will put everything in subjection to the rule of Christ, with, of course,

the exception of Himself! As Paul explained, "Now when it says that 'everything' has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. When he has done this, then the Son will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all" (I Cor.15:27-28).

It seems obvious to me, as it did to the writers of the New Testament, that now that God the Father has been revealed, as the Supreme God and Head of the Family of God, that we should address Him as "God" and as our "Father" both, even as Jesus Christ, our Elder Brother, did.

In His final prayer for His disciples and the church, He prayed, "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they may know *you*, THE ONLY TRUE GOD, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence *with the glory I had with you before the world began*" (John 17:1-5).

Notice! In this remarkable statement, Jesus refers to the Father as the "only true God." Yet He also clearly alludes to the "glory" which He possessed WITH THE FATHER before the world began. The only way to reconcile all these Scriptures, without doing violence to any of them, is to realize that even though Jesus Christ was the Logos, a pre-existent Being and Member of the Godhead, and is the "Son of God," nowhere does the Scripture refer to Him as a member of some divine "Trinity" or call Him "God the Son." Jesus is plainly under the authority of the Father -- they are NOT "co-equal," as Trinitarian doctrine argues. Christ is subject to the Father; He is less than the Father; the Father is greater than He is (John 14:28). Therefore, although Jesus is also God, He is lesser in authority than the Father, and we, even though we are to become "Gods" in the Family of God, are still to always address our worship and prayers to the Father, to whom Christ has transferred the main thrust of our worship. Although we still worship Christ, for He is also God, the emphasis of our worship is directed to the Father, who is all in all.

Unfortunately, the truth of God has been buried for centuries under an avalanche of pagan superstition, heretical "orthodoxy," and incorrect terminology inherited from mainstream "Christian" orthodoxy. Very few, today, understand that Jesus Christ was the Logos and YHVH of the Old Testament -- very few Churches understand it!

Thank God He has given us His precious truth -- the truth about our Savior, Redeemer, and Messiah -- the Lord Jesus Christ!

Chapter 5

Who Is the “ONLY True God”?

Who is the true and living God? Who is the God of the Old Testament? Who is the Creator? How many Gods does the Bible speak of as the "only true God"? Who is the LORD (YHVH)? What is the REAL ORIGIN of the "Word" or "Logos" of God? Is the true God a Duality or a Trinity? What does Scripture mean by the expression "the FAMILY of God" (Eph.3:15)? What is the REAL DIFFERENCE between God the Father and the Logos or One who became Jesus Christ? It's time the TRUTH were fully understood, once and for all time!

The Scriptures teach that ultimately and originally, in the strict sense of the word, that there was ONE GOD -- the One who became the Father. Jesus Christ Himself stated this fact unequivocally when He said, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee THE ONLY TRUE GOD, and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent" (John 17:3).

The apostle Paul corroborated this sublime and divine truth when he wrote to the Corinthians, "As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered unto idols, we know that an idol is is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but ONE. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) but to us THERE IS BUT ONE GOD, THE FATHER, of whom are ALL THINGS, and we in him; and ONE LORD JESUS CHRIST, by whom are all things, and we by him" (I Cor.8:4-6).

Notice! The inspired Word of God, which cannot be broken (John 10:35), which is TRUTH (John 17:17), says plainly that the Father, in the ultimate sense, is the "One GOD" from whom or of whom are "ALL THINGS." That by necessity means EVERYTHING -- including the One who later became Jesus Christ, the Son of God!

There is, therefore, a clear differentiation made between the ONE ORIGINAL, ULTIMATE BEING KNOWN AS "GOD," and called "God" in these Scriptures, and

the other Being known as the "Word" or "Logos" of God, the One who became our Saviour and Redeemer, Lord and Master, Jesus Christ!

The Bible does not contradict itself. Jesus Christ was not just mumbling in His final prayer for His disciples to the Father, nor was the apostle Paul absent-mindedly misstating the truth. Both were telling the absolute, unequivocal truth -- and a great, awesome TRUTH it really is, when we come to fully understand it, and its vast meaning and amplifications and repercussions, and significance for US, who today are the "begotten CHILDREN OF GOD!"

"In the Beginning Was the WORD"

In the book of John we read, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with GOD, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning WITH God. All things were made by him; and without him nothing was made that was made" (John 1:1-3). And verse 14 tells us, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

Notice! There is a clear distinction made here between One called "God," and One who is called the "Word." Although the Word is also said to be "God," and was instrumental in the entire Creation of the Universe, nevertheless, there seems to be a clear point made here that this Word was with One who was primarily known as "GOD." The Greek word for "God" in these verses is Theos, and can mean, "a deity, the supreme Divinity, figuratively, a magistrate, God, god," and so forth (Strong's Concordance, #2316). The context, of course, must tell us which is the correct definition in each individual case.

This verse simply states that these two individuals both existed "IN THE BEGINNING," and that both were "God," yet there was a subtle and important difference between the two. The phrase "in the beginning" is interesting. The literal, explicit, original Greek translated "in the beginning" actually was simply, "IN BEGINNING," or "IN A BEGINNING." The article "the" was supplied by English translators.

Similarly, in Genesis 1:1 we read, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." In this verse, the original Hebrew simply states, "Bereshit bara," that is, "In [a] beginning." The article "the" is once again supplied by the translators. Moffatt renders this verse simply, "When God began to form the Universe . . ." The Ferrar Fenton translation has this verse, "BY PERIODS God created that which produced the Solar Systems; then that which produced the Earth." In a footnote to this passage he states, interestingly, about the phrase "by periods,"

"Literally, 'By Headships.' It is curious that all translators from the Septuagint have rendered this word *bereshitii*, into the singular, ALTHOUGH IT IS PLURAL in the Hebrew. So I rendered it accurately."

In other words, the original Hebrew says, "In beginnings," or, "by beginnings." Furthermore, the Word for "God" here is "Elohim," which literally means, "The Mighty Ones." It is a unitary-plural word, much like "church" or "family" in English. A "church" or "family" may be composed of two or more individuals or people -- one church or one family, yet many members in that church or family.

What, then, should we learn from these verses? First of all, we should realize that there were MANY BEGINNINGS -- not just ONE! The record of geology of the earth bears this out. There was a time when God created the kinds of life we see on the earth today. There was a time when He created a PREVIOUS world -- the world of the dinosaurs. There was a time when He created the world of the trilobites and ancient sea creatures. Then, of course, there was the time when He created THE EARTH ITSELF, and the HEAVENS. Scientists surmise that the earth and solar system are perhaps 5 billion years old, but the Universe as a whole with all its galaxies is believed to be, by evidence of the "red shift" effect caused by retreating galaxies, something in the range of 15-20 billion years old. Thus God is responsible for what we could term "A SERIES OF CREATIONS," AND NOT JUST ONE!

Even before the physical Universe was made, God created the angelic world. God tells us in the book of Job, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? . . . Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; when the MORNING STARS SANG TOGETHER, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" (Job 38:4-7). The time when the angels were created, then, PRECEDED the time of the creation of the earth itself!

This brings up an interesting question. What was the very FIRST of all God's Creations? Interesting, Jesus, who was the Logos or Word of God (John 1:1-3), says, in the book of Revelation, "I am Alpha and Omega, the FIRST and the last" (Rev.1:18). Some think Jesus simply meant here that He was the first begotten of God, and the first one BORN of God in the resurrection. But that is NOT what He said! He simply said, "I am the FIRST"! Was He implying by this that in an original "beginning," that He Himself was the FIRST of all the original Created Beings, the FIRST one to be created and to come into existence?

With this tantalizing thought in mind, notice that Jesus later said to the Laodicean Church, "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, THE BEGINNING OF THE CREATION OF GOD" (Rev.3:14). Jesus reiterated, "I am Alpha and Omega, THE BEGINNING and the ending" (Rev.1:8). He repeated this expression in Revelation 21:6 and said in Revelation 22:13, "I am Alpha and Omega, the BEGINNING and the end, the FIRST and the last."

The word translated "beginning" in all these verses is the VERY SAME WORD TRANSLATED AS "BEGINNING" IN JOHN 1:1! Throughout the New Testament, in 39 places, it is translated "beginning." It is at no time translated "beginner," or "originator," or "some similar term." It is always used in terms of describing a

beginning, not one who "begins" by "creating" or "originating" something else! It is the word *arche*, in Greek, and means "a commencement, or (concrete) chief (in various applications of ORDER, TIME, PLACE, OR RANK): beginning, corner, first, magistrate, power, principality, principle, rule" (Strong's Concordance, #746).

Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon says of this word, "1. beginning, origin. a. used absolutely of the beginning of all things. b. in a relative sense, of the beginning of the thing spoken of. 2. the person or thing that commences, the FIRST PERSON OR THING IN A SERIES, THE LEADER. 3. that by which anything begins to be, the origin, active cause. 4. the extremity of a thing: of the corners of a sail. 5. the first place, principality, rule, magistracy."

When this term is used in the sense of "beginning," it is clear that the most probable rendering would be simply "the beginning" -- describing One whose origins were at the "beginning," as well as describing One who was indeed the "first Person in a SERIES" -- that is, the FIRST ONE TO BE CREATED or the FIRST ONE TO BECOME OR BE MADE GOD, by a procreative act of the Father, or the first One to be BORN of God at the resurrection!

Jesus Christ is the "first in a series." The apostle Paul wrote, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But EVERY MAN IN HIS OWN ORDER: CHRIST THE FIRSTFRUITS; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father . . ." (I Cor.15:22-24).

Much of the truth of the Bible is DUAL. Much prophecy is dual in application. Even so, many spiritual truths, also, have a DUAL meaning. Even as Christ was the FIRST in a series of "men" to be born of God at the resurrection, using the duality principle, was He not also IN THE BEGINNING the "first" of all God's created Beings, One made like the Father, and who also therefore was "God"?

This is indeed a "mind-blowing truth," a revelation of the highest order of importance and significance. It is literally AWESOME to contemplate! It "blows you away." The ramifications are enormous. This would mean that God the Father HAS THE ABILITY to CREATE IN HIS OWN SPIRITUAL IMAGE OTHERS LIKE HIMSELF! That is, like all living things, He, too, has the ABILITY TO "REPRODUCE" HIMSELF!

But why should this be thought "impossible" in the eyes of men? Why should it be considered blasphemy, or heresy, or "impossible," for GOD to "reproduce"?

The Truth about GOD

Let's understand this! God, whom we call the "Father," created first His own original offspring, the Logos, or Word, who was later incarnated as Jesus Christ the Messiah (John 1:1-3, 14). Through the Logos or Word, He originally made all things

(the Son or Logos Himself excepted) that exist in the universe (John 1:1-3, Col.1:13-18; Heb.1:1-2).

Then, at the creation of mankind, we read, "And God [Elohim, the "Mighty Ones"] said, Let us make MAN IN OUR IMAGE, AFTER OUR LIKENESS . . . So God CREATED MAN IN HIS OWN IMAGE in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Genesis 1:26, 27). God then blessed them, and "God said unto them, BE FRUITFUL, AND MULTIPLY, and replenish ["FILL"] the earth . . ." (verse 28).

Do we begin to grasp this fundamental truth, this awesome principle? WE ARE IN GOD'S IMAGE! But why would He do that? Obviously, He is RE-CREATING or REPRODUCING HIMSELF -- AS A FAMILY! Through us He intends ultimately to Himself MULTIPLY the members in His God Family! From the TWO that exist at present, He intends to eventually have BILLIONS!

Today we are in God's image, but physical, fleshly, and we can die and perish. But ultimately, God intends for us to be made SPIRITUAL, to become SPIRIT as HE is Spirit -- and then we will possess all the attributes of the Godhead, God Himself!

What an incredible Plan! What a mind-boggling, dumfounding Idea! God the Father has thought it through; He has examined all the ramifications and implications; and He has decided that it is GOOD for Him to do so. In fact, we read in Genesis, "And God saw everything that he had made [including man], and, behold, IT WAS VERY GOOD" (Genesis 1:31). That is God's own estimation and valuation of His Creation, and His PLAN for mankind!

We have the potential to become born of God, spirit beings -- sons of God -- very members of the GOD FAMILY, Jesus being our Elder Brother -- in the resurrection (Heb.2:6-9; II Cor.6:17-18; Eph.3:14-15), carrying the very NAME of "God" (Eph.3:14-15).

We will be just like Jesus, who is the image of the Father, so we will also be the image of the Father (I John 3:1-2, Heb.1:1-3). We will have attributes of the Father, and look like Him, and like Christ, even as members of a human family are all human and resemble their parents (Phil.3:21). This is of course a great divine "mystery," beyond full human understanding and comprehension ("we see as through a glass darkly" -- I Cor.13:12).

God's Amazing, Incredible Plan

However, let me be plain -- the Bible is replete with incontrovertible evidence that Christ pre-existed His human form. He was not merely a human babe born of Mary, with no pre-existence in the God Family. He was originally the "agent" of the Father who created the entire universe. But He was more than just an "agent." Angels, sent with messages, are also "agents." But He was a SON of the Father by original creation,

and was FULLY DIVINE in every respect, and therefore ALSO bore the name "YHVH" (Zech.14:1-4, I Cor.10:4; Psa.45:1-6) and "Elohim" (Gen.1:1). Therefore, we do not need to stretch or twist the Scriptures to suggest that every place where the One who is called YHVH in the Old Testament, it actually refers to the Father, and that when this term is used to refer to Christ, it merely means as the "agent" of the Father. God does not call His "agents" by His own name. As Isaiah said, quoting God, "I am the LORD: that is my NAME: and my glory [including His name!] will I not give to another . . ." (Isa.42:8).

As Paul wrote to the Hebrews, "For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?" (Heb.1:5). Angels do not say, "I AM YHVH." They say, "YHVH sent me," or "the Most High sent me." Therefore they are not "very God," or literal "sons of God," and members of the divine God Family, as Jesus Christ is. God does not give His Name to another who is merely His agent. He only gives His name to HIS SON (or sons). David specifically said, "The LORD [YHVH] is my shepherd" (Psa.23:1). Who is this "LORD"? Jesus Christ Himself is the "Good Shepherd" (John 10:11-14). Therefore, He is the "LORD" [YHVH].

To believe or say that YHVH always only refers to the Father in the Old Testament makes Christ a liar, who said no man had ever seen the Father, yet Moses and 70 of the elders of Israel looked upon and ate a meal with YHVH (Exodus 24:10). However, in the Ultimate sense, the Father is the only true God -- the rest of us are His offspring, including Jesus Christ, who, however, has the pre-eminence over all the rest of us. He is unique.

Is Christ also "VERY GOD"? What does this Mean?

Jesus Christ said, "My Father is greater than I" (John 10:27-30; 5:19-30). Jesus also said, "All power is GIVEN me in heaven and in earth" (Matt.28:19-20). Eventually the Son also Himself shall be subject to the Father, when He delivers up the Kingdom to Him (I Cor.15:24-28). The apostle Paul said, "But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him" (see I Cor.8:4-6, especially v.6). As I Timothy 2:5 says, "For there is but one God, and one mediator between God and men, the MAN Christ Jesus."

Do these Scriptures "put the lie" to the amazing discovery we have already seen, that Jesus Christ is also GOD, and that we have the potential to become God-beings as well?

Not at all! Many people have a pagan concept of God, and they think of Him as a sort of all-encompassing, static, ethereal Being who fills the Universe and knows the future from the beginning -- who is changeless, absolute -- like some sort of "spiritual CONCRETE." They fail to understand what it means for God to be a sensate, living, active, dynamic, thinking, planning, creating, functioning, actively involved BEING

who Himself has dreams, desires, emotions, feelings, marvelous ideas which He would someday like to implement in His Universe -- as well as someday even create billions of more "Universes"!

God is not some Monolithic Giant, faceless, austere, stern, never-bending, unyielding, adamant. When men became grossly evil before the Flood, we read, "And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it GRIEVED him at his heart" (Genesis 6:6).

But despite obstacles, set-backs, and "trials," God is persevering with His Plan for mankind. He is determined to accomplish it, and to FINISH it! As Job wrote, "If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my CHANGE come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a DESIRE to the work of thine hands" (Job 14:14-15).

Satan's Greatest Deceptions

Satan the devil has truly deceived the whole world -- all nations (Rev.12:9). He has blinded the minds of those who do not believe or understand this fascinating, epochal truth of God (II Cor.4:4). Let's understand!

On the one hand, Satan has deceived the world's churches into believing that God is some sort of mystical "Trinity." Thus they believe that GOD IS LIMITED FOREVER, like a "closed triangle."

On the other hand, Satan has deceived others into thinking and believing that Jesus Christ Himself is NOT "divine," or truly "God" at all. They believe that He was simply a "man" who "made good"! They believe that He had no pre-existence whatsoever. One such teacher is Anthony Buzzard, a former student at Ambassador College, back in the late 50's and early 60's, when I also was a student there. He claims Jesus is not God and ridicules His pre-existence. One of his favorite expressions or questions seems to be something like, "How can something *exist* before it is even *born*?" Thus in his writing he creates doubt and weakens the faith of many.

What is the truth of the matter? Satan, like any clever deceiver, has created deceptions to catch people in his net, by teaching TWO EXTREMES -- the false doctrine of the Trinity, which makes Christ "co-equal" with the Father, and "co-eternal"; and the false deception which relegates Christ's divinity to the class of superstition and fraud!

Concerning the divinity of Christ, the truth, as is often the case, lies right in the MIDDLE of these two extreme positions! The Anthony Buzzard view of Christ, and that of many others, that He was simply a man who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and had no pre-existence, is tantamount to denying the Saviour, a doctrine of demons, causing loss of salvation. As Peter prophesied, "There shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, EVEN DENYING THE LORD that

bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction" (II Pet.2:1).

Such a doctrine leads to many difficulties, including how the death of one mere man could possibly atone for the sins of multiple BILLIONS of humans? Only a life worth the lives of billions could balance the scales and make such an atonement.

On the other hand, the Trinitarian view of God is pagan, and has no basis in the Scriptures. Nowhere does either the Old or New Testaments show or teach that God is a "Trinity" composed of three Persons. The Scriptures do not teach that the Holy Spirit is a "Person" at all, but rather the POWER of God (Luke 1:35).

Also, those who teach that Christ existed forever, with the Father, are teaching what could be called "a DUAL Godhead." This would imply that Christ and the Father are EQUAL in every respect -- co-equal, co-eternal. But the Scriptures simply do not teach this!

If you read God's Word closely, you see that Christ is SUBORDINATE to the Father, clearly. The Father is #1, if I may put it that way. Christ, who was created as His Companion, in the very beginning, is #2. The Father is SUPREME and always will be; He is also "the One True God," in the ultimate sense, as all others come from/flow from HIM, as He chooses and directs.

The Father is the Supreme HEAD of the God Family, and always will be. Jesus repeated said the Father "sent" Him, and one who sends another is greater than the one sent. Jesus Himself declared clearly, "My Father is GREATER Than I" (JOHN 14:28).

Some say that my teaching is very similar to the Trinity view, since I have written that "Christ is VERY GOD," and said He is "VERY God of VERY GOD." However, there are major differences between the truth of God, revealed in Scripture, and the "Trinity" view of God! The Trinity concept LIMITS God and the God-head to "three Persons." Is God limited? The very word "Elohim" in Genesis 1:1, means "The MIGHTY ONES," a uni-plural word, like "family" or "church." The singular form is "El," which means "The Mighty One." God used this word of Himself in Genesis. God said, "Let us make man IN OUR image" (Gen.1:26). We human beings are now in His physical likeness; someday, in the resurrection, we will be in His SPIRITUAL LIKENESS!

Men and women "reproduce" after their own image and likeness, through genetic sexual reproduction. Can we limit God? Can we tell the Father that He cannot reproduce new God beings in His own GOD Family? He will always be the HEAD, and no one is really co-equal or co-eternal with Him. We will be younger God beings, descended from Him and Christ (The Logos).

We will all be ONE as Christ and the Father are, together "One." They are one family, one in thinking and planning and acting, one in substance and essence -- ONE IN NATURE -- TOTALLY UNIFIED AND COMPLETE IN EACH OTHER -- they

are "one Spirit" in a sense in which a husband and wife are "one flesh," a mystery to us, but a deep truth of God which transcends human understanding.

Jesus spoke of this sublime truth. He wrote: "That they all may BE ONE; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be ONE IN US. . . . And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may BE ONE, even AS WE ARE ONE: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be PERFECT IN ONE . . ." (John 17:21-23).

This is speaking of a very intimate, close relationship -- something we can scarcely comprehend or understand. But human marriage is a TYPE of the divine relationship. The human FAMILY is also a TYPE of the God Family. Yes, Jesus Christ IS "God," and we will be His younger brothers (Rom.8:17), co-heirs with Him of the KINGDOM OF GOD! To put it another way, the "Kingdom of God," the true gospel which we preach, when we really understand it, is that GOD IS A KINGDOM. Human kingdoms are merely a TYPE of the supreme, divine GOD KINGDOM. Human kingdoms are filled with and composed of human beings. The GOD KINGDOM WILL BE FILLED WITH DIVINE SONS OF GOD -- HIS EXPANDED, SUPER-FAMILY of "GODS" JUST LIKE HIM, but subordinate, under His everlasting authority, ONE with Him in plan, thought, motivation, and deed, just as He and Christ are ONE!

Perhaps the orderliness and togetherness, in the animal world, of an ant colony, or a bee hive, gives us a faint illustration of the PERFECT UNITY which ALL MEMBERS OF THE GOD FAMILY will have in the GOD KINGDOM!

This is an astonishing, incredible truth which God has revealed through His servants, the apostles and prophets, and His Word. Very few, today, understand it.

*Is the One Who Became Jesus Christ Sometimes
the YHVH of the Old Testament?*

I have written before that Jesus Christ was, in many Scriptures, the YHVH of the Old Testament -- the One who will stand someday on the Mount of Olives (Zech.14:4; Acts 1:9-12). Jesus clearly said that no human being has ever seen the Father or even heard His voice (John 1:18; 5:37). Yet Moses heard the voice of YHVH (Exodus 34-14), and so did all Israel (Exo.20:18-20). Moses and 70 of the elders of Israel sat down and ATE with YHVH, and "SAW THE GOD OF ISRAEL" (Exo.24:9-11). This could not have been the Father, who had never been seen by man; so it must have been the One who became Christ! (I Cor.10:4). My articles, "Is Jesus God?" and "Who Was the YHVH of the Old Testament" discuss this subject fully.

Nevertheless, the Father is greater than the Son, and the original "one True God," the Father, is greater than the Word or Logos of God. Paul makes this difference in rank and authority in the Kingdom of God very plain. He wrote to the Corinthians, "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the

Father" (I Cor.15:24). Paul goes on, "And when all things shall be subdued unto him, *then shall the Son also himself* be SUBJECT unto him that put all things under him, that GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL" (I Cor.15:24-28).

Read that last phrase very carefully: "*that God may BE ALL in ALL.*" That is not just rhetorical nonsense. It is not just vain puffery. It is LITERAL! IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD, GOD WILL BE *IN US ALL* -- AND WE WILL BE *IN HIM!* God will literally be *ALL IN ALL!*

Can we really grasp the overwhelming significance of this wonderful truth of God? The Father is God in the PRIMARY sense, and Christ, or the Word or Logos, is God in a SECONDARY sense. Also, those BORN of God in the resurrection will also be God, in a TERTIARY sense! Does this not make wonderful "sense"? In the strict and absolute sense, as the apostle Paul wrote, there is "ONE GOD and one mediator, the man Christ Jesus" (I Tim.2:5). This, however, does not mean that Christ is not also "God."

In Hebrews, chapter 1, we read that Jesus is the one whom God, the Father, "hath appointed HEIR of all things, BY WHOM also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the EXPRESS IMAGE of his person, and upholding all things

by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb.1:1-3). Of this same Jesus, the Father says, "Let all the angels of God WORSHIP him" (verse 6). Since He is worthy of WORSHIP, He must also be "God"! To worship anything besides "God," would be IDOLATRY!

Furthermore, the Father Himself calls Christ "God." We read, "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O GOD, is for ever and ever" (verse 8)! Clearly Jesus Christ is ALSO VERY GOD! There should be NO QUESTION OR DOUBT about this fundamental, clear, precise TRUTH! Being the very "Son of God," by itself, meant that Jesus was GOD! Even as the son of a human father is also "human"!

The Son or Offspring of God -- a DUALITY!

However, Christ was the SON of the Father in a DUAL sense. He became the "Son of God," by being born as His Son from the womb of the virgin Mary. But, in another sense, He was also God the Father's "original Son" by CREATION or some form of Divine Reproduction which the Father has not revealed, but we see all kinds of reproduction of living things in nature -- cell division, sexual, asexual, and so forth.

This truth is hinted at in Proverbs 8 where one called "Wisdom" says: "The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I WAS BROUGHT FORTH . . . Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I BROUGHT FORTH: While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields

. . . When he prepared the heavens, I WAS THERE . . . Then I was BY him, as one BROUGHT UP with him [note that "with him" is in italics, and was supplied by the King James Translators; this expression was not in the original Hebrew, and is really not necessary for understanding the context!]: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him" (Prov.8:22-30).

This is the One who BECAME Jesus Christ. Notice how He says He was "BROUGHT FORTH." This is very important! Now notice the Words of Christ Jesus Himself! He said in His prayer to the Father: "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine OWNSELF with the glory which I HAD WITH THEE *before the world was*" (John 17:5).

Jesus also said to His disciples, "For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I CAME OUT FROM GOD. I CAME FORTH FROM THE FATHER, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father" (John 16:27-28). Did you get that? Did you understand it? JESUS CAME OUT FROM GOD THE FATHER! This is a divine mystery, a great incomprehensible mystery -- but Jesus said it, and He meant it, LITERALLY!

If we believe He meant exactly what He said, then at some time in the primordial past, before the Creation, He came out from the Father as a separate BEING -- a Companion for the Father of His very own substance and essence!

Jesus further alluded to this when He said, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last" (Rev.1:11), and also, "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the BEGINNING OF THE CREATION OF GOD" (Revelation 3:14).

What an awesome truth! May God the Father give you grace, and mercy, to really comprehend this wonderful, awesome, incredible truth!

Has Jesus Christ Existed Throughout All Eternity?

One person wrote to me, saying, in essence, "John 1:1-3 says the Word -- Jesus Christ -- made or created ALL things. If He Himself were created, then this Scripture could not be literally true, could it? Furthermore, Hebrews 7:3 says Melchizedek -- a name for Jesus prior to His human birth -- was 'without father, without mother, WITHOUT BEGINNING OF DAYS . . .' Does this not imply He must be eternal, with no beginning, and therefore not "created" at some point? Habakkuk 1:12 says, 'O LORD (Jesus Christ), are you not from EVERLASTING?' Psalm 90:1-2 says, '. . . From everlasting to everlasting you [YHVH or Christ] are God.'" And in several places, the YHVH, and Christ Himself, are identified as the "I AM," a timeless expression where past, present and future are meaningless concepts (see John 8:58, Rev.1:17-18, 21:2-6, 22:6). In Isaiah 9:6 Jesus is referred to as 'Everlasting Father,' and in Isaiah 63:16 we read, 'You O LORD [YHVH] are our Father; Our Redeemer [Jesus Christ] FROM EVERLASTING is your name.' Finally, Micah 5:2 speaks of Christ, 'whose origins are from of old, from ancient times' (NIV). The King James Version has this,

'whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.' The marginal note for this phrase gives, 'FROM DAYS OF ETERNITY.'

This correspondent goes on to say, "There is a geometric theorem which states that 'two parallel lines meet at INFINITY.' The reality, of course, is that parallel lines never meet. Just so with the Word -- Jesus Christ. If his 'origins are from of old, from days of ETERNITY,' then in reality He had NO ORIGIN. Jesus Christ has existed FROM ETERNITY. These Scriptures seem to contradict your teaching that Jesus Christ Himself was 'created' or came forth from the Father at some point in time!"

These are very good questions! Let's understand the answers!

First of all, we need to get several things straight, here. If, as this writer contends, Jesus Christ in His original form as the Logos of God existed for all eternity, at the side of the Father, as a separate Being, then we face the inescapable conclusion that there were NOT ONE BUT TWO GODS who "inhabit eternity." That is, such a teaching clearly would imply that both individuals were "co-eternal" -- both "YHVH" -- and therefore, seemingly, "CO-EQUAL."

This concept, however, does violence to the truth that the Lord God is truly and ultimately "ONE." As God told Moses, "Hear O Israel, The LORD our God is one LORD" (Deut.6: 4). If there were TWO separate beings, both being LORD, from all eternity, then it would seem this Scripture should say, "The LORD our God is TWO LORDS," or "TWO YHVH." Such is obviously not the case. God is ONE. But if like two individual parallel lines, that never converged, they both went individually back into eternity, it would sure seem that we are looking at the reality of TWO beings called God, or a DUAL Godhead, and not really "ONE" original, ultimate "LORD."

Secondly, if this concept be true, then it seems very wrong that Jesus would constantly imply that the Father was "GREAT ER" than He was, that He was under the Authority of the Father. How could this be if they were both ETERNAL, EQUAL, AND CO-EXISTENT FOREVER? It would not compute. If indeed One is GREATER than the other, then it would seem also that One is Older than the other. If they were indeed "separate but equal," then Jesus should not have been subordinate to the Father, but He should have pointed out that actually He had EQUAL authority -- which, of course, He never did, for it is NOT TRUE! The subordination of Christ to the Father is clear all through the New Testament.

Thirdly, Jesus actually prayed to the Father, and worshiped the Father. If He Himself were EQUAL from all eternity, this would seem like a travesty and mockery of the truth. Jesus prayed to the Father because the Father was His own "GOD." He worshiped the Father, because the Father was GREATER than He in the God Family. This would imply and indicate that the Father was greater than Christ and therefore pre-existed Him in eternity.

The Hebrew Word for "Eternity"

When we talk about such concepts as "infinity" and "eternity," we must be very careful. The terms can be very ambiguous and misleading. We often tend to read our own English interpretations into them. For example, the actual Hebrew word translated "eternity" and "everlasting" does not literally mean those terms, necessarily. The Hebrew word is actually *OLAM* and simply means: "concealed, ie., the vanishing point, time out of mind, (practically) eternity." It is variously translated in the following ways -- notice! "always(s), ancient (time), any more, continuance, eternal, ever (lasting), of old, ever (more), lasting, perpetual, at any time, beginning of the world, without end" (Strong's Concordance, #5369). The root meaning of this word, as the *Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon* shows, means "to hide, conceal." Truly, God's origin is hidden or concealed from mankind. The word is used for "remote time," used of the future or the past. It is sometimes translated "for ever and ever" which can mean "from eternity to eternity" (Dan.2:20).

The Hebrew word can also mean "unto death." This same word occurs in Exodus 21:6, where we read: "Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall SERVE HIM FOR EVER." Obviously, the servant would only serve his master for the rest of this physical life. Thus "olam," translated "for ever," here, actually means "unto death," or "the rest of his life."

Therefore, let's examine these Scriptures which the letter writer brought up, carefully and cautiously. First of all, when John 1:1-3 says the Word or Logos was instrumental in the creation or making of "all things," the context itself must tell us that He Himself is excepted from those "all things." Similarly, when it says in Philippians that "every knee" in heaven and earth shall bow before Jesus Christ, it must be understood that the knees of the Father are excepted from "all knees" mentioned in this Scripture (see Phil.2:10). We must not try to take the Scriptures TOO rigidly, too literally. We must also exercise a modicum of common sense.

Similarly, when Jesus said to the Jews, "Before Abraham was, I AM" (John 8:58), this does not necessarily imply timelessness or that He had no beginning whatsoever. It simply means that He had the power of "self-existence" before Abraham was even born -- that He possessed the NAME of YHVH, the "I AM" (Exodus 3:13-14).

By the way, just because the One who became Christ had the Name YHVH, meaning "I AM THAT I AM," does not imply that He existed for all eternity. When WE are born into the God Family, we also will possess the NAME YHVH -- yet we most definitely have had a "beginning," a time when we were conceived, by God's Spirit, and a definite time when we will be literally BORN of the Spirit (John 3:3-8). When we become members of the God Family, we INHERIT THAT NAME -- even though we as individuals have NOT lived for all eternity. But since we actually become ONE with the Father, and HE personally has always existed, therefore in that sense we participate in His eternity, sharing it with Him, as we are "ONE" with Him.

As to the verse in Hebrews 7:3, where it says of Melchisedek, ". . . without father or mother, without genealogy, WITHOUT BEGINNING OF DAYS or end of life, like the Son of God he remains a priest for ever" (NIV). Notice carefully here. This person was "without beginning of days." What does that mean? The definition of a "day" is a morning and an evening (Genesis 1, throughout) -- that is, 24 hours. A "day" is defined as one revolution of the earth upon its axis. Therefore, all this verse is really telling us is that Melchisedek PRE-EXISTED the diurnal rotation of the earth upon its axis! In other words, He was "made" or "existed" BEFORE THE EARTH AND SUN WERE CREATED! That fact does not imply or suggest eternal existence. Even the angels were created BEFORE the earth was (Job 38:4-7).

Again, Habakkuk 1:12 says that the YHVH (the one who became Christ and/or the Father, the term can apply to either one of them, technically) is "from EVERLASTING" (also Psalm 90:1-2). The Hebrew word for "everlasting" here is OLAM -- meaning, literally, "concealed," "hidden," "to the vanishing point," etc. It does not necessarily mean or imply what we think of as "for ever and ever," or "eternity." This word or the actual meaning of it, must be understood FROM THE CONTEXT and SUBJECT MATTER of who or what it is talking about. If it were talking about a slave, it would mean "unto death." If it is talking about the Logos, or Word, it must be understood to mean from the original primordial time when He began His individual existence as a separate Being apart from the Father. If it is talking about the Father, then we can understand it to mean or include "forever" or "eternity."

What about Micah 5:2?

Micah 5:2 actually implies the very opposite of what the letter writer suggests it proves. Speaking of Christ the Messiah, Micah wrote, "But you Bethlehem Ephratha, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, WHOSE ORIGINS [notice -- He really does have an ORIGIN!] ARE FROM OLD ["old" does not mean "eternity"], from ANCIENT TIMES" -- that is, some point in TIME which is *very ancient* -- perhaps billions or even trillions of years ago (scientists and astronomers believe the Universe itself is about 15 to 20 billion years old, as we count time).

The marginal note referred to, "from days of eternity," has little real meaning, as "days" would not exist before the earth and solar system were created. The real key to this verse is the mysterious word "OLAM" which, as I have shown, is full of surprises and hidden, concealed, multiple meanings and can be interpreted a vast number of ways.

The Hebrew Tanakh has this verse, "And you, O Bethlehem of Ephrath, least among the clans of Judah, from you one shall come forth to rule Israel for Me -- One whose origin is from of old, from ancient times" (Micah 5:1-2). The Critical Experimental Commentary states of this last expression, "literally, from the days of eternity, or the days OF THE AGES." Thus the word "olam" in Hebrew is comparable in meaning to the Greek word "aion" or "aionios," meaning, "age," or "ages." This

word, in English, is often translated as "age, by extension perpetuity, spec. a Messianic period (present or future), age, course, eternal, for (ever) (more), ever, beginning of the world, without end," and "aionios" means "perpetual, also used of past time and future, eternal, everlasting, world (began)." The use of OLAM, therefore, does not prove that the Messiah has always existed, throughout all eternity, but rather than His origin is FROM ancient times or ages, long, long ago, beyond the ken of the human mind.

One might also point out that this verse in Micah says this individual is "FROM eternity to eternity," or "FROM everlasting to everlasting." The word "from" is a preposition meaning "away out of," or "beginning at that certain point." In other words, "FROM everlasting" does not necessarily INCLUDE "everlasting." If I say I come from Seattle, Washington, it would be true even if I came from the region NEAR Seattle, or from the outer "city limits," and not from the inner city itself! If I say I come from the United States of America, it would be just as true whether I came from Topeka, Kansas, in the heartland, or if I came from San Francisco, right on the west coast, or even from Hawaii. "Eternity" can be understood as a broad expanse of "time." Therefore, to originate at any point DURING that expanse of time could fulfill the meaning of being "FROM eternity"!

The fact that the Father and Jesus Christ have the exact same titles does not prove they both come from "beyond eternity" or have both existed FOREVER, in the way we commonly think of that term. When we Christians become BORN SONS OF GOD, and enter the God Family, we, too, will INHERIT THE NAME OF OUR FATHER AND ELDER BROTHER (Eph.3:15). We, too, will become "I AM," SELF-EXISTANT EVER-LIVING BEINGS IN THE GOD FAMILY -- ELOHIM, AND YHVH. Or, as Moffatt translates it, we, too, will become "THE ETERNAL." But this cannot be used to prove that we ALWAYS existed, or were ALWAYS God!

For example, Isaiah 63:16 says "You O LORD [YHVH] are our Father; our Redeemer FROM EVERLASTING is your name." Jesus Christ is our Redeemer. This only proves, as the word "olam" itself shows, that Jesus is FROM ANCIENT TIMES, or has existed since misty antiquity, even before "time" itself as we know it was created. It does not prove that He existed as a parallel "God" with the Father for all eternity, like a "parallel line" extending into infinity.

By the way, concerningf "parallel lines," to say that parallel lines remain parallel forever to to infinity is not necessarily true. It is actually only true of "Euclidian geometry." In the space-time continuum envisioned by Albert Eistein, who formulated the "Theory of Relativity," such a conclusion is impossible. Einstein points out that space is curved. Light rays themselves "bend" when they pass by local stars -- even though "light" has no mass and travels at 186,000 miles per second! Since scientists say space is curved, at some point far away even parallellines would be required to "meet." That "meeting place" could be called "infinity," insofar as its relevance to our human comprehension is concerned. What is "infinity," anyway? Do we comprehend it? Can your mind really comprehend "eternity"? These concepts are about as foreign to us as light years, parallax, understanding the formation of stars clusters, nebulae,

galaxies, or even the atom it self!

Christ Personified as "Wisdom"

In Proverbs 8, "Wisdom" is personified and is a type of Jesus Christ. "Wisdom" is said to have been "established FROM EVERLASTING," or "from ETERNITY" (verse 23, NIV). Does this mean "Wisdom" or Christ existed "forever," throughout eternity? Not at all! Let's take a good, careful look at Proverbs 8. Notice!

In Proverbs 8:24 we read of Wisdom saying, "When there were no depths, I WAS BROUGHT FORTH; when there were no fountains abounding with water." And verse 25 -- "Before the mountains were settled, before the hills WAS I BROUGHT FORTH" (KJV).

I believe the Jewish Tanakh makes this the plainest. Notice, beginning verse 22: Wisdom [a type of CHRIST or the LOGOS or WORD of God!] says, "THE LORD [FATHER] *CREATED* ME at the *beginning* of His course AS THE *FIRST* OF HIS WORKS OF OLD. In the distant past I WAS *FASHIONED*, at the beginning, at the ORIGIN of the earth. There was still no deep when I was BROUGHT FORTH, no springs rich in water; before [the foundations of] the mountains were sunk, before the hills I WAS *BORN*. He had not yet made earth and fields, or the world's first clumps of clay. I WAS THERE when He set the heavens in place . . . When He made the heavens above firm . . . When He assigned the sea its limits . . . When He fixed the foundations of the earth, I WAS WITH HIM AS A CONFIDANT, a source of delight every day, rejoicing before Him at all times, rejoicing in His inhabited world, finding delight with mankind' (Proverbs 8:22-31).

How clear! The One who became "Christ" was *BORN* back in the "beginning"! He was literally "BROUGHT FORTH" -- He was "FASHIONED" -- He was "*CREATED*"!

God the Father, WITH WISDOM at His side (that is Christ, or the Logos -- John 1:1-3), then *CREATED THE UNIVERSE*, using Wisdom (the Logos or Christ) to create everything that exists.

The Awesome, Incredible Truth of God

How plain! How clear! How wonderful! I sincerely hope that this new information and research will help you to more fully see and understand the truth about the origin of Christ, the Logos, the Word of God. The Truth of God should not and cannot conflict with ANY Scripture, but must harmonize with ALL relevant Scriptures, doing no violence to any. Thus the truth is not in the extreme anti-Christ theology of Anthony Buzzard and others who DENY the divinity and pre-existence of Christ; nor is it in the opposite extreme view of the Trinity doctrine, or the "Dual God" concept, sometimes called the "Binitarian" doctrine.

The truth is that God is ONE -- Hebrew Monotheism -- but that ONE is a fully united FAMILY, which began with God the Father, or Ancient of Days, and then included the Word or Logos, the two of them becoming "Elohim," the "Mighty Ones," and eventually will include ALL those born of God at the resurrection as His literal SONS, who, along with Christ, will "inherit ALL THINGS" (Heb.2:7-13; Rom.8:14-17, 19-21). As Paul the apostle wrote, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, THEN HEIRS; HEIRS OF GOD, and JOINT-HEIRS WITH CHRIST; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also GLORIFIED TOGETHER. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the GLORY which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature [creation] waiteth for the MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD" (Rom.8:16-19).

There is a REASON God created YOU! There is a PURPOSE for your existence! There is a DESTINY that awaits you, if you can see and comprehend it, in the KINGDOM OF GOD! No matter how much we suffer in this life, no matter how much trouble and tribulation and trials we experience, it is as NOTHING but a mere puff of wind compared to the eternal GLORY of divine SONSHIP in the Universe-RULING Kingdom of GOD!

You are called of God to become a King, and a Priest, and a Ruler and Creator -- a literal SON OF GOD, even like Jesus Christ Himself is, our Elder Brother! YOU are called to become a Universe-ruling LORD YHVH! What are you doing about your divine destiny and calling? Are you preparing yourself, overcoming, enduring trials, and growing in grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ? May God help all of you to clearly grasp your calling and comprehend the real meaning of your eternal life and SALVATION! THANK GOD for His wonderful and precious Truth!

Chapter 6

The Pre-Existence of Christ

Fact? or Superstition?

Did Jesus Christ exist as a member of the divine Godhead before His human birth? Or is this teaching mere tradition and superstition? What is the truth? In recent times a revolutionary new theology has gained ground which says that Jesus Christ had no existence prior to conception in the womb of Mary His mother. Some claim the New Testament documents are often unreliable and untrustworthy -- especially the gospel of John. Its time you knew what is going on "behind the scenes" in modern theological circles -- and the modern assault on the Bible and the divinity of Christ -- and the architect behind this furious attack!

Recently, a friend sent me an article written by Anthony Buzzard entitled, "The Preexistence of Christ -- Truth Or Tradition?" published by the extremely liberal Foundation For Biblical Research, as well as another article along similar lines. In his letter he remarked, "I hope you'll have time to read and *consider* them before you write your article refuting them. Some points shouldn't be ignored!"

I suppose I could humanly take offense at that remark; apparently he thinks I might just dash off a quick response which will leave many questions unanswered and leave him feeling empty or uncertain.

Frankly, I must admit I am somewhat "tired" of hearing about Anthony Buzzard's new heresy (which I suppose isn't really new). I read his booklet entitled "Who Is Jesus?" and his dissertation a year ago, and wrote an article entitled "Who Was Jesus Before His Human Birth?" in response to it.

The Abuse of Scripture

When the devil came to Christ with specious interpretations of Scripture, Jesus didn't have someone else to appeal to to answer his arguments. He Himself used Scripture (Matt.4:1-10; Luke 4:1-13). He knew God's Word well enough to defeat the devil; and He set us an example for doing battle with the adversary and all his henchmen, including the likes of Anthony Buzzard.

I know Buzzard from Ambassador College days. We entered as freshmen the same year (1959). He was the son of a British admiral, and consequently Herbert Armstrong appointed him freshman class president. I had no office, but I knew my Bible better than anyone else in the class (scoring 99% on the first Bible test in freshman Bible to the disbelief of Roderick Meredith the teacher). At any rate, Anthony had adjustment problems, and eventually left college, let his hair grow long, left the Church, had a nervous breakdown (he was apparently under much pressure to "succeed" at college besides persecution from his family for his affiliation with the "American" Church). Eventually he rejoined the Church, then left again; now he teaches at a Bible college and has a masters degree, for which he wrote his thesis denying the pre-existence of Christ. Interestingly, while still at Ambassador, he dated the woman who was to become my wife. On one of their dates he remarked to her, "You really know God, don't you?" Obviously he did not.

Charles Hunting, former evangelist, and a distinctly NON-scholarly type, has joined with Buzzard in this belief. Jim Tabor, professor at North Carolina University in Charlotte, who himself once came to Ambassador after attending a Bible college in the midwest, and who briefly taught Hebrew at Ambassador (he was my Hebrew teacher one semester), has also adopted a similar view. His story is also unique; after being let go from Ambassador, he later joined the faculty at Notre Dame, then William and Mary, and last year University of North Carolina. During this sojourn he lost his faith in God and Christianity, and became a secularist and agnostic, as he himself relates, but apparently recaptured his faith in God through the study of Judaism and the Old Testament Scriptures. Now he believes only the "Old Testament" is inspired Scripture, as such, and the New Testament is not. Particularly, he would throw out or relegate to "second place," whatever that means, the gospel of John and his epistles. This, of course, makes it easier for him to deny the pre-existence of Christ, as John's gospel is the key element in explaining the purpose and plan behind God's sending the Messiah, and how it all came about.

Attack on the New Testament

Tabor writes in "Restoring Abrahamic Faith," a recent publication of his, "In other words, the New Testament, as it has come (sic) to us, in multiple manuscripts, Greek translation, with interpolations and editorial expansions, is a mixture of 'wheat and tares' as he himself predicted" (p.45). Did Jesus really predict that His Word would become a mixture of "wheat and tares"? Nonsense (John 10:35; 17:17). Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but MY WORDS WILL NEVER PASS AWAY"

(Matt.24:35).

Tabor claims the New Testament is not Scripture. But the apostle Peter said it was! He wrote, specifically about Paul's writings, "Paul also wrote you with the wisdom GOD gave him. He writes the same way in ALL his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and UNSTABLE people distort, AS THEY DO *THE OTHER SCRIPTURES*, to their own destruction" (II Pet.3:15-16).

Tabor, probably well-meaning and sincere, nevertheless claims much of the New Testament is uninspired and seems to think it is the responsibility of people -- scholars, and so forth -- to sit down and determine how to choose between the correct sayings of Jesus and the incorrect, uninspired passages. Nevertheless, he claims only the Old Testament is "Scripture" as such.

Doesn't that same strange? Consider! Only the New Testament witnesses to the life and sayings of the Messiah Himself! It interprets the OLD TESTAMENT. It brings us the NEW COVENANT to replace the Old Covenant. How could it be less than inspired Scripture?

Are books dealing with the "first Moses" more important, and Scripture, but books dealing with the "second Moses," the Messiah, LESS IMPORTANT, and NOT "Scripture"? Apparently it offends Tabor that most of the New Testament was written originally in GREEK, not Hebrew! But why should this make any difference? Greek was the "lingua franca" of that time -- the common spoken language throughout the Mediterranean world. God PRESERVED the New Testament through the Greek Orthodox Church which copied manuscripts faithfully through the centuries. Tabor is wrong to conclude we have no reliable New Testament documents, and must resurrect what we can out of the Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, and from fragments of old parchments lost in desert caves! What a low opinion he must have of God's ability to PRESERVE AND PROTECT His own "witness" to the Messiah!

Tabor seems to like the synoptic gospels -- Matthew, Mark and Luke. He writes, "These show every evidence of authenticity, particularly those from Luke, or from what scholars call the Q source (contained now in Matthew and Luke). But there are other statements in the Gospels, particularly in the Gospel of John, which seem to contradict Torah faith [or his interpretation of it!]. What are we to make of this? MY APPROACH [is there any vanity here?] is to go with the clear, central, multiple-attested tradition of the Synoptic Gospels. John, who reflects more of his own style (compare 1,2,3 John), and a HELLENIZING, QUASI-GNOSTIC THEOLOGIZING, is always secondary."

Isn't that interesting? Tabor, like Buzzard, rejects the divinity and pre-existence of Christ. It helps his case to just do away with the entire Gospel of John and relegate it to "Hellenizing [pagan], quasi-Gnostic" influences which, of course, are dubious, suspicious, untrustworthy, and not to be considered inspired Scripture! I have always

felt (I read the New Testament through many times before reading the Old Testament as a teenager), personally, that the key to understanding the New Testament is to look at Matthew, Mark and Luke as virtual "newspaper reporters" of their day, who were simply trying to give the "facts, just the facts," about the actions, deeds, and words of Christ -- like a fascinating biography, from birth to death, essentially chronological and written simply as factual reporting. The gospel of John, however, goes far beyond such "reporting." It gives us penetrating depth and analysis missing in the other gospels. John gives us an inner glimpse into the PLAN AND PURPOSE of God, WHY Christ was sent, and over and over explains that He came down from Heaven, previously abode with the Father, and gave up His divinity to become flesh (John 1:1-4, 14). John testifies that Christ is greater than Moses (John 1:17), and plainly writes, "No one has ever seen God [the Father], but GOD THE ONE AND ONLY, who is at the Father's side, has made him known" (v.18).

The Gospel of John

In John 3, we read, "The one who comes from above is above all. . . The one who comes from heaven is above all. He testifies to what he has seen and heard . . ." (John 3:31-32). John plainly states, "No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven -- the Son of Man" (John 3:13).

In John 5, we read that the Jews tried to KILL Jesus because they perceived by His words that He claimed to be divine. "For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, MAKING HIMSELF EQUAL WITH GOD" (verse 18).

In John 6, Jesus repeatedly referred to the simple fact (it seems so simple when we read it, if we will just believe what Jesus says, and not what some men try to make Him say by their twisting and distorting and misinterpreting His words!) that he is "the bread of God" who "comes down from heaven and gives his life to the world" (v.33), "I have come down from heaven" (v.38), "I am the bread that came down from heaven" (v.41), "I came down from heaven" (v.42), "No one has SEEN the Father except the one who is FROM GOD, only he has seen the Father" (v.46), "But here is the bread that came down from heaven" (v.50), "I am the living bread that came down from heaven" (v.51), "This is the bread that came down from heaven" (v.58).

Jesus went on to state that nobody could really believe this essential truth unless they are specially enabled to do so by the Father (verse 65). You cannot approach the Son of God and understand Him by coming to Him via the avenue of human scholarship, or Jewish study of the Torah, or the misguided Churches of mainstream Christianity, or the various sects and cults. Does this explain why so-called "scholars" are unable to understand basic, fundamental truths of Scripture?

How To Understand the Bible

The only way to approach God, and to learn the truth about the Son of God, is on one's knees before the Father, praying for truth, revelation, mercy and divine guidance and understanding. Only those who truly have God's Spirit leading and guiding them will ever understand!

As Paul wrote, "But God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. . . The man without the Spirit does NOT ACCEPT the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment. 'For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?' But WE have the mind of Christ" (I Cor.2:10-16). Only those who truly are converted (Acts 5:32; 2:38) and who have the MIND of Christ dwelling in them (Rom.8:9-10) can understand these things.

Frankly, my heart goes out to men such as Anthony Buzzard and Jim Tabor, who seem to have lost their way spiritually, and who think they have found their way "back" into the fold, but who haven't. Their writings convince me that they are still groping blindly for the true faith. In some respects they appear to have made shipwreck of the faith; their faith capsized in tumultuous oceans of doubt and sea-fogs, blinding their vision. However scholarly and intelligent they may be, humanly (and there are many much more intelligent than they are, who also reject the faith of God's Word), I must lump them together with those of whom Paul writes in I Corinthians:

"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the POWER OF GOD. For it is written: 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise [so-called scholars!]; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.' Where is the wise man? Where is the SCHOLAR? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has God not made foolish the wisdom of the world? . . . Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has CALLED, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (I Cor.1:18-24).

Here Paul calls Christ "the power of God." Isn't that one more evidence that He is divine? Luke wrote the words of Gabriel to Mary about the conception of Christ: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the POWER OF THE MOST HIGH will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). The Holy Spirit, which is also divine, is also the "power" of God (Acts 1:8).

Yet these modern nay-sayers seem to seek to diminish both the love of the Father and the power of the Son. They seek to minimize both the sacrifice of the Father and the sacrifice of the Son. To my mind, one of the most amazing and mind-boggling truths of all time is that One who was VERY GOD was willing to GIVE UP His

divinity, and become a mere human being! THAT is the essence of TRUE LOVE!

It is as if a commander-in-chief of the armed forces of a nation, such as General Colin Powell, were willing to strip himself of all his rank and power, and become a mere buck private in the army, and go through basic training, being yelled at by sergeants and corporals, forced to take long marches under full pack, and to peel spuds and do latrine duty -- ALL WILLINGLY -- and then forced to DIE a horrible death, killed for TREASON by his own fellow soldiers, even though he was innocent of any wrong-doing!

The Concept of True Love

The concept that Jesus was a mere man, and did not pre-exist with God the Father, is mind-boggling. Consider, for example, what the apostle Paul had to say to the Philippians, concerning the nature and prerogatives of Christ. Paul wrote:

"For he, who had *always been God by nature*, did not cling to his prerogatives *as God's equal*, but stripped himself of all privilege by consenting to be a slave by nature and being born as mortal man. And, having become man, he humbled himself by living a life of utter obedience, even to the extent of dying, and the death he died was the death of a common criminal" (Phil.2:6-7, Phillips).

"Though he were *divine by nature*, he did not set store upon *equality with God*, but EMPTIED himself by taking the nature of a servant; born in human guise and appearing in human form, he humbly stooped in his obedience even to die, and to die upon the cross" (Moffatt).

"Who, although *being essentially one with God and in the form of God [possessing the fullness of the attributes which make God God]*, did not think this equality with God was a thing to be eagerly grasped or retained; but stripped Himself [of all privileges and rightful dignity] so as to assume the guise of a servant (slave), in that he became like men and was born a human being. And after He had appeared in human form He abased and humbled Himself [still further] and carried His obedience to the extreme of death, even the death of [the] cross!" (Amplified).

Tabor, Buzzard, and others seem to think that Jewish people will not "accept" a Jesus who is divine. That is not true at all. There are many Jewish converts, today, who accept the divinity of Christ and worship Him as the Son of God. The Jewish New Testament has no problem with Christ's divinity. Translated by David Stern, it declares:

"Let your attitude toward one another be governed by your being in union with the Messiah Yeshua: *Though he was in the form of God, he did not regard equality with God something to be possessed by force*. On the contrary, he emptied himself, in that he took the form

of a slave by becoming like human beings are. And when he appeared as a human being, he humbled himself still more by becoming obedient even to death -- death on a stake as a criminal!" (Jewish New Testament).

I have also found that Buzzard and others, despite their many words and much writing, tend to do two things which appall me: First, they tend to only recite for the reader those verses which they desire to emphasize and make commentary on. The other verses, which would tend to weaken or even invalidate their arguments, they generally ignore, or if they admit their existence, only refer to them obliquely, in passing, with a footnote, or a cursory reference -- and then tend to "explain them away" without spending adequate time or energy discussing them. Is this approach really HONEST? I don't think so.

Yet it is a very familiar tactic, often employed by the devil, to deceive and to delude the unwary and unwatchful (II Cor.2:11). I can only hope and pray that these people will "come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will" (II Tim.2:26).

We have all read John 3:16 -- "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son" (John 3:16-18).

John goes on: "This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Every one who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God" (John 3:19-21).

These new "infidels," if I may call them that, deny the real heart and core of this basic passage. If Christ were merely a human being, with no pre-existence, in what sense would He have truly been a "Son of God"? How could He have been "sent into the world"?

Is Christ the "Son" of God merely because the Holy Spirit conceived Him in Mary's womb by uniting with an egg? Or doesn't the Father-Son relationship go back into the aeons of time, while Father and His (created) Son co-ruled the Universe? If Christ were only human, how is He really God's Son any more than the rest of us, and why would He be called "the ONLY begotten son" of God? Are we not also "begotten" of God? Oh, but He, unlike us, was begotten at conception! But so what?

The idea that Christ was merely human, but was supernaturally conceived, poses three basic difficulties: 1) that makes God the Father a respecter of persons, showing favoritism, because He gave Christ advantages over the rest of us! Yet there is no respect of persons or favoritism with God (Rom.2:11). Why didn't God just conceive

all of us the same way? Then we could all have lived perfect lives, and theoretically, there would have been no need for a Saviour at all! Then we could all sit at God's right hand! If Christ were merely human, but had this one advantage over the rest of us humans, then why didn't God make us all the same way -- and give us all the "same chance"?

Secondly, 2) if Christ were merely human, does this not diminish to virtually nothing the sacrifice the Father made in giving up His only begotten Son (or should I say "son," small "s")? If Christ were merely human, like the rest of us, with NO pre-existence with the Father, during which time they were together for aeons, and worked together, and loved each other incredibly, then when "he" died on the stake, what did the Father really give up?

Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son Isaac, a type of Christ, his only son, the son of promise, whom he had lived with for some 15-16 years, and whom he loved dearly. But if Christ were only a human being born 2,000 years ago, who "became" the "Son of God," doesn't that take away from the awesome love the Father had for mankind? Then He only sacrificed a human being -- not a truly "divine" Son with whom He had shared a family life for aeons of time! Such an idea relegates the idea of "divine love" to virtually nothing more than great human love -- a slap in the Face to the Father!

As a husband and wife live together, and go through trials and experiences together, their love is forged and grows stronger and deeper and broader and higher. The furnace of affliction and sharing sufferings and delights nurtures and nourishes love. This takes TIME. But if Christ only existed a few years, and then died, that picture subtracts from the deep, awesome ETERNAL LOVE which the Father and the Son shared from the beginning of TIME!

Thirdly, 3) if Christ were merely human, and lived a perfect life, dying for sins, how many of the rest of us could his perfect life atone for? Even though He had God's Spirit, these people argue that he was merely a human being. Then his life would atone for ONE HUMAN BEING'S SIN! In order, logically, for his DEATH to atone for the sins of billions of human beings, His life would have to be worth MORE THAN all their lives put together!

But if Christ is the original Creator of mankind -- in Genesis we read, "Let US make man in OUR image" (Gen.1:26) -- this fact would solve the problem completely. As Paul writes in Colossians, "For by him were all things created" (Col.1:16). The life of the CREATOR would be worth more than the lives of all His created subjects put together!

The Writings of Paul

Let us also look at the writings of Paul in this regard. Jim Tabor dismisses the writings of Paul by simply saying that he writes things "hard to be understood," and

claims that Paul's writings are "less of a problem than many imagine. He has been mistranslated, misinterpreted, and maligned almost beyond recognition" (p.45-46 of "Restoring Abrahamic Faith"). Of course, Tabor is here referring to the epistles of Paul themselves! Is he not overstating his belief? He presents NO evidence or examples of such "mistranslation, misinterpretation, or maligning beyond recognition." Therefore his statement begs the question. He presents no case whatsoever. A judge would therefore have to declare a "mistrial" and throw his case out the window even before hearing it -- for he offers no evidence!

Tabor goes so far as to claim, "As for the New Testament, it should not be forgotten that no one in the early Church had one. In fact, that would be true for everyone in the entire Biblical tradition, from Enoch to Ezra, and from Yeshua to Paul." That is true, of course. Abraham didn't have a "Torah," either. Nor did Moses for most of his life! And none of them ever had the Writings or the Prophets. Therefore, Tabor's statement above is meaningless. However, he continues: "The GREAT ERROR is to equate the documents of the New Testament with what those documents themselves, and everyone mentioned in them, call The Holy Scriptures." Tabor only accepts the Tanakh, consisting of the Torah, Prophets, and Writings, as Scripture.

"The New Testament documents do not even *claim* to be Scripture," he asserts. He goes on, "They are in Greek, not Hebrew. They do not reflect the style or either the Torah or Prophets . . . In other words Luke is far more reliable than Mark, or certainly than John." Tabor concludes, "The New Testament documents should be interpreted in the light of the Holy Scriptures, not the other way around" (p.47).

Isn't that statement shocking? Isn't such a conclusion startling?

For a professing believer in Jesus, or Yeshua, to boldly make such claims is very shocking to me. I would have to regard those statements as categorically untrue and self-defeating. Certainly, Satan the devil has stolen a march on scholars and intellectuals who dismiss the New Testament so cavalierly. It seems incredible to me that such people would think for one minute that God cannot inspire HOLY SCRIPTURE IN THE GREEK LANGUAGE as well as in Hebrew! Furthermore, I find it amazing that they would conclude that God would inspire Scripture to be written detailing the Law, Writings and Prophets, but when the GREATER than Moses came along, the very Messiah, that God would not inspire NEW SCRIPTURES to be written detailing His life and sayings!!!

The very idea is preposterous, and frankly elevates Moses far above Christ. Furthermore, such a belief turns the New Testament into a riddle, and a soupy mush, without divine inspiration, begging the question, What can we believe? Which verses reflect the true sayings of the Messiah? Which are not accurate, and why? And how can you prove it? And what about the people who lived hundreds of years ago who thought the New Testament was inspired? Did God just allow millions to be deceived on this point? If the New Testament is not inspired by God, THEN HOW CAN WE BELIEVE -- HAVE FAITH IN -- THE MESSIAHSHIP OF JESUS?

Satan's End-Time ASSAULT on the Bible

Thus Satan the devil has launched his final end-time assault -- a new ASSAULT ON THE BIBLE! This time he has focused his energy on the New Testament, in order to destroy faith in Jesus Christ, the Messiah! Truly, he knows that his time is short. He is furious (Rev.12:12), and therefore he is going straight for the jugular!

But since Tabor seems to think Paul's writings are easily handled to disprove the pre-existence of Christ, let us look at the book of Hebrews, which is generally credited to Paul. Let's read the Jewish New Testament here:

"In days gone by, God spoke in many and varied ways to the Fathers through the prophets. But now, in the *acharit-hayamim* [End Times], he has spoken to us through his Son, to whom he has given ownership of everything and through whom he CREATED THE UNIVERSE. This Son is the radiance of the *Sh'khinah* [God's manifest glory], the very expression of God's essence, upholding all that exists by his powerful word; and after he had, through himself, made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of *HaG'dulah BaM'romim'* [the Power Above].

"So he has become much better than angels, and the name God has given him is superior to theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say, 'You are my Son; today I have become your Father'?"

"Also, God never said of any angel, 'I will be his Father, and he will be my Son.' And again, when God brings his Firstborn into the world, he says, 'Let ALL GOD'S ANGELS WORSHIP HIM.'

"Indeed, when speaking of angels, he says, '. . . who makes his angels winds and his servants fiery flames;' but to the Son, he says, 'YOUR THRONE, O GOD, WILL LAST FOREVER AND EVER; you rule your Kingdom with a scepter of equity; you have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Therefore, O GOD, your God has anointed you with the oil of joy in preference to your companions;' and, 'In the beginning, Lord, YOU laid the foundations of the earth; heaven is the work of YOUR hands. They will vanish, but you will remain; like clothing, they will all grow old; and you will fold them up like a coat. Yes, they will be changed like clothing, but YOU REMAIN THE SAME, your years never end' " (Heb.1:1-12).

Clearly, the Jewish New Testament proclaims the divinity and pre-existence of Christ with power and authority!

There is no indecision, waffling, or demurring here. This is straight from the shoulder, pulling no punches. Paul plainly calls Christ GOD, and quotes Old Testament Scriptures as referring to Christ as very GOD! See Psalm 45:6-7 for the Old Testament PROOF that Christ the Messiah is also GOD!

The Real "Anti-Christ" of Our Day

Frankly, I believe the New Testament Scriptures are very clear. The ones who are misinterpreting Paul's words, and mistranslating and misrepresenting his words and theology, are the very ones who are maligning the divinity of Christ! They are the real "ANTICHRISTS" who were especially prophesied to come into the world, particularly during these "End Times" or "Last Days" (I John 2:18). Isn't it interesting that John says of these "antichrists," prophetically speaking, "*They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us*" (verse 19). This prophecy has LITERALLY come to pass!

Anthony Buzzard begins his paper by stating as if it were commonly accepted fact, "The very commonly held idea that Jesus was alive before His conception raises a number of questions about the nature of the Messiah." He then goes right on to ask such a question -- namely, "Can one indeed be a human being in any meaningful sense if one does not originate in the womb of one's mother?"

Now think about it. Isn't that a strange question? Buzzard does not address the issue openly and objectively. Rather, circumlocutiously, he sneaks up via the back door, hiding in the underbrush, and attempts to ambush ignorant and naive Christians, by the subtle approach the Devil used on Eve in the garden. He also used the "question" approach! He said to Eve, "Did God really say . . .?" (Gen.3:1).

Buzzard (I feel he is aptly named -- God somehow sees to it that people are named what they are! And like a buzzard or vulture, he picks the bones of the dead and near-dying, attacking the weak and those unable to defend themselves from his attacks) begins his paper with a subtle *question*. These kinds of questions are meant to implant the seeds of DOUBT. They could produce a nasty harvest of poisonous weeds, if allowed to remain in the soil! Buzzard asks, O so innocently, "Can one indeed be a human being in any meaningful sense if one does not originate in the womb of one's mother?"

"Can one indeed. . .?"

Can you not see the spirit of Satan in that vicious question, just like in the garden of Eden? "Did God really say the Messiah pre-existed?" "Is it really true that . . .?" Well, let's face this question head-on. Using Buzzard's reasoning, then Adam and Eve could not have been human -- for neither one originated in the womb of a woman! How about that?

Furthermore, if you READ Matthew 1:18-21 and Luke 1:30-35, dealing with the birth of Christ, you will find out that JESUS WAS CONCEIVED IN THE WOMB OF HIS MOTHER! The only "difference" between Him and other human beings is that His Father was a Spirit Being -- or, putting it another way, the male sperm which united

with Mary's ovum was THE LOGOS, the second member of the Godhead, who had transformed Himself into a human male reproductive cell! What is so hard to believe about that? Even today medical science can take male sperm and inject them into infertile women to help conception along, or even take a human egg and sperm from a woman and a man and let them "fertilize" outside the womb, in a special solution, and then re-implant the fertilized egg in a woman's uterus. What "science" can do God can do better.

With God all things are possible (Matt.19:26). Who are we to question the ability and power of God?

Buzzard then says, "Surely an angel differs from a human being *precisely because* he has an origin outside the system of human procreation." Analyze that statement. What really makes angels different from humans? Buzzard is totally off base here. The difference has nothing to do with their point of origin -- God could create humans ANYWHERE HE CHOSE! By Buzzard's reasoning, since Adam and Eve arose "outside the human reproductive system," Adam and Eve were *not human!* Need I go on?

Buzzard then presents us with *another* doubt-ridden question. Satan is not only persuasive, but persistent. The third question -- "If . . ." Did you catch that? The third question begins "IF." Did not the tempter come to Jesus and begin his temptation by saying, "IF you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread"? (Matt.4:3). Buzzard challenges the reader, saying, "IF Jesus was really a being who changes Himself (or is changed by God) in order to enter the human race through Mary, he is clearly a being vastly different from the rest of humanity."

Why would that be so "clearly" obvious or true? The statement is not true at all. Although the source of the "cell" that united with Mary's ovum was divine, why would that make Jesus any different from other men or human beings? Only the source or origin of that "cell" was different. But that "cell" BECAME FULLY HUMAN! That is what the Scriptures state unequivocally -- but Buzzard avoids these Scriptures with a 100-foot pole!

Notice!

"Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death -- that is, the devil -- and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. . . For this reason he had to be MADE LIKE HIS BROTHERS IN EVERY WAY, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself SUFFERED when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted" (Heb.2: 14-18).

Paul further declares about the humanity of Christ:

"During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him . . ." (Heb.5:7-9).

Plainly, Jesus Christ was obviously FULLY HUMAN, just like you and I are -- but He also was "divine" in the sense of His origin on His Father's side!

Setting the Stage for Failure

Buzzard then states, categorically, "We maintain that the idea [of pre-existence of Christ] has to be held prior to an investigation of the scriptural evidence and then *read into the Bible*" (emphasis his). He adds, "There is also a strong bias in our translations, due to the preconceptions of 'orthodox' theologians, which encourages this process of 'reading-in.'"

Notice how clever this is. Buzzard offers no proof whatsoever. He expects us to take his word for this "strong bias." He offers no proof -- he merely "*accuses*." Now I ask you -- who is the "accuser of the brethren"? The apostle John declares, "For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down" (Rev.12:10). Satan is the accuser! By falsely accusing unnamed "*orthodox theologians*," without offering any proof, Buzzard follows faithfully in the tradition of Satan the devil, who is also "a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44).

Thus, after prejudicing the mind of the reader against the concept that Jesus had a literal pre-existence, Buzzard goes on to construct his case. He begins by building upon the fact that Matthew, Mark and Luke -- the synoptic gospels -- do not mention any such pre-existence. He quotes various scholars to attest to this fact, which is really completely unnecessary -- appealing to worldly scholars proves nothing of itself, but it shows a tendency and a trend in Buzzard's thinking. Anyone who will read the synoptic gospels will see that the pre-existence of Christ is nowhere discussed there.

The question becomes, then, why not? Could it be that they were not concerned with such "theological" matters, because they were merely writing short "biographies" of the life of Christ, revealing His statements, actions, and miracles -- like any fair-minded, judicial, investigative reporter worth his salary? The three synoptic gospels do not concern themselves with questions of *why*. Rather, like true reporters, they deal primarily with "facts -- just the facts." There is no explanation or theologizing in them -- that duty is, as it were, left up to John to tackle in his gospel.

John is the apostle whom God chose to write about the mystery of Christ's pre-

existence, and His having come down from heaven, and His statements which indicated He was "very God."

Although Buzzard builds his case on the fact that the pre-existence of Christ is not mentioned in the three synoptic gospels, that is irrelevant and proves nothing. The absence of proof does not constitute proof of the opposite!

Buzzard claims that this absence has "embarrassed" many orthodox theologians. Pray tell, why? It doesn't embarrass me. I find it interesting, but not unusual, considering the purpose for which God inspired the three synoptic gospels to be written -- as basically factual reporting of the birth, life and death of the Messiah, the one known as Jesus. Yet, Buzzard continues to prejudice the case by saying, "It is a very remarkable fact that traditional Christianity has insisted nevertheless that Jesus did exist before His conception . . ." Hogwash! Bogus nonsense! How dare Buzzard presume such a thing simply because three gospels don't discuss this matter! The book of Esther doesn't contain the name of God -- should we therefore throw it out of the Bible? The Song of Solomon is a love poem -- should we cast it out of Holy Scripture?

Next, Buzzard avoids the New Testament evidence which would shoot down his theory in flames, and instead diverts the attention of the reader to passages in Isaiah where One who claims to be God says He stretched forth the heavens and asked, "Who was with me? (Isa.44:24 RV), and Job who says that God "alone stretches out the heavens" (Job 9:8). But we have already pointed out that it was the One who became Christ who did these things -- therefore, He is the One who says, through Isaiah, "Who was with me?" The Father had not yet been revealed to mankind; Christ came to reveal Him (John 1:18; 14:8-10). Read my article, "Who Was the YHVH of the Old Testament?"

It seems strange to me that Buzzard continually quotes various writers and their human opinions about the gospel writers, or the books of the New Testament, which absolutely proves nothing! Doctrine should not be formed by the opinions of uninspired scholars or writers who all have their own axes to grind and problems. Doctrine should flow solely and only from the WORD OF GOD!

Dishonesty Evident -- Colossians 1:16

On page 3 of "The Pre-existence of Christ -- Truth or Tradition?", Buzzard declares,

". . . many will appeal to Col.1:16 and read in a way which contradicts the texts quoted above. Here Paul says that 'in Jesus,' 'through Jesus' and 'for Jesus' all things have been created. We must emphasize before all else that Paul did not say that 'all things were created by Jesus.' No text in the New Testament says that."

Read that very carefully. Read it twice. I want you to notice something.

Is Buzzard telling the truth? Did you look up Colossians 1:16 and READ it? Let's not be lazy -- that's why so many people get into deep water and great trouble when it comes to understanding the Bible. They take things for granted. The take scholars "at their word." They DON'T DOUBLE-CHECK!

They DON'T really "PROVE ALL THINGS," as Paul commanded (I Thess.5:21).

Here is a fundamental principle of Bible Study. NEVER TAKE A WRITER'S WORD FOR ANYTHING! *Always look up the Scripture, preferably in two or three translations, if it is an important proof text!*

Buzzard categorically says this verse does not say "all things were created by Jesus." Technically, is he correct? Notice what it says. In the New International Version, which I generally use, we read: "FOR BY HIM [JESUS] ALL THINGS WERE CREATED."

Now, I ask you -- isn't Buzzard grasping at straws? Isn't he being devious and dishonest? It seems to me that this verse says *exactly* what Buzzard says it doesn't say! Of course, the sentence is structured in the reverse sequence -- BUT THE MEANING IS THE SAME! Phillips has this verse, "He [Christ] existed before creation began, for it was through him that everything was made, whether spiritual or material, seen or unseen."

Buzzard *grossly* misrepresents when he declares this verse does not state that all things were created by Jesus. It says that very thing, but in slightly different words!!! Again, I ask you: Who is the "father of liars"? Who is it in whom the truth does not dwell? "He [Satan] was a murderer from the beginning, *not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him.* When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a LIAR and the father of lies" (John 8:44).

Whom Do We Believe?

Buzzard then quotes a Trinitarian, Arthur Wainwright, as saying that in the three synoptic gospels Jesus nowhere suggests that He was creator, concluding that "in no passage [in Matthew, Mark Luke] does Jesus say he existed before his birth . . ."

As I have already said, however, this point is meaningless and proves nothing. Absence of proof in one source does not invalidate the truth of the pre-existence of Christ! Absence of proof does not prove the reverse!

Although Buzzard admits Wainwright believes that Jesus was alive at the Creation, he never discusses those passages of Wainwright! He only quotes what he agrees with. He admits that Wainwright believes that Colossians 1:16 links Jesus with creation. But Buzzard negates this point by claiming that "other authorities do not think that Paul is speaking of the Genesis creation at all in this passage."

What other authorities? Buzzard doesn't say. But I must ask -- what difference does it make what mere MEN think or say? Who calls them "authorities," anyway? And who cares what MEN think? They are not "authorities" to me -- they have NO AUTHORITY WHATSOEVER! In God's eyes, they are *mere pipsqueaks*, I assure you of that!

This brings up a point: Who determines what we believe? Are we followers of MEN, or supposed "human authorities"? Or do we follow the WORD OF GOD? If we claim to follow the Word of God, then shouldn't we read it, and quote it, and ignore with what self-styled human "authorities" say or think?

"In The Beginning Was the Word"

Buzzard continues to quote various men and supposed "scholars" and their opinions about various Scriptures, such as John 1, instead of quoting the entire passage or vital portions of it from the book of John itself. This is a device which distracts the reader's attention from the Word of God itself, and the very words of John which God inspired him to write, and focuses the attention instead to the opinions of various men ABOUT what John wrote -- a very clever trick to confuse and disorient the unlearned and unwary.

Rather than read, for example, James Dunn's opinion, which makes no difference whatsoever (who is James Dunn? Is he an inspired Christian apostle or prophet? Is he, more likely, an uninspired "scholar" who does not even have the Spirit of God abiding within him?), let's read the words of John himself.

John wrote:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. *He* was with God in the beginning. Through *him* all things were made; without *him* nothing was made that has been made. In *him* was life, and that life was the light of men. . . . The Word BECAME FLESH and made *his* dwelling among us. We have seen *his* glory, the glory of the One and Only, *who* came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:1-4, 14, NIV).

Now do you see? Do you see WHY Buzzard did not want to quote the entire passage, as it appears in the Bible? Let's cut through all the chaff and smoke-screens which he and others throw up to confuse the issue, by their constantly quoting MEN about these passages of Scripture, and let's LOOK AT THE WORD OF GOD ITSELF! That's the only safe way to avoid deception, delusion, and devious doctrines of Satan-inspired men!

But again -- don't ever take my word for it, or theirs either, for that matter -- SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES! Do as the Bereans did. Don't just read some "scholarly

appearing" article, which raises doubts and causes consternation or dismay, and "assume" the author knows what he is talking about. Consider the possibility that he could be demon-inspired or Satan-inspired. How do you know? How can you prove what the TRUTH is?

The Bereans had the answer. "Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and EXAMINED THE SCRIPTURES EVERY DAY to see if what Paul said was true" (Acts 17:11). Did you notice how little Buzzard actually quoted of the Bible, and the very passages which he disputed -- but how much time he spent quoting various men and their "opinions" which proved nothing?

John 3:13

On page 6, Buzzard discusses John 3:13, where Jesus clearly spoke as "he who came down from heaven." We read: "No man has ascended into heaven, except he who came down from heaven, the Son of man, who is in heaven." But notice! Buzzard does not immediately discuss this point at all, but rather focuses on the obscure question of what He meant by "no man has ascended into heaven," using the perfect tense of the verse "has ascended." He goes on to claim that this referred to the vision in Daniel 7 where the "Son of man" appeared before the throne of the Ancient of Days.

Buzzard writes, "How then can it be said that the Son 'has ascended to heaven'? Simply because this is what had been forecast about Him in Daniel."

Wha-a-a-a-a-t? Read that again. Daniel had seen IN VISION a picture of the Son of Man, Christ, appearing in heaven before the Father's throne. Daniel records: "As I looked, 'thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened. . .

"In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language WORSHIPED HIM. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed" (Dan.7:9-14).

Notice! Daniel merely had a vision of the future, of the time just before Christ's Second Coming, when He would be given power and authority over all nations. Pray tell, what does this have to do with John 3:13? Again -- let's read the entire verse! "NO ONE has ever gone into heaven EXCEPT THE ONE WHO CAME FROM HEAVEN - - the Son of Man [a title Jesus often used of Himself!]" (John 3:13, NIV). Jesus' statement here has nothing whatever to do with Daniel's vision. Buzzard stretches and

stretches and his point collapses, because he has stretched too far and too thin, to make the connection!

Buzzard then offers HIS OWN "mistranslation" or paraphrase of John 3:13. Did you read it? He wrote, "Thus 'No one [it is written in the book of Daniel] IS DESTINED to ascend to heaven except the one who came down from heaven, the Son of Man who [in Daniel] is in heaven.'" Buzzard claims the final phrase "who is in heaven" belongs in the original, but the New International Version leaves it out. Buzzard's claims that Jesus was referring to the vision in Daniel when He spoke of the Son of man "ascending to heaven" is, frankly, very thin and extremely forced.

The proper sense of this expression is found in the *Amplified Bible*: "And yet no one has ever gone up to heaven; but there is One Who has come down from heaven, the Son of man [Himself], Who is -- dwells, Whose home is -- in heaven." Moffatt has this verse: "And yet, the Son of man, descended from heaven, is the only one who has ever ascended into heaven." Phillips has it: "No one has ever been up to Heaven except the Son of man who came down from Heaven."

Buzzard claims Jesus was here talking about His future ascension into heaven. But that is not what He said! Once we truly understand who Jesus was, and that He did pre-exist, it becomes obvious that He had ascended up to heaven many times during Old Testament history!

The One who became Christ came down from heaven and talked with Adam and Eve (Gen.3:8); He visited with Abraham and Sarah (Gen.18:1-5); He wrestled with Jacob 32:24-30); He spoke with Moses on Mount Sinai (Exo.3:1-14); He was seen of the 70 elders of Israel (Exo.24:9-11); and Moses in particular was permitted to view Him from behind at a close distance (Exo.33:12-23). He ascended and descended from heaven many times! And this could not have been the Father, for no man has seen the Father -- at any time -- ever! (John 1:18; 6:46).

The proofs that Jesus IS the YHVH of the Old Testament, who was prophesied to stand on the Mount of Olives in the last days (Zech.14:1-4; Acts 1:7-12) are far too many to list here. I suggest all who are interested to write for my article "Who Was the YHVH of the OLD TESTAMENT?" Meanwhile, take a concordance and look up such words as "Saviour," "Redeemer," and compare their usage in the Old and New Testaments. Jesus IS the "Saviour," the "Redeemer," the "Only One" of Israel!

John 8:58

In John 8, Jesus said to the Jewish crowd, "If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me. Though you do not know him, I know him. If I said I do not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and keep his word. Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad."

The crowd responded, "You are not yet fifty years old, and you have seen Abraham?"

Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, *before Abraham was, I am!*" (John 8:54-58).

When Jesus told the assembled unbelieving Jews, who accused Him of having a demon, that He existed before Abraham's day, He was not fooling. Buzzard states, "The day of Messiah 'preexisted,' so to speak, in Abraham's mind" (p.8). In other words, Buzzard claims, "Messiah's day was a reality to Abraham through the eyes of faith, though it had not yet arrived. So also the Messiah 'existed' as the supreme subject of God's plan long before the birth of Abraham" (*ibid.*).

But wait a minute! Buzzard is reading a lot into this passage that simply isn't there. Again, his explanation is extremely forced and conjectural. Jesus literally said that before Abraham existed, He existed. That's what He said. No matter how Buzzard and others try to explain away that simple fact, it remains true.

Notice! Jesus used the expression, "I am," several times at crucial junctures to refer to Himself (John 18:5; 4:26). However, in these instances the expression proves nothing. Jesus merely used it to identify Himself to others. However, John 8:58 is far different. Here Jesus uses a very unusual setting for saying, "I am" -- which was the very NAME of God (Exo.3:14). He tells the hostile Jewish crowd who were baiting Him,

"I tell you the truth, *before Abraham was, I am!*" (John 8:58).

This is a plain and straight-forward statement that He existed BEFORE ABRAHAM! He is clearly implying here that as the Logos (John 1:1-3), He pre-dated their father Abraham in existence!

What could be plainer than that? We don't have to try to twist, and squeeze every nuance of meaning from this verse -- it is very straight-forward and crystal clear. The Jews knew what He meant when He said this. They picked up stones to stone Him for what they considered to be blasphemy (verse 59). They knew He wasn't talking about merely being an "idea" in the mind of Abraham!

How To Study the Bible

What more can I say? Recognizing Christ as God does not set John against Matthew, Mark and Luke -- except in the mind of Buzzard who does not grasp the fact that all truth of God is not found in many different places. John's gospel provides the meaning and purpose which the other three gospel accounts leave out. To properly understand the nature and divinity of Christ, we must put ALL the Scriptures together, and not try to set one against another.

As Isaiah wrote, "For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line

upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little: For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people" (Isa.28:10-11, KJV). "But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken" (Isa.28:13).

Buzzard ends his article with a reference to John 17:3 where Jesus addresses the Father, in His prayer, as "the only true God." To Buzzard, this seems to clinch the case for Christ having no divine pre-existence. Does this mean, then, that only the Father is God, after all, and Jesus is not divine and did not pre-exist? Buzzard would have you think so. But again, he fails to honestly quote the context of Jesus' remark!

What about this verse? Let's read Jesus' prayer, and His remarks, in context. John records: "After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: 'Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence WITH THE GLORY I HAD WITH YOU BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN" (John 17:1-5).

Why does Buzzard so obviously leave out verse 5 from his remarks dealing with John 17:3? His silence speaks volumes. His silence is DEAFENING. Jesus, in the form of the Logos of God, was with the Father and shared His glory before the world began -- before the time of Creation of the universe!

"I am the Alpha and the Omega,' says the Lord God, 'who is and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty' " Rev.1:8).

"I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever!" (Rev.1:17-18).

Jesus Christ, Himself, says: "Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book" (Rev.22:7). "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. *I AM THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA*, the *First* and the Last, the *Beginning* and the End. . . . I am the *Root and* the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star" (Rev.22:12-16).

"He said to me: 'It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son' " (Rev.21:6-7).

Both Christ Jesus and the Father are "the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End." Both are divine. Both are God! The Father is the Supreme head of the

Family of God; Christ is His eldest, firstborn Son. Together, as "Elohim," they created the heavens and the earth (Gen.1:1-2), and then created man in their own image and likeness (Gen.1:26).

Let's rejoice in the divinity and glory of the Father, and our Saviour, Jesus Christ!

Chapter 7

Who or What Was Jesus Christ *Before* His Human Birth?

Was Jesus Christ the Messiah "very God of very God"? Is He a second member of the divine Godhead? Is there a contradiction between the terms "God the Son" and "the Son of God"? Were there two or more divine Beings, co-equal and uncreated, who have existed for all eternity, who were and are "God"? Why did Jesus speak of His Father as "the only true God"? Why do the Jews recite, "The LORD is our God, the LORD *alone* "? Who is the "LORD" of the Old Testament? Isaiah quotes God as saying, "I am God, and there is none else" (Isa.45:22), "there is none beside me" (verse 21). Does this preclude the pre-existence and divinity of the Christ, the Messiah? Heresies abound in these "last days," terrible heresies and apostasizing errors -- deviations from the truth which could rob you of your eternal salvation! It is time you knew -- and proved conclusively -- the PLAIN TRUTH about Jesus Christ the Messiah!

The apostle Paul warned almost 2,000 years ago, speaking of our End-Time generation, "The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron" (I Tim.4:1-2).

In his second epistle to Timothy, Paul warned that these evil deceivers are "always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth. Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these men oppose the truth -- men of depraved minds, who, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected. But they will not get very far because, as in the case of those men, their folly will be clear to everyone" (II Tim.3:7-9).

Such a heresy has arisen in these last days. It has received a new dimension of clever manipulation and pseudo-scholarly advancement by its authors. Claiming the Jews only worshiped "one God," and that they are rejecting "pagan" errors, they assert that Biblical revelation teaches that Jesus Christ was indeed the "Son of God," but definitely not "God the Son," making a clever distinction between the two terms.

According to one proponent of this "new theology," which is really just an End-time revision and revanchist version of the first century, age-old Gnosticism, it is a "striking fact" that Jesus never referred to himself as 'God.'" He asserts, in contrast, that the word "God" in the New Testament refers to the "Father" some 1350 times. He admits that a few texts refer to Christ also as "God," but claims those particular texts should be translated with a small "g" for "god." He then asks, "Why this impressive difference in New Testament usage, when so many seem to think that Jesus is no less 'God' than his Father?" (from the booklet, "Who Is Jesus?" by Anthony Buzzard, p.3).

The author goes on to state that people today may not appreciate the strength of "monotheism -- belief in one God -- which was the first principle of all Old Testament teaching about God. The Jews were prepared to die for their conviction that the true God was a single person. Any idea of plurality in the Godhead was rejected as dangerous idolatry." According to Buzzard, therefore, only the "Father" is truly God from all eternity, and Christ was merely a human being, albeit He was supernaturally conceived of the Holy Spirit. Buzzard states dogmatically that Christ had NO pre-existence before His human birth, except as a "thought" or "idea" in the mind of the Father, but that this "idea" goes back to the beginning of the human race or time of Creation.

Buzzard then declares: "It is essential to ask, therefore, whether the Old Testament anywhere suggests that the Messiah was to be 'coequal God,' a second *uncreated* being who abandons an eternal existence in heaven in order to become man. If it does not say anything like this (and remembering that the Old Testament is concerned even with minute details about the coming Messiah), we will have to treat as suspicious the claim of anyone saying that Jesus is both Messiah and an uncreated second eternal person of the Godhead, claiming the title 'God' in the full sense" (*ibid.*, p.7).

Is Jesus Christ "God"?

What about this claim? What do the Scriptures say about this new "theory" concerning the role of Jesus Christ? Was He merely a Messiah with no claim to divinity? On the other hand, did He pre-exist from the beginning of all Creation, coequal and uncreated, along with the One known as the "Father"? Could, by some chance, both views be equally erroneous and inaccurate? What is the truth about God, and especially Jesus Christ, our Saviour?

It is amazing how a clouded and prejudiced mind can only view Scriptures through the filter of its own artificial prejudice. Even so, those who claim Jesus was not truly divine argue that "only a few" Biblical texts seem, on the "surface," to suggest that Christ was indeed divine. But, they claim, these "few" texts should not be seen to overthrow the "unflinching monotheism" of the Old Testament. According to them, there is not even a "hint" in the New Testament that Jesus Christ regarded Himself as divine "God." They attempt to "explain away" by sheer dismissal all the Biblical verses where Jesus said He, the "Son of man," came "down from heaven," as merely

picturesque speech reflecting only the fact that as an "idea" of the Father, Jesus figuratively came down from heaven. Thus with a subtle, slick, back-door approach to the subject, these neo-Gnostics defy and deny the divinity of Christ!

This is no mere academic argument. This is crucial -- foundational -- the very essence of "Christianity" and the teaching of Scripture! Either Christ was divine and pre-existed with the Father -- or He was a mere man, albeit a "perfect man." What difference does it make? If Christ was a "mere man," and not truly Divine, and not the Creator of all mankind, then I ask you -- of what good is the fact that He lived a perfect life? On that basis, then, His death might atone -- on the basis of a life for a life, or one for one -- for JUST ONE other human life! If he was merely a "perfect human being," and died sinlessly, his death might have atoned for ONE human life -- but not for billions of billions! In order for a sinless life to be equal to all sinful mankind, that sinless life had to be equal to ALL HUMAN LIVES -- that is, He had to be equal to the CREATOR of all human life, or that Creator Himself!

Messianic Texts in the Old Testament

The Messiah was to be born of "the seed of a woman" (Gen.3:15). He was to be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). He was to be a descendant of David (II Sam.7:14-16; Isa.11:1). He was to be a mighty prophet, like Moses (Deut.18:15-16). But was He also to be very "God" Himself, a member of the divine Godhead?

Let us not assume. The apostle Paul tells us plainly that we must "prove all things," lest we be led away into hideous error and slanderous deception, which could deny us salvation itself (I Thess.5:21). He praised the Bereans because they searched the Scriptures daily to prove whether what he taught was true or not (Acts 17:11).

We know from many Scriptures that the coming of the Messiah was prophesied. This of itself neither proves His divinity or His humanity. It merely proves that the Father indeed had planned for the Messiah to appear to save mankind from their sins -- from the beginning. But is the Messiah ever referred to as "God" in the Old Testament?

The answer to this question is an astonishing and overwhelming YES!

"The Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). If even in just ONE verse we find the Messiah referred to as "God," then that would be sufficient proof of the fact. Scripture does not and cannot contradict itself. Jesus said of the Father, "Thy word is TRUTH" (John 17:17). In other words, just one clear Scripture would be sufficient to PROVE the divinity and pre-existence of Christ, the Messiah!

But God has given us much more witness than that. Notice! In the 45th Psalm, speaking of the coming Messianic king, David writes prophetically: "You are the most excellent of men and your lips have been anointed with grace, since God has blessed you forever. Gird your sword upon your side, O mighty one; clothe yourself with splendor and majesty. In your majesty ride forth victoriously in behalf of truth,

humility and righteousness; let your right hand display awesome deeds. Let your sharp arrows pierce the hearts of the king's enemies; let the nations fall beneath your feet. Your throne, O GOD, will last forever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom. You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy" (Psalm 45:2-7, NIV).

The word for "God" in this passage, used once for the Messiah, and later for His "God," is the Hebrew word Elohim. It can refer to "gods in the ordinary sense," but in the plural with the article, refers to the supreme God. It is a word occasionally applied by deference to magistrates, and sometimes to angels, judges, or the mighty (see Strong's Exhaustive Concordance).

This is the very same word used in Genesis 1, where we read: "In the beginning GOD (Elohim) created the heavens and the earth" (Gen.1:1). The very name "Elohim" is a "uni-plural" word denoting both unity and plurality at the same time. The singular form is "El," literally meaning "the mighty one." Thus Elohim, strictly speaking, is literally "The Mighty Ones" -- an indication of just ONE GOD composed of more than one entity, being, or personality!

This conclusion is further reinforced by simply reading the rest of Genesis 1, especially the verses concerning the creation of mankind. We read, "Then God (Elohim) said, 'Let US make man in OUR image, in OUR likeness, and let THEM rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.' So God created MAN in HIS OWN IMAGE, in the image of God (Elohim) he created him; MALE AND FEMALE he created them" (Gen.1:26-27).

Notice this passage of Scripture carefully. God is not like the absent-minded professor who forgets how many of them there are, who speaks in the plural when there is only the singular. God cannot lie (Titus 1:2). When He said, "Let US make man in OUR image," He was clearly referring to the fact that there were at least TWO PERSONAGES in the Godhead, communing with each other -- just as in a human family, there are Two Beings -- a man and a woman -- who become One in marriage! Both beings are on the same level -- that is both are human beings; but the man has authority over the woman. Even so, in the original Godhead, there are Two Beings -- the One we know as the Father, and the Other -- the One who BECAME the "Son" when He was born of the virgin Mary! This second member of the Godhead was also God, of the same composition and spirit essence as the Father -- but He was inferior in authority, even as the wife is inferior in authority to her husband. Thus a Great Truth is taught to us in this ancient verse of Genesis, the first book of the Torah!

Thus the "Son of God" did pre-exist as a member of the Godhead. However, He was not "coequal" with the Father, but was subject to and under the authority of the Father, who was greater than He. With this truth in mind, we can more fully understand the words of the prophet Micah who wrote: "But you, Bethlehem

Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, WHOSE ORIGINS ARE FROM OF OLD, FROM ANCIENT TIMES" (Micah 5:2). I believe it is very tenuous, and stretching the point, to try to claim that the person mentioned here was in existence merely as an "idea" or "thought" in the mind of God in ancient times. This verse, on the contrary, says that His very ORIGINS are of old, from ancient times -- or as the King James Version has it, "from EVERLASTING." The original Hebrew expression here is, "from the DAYS OF ETERNITY."

Does this really sound as if the Messiah really had no literal existence until His birth of the virgin Mary some 2,000 years ago? Nonsense! Falderol! Balderdash! Sheer bunkum!

The prophet Isaiah also foretold that the Christ would be God incarnate. He wrote: "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, MIGHTY GOD, EVERLASTING FATHER, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end" (Isaiah 9:6-7).

Anthony Buzzard and others claim that the word "God" here should be with a small "g." Now it seems to me, if you want to talk about idolatry, that would be it -- to worship any "god" with a small "g"! The Jehovah's Witnesses, of course, also subscribe to this interpretation. Thus they deny the Godhood and divinity of the Messiah! In the Hebrew, however, the expression "Mighty God" is *gibbor* meaning "mighty, powerful, champion, valiant" and "God" which is "El," the singular of Elohim, and which means, "The Mighty One." Thus the Christ is here portrayed as being the "Powerful, Valiant Mighty One," or "Powerful God." He is also referred to as the "Father" of Israel, His people, but not just that -- but as "EVERLASTING Father." The Hebrew for everlasting is *ad*, from *adah*, and means "for perpetuity," "eternity," "everlasting," "world without end."

Therefore, the Messiah is here depicted as being Eternal, Everlasting, and is once again referred to as God, "the Mighty, Powerful God," to distinguish Him from all pagan gods or lesser objects worshiped as gods by mankind.

Notice more proof that the Messiah was to be the Divine King of Israel. In the second Psalm we read: "I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, 'You are my Son; today I have become your Father. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance. You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery. Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth. Serve the LORD (here the Messiah is actually referred to directly as the "LORD"!)" with fear and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him" (Psalm 2:7-12).

Christ, the Messiah, is clearly referred to here not only as "the LORD," and is

called by the Tetragrammaton (YHVH), or "Yahveh," but He is also referred to as the "Son of the LORD" (verse 7)). Let us learn a lesson from human experience. A husband and wife mate, and produce a "son." That son is fully human, just as much as his parents. He is just like them in every way -- with the same genetic code imprinted in his chromosomes. He is in the very image and likeness of his parents. He is FULLY HUMAN!

Even so, when the Father spoke of His own Son, whom He would give the nations of the earth as His inheritance, He was referring to a literal, begotten, and born SON -- fully Divine, just as He, the Father, is Divine -- FULLY GOD AS HE IS GOD, just as human children are fully human as their parents are!

To claim that the divinity of the Messiah is nowhere mentioned or alluded to in the Old Testament is nothing short of sheer unadulterated, fabricated ERROR and doctrinal heresy! It may not be pleasant to hear this belief described in such blistering, plain, and no-holds-barred terms, but it is true, nevertheless. Christ is very God, just as much as a human son is very human. But, of course, there is much more evidence! Now let us turn to the NEW Testament, and see what Christ Himself said on this pivotal question.

Testimony of the New Testament

What do Jesus Christ Himself and the apostles have to say about this very important question? When the high priest interrogated Christ, and demanded, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" Jesus answered: "*I am*. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven" (Mark 14:61-62).

On another occasion, the Jews asked Him, "Are you greater than our father Abraham?" "You are not yet fifty years old, and you have seen Abraham!" (John 8:53, 57). Jesus replied to them: "I tell you the truth, before Abraham was born, *I am!*" (v.58). At this point, the Jews picked up stones to stone Him for what they considered blasphemy (v.59). In other words, they understood that He was claiming to have existed BEFORE ABRAHAM -- they knew at this point that He was claiming to be the "I AM" -- the God, or YHVH, of the Old Testament!

Notice the play of words that Jesus was using. In Exodus 3, when God reveals Himself to Moses at the burning bush, He said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Exo.3:6). Moses then asked God His name, so He would be able to tell the Israelites who had sent him. God then said, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites. *I AM* has sent me to you" (Exo.3:13-14).

When Jesus told the high priest He was the "I am," the priest tore his clothes and accused Christ of blasphemy, of claiming to be God. When Jesus told the Jews that before Abraham was, "I AM," He was also telling them that He was the "I AM" who

appeared to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses. They got the point, and that is why they sought to stone Him to death!

Why is it that modern so-called "scholars" and professors of theology cannot grasp this simple, singular truth? Why is it that in their ignorance, arrogance, and conceit, that they overlook this fundamental TRUTH of Scripture?

Although Jesus deliberately hid His awesome true identity from the masses for most of His ministry, and simply let His miracles and signs do the talking for Him, speaking in riddles and paradigms and allegories to the masses, nevertheless there were special times in His ministry where He much more than "hinted" as to His true secret identity! He was GOD IN THE FLESH!

Bout with the Jehovah's Witnesses

Years ago, in 1958, when I was a young converted teenager, getting ready to go to college, my father decided that I was getting too "fanatical" in obeying the Word of God. He decided to have a couple of Jehovah's Witnesses speak to me about my religion. Before they came, my dad told me he didn't want me to follow them, either, but he thought they might open my mind to the fact that I didn't have all the truth, nor did Herbert Armstrong. I agreed to meet with them.

The two men appeared at our home a few days later. We went to my room, where the discussion began. Since they believed the Law of God was abolished, I confronted them with several Scriptures which prove God's law is eternal and everlasting, and Christ did not come to abolish it. They had no answer to the simple Word of God, except to deny flatly that the Scriptures I quoted were relevant; however, they could not explain them.

During our discussion, they mentioned that the Word of God teaches that Christ was not divine "God," but a created being less than God. At this point, I turned to Hebrews, chapter one. Notice what this Scripture says:

"In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and THROUGH WHOM HE MADE THE UNIVERSE" (Heb. 1:1-2).

Now, how can those who deny the divinity of Christ get around such a plain verse as that? Here it very clearly states that it was through the One called Christ that God the Father "made the Universe"! Yet Anthony Buzzard and others simply decline to admit the simple veracity of this plain statement; they "interpret" it to say only that it is through Christ that all those who are to be saved will be saved -- that is, the "universe of the saved." That is pure unadulterated poppycock and pish-twaddle! Can't we believe the simple words of Scripture? Do you really think God had the words of the

Bible written in such a way that only blowhard errant intellectual "elite" could understand the real underlying meaning? Must we "force" the Scriptures to say what WE want them to say, because we are blinded to the truth? Must we deny one key Scripture, and then another and another, just so we can maintain our own pet cherished theory?

This verse very clearly is not talking about just the numbers of those who are saved. It says very plainly that God the Father created ALL THE UNIVERSE -- including all the planets, stars, galaxies, and the earth, sun and moon, and all life -- THROUGH JESUS CHRIST!

In this Scripture, the apostle Paul goes on: "The Son is the RADIANCE OF GOD'S GLORY and the EXACT REPRESENTATION OF HIS BEING, SUSTAINING ALL THINGS by his powerful word" (Heb.1:3). A mere created being, less than God, could not have been the radiance of God's glory and the EXACT representation of His being. To be an EXACT REPLICA of GOD, you must also BE "God"! Furthermore, this verse says Christ SUSTAINS ALL THINGS -- that means, the entire Universe! -- by HIS powerful Word! To be the Creator, and Sustainer of the Universe, One would have to be identified as *VERY GOD!*

Now let us continue this amazing chapter. Paul goes on, "For to which of the angels did God ever say, 'You are my Son; today I have become your Father?' Or again, 'I will be his Father, and he will be my Son'? And again, when God brings his first born into the world, he says: 'Let all God's ANGELS worship him' " (verses 5-6).

Now, if Christ were simply a created perfect human being, why would God the Father command all the heavenly ANGELS to worship Him? Maybe, in that case, human beings should worship Him, but why the angels? The angels of God in heaven never sinned. They don't need "redemption" and "salvation." So why should they worship the Messiah, the Christ? That would make no sense at all. However, since Christ is ALSO the One who CREATED all the angels, it makes perfect sense for all the heavenly angels to WORSHIP Him!

This verse also brings up another point. The angels are commanded to worship the Messiah. He is regarded as worthy of WORSHIP by all people. To worship means to revere, to reverence. One should only worship GOD! The Word of God itself says: "I am the LORD your God . . . You shall have NO OTHER GODS before me" (Exo.20:1-3). Only GOD, the supreme God, should be worshiped and revered. Any other worship would be IDOLATRY!

In the book of Isaiah, we read of the supreme God, who says: "Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me. I, even I, am the LORD, and apart from me there is no savior" (Isa.43:10). If Jesus Christ was a created "god," or became a "god" through the perfect life He led on earth, then He was clearly formed after the supreme God -- and this Scripture very clearly says THERE WILL NEVER BE SUCH FORMED! Further, this verse says that there is no "god" apart from the Supreme

Being

Himself, the true Godhead! Therefore, the wacky and weird ideas of Anthony Buzzard and other modern Gnostics are without Scriptural foundation. This verse also states that there is NO SAVIOR apart from God Himself. This tells us, then, that unless Jesus Christ IS part of the Divine Godhead, and IS the "LORD" of the Old Testament, He would have NO CLAIM to being a savior!

How plain! Isaiah goes on, quoting God: "And there is no God apart from me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is NONE BUT ME" (Isa.45:21). Since Jesus Christ is our Savior, and the Savior of the world, He MUST be a member of the Godhead. Otherwise this plain Scripture would be broken, and God's Word would contradict itself!

Again, Isaiah declares of God: "Remember this, fix it in mind, take it to heart, you rebels. Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me" (Isa.46:8-9). It is true that the Jews worship ONE GOD. That God is the LORD, or YHVH, which would be pronounced "Yahveh," according to the best knowledge, today. Some spell God's name YHWH, but the "W" in the German language is pronounced like a "V." The ancient Hebrew language had no "w" sound or letter. The fourth consonant of the Tetragrammaton was "vav" which carries a distinct "v" sound, which is an explosive sound formed by closing the air passage through the mouth, and then opening it slightly and forcing air through the slightly pursed lips. It is a powerful sound. The German "w" however is a weak, ineffectual sound, as in "weak, wuss, woolly, winsome, wild." The "v" sound is strong, as in "victory, violent, vine, vial, veil, vim, vigor," etc.

Does the fact of there being two members of the divine Godhead contradict the idea of ONE GOD? Not at all. The truth is, there is only One "God," but that God is composed of two divine, celestial Beings, members of One Divine Family. One is the Father; the other is the Son. There is a FAMILY relationship between them. One is completely obedient to the other. Therefore, they are not "coequal" in the sense of authority or power. But they are UNITED AS ONE in thought, plans, goals, and complete spiritual, emotional and mental unity. Therefore, Jesus Himself prayed, expressing this DIVINE UNITY, which He has ALWAYS had with the Father, "And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the GLORY I HAD WITH YOU *before the world began*" (John 17:5). This is not speaking of some vague "idea" or nebulous "thought" that was in the mind of God before the world began that He would create a human Messiah someday. Jesus here is speaking expressly of THE VERY DIVINE GLORY HE SHARED WITH THE FATHER FROM ETERNITY -- before the world was created!

Jesus went on, saying of His disciples, "They knew with CERTAINTY that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me" (John 17:8). This is a literal truth. Jesus was not stretching the point, meaning that He only came from God in the sense of being a "divine idea" originating with God. If He meant that He would have expressed it in another manner. But He clearly said that the disciples KNEW He came from God

and was sent by Him.

Jesus prayed that the disciples would be one, "as we are one" (verse 11). Jesus said to His disciples, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father?' Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words that I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me . . ." (John 14:8-11).

Christ and the Father are One in thought, purpose and mind. They are perfectly welded together, united, and completely harmonious. They are "one." Yet the Father is the greater of the two. Jesus said, "The Father is greater than I" (John 14:28). He told them on another occasion, "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these" (John 5:19-20).

From the very beginning, Jesus has learned from and imitated the Father. Paul wrote, in the book of Colossians, speaking of Christ, "He is the IMAGE of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation, FOR BY HIM ALL THINGS WERE CREATED: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; ALL THINGS were created BY him and FOR him. He is BEFORE ALL THINGS, and in him all things HOLD TOGETHER. And he is the head of the body, the church . . ." (Col.1:15-18).

Now consider this Scripture carefully. If indeed "all things" were created by the One who became Christ, as Paul so clearly says here, then Christ had to EXIST before all the things which He created. You cannot create something before you yourself exist! Therefore, He must have pre-existed the created Universe around us! But of course! Paul plainly says He is "before ALL things" (v.17). That means He existed before the Universe was formed, as is recorded in Genesis 1:1. He, the One who became Christ, existed before the Universe was made, and then was instrumental in the CREATION of all things, including angels and atoms, planets and galaxies, amoeba and mammoths, seas, skies, and mountains.

Being a pre-existent member of the Godhead, then, why and how did He become the Messiah, the Christ or Anointed One?

Notice! The apostle Paul wrote, "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, BEING IN VERY NATURE GOD, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death -- even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the

Father" (Phil.2:5-11).

Being God, a Spirit Being, Jesus divested Himself of His divine nature, and became a mortal man. Because He successfully completed His mission, now every being will worship Him -- all the future children in the Kingdom of God, and all the angelic beings in heaven, and even all the demons and their leader! Those who will not worship Him willingly will do so by constraint. Those who must be forced, and are incorrigibly wicked, will be destroyed in the lake of fire (Matt.25:41).

Moffatt translates this verse: "Though he was DIVINE BY NATURE, he did not set store upon equality with God, but emptied himself by taking the nature of a servant . . ." (Phil.2:6-7). The Phillips Translation says: "For he, who had ALWAYS BEEN GOD BY NATURE, did not cling to his prerogatives as God's equal, but stripped himself of all privilege by consenting to be a slave by nature and being born as mortal man." The Amplified Bible gives the full sense of the Greek words in this passage: "Who, although being essentially one with God and in the form of God [possessing the fullness of the attributes which make GOD GOD], did not think this equality with God was a thing to be eagerly grasped or retained; but stripped Himself [of all privileges and rightful dignity] so as to assume the guise of a servant (slave), in that He became like men and was born a human being."

I believe these Scriptures are incredibly clear as crystal and to the point. How anyone can deny the divinity and pre-existence of Christ after reading these verses, is really beyond me. It is obvious that false assumptions concerning the Godhead has caused them to deny plain and simple Scriptures to maintain their bull-headed and false presumptions.

The Gospel of John

Perhaps one of the clearest and yet most mysterious verses in the Scriptures is found in the beginning of the Gospel of John. John writes:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him ALL THINGS WERE MADE; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men" (John 1:1-4).

Now compare this verse with Genesis 1:1:

"In the beginning GOD [Elohim, "The Mighty Ones"] created the heavens and the earth."

Notice! The Greek word for "Word" in this passage in John's gospel is Logos. It means literally "word," divine "expression," "utterance," "reasoning" or "communication" of God. In this Scripture is it clearly a reference to a DIVINE

BEING and PERSONALITY -- One who was with the Father, and through whom He made ALL THINGS -- the WHOLE CREATION -- THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE! In fact, according to this verse, nothing was made without the involvement or agency of this "Word." Who was this "Word" or Logos of God?

John goes on to tell us:

"The Word BECAME FLESH and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the ONE AND ONLY, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (verse 14).

This divine Being who was involved in all Creation literally became human flesh and blood, so that He could die for our sins on the cross. These verses do not merely discuss some "thought" that was in the mind of God in the beginning. This is far more than the mere personification of a "thought." John does not use such personifications in his gospel. It is not his writing style. It requires major forcing of the text and major surgery to interpret this passage as a mere "allegory" or "personification." Such twisting and wresting of the Scriptures, and manhandling of the Word of God, is a sign of arrogance and lack of submission to the power of God and the Spirit of God.

Paul wrote of those who wrest and twist the Scriptures, and their followers, "I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a DIFFERENT GOSPEL -- one which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to PERVERT the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, *let him be ETERNALLY CONDEMNED!* As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, LET HIM BE ETERNALLY CONDEMNED!" (Gal.1:6-9).

This may seem like severe language. Paul means every word of it, and so do I! Paul goes on, "Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ" (Gal.1:10).

Who Is the LORD of the Old Testament?

Jesus Christ is the Logos, or Word, the Second member of the Godhead, who did the creating in Genesis 1:1 and John 1:1. He, as the "Word," is the One who spoke the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20). He is actually the One who revealed Himself to the children of Israel and to Moses, and who spoke to Moses in the burning bush! That is why He told the Jews who questioned Him as to His identity and authority, "I AM."

The proof of these remarkable assertions is really very simple. We read in the book of John, the words of Christ:

"And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You [referring to the Jews, as well as all mankind] have NEVER HEARD HIS VOICE NOR SEEN HIS FORM, nor does his word dwell in you" (John 5:37-38).

Jesus Christ also pointed out: "NO ONE has SEEN the Father except the one who is from God; ONLY HE has seen the Father" (John 6:46). Who, then, was it Who revealed Himself to the Jews at Mount Sinai, and spoke with them? Who *really* gave the Ten Commandments at Sinai?

If no one ever heard the voice of the Father, or saw His shape or form, then it could not have been the Father who gave the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai. We read in Exodus 20, "And *God* spoke all these words . . ." (Exo.20:1). When the people heard the thunder and the trumpet blast, and the words of God, and saw the lightning on the mountain, they were terrified, and trembled with fear, and said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself, and we will listen. But do not have GOD speak to us or we will die" (Exo.20:18-19).

Since it was GOD who spoke to them, yet no man has heard the Father at any time, as Jesus said, then the One who spoke must have been the Logos -- the One who became Christ!

Furthermore, Jesus said that no man has ever seen the shape or form of God the Father. Yet we read in the book of Exodus this remarkable statement:

"Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up and SAW THE GOD OF ISRAEL. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself. But God did not raise his hand against these leaders of the Israelites; THEY SAW GOD, and the ate and drank" (Exodus 24:9-11).

The God of Israel, the LORD of the Old Testament, the One who brought Israel out of Egypt, then, was SEEN OF MEN, including the elders of the tribe of Judah. Yet Jesus Christ said that NO MAN had ever seen the form or shape of the Father. Is this a contradiction in the Scripture? Has the Scripture been broken? Not at all! There is no contradiction whatsoever. The simple explanation of this anomaly is simply that the One whom they all SAW was the LOGOS -- the WORD OF GOD -- the ONE WHO BECAME CHRIST! He WAS the "LORD" or YHVH of the Old Testament who revealed Himself to Israel!

Moses said to this same One, on a later occasion, "Now show me your glory" (Exo.33:18). Because God was pleased with Moses, we read:

"And the LORD said, 'I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in

your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. But,' he said, 'you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live.'

"Then the LORD said, 'There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen' " (Exo.33:19-23).

Moses looked upon the God of Israel. He saw His back, although he was not permitted to look at His face. Yet Jesus said NO ONE had ever seen the Father, or heard His voice. Yet Moses was right there, communing with God, listening to His voice, and even looked upon His form!

What an amazing event! What an astonishing, dumfounding occurrence! The One who revealed Himself to Moses was none other than the Word, the Logos, the One who became Jesus Christ, as both Paul and John so clearly record in the New Testament!

Up until the time Christ came, the world was in virtual total ignorance of the Father. There were several allusions to Him in the Psalms, but the Jews did not understand the relationship of the Godhead. Jesus Himself said that He came to REVEAL the Father. His exact words were,

"All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and NO ONE KNOWS THE FATHER except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to REVEAL him" (Matt.11:27; see also Luke 10:22).

Notice! Jesus said plainly that nobody knew or understood the Father -- He had not been REVEALED to mankind. Yet the God of the Old Testament, the God of Israel, revealed Himself to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses, and to the children of Israel when He entered a covenant relationship with them -- a "marriage covenant" (Exodus 24). He also revealed Himself to the prophets, Samuel, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and others. Yet Jesus declared without any equivocation that NO ONE KNEW THE FATHER! That statement would have been bizarre and erroneous if it had been the Father who had revealed Himself to the patriarchs and prophets of old! Here again, then, is visible and palpable PROOF that the God who stands REVEALED in the Old Testament is none other than the One who became flesh and dwelt among us -- the Logos, who became Jesus Christ, the Messiah and Saviour!

Therefore, it is the Logos, who became Christ, who is quoted in the book of Isaiah as saying, and speaking for the Godhead, "I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols" (Isa.42:8). He is the One who said,

"Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me. I, even I, am the LORD, and apart from me there is no savior" (Isa.43:10-11). This God says, "You are my witnesses, declares the LORD, that I am God. Yes, and from ancient days, I am he. No one can deliver out of my hand. When I act, who can reverse it?" (Isa.43:12-13). This Personage says, "I am the LORD [YHVH], your Holy One, Israel's Creator, your King" (verse 15).

This same Logos, or Word of God, continues, revealing Himself to Israel through the prophet Isaiah: "I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God. Who then is like me? Let him proclaim it" (Isaiah 44:6). Interestingly, in the book of Revelation, Jesus Christ also reveals Himself as "the first and the last"! He declared: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord God, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty" (Rev.1:8). He said also, "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead. And behold I am alive for ever and ever!" (Rev.1:17-18). He said also to the Smyrna Church of God, "These are the words of him who is the First and the Last" (Rev.2:8). How clear that these two Beings are One and the Same!

Isaiah also quotes the LORD as saying: "This is what the LORD says -- your REDEEMER, who formed you in the womb. I am the LORD, who has made ALL THINGS, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself" (Isa.44:24). He goes on to say, "I am the LORD, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God" (Isa.45:5). "I am the LORD, and there is no other. I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the LORD, do all these things" (Isa.45:6-7). This same God says, "Who foretold this long ago, who declared it from the distant past? Was it not I, the LORD? And there is no God apart from me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none but me. Turn to me and be SAVED, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other. By myself I have sworn, my mouth has uttered in all integrity a word that will not be revoked: Before me every knee will bow; by me every tongue will swear. They will say of me, 'In the LORD alone are righteousness and strength. All who have raged against him will come to him and be put to shame. But in the LORD all the descendants of Israel will be found righteous and will exult" (Isa.45:21-25).

Notice that paragraph very carefully, point by point. The LORD of the Old Testament was the REDEEMER. Christ is our only Redeemer (Luke 1:68; 24:21; Gal.3:13; Rev.5:9; 14:4). The LORD made "all things." So did Christ (Col.1:15-16; John 1:1-3; Heb.1:1-2). The LORD is our Savior (Isa.43:3, 11; 45:15, 21; 49:26; 60:16). Jesus Christ is our Savior, and there is no other (Rom.4:12; Luke 2:11; John 4:42; Acts 5:31, 13:23; Phil.3:20; Titus 2:13, 3:6; II Pet.2:20; I John 4:14). There cannot be two Redeemers, each saying there is no one else! There cannot be two Saviors, each the "only one." There cannot be two different Ones, both of whom independently made "all things." If it were so, they would mutually EXCLUDE each other! Or One would have to be a LIAR! How can the riddle be solved? How can the conundrum be resolved? How can the puzzle be put together?

The answer is simple: Christ IS the LORD of the Old Testament -- the One who revealed Himself to Moses, and the One who spoke to Isaiah! There can be no other logical, consistent, coherent, cogent answer! Therefore, indeed, CHRIST IS GOD -- DIVINE GOD! Any other belief or doctrine is sheer heresy and anathema to the Word of God!

What Does It Mean, Christ "Came Down from Heaven"?

In John 3:13 we read the very words of Christ, "No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came down FROM heaven -- the Son of Man." In verse 31, John declares: "The one who COMES FROM ABOVE is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from HEAVEN is above all."

In chapter 6 of the gospel of John, Jesus said plainly: "For the bread of God is HE WHO COMES DOWN FROM HEAVEN and gives life to the world" (verse 33). Further, Jesus said: "For I have come DOWN FROM HEAVEN not to do my own will but to do the will of him who sent me . . ." (verse 38).

The Jews who heard Him say these things grumbled to themselves (verses 41-42), wondering how He could claim to have come down from heaven, since they knew He was the son of Joseph the carpenter and Mary. Jesus went on to tell them, "No one has seen the Father except the one who is FROM GOD; only he has seen the Father" (v.46). Speaking of himself, He then added, "But here is the bread that came down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven" (v.51).

These verses clearly speak of the pre-existence of Christ with the Father in heaven. There can be no doubt that Jesus told the crowds that HE CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN. Skeptics and pseudo-scholars may try to explain away these simple, straight-forward Scriptures, but their reasoning falls flat. The ONLY real so-called "evidence" they can offer to negate these powerful witnesses of Scripture is the assertion that they cannot be literal since the Jews only worshiped "one God," and were monotheistic, and that -- in the minds of these so-called scholars -- therefore means that Christ COULD NOT have co-existed with the Father in heaven as very "God." But this claim-proof sequence is nothing more than "circular reasoning" -- assuming to be true that which you are attempting to prove to be true! It is also called "begging the question." Obviously, it is not these plain and simple Scriptures which are faulty, but their own reasoning -- their own interpretation of what "monotheism" implies and constitutes.

The apostle Paul also concludes that Christ came down from heaven. He wrote to the Corinthian Church, "The first man [Adam] was of the dust of the earth, the second man [Christ] from heaven. As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the MAN FROM HEAVEN, so also are those who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the

MAN FROM HEAVEN" (I Cor.15:47-49).

Jesus Christ came from heaven, from the right hand side of the Father. And after His resurrection and ascension, He went back to heaven, where He had come from, to once again sit at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven (Heb.4:14; 6:20; 7:26).

Overwhelmingly, the evidence -- if we will just look at it with an open mind, without preconceived and prejudicial ideas -- shows that Jesus Christ not only pre-existed as a literal Being before His human birth, but that He came down from Heaven, and that He was actively involved in the Creation of the entire Universe, and in sustaining its continual operation. He was the "LORD" who revealed Himself to Moses and the patriarchs, and the prophets of old, as well as seventy elders of Israel.

But what about the other question: Was this member of the Godhead "coequal" with the Father in every respect, and "uncreated"?

We have already seen that Christ revealed that He was always subject to the Father and under the authority of His Father, and plainly said, "The Father is greater than I" (John 14:28). Did the One who became Christ have a "beginning" at one time? Or did He exist from all eternity, as a separate Being alongside the "Father"?

What Is the ORIGIN of GOD?

One of the mysteries which is not set forth plainly and clearly in the Scriptures is the question of the "origin of God." The simple explanation is that "God always was, and always has been." We human beings cannot easily focus our minds on the concept of "eternity." Somehow the very idea eludes us and evades our comprehension. Just what IS "eternity"? How long is "forever"?

Little children often ask their parents a most logical question, which they have never really been able to answer: "Mommy, Where did God come from?" Or, "Who created God?"

Evolutionists deny God exists. But evolution is a "non-science" -- a mere warped interpretation of existence by men who deny a Creator. Could "God" have evolved from nothing at some remote point in the primordial past? If it is impossible for human life, and the varieties of life on the planet earth as we know them -- millions of species of plants and animals -- then surely it would have been much more impossible for a spiritual Being, "God," with all His power and attributes, to have "evolved" over eons of time, from "nothing."

Where then did "God" come from?

Some things we are not given to understand at this time. Moses, the Lawgiver of Israel, wrote: "The SECRET THINGS belong to the LORD our God, but the things REVEALED belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words

of this law" (Deut.29:29). God has not revealed at this time the truth about His origin. It is probably completely beyond the human mind to comprehend.

Solomon wrote of God, "He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they CANNOT FATHOM what God has done from beginning to end" (Eccl.3:11). Solomon went on, "No one can comprehend what goes on under the sun. Despite all his efforts to search it out, man cannot discover its meaning. Even if a man claims he knows, he cannot really comprehend it" (Eccl.8:17).

Isaiah wrote of God, "Truly you are a God who HIDES himself, O God and Savior of Israel" (Isa.45:15). Therefore we can only know of God that which He wants us to know; our knowledge is presently limited. As the apostle Paul wrote, "the mystery of God" is wrapped up in "Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col.2:2). He also wrote, "Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up into glory"(I Tim.3:16).

The apostle Paul put it this way: "Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. Now we see but a POOR REFLECTION as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known" (I Cor.13:8-12).

The apostle John declared, "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason that the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now are we children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be LIKE HIM, for we shall see him as he is [Jesus Christ in the fullness of His divine glory of Godhood, as the eternal radiant Son of God!]. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure" (I John 3:1-3).

The Awesome Destiny of Mankind

We have already seen that Jesus Christ was the Logos, or very God, from "the beginning." We have also seen that when He appears, WE shall be "like Him, for we shall see him as he is" (I John 3:3). Does this mean, then, that we, too, shall become "very God," of the very nature and substance and attributes of the Godhead, in the resurrection?

This may seem preposterous to some -- outlandish and heretical. But notice what divine Scripture says! Jesus Himself declared, "Is it not written in your Law, 'I have said you are gods'? If he called them 'gods' to whom the word of God came -- and the

Scripture CANNOT BE BROKEN -- what about the one whom the Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world? Why then do you accuse ME of blasphemy because I said, 'I am GOD'S SON'? Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father" (John 10:34-38).

Jesus was claiming to be DIVINE -- the divine Son of God! The Jews knew what He meant, and they sought to capture Him and kill Him for alleged "blasphemy" (verse 39).

Why is it that some supposedly erudite and intelligent men, today, cannot see the truth about the divinity of Christ? The apostle Paul asserted, "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the GLORY that will be revealed in us [the GLORY of God shining out from us, as resurrected and born SONS of God, members of His divine Family!]. The creation waits in eager expectation for the SONS OF GOD to be revealed" (Rom.8:18-19).

Paul declared, "Now if we are children, then we are HEIRS -- heirs OF GOD and CO-HEIRS WITH CHRIST, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also *share in HIS GLORY*" (Rom.8:17).

Do you get the vast, incredible import of these verses? Christ is literal GOD. We, as children of God, if we share in His sufferings, and remain faithful to the end, will SHARE IN HIS GLORY, AS HIS YOUNGER BROTHERS!

This awesome calling and destiny, to which God has called us, is spelled out in even more detail in the book of Hebrews. Paul wrote,

"But there is a place where someone has testified: 'What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor and put everything under his feet.' In putting everything under him, God left NOTHING that is not subject to him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. In bringing MANY SONS TO GLORY, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering. Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the SAME FAMILY [the Family of GOD!]. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them BROTHERS. He says, 'I will declare your name to my BROTHERS; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises' " (Heb.2:6-12).

Notice! God said, in the beginning, when He created Adam and Eve "in His own image," but out of dust of the earth instead of spirit, that they were to rule over "all things." Paul points out in this passage that we DON'T YET SEE "ALL THINGS" under the rulership of mankind -- that this is a FUTURE PROMISE! In other words, God someday intends for us to rule over EVERYTHING THERE IS! What does that include? Does God mean what He says? Everything would include very single atom or subatomic particle of the far flung stars and galaxies, and living creatures, of the entire UNIVERSE! It would also include the angels in heaven!

God does not merely promise that we shall become "as" angels in the resurrection. Not at all! Rather, as the apostle Paul said, "Do you not know that we shall judge ANGELS?" (I Cor.6:3).

As sons of God, divine members in the very family of God, under the rulership of God the Father and Jesus Christ our Elder Brother, we shall rule the far flung reaches of all Creation -- that is, "EVERYTHING"!

Paul summarizes this awesome truth this way: "For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For he 'has put EVERYTHING under his feet [under His authority!].' Now when it says that 'everything' has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. When he has DONE this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all" (I Cor.15:22-28).

Do we grasp the sheer awesomeness and mind-boggling incredible vastness of this divine promise? God the Father will put EVERYTHING under Christ. Christ says He will put EVERYTHING under US! Of course, "everything" means the WHOLE CREATION, including stars and galaxies, planets and angels. But it does not mean Christ Himself, or the Father. They are excluded, as the Ones OVER ALL, who give us this authority.

What Is the ORIGIN of the "Word"?

This incredible truth brings to our minds the concept that in order to become a "Member" of the Divine GOD Family, of whom there are only the Father and Christ the Son, today, ruling in heaven, God has ordained a Plan so that human beings can enter His Kingdom, and be literally born of Him, begotten by His very Spirit essence (Acts 2:38; 5:32; Eph.1:13-14; Gal.19). This presents an astonishing truth! That is this -- one can become a very "God," or member of the Family of God, even though one has NOT eternally existed! In other words, our "BEGINNING" as members of God's Family will

be AT THE RESURRECTION!

Paul wrote, "But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will TRANSFORM our lowly bodies so that they will be like his GLORIOUS body" (Phil.3:20-21).

Imagine it. We have been humbled. We have been "as nothing." We shall, from this lowly, humble, unimportant beginning, BECOME SONS OF GOD HIMSELF! Doesn't that mere thought take your breath away? Doesn't the very thought make you tremble, and shake with nervous anticipation and reverence toward God?

What is Jesus' body like today? What will our bodies be like in the resurrection? Paul wrote, "And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the LIKENESS of the man from heaven (I Cor.15:49). He went on, "Listen, I tell you a MYSTERY: We will not all sleep, but we will all be CHANGED -- in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be CHANGED. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with IMMORTALITY" (I Cor.15:51-53).

We will then be IMMORTAL SONS OF GOD, *just like Jesus Christ!*

A description of the fantastic appearance of Jesus Christ, the Divine Son of the Divine Father, is given in Revelation, chapter 1. Notice! John writes, "And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and among the lampstands was someone 'like a son of man,' dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was LIKE THE SUN shining in all its brilliance. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said, 'Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades [the grave]" (Rev.1:12-18).

We will enter this awesome glory. We will become like Christ -- just like Him (I John 3:1-2). But, of course, it has not always been so. We come from nowhere. We formerly did not exist, until God caused us to be created in the womb of our mothers. Prior to that conception, we had no existence at all, except as a "thought" in the mind of God.

This brings up the question then -- WHY is the Logos under the authority of the Father? WHY is He subservient to the Father? If, as most people believe, they are both UNcreated and COequal members of the Godhead, and BOTH existed from all "eternity," then WHY is One greater than the other?

Is there something the world has missed here? Is there something about their relationship which the world and churches have completely overlooked?

Indeed there is! Notice a verse, now, which has perplexed and befuddled scholars and Biblical exegetes for thousands of years. In Revelation chapter 3, Jesus Christ says:

"And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write;
These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness,
the beginning of the creation of God" (Rev.3:14, *KJV*).

"These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness,
the *beginning* of God's creation" (*Phillips Translation*).

"These things says the Amen, the witness faithful and true,
the **BEGINNING** of the creation of God" (*Englishman's
Greek New Testament*).

What have we here? Now notice further:

"He said to me, 'It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the
Beginning and the End'" (Rev.21:6, *NIV*).

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the
Beginning and the End" Rev.22:13).

Christ says very clearly that He is the "BEGINING." But in verse 14 of Revelation 3, He declares that He is the "BEGINNING OF GOD'S CREATION"! What does that mean? Just as the word "Logos" means literally the "word," "utterance," or "expression" OF THE FATHER, which came OUT of or FORTH FROM the Father, and Jesus continually said that He came "FROM THE FATHER," is it possible, then, that back before time began, before there was any Creation, that the Father actually took part of Himself, part of His Spirit, and literally CREATED a Second Member of the Godhead -- One who would be under His authority, subservient to Him, and yet still "God," and a Member of the Divine Family? Did God the Father anciently, before time existed, take of Himself and make the Logos, or Word, of God?

Consider: God said of Adam and Eve, "Let US make man in OUR image, in OUR LIKENESS" (Gen.1:26). "So God CREATED man in his OWN IMAGE, in the image of God he created him; MALE AND FEMALE he created them" (Gen.1:27).

Now, God created Adam of the dust of the ground (Gen.2:7). But how did He create Eve, the wife of the first man?

"The LORD God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone.
I will make a helper suitable for him' So the LORD God

caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a WOMAN FROM THE RIB he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called "woman," for she was taken out of man.' For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be UNITED to his wife, and they will become one flesh" (Gen.2:18, 21-24).

What an awesome picture! God made MAN in His own image. He made Eve by taking a portion of the body of Adam, and creating the woman. They, too, were to become ONE FLESH, even as God and the Logos or Word are "ONE IN SPIRIT" (John 17:22). The marriage relationship is the nearest thing we humans can experience that is akin to the Divine Relationship! It is meant to be a PERFECT UNION -- a perfect ONENESS! Of course, as humans we generally fall far short of the mark.

Nevertheless, there are several levels of meaning hidden in this Scripture in Genesis, describing the original creation of Man. Remember, man is in the IMAGE and LIKENESS of God. Therefore, it is also possible that the Creation of Eve was a TYPE of the original Creation and Origin of the Word or Logos of God, from the very Being of the Father!

This would explain why one Member of the Godhead is subject to the authority of the other, even as a wife is to be subject to her husband in all things (Eph.5:22). In fact, Paul declared that the husband-wife relationship is "a PROFOUND MYSTERY -- but I am talking about Christ and the church" (Eph.5:32). Husbands are to love their wives, and their wives are to reverence their husbands (verses 22-33).

This great mystery tells us something about God, and the origin of the Second Member of the Godhead long before there were any angels or Creation. The One who became the Father took of Himself and made a Companion -- the One who was to become the Christ, or Messiah! Perhaps there is a key in understanding in the fact that once God made Adam, He immediately said, "It is not good for the man to be alone" (Gen.2:18). Perhaps, having existed for all eternity, until the thought came into His mind, to make a Companion for Himself, God knew all there is to know about "loneliness" and being "alone." One of the greatest curses a human being can experience is the feeling of utter loneliness! Is God so different from us? He made us in His own image, remember, and we have emotions much like His own. He created us in His own image, and likeness, including what we call emotions. And the feeling of rejection and being alone is one of the most awful things a human being can experience.

An amazing Scripture which seems to discuss and reveal the "origin" of the Word or Logos of God, is found in the book of Proverbs. Here the Word of God is referred to as "Wisdom," or the "Wisdom" with which God made the Universe. Notice this most

remarkable revelation!

"The LORD *brought me forth* as the FIRST OF HIS WORKS, *before his deeds of old*; I was APPOINTED FROM ETERNITY, *from the BEGINNING, before the world began*. When there were no oceans, *I was given BIRTH*, when there were no springs abounding with water; before the mountains were settled in place, before the hills, I was given *birth*, before he made the earth or its fields or any of the dust of the world. *I was there* when he set the heavens in place, when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep, when he established the clouds above and fixed securely the foundations of the deep, when he gave the sea its boundary so the waters would not overstep his command, and when he marked out the foundations of the earth. Then I WAS THE CRAFTSMAN AT HIS SIDE, I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in his presence, rejoicing in his whole world and delighting in mankind" (Prov.8:22-31).

Read this passage over very carefully. This vivid description appears to be telling us the ORIGIN of the One who became the "Word," Logos," or "Wisdom" of God. He is God's first "Expression" of Himself. He was, at a point before Time began, created by the Father as the "beginning" of the Creation of God -- as the "FIRST OF HIS WORKS, before his deeds of old." The Logos was actually "appointed from ETERNITY." He existed "before the world began." He was given "birth" before any of the Creation was formed and fashioned. He was not only present at the Creation of the Universe, but He also was "GOD'S CRAFTSMAN," the One who did the actual creative work, under the direction and supervision of the Father!

This is a fascinating passage of Scripture. Years ago, I used to work with my own father, who was a house builder and contractor. Working with him, building houses, up in the Seattle area, I learned how to dig foundations, build forms, pour concrete, build floors, raise walls, create windows, and doors, build corners and place headers, nail floor and ceiling joists and construct rafters. It was healthy, wholesome, and fascinating work. I remember many days, as the clouds floated overhead in the sky, we would be nailing down subroofing. We would take a break, and have a drink of refreshment, sometimes a can or Olympia, and rejoice in the accomplishment of our work! There was a THRILL as we saw the house take shape and near completion!

Perhaps, in a small measure, the feelings I had were similar to those that the Logos or Word of God had, at the Creation of the Universe!

At any rate, this Scripture in Proverbs tells us a great deal of "hidden truth" concerning the origin of the Word of God. Revelation 3:14 tells us that Christ was the "beginning of the creation of God." The Greek word for "beginning" here is *arche*, and means, literally, "a commencement," or "chief," "beginning," "corner," "first (estate)," "magistrate," "power," "principality," "principle," "rule." *Thayers Greek-*

English Lexicon of the New Testament says this word means: "1. beginning, origin . . . 2. the person or thing that commences, the first person or thing in a series, the leader." In this sense, Thayers says, Christ is "the beginning" (Col.1:18), and "the beginning" (Rev.1:8). The word is also, "3. that by which anything begins to be, the origin, active cause." "4. the extremity of a thing . . . 5. the first place, principality, rule, magistracy."

When we put together all the Scriptures, we see a wonderful picture emerging, which the world cannot understand. We see that in the very earliest "beginning," there was the Father, or "Ancient of Days." At some time in prehistory, He took of Himself and gave "birth" to the Logos, or Word or Wisdom of God. These two collaborated in making the entire Universe. They were the "Elohim," or "Mighty Ones" who created the heavens and the earth (Gen.1:1). The Word was instrumental in all this creation (John 1:1-3).

But that is NOT THE END of the "Family" of God! The Father intends to bring MANY MORE SONS TO GLORY, in His divine Family, through Jesus Christ (Rom.8:17-18; Heb.2:5-13).

The Family of God is *EXPANDING!* It will have NO END! Human reproduction is merely a "type" or figure of the awesome Plan of God. Even as the human race reproduces, each new human being has the potential for becoming a divine Member of the GOD FAMILY -- a Son of God, like Jesus Christ, with radiant power and glory -- with Creative Power through the Holy Spirit! Someday we will be able to CREATE WORLDS -- PLANETS -- STARS AND GALAXIES -- UNIVERSES! Even LIFE itself!

Isaiah wrote in a little understood Scripture: "And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the *INCREASE* of his government and peace [blessings, prosperity] there will be NO END" (Isa.9:6-7).

Do you really understand what I am saying? God is NOT STATIC. He is not "dead," or obsolete. He is ALIVE -- a LIVING BEING! Life can come only from life. That is a law of nature, the famous law of biogenesis. God is the Author of all life. As a living Being, He THINKS, reasons, has emotions, PLANS, creates, BRINGS INTO BEING -- or if He is displeased, He destroys, tears up, roots up, and replaces. This Eternal Creator says:

"I am the LORD, and there is no other. I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the LORD, do all these things" (Isa.45:6-7).

God says in Deuteronomy:

"See now that I myself am He! There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand" (Deut.32:39).

As a Living, All-knowing, Omniscient and Omnipotent Being, God is not like a static brick or stone or inanimate Object. He is not merely some "First Cause," or "Primordial Push" that set the Universe in motion. He is ALIVE! And His Divine Family is GROWING and EXPANDING! Of its "increase" there will be NO END -- NO TERMINATION! That is, its growth and expansion will CONTINUE ON FOREVER!

God has put it before you. You can be a part of that Divine Kingdom. You can become a member of that Divine FAMILY! Truly, as the apostle Paul wrote:

"No, we speak of God's SECRET WISDOM, a wisdom that has been hidden and that GOD DESTINED FOR OUR GLORY *before time began*. None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. However, as it is written: *'No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him'* -- but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the *deep things of God*. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. . . . The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment: 'For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?' But we have the mind of Christ" (I Cor. 2:9-16).

The awesome and mind-numbing Plan of God for mankind leaves me speechless. It is overpowering, beyond comprehension -- glorious beyond words to describe "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and paths beyond finding out! 'Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?' 'Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?' For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen" (Rom.11:33-36).

Chapter 8

Was Jesus Christ *Originally Created*?

What Do You Mean, the ‘FIRSTBORN of Every Creature’?

When was Jesus first "BORN" of God the Father? Is He part of a "divine Trinity"? Was the Logos ALWAYS part of "God"? Or did the Father at some point CREATE or bring into being the "Logos"? What does the Bible REALLY teach about God and Christ? Did the Logos have a "beginning"?

There are several Scriptures in the Bible which Trinitarians find very difficult, if not totally impossible, to explain. These Scriptures, when carefully analyzed and examined, totally destroy and refute the doctrine of the Trinity. But at the same time, they also destroy and refute the doctrine of a "Dual" Godhead, or what some have termed a "Binitarian" Godhead of Two members!

According to the Trinity doctrine, there is One God who is expressed in Three "Persons" -- who are all combined into "One" actual Being-- not three different Beings! These three are supposed to be "co-equal, co-eternal," and "uncreated." They are supposed to have no bodily form whatsoever (it would be "anthropomorphic" to think of them as in human form, as the Bible so often declares!).

Another common theory is that originally there were Two Beings in the Godhead -- who existed all eternity. According to this theory, these two Beings -- the Father and the Logos, or Son -- were themselves "co-equal, co-eternal," and uncreated. They are two Beings, yet act in unison as One. They have shape and form, and it is they who said, "Let US make man in OUR image, after OUR likeness" (Genesis 1:26).

In What Way Is God "ONE"?

But are either one of these concepts really true? Does the Bible teach a

Trinitarian or a Binitarian Godhead? In the Old Testament, God reveals Himself to Israel in the famous "Shema" which every Jew is taught to repeat daily: "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD" (Deut.6:4). This, however, is not precisely the meaning of the original Hebrew expression. The actual original Hebrew for this verse literally translates:

"The LORD our God, the LORD is *one*."

What does it mean that the LORD is "One"? The Hebrew word for "one" in this verse is *echad* and has a very interesting meaning. The Companion Bible says of this word:

"One. Heb. *'ehad* -- A COMPOUND UNITY (Lat. *unus*), one made up of others; Gen.1:5, one of seven; 1:11, one of four; 2:21, one of twenty-four; 2:24, one made up of two; 3:22, one of the three: 49:16, one of twelve; Num.13:23, one of a cluster. So Ps. 34:20, etc. It is not *yahid*, which is (Latin) *unicus*, unique -- a single or only one . . ."

Thus we know there is ONE GOD -- but what does that really mean? Polytheism, the worship of many gods, is pagan and demon worship. The pagans worship many gods!

The apostle Paul tells us something very interesting about the true God, however, in contrast to pagan gods. He wrote:

"For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) but to us there is but ONE GOD, THE FATHER, of whom are all things, and we in him; and ONE Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him" (I Cor.8:5-6).

Now this is very interesting. Here we see that ultimately God the Father is the ONE TRUE GOD. Jesus here is not referred to as "God," but as the "Lord." Yet we know that He also is God, because, in Hebrews we read of Him:

"[Jesus] Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by INHERITANCE obtained a more excellent NAME than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art MY SON, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a FATHER, and he shall be to me a SON? . . . But unto the SON he saith, Thy throne, O GOD, is for ever and ever . . ." (Heb.1:4-7).

Jesus also, then, is "God." But it should be obvious that He is not as great as the Father! Just as a Son is under the authority of his Father, so Jesus learned everything from His heavenly Father, and is like Him -- but under Him!

Jesus Himself acknowledged this fact. He said, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the WILL OF HIM that SENT me" (John 5:38). Jesus said in another place, "I am not come of myself, but he that SENT me is true, whom ye know not. But I know him: for I am FROM him, and he hath SENT me" (John 7:28-29).

Notice again. In another place, Jesus said, "I proceeded forth and CAME from GOD; neither came I of myself, but he SENT me" (John 8:42). Jesus here clearly shows that the Father exercises supreme authority, and SENT him to do a job -- to be our Saviour! In another place, Jesus said plainly, "For my Father is *greater* than I" (John 14:28).

In His final prayer for His disciples, Jesus said, "And this is life eternal, that they might know THEE the *ONLY TRUE GOD*, and Jesus Christ, *whom THOU hast sent* " (John 17:3). Jesus worshipped the Father, prayed to the Father, and loved the Father, and obeyed the Father! Clearly, in the God Realm, the Father is GREATER than the Son!

After His resurrection from the dead, Jesus appeared to Mary, and said to her:

". . . Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto MY FATHER, and YOUR FATHER; and to *MY GOD*, and YOUR GOD" (John 20:17).

Do you see? Jesus looked upon the Father as HIS "God"! That is, He WORSHIPPED the Father! Now if He was a co-equal part of the Trinity, this would make no sense at all. Would One equal part of the Trinity WORSHIP another Part which was only EQUAL? You worship that which is GREATER in authority and power -- you don't worship EQUALS! Jesus calls the Father His own *GOD*!

Clearly, there is something direly wrong with both the "Trinity" doctrine, and also the doctrine that the "Word" or "Logos" is EQUAL with God the Father and existed from all eternity, "co-equal" and "co-eternal"!

What is the answer to this mystery? What is the TRUE ORIGIN of the Logos, or Word, of God? What is His real relationship to God the Father!

Here is the astounding truth! Here is the TRUE REVELATION of the Word of God!

Notice!

"The FIRSTBORN of Every Creature"

In the book of Colossians we find an incredible passage of Scripture which bears upon this question, and the true nature of the pre-existence of the One who became "Christ." The apostle Paul wrote of Christ Jesus, and His pre-existence before His supernatural human birth of the woman Mary:

"[The Father] Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son . . . Who is the IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD, *THE FIRSTBORN OF EVERY CREATURE*: For *BY HIM WERE ALL THINGS*

CREATED, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: ALL THINGS were created BY HIM and FOR him: And HE is *before all things, and by him all things consist*. And he is the HEAD of the body, the CHURCH: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead that in all things he might have the preeminence" (Col.1:12-18).

When we read this passage in context, it seems to clearly suggest outright that the One who became Jesus Christ was originally made, created, or fashioned in "the IMAGE of the invisible God" -- and that He was "the FIRSTBORN of every creature" or creation of GOD the Father!

The word translated "firstborn" in Colossians 1:15 is *prototokos*, derived from *protos*, meaning "foremost" in "time, place, order or importance," and is translated "before, beginning, best, chief, first, at the beginning." It is the superlative of *pro*, which means "in front of, prior to"; and *tokos* derived from *tikto* and *teko*, meaning, "to produce, (from seed, as a mother, a plant, the earth, etc.) -- bear, be born, bring forth, be delivered" (see *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, #4416, 4413, 5088).

Now, for this Scripture to be LITERALLY TRUE, and for the One who became Christ to have been the "FIRSTBORN" of every creature, He would literally have to have become the 'FIRSTBORN' *BEFORE ANY OTHER CREATURE WAS BORN OR CREATED! He would have to have been FIRST!* The Greek word translated "creature" in this verse is *ktisis* (Strong's #2937), and means "original *formation*," "building, creation, creature, ordinance." Thus when we examine this verse carefully, we find that Jesus Christ BORN FIRST, before every other "original formation," "creature," and "creation" and "ordinance" (or law) of heaven and earth!

That is, after God the Father, *He came FIRST, and was "FIRSTBORN"!*

This statement is made, in Colossians 1:15, right before the following phrase: "For by HIM were ALL THINGS CREATED . . . all things were created by him and for him" (v.16). Thus, after the Logos, or One who became Christ, was born, or "created," He participated in the creation of EVERYTHING ELSE in the Universe!

Thus we read in John 1 the following clarification of His creative role:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning WITH God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:1-3).

In the book of Hebrews, Paul adds this insight:

"God . . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he appointed HEIR of all things, BY WHOM ALSO HE MADE THE WORLDS; who being the brightness of his glory, and the *express image of his person*, and upholding all things by the word of his power,

. . . sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb.1:1-3).

The Logos, then, was and is the "brightness" of the glory of God the Father. He is the "Heir" of the Father. It was by Him that the Father "made the worlds" -- the Universe! And now He sits at the Father's right hand in heaven!

What do these things tell us? Before we attempt to put the picture together, notice a few more clear and fascinating Scriptures!

"The Beginning of the CREATION of God"

In the book of Revelation, in the seven letters to the seven churches, Jesus Christ said to the Church in Laodicea:

"These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, THE BEGINNING OF THE CREATION OF GOD" (Rev.3:14).

The Greek word translated "beginning" here is *arche* and means "A COMMENCEMENT, or (concrete) chief (in various applications of ORDER, TIME, PLACE or RANK); beginning, corner, first, magistrate, power, principality, principle, rule." Adds *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon* --

"1. *BEGINNING, ORIGIN*; a. used absolutely, of the BEGINNING OF ALL THINGS . . . b. in a relative sense, of the BEGINNING of the things spoken of . . . 2. *The person or thing that COMMENCES, THE FIRST PERSON OR THING IN A SERIES, the leader* . . . 3. *that by which anything begins to be, the ORIGIN* . . . 4. *THE EXTREMITY* of a thing . . . 5. *the first place, principality, rule, magistracy* . . ."

The basic, underlying meaning of this word is simply "BEGINNING," or "FIRST," that which "COMMENCES" OR BEGINS -- as the first automobile in history, the first airplane, the first wheel, the first planet, the first fire, the first house built, etc. Notice how this word is most commonly used in Scripture:

Matthew 19:8 "from the beginning it was not so."
 Matt.24:8 "these are the beginning of sorrows."
 Matt.24:21 "since the beginning of the world to this time . . ."
 Mark 1:1 "the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ."
 Mark 10:6 "But from the beginning of the creation . . ."
 Luke 1:2 "us, which from the beginning were eye witnesses"
 John 2:11 "This beginning of miracles did Jesus"
 Col.1:18 "Who is the beginning, the firstborn of every creature"
 Rev.1:8 "the beginning and the ending"

From these verses, it seems very clear that Jesus Christ AS THE LOGOS, was the very FIRST ACT OF PRODUCTION OR CREATION, the very FIRST CREATION of the Father -- His FIRSTBORN SON BY A SEMINAL ACT OF CREATION!

How the Father, the original ONE GOD, brought into being the Word, Logos, or

Son, we are not told. Apparently, He took "part" of Himself, of His eternal spirit, and fashioned it into the "Logos." However, when He made Him, He made Him to be VERY GOD -- even as He, the Father, is very God -- only lesser in authority! In the beginning, there was ONE GOD. Then, in another subsequent time of "beginning," God "reproduced" Himself, and created a SON! Thus the Logos was indeed the "first BORN" of all creation -- the BEGINNING of the Creation -- the First Step in God's Creative Plan!

Thus there was ONE God. And then ONE became, by process of reproduction known only to God, TWO divine Beings, in complete unity and harmony and purpose! As Jesus said to His disciples,

"Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not know me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father . . . Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me" (John 14:9-11).

Jesus explained further in His final prayer for His disciples,

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that THEY ALSO MIGHT BE ONE IN US . . . And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; THAT THEY MAY BE ONE, *EVEN AS WE ARE ONE: I in them, and thou in me, THAT THEY MAY BE MADE PERFECT IN ONE . . .*" (John 17:20-23).

WHAT IT MEANS, GOD IS "ONE"!

Do you see? God, the Father, is ONE GOD -- He is "ONE." The Hebrew expression connotes the meaning of "ONENESS." When the Father created the Logos, they became "ONE." And now, Christ, the Son of God, is bringing "MANY BRETHREN" INTO THIS DIVINE "ONENESS"!

The apostle Paul wrote, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the *IMAGE OF HIS SON [who is in HIS own image! -- Heb.1:1-2]*, that he might be the *FIRSTBORN among MANY BRETHREN*" (Romans 8:29).

Do you get it? Even as God the Father made the Logos His Son, and brought Christ into the world, as His Son, to die for our sins, He is now in the process of creating MANY MORE SONS -- *just like Himself* -- DIVINE -- who will all SHARE IN HIS "ONENESS" -- the Oneness of "GOD"!

Now do you see?

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we ARE the CHILDREN OF GOD: And if children, then HEIRS; HEIRS OF

GOD, and JOINT-HEIRS *WITH CHRIST*; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also GLORIFIED *TOGETHER* " (Rom. 8:16-17).

In the beginning, there was ONE God -- the "Father." In process of time, He created a FIRSTBORN SON -- THE LOGOS -- to share with Him in all creation, with whom He made the Universe! Possibly He took part of Himself, and fashioned that part -- that divine seed -- into a complete copy, an IMAGE of Himself!

Thus the ONE God now became TWO Beings, but completely UNITED as "ONE," or "ONENESS." Originally, there was ONE Being who was "God." He became "Two" by process of self-reproduction! Think for a moment. Does it really make sense that in the first "beginning" there were TWO Beings who were both "God"? If there were TWO, then they would both have to be EQUAL -- co-eternal, co-equal. But as we have seen, MANY Scriptures prove that Jesus or the Logos, is less powerful and under the authority of the One known as the "Father," and He Himself worships the Father and calls Him *His* "God"! Clearly, in the first beginning, there was ONE God -- and He later brought into being the Logos, or Word, who came forth from Him (John 6:46; 7:29; 8:42; 9:4; 10:29; 17:8).

Does it really make any sense that in the beginning there were TWO? Simple logic impels us to the conclusion that in the beginning there was originally ONE, and in a later "beginning," there were "Two." This is the real meaning of John 1:1, for in the original Greek language we read, literally:

"In *a beginning* was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1).

The Englishman's Greek Interlinear correctly reveals there is no article "the" in the original Greek in John 1:1. The actual Greek language here is, "In beginning was the Word." The absence of a definite article indicates that the indefinite article "*a*" would be the appropriate translation here!

Similarly, in the Old Testament, in Genesis 1:1, we find the same thing in the original Hebrew. The text reads: "Bereshit bara Elohim ha shamayim va ha erez."

Literally, this means, "In [a] beginning, God ["the Mighty Ones"] created the heavens and the earth." The lack of a definite article "the" for "beginning" has given rise to many different English translations, including the following:

"When God began to form the universe . . ." (Moffatt).

"When God began to create heaven and earth . . ." (Tanakh).

"When God began creating the heavens and the earth . . ." (Living Bible).

The Divine Name Elohim

Who is this God who created the heavens and the earth?

The Hebrew word is "Elohim," a fascinating word. Says the *Critical-Experimental Commentary* on this verse and the word "Elohim":

"The Hebrew word Elohim, from its derivation and use, signifies 'strong,' 'mighty' . . . A remarkable peculiarity, however, distinguishes this word; for it is A PLURAL NOUN accompanied with a SINGULAR VERB, which is the construction maintained for the most part throughout the Hebrew Scriptures of the Old Testament, though it is also found in various passages associated with plural adjuncts, and in such a connection it irresistibly suggests the idea of more objects than one. This interchange of singular and plural forms, as well as the frequent combination of both in the same sentence, constitutes a peculiar idiom unparalleled in any other language, and it demands particular attention . . . The use of it originated from no imperative necessity. It arose from no grammatical defect; for the word existed in the singular form . . . Nor was it occasioned by any poverty of language; for the Hebrew vocabulary is richer and more copious in names for the Deity than any other cultivated language . . .

"The choice of Elohim, therefore, in preference to all other names for the Divine Being, must have been dictated by some special reason of great utility and importance. Applied as it commonly was to false deities, and liable, from that constant and familiar use, to suggest or foster polytheistic ideas, the introduction of such a term as the designation of the true God into a book which was designed to give a death-blow to idolatry . . . seems altogether unaccountable except upon the ground that it was conducive to the promotion of the same high end; *and therefore we are led to conclude by its use here in the PLURAL FORM is obscurely taught, at the opening of the Bible, a doctrine clearly revealed in the later portions of it -- viz., that though God is one, there is a PLURALITY OF PERSONS IN THE GOD-HEAD, who were engaged in the creative work "* (p.1).

However, in the primordial beginning, there was ONE God, *El*, or "the Mighty One." Later, He took part of Himself and fashioned a companion -- a SECOND member of the God Family or Kingdom, thus ONE became TWO -- yet they were still ONE in Unity function, and total harmony. Thus the SINGULAR *EL* became the PLURAL *ELOHIM!* Therefore, the *two* of them, acting as *ONE GOD*, and in every way truly ONE, require a SINGULAR VERB!

How fascinating!

The Book of Proverbs

A clear allusion to this fact of divine unity of plurality is found in the book of Proverbs. Here the second member of the Godhead is revealed, as the "Wisdom" of God. Notice this remarkable Scripture witness!

"The LORD possessed me in the BEGINNING of his way, before his works of old. *I was set up [established] FROM EVERLASTING, from the BEGINNING, or ever the earth was.* When there were no depths, I WAS BROUGHT FORTH [CREATED, BORN]; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I BROUGHT FORTH [CREATED, BORN]

... When he prepared the heavens, I WAS THERE . . . when he appointed the foundations of the earth: THEN I WAS *BY HIM*, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men" (Proverbs 8:22-31).

God the Father thus brought into being the Logos, or "Wisdom" of God, the "Word." He "brought him forth," or created Him!

A Divine Lesson from the Creation of Man

Similarly, when God made man, He first made Adam. Adam came first -- and he was alone. So God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Gen.2:18). Does this show us that God decided, originally, that it was not good for Himself to remain alone -- and so He made the Word, or Logos, to be "an help meet [fitting] for Him"?

Notice what God did next: "And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a WOMAN, and brought her unto the man [and I would bet that when Adam saw her, he flipped!] And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman [*Isha*] , because she was *taken out of Man [Ish]* " (Gen.2:21-23).

"After His Kind" -- "Image and Likeness"

Was the Logos originally "taken out of" the Father, even as Eve was taken out of Adam, from his rib? Did God similarly create the Logos in time primordial? "With God, all things are possible" (Matt.19:26). "For with God nothing shall be impossible" (Luke 1:37).

Trinitarians, of course, will deny this. They will cry, "Impossible!" They will shout, "Heresy!" But it is they who are the real heretics, who deny the plain Scriptures of the Word of God! *Why should it be thought impossible that GOD, who can do all things, can also therefore REPRODUCE HIMSELF?*

The whole story in Genesis chapter 1 is that God CREATED the world, and life -- and that all life reproduces "AFTER ITS KIND" (Gen.1:11-12, 21, 24-25). Then God made MAN -- but He made mankind DIFFERENT.

"And GOD said, Let US [the Father and the Logos!] make MAN in OUR IMAGE [physical shape, with a body fashioned to look like God's own body, only flesh instead of spirit!], AFTER OUR LIKENESS [that is, character and personality, spiritual maturity, wisdom, intelligence, creative ability! -- potentially!]: And let them have DOMINION [rulership, government, authority!] . . . So God created man IN HIS OWN IMAGE, IN THE IMAGE OF GOD created he him; *male and female* created he them" (Gen.1:26-27).

The Essence of GOD

Do we understand? The essence of God, His Supreme Characteristic, is ultimately, ONENESS. God is "ONE." Even though He can reproduce Himself, the result is still ONENESS. God the Father and the Logos act as ONE. They are in each other, and think alike, and are in complete harmony and cooperation.

Even so, God has called us to become ONE WITH HIM. He desires that we share in His ONENESS. He is like a PERFECT FAMILY, with total LOVE as the supreme characteristic, expressing itself in TOTAL UNITY and HARMONY.

When God created Eve for Adam, He said, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall CLEAVE unto his wife: and they shall be ONE [ECHAD] FLESH" (Gen.2:24). Remember, the Hebrew word *echad* means a "unity," a "togetherness," "oneness." Two individuals, two parts, become an integrated, harmonious WHOLE ONE.

God is in the process of making all of us, who yield to Him, and obey Him, and keep His commandments -- ONE -- ONENESS WITH HIM!

As Paul wrote, "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the WHOLE FAMILY in heaven and earth *is NAMED* " (Ephesians 2:14-15) -- that is, the Family named "GOD"!

"There Is None Like Me"

God says -- that is, the Father, and the Logos, speaking and acting AS ONE, as a UNITY -- "Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour" (Isa.43:10).

God says further, "Thus saith the LORD, the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; *I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God* " (Isaiah 44:6). "Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God [beside me]; I know not any" (Isa.44:8). Do these Scriptures nullify everything I have written so far?

Again, we read: ". . . and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else" (Isaiah 45:21-22). Does this mean God CANNOT "add" to His Family?

"Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none like me" (Isa.45:9).

What about these verses? Do they somehow negate all that we've discussed so far? Do they somehow "prove" the Trinity doctrine is right? Or the Binary God doctrine? Do these verses state categorically that God is One Person with Three Personalities? Wouldn't that make Him a Schizoid God with a Split Personality, reminiscent of the movie "The Three Faces of Eve"?

Let's be fair, and honest. These verses only state the obvious -- that the FATHER is SUPREME GOD -- and there is no other "God" beside Him, who exists, or brought himself into existence, or who can compare or compete with God the Father! But the Father has chosen to REPRODUCE HIMSELF in the LOGOS, so now the Two of them, Two Divine Beings, called "Elohim" in Genesis, which translates literally as "THE MIGHTY ONES," acting together, as ONE WILL and ONE MIND, constitute the ONE GOD WHO, AS "ELOHIM," *created the heavens and the earth* (Genesis 1:1). Therefore, in this case, the Plural form *Elohim* takes the singular verb, *bara* -- for God is a UNITY, *echad*, "ONENESS"!

Therefore, there was no God formed before God the Father (Isa.44:10), nor apart from Him, nor shall any "God being" come into existence *apart from Him* or be formed *after Him!* But in saying this, God obviously excepts Himself and His own Divine Family Plan! He can do as He wishes! No "God" being will ever be formed apart from *His own plan, energy, and activity!*

When God the Father reproduces Himself, and makes more members of the divine God Family, they all enter into HIS ONENESS. They become PART OF HIM - - PERFECTLY ONE WITH HIM AND CHRIST, even as they are ONE! AS Jesus prayed, "That they all may be ONE; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they ALSO may be ONE IN US" (John 17:21), "that *they may be one*, EVEN AS WE ARE ONE" (verse 22), "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be MADE PERFECT IN ONE" (John 17:23). Notice! He said -- "*PERFECT IN ONE!*"

Therefore, when this happens, we become literally PART OF GOD! Therefore, we become part of the One, the Supreme Essence and Personality, who says, of Himself, and INCLUDES us as His CHILDREN, as part of Himself, when He says it:

"I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, and the LORD . . ." (Isa.43:10-11).

When God and Christ say, "I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God" (Isaiah 44:6; compare Rev.1:8, 11, 18; 3:14; 21:6; 22:13), the reference is to BOTH of them as a UNITY, as ONE. But in Isaiah 41:4, God says, "I the LORD, the first, and WITH the last; I am he"! Notice! He said He is here "*WITH the last!*" Does this not indicate that in process of time, He will EXPAND His own family, and the Godhead? In this way, CREATION WILL CONTINUE FOR EVER!

Do you comprehend? There is NO LIMIT to God! And as He reproduces and develops His ONENESS throughout His Divine FAMILY, the whole CREATION will grow, and surge, and expand, and increase, in glory, and majesty, and beauty, and

height, and depth, and breadth, and length, and IN ALL DIMENSIONS known and unknown!

There is NO LIMIT to God. He can, as He chooses, go on MULTIPLYING and EXPANDING and increasing His Kingdom, FOREVER, adding to CREATION!

Beside Him, and His progeny, His offspring, apart from His ONENESS -- there is no other God, none at all! He says, "Is there a God beside me? [and by extension, "beside my family"? "Beside those whom I make a part of ME"?] yea, there is no God [beside me, and my Oneness]; I know not any" (Isaiah 44:8).

The True "Never-Ending Story"

God is not like the pagans, and the Greeks, and the Trinitarians, imagine. He is not some monolithic never-changing ethereal spirit. He is LIVING! And one of the key characteristics of ALL LIVING THINGS is that they GROW, and they REPRODUCE!

The supreme law biology known as the great law of biogenesis states simply that "LIFE REPRODUCES LIFE" -- or that it requires LIFE to bring forth LIFE! Living things cannot be produced from dead or inanimate objects! Only LIFE produces LIFE! This truth has been demonstrated time and time again in the test tubes of science and scientific laboratories. The second law of biogenesis states that "living things only reproduce after their own kind."

God is LIFE! That is one of His supreme characteristics! He is therefore *reproducing life, and He is reproducing after HIS OWN KIND, in his image and likeness!*

This is a NEVER-ENDING STORY! This is a NEVER-ENDING SAGA!

Do we really grasp it? Do we really comprehend it?

The Trinity doctrine limits God. It denies Him the ability and opportunity to REPRODUCE Himself, as all living things on this planet do! It denies His Plan, revealed in the Scriptures! It limits Him to some sort of "Three-in-One" Triangle, which nobody can understand or make any sense of! It defies logic, common sense and human intellect and experience!

No human corporation, with three "Presidents," will get anywhere! And where would the United States of America be if it had THREE "Presidents" instead of one? Confusion! Chaos! The whole thing boggles the mind and marinates the brain!

God is NOT and never was a "Trinity" -- nor does He ever intend on limiting Himself to a "Trinity"! Rather, He is the SUPREME BEING who is building a Creation, and part of that Creation is the reproduction and multiplication of Beings *like*

Himself, with the very same character, humility, love, and UNITY of mind and purpose, who will rule with Him over an ever-expanding and growing UNIVERSE -- THE KINGDOM OF GOD!

The Incredible Adventure

Isaiah wrote of the Plan of God:

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.
OF THE INCREASE OF HIS GOVERNMENT AND PEACE THERE SHALL BE NO END . . ." (Isaiah 9:6-7).

Did you get that? "NO END" to the INCREASE of His authority, His Kingdom, His Peace and Prosperity -- *NO END TO THE GROWTH, EXPANSION, AND MULTIPLICATION!* The Hebrew word for "increase" here is *marbiyth* and literally means "a multitude, offspring, interest on capital, greatness, increase, multitude" (Strong's, #4768). Gesenius Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon defines it as "multitude, magnitude, very great part, progeny, interest, usury," and is related to the root of the Greek/Latin/English word for "fetus," "fecund," "fecundity," "fertility." In other words, the FAMILY OF GOD WILL CONTINUE EXPANDING, GROWING, REPRODUCING, MULTIPLYING AS THE KINGDOM OF GOD EXPANDS AND GROWS! The Hebrew word for "end" in this verse is *kates* and means "extremity, border, end, finite" (Strong's, #7093). Coupled with the word "no," the expression means there will be NO BORDER, NO END OR TERMINATION, NO LIMIT OR FINITE ENDING to the Family of God -- it will be INFINITE, *and will grow throughout INFINITE ETERNITY!!*

Can your feeble brain and mine comprehend such an awesome, incredible, marvelous thing? And just think of it! *We* are called and chosen of God to be a wonderful, integral part of it!

Chapter 9

Is Jesus Christ Really **"GOD"?**

An ancient theological theory has been resurrected in recent years and is being strongly promulgated by a small number who are successfully confusing many with their esoteric doctrine. They claim Jesus Christ had no pre-existence, was merely a human being, and was not and is not truly "GOD." Yet the Jews who lived in Jesus' own time thought that He proclaimed He was divine and sought to kill Him for this "blasphemy"! What is the real truth?

Many today are forsaking the faith of the Word of God -- they are having their true faith shattered -- by false doctrines and modern theologies of demons. Sincere as they may be, they have stumbled off the true path of the true faith, and are in grave danger of causing great shipwreck to themselves and their congregations or followers!

The wife of one elder in God's Church wrote to me, and castigated me for several things she found fault with, including the several articles I have written in answer to the new doctrine being preached by Anthony Buzzard and others claiming Jesus Christ was not and is not "God," and did not exist prior to His human birth in the womb of Mary his mother. This no-doubt well-intentioned woman accused me of not respecting the "scholarship" of Buzzard, although, she pointed out, I often quote respected "scholars" in my own writings. This she seemed to think was hypocritical. She and her husband seem to want to justify Buzzard's message that Jesus was not God and never existed prior to being born as a human being. In my opinion, they seem to have become "buzzard bait" for the great "buzzard" or vulture of this world -- Satan the devil!

When I received her letter, I was dismayed -- but not altogether surprised. The saddest thing is that her husband, who is supposed to be the "leader" in the family, had not communicated to me any of his feelings on these matters. He had only sent me articles written by Buzzard for my reading, without any comments. But when his wife wrote to me, he just penned a little footnote at the end of her lengthy letter saying he agreed with her.

Over the past year, I have written SEVEN articles proving that Christ is very GOD, showing His true origin long before His human birth, proving He is often referred to as YHVH in the Old Testament, explaining the "Mystery of God," and showing the proof that God is actually "reproducing Himself" in character and traits in His divine children. I have carefully analyzed and refuted Buzzard's esoteric religious nonsense, showing even how he twists and perverts Scripture, but seemingly all to no avail. At least insofar as this woman and her husband are concerned, it has been apparently to no avail. They still have not finally declared themselves one way or the other, but seem to be leaning toward believing Christ was merely human and never divine.

I wondered as I read her letter, how it was that they came to be led astray. Truly, Satan the devil is subtle and cunning -- more than a match for any of us, humanly speaking. Jesus Christ warned us long ago that in the end times deception would be so powerful that "if it were possible, they shall deceive the VERY ELECT" (Matt.24:24). Paul warned that God would "send them strong DELUSION, that they should believe a LIE: That they all might be damned who believed not the TRUTH, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (II Thess.2:11-12).

Apparently, like Eve in the garden of Eden, this dear lady became offended over little things, and allowed her own feelings to be hurt, and ate of the tree of the knowledge of good AND EVIL, and has begun to eat the poisonous fruit -- and her husband, just like Adam of old, has followed her in her transgression. I say this because thus far SHE is the one who wrote me the letter, and he in effect just wrote a footnote declaring, "I agree." It seems to me that she is the leader in that family, just like Eve -- she seems to be the one who "wears the pants."

My heart goes out to them -- yet they must make their own decision, even if it takes them away from the truth and Satan gains an advantage over them. Like Paul, my heart cries out, and I exclaim, "But I fear, lest by any means, as the SERPENT BEGUILED EVE through his subtilty, so your minds should be CORRUPTED from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth *another Jesus* . . ." (II Cor.11:3-4).

If you have not read my in-depth articles on this subject of the divinity of Christ, then I urge you to write for them right away. They are entitled: "The Pre-Existence of Christ -- Fact? Or Superstition?", "Is Jesus God?", "Who was the YHVH of the OLD TESTAMENT?", "Who or What Was JESUS CHRIST Before His Human Birth?", "The Mystery of GOD," "What Is God Like?", and "Is God Reproducing Himself?"

"Beware of False Prophets"

How some people can so easily be led astray by every wind of false doctrine truly puzzles and intrigues me. Paul the apostle indeed prophesied that it would happen. And it can happen to truly sincere and well-meaning people! Truly God's warning is

serious business when He says to us, "TAKE HEED THAT NO MAN DECEIVE YOU" (Matt.24:4), and, "Many false prophets shall arise, and shall DECEIVE MANY"(verse 11), "Behold, I have told you before" (v.25).

Jesus warned all of us, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits" (Matt.7:15-16).

Paul warned us deliberately and urgently: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the LATTER TIMES some shall DEPART FROM THE FAITH, giving heed to seducing spirits, and DOCTRINES OF DEVILS"(I Tim.4:1). Paul warned of some of these pseudo-scholars and make-believe "saints," saying they have "a form of godliness" but deny the power thereof, and commands us, "from such TURN AWAY" (II Tim.3:5). He says they are "ever learning, and NEVER able to come to the knowledge of the TRUTH" (verse 7).

We are living in the days prophesied by Jude, the brother of Christ, who wrote, "Beloved . . . it was needful for me to write unto you, and EXHORT you that ye should EARNESTLY CONTENT for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). It is very sad to see some jettison the true faith which was "once delivered," and exchange it for a new model "faith" which is guaranteed to poison the mind and destroy godly, righteous character! And when I become angry when I see these horrible things happening, the people involved accuse me of my "anger," not realizing that God Himself is FURIOUS and VERY ANGRY with their foolishness and their wicked departure from the TRUTH into hideous and Satanic ERROR!

Did Jesus Exist Before His Human Birth?

There are, of course, as any really devoted student of the Bible knows, many Scriptures which tell us in plain language that Jesus did exist BEFORE His human birth. He was the Logos, or Word of God, "which was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). John tells us, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the WORD WAS GOD. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was LIFE; and the life was the light of men" (John 1:1-4).

This Word, or "Logos" in the Greek language, was a being who was a member of the very Godhead -- a God being just like the Father! No matter how some men attempt to reason around this plain and simple verse, it says just what it says! Now notice what became of this Logos, or member of the Godhead, in due passage of time! John tells us:

". . . And the WORD WAS MADE FLESH, and dwelt among us . . ." (John 1:1, 14). This Word, therefore, which pre-existed with the Father from some point in eternity, was GOD -- and this "Word" IS THE ONE WHO BECAME CHRIST!

Jesus Came Down from Heaven

That truth is so plain a child can understand it -- yet some have become befuddled and baffled and confused. Furthermore, in John chapter 6, Jesus plainly says, "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 6:38). He said further, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven"(verse 51). Read this whole chapter.

But unfortunately, those who have been bamboozled by Satan's dirty tricks campaign, cannot see this plain truth any more at all. They have become strung out on pseudo-scholarship and false, deadly mis-reasoning. They ASSUME that since the ONE QUOTED in Isaiah says, "I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God" (Isaiah 44:6), and since they ASSUME that that individual is the Father, that therefore JESUS CHRIST could not be God!

However, as I show in my article "Who Was the YHVH of the Old Testament?", the One who is doing the speaking in Isaiah 44:6 is the "WORD" -- THE LOGOS -- the "Spokesman" of the God Family! He is the very ONE WHO BECAME CHRIST! This one verse in Isaiah should not be construed to be the basis of all major theological doctrine concerning GOD and His nature -- it is merely one verse among many. To get to the truth of the matter, we must put ALL the Scriptures together!

Notice! One powerful Scripture that PROVES beyond legitimate question that the YHVH of the Old Testament is the very One who became Jesus Christ is revealed in the book of Zechariah the prophet! We read, "Then shall the LORD [YHVH] go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And HIS FEET shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives . . ." (Zech.14:3-4). Who is the "Lord" who will go forth to fight the nations and whose feet will stand on the mount of Olives when He returns? None other than Jesus Christ! Notice!

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" (Rev.19:11-16).

It is Jesus Christ who is going to return to this earth and fill it with the blood of wicked and apostate men and women! Further proof that this is the same YHVH that Zechariah foretold is revealed in the book of Acts. As Jesus ascended to heaven on a cloud out of the sight of His disciples, two angels stood by and told the disciples: "This

same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). Where did Jesus ascend to heaven from, and to what point will He therefore descend, "in like manner"? "Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the MOUNT CALLED OLIVET, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey" (verse 12).

Jesus Christ will return to the Mount of Olives, in plain view of all the nations -- and then He will go forth to fight against their combined armies, and destroy them -- just as was prophesied by Zechariah of the "LORD" GOD of the Old Testament (Zech.14:1-4)! What could be plainer than that?

"I Saw Satan as Lightning Fall from Heaven!"

Did Jesus Christ pre-exist as "God"? Jesus said plainly to the Pharisees of His day, who accused Him of having a demon, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad" (John 8:56). The Jews replied, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?" Jesus replied: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I AM" (John 8:58). This is a perfectly clear reference to the fact that Jesus PRE-EXISTED even Abraham, and lived long before His human birth in the virgin Mary!

Did Jesus live back in the time before all human life on earth was created? He told His very own disciples, who rejoiced that they had been given power to cast out demons: "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Luke 10:18). Jesus was present, then, when Satan himself was cast out of heaven, long before humans were ever created!

Isaiah the prophet speaks of Satan's fall in that distant, primordial time, the misty past: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which did weaken the nations [of angels, whom he led astray -- one third of the angels in heaven followed him in his rebellion -- see Rev.12:3-4]! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit" (Isa.14:12-15).

Satan's rebellion occurred long before there were any human beings created on the earth. Ezekiel the prophet tells us that Satan originally was one of the created cherubim and walked in the original Garden of Eden (Ezek.28:12-13). He was the "anointed cherub that covered" the throne of God and was "upon the mountain of God" and "walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire" (verse 14). God says of him, "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, TILL INIQUITY [LAWLESSNESS] was found in thee" (v.15). Because of his pride and arrogance, God cast him out of heaven, out of the mountain of God (vs.16-17).

This sin of Satan occurred perhaps millions of years ago, for Jesus said of him

very clearly, "He [Satan] was a *murderer from the beginning*, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh on his own: for he is a LIAR, and the father of it" (John 8:44).

If Jesus saw Satan fall from heaven, as He so clearly says He did, then HE CERTAINLY MUST HAVE PRE-EXISTED SATAN HIMSELF! To believe otherwise is to call Jesus Christ the MESSIAH a "liar," and to call Him a liar is to invalidate one's own salvation and to make shipwreck of the true faith! Jesus is the "Word" of God, and that Word cannot lie (Titus 1:2, John 17:17, 10:35).

Jesus' Own Words In Answer to This Question

The fact is, in John, chapter 5, Jesus forever settles and puts to rest the false doctrine and Satanic belief that He is not God -- very God -- the offspring of the Father! In this chapter, let us study carefully and cautiously, and read HIS VERY OWN WORDS on the subject!

Jesus declared: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John 5:17). Notice! In this very verse Jesus puts Himself on a par with the Father, saying in effect that He HIMSELF was doing the very work of God the Father. The Jews who heard Him were distressed. Notice!

"Therefore sought the JEWS THE MORE TO KILL HIM, because He not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that GOD WAS HIS FATHER, *making himself EQUAL WITH GOD*" (John 5:18). The Jews understood what Jesus implied -- what He meant, when He literally called God His "Father," and said He worked as His Father worked. They were furious at this! They wanted to kill Christ for heresy!

Jesus declared: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. . . . For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should HONOUR THE SON, EVEN AS THEY HONOUR THE FATHER. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him" (John 5:19-23).

How clear! Jesus Christ, the MESSIAH, is just like the Father! He does the VERY WORKS OF THE FATHER! Even as the Father, who is God, raises the DEAD, so Jesus Christ has entered into this very same work -- He has this very same AUTHORITY!

ONLY GOD CAN RAISE THE DEAD! Since Jesus has been given this authority, even as the Father has it, He also is very God of very GOD!

Notice further! Jesus went on, "For as the Father hath life IN HIMSELF; so hath he given to the Son TO HAVE LIFE IN HIMSELF; and hath given him AUTHORITY

TO EXECUTE JUDGMENT also, because he is the Son of man" (John 8:26-27).

Only GOD has "life in Himself." This Scripture shows that Jesus Christ, just like God the Father, has LIFE INHERENT WITHIN HIMSELF -- that is, He is the Author of LIFE -- HE IS THE LIFE-GIVER AND LIFE-SUSTAINER! That is one of the key definitions of "GOD"!

Notice! God told Moses at the burning bush, "I AM THAT I AM . . . Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you" (Exodus 3:14). The very name of God, YHVH, the Tetragrammaton, pronounced YAHVEH in English, means, by definition, "THE I AM" -- THE EXISTING GOD, THE ONE WHO WAS, AND IS, AND IS TO BE, AND WHO CAUSES TO BE -- THE ETERNAL ONE WHO IS!

Jesus Christ IS Very GOD!

In the book of Malachi, the YHVH of the Old Testament says, "For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" (Malachi 3:6).

In the book of Hebrews, in reference to Jesus Christ, the Messiah, we read, "Jesus Christ THE SAME, yesterday, and today, and forever" (Heb.13:8).

Both the YHVH and Jesus Christ are the SAME -- CHANGE NOT -- yesterday, today and forever! This could only be said or stated of ALMIGHTY GOD HIMSELF! Therefore, Jesus Christ is very God even as the Father is very God!

The Alpha and Omega

John records in Revelation the words of God, saying, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, THE ALMIGHTY" (Revelation 1:8). Who is this Person who is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending, who is also the Almighty God? This refers to none other than Jesus Christ, the Messiah!

John records, in Revelation 22, the very promise of Jesus Christ to return to this earth quickly (verse 7). Jesus goes on, saying, "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I AM ALPHA AND OMEGA, THE BEGINNING AND THE END, the first and the last. . . . I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star" (Rev.22:12-16).

Jesus Is CREATOR and SUSTAINER

Yes, JESUS CHRIST IS VERY GOD! As Paul wrote, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the IMAGE of the invisible GOD, the firstborn of every creature: For by him [this same Jesus!] were all

things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible . . . all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things exist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in ALL THINGS he might have the preeminence" (Col.1:14-18).

This very Jesus, aeons ago, decided to become our Saviour. "Who, being in the FORM OF GOD, thought it not robbery to be EQUAL WITH GOD: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men" (Phil.2:6-7).

This same Jesus is God's Son, "whom he hath appointed heir of ALL THINGS, BY WHOM ALSO HE MADE THE WORLDS; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the EXPRESS IMAGE OF HIS PERSON, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as he hath BY INHERITANCE obtained a more excellent NAME than they" -- the very name of GOD and the GOD FAMILY! (Heb.1:1-4).

The Moffatt translation has this verse: "In these days at the end he has spoken to us by a Son -- a Son whom he has appointed HEIR OF THE UNIVERSE, as it was by him that he created the world. He, reflecting God's bright glory and stamped with God's own character, SUSTAINS THE UNIVERSE with his word of power; when he had secured our purification from sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high; and thus he is superior to the angels, as he has inherited a Name superior to theirs" (Heb.1:1-4).

Paul goes on, describing the majesty and divinity of Jesus Christ: "For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my SON, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a SON? And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM. . . . But unto the Son, he saith, THY THRONE, O GOD, IS FOR EVER AND EVER: A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom" (Heb.1:5-8).

The Question of IDOLATRY

How plain! Jesus is worthy of WORSHIP! But to worship any other than GOD IS NOTHING BUT GROSS *IDOLATRY!* If Jesus were not TRUE GOD, then worshipping Him would constitute *IDOLATRY!* God the Father would NEVER command His very own angels to commit *IDOLATRY!* GOD FORBID!

To worship any other than the true GOD is idolatry, pure and simple. If Jesus is not "God," then worshipping Him would be an act of idolatry, a sin comparable to witchcraft (I Sam.15:23). It is against the Law of God for anything to be worshipped except God Himself! The first two commandments forbid idolatry (Exodus 20:1-6).

The devil told Christ he would give him all the kingdoms of the world if Jesus would only bow down and worship him. But Jesus replied, "Get thee hence, Satan! for it is written, Thou shalt worship THE LORD THY GOD, and him ONLY shalt thou serve" (Matt.4:8-10). Therefore, if Jesus is not God, it would be a SIN to "worship" Him -- and yet the Father COMMANDS His angels, and human beings, to worship Him! This PROVES beyond any doubt or question that Jesus IS "GOD" as the Father is also GOD!

If Christ were not very GOD, then worship of Him would be IDOLATRY! Those who claim He was merely a human being who "made good," therefore, are guilty of IDOLATRY if they worship Him -- and guilty of dishonoring the Son of God, if they don't! Thus they are caught in a spider's web -- a trap -- between the rock and the proverbial hard place. If they don't worship Him, they DENY Him, and He will deny them at the resurrection! And if they DO "worship" Him, while believing that He is NOT God, or Divine, they are then guilty before God of IDOLATRY!

Which is it going to be? Can't they see the terrible error of their sin and their false belief? Can't they see that they are denying Christ by their modern-day superstition?

In Isaiah 44:21, the LORD {YHVH} says, "Who hath told it from that time? Have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a SAVIOUR; there is NONE BESIDE ME. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else" (vs.21-22).

The One speaking here is obviously the One who became CHRIST! He calls Himself the Saviour," and Christ is the ONLY "Saviour." As Peter declared, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). The name Jesus actually MEANS, by definition, "Saviour" (Matt.1:21).

Are You a "Doubting Thomas"?

In the gospel of John we read the unique experience of one of the apostles, called Thomas. Even after Jesus rose from the dead and the other apostles testified that they actually saw Him, Thomas said to them, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe" (John 20:25).

Thomas had His doubts, too. He was very skeptical, at this point. He had seen Jesus, dying like a mere man, on the stake on Calvary. But after eight days, when the disciples were gathered together once again, Thomas with them, Jesus came among them, even though the doors were shut, and stood in their midst, and said, "Peace be unto you" (verse 26). Then Jesus had special words for Thomas, who up to this point had not seen Him since the resurrection. "Then saith he to Thomas, 'Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: *and be not faithless, but believing*'" (v.27).

I cannot think of better words or better advice to all those who have doubted the divinity of Christ. To those who have been bewitched by false doctrine and subverted in their pure and simple faith, I can only say, "*Be not faithless, but believing!*" When Jesus uttered these momentous words to Thomas, Thomas was moved to his very innermost being. "And Thomas answered, and said unto him, '*My Lord and my God*'" (v.28).

Do you acknowledge Jesus Christ as YOUR "LORD" and as YOUR "GOD"? I do. I worship Him AND God the Father with all my heart, all my soul, all my strength, all my being, and all my mind, and all my spirit. Together, they are ONE GOD, and I worship them!

Jesus then said to Thomas, the doubter, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: *blessed are they that have not seen, and YET have believed*" (John 20:29). What about you? Are you still a "doubter" like Thomas? Or, having not seen, can you STILL believe?

Do you still question the very essence of the divinity of Christ and His Godhood? Thomas repented of his unbelief and lack of faith, and exclaimed from his innermost soul, "My Lord AND MY GOD!" Will you also repent, and come to your senses, and acknowledge Jesus Christ not only as the Messiah, but as your GOD? The Jews were right. The Son of God IS also "God." They tried to kill Jesus for what they considered blasphemy. But He was not blaspheming. He truly was AND IS the "Son of God," and therefore very GOD!

The "Firstborn of Many Brethren"

In the book of Hebrews we read of God's plan concerning mankind, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands. Thou hast put ALL THINGS in subjection under his feet. For in that he put ALL in subjection under him, he LEFT NOTHING that is not put under him. But now we see NOT YET all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb.2:6-9). Jesus, therefore has made us "ALL OF ONE" (verse 11). Therefore, He is "not ashamed to call them [us] BRETHREN" (v.12).

Jesus, is the very own Son of God the Father, in the God Family -- and as such, He is the "firstborn among MANY BRETHREN" (Rom.8:29). As the apostle Paul tells us, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the GLORY which shall be revealed IN US" (Rom.8:18). What "glory" is Paul talking about? "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that WE ARE THE CHILDREN OF GOD: And if children, then HEIRS; HEIRS OF GOD, and JOINT-HEIRS WITH CHRIST; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also GLORIFIED TOGETHER!" (Rom.8:16-17). Did you get that tremendous promise?

Did you understand the meaning of that awesome verse of Scripture?

We also, as true Christians, as true believers in the Messiah, who follow and obey Him, and who WORSHIP HIM in "spirit and in truth" (John 4:24), are to be glorified together with Christ, who is VERY GOD -- the literal SON OF GOD! We are destined to share in His inheritance, as His "JOINT-HEIRS"! He is the "elder brother." We are the younger brothers. What is our inheritance? To be members of the very UNIVERSE-RULING GOD FAMILY! TO BECOME YAHVEH, ELOHIM, divine members of the very ALMIGHTY GOD FAMILY! What a breath-taking destiny! What an awesome future! What a mind-boggling inheritance! "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM; for we shall see him as he is" (I John 3:1-2). How great is God, our Father! And how Great is His Son, also our God, Messiah and Saviour, Jesus Christ! Praise God, forever and ever, for His most wonderful and sublime truth!

Chapter 10

Is God a "TRINITY"?

The vast majority of Christians believe that God is a Trinity, composed of three divine persons -- the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit! But is this age-old concept, which derives from the Catholic Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D., true? Does the Bible itself -- the Word of God -- teach that God is composed of three persons? Where did the "Trinity" doctrine come from? What is the truth about the divine Godhead? Here is vital truth you need to understand!

The overwhelming majority of professing Christians believe that God is a Trinity. They have been taught this doctrine in Sunday School, they sing of it in their hymns, and their pastors and teachers emphasize it continually. They recite it often in the Nicene creed, which forms the basis of belief of many Protestant Churches, as well as the Roman Catholic Church.

Protestant hymns declared, "God in three persons, blessed Trinity." Protestant and Catholic scholars, in their attempt to explain the "Trinity," and how God could be "three persons in one," admit that the concept is "one of the great mysteries of revelation," "transcends the finite comprehension," "incomprehensible," and even "absurd." Says Dr. Herbert Lockyer, "Natural reason may not be able to grasp and explain the Trinitarian conception . . . because the Three-in-One God is beyond our understanding, the truth should not be doubted on account of its mysteriousness . . . Are we not surrounded by mysteries? . . . the one God in three Persons is an audacious conception . . . a divine riddle . . . Granted that there is not presented a formulated definition of the Trinity . . . the term Trinity is not found in the Bible . . . It is affirmed that the word Trinity itself was first formally used at the synod at Alexandria in A.D. 317 . . . Triads of divinities can be found in MANY RELIGIONS . . . In the Nicene Creed of A.D. 325 we have a Trinitarianism in which the three Persons are divine and are of one substance . . . this sacred doctrine is above reason."

Says the *Worldbook Encyclopedia*, "Belief in Father, Son and Holy Spirit was first defined by the earliest general council of churches. This was the First Council of Nicaea in 325. This council declared that the Son is of the same substance as the Father. The East and West branches of the church later disagreed as to how the Holy

Spirit proceeds from the other divine Persons. The Eastern Church held that the Son comes from the Father and the Spirit comes from the Father through the Son. The Western Church held that the Spirit comes from Father and Son together. Most Christians believe that Father, Son and Holy Spirit have equal power and glory. Each has His own activity. The Father creates; the Son saves souls; and the Spirit makes holy" ("Trinity").

The Nicaean Council condemned the theological view of Arius, a priest of Alexandria, Egypt, who about 318 A.D. rejected the Trinitarian doctrine and held that Jesus Christ was not divine God, but rather an inferior being created by God to redeem the human race. He believed that both Father and Son were greater than the Holy Spirit. Arianism was condemned by the Council of Constantinople in 381.

Interestingly, the word "Trinity" is nowhere found in the Scriptures -- in either the Old or New Testaments. Jesus never addressed God as a "Trinity," and never spoke of the concept. Nor did any of the early apostles.

A Spurious and Fraudulent Verse!

Some theologians claim that the Trinity doctrine is proved by I John 5:7, where we read in the King James Version: "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost [Spirit]: and these three are one." That verse might seem rather clear, as supporting a Trinitarian view of the Godhead, except for one major problem -- *the verse is absolutely SPURIOUS!*

This verse does not belong in the Bible! It was inserted by corrupt scribes during the Middle Ages, with no other purpose than to "provide evidence" for a Trinity belief in the Scriptures. Says the Adam Clarke Commentary:

"But it is likely this verse is NOT GENUINE. It is wanting in every MS. of this epistle written *before* the invention of printing, one excepted, the *Codex Montfortii*, in Trinity College, Dublin: the others which omit this verse amount to one hundred and twelve.

"It is wanting in both the *Syriac*, all the *Arabic*, *Ethiopic*, the *Coptic*, *Sahidic*, *Armenian*, *Slavonian*, etc., in a word, in all the ancient versions but the *Vulgate*; and even of this version many of the most ancient and correct MSS. have it not. It is wanting in all the ancient Greek fathers; and in most even of the Latin.

"The words, as they exist in all the Greek MSS. with the exception of the *Codex Montfortii*, are the following: --

"6. This is he that came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not by

water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. 7. For there are three that bear witness, the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one. 9. If we receive the witness of man, the witness of God is greater, etc.'

"The words that are OMITTED BY ALL THE MSS., the above excepted, and all the *versions*, the *Vulgate* excepted, are these: -- "[In heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one, and there are three which bear witness in earth.]"

Adam Clarke continues, "Any man may see, on examining the words, that if those included in brackets, which are wanting in the MSS. and versions, be omitted, there is no want of connection; and as to the sense, it is complete and perfect without them; and, indeed much more so than with them. "

Clarke says with Dr. Dodd, "that there are some internal and accidental marks which may render the passage suspected; for the sense is complete, and indeed more clear and better preserved, without it. Besides, the Spirit is mentioned, both as a witness in heaven and on earth; so that the six witnesses are thereby reduced to five, and the equality of number, or antithesis between the witnesses in heaven and on earth, is quite taken away. Besides, what need of witnesses in heaven? No one there doubts that Jesus is the Messiah; and if it be said that Father, Son and Spirit are witnesses on earth, then there are five witnesses on earth, and none in heaven; not to say that there is a little difficulty in interpreting how the Word or the Son can be a witness to himself."

Virtually all modern translations leave out this spurious passage which does not occur in the oldest and best manuscripts. The margin of the New International Version says this passage in I John 5:7 is "not found in any Greek manuscript before the SIXTEENTH CENTURY."

Says the *Critical-Experimental Commentary* by Jamieson, Faussett and Brown, of this passage:

"The only Greek MSS., *in any form*, which support the words 'in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one; and there are three that bear witness in earth,' are the Montfortianus of Dublin, copied from the *modern* Latin Vulgate; the Revianus, copied from the Complutensian Polyglot; a MS. at Naples, with the words added in the margin by a recent hand; Ottobonius, 298, of the fifteenth century, the Greek of which is a *translation* of the accompanying Latin. ALL THE OLD VERSIONS OMIT THE WORDS. The oldest MSS. of the Vulgate omit them, the earliest Vulgate MS. which has them being Wizanburgensis, 99, of the eighth century."

Where, then, is there any real "proof" of the doctrine and widespread belief that God is a "Trinity," composed of Three Persons? Just what does the Word of Inspired Scripture teach about the nature of God?

A Very Serious Problem for Trinitarians

In the gospel of Matthew we read of the birth of Jesus Christ, "This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT" (Matt.1:18).

Joseph, her husband, was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, so he planned to divorce her quietly. "But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is CONCEIVED in her is FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins" (Matt.1:20-21, NIV).

These verses pose an excruciating headache for believers in a "Trinity." They constitute an insurmountable, unanswerable paradox! Consider for a moment: Here we read very plainly that it was the HOLY SPIRIT which "conceived" Jesus Christ. If the Spirit were indeed a Person, then, *it would have to be the Father of Christ!*

That "Person" who begets a "child," is always called the "Father." Since the Holy Spirit beget Christ, if it were a Person, it would be His "Father"! What a head-scratching paradox! How can a baby have TWO FATHERS? On the other hand, if the Father in heaven did NOT beget Christ, but the Holy Spirit did instead, the the "Father" was NOT Jesus' Father! In that case, Jesus was mistaken in His prayers in which He continually addressed His Father in heaven as "Father." Rather, He should have addressed the Holy Spirit as His "Father," if the Spirit is a Person, or one of the Three Persons in the so-called "Trinity"!

What CONFUSION! What a miasma of spiritual error! What a jumbled up, mixed up, perplexing mess!

The truth is as simple as it is plain. Jesus Christ KNEW who His Father was, and addressed Him in prayers often, praying to His Father in Heaven. He never called the Holy Spirit His "Father," because He knew that the Spirit was *NOT A PERSON*, but rather the spirit energy or POWER that emanated from God!

In other words, Jesus knew that God was not a "Trinity," and He never taught such a concept, or alluded to it, or mentioned it -- not once!

The Spirit of God is not a "Person" at all, but is the spirit essence of God, which fills the Universe. It is the spirit energy or Power of God! The archangel Gabriel told Mary, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the POWER of the Most High will

overshadow you. So the Holy One to be born will be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35).

What IS the Spirit of God?

The Holy Spirit is the creative energy of God. David, the Psalmist, wrote, "When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth (Psalm 104:30).

God inspired the prophet Jeremiah to write of Him, "'Am I only a God nearby, 'declares the LORD, 'and not a God far away? Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?' declares the LORD. 'Do not I *FILL HEAVEN AND EARTH*?' declares the LORD" (Jer.23:23-24).

David wrote further of God's Spirit, saying, "Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me; your right hand will hold me fast" (Psa.139:7-10).

God's Spirit is like a cloud that fills the Universe. It is invisible, because it is spirit. The naked eye cannot see it. But mankind can see the *results* of its actions! In the book of Genesis, we find that God used His Spirit in the creation process, to make all things. We read, "In the beginning God [Elohim] created the heavens and the earth . . . And the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters" (Gen.1:1-2). "And God [Elohim] said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light" (verse 3).

The word for "God" here is Elohim, a Hebrew word, and means, literally, "the mighty ones." It is a uni-plural word, similar to the English words "church," "assembly," "family." It means more than one, and yet one at the same time. In other words, God is both one and more than one -- He is a Family, with more than one member -- yet all belong to that divine Family! The "Father" is the head of that divine Family; Jesus the "Son" is the firstborn Son, also God, but a different individual or person.

Notice this plurality in the book of Genesis. We read, "Then God said, 'Let US make man in OUR image, in OUR likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground'"(Gen.1:26).

There is only ONE "Elohim," or "God Family," but more than one member in that divine family! At present there are TWO members of that divine family. John was inspired to write, "In the beginning was the Word [Logos], and the Word was WITH God, and the Word WAS God. He was with God in the beginning.

"Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been

made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men" (John 1:1-4). John goes on, "The Word BECAME FLESH and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (verse 14).

The "Elohim" that created the heavens and the earth, then, was one God, but TWO PERSONS -- the "Father," and the "Word," who later became Jesus Christ! These two, acting together, in concert, created and fashioned the entire Universe!

This same truth is corroborated by the apostle Paul, who wrote of Christ, "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For BY HIM all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created BY him and FOR him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fulness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross" (Col.1:15-20).

Speaking of the Word, who became the Son of God, the apostle Paul also writes: "In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of ALL THINGS, and through whom he MADE THE UNIVERSE. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word" (Heb.1:1-3).

Thus two personages compose the "God" of the Bible, the "Elohim" or "Yahveh" of the Old Testament. These two individuals are the One and Only true GOD! They are united in all they do. They act as ONE in everything. There is no disagreement or "falling out" between them. They are ONE harmonious FAMILY!

The Spirit of God is the Spirit essence of which they are composed. Jesus compares it to the wind -- an energetic force which you cannot see or comprehend. He declared to Nicodemus, a ruler among the Jews, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but *the Spirit gives birth to spirit*. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' The *wind* blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. *So it is with everyone born of the Spirit*" (John 3:5-8).

God's Spirit energy is invisible, like the wind. However, it is also POWERFUL, like the wind! It goes wherever God directs it, to accomplish His will.

The Word of God not only compares God's Spirit to wind, but also compares God's Spirit to water. Jesus said, "If anyone is thirst, let him come to me and drink.

Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, STREAMS OF LIVING WATER will FLOW from within him.' By this he meant the SPIRIT, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified" (John 7:37-39).

The Spirit of God is also compared to a solid force. Therefore, like physical matter, which can occur as a gas, liquid, or solid, even so the SPIRIT of God can be displayed in three forms or states, as well -- like the wind (or a gas which fills everything), like the water (a liquid which flows and can be poured out), and like a solid (it is the "solid" agency or form which literally "begets" us as children of God!

On the day of Pentecost, in 31 A.D., God sent His Spirit to come upon each individual of His fledgling new Church. We read, "When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the BLOWING of a violent WIND came from heaven and FILLED the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT and began to speak in other tongues [languages] as the Spirit enabled them" (Acts 2:1-4).

The Holy Spirit is that which literally "begets" us. In its "solid" form, it can be compared to the "seed" of the Father which, like the male sperm of human beings, literally "begets" a human child by joining with a female "egg" or "ovum" in a woman's belly. However, God's Spirit begets us by joining with our MIND, and thus making us a "new creature" or "creation" IN CHRIST!

The apostle Paul wrote of this marvelous mystery as follows: "Having believed, you were marked in him with a SEAL, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a DEPOSIT guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession -- to the praise of his glory" (Eph.1:13-14).

James wrote, "He chose to give us birth [or, "to *beget* us," as the original Greek says] through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of FIRSTFRUITS of all he created" (James 1:18, NIV). Actually, the Englishman's Greek New Testament is more accurate here. It says plainly: "Having willed it, he BEGAT us by the word of truth."

The apostle John writes: "Everyone that believes that Jesus is the Christ of God has been BEGOTTEN; and everyone that loves him that BEGAT, loves also him that has been BEGOTTEN of him" (I John 5:1, *Englishman's Greek New Testament*). John goes on: "We know that anyone that has been BEGOTTEN of God sins not, but he that was BEGOTTEN of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him" (verse 18).

The Spirit of God unites with our mind, and a New Creature is begotten -- a NEW SON OF GOD! Sealed, or begotten, by the Holy Spirit, Christ begins to grow within us. We begin to develop His very own mind and attitude. Paul wrote, "You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your own self, which is being

corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be **MADE NEW** in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the **NEW** self, created to be **LIKE GOD** in true righteousness and holiness" (Eph.4:22-24).

Therefore, Paul wrote, "My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until **CHRIST IS FORMED IN YOU**" (Gal.4:19). Even as a newly begotten babe is created and month-by-month "formed" within its mother's womb, so after the Holy Spirit begets us as children of God, we begin to grow month-by-month and year-by-year spiritually, as the Holy Spirit begins to **FORM CHRIST** in us, and change us to become more and more **LIKE CHRIST** in every respect!

Paul wrote to the Corinthians about this spiritual process. He declared, "Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed we will not be found naked. For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has **GIVEN US THE SPIRIT** as a **DEPOSIT** guaranteeing what is to come" (II Cor.5:1-5).

The indwelling of God's Holy Spirit makes us a new man -- a **NEW BEING!**

As a result of this spiritual process, the apostle Paul wrote, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, **HE IS A NEW CREATION**; the old has gone, the new has come!" (II Cor.5:17). The Holy Spirit begetting us, by connecting with our minds, makes us a new **SON OF GOD!**

But if we don't possess the Spirit of God, then we don't even belong to Christ -- we are not His at all. Paul wrote to the Romans, "You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, **IF** the Spirit of God lives in you. *And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.* But **IF** Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your Spirit is alive because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is **LIVING IN YOU**, he who raised Christ from the dead will **ALSO** give life to your mortal bodies *through his Spirit*, who **LIVES** in you" (Rom.8:9-11).

Isn't the truth of God perfectly clear?

The Spirit of God is **NOT** a "Person" at all, but the Power of God -- His creative energy, with which He created all the Universe. This Spirit, like a "gas," fills all space -- the entire Universe. You cannot go anywhere where the Spirit of God does not already exist and is present! But the Spirit-energy of God is also like a liquid, in that it "flows," and can be "poured out" on individuals, and flows through those who have it like a mighty river of living water (John 7:36). It also is like a "solid" in that, like a male sperm cell which unites with a human egg, the Spirit of God unites with a human,

making a NEW SPIRIT CREATION -- *a new Son of God!*

Paul goes on, explaining this cosmic mystery. He says, "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are GOD'S CHILDREN [children through a spiritual "begettal," as we are "begotten" by His Spirit!]. Now if we are children, then we are HEIRS -- heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory" (Rom.8:16-17).

God has called each one of us to BECOME PART OF HIS SPIRITUAL FAMILY!

Paul wrote to the Hebrews, of our awesome, manifest calling, saying, "It is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking. But there is a place where someone has testified: 'What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care about him? You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor and PUT EVERYTHING under his feet.'

"In putting everything under him, GOD LEFT NOTHING that is not subject to him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

"In bringing MANY SONS TO GLORY, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering. Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of THE SAME FAMILY. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them BROTHERS" (Heb.2:5-12).

Did you get that? Even as God has given Jesus Christ ALL AUTHORITY, and RULERSHIP over everything -- the entire UNIVERSE! -- so He has given to all mankind, when they become converted and have His Spirit, and become His spiritual children, to have rulership WITH CHRIST over the ENTIRE FAR-FLUNG COSMOS -- the vast, unending UNIVERSE!

After we are born of God at the resurrection, and become Spirit beings just like He is, we will be "THE SAME FAMILY" -- THE FAMILY OF GOD! Jesus will look upon us as His own BROTHERS in the God Family! We will not be a "lesser" creation, but we will be LIKE HIM!

Isn't that astounding? Incredible? Amazing?

Think about that! We are literally "JOINT-HEIRS WITH CHRIST" of all things God has created -- of the entire CREATION, and everything within it -- the entire cosmos and Universe, with all the galaxies, planets, stars, and beings in the entire realm of Space!

John wrote of this awesome divine calling, when he said, "How great is the love

the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, WE SHALL BE *LIKE HIM*, for we shall see him as he is" (I John 3:1-3).

What is Christ like, today? He is the EXPRESS IMAGE of the Father! (Heb.1:1-2). His face shines with all the glory of the radiant sun in its powerful strength. John describes Him, "His head and hair were white like wool, and white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. . . His face was like the SUN SHINING IN ALL ITS BRILLIANCE" (Rev.1:14-16).

That is what WE will be like, in the resurrection!

Doesn't that very thought boggle your mind? Think of it! Surely, we cannot begin to comprehend the love God has decided to share with us, to make us His very own Sons, and to give us of His very own Spirit as a begettal! We should bow our heads in humble praise, giving glory to God, our Father, and loving Creator in heaven!

A Few Honest Questions Examined

But if the Holy Spirit is not a Person, some will wonder why in various passages of Scripture it refers to the Spirit of God as "He" and "Him." Yet, in other passages, the Spirit of God is referred to as "IT." What is the reason for this ambivalence -- this seeming paradox, and contradiction? Why is the Holy Spirit sometimes referred to as "he"?

Let's understand this mystery, once and for all!

Romans 8:16 says, in the original Greek language in which it was written, "The Spirit ITSELF bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God." Likewise, in verse 26, we read in the original language: "And in like manner the Spirit also jointly helps our weaknesses; for that which we should pray for according as it behooves, we know not, but the Spirit ITSELF makes intercession for us with inexpressible groanings."

Yet, in another place we read: "But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you" (John 16:13-14).

Why is the Spirit called "he" in these verses? The original Greek word translated "he" in many English translations is "ekeinos," is a pronoun, and simply means "THE ONE THERE," "that man, woman or thing." It could just as readily been translated as "it," or "the one there," but the translators chose to use the masculine pronoun "he"

instead. It was simply a translation error; the original Greek did not use a masculine pronoun, but a neutral pronoun which simply reflects the noun immediately preceding it -- whether it is a he, she, or it! The translators could just as easily have said "SHE." The fact is, both "he" and "she" would be totally incorrect in this passage, because the noun referred to is simply "Spirit" -- or *pneuma* in the Greek -- and it is neither a masculine or feminine word, but should take the pronoun "it." However, remember, the translators of most Bible are *conditioned* to think in terms of the HOLY SPIRIT as a "Person," and so they translated accordingly.

Jesus also told His disciples, "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever -- the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you" (John 14:16). Here the Spirit of truth is called "him," and "he." Why is this?

Then again, in John 14:26 Jesus says: "But the Counselor [Comforter, KJV], the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you." Why does this verse use the pronoun "whom," which would seem to indicate the Counselor, or Holy Spirit, is a "person"?

Also, in John 15:26, Jesus declares: "When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me." Finally, in the next chapter, Jesus says, "Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment . . ." (John 16:7-8). Here again, we see the words "whom," "who," "he," and "him," in reference to the "Counselor," or Holy Spirit. Why is this?

In this case, the subject of the sentence is the "Counselor" or "Comforter." The "who," "whom," "he," and "him" all refer directly back to the *Counselor*. The Greek word for Counselor here is *parakletos* and means "advocate, intercessor, comforter, consoler." Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon says of this word, "prop. summoned, called to one's side; hence 1. one who pleads another's cause before a judge, a pleader, counsel for defence, legal assistant; an advocate; 2. one who pleads another's cause with one, an intercessor; 3. in the widest sense, a helper, succorer, aider, assistant; so of the Holy Spirit destined to take the place of Christ with the apostles (after his ascension to the Father), to lead them to a deeper knowledge of gospel truth, and to give them the divine strength needed to enable them to undergo trials and persecutions on behalf of the divine kingdom."

In this instance, therefore, the Holy Spirit is compared to a Counselor or personal Advocate, someone who intercedes on our behalf, and who helps and aids us, and leads us into deeper spiritual knowledge. It is "personalized" in the sense of a metaphor. Since the word "Counselor" would take a pronoun such as "who," "whom," "he," or "his," these pronouns are used in this case. They refer to Counselor, however, not to "Spirit," and prove nothing one way or the other as to whether the Holy Spirit is a

Person or the active, energetic force or power of God!

We often do the same thing in English, when speaking metaphorically. We often speak of our "flag" as in "let her wave," or our country, "let her remain great." Yet technically, a "flag" is "it" and a country also should be referred to as "it." In this case, since the Holy Spirit is compared to (or metaphorically described as) a "Counselor," it is logical that the Counselor would be described with the masculine or personal pronoun.

Remember, also, that the Holy Spirit, as such, is the SPIRIT OF GOD -- it is an extension of Himself. Since God is in the masculine, and is a Person, when His Spirit is referred to as a Counselor, it would naturally be regarded as being representative of God and therefore would take the masculine or personal pronoun "he," "his," "who," or "whom." What could be clearer than that?

*"In the name of the Father and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit"*

Finally, if the Holy Spirit is not a Person, some might wonder, why does Jesus say in Matthew, in His final instructions to His disciples: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matt.28:18-20). Does this verse prove the "Trinity" doctrine?

If this is all the "evidence" there is to support the Trinity, then it is a specious, weak, and unprovable doctrine to be sure. Nothing is said here about the Holy Spirit being a PERSON! Not at all! Think about it. All Jesus really told His disciples, here, is that they are to BAPTIZE people *in* (or, Greek, *eis*, meaning "to") the NAME of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. What NAME is that?

It is the name of *GOD!*

Remember, the Father is the Head of the God Family. Jesus is the Word, or Logos, the Son of God the Father -- the Firstborn of many brethren. He, also, is GOD! Finally, the Holy Spirit is the "Spirit of GOD." It belongs to no other. Only God can control His Spirit. It is the very essence and Spirit nature and POWER of God -- His creative energy. Therefore, the Holy Spirit, also, is GOD -- although it is not a distinctive "Person" or personality. It reflects the personality of God the Father and the Son! It does whatever they tell it to do. They speak, and it moves. They direct its energy and attention wherever they so desire. But it, also, is GOD!

Therefore, when Jesus told His disciples to baptize people in or to the NAME of the "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit," He meant they should baptize people into or to the "NAME OF GOD."

In other words, Jesus told them to baptize people into the GOD FAMILY! When we are baptized, and subsequently receive the gift of God's Holy Spirit, we BECOME family members of the Family of God. God becomes our Father. Jesus becomes our Saviour and eldest Brother. We become the CHILDREN OF GOD! And all of the family of God have one characteristic or attribute in common -- they all have the HOLY SPIRIT!

That is why Jesus told His disciples to baptize people into the NAME of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He was saying to baptize them into the name of *GOD* -- *Elohim, Yahveh* -- the true names of God, which describe the God Family!

The Divine Family of GOD

The plain truth is, the Bible nowhere teaches a doctrine of a Triune God -- a God of Three Persons, a "closed triangle." Rather, the Bible teaches that there is a Supreme Family ruling over the entire Universe, presently composed of Two Individuals, both God -- the Father and the Word, or Son. But when we are resurrected, and made immortal sons of God, then we, too, will be part of that Divine Ruling Family -- SONS OF GOD, for ever and ever! Thus the "Godhead" is not limited to a closed "triangle." Rather, it is a growing, expanding FAMILY!

At the head of this Family is God the Father. He is the greatest, as even Jesus Himself testified. Although both Jesus and the Father are "God," the Father exercises greater authority. Jesus declared this to be true when He said: "For the Father is *greater* than I" (John 14:28). He added, "I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him" (John 13:16). Jesus came as a servant of God, as the messenger of the Father. Therefore, He readily admitted the Father is the greatest in the God Family. Jesus and the Father are "co-equal" in the sense of both being God, but the Father has greater authority.

This truth is also verified in Corinthians. Paul wrote, "Then the end will come, when he [Christ] *hands over the kingdom to God the Father* after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. . . . When he has done this, then the *Son himself will be made subject to him* who put everything under him, so that *God* may be all in all" (I Cor.15:24-28, NIV).

So God the Father will be greatest in authority, for all ages; under Him will be Christ; and under them both will be the saints, made immortal, glorified, and given divine powers, so that they, too, will be literal "children of God" and "brothers" of Christ, as very members of the divine Family of *GOD!*

WHAT AN AWESOME TRUTH!

Can your mind begin to comprehend it?

Satan the devil hates this truth. He has tried to bury it under a mountain of pagan superstition and false doctrine. He has "*deceived the whole world*" even about the very nature of the Godhead (Rev.12:9). He has convinced the entire world that God is some sort of mysterious "Trinity," so mankind will be ignorant of his true eternal potential and awesome destiny!

Where, then, did the idea of a "Trinity" come from? Since it is not Biblical in origin, can we understand its true source?

The Pagan Trinity

Alexander Hislop declares in *The Two Babylons*, "In the unity of that one Only God of the Babylonians, there were three persons, and to symbolize that doctrine of the Trinity, they employed, as the discoveries of Layard prove, the equilateral triangle, just as it is well known the Romish church does at this day. In both cases such a comparison is most degrading to the King Eternal, and is fitted utterly to pervert the minds of those who contemplate it, as if there was or could be any similitude between such a figure and Him who hath said: 'To whom will you liken God, and what likeness will ye compare unto Him?'"

Hislop continues:

"The Papacy has in some of its churches, as, for instance, in the monastery of the so-called Trinitarians of Madrid, an image of the Triune God, with three heads on one body. The Babylonians had something of the same. Mr. Layard, in his last work, has given a specimen of such a triune divinity, worshiped in ancient Assyria . . . In India, the supreme divinity, in like manner, in one of the most ancient cave-temples, is represented with three heads on one body, under the name of 'Eko Deve Trimurtti,' 'One God, three forms.' In Japan, the Buddhists worship their great divinity Buddha, with three heads, in the very same form, under the name of 'San Pao Fuh.' All these have existed from ancient times" (*The Two Babylons*, pp.18-19).

Thus the doctrine of the Trinity is distinctly *pagan* in origin! It goes right back to ancient Babylon, that fountain of false religion and religious abominations! The ancient Babylonian trinity was Nimrod, Semiramis, and Tammuz, the illegitimate son of Semiramis. These three were worshipped as the supreme gods of the Babylonian pantheon. From them came the Roman trinity of Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva about 509 B.C. In 493 a temple was built to the Greek trinity of Demeter, Dionysus, and Persephone, in the Circus Maximus, under the Latin names of Ceres, Liber, and Libera.

The Babylonian trinity evolved to a faith in the "father," the spirit of the father in the human mother, and the son. Thus, the "spirit" was symbolized by the great earth mother goddess. This concept of the trinity came to be adopted by the Roman Catholic

Church. Gradually the Father was displaced, as invisible and in heaven, and worship concentrated on the Mother and the Son -- a vestige of ancient pagan worship as well. After the death of Nimrod, who rebelled against God and was the world's first tyrant after the Flood, Semiramis, his widow, convinced the people that they should worship Nimrod as a god, and herself and her son Tammuz as the other two members of the pagan trinity. Thus the "Mother and child" worship goes all the back to ancient Babylon!

Writes Hislop in *The Two Babylons*:

"While this was the theory, the first person of the Godhead was practically overlooked. As the Great Invisible, taking no immediate concern in human affairs, he was 'to be worshiped through silence alone,' that is, in point of fact, he was not worshipped by the multitude at all. The same thing is strikingly illustrated in India at this day. Though Brahma, according to the sacred books, is the first person of the Indoo Triad, and the religion of Hindostan is called by his name, yet he is never worshiped, and there is scarcely a single temple in all India now in existence of those that were formerly erected in his honor. So also in those countries of Europe where the Papal system is most completely developed. In Papal Italy, as travelers universally admit . . . all appearance of worshipping the King Eternal and Invisible is almost extinct, while the Mother and the Child are the grand objects of worship. *Exactly so, in this latter respect, also was it in ancient Babylon.* The Babylonians, in their popular religion, supremely worshiped a Goddess Mother and a Son, who was represented in pictures and in images as an infant or child in his mother's arms. FROM BABYLON THE WORSHIP OF THE MOTHER AND THE CHILD SPREAD TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH. In Egypt, the Mother and the Child were worshiped under the names of Isis and Osiris. In India, even to this day, as Isi and Iswara; in Asia as Cybele and Deoius; in Pagan Rome as Fortuna and Jupiter-puer, or Jupiter, the boy; in Greece as Ceres, the Great Mother, with the babe at her breast, or as Irene, the goddess of Peace, with the boy Plutus in her arms; and even in Tibet and China, and Japan, the Jesuit missionaries were astonished to find the counterpart of Madonna and her child as devoutly worshiped as in Papal Rome itself; Shing Moo, the Holy Mother in China, being represented with a child in her arms, and a glory around her, exactly as if a Roman Catholic artist had been employed to set her up" (*The Two Babylons*, p.20-21).

Thus the doctrine of the "Triune God," and the subsequent worship of "Mother and Child," are shown to be utterly and completely PAGAN to the core! What does Almighty God think about this modern worship, which professes to worship Him?

VAIN WORSHIP

Jesus Christ declared to the people of His day, "You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: 'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. *They WORSHIP ME IN VAIN*; their teachings are but *rules taught by MEN*'" (Matt.15:7-9).

Such worship is, in the words of Christ Himself, VAIN! It does no good whatsoever! It is a farce -- a fraud -- a fairy tale! It is utterly useless and empty worship, and those who practice it are closer to the Kingdom of Hell than to the Kingdom of Heaven!

Any religious doctrine which stems from ancient Babylon is, in the sight of God, a monstrous hoax and spiritual dynamite, foisted on the world by a devious and mendacious Devil. The apostle John declared:

"After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven. He had great authority, and the earth was illuminated by his splendor. With a mighty voice he shouted: 'Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great! She has become a home for demons and a haunt for every evil spirit, a haunt for every unclean and detestable bird. For all the nations have drunk the maddening wine of her adulteries. The kings of the earth committed adultery with her, and the merchants of the earth grew rich from her excessive luxuries.'

"Then I heard another voice from heaven say: 'COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues; for her sins are piled up to heaven, and God has remembered her crimes. Give back to her as she has given; pay her back double for what she has done. Mix her a double portion from her own cup. Give her as much torture and grief as the glory and luxury she gave herself. In her heart she boasts, "I sit as queen; I am not a widow, and I will never mourn." Therefore in one day her plagues will overtake her: death, mourning and famine. She will be consumed by fire, for mighty is the Lord God who judges her'" (Rev.18:1-8, NIV).

The doctrine of a Triune God is pure paganism, coming from the sink of depravity, Babylon. Those who worship God according to the teachings of Babylon will suffer the plagues of God, and experience His undiluted wrath and fury poured out.

John writes, in the 14th chapter of the book of Revelation, this awesome and serious warning:

"Then I saw another angel flying in mid-air, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth -- to every nation, tribe, language and people. He said in a loud voice, 'Fear GOD and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water'" (Rev.14:6-7).

In other words, worship the TRUE GOD -- not some Triune pagan relic from the Babylonian past, adopted and "baptized" by the Roman Catholic Church, and all her Protestant "daughter" churches! Don't worship the Babylonian "Madonna and Child" in all their disguises and variations of paganism.

John continues:

"A second angel followed and said, 'Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which made the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries.'

"A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: 'If anyone worships the beast [modern Rome-Babylon] and his image [the Roman Catholic Church, patterned after the "beast"] and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured out full strength into the cup of his wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulphur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever'" (Rev.14:8-12).

God hates this modern Babylonish religious system, which masquerades as His true Church on the earth. He detests and deplors its pagan practices, and its penchant for calling paganism "Christian," and its synthesizing ancient pagan beliefs with the Bible and calling them "holy." This *whole apostate system* is a stench in the nostrils of a Holy God!

God describes this modern religious system as the "daughter" of ancient Babylon. She is characterized as a "great prostitute." John writes of her:

"One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, 'Come, I will show you the punishment of the GREAT PROSTITUTE, who sits on many waters. With her the kings of the earth committed adultery and the inhabitants of the earth were intoxicated with the wine of her adulteries.

"Then the angel carried me away in the Spirit into a desert. There I saw a WOMAN sitting on a scarlet beast that was covered with blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns. The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet,

and was glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls. She held a golden cup in her hand, filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries. This title was written on her forehead:

MYSTERY
BABYLON THE GREAT
THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES
AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH

"I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints
the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus" (Rev.17:1-6).

Do you want to be a part of this evil religious empire, and to suffer the wrath and fury of God? God tells His people to *COME OUT* of this evil religious system, and its pagan beliefs, doctrines, and practices! The doctrine of the "Trinity" is one more of those pagan relics, those pagan superstitions, those pagan beliefs and customs, which the Almighty God condemns! God is not a "Trinity." Rather, as God inspired Moses to record, in the Sh'ma:

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD [Yahveh] our God, the LORD [Yahveh] is *one*. Love the LORD [Yahveh] your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them upon your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates" (Deut.6:4-9).

It is time we forsake the clever errors palmed off on the world by a cunning Devil, and return to the faith once delivered to the saints. As the apostle Jude wrote, "Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and URGE you to *CONTEND FOR THE FAITH* that was once for all entrusted to the saints"(Jude 3). The truth of God has been buried under an avalanche of pagan superstition and fraud, disguised as "Christianity." The great deception was already beginning in the days of the apostle Jude! It is high time we get back to the pure, unadulterated TRUTH!

Jesus Christ said, "Yet a time is coming and has now come when the TRUE worshipers will *worship the Father in spirit and truth*, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God *is* spirit [that is, "spirit" is the very composition of God], and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in *truth*" (John 4:23-24).

Chapter 11

Is The Trinity Doctrine Biblical?

The TRINITY doctrine claims that God is a monolithic "Three-in-One" Godhead composed of three Personalites, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Where did this doctrine come from? Is it Biblical? *Why is the word "Trinity" NOT ONCE found in the Scriptures?* If God is a "Trinity," then which one is really the "Father" of Christ -- the Father? or the Holy Spirit which begot Him? (Matt.1:18, 20.) Its high time we take a careful look at this strange but well-nigh universal doctrine among Catholics and Protestants! Your own salvation could very well be at stake!!!

In the gospel according to Matthew, we read of the birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Matthew relates, under divine inspiration, "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found *with child of the Holy Spirit* " (Matt.1:18). Joseph, her husband, feared the worst -- that she must have been with another man, so he decided to cancel the nuptial agreement and cancel the betrothal, but an angel of God appeared to him in a dream, saying to him, "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for *that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit* " (verse 20).

This matter-of-fact statement of Scripture poses a mind-boggling conundrum for believers in the Trinity doctrine, who profess that God is a divine "Trinity." If that is true, and the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three Persons or Personalities, which together combine to form ONE "God," then *how could God the "Father" be the Father of Christ when he was conceived by the HOLY SPIRIT?*

If the Holy Spirit is a Person, the "Third Person" of the Trinity, and "HE" begat Christ, then HE would have to be the FATHER!!!

What a mystery! What a mind-twisting, head-wrenching, brain-teasing spiritual HEAD-ACHE for all believers in the "Trinity"!

A New Look at the Trinity Doctrine

Throughout his ministry, Herbert Armstrong taught vehemently that the Bible does NOT teach the doctrine of the "Trinity." Years ago, around 1962-63, in the first article I ever had published in the *Plain Truth* magazine, I wrote a "Question Box" article proving and showing that the verse in I John 5:7 is spurious, was not in the original manuscripts of the Bible, but was added by a monk or copyist in the Middle Ages, first appearing in a Latin text! All Bible scholars are agreed upon this point, today -- it is not even controversial -- and modern translations of the Bible leave this fake verse out!

Isn't it strange -- if the Trinity is such an important concept, as Catholics and Protestant churches believe, who claim it is a major tenet and article of their faith -- then why doesn't the Bible refer to the "Trinity" concept clearly, and why is the word "Trinity" NOWHERE found in Scripture?

The doctrine of the Trinity is so important to mainstream "Christianity," that according to some theologians,

"The mind of man cannot fully understand the mystery of the Trinity. He who would try to understand the mystery fully will lose his mind. But he who would deny the Trinity will lose his soul" (Harold Lindsell and Charles J. Woodbridge, *A Handbook of Christian Truth*, p.51-52).

The *New Catholic Encyclopedia* admits,

"It is difficult, in the second half of the 20th century, to offer a clear, objective, and straightforward account of the revelation, doctrinal evolution, and the theological elaboration of the mystery of the Trinity. Trinitarian discussion, Roman Catholic as well as other, present a somewhat *unsteady silhouette* " (vol.XIV, p.295).

Asserts *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*,

"The term 'Trinity' is NOT A BIBLICAL TERM, and we are *not using Biblical language when we define what is expressed by it as the doctrine* " (article "Trinity," p.3012).

This fact has caused no end of embarrassment to Trinitarian theologians over the years. Search as you might, you will NOWHERE find the concept or doctrine of the "Trinity" delineated or discussed in the Bible. The apostles never heard of it. Jesus Christ never referred to it. The apostle Paul not so much as mentioned it even *once* in passing! It is simply not there. The word isn't there, and the concept of three divine Persons being "one God," "Three-in-One," each one being co-equal, and co-eternal, simply cannot be found stated or clearly implied in Scripture -- not from Genesis to

Revelation!!!

Doesn't that sound strange, that such a cardinal "Christian" belief and tenet of modern Churchianity is *NOWHERE* taught in Scripture?

In a book entitled *The Trinity*, Catholic theologian Karl Rahner confesses that theologians in the past have been

"... embarrassed by the simple fact that IN REALITY the Scriptures DO NOT EXPLICITLY PRESENT a doctrine of the 'imminent' TRINITY ..." (*The Trinity*, p. 22, emphasis mine throughout article).

Theologians have long puzzled over the first few verses of the gospel of John. We read, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us . . ." (John 1:1-3, 14).

This passage clearly delineates TWO Persons in the God-head -- the Word, or "Logos" of God, in the Greek language, and the One whom we refer to as the "Father." But *if the Holy Spirit is a Third Person of the Godhead, then WHY ISN'T HE MENTIONED in this verse?*

Says Dr. William Newton Clarke about this passage, "*There is no Trinity in this; but there is a distinction in the Godhead, a DUALITY in God*" (*Outline of Christian Theology*, p.167).

As we explore this subject further, the mysteries only deepen and intensify. For example, the Trinity doctrine teaches that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all co-equal and co-eternal -- none is superior to the other -- each and all three are equally "GOD" in every respect. But if this is true, then this very belief makes Jesus Christ Himself out to be a LIAR, for He said plainly, "My Father is *greater than I*" (John 14:28). In His last recorded prayer to the Father, Jesus prayed, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee *the only true God*, and Jesus Christ, whom *thou hast sent*" (John 17:3).

The Teachings of Christ Himself

Clearly, Jesus looked upon the Father as GREATER than He Himself! He continually said that the Father "sent" Him (John 5:24, 30, 36, 37; 6:38, 39, 40, 44, 57; 7:18, 28, 29, 33; 8:16, 18, 26, 29, 42, etc.). On one occasion, He said plainly, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him" (John 13:16). Obviously, the master is greater than the servant, and the sender is greater than the one sent! Therefore, Jesus taught that the Father is SUPREME in the Godhead! The doctrine that Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all "co-equal" is false! And when this cornerstone of the Trinity doctrine falls, then the Trinity doctrine itself crumbles into dust!

Making this truth even more plain, the apostle Paul declared, "But to us there is but ONE GOD, THE FATHER, of whom are all things, and we in him; and ONE LORD JESUS CHRIST, by whom are all things, and we by him" (I Cor.8:6). Clearly, in the Godhead there is a distinction between the Father, who is Supreme, and Jesus Christ, who is lesser! Both are "God," as John wrote in John 1:1-3, but the *FATHER IS SUPREME!*

If we were to liken or compare God to a human corporation, we might say that the Father is the "Chairman of the Board of Directors," who has final authority in all things, and Jesus Christ is the "Executive Officer," or "Executive Vice-President"!

In even plainer language, Paul declared of the plan of God and the coming resurrection, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ Jesus shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the *firstfruits*; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. *Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom TO GOD, EVEN THE FATHER.* . . . And when all things shall be subdued unto him, *then shall the Son also himself be subject unto HIM THAT PUT ALL THINGS UNDER HIM [that is, the FATHER!], that GOD may be all in all* " (I Cor.15:22-28).

Isn't this plain? There is NO ROOM in these Scriptures for the so-called "TRINITY" doctrine, as it is taught by Protestants and Catholics, at all!

The prophet Daniel recorded, "I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man [Jesus Christ] came with the clouds of heaven, and *came to the ANCIENT OF DAYS*, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him [to Christ, by the Father] dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Dan.7:13-14). Isn't it clear which is greater? Obviously, the FATHER is the greatest in the kingdom -- in the entire Universe! Christ Jesus, who was the "Word" of God, and who sits now at the Father's right hand, is SECOND-IN-COMMAND!

The Trinity -- the FOUNDATION of Catholicism!

This teaching is very clear in the Bible. Unfortunately, it flies right smack in the face of the traditional, conventional "Trinity" doctrine of the Protestant-Catholic world! Truly, Satan the devil is the one which "DECEIVETH the *whole world* " (Rev.12:9; 20:10).

But why would the Devil seek to deceive people as to the very nature of the Godhead? Why does he even care? Why is it important to him -- what does he get out of it? WHY does the WHOLE WORLD, deceived by Satan, believe in the TRINITY doctrine?

According to the *Catholic Encyclopedia*,

"This [the Trinity doctrine] the Church teaches, is the revelation regarding God's nature which Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came upon earth to deliver to the world: and which she [the Catholic Church] proposes to man as the *FOUNDATION of the whole dogmatic system.* "

But isn't it surpassingly strange that IF Jesus Christ came upon earth for the major purpose to REVEAL THE TRINITY, *WHY is it He never said ONE WORD about it?!!*

Yet the Catholic Church makes this doctrine the pivotal doctrine of ALL faith and practice. And Protestants concur. If you don't subscribe to this ONE DOCTRINE, they consider you to be a HERETIC! Cursed of God! Anathema from Christ!

The Incredible True ORIGIN of the "Trinity"

The historical truth is that it was several hundred years AFTER the time of Jesus Christ and the apostles before the TRINITY doctrine became a part of Catholic dogma. It was during the last twenty-five years of the convulsive fourth century that "what might be called the definitive trinitarian dogma 'one God in three persons' became thoroughly assimilated into Christian [sic] life and thought" (see the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, article "Holy Trinity").

Interestingly, however, although the "Trinity" doctrine is nowhere mentioned in Scripture, and is totally without Scriptural basis or proof, it has become the rock-solid core doctrine of the professing "Christian" world. It is also interesting to note that a belief in the "Trinity" was a very COMMON DOCTRINE among the ancient PAGAN NATIONS, long before "Christianity" in its modern garb appeared on the scene!

Hasting's Bible Dictionary points out:

"Although the notion of a Triad or Trinity is a characteristic of the Christian religion, it is by no means peculiar to it. In Indian religion, e.g., we meet with the trinitarian group of BRAHAM, SIVA, and VISNU; and the Egyptian religion with the trinitarian group of OSIRIS, ISIS, and HORUS, constituting a divine family, like the Father, Mother and Son in medieval Christian pictures. Nor is it only in historical religions that we find God viewed as a Trinity. One recalls in particular the Neo-Platonic view of the Supreme or Ultimate Reality, which was suggested by PLATO" (vol.12, p.458).

Writes James Bonwick in *Egyptian Belief and Modern Thought*,

"Though it is usual to speak of the Semitic tribes as monotheistic; yet it is an undoubted fact that *more or less ALL OVER THE WORLD the deities are in TRIADS.* This rule applies to eastern and western hemispheres, to north and south. Further, it is observed that, in some mystical way, the triad of three persons is one. . . . The definition of Athanasius [fourth century theologian] who lived in Egypt, applied to the TRINITIES OF ALL HEATHEN RELIGIONS" (p.396).

Athanasius was the Catholic scholar and theologian of the fourth century who first formulated and delineated the Trinitarian doctrine for the Church. His teaching was adopted and embraced by the Roman Catholic Church at the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D. The thinking of Athanasius and his cohorts was strongly influenced by Plato's philosophy. Thus the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity does not come from the Bible at all, but from PAGAN PHILOSOPHERS and was strongly influenced by PAGAN RELIGIONS!

Admits the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, article "Trinity,"

"There is recognition on the part of exegetist and Biblical theologians, including a constantly growing number of Roman Catholics, that one should not speak of Trinitarianism in the New Testament without serious qualification. There is also the closely parallel recognition -- that when one does speak of unqualified Trinitarianism, one has MOVED FROM THE PERIOD OF CHRISTIAN ORIGINS to say, *THE LAST QUADRANT OF THE FOURTH CENTURY*. It was only then that what might be called the definitive Trinitarian dogma 'one God in three persons' became thoroughly assimilated into Christian life and thought" (vol.14, p.295).

At the Nicean Council in 325 A.D. the doctrine of the Trinity was formally adopted by the Church in the Roman Empire, with headquarters at Rome. Convoled by Emperor Constantine, the main purpose of the Council was to bring CHURCH UNITY. Constantine believed that a strong, unified Church would help him unify the fraying remains of the Empire.

Writes Will Durant in *The Story of Civilization*,

"Christianity did not destroy paganism; it adopted it. The Greek mind, dying, came to a transmigrated life in the theology and liturgy of the Church . . . the Greek mysteries passed down into the impressive mystery of the Mass. Other pagan cultures contributed to the syncretist result. *From Egypt came the ideas of a DIVINE TRINITY* . . . Christianity was the last great creation of the ancient pagan world" ("Caesar and Christ," vol. 3, p.595).

How did these pagan concepts creep into the far-flung Church? Will Durant explains:

". . . the Church felt the need of unity; it could not safely allow itself to be divided into a hundred feeble parts by every wind of intellect, by disloyal heretics, ecstatic prophets, or brilliant sons. Celsus himself had sarcastically observed that Christians were 'split up into ever so many factions, each individual desiring to have his own party.' About 187 Irenaeus listed twenty varieties of Christianity; about 384 Epiphanius counted eighty. *At every point foreign ideas were creeping into Christian belief . . .*" (*ibid.*, p.616).

As the centuries passed, the power of Rome grew. "By the middle of the third century the position and resources of the papacy were so strong that Decius vowed he would rather have a rival emperor at Rome than a pope" (p.618). Durant goes on:

"It was not merely that the Church took over some religious customs and forms common in pre-Christian Rome -- the stole and other vestments of pagan priests, the use of incense and holy water in purifications, the burning of candles and an everlasting light before the altar, the worship of the saints, the architecture of the basilica, the LAW OF ROME as the basis of canon law, the title of *Pontifex Maximus* for the Supreme Pontiff, and, in the fourth century, the Latin language as the noble and enduring vehicle of Catholic ritual. THE ROMAN GIFT WAS ABOVE ALL A VAST FRAMEWORK OF GOVERNMENT, which, as secular authority failed, became the STRUCTURE OF ECCLESIASTICAL RULE. . . .

"The Roman Church followed in the footsteps of the Roman state; it conquered the provinces, beautified the capital, and established discipline and unity from frontier to frontier. *Rome died in giving birth to the Church . . .*" (p.618-619).

What about the Trinity doctrine? This doctrine did not become formulated in professing Christianity until the Nicean Council of 325 A.D., a council convoked by Emperor Constantine because the unity of the Church, and even of the Empire, seemed to be threatened by a hot new schism and dispute over the nature of God and Christ which had arisen. The most challenging crisis in the history of the Church arose because about 318 a priest named Arias from the Egyptian town of Baucalis startled his bishop with a new and powerful opinion about the nature of Christ.

According to Arias, Christ was not God Himself, but was rather the Logos, the first and highest of all created beings. He argued that if the Son had been begotten by the Father, it must have been in time; the Son therefore could not be "coeternal" with the Father. Arias further reasoned that if Christ were "created," it must have been out of nothing, not from the Father's substance, thus not "consubstantial" with the Father.

These shocking and novel views spread like wildfire among the clergy. Alexander, his bishop, persuaded the Egyptian council to defrock Arias and his followers, but many priests sympathized with Arias throughout Asia, and the cities rang with tumult and disorder, leading Emperor Constantine to involve himself in the fray. Writes Will Durant:

"If Christ was not God, the whole structure of Christian doctrine would begin to crack; and if division were permitted on this question, chaos of belief might destroy the unity and authority of the Church, and therefore its value as an aide to the state. As the controversy spread, setting the Greek East aflame, Constantine resolved to end it by calling the first ecumenical -- universal -- council of the Church. He summoned all

bishops to meet in 325 at Bithynian Nicaea. . . Not less than 318 bishops came, 'attended' says one of them, 'by a vast concourse of the lower clergy'"(*Story of Civilization*, vol.3, p.659).

Constantine himself presided at the opening ceremonies, and appealed to the bishops to restore the unity of the Church. He chaired the meetings, listened to the debates, and even joined in the argument. Countering Arias' view that Christ was a created creature, Athanasius, an eloquent and pugnacious archdeacon, argued that if Christ were created and not of one substance with the Father, polytheism would triumph. He argued that God must be a Trinity, despite the difficulty of understanding how "Three Persons" might be "One." Athanasius, "conceded the difficulty of picturing three distinct persons in one God, but argued that reason must bow to the mystery of the Trinity" (Durant, *ibid.*, p.660).

Eventually, all but two bishops signed a formula put forth by the council declaring that Jesus was "not made, being of one essence with the Father." Those who refused to sign, along with Arias, were anathematized by the Council and exiled by the Emperor. An imperial edict ordered all books written by Arias to be burned and made the concealment of such books a crime punishable by death! The Nicean Council, however, did not settle the controversy. In the ensuing years, more Christians were killed over that doctrine than were killed by all the pagan emperors of Rome!

The *Encyclopedia Britannica*, eleventh edition, says of this Council,

"Finally, the Council marks an epoch in the history of the conception of the Christian religion, in that it was the first attempt to fix the criteria of Christian orthodoxy by means of definitely formulated pronouncements on the content of Christian belief -- the acceptance of these beliefs being made a *sine qua non* of membership in the Church. Moreover, it admitted the principle that the *state might employ the secular arm to bring the Christian subjects of the Roman world empire under the newly codified faith* " ("Nicaea, Council of," vol.19, p.640).

Actually, the majority of bishops at the Council were not inclined to take either side of the controversy, but the bulk of the members occupied a position between the two extremes as set forth by Arias and Athanasius. They did not accept the views of Arias, but neither did they endorse the "Trinitarian" concept of Athanasius. They were neutral in their sentiments. However, the majority eventually acquiesced to the Trinitarian dogma, not due to internal conviction, but because of "indifference," and largely due to "the pressure of the imperial will" of Constantine (*ibid.*, p.641). Eventually this decision, which was to bring unity to the Church, only succeeded in convulsing the whole Empire.

Thus it was that Constantine's fears of the disintegration of the Roman Empire were the real motive behind the legislation at the Nicean Council to force the Church into unity on the question of the Godhead. It was finally decided by the bishops that "the Son was 'of the same substance' with the Father, and *all thought of his being created or even subordinate had to be excluded* " (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, article

"Arias," vol.2, p.543, eleventh edition).

Thus when the Trinity doctrine was embraced by Catholicism in 325 A.D., the very words of Christ Himself that He is subordinate to the Father were rejected as heresy! Dogma replaced Biblical revelation; error was substituted for truth -- on the pain of death to any who disagreed with the new dogma!

The True Plan of God Revealed

The Bible reveals, not a Trinitarian, but a FAMILY relationship in the very Godhead. Many times Jesus and the apostles addressed God as the "Father." When Jesus asked Peter who he believed He was, he answered, "Thou art the Christ [Messiah -- Anointed One], the Son of the living God" (Matt.16:16). The Father-Son relationship is definitely a "FAMILY" relationship! It is also a relationship in which One is clearly superior to the other, although BOTH are of the same kind, or essence.

The Scriptures reveal that the Father used Christ, or the Logos, as the creating agent - the One who created the Universe and everything in it (Col.1:13-17; Heb.1:1-3). The apostle Paul declared, "For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten THEE? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?" (verse 5). It was of the Son that God the Father said, "And let all the angels of God worship him" (v.6). Paul went on, "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O GOD, is for ever and ever . . . Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, EVEN THY GOD, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows" (v.8-9).

Clearly, God the Father is the God of Christ! And Christ is also God, because He is here called God, and the angels are told to worship Him! Does this mean there are TWO "Gods"?

Not at all -- Christ and the Father are perfectly united, as ONE in mind and thought and action. They are One in spirit and action, thought and activity. God is a FAMILY! This is perhaps the greatest revelation that God ever gave to mankind -- and to Herbert Armstrong during this 20th century -- that God the Father is planning a great celestial FAMILY, and Jesus Christ is the "firstborn" into that Family!

Notice this carefully now!

Jesus speaks of us, true Christians, as His brethren, and His children. We read in Hebrews, "But we see Jesus . . . For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing MANY SONS UNTO GLORY, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified ARE ALL OF ONE: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name UNTO MY BRETHREN . . . And again, Behold I and the CHILDREN which God hath given me" (Heb.2:9-13).

Jesus is bringing us to "glory." What glory? "And the glory which thou gavest me *I have given them*; that **THEY MAY BE ONE, even as we are ONE** " (John 17:21).

How astonishing! How remarkable! How incredible! GOD is a FAMILY, and the Father is in the process of *EXPANDING HIS DIVINE FAMILY!!!*

The apostle Paul put it plainly: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the **SONS OF GOD**. . . The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we **ARE** the children of **GOD**: *And if children, then HEIRS; HEIRS OF GOD*, and **JOINT-HEIRS WITH CHRIST**; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also **GLORIFIED TOGETHER**. *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the GLORY which shall be revealed in us* " (Rom.8:14-18).

This incredible TRUTH runs throughout the New Testament as a major theme, yet carefully hidden from the eyes of the blind and foolish. Paul wrote to the Ephesians, "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the **WHOLE FAMILY** in heaven and earth is **NAMED**" (Eph.3:14-15).

To the Philippians, Paul wrote that **CHRIST** "shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto **HIS GLORIOUS BODY**" (Phil.3:21). Christ's body is **DIVINE!** His face shines like the **SUN** in its strength (Rev.1:13-16). *We will have bodies like His -- we will SHINE like He shines in GLORY!*

The apostle John writes, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the **SONS OF GOD**: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, **WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM**; for we shall **SEE** him *as he IS* " (I John 3:1-2).

Notice carefully! We are going to be **JUST LIKE CHRIST -- AND JUST LIKE THE FATHER!** We will literally be "**SONS OF GOD**"! Can't we just believe God's Word?

How precious a thought! How staggering a truth! How dumfounding and mind-boggling a revelation from God! Our true destiny should make us want to leap for joy - - dance pirouettes, and turn summersaults and cartwheels of delirious ecstasy and sublime rapture and delight!

In the book of Genesis we read of the inception of this plan, when God and the Logos said, "**LET US MAKE MAN IN OUR IMAGE, after OUR likeness** " (Gen.1:26). "**So God created man in HIS OWN IMAGE, in the IMAGE OF GOD created he him . . .**" (verse 27).

God first created the human family in His physical image and likeness. After we learn the lessons of obedience to His ways and His laws, and accept Christ as our personal Saviour, and repent of our sins, and are baptized, He promises to **GIVE US** the

Holy Spirit, even as Christ Himself had it (Acts 2:38; 5:32; Gal.2:20). As Christ is "formed" in us as we follow Him and obey Him (Gal.4:19), we grow in spiritual character and begin to form the mind of Christ within us (Phil.2:5). Why is God going to all this trouble?

Notice! The apostle Paul was inspired to explain God's awesome purpose. He wrote, "But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownest him with glory and honour, and did set him over the works of thy hands: Thou has put *ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET*. For in that he put all in subjection under him, *he left NOTHING that is not put under him*. But now we see *NOT YET all things put under him*" (Heb.2:6-8).

Consider this thought carefully. The expression "all things" is also found in Hebrews, chapter 1, where we read of Christ, that God "Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, *whom he hath appointed HEIR OF ALL THINGS*, by whom also he made the worlds" (Heb.1:1-2). Moffatt translates this verse, "But in these days at the end he has spoken to us by a Son -- a Son whom he has appointed *heir of the UNIVERSE . . .*" The expression "all things" means, literally, **EVERYTHING THAT IS -- ALL THE CREATION -- THE UNIVERSE!**

Thus when God says that He has put "all things" under MAN, but we see "NOT YET" ALL these things placed under man, the inference is that in the future, when mankind has qualified, God intends to place him over ALL THE UNIVERSE (Hebrews 2:8)!

Satan's Great Deception -- the Cruel Hoax

The whole world is blind to this sublime, majestic truth. Only the few, the *very few*, really, have even a glimmer of it. The Worldwide Church of God has in recent years *LOST COMPLETELY this precious knowledge!* But why is Satan the devil so desirous of blinding the eyes of mankind to this incredible truth and awesome understanding?

Of course, if mankind understood this truth, then Satan the devil would have a hard time getting the world to worship HIM in place of the true God! If people really knew their potential -- their divine calling -- they might not be so ready to listen to the charms and subtilty of Satan! Therefore, Satan does his level best to HIDE this truth from mankind. He calls it HERESY, and gets his ministers, churches, and servants to blast this truth as cursed "error," heresy, and blasphemous!

But why does Satan even care? Have you ever thought about it? Satan the devil is *JEALOUS!* He knows that today there is no chance for him to ever qualify to become a member of the GOD FAMILY! He disqualified long, long ago -- aeons ago, when he attempted to seize the throne of God *by force!* Isaiah the prophet described that ancient rebellion: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning

[or, morning star!]! how art thou cut down to the ground which didst weaken the nations [of angels -- one third of them followed him in his abortive rebellion -- see Rev.12:4]! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will *exalt my throne ABOVE the stars [angels] of God . . . I WILL BE LIKE THE MOST HIGH* " (Isaiah 14:12-14).

Lucifer was undoubtedly the most beautiful and intelligent of all the beings that God -- the Father and the Logos -- created. God's own word says of him, "Thou sealest up the sun, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering . . . the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee *in the day that thou wast CREATED*. Thou art the ANOINTED CHERUB THAT COVERETH; and I have set thee so . . . Thou wast PERFECT in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, TILL INIQUITY was found in thee . . . Thy heart was lifted up [vain, proud] because of thy beauty . . . I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God; and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire . . ." (Ezek.28:12-17, 16).

These few verses tell us an incredible story. Ages ago, in a remote time and place, God created a spectacular angelic spirit being -- who was to be a shining jewel of His Creation. That premier or prince among the creation was named Lucifer, the "light-bringer." He was designed to be a powerful arch-angel, a highest ranking cherub, a "bringer of light," entrusted with guardianship of the throne of God as a "covering" cherub (compare Ezek.28:14; Exodus 25:10-22). He was to be a "morning star," or "light-bringer." The clear indication is that if he had remained faithful, and served God loyally, in due time God may have made Lucifer part of his Divine Family -- third in authority over the Universe! *But something went wrong!* Something happened, and Lucifer decided that God's way was not for him. When God would not share His throne with Lucifer on Lucifer's terms, he plotted to rebel, and eventually led one third of the angels astray (Rev.12:4).

Do you see the point? Satan seems to have an *obsession* with the concept of a "Trinity." Perhaps he still lusts and pines away for the glory which he once had, and the potential to be THIRD IN THE UNIVERSE! Perhaps aeons ago he envisioned himself as the "Third Person" in the supreme Universe-ruling Godhead -- a sort of divine "Trinity"!

Therefore, after he rebelled, and was cast down to the earth, he set up religions among mankind, leading them to worship him, "the god of this world" (II Cor.4:4), the "prince of the power of the air" (Eph.4:4). And in these religions around the world, he instituted the concept of the TRINITY -- among the Hindus, Babylonians, Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, religions of Northern Europe, Asia Minor, the Middle East, and throughout the inhabited regions of the earth!

Satan lusted and aspired as a cherub to be a part of a Universe-ruling "Trinity." But God rejected his plan and offer. Jesus said, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Luke 10:18). Satan was CAST OUT! Ever since that time, he has nursed a

grudge and grievance against God, and has secretly desired to BE A PART OF A DIVINE TRINITY!

Not only this, but he seeks to be the FINAL "Person" in the Godhead. He knows the Spirit of God is not a "person" but is the POWER of God, the substance of God which fills the Universe (II Tim.1:6-7; Jer.23:23-24; Psa.139:7). An angel told Mary of her conception of the child who was to be the Messiah, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the POWER of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). The Holy Spirit is not a "Person," but the very SUBSTANCE which composes both the Father and the Son -- their Spirit which they share mutually. It fills all space!

But the world's religions consider the "Holy Spirit" to be a Person. That "Person," in Satan's scheme of things, is Satan himself -- a "Spirit Being" who considers himself to be "Holy"! Satan, or Lucifer, sought to be the final member of a divine Trinity. But God rejected his devious, short-sighted, selfish, proud plan, and cast him out of heaven to the earth, to be restrained until the final time of Judgment comes. God, in so doing, revealed that it was NEVER His intention of sealing up the Godhead, or the God-Family. Rather, He created mankind to eventually become as He is -- DIVINE!

Satan desperately doesn't want to you have a part in God's great Plan. He desperately wants you to FAIL -- *as he did!* He wants you to follow him, and disqualify as a potential God Being and member of the God Family! He seeks your everlasting DESTRUCTION!

That is why Satan has "BLINDED THE MINDS of them which believe not, *LEST the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, WHO IS THE IMAGE OF GOD [and we, too, shall be the VERY IMAGE OF GOD, AND HIS LIKENESS!], should shine unto them*" (II Cor.4:4).

As Paul wrote, "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are LOST" (verse 3). Satan had "hid" it. He has blinded the world to this incredible TRUTH! His attitude is, if he can't make it, then NOBODY will make it!

What about you? Do you see how the doctrine of the Trinity is a self-defeating, limiting doctrine which rejects and hides the true awesome plan of God from the eyes of mankind? As Paul wrote, "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the *HIDDEN WISDOM*, which God ordained before the world *unto OUR GLORY*: which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which GOD HATH PREPARED for them that love him. But God hath REVEALED THEM unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (I Cor.2:7-10).

This is precious knowledge. This is PRICELESS truth!

Chapter 12

Were Lucifer and the Logos *Ever “Twins”?*

The Mystery of Lucifer and the Logos

Did the Logos, or One who became Christ, create the one known as Lucifer, whose name was changed to Satan? Did the Logos of God create "ALL things," and would this not have included "Lucifer"? And if that be true, then it follows that Lucifer could not have had the same "rank" as his "Creator" -- and they both would not have been "morning stars." How could they have been "twins" at one time, if one created the other? But if Christ created Lucifer, then why did Christ have to "qualify" to replace him -- couldn't he have just "booted" him out?

Mystery of mysteries! Who created the being known as "Lucifer," who became known later as Satan the devil?

A person wrote to me asking, "Who created Lucifer? Given that the Logos was the first creation of God the Father and that there was nothing (else) created that was not created by him, isn't it logical that the host of angels and Lucifer were created by the Logos? If so, then it follows that Lucifer would not have the same rank as his creator. . . It also becomes a bit difficult to understand why Christ *needed* to qualify to replace a creation of his. He could have easily have kicked him out with his left foot. What is the truth?"

These are excellent questions. In exploring them carefully, we will discover some amazing truths which have been hidden from the prying eyes of the world from the very creation itself!

The letter writer has put his finger on several issues, or problems, about the whole subject of God and Satan, which have never been clarified. These questions need to be

answered -- they pose eternal riddles that must be solved.

As the word of God says, "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honor of kings is to search out a matter" (Prov.25:2). Can we search this matter out and come to a proper understanding?

Or must we remain mystified by apparent "contradictions" in God's Word? What is the truth about this matter? What does the Word of God have to say?

Searching Out the Truth

To begin, let's use the "Benjamin Franklin" approach to this subject -- a true scientist. Let's line up the "evidence" on both sides -- the pro's and the con's. Let's analyze the subject very carefully. But in doing so, we must be very careful that we *don't* prejudice the matter with conclusions or assumptions which may be invalid. Remember, Isaiah was inspired to write: "For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little and there a little" (Isa.28:10). In other words, we must be careful that we look at the WHOLE picture, and not just a small *part* of the evidence!

Did Christ/The Logos create Lucifer? That is the first question the writer asks. Let's analyze this question. But to answer that question, let's look at the many Scriptures which seem to indicate that rather than the Logos being the creator of Lucifer, that they were both created beings of the Father. Notice!

Evidence Christ and Lucifer were Once "Equal"

Proof #1. Christ is called the "bright and morning star" (Rev.22:16) and "day star" (II Pet.1:20).

So is Lucifer (Isa.14:12) -- "O Lucifer" means "O day star" (margin, KJV) Also, he is called "son of the morning," or "morning star" (same verse).

Thus the Scriptures do show that both have or had this same title or rank!

Proof #2. Christ was a created being. He said He was "the beginning of God's creation" (Rev.3:14), and the apostle Paul refers to Him as "the first born of every creature" (Col.1:15). He is referred to as an "Angel" (Acts 7:30, 35, 38). He called the Father "the only true God" (John 17:3) and referred to Him as "Father" (v.1). He said the Father was greater than He (John 14:28). The apostle Paul also verified this truth. He declared: "But to us there is but *one God, the Father*, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him" (I Cor.8:6).

Lucifer also was a great "created being," unlike any other mentioned in the Scriptures (Ezek.28:12), who "sealest up the sum," "full of wisdom," "perfect in beauty" (same verse). God never said this of any other of the angels, archangels, cherubim, or

seraphim! Of no other being is this said, but God Himself, or the Logos. Thus Lucifer was *higher and greater than any other angel or created cherubim or seraphim*. He too was "created" (Ezek.28:13, 15).

Proof #3. The Logos, or Christ, is God's "anointed one" (*Christos* means "anointed one").

Lucifer also, unlike any other created being but Christ, was an "anointed one." God said of him, "Thou art the *anointed* cherub that covereth" (Ezek.28:14). No other being or angel is ever said to be "anointed," except for the Logos, or Christ (Isa.61:1; Heb.1:9; Psa.2:2).

Proof #4. The Logos, we know, was and is a "ruler" of God's creation, "upholding all things by the word of his power" (Heb.1:3).

Lucifer also was (and is) a "ruler" -- unlike any other angel or being mentioned in Scripture, he is "ruler" of the earth and has had a "throne" for aeons on the earth. He said, "I will exalt *my throne*" (Isa.14:13). What other angels has a "throne"? None! He is the ruler of this world (Matt.4:8-9), "prince of the power of the air" (Eph.2:2), the "god of this world" (II Cor.4:4).

Proof #5. There are only TWO "anointed" cherubim that "covered" the Ark, which represented the throne of God the Father (Exo.25:18-20). Not three or four cherubim. Thus out of all the cherubim God created, there were at least "four" that Ezekiel saw (Ezekiel 1:5;10:10, 20). But there were only TWO special cherubims that were "anointed" and covered the throne of God as guardians -- these two cherubim were TWINS!

Proof #6. The "mercy seat" is the seat of God, God the Father -- a type of His Throne. Today, Christ sits at His right hand, since He arose from the dead. Notice that these two cherubim, *and only they -- nothing else* -- are made *of gold* out of the *mercy seat itself* -- all of one part (Exo.25:18-19). "And he made two cherubims of gold, *beaten out of one piece . . . out of the MERCY SEAT made he the cherubims . . .*" (Exo.37:7-8).

What does this enigmatic statement tell us? It seems very puzzling. Why were the two cherubim *made out of the same ESSENCE as the mercy seat, which represents God the Father?* Could this show not only that these two beings were made "from" the Father's own essence? And that they were "pro-created" from His own being? That is, they were His "first-born" of all creation?

Keep this puzzling fact in your mind as we further explore into this baffling mystery of the ages!

Proof #7. The day of atonement contains a ceremony in which two identical goats were chosen -- one "for the LORD" (which is sacrificed to atone for our sins), the other the "Azazel" goat -- the goat "for departure" or ""for complete removal" (KJV

margin), a representation of "Lucifer" or "Satan."

Notice -- both are chosen at random, and lots are cast over them. One makes an atonement for sin (Lev.16:9), the other is cast out into the wilderness (v.10; compare Rev.20:1-2). Both goats are similar -- equal -- just "goats." But in this ceremony, *these equal or similar goats are chosen, one to represent Christ, one to represent Lucifer.* Again, this implies a certain "likeness" between them -- an "equality" or "similarity" at one time.

Proof #8. When Christ was crucified, as our Atonement, as the true "SON OF GOD," at that very same time another man was set free who deserved to be put to death. When Christ, the "Son of God," was killed as our Atonement, at the very same time, a criminal/murderer named "Barabbas" was set free. Barabbas was a type of the "Azazel" goat, the one "set free," while Christ, our Redeemer, symbolized as the one chosen "for the Lord," was slain for our sins. The name "Bar-abbas" in Hebrew means, "Bar" -- "son," and "abba," -- "father." That is, Bar-abbas means "SON OF THE FATHER." Thus both were "sons of the Father." Here again, the concept of "twins" comes to the forefront!

Since Bar-abbas was a "son of the Father," does not this imply that Lucifer, whom he represented, was also a "son of the Father"? And since he was set free when Christ was crucified, does this not again imply their "equality" in a sense?

Putting the Evidence Together

This is strong Biblical evidence which implies that the Logos and Lucifer were at one time considered as "equals" -- on the same plane of existence -- of the same heavenly RANK!

In astronomy, the Zodiac contains a constellation known from antiquity as "The Gemini" or "The Twins." Is it not possible that THE GEMINI (HEAVENLY) TWINS, depicted in the Zodiac, are ancient representations of the Logos and Lucifer, depicting a time when they were friends and companions, under the Father, both hovering over His throne as Guardians of the Throne of God?

As we have already seen, both Christ/The Logos and Lucifer were created beings, originally. One later became the TRUE "son" of God, and a co-Creator with the Father, and will ultimately inherit all things (Rom.8:17; Heb.2:8; I Cor.15:27-28). He has qualified for this position and glory by His obedience and faithfulness through aeons of time!

The other, however, became the "evil twin," and disappointed his heavenly Father. He also could have inherited all things with his "brother," if he had been faithful and obedient -- but instead, he rebelled against His Father, he disqualified, and was "disinherited," and "cast out."

As such, he has become the great "enemy" of God and of mankind.

At one time, then, Lucifer had an opportunity to be like the Logos has become -- a co-ruler of the Universe. But pride got in the way, evil entered into his heart, he became greedy and insubordinate, rebellious and full of hate (Ezek.28:15-18). He led *one third* of the angels in rebellion (Rev.12:4). This implies that at one time he was "over" at least one third of all the angels, if not over even half of the angels, and that his personality and persuasiveness was great enough to cause *one third* of all God's angels to follow him instead of the Father and the Logos!

Clearly, Lucifer was no ordinary "cherubim"! Such a SUPER creation of God, with this kind of power and influence, must have been comparable to the Logos at one time.

But his "development" was "arrested" when he turned to evil, whereas the Logos kept on growing in power and authority and ability. His "growth" stopped. His spiritual development took a turn for the worse. Instead of learning how to become a great Creator, he developed the "dark side of the force," and became a great Destroyer!

The Rebellion of Absalom

This heavenly story of what must have occurred aeons ago in the celestial court of Heaven is similar to the story of David and his son Absalom. We read in the Old Testament that Absalom took matters into his own hands, and killed his brother Amnon who had raped his half-sister, and Absalom's sister, Tamar (II Sam.13:1-34). David banished Absalom from the kingdom for this heinous, treacherous act. Absalom never forgave David, although later David forgave him and brought him back into the kingdom.

Absalom, like Lucifer, was renown for his beauty. We read, "But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him" (II Sam.14:25). But Absalom plotted and connived, and cooked up a virulent and powerful conspiracy to usurp David's throne, and seize the kingdom for himself! (II Sam.15:1-10). Lucifer tried that very same sort of thing (Isaiah 14:12-14).

Absalom succeeded in his plot, and David had to flee for his life (II Sam.15:14-30). These were dark days for David and those faithful to him, and for the kingdom of Israel. But Absalom, like Lucifer before him, *stole the hearts* of many man, even as Lucifer deceived and stole the hearts of many of the angels, and one third followed him in his rebellion (Rev.12:4).

Do you see how the Physical is often a Type of the Spiritual Realm? Absalom was *one of king David's own sons!* Yet he rebelled! Even so it must have been painful for God the Father -- one of His very own beloved "sons" -- Lucifer -- rebelled against him, and plotted to seize the kingdom of heaven for himself!

Absalom's rebellion eventually failed, and David regained his throne. But even then his heart went out to his son, Absalom, who had been killed. He wept and mourned, and cried, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would I have died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" (II Sam.18:33).

Truly, God the Father must know pain. Even though He is God, He is most sensitive, full of loving-kindness, and it grieves Him deeply when one of His children goes astray. He mourned and grieved when He saw the wickedness of men upon the earth before the Flood -- "it grieved him at his heart" (Gen.6:6). God is not without feelings. How it must have 'hurt' to see His own created and much-loved son "Lucifer" turn on him, and savagely attack Him, and seek to seize His throne! Can we even begin to imagine the grief and sorrow and pain He must have felt?

Christ Qualified to be King and Saviour

How much the true "success story" of the Logos must have rejoiced His heart! Jesus Christ, that is, the Logos, was willing to obey His Father, and risk everything, and become a human being, so that He could suffer pain, and temptation, and resist sin, and abase Himself to even die for our sins, even so shameful a death as crucifixion! (John 1:14; Phil.2:5-9; Heb.12:1-4). In order to redeem us to God, and bring us back out of Satan's domain, He had to "pay" the penalty we had incurred for all our sins. He had to *qualify to become our Saviour, and to pay the price for our sins. He had to live a perfect, righteous, sinless life, so He could give His life in exchange for ours!* He was then resurrected, and now sits at the right hand of God as our High Priest (Heb.1:3; 3:1, 8:1).

But Christ/the Logos first had to be "perfected" through sufferings (Heb.2:10), He had to overcome temptation (Heb.4:15). He had to "learn obedience" through what He suffered (Heb.5:7-8). Through this process, He was "made perfect" (Heb.2:10, 5:8). Thus He had to *qualify to replace Satan* -- to "save" mankind from Satan's grasp and evil influence -- to "remove" Satan from being our lord and master!

As the letter writer pointed out, IF Christ had been the Creator of Satan, or Lucifer, in the first place, *then why would He have had to qualify to replace him?* That makes no sense. If He was his creator, He could simply have "replaced" him by kicking him out and taking over!

This fact alone, therefore, testifies to the truth that Christ was NOT the creator of Satan or Lucifer. Rather, He was indeed at one time comparable to Him – as it were, like his brother or his "Twin" brother – early in their lives, in the beginning. Both had to "prove" themselves over time and experience to be faithful. The Logos did that, but Lucifer failed. Nevertheless, he had much power and government which had been given to him. Christ/The Logos therefore had to "qualify" to replace him as ruler of this earth and to complete the Plan of God, of bringing many "sons" to glory, into the Family of God! Only by coming to the earth, becoming a Man, and living a perfect life and dying for our sins, could He accomplish this awesome Plan.

But long ago, it was the Father -- not Christ or the Logos -- who put Lucifer in charge of the earth, and gave him a throne upon it! To replace him as King over the world, the Logos/Christ had to defeat him and overcome him (Matt.4:1-4; Luke 4:1-4), and then give His life to make it possible for mankind to be brought back out of subjection to the Devil and his government, and to qualify to enter into the Kingdom of God!

The Son of God Died, Lucifer Must Die

We know that God became human flesh, and died for our sins -- the Messiah gave up His divinity, became a human being, so that He could suffer death for all mankind (Phil.2:5-11). He died for us that we might live through Him (II Cor.5:21). "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that he by the grace of God should suffer taste death for every man" (Heb.2:9).

The Scriptures also show that Lucifer -- Satan the devil -- will eventually suffer the death penalty for his sins. But for him there will be no resurrection! As Paul wrote, "For the wages of sin is DEATH" (Rom.6:23). The devil, Satan, will be turned into ashes, and perish in the final "death" -- the lake of fire (Matt.25:41). Christ Himself will eventually "destroy him that had the power over death, *that is, the devil*" (Heb.2:14).

Lucifer himself will exist no more! God says, "I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee" (Ezek.28:17). "Therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall *devour thee*, and I will *bring thee to ASHES* upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be [exist] any more" (v.18-19).

So here again, we see a parallel. Christ, the Logos, became flesh, and DIED. Lucifer, that great spirit being of Rebellion, the Enemy of God, will also perish, and taste death -- but he will do so forever!

Putting ALL the Scriptures Together

When we put all this together, it all begins to come together like a giant jigsaw puzzle, with all the pieces fitting into place. It is a glorious picture. The history of the universe, and the original rebellion of Lucifer, and how he was able to convince one third of the angels to follow him in rebellion, begins to make more sense!

The fact that Christ had to come to this earth, and qualify to become our Saviour, and had to battle Satan and resist him and conquer him (Matt.4:1-11), begins to make more sense. Such a battle would have been unnecessary if Christ had been Lucifer's creator! It would have made no sense. It would have been mere "window-dressing."

But that battle was REAL! Make no mistake about it! Christ could have failed --

He could have slipped up, sinned, and disqualified to be our Saviour! But HE DID NOT! He fought, resisted, and overcame Satan the devil! He overcame, on the spiritual battlefield, the one who had been His at one time during their lives his own "twin brother" – one like him in many respects – before He became the full Son of God and like the Father in every way!

For a fuller explanation of the Logos, write for our articles “The Origin of the Logos and Lucifer,” “Who or What Was Jesus Christ Before His Human Birth?,” “The Only True God,” “Did Christ Pre-Exist?” and “Was Jesus Christ Created?”

But wait a minute. What about those other Scriptures, which I have not yet explained, or attempted to explain, which imply that Christ/The Logos was CREATOR of "ALL" things? Did that include Lucifer?

Everything I have written so far indicates that Christ/The Logos did not create Lucifer, but God the Father did! "But," I can just hear the questions coming, "But, but, but --"???

Now let's look at those other Scriptures, and see if perhaps we have MISUNDERSTOOD them! Have we allowed preconceived ideas to lead us to false assumptions and conclusions?

The Other Side of the Picture

But what are the verses which many may think militate against this conclusion? What are the "con's" -- the passages of Scripture which would seemingly belie this picture, or render it invalid? Let's take a very careful look at them, and see what they really say, and what they *don't* say!

The arguments against this scenario essentially boil down to one argument only. Once we see the proof and understand that the Logos Himself was a created being, originally, and did not always "co-exist" with the "Father" as a second and "co-equal" member of the God Family, then our minds can be more open to realize that since God the Father created or pro-created ONE heavenly "Son," what was to stop Him from creating *two*? And, if it had worked out, three, four, five, six, or even more? Why did He stop at "two"? Let's understand!

The major argument against the Logos and Lucifer once having been "celestial twins," boils down to this: If the Logos was involved in the creation of EVERYTHING - - the whole creation of angels and the universe -- then didn't He also create Lucifer? And if He created Lucifer, then isn't the Creator more powerful than that which he creates? How could the creator be the "twin" of His own creation? Obviously, that doesn't make much sense! Would He create His own "twin"?

Now let us analyze this idea carefully. Let's try not to reason ourselves into a loop, or use circular reasoning. Let's analyze carefully all those statements which refer to

the Logos as the Creator. What are they *really* saying? Let's not "jump to conclusions," as many seem eager to do on this subject! Let's patiently explore the evidence with an OPEN and sincere mind.

Remember, ALL the Scriptures must fit together like fingers in a glove, perfectly. To rephrase a famous defense attorney, "If the glove doesn't fit, we must acquit!" But if the glove does fit, then we must be willing to change our previous ideas and beliefs -- no matter how hard it may be! Jesus Christ pointed out, "The Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). He also said, "Thy word is TRUTH" (John 17:17). So let's look at the Word of God very carefully on this issue, before we draw any conclusions, or say "it just can't be"! The EVIDENCE is all that matters -- not our presumptions, opinions, or emotionally biased feelings!

The apostle Paul wrote, "ALL scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Tim.3:16-17).

So what about those two passages of Scripture which seem to imply that Christ/The Logos created Lucifer? Have we properly understood those passages?

Notice!

We read in John: "*All things* were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:2).

Paul adds in Colossians: "For by him were *all things* created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him" (Col.1:16).

What do these statements, which seems so clear, REALLY MEAN? First of all, what is meant by the expression, "ALL things"?

What Does "ALL THINGS" Mean?

Let us notice carefully a comparable scripture in the book of Romans.

Paul tells us, in the book of Romans: "*ALL* Israel shall be saved" (Rom.11:26). What does "ALL" mean? Does this mean every last person who was or is an "Israelite" shall be saved -- EVERYONE -- no exceptions? Is Paul here teaching "UNIVERSAL salvation"?

Not at all!

Jesus Christ said to the Pharisees, who were of Israel, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how shall ye escape the damnation of hell [Gehenna fire]?" (Matt.23:33).

Paul himself was concerned lest he himself should fall away from the truth of God, and become a "castaway" (I Cor.9:27).

The apostle John writes in the book of Revelation: "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. *This is the second death.* And *whosoever* was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev.20:14-15).

John adds, in another place: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Rev.21:8).

How clear it is, then! "All" does not necessarily mean literally, absolutely "all," as we think of it in English! Thus "ALL" Israel does not mean every single last one of all Israelites will be "saved." Not at all! Those who are wicked will be JUDGED cast into the lake of fire! What Paul means when he says "ALL" Israel, then, is "*the vast majority*" -- the "*overwhelming preponderance.*" But he does *not* mean "all" in the sense of "every last one." Not at all!

Let's consider another example. What does it mean that Christ will rule over "*all things*"?

We read in I Corinthians: "For he [the Father] hath put ALL under his [Christ's] feet. But *when he sayeth ALL things are put under him, it is manifest that HE IS EXCEPTED which did put ALL things under him*" (I Cor.15:27). "And when ALL things shall be subdued unto him, then shall *the Son also himself be subject unto him that put ALL things under him . . .*" (v.28).

Let's analyze this statement. In this passage, we clearly see that there is an EXCEPTION made to the "all things" mentioned which will be under Christ. Paul plainly says the FATHER will not be under Christ's feet -- He is an "exception" to the "ALL things" which will be under Christ! Isn't that plain as clear crystal?

Thus whenever we read the expression "all things," we must not jump to conclusions, and think that such an expression "settles the matter" once and for all! It simply does not. This expression in many cases must not and cannot be taken *literally!* In this case, ALL THINGS will be under the rule of Jesus Christ, Yeshua the Messiah -- but that clearly does not include "ALL" things, for it does not include the Father Himself! He is an "exception"!

This shows us plainly that *there can be "exceptions" when we read of "all" things!*

What Does "ALL" Really Mean?

How, then, does this principle apply to "creation"? And to the creation of

"Lucifer"?

Simply this! When the Logos created "all things" -- that does not and cannot mean literally everything. In fact, we *know* He did not create "all things." First, He did NOT *create the Father!* Second, He did not create *Himself!* Therefore, "all things" obviously excludes both the Father, and Himself!

Thirdly, based on the evidence we see in Scripture which we have already discussed in this article, He did not create Lucifer!

These are the three logical exceptions! If there are any other exceptions, the Word of God does not tell us about them.

Thus the word "all" means "the vast overwhelming majority of things," or, "the preponderance of things," or "most everything," but does not necessarily mean *everything!* It would appear that Lucifer is an exception, because he was created with the Logos by the Father at the earliest of times, before the rest of the angels were made. He, like the Logos or Christ, was also "a morning star," "bright star of the dawn," "an anointed one," had a "throne," and held awesome power unlike that of any other angel!

Thus the exceptions to the statement that the Logos/Christ created "all things" would have been the Father, Christ or the Logos Himself, and Lucifer, who was evidently created by the Father at about the same time the Logos was created. Thus when Paul speaks of "all things" being created by Christ, this expression *would simply exclude anything not created by Him, such as the Father, Himself, and Lucifer, who was created at about the same time He was!*

How Many "Creations" Were There?

On the other hand, there is another fact which we must consider:

The expression "all things" could also be a *limited reference* that only refers to all the things that are included in THE FINAL CREATION. In other words, there must have been a "PRIOR creation" to the present one, and Lucifer and the Logos were part of that prior, primordial creation! Notice!

The Scriptures declare, "In *a beginning* God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen.1:1). The Hebrew does not contain the article "the." Also in John 1:1, it literally reads, "In *a beginning* was the Word" -- again, not "the beginning," as the King James says.

How many "beginnings" were there? Or, to put it another way, how many "creations" did God create?

Judging by the Hebrew and the Greek language, and the evidence of Scripture, there was definitely more than "one" beginning, and more than one "creation." Looking

at Scriptural evidence, as well as the vast realm of geology and paleontology, there have been several periods of "Creation." What does the Word of God tell us about the different creations?

1) First, we know there was the creation of the Logos. That would be Creation #1. Thus Christ was the "first born of all creation" (Col.1:15), "the beginning of the creation of God" (Rev.3:14). This creation could have included Lucifer, as His "twin," but Lucifer isn't mentioned as part of this creation *because he disqualified and disgraced himself!*

2) There was the creation of the angels, who were made before the physical universe, because they rejoiced to see the physical universe created. God says of them to Job, "Where was thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? . . . When the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God [angels] shouted for joy?" (Job 38:4-7). The rest of the angels would have been "creation #2" -- and Christ, the Logos, helped the Father create them according to the New Testament (John 1:1-3; Col.1:15-16).

3) There was the creation of the present Universe -- the stars, planets, and galaxies -- the heavens and earth (Gen.1:1). This would be the *third creation* -- the "third beginning."

This creation may have been millions or billions of years ago -- we do not know for sure when it occurred. However, we do know that after it took place, Lucifer rebelled and led his angels into cosmic warfare. This was the true "star wars" of ancient cosmological history! He and his angels caused massive destruction and devastation throughout the earth, and solar system, when Lucifer rebelled! The result was *tohu va vohu* -- chaos and waste (Gen.1:2).

The earth "became" desolate and uninhabited, due to the destruction caused by the cosmic "star wars" that occurred! This fateful cataclysm may have occurred at the time of the massive dying off of the dinosaurs, estimated by geologists to have occurred perhaps 60 million years ago. Of course, their "timetable" could be very inaccurate, as well. However, there is evidence that a massive asteroid struck the earth, in the region of the Yucatan peninsula of Mexico, which caused incredible destruction of life forms around the world. Was that the time Lucifer led his angels in an attack on God's throne, after a long time of discontent and seething jealousy built up in his heart and mind? Was that when he finally "rebelled" and led one third of the angels on a very destructive course?

However, in the original universe, God did not originally create the cosmos that way. He created it beautiful, and lovely. He created it "not in vain" [*tohu*] (Isa.45:18). After this cosmic destruction, there was a period of darkness upon the earth (Gen.1:2-3). But then God began another "creation."

4) Genesis 1:3-31, beginning with the "first day," then, depicts a NEW creation -- the *FOURTH "creation."* This was a NEW creation -- actually, a period of vast "re-

creation." This new creation occurred in seven literal days when God "renewed" the face of the earth (compare Psalm 104:30).

Thus we see at least *four periods of "Creation"* mentioned or alluded to in the Scriptures. We know very little about the period of creation of the Logos, or Lucifer, or the "angels." That period of creation may well not have been "instantaneous" at all, but could have comprised a long period of time, when God, with the Logos, created the angels. What part Lucifer would have served in that period we do not know. Remember, however, that he is depicted as one of two "anointed" cherubim which "guard" the throne of God! He must have had great authority and presence to hold such a vital position!

During the creation of the angels, God created vast numbers of them. We know, for example, that there are billions of such creatures -- a "thousand thousand [million]" and "ten thousand times ten thousand [one hundred million]" (Dan.7:9-10).

How long did it take God and the Logos to create these spirit beings? Time, as we know it, did not exist then, for there were still no heavens and earth!

After this, we come to Genesis 1:1, where we read, "In the beginning [or, "a" beginning] God [*Elohim*, a uni-plural word which literally means, "The Mighty Ones"] created the heavens and the earth." Thus we see that the Father and the Logos created the physical universe. This fact is further verified by the statement in Genesis 1:26, where God says, "Let US make man in OUR image, after OUR likeness." God was not the "absent-minded professor" who was talking to Himself! This was the Father, speaking to the Son or the Logos!

Mankind, therefore, was made in the physical and mental "image" and "likeness" of the Logos and the Father, only composed of the dust of the ground (Gen.2:6). How interesting! God stopped creating "sons" in His spiritual image with the Logos, and Lucifer. Why did He stop? Because one of them, Lucifer, turned into a "spoiled brat" and rebelled against his Father!

At this point, then, God the Father devised a NEW PLAN. Rather than create "sons" of spirit, which could rebel and throw -- or lead -- the whole of Creation into a paroxysm of violence and destruction, He began creating new "sons" in His "image" out of dust of the ground. (Gen.1:26). This way He could work with them, educate them, teach them the right way to go, and give them His Torah -- His Laws and commandments -- that are the way to LIFE! This way He could observe them, as they develop their "character" on earth, during a short span of time. Those who "rebelled," like Lucifer, could be cast into a lake of fire and destroyed, without any harm coming to the rest of the Creation!

Do we begin to glimpse the awesomeness of God's Plan?

But now let's get back to the story of Creation.

We can conclude that the Logos, a created or pro-created Son of God, had qualified to become a Co-Creator with the Father when the angels were made. We read, "for by him [Christ, the Logos] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers . . ." (Col.1:16). This would obviously include the angelic beings in heaven and earth! However, as we have just seen, this passage of Scripture, speaking of "all things," would be a reference to the PRESENT CREATION, and is not even discussing the prior creation to that of the angels! It would not even be referring, then, to Lucifer, who was part of a prior "creation"!

This and similar passages, then, do not "prove" or necessarily state that the Logos created Lucifer! This statement is simply a general, over-all kind of statement of fact, such as "All Israel will be saved." It is a statement of fact *referring to all things of a later Creation*. It is not even taking under consideration the "first creation" period when the Logos, and apparently Lucifer, were created as the "two cherubim" that covered the Ark - - the Throne of God -- in heaven! It clearly therefore does not prove that Lucifer was created by the Logos!

Obviously, "*all things*" here *do not include the Father. Nor do "all things" include the Son*. Since many Scriptures imply that the Logos had a "twin," whom the Father created about the same time as the Logos, then this statement would also automatically exclude that "twin."

What about TWINS?

Therefore, when all this evidence is put together, we find that originally, there was ONE GOD -- THE "ANCIENT OF DAYS" (Dan.7:9-10).

At some point, then, He began to create. He created the Logos (the "firstborn" of all creation). The fact that there was a "first-born" implies that God also intended to create MORE -- at least one more -- like Him, or a "second born"! But why create only "one"? Why not "two," or "three," or more?

Notice! At the beginning of the human race, Adam and Eve had "Cain and Abel" (Gen.4:1) -- TWO SONS, or TWINS! Was this a human "*type*" of what had already occurred in heaven, long, long ago, in the Father's own family?

However, we do not need to *literally* think of the Logos and Lucifer as "twins." They were evidently not "identical twins," but more on the line of "fraternal" twins. One would have been created before the other, but very close together in time sequence, probably. They were not both alike in every way -- there were differences between them. Evidently, judging by the description given in Ezekiel 28, Lucifer was the "best-looking," or most "beautiful" of the two -- "perfect in beauty" (see Ezekiel 28:12). Yet this overpowering "beauty" was a source of temptation which led to pride and conceit (v.17). His own "brightness" led to his later corruption (same verse).

Consider this possibility, also. Even as Cain was the first twin, before Abel, and Esau was the "elder" twin who was born before his brother Jacob, so it is even possible that Lucifer was originally the first twin, followed by the Logos! But he "disqualified" himself because of his attitude from being the "firstborn." He, like Esau, apparently "despised" his "birthright," and lost title to it when he rebelled against his own Father/Creator!

As Cain was "born" before Abel, so Lucifer may have been "born" before the Logos. But, like Cain, he turned into a murderer. And as a result, he was "disinherited"!

Esau also was born before his brother Jacob, and was his "fraternal twin," but he also turned into a murderer and a bully. So much so that God said, "Was not Esau Jacob's brother? yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau" (Malachi 1:2-3). Esau's violent nature and uncontrolled temper finally led to his ruination. Was this not also a parallel of what happened to Lucifer, aeons before?

Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, but it appears that Shem was the younger -- yet the "right of birth" goes through him, and he became reckoned as the "firstborn" *because he was righteous*. Jacob's literal "firstborn" was Reuben, but he *disqualified being the firstborn* because he went up to his father's bed and slept with his father's concubine, and the birthright was transferred to Joseph (Gen.49:4; I Chron.5:2). Abraham has two brothers, Nahor and Haran, and he himself was evidently the youngest -- but he also qualified to obtain the "birthright" as his two older brothers disqualified.

Even so, the Logos -- whether or not He was *literally* the "firstborn," *became* the firstborn because Lucifer *disqualified*, rebelled against God, and has been in a state of perpetual rebellion ever since!

The Bible has these fascinating accounts of the life stories of twins, like Cain and Abel, one evil, one righteous -- and the righteous was second-born, but became the "firstborn" when the original firstborn disqualified. Esau, the firstborn, sold his birthright to Jacob, and lost it forever.

Is it not possible, therefore, that long, long ago, God the Father made *two sons* -- but one of them became evil and twisted, and started a revolution amongst the angels, and became a "Destroyer" rather than a "Creator"?

God's Awesome Plan -- Reproducing Himself!

Think about it. It seems to have been God's plan from the beginning to reproduce Himself, and He began with the Logos ("Word") and "Lucifer" ("Shining Star"). Lucifer, however, corrupted himself and became a "fallen star," an "Adversary," so his name was changed to "Satan" ("Adversary," "Enemy"). Therefore, God made no more spirit beings after the same process -- the "failure rate" was too high and too costly. He could not afford to have 50% of His created "sons" turn bad like Lucifer -- or even 33%, judging by the percentage of angels who followed Satan into rebellion!

Therefore, to continue His plan, God began the new creation in Genesis 1, and this time around He created "mankind" in His own image -- but out of dust of the ground, so that if mankind went "bad," those who became incorrigibly wicked could easily be destroyed, without their causing too much damage to the Universe in the process!

Like David's son Absalom, one of God the Father's "sons" went astray, rebelled, and caused vast havoc and destruction. He will be dealt with appropriately, as we have seen. But to make certain that such a thing never happened again, on a cosmic scale of rebellion and intergalactic destruction, God decided to limit the "divine experiment" to this planet we call earth, for now. And now He is furthering His plan through human beings, who live only about seventy years, and who are given this time to learn lessons of obedience to God, submission to God's Law, love and respect, honoring their parents, and loving their neighbors. This way any future "damage" will be minimized and any potential universe-destroying rebellions will be nipped in the bud, before the rebels gain enough power to do any real damage!

"The Secret Things Belong to God"

There is much that we do not know. Therefore, we should not *assume* that we know, based on a few superficial observations or misinterpretations of a few Scriptures. We must be very careful to put ALL the Scriptures together, and not allow ourselves to become trapped in a "box canyon."

As Moses declared, "The *secret things* belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are *revealed* belong to us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law" (Deut.29:29). And God Almighty is revealing more and more to His servants during these last days, before the end!

As God told Daniel the prophet, "Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed *till the time of the end*. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried: but the wicked shall [continue to] do wickedly; and *none of the wicked shall understand*; but the *WISE SHALL UNDERSTAND*" (Dan.12:9-10).

The prophet Amos also was inspired to write, "Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing [including fulfilling His great awesome plan] but he REVEALETH HIS SECRET unto his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7).

When we stop and think about it, and look at ALL the Scriptures, the evidence showing that the Logos was created, or "pro-created" by the Father, is simply *overwhelming*. He did not eternally exist, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father. He Himself had "a beginning." In many passages of Scripture He is called an "Angel." He came "proceeded forth and came" *from* God the Father (John 8:42). He was *sent to earth* by the Father (John 6:29, 38, 40, 44, etc.). He acknowledged that the Father is greater than He (John 14:28). *Yet He, too, became very "GOD"!* He says, in John, that He is the "I AM" (John 8:58). The Jews tried to kill Him because He claimed to be the very Son of

God -- and they knew what He meant (John 5:18).

Only the two anointed cherubim that covered the throne of God came forth from the throne itself -- were made out of the very same piece of gold that was the throne -- symbolizing God the Father! They were "of one piece" with the throne. Moses was told, "Even OF the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof" (Exo.25:19).

"And he made the mercy seat of pure gold . . . And he made two cherubims of gold, *beaten out of one piece* made he them, on the two ends of the mercy seat. . . *OUT OF the mercy seat made he the cherubims . . .*" (Exo.37:6-8). They were of "*beaten*" gold (v.7) -- meaning their "character" was hammered into shape. There were only TWO of them. *What is God telling us here? Is this just superfluous and irrelevant details which have no real purpose?*

Or is God TELLING us something -- something IMPORTANT?

ALL these facts, plus much more, reveal to us that the "Logos" indeed, in the earliest aeons of eternity, had a "brother" -- whom we could call a "twin" in general terms -- just as the two cherubims were "twins" for all practical purposes. This "twin" also, like the Logos at one time had the *potential* to become part of the *Elohim*. But Lucifer disqualified -- at some point, he went astray and became proud, and grew dissatisfied with God's plan and His government -- His way of doing things -- His "Law" or "Torah." So he rebelled and led one third of the "stars of heaven" -- angelic beings -- into sin and lawlessness (Rev.12:4).

What a story! Stranger than fiction! But this is the TRUTH! Lucifer led a third of the angels into cosmic combat, fighting against the legions of God, in a mad and depraved attempt to seize His Throne! (Isa.14:12-15). What a drama! And it is still unfolding before us, today! It is not yet finished!

The Scriptures clearly show that "Lucifer" -- "shining star of the dawn" -- was a superpowerful being, much more so than any normal "cherubim" although they were among the most powerful of angels. He also had a "throne," which they do not. He also was "anointed" -- they are not. He was the "anointed cherub that covereth" the throne of God -- thus making him *one of the ONLY TWO that were formed out of the gold of the "mercy seat" itself, all of "one piece."*

The Father created them both from the "mercy seat" -- representing Himself. Lucifer, however, was never truly "begotten" of God, or if he was, his begettal "aborted," one way or the other, when he disqualified, so he ceased to grow into his potential from that time. But he has lusted after God's office and throne ever since, and therefore has made himself into a member of the "trinity," the pagan trinity, refusing to accept his punishment. He lusts for worship and power; but now his destiny is to die.

All these facts show the uniqueness of this individual, and why he has been able

to cause so much trouble for all God's people. And he is soon going to cause even MORE trouble for the saints of God! For he is not finished yet!

We read in the book of Revelation, that very soon, now, another intergalactic, celestial battle is going to take place. Once again Lucifer/Satan will stage a final desperate attempt to seize God's Throne. Once again "star wars" are soon to break out!

The apostle John records a vision of what is shortly to occur. He wrote: "And there was WAR IN HEAVEN: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, *and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And that great dragon was CAST OUT, that old serpent called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was CAST OUT into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him*" (Rev.12:7-9).

When he discovers he is cast out, however, he is going to PERSECUTE the saints, the church of God, and bring great calamity to this earth! John goes on, "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time" (Rev.12:12).

Yet he will come to his end, and none shall stop him (Rev.20:10; Matt.25:41). He will be destroyed -- for ever! If you have not read it, be sure to read our article, "What is Satan's Fate?"

The Enigma of the Devil

Throughout the Scriptures, it is evident that there are three most powerful beings, not more, at this time. There is the Father. He has supreme power and authority. Then there is the Son/Logos -- Jesus Christ, Yeshua our Messiah. All power in heaven and earth is now given to Him, under the Father (Matt.28:19-20). But thirdly, as the "ruler" of this earth, the "prince of the power of the air," the "god of this world," there is Satan the devil -- the arch-enemy of God, and the arch-enemy of mankind! Various names: Lucifer, Satan, the Adversary, Abaddon, Apollyon, Beel-zebub, he is "the prince of darkness."

Even Michael, one of the chief princes among the angelic host, the "first" among the angelic princes, who stands for Israel (Dan.12:1), cannot defeat him alone. In the book of Jude we read: "Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee" (Jude 9). Notice! Even when Michael confronted Satan in a dispute over the body of Moses, could not defeat him by himself, but called upon the LORD, saying, "The Lord rebuke thee" (Jude 9).

Lucifer/Satan still has great power. He is now compared to a "roaring lion," going about seeking whom he may devour. But we can overcome him through the indwelling power of the Spirit of God (Acts 5:32; Gal.2:20). The apostle James tells us, "RESIST the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). We are commanded to

"resist" him "steadfast in the faith" (I Pet.5:9). James goes on: "Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you" (v.8).

The apostle Peter commands us: "Be sober, be vigilant: because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (I Pet.5:8). Unfortunately, some have already been pulled aside, snatched off the true path, and have been devoured.

Mystery of the Ages

Thus we get back to an enigma -- the enigma of the devil. His origin is shrouded in mystery, but at one time he was a brilliant cherub that was "anointed" and had a throne, and was one of only "two" twins -- cherubim that guarded the throne of the Father. He failed to develop properly and to perform his duties, failing the tests the Father gave him.

On the other hand, the Logos -- the only other "anointed" cherub or Angel -- succeeded, was obedient, and developed in perfect character so that He became a partner of the Father in later creations, and qualified ultimately to be our Redeemer and Saviour, in bringing "many sons unto glory" (Heb.2:10).

The Greatest Story of All Time

What a story! What a saga! What an eye-opening and mind-boggling drama! More fantastic than any human fantasy -- more intriguing than the "Star Wars" saga or trilogy -- more awesome than a Hollywood spectacular cinematic extravaganza -- stranger than the strangest fiction -- more fascinating than the tallest "tall tale."

I know the concept of Lucifer having once been a "twin" of the Logos is hard for many people to accept. It seems so strange at first. But when we patiently sift through the Scriptural evidence, with an open mind the truth begins to come forth. Once we begin to get rid of the mud and the filth, and the character flaws of human nature, such as pride, lust, and greed, and our character is changed into the image and reflection of God's own perfect character through trials and tests and tribulations -- then our own character will shine with the iridescence of the brilliance of a diamond, in dazzling glory, splendor and majesty! Our own character will itself begin to dazzle and sparkle and radiate like a shine star of the heavens.

Many still have difficulty with the concept that Christ Himself, the Logos, was a created (or, "pro-created") being, the first creation of God. Once this hurdle is past, however, and we "prove" and then accept the truth about the creation of Christ, we wonder why we never saw it before! It seems so obvious, so reasonable, so logical.

Even so, if we give it enough time, and study and meditate upon it, I think the logic and power of the "heavenly twin" hypothesis will begin to clarify, and shine, and become more easily seen, more plausible, and even undeniable, when we put all the

evidence together.

This is the reason why Christ needed to "qualify," to "replace" Satan! If Lucifer had been Christ's own "creation," then *He would not have needed to "qualify" to replace him!* He could have just "booted him out"!

But it is not so simple as that. According to the Plan of God the Father, Christ had to come down as a human being, and "prove" Himself, and go through suffering, and being tempted, and yet remain faithful, loyal to God and obedient -- or else He would have "failed." And we would have had no hope. No promise of salvation. No gift of eternal life! By dying for us, He ransomed us -- bought us back -- redeemed us from the kingdom of Satan and his world, and ushered us into His own Kingdom -- the Kingdom of God.

Truly, the "secret" things belong to God. I am sure there is much more to be learned -- that we have "only just begun" this process of learning, and discovery. As Paul wrote, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit" (I Cor.2:9-10).

In the words of the popular song, made famous by the singer Karen Carpenter, the revelation of God's truly mind-boggling, awesome story has "*only just begun!*"

Chapter 13

What is the Origin of *Lucifer and the Logos?*

Where did the "Devil" come from? Where did he get the name "Lucifer?" What does "Lucifer" mean?

And what about the Logos? What is His Origin? Who Is He? What is His role in God's Plan?

What is the true story of these ancient beings described in the Scriptures? How did they become adversaries? Here is one of the intriguing mysteries of the Universe Revealed and explained!

First, let's look at this being called "Lucifer" in the Bible.

The word "Lucifer" itself comes from the Latin, and there is no doubt that Jerome used this Latin word to translate the Hebrew word "Heylel." His work in translating the Latin Vulgate was largely based on the Septuagint, which was the version quoted often by Christ and the apostles, and later rejected by the Jews because the Christians were using it to great advantage in arguing that Christ was the Messiah. The original Septuagint (which we do not really have today, but rather a "reconstruction" undertaken by Origen) was an authoritative version begun in the days of Ptolemy Philadelphus circa 250 B.C.

The word "Heylel" in Hebrew means: "in the sense of brightness, the morning star" (Strong's Concordance). It is from the root "halal" which has several meanings: "clear, to shine, hence to make a show, to boast, and thus to be foolish, to rave, be mad, glory, shine, etc." The Gesenius Hebrew Lexicon has for "Heylel," "according to the LXX, Vulgate, Targum Rabbin (ancient Jewish source), Luther, *stella lucida*, bright star,

i.e., Lucifer. *Nor is this a bad rendering*, for there is added [in the text of Isaiah] . . . and in the Chaldee also Lucifer (the *morning star*) . . . in Arab . . . 'a splendid star.' According to this opinion 'Heylel' would be derived from the root 'Halal,' 'to shine.'"

The Septuagint translates Isaiah 14:12 as follows: "How has Lucifer, that *rose in the morning*, fallen from heaven! . . . But thou saidst in thine heart, I will go up to heaven, I will set *my throne ABOVE the stars of heaven*: I will sit upon a lofty mount, on the lofty mountains toward the north: I will go up above the clouds; *I will be like the Most High*. But now thou shalt go down to hell, even to the foundations of the earth" (Isa.14:12-15). The Tanakh uses the expression, "O Shining One, son of Dawn." Either way, Lucifer was a "shining one," and a 'star' that rises in the morning is a "day star" or a "morning star."

Are There Two "Day Stars"?

What is the significance of this fact, since Christ is also called a "day star" (II Pet.1:19) and speaks of Himself in Revelation 22:16, saying, "I Jesus . . . I am the . . . *bright and morning star*"?

Most scholars conclude that 'Heylel' comes from the root 'Halal' whose basic meaning is "to shine." However, "shining" can have both positive and negative aspects. To "shine" can mean "to boast," "self-glory," rave on, even so far as being "mad" and "foolish." Certainly, Lucifer became such in his inordinate ambition and pride, as both Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 show. But the basic meaning of the word is "to shine," and it is connected in Isaiah with "son of the morning," meaning the "morning star." For "Lucifer," my KJV margin has an alternate reading of "day star." Again, the essential meaning is "brightness." And that appellation is correct. For in II Corinthians, Paul tells us of "Lucifer," that even today he appears as "an angel of *light*" (II Cor.11:14). Christ also verified his brightness, saying, "I beheld Satan *as lightning* fall from heaven" (Luke 10:18).

"The Anointed Cherub that Covers"

Lucifer was created as a glorious, resplendent cherub, one of the highest ranking angelic beings surrounding God's Throne -- he was even appointed as the "anointed cherub that covers" the throne of God (Ezek.28:14), and was "perfect in [his] ways" until wickedness was discovered in him (verse 15). God said of him, that he "sealed up the sun, full of wisdom, *perfect in beauty*" (v.12), and "every precious stone was thy covering" (v.13). He was a "work of art." A "masterpiece." But, God declares, "Thine heart was lifted up *because of thy beauty*, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of *THY BRIGHTNESS . . .*" (v.17).

For these reasons, I find no fault with Jerome's translation, or the term "Lucifer" as referring to Satan, on account of his "brightness." The name fits. The other meanings of the name "halal" also fit him, of course, since he allowed his "brightness" to go to his head: and he became *foolish, raving, mad, etc.*

What is intriguing, however, is that Christ Jesus also is referred to in Scripture as "the day star." In fact, in the Latin Vulgate, the Greek word *phosphoros* is translated in II Peter 1:19 in reference to Christ as "day star" -- but the very same word *phosphoros* is used in Isaiah 14:12 where it is translated "Lucifer"! Thus both Satan and Christ are described as *phosphoros*! Do they both, then, have as one of their names, "Lucifer"? Although both could be called "Lucifer," which is merely Latin for "Light-bringer," the word Lucifer has come to be applied to Satan, to make it clear which being is referred to. Let's understand this.

In II Peter 1:19 we read: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, AS unto a *light that shineth* in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the DAY STAR arise in your hearts."

Christ is the true "light" (John 12:35-36, 46) of the world. Malachi the prophet says of Him, "But unto you that fear my name shall the *Sun of righteousness arise* with healing in his wings" -- a reference to Christ (Malachi 4:2). The Psalmist declared of God, "For the LORD God is a *sun and shield*: the LORD will give grace and glory" (Psalm 84:11).

It is certainly interesting that both Lucifer, the "son of the morning" and whose name also means "day star," and Christ the Son of God, who is referred to as the "day star" in II Peter 1:19, both are called "day star." Obviously, BOTH had and have incredible "brightness." Both "shine." Both would have the same "root" in this sense. The Englishman's Greek Interlinear translates the Greek in II Peter 1:19 as "morning star" -- as a reference to Christ. Lucifer, too, was called "the son of the morning" (Isaiah 14:12), or "son of dawn." The Amplified Bible refers to him as, "How are you fallen from heaven, O light-bringer and day-star, son of the morning!" (same verse).

Why are both Lucifer and Christ or the Logos spoken of as having the SAME TITLES -- in one sense, one could even say THE SAME NAME? Obviously "Lucifer" merely means "Light-bringer." That is one of Christ's names. Interestingly, the first thing that God created in Genesis 1 was "light" (Gen.1:3). Is it not possible that in the original, FIRST CREATION, that the first thing God the Father created was Light?-- that is, "beings of light" or "light bringers"?

The Origin of the Logos of God

Christ Himself admitted that the Father was greater than He (John 14:28). He admitted that the Father was (and is) "the only true God" (John 17:3), who sent Him. He calls himself "the faithful and true witness, the *beginning* of the creation of God" (Rev.3:14). Did the Logos have a "beginning"? The Greek word translated "beginning" in this verse means "first in a series," as its primary meaning. The same truth is indicated in Colossians, chapter one, where we read of Christ's pre-existence: "Who is the *image* of the invisible God" (Col.1:15). Now an "image" is a copy, or a "likeness" -- *not the original!* Continuing: "Who is the *image of the invisible God, the FIRSTBORN OF*

EVERY CREATURE" (Col.1:15). Notice! The One who became Christ Himself was *an image* of the True God -- a reproduction, or "copy." As such, we read in the book of Hebrews, He was made "the brightness of his glory, and the EXPRESS IMAGE OF HIS PERSON" -- or character (Heb.1:1-3).

Thus Christ or the Logos was the "firstborn of EVERY creature." He was the *firstborn of God* -- the first to "qualify" to become a very "Son of God" and a member of the Godhead, aeons ago, when He proved Himself and His loyalty to the Father -- the Father proclaimed Him to be His "Firstborn." This was not automatic. Character is never "automatic." It is based on choices, decisions, and actions. Thus the One who became Christ, aeons ago, was created out of the Father's own essence, of His own Spirit, to be His companion -- a "Mighty One." When He proved Himself, He was granted powers from God the Father to sit with Him in His Throne -- He became a Co-Regent with the Father. He became "very God," as the Father is "God," because the Father proclaimed Him to be His "Son," and gave Him authority over all things, and imparted to Him authority as Co-Creator!

Therefore we read of the Logos, that it was by him "also he [the Father] made the worlds," and who now "upholds all things by the word of his power" (Heb.1:2-3), who has also "purged our sins," and "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (v.3); "Being *made* so much better than the angels, as he hath *BY INHERITANCE obtained a more excellent NAME than they*" (Heb.1:4).

At some distant point, before the Creation as we know it, God the Father created - - or "pro-created," from His own essence -- the "Logos." The Logos, or "Word," grew up, matured, and became the "Son of God," and eventually God shared His very own authority as "God" with Him. Therefore, we read in the book of John that in "a" beginning, as the Greek should read, there was the Word (Logos), and the Word was *with* God, and the Word *was* [i.e., *had become*] God (see John 1:1-3).

The Logos, the One who became Christ, at this earlier time -- after *proving Himself and qualifying through developing perfect, righteous CHARACTER, which cannot be created instantaneously -- became* the second member of the "Elohim," or "Godhead" and participated in the creation of this present Universe (Heb.1:1-3). Through tests and trials of which we have no direct knowledge, and through "much tribulation" (Acts 14:22), He qualified at that ancient epoch to become "Elohim" together with the Father! Therefore, we read in Genesis, chapter one, "In [a] beginning, GOD [Elohim, meaning "The mighty Ones"] created the [present] heavens and the earth" (Gen.1:1). We read, further, that God said, "Let US make man [mankind] in OUR IMAGE, *after our likeness*" (Gen.1:26). By this time, then, the Logos had qualified and become a Co-Creator with the Father! Together they made the Universe, and later mankind, as is depicted in Genesis, chapter one.

The Logos had become "the brightness" of the glory of God the Father, and His "express image" in character (v.3). Therefore He has become "so much better than the angels," and "by inheritance *obtained* [qualified for] a more excellent name than they"

(Heb.1:4). He became God's true Son by creation, so that the Father said of Him, "Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee," and "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son" (v.5).

Paul alludes to the origin of the One who became Christ, the Logos of God, when he wrote that Christ or the Logos "is the *image* of the invisible God," and "the *firstborn of EVERY CREATURE*: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible . . . And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: *who IS the BEGINNING . . .*" (Colossians 1:15-18).

Thus the Logos, who later became our Saviour and Messiah, assisted the Father in creation of this present Universe. As we read in John: "In [a] beginning was the Word [Logos], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him [the present Universe]; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men" (John 1:1-4).

But what about this being called "Lucifer"? Where did he come from?

The Creation of Lucifer, Another 'Light-bringer'

But what about this other being, called "Heylel" or "Lucifer"? He was also a "light-bringer," as his name implies. He was another celestial being whom the Father created -- "Heylel," or "Lucifer." He also was a "son of brightness," "son of the morning," and "day star," a brilliant, glorious creation of God -- superb in wisdom, intellect, and beauty. God tells us about his origin in the book of Ezekiel:

"Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.
Thou hast been in the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the *workmanship* of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was *prepared* in thee in the *day that thou wast CREATED*" (Ezek.28:12-13).

Lucifer, then, was also "created." He was a magnificent, awesome angelic being - - there is no other being in Scripture that God describe in this spendid fashion. God says of him, in fact, "Thou art *THE ANOINTED CHERUB THAT COVERETH*" (v.14) -- that is, Lucifer was anointed as a special GUARDIAN of the very Throne of God, a position of the highest trust and importance! He was the "captain" of the palace guard, so to speak. He, too, was created as a "son of God," a "son of the morning," in that original Creation aeons ago. He was present at the Creation of the existing Universe, when the heavens and earth were created, for we read that at that time, "the *morning stars sang together, and ALL the sons of God shouted for joy*" (Job 38:7).

So what happened? Can we piece the story together? Are there enough allusions

and hints and pieces of evidence, in the Scriptures and the cosmos, so that we can "reconstruct" the true story of what happened? Let us investigate this intriguing saga of the world that was.

An Ancient Competitive Drama Unfolds

There is very likely far more to the original story of the Logos and Heylel than we have ever assumed. It is interesting that in the Zodiac, one of the signs is that of "Gemini," or "the Twins." Why is this? As Bullinger shows, the celestial Zodiac goes back to ancient astronomical sources and bears witness in an incredible manner to the plan and purpose of God.

E. W. Bullinger writes concerning the sign "Gemini," or "The Twins":

"All the pictures of this sign are confused. The Greeks claim to have invented them, and they called them Apollo and Hercules. . . The Latins called them Castor and Pollux; and the name of a vessel in which Paul sailed is so called in Acts 28:11.

"The name in the ancient Denderah Zodiac is *Clusus*, or *Clastrum Hor*, which means *the place of Him who cometh*. It is represented by two human figures walking, or coming. The second appears to be a woman. The other appears to be a man. It is a tailed figure, the tail signifying *He cometh*.

"The old Coptic name was *Pi-Mahi*, *the united*, as in brotherhood. Not necessarily united by being born at the same time, but *united* in one fellowship or brotherhood. The Hebrew name is *Thaumim*, which means *united*. The root is used in Exodus 26:24: 'They (the two boards) shall be coupled together beneath.' In the margin we read, 'Heb., *twinned*' (R.V. double). The Arabic *Al Tauman* means the same.

"We need not trouble ourselves with the Grecian myths, even though we can see through them the original and ancient truth. The two were both heroes of peculiar and extraordinary birth -- sons of Jupiter. They were supposed to appear at the head of armies; and as they had cleared the seas of pirates, they were looked upon as the patron saints of navigation. (Hence the name of the ship in Acts 28:11). They were held in high esteem by Greeks and Romans; and the common practice of taking oaths and of swearing by their names has descended even to our own day in the still surviving vulgar habit of swearing "by Gemini!" (*Witness of the Stars*, p.137-138).

One star in the head of one of the twins in the sign of Gemini is *Apollo* which means "ruler" or "judge." Another star in the head of the other is called "*Hercules, who cometh to labour, or suffer*. Another star . . . (in his left foot), is called *Al Henah*, which means *hurt, wounded, or afflicted*."

Bullinger interprets the two twins of Gemini as the two natures of Christ depicted here as "two persons." One showing Christ as God, triumphant, ruling, "glorified for our complete salvation and final triumph." The other as man, "suffering for our redemption." Although this may certainly be a possible meaning of the Twins of Gemini, there is another possibility.

Notice. The twin on the left has a *club* in hand; the twin on the right a bow and

arrow. Christ is pictured as an archer with bow and arrow (Psalm 45:3-6). He is coming as the "Judge" of the world (Matt.25:30-31; Acts 17:31; John 5:25-29). This twin, on the right, has a star in His knee called *Mebstuta*, meaning "treading under feet." He will tread all His enemies under His feet!

However, Christ is not pictured as coming with a "club" in His hand anywhere in Scripture. He is pictured carrying a "sword" and ruling the nations with a "rod of iron" (Rev.19:15). But never a "club." Is not Lucifer, then, the "twin" on the left, the one who was the guardian of the Throne of God, the one who carried a "club"? As an "anointed cherub that covered" the throne of God, as its guardian, would he not have held a weapon? And the "club" symbolizes his authority. Today, Satan is still the one who carries a club, who uses it to browbeat, brutally rule, and tyrannize over people, as an "overlord."

Notice another feature of the sign of "Gemini." In the picture illustrated by the Zodiacal sign of "Gemini," the two Twins are actually depicted as being together, in each other's company, *fellowshipping together, in a condition of peace, tranquility, or "at rest."* The old Coptic name for the sign, *Pi-Mahi*, means "the united." Would this not depict an ancient, primordial time when both Lucifer and the Logos enjoyed fellowship together, in perfect peace, and were *united* in purpose, serving the One true God? This would have been an ancient time of peace and quiet, throughout the Universe, before Lucifer rebelled, and declared war on God, and His government, and led one third of the angels in rebellion against God!

The twin on our left hand, however, has the star *Hercules* in its forehead, meaning "labor" or "suffer," and a star in its left foot, *Al Henah*, meaning "hurt," "afflicted," "wounded." Could this not be a reference to the widespread suffering, hurt, affliction, and pain brought about in the Universe due to the rebellious activities of this celestial "Hercules," a depiction of the suffering that Lucifer would cause -- the "Evil Twin"?

Another constellation in the sign of Gemini is that of Orion, picturing Christ, "the Sun of righteousness" (Malachi 4). He will "tread down the wicked" (same chapter). He will "tread down our enemies" (Psalm 90:12). Beneath His foot is *Lepus*, the hare, or enemy. In the Persian planisphere the first constellation was pictured by *a serpent*. In the Egyptian, it is an unclean bird standing on the serpent, which is under the foot of Orion. Its name is *Bashti-beki*. *Bashti* means *confounded*, and *Beki* means *failing*" (p.141). The brightest star in the body of the hare has a Hebrew name, *Arnebo*, which means "the enemy of Him that cometh." Other stars in it are "*Nibal, the mad; Rakis, the bound* (Arabic, *with a chain*); *Surgis, the deceiver*" (p.141).

The plan of God is depicted in the heavens. The mysterious Zodiacal sign of "Gemini," or "The Twins," is far more meaningful than we have ever imagined! More evidence of this amazing story, however, is found in the strange appearing ritual of the "two goats" which lie at the center of the stage of the holiest day of the year -- *Yom Kippur*.

The Mystery of Yom Kippur or the Day of Atonement

In Leviticus 16 we read: "And he [Aaron, or the High Priest] shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel *two kids of the goats* for a sin offering . . . And he shall *take the two goats, and present them BEFORE THE LORD* at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Aaron shall *cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scapegoat* [Heb., *Azazel*]. And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the LORD's lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering" (Lev.16:5-9). This goat pictures Jesus Christ, who took upon Himself our sins and died for us (II Cor.5:21; Heb.9:28, 10:1-12).

What about the other goat, which to all appearances, looked identical to the first goat? "But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat [*Azazel*], shall be presented *alive* before the LORD, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat [*Azazel*] into the wilderness . . . And Aaron shall lay both hands upon the head of the *live goat*, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: and the goat shall *bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited*: and he shall let go the goat into the wilderness" (Lev.16:10-22).

This goat pictures Lucifer, or Satan the devil. He is the one ultimately responsible for all sin and rebellion in the Universe. He is the one who led mankind astray, beginning with Adam and Eve. He is "murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him" (John 8:44). He is "the god of this world [who] hath blinded the minds of them which believe not" (II Cor.4:4). He is "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph.2:2). He is "the great dragon . . . that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world" (Rev.12:9).

At the beginning of the reign of Christ and the Kingdom of God, this old serpent, Lucifer or Satan, will be taken "away by the hand of a fit man" -- an angel -- "into the wilderness." The apostle John writes, "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and *cast him into the bottomless pit* [Greek *abyss*], and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more . . ." (Rev.20:1-3).

Now let us examine this picture of the scene depicted on the Day of Atonement. On the Day of Atonement, two goats are selected, seemingly equal and both spotless and without blemish (Lev.16:5). Aaron was to "cast lots" upon the two goats, to select between them (God doing the actual selecting, of course, by using this method). One goat would become the one who made atonement by shedding his blood, a type of Christ, the Logos; the other would become the "Azazel," or 'scape-goat,' who would bear the sins of all the people, into the wilderness. According to Jewish tradition, the Azazel goat was led into the wilderness, and there was thrown over a cliff to the jagged rocks below, where he was in this manner killed. This goat represented Satan the devil, who will be

bound (Rev.20:1-2), and then ultimately destroyed (Rev.20:10, Heb.2:14). If you have not read it, be sure to write for our article, "Will Satan the Devil Be Punished Forever?"

The Real Lesson for Us!

What, then, is the real lesson in the Day of Atonement, in the drama using the two goats? Notice! Both the Logos, and Lucifer, were originally "light bearers." Both were "day stars." Both were "shining stars of the morning." One became the Messiah, laying down His life for our sins. The other became a wicked, devious, deceitful and destructive being, known as "Satan" or "Adversary," who rebelled against God. One submitted to the loving direction and government of the Father. The other "twin" rebelled, and attempted to seize the throne of God and occupy it himself (Isaiah 14:12-14). There is an incredible lesson in all this, for us, today!

In other words -- our future destiny is *up to us!* The choice is OURS to decide! As God says to us: "See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; in that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee . . .

"But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away to worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish . . . I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: THEREFORE *CHOOSE LIFE*, that both thou and thy seed may live" (Deut.30:15-19).

God commands us to *CHOOSE* which way we will go! He commands us to choose *life*, but in so doing He leaves open to us the option of choosing the other way -- the way that may *seem good* and *feel good* but ends in *DEATH!* (Prov.14:12; 16:25).

Sibling Rivalry

Interestingly, the Scriptures have a great deal to say about the mystery of "twins." We have all heard of "sibling rivalry." We all are familiar with "jealousy" among children. Cain and Abel were "twins" -- the first two human beings ever born of a woman (Gen.4:1-2). One was righteous; the other became a murderer, and slew his twin brother! (Gen.4:3-8).

Jacob and Esau were also twins. They even struggled between themselves while in Rebekah's womb (Gen.25:22). Esau became a "cunning hunter," but Jacob was a "plain man" (v.27). Esau looked good on the outside, and impressed his father; but Rebekah loved Jacob (v.28). Esau was a man given to his lusts and desires, and even despised and sold his "birthright" to Jacob (verse 30-34). Eventually, Esau became a mighty man of evil and deceit, despising his parents. Eventually Jacob, after going through years of suffering, trials and tribulation, became a true man of God, and wrestled with the "Logos" or Son of God, and his name was changed to "Israel," meaning a

"mighty champion of God," or "One who prevails with God."

Are Cain and Abel, and Esau and Jacob, Biblical examples of the proverbial "good and evil twin," counterparts to that ancient celestial drama in heaven when the Logos and Lucifer also vied as sibling rivals, and one was found righteous, and the other became mad with jealousy and rage, and became "The Adversary"?

Do not these historical events in the Scriptures tell us something about the origin of the Logos, and the origin of that being called Lucifer?

Family Intrigue in Heaven

Let's be plain -- and blunt. The Logos, who became Christ, succeeded wonderfully in fulfilling God's plan and purpose. He was brilliant, loyal, honorable, and righteous -- developed the very perfect character of His Father, God. On the other hand, the one called Lucifer, also a light-bringer in the beginning, later rebelled, and put his own interests ahead of those of the Father -- he became a powerful Adversary -- now known as Satan the devil. He was so devious and seductive and smooth that he convinced one third of the angels to follow him, and led one third of the angels into sin and rebellion against the Most High God (Rev.12:3-4). He became the "father of liars," and was a "murderer from the beginning" (John 8:44).

Obviously, in the court of heaven, long ago, there was sordid and foul intrigue surrounding the Throne of God -- at a distant time long before there were any men on the earth.

No wonder Job wrote of God, "Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints [Hebrew, *holy ones*, which can refer to angels]; yea, the *heavens are not clean in his sight*" (Job 15:15).

No wonder God is so concerned about righteousness and purity in the "new heavens and new earth." As Peter was inspired to write, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, *what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conduct and godliness*, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, *wherein dwelleth righteousness*. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, *be diligent* that ye may be found of him *in peace, without spot, and blameless*" (II Peter 3:10-14).

The Record of Ancient Rebellion

A clue to what happened aeons ago may be found in Genesis, the first chapter. In verse one we read that "In [a] beginning, God [Elohim] created the heavens and the earth.

And the earth [became] without form and void [*tohu va vohu*, or in a chaotic condition, as a wasteland]: and darkness [became] on the face of the waters" (Gen.1:1-2). The word translated "was" here in the King James Version also means "became," and is translated such in Genesis 19:26 of Lot's wife: "and she *became* a pillar of salt." Originally, when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was NOT "without form and void," according to the prophet Isaiah. He quotes God as saying: "For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, *he created it NOT IN VAIN [i.e., not in tohu va vohu], he formed it to be inhabited*" (Isa.45:18).

In other words, at some distant time or epoch before this present Creation, this time of Man, as we know it, and see it, and study it, today, including the stars and galaxies in the heavens, which all began, astronomers tell us, in a great creative act known as "The Big Bang," there was a *previous Creation*, in which God the Father created "light," and began a process of creation similar to that described in Genesis 1 and the six days of "re-creation," following a period of "chaos and confusion" described in verse 2 (Hebrew *tohu va vohu*). In this earlier creation God first made angelic beings (the creation of which are not described in the "re-creation" events of Genesis 1). These "angels" are mentioned in Job as existing BEFORE the present earth was created. We read: "Then the LORD answered Job . . . Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? . . . When the *morning stars [plural] sang together, and all the sons of God* shouted for joy?" (Job 38:1-7).

In this earlier created world, Lucifer was apparently put in charge of one third of the angels, and was given a throne to rule from on this earth. The Scriptures speak of his having a "throne" (Isa.14:13), and of his seeking to rise "above the heights of the clouds," which are in the earth's atmosphere, indicating his throne was on earth. Ezekiel verifies this since he alludes to the fact that this being was "in Eden, the garden of God" (Ezek.28:13). Lucifer apparently was given charge over nations of angels at that time. That creation may have paralleled or been similar to this present creation in some respects, but with angelic beings inhabiting the earth, not human beings. Even as this present "creation" is destined to be consumed with fire and melt away, so that ancient creation suffered a similar fate, causing destruction and chaos, due to the presence of sin and wickedness, lawlessness and rebellion, in the ranks of the angels (Rev.12:3-4).

When these events transpired we have no knowledge. The original rebellion could have occurred millions or billions of years ago, with sporadic outbreaks since that time, leading to various periods of cataclysm, destruction, and death, as is evidenced in the geologic record in the rocks, and in the cataclysms and destructions in outer space.

The "God of This World"

However, the real key to understanding what has happened is in the Scriptures. We are told enough in God's Word to know what we need to know, and whom we need to worship and obey. Satan has attempted to counterfeit everything God has done. He has appointed himself as a "god of this world" in place of the true God (I Cor.4:4). He has

deceived all nations, at least for the time being (Rev.12:9). He is, in many respects, a *counterfeit Christ*, and has made himself the Messiah of this world.

It is therefore, judging from his origin, and his nature, no strange thing that he should have the same name or title as the true Christ -- for he was a "light bringer," and today he is a counterfeit, false "light bringer" (II Cor.11:13-15), as are his ministers. The name or term "Lucifer" in Latin, or "Heylel" in Hebrew, could be applied to either "Lucifer," or "Christ," as both are called "day star," or "light-bringer," or "morning star." The Greek term *phosphoros* is used of Lucifer's name in the Septuagint translation of Isaiah 14:12, and the same word *phosphoros* is used as a title or description of Christ in II Peter 1:19! Why is this?

The reason is obvious: BOTH were "light bringers" or "morning stars"! But one has gone into evil and has become a wicked counterfeit. He gave in to the "dark side of the force," and became the epitome, the essence of, *pure undiluted evil*. But the other has become the essence of obedience to God, a perfection of character, the living *Torah*, and therefore has been appointed as the promised Messiah and Redeemer and Saviour of mankind! One sought to become God by force, and failed miserably. The other became a "Son" of the Father, one of the Elohim, the "Mighty Ones," an exact image of the "Father," becoming God's "Anointed One"!

The Awesome Plan of God

How awesome is the plan of God! Think of it! Lucifer, at one time, may well have had a "chance" to qualify to inherit the Kingdom of God. But he "muffed" it. He "blew it." He disqualified himself in every way.

Yet, today, he still wants to become "God." So he has set himself up as a competing "deity," a "god" of this world, which he leads into worshipping him in all the pagan religions and counterfeit cults around the world. He has been worshipped as Baal, Mithras, Thor, and Bel, and under innumerable guises and names. He is worshipped as Shiva, today, among the Hindus. He is even worshipped by millions of Christians who follow his pagan practices and believe his pagan doctrines -- under the disguise of "Christianity."

The apostle Paul warned us plainly, "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should become corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh *preacheth ANOTHER JESUS, whom we have not preached*, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not received, ye might well bear with him" (II Cor.11:3-4). Yes, Satan even claims to be the Messiah, and even uses the name "Jesus" -- for he is "*another Jesus*," whom Paul warned about.

This new revelation about the Logos, and the one who became Satan, aeons ago, may seem startling, even shocking. But let's put aside prior assumptions, and just look at the facts, accept the facts, and embrace the truth of God joyously!

Chapter 14

Early Church Fathers Understood the Truth!

Who or What is God, the Logos, and Man?

Is God the Father in the process of "expanding" His DIVINE Family? Is the Christian destiny to become deified -- a "God" as God Himself is God? What does the Bible teach? What did the early church fathers of the first four centuries believe? Believe it or not, the early church leaders did NOT believe in a "Trinity"! They understood that Christ, as the Logos, was Himself originally a CREATED BEING, who BECAME part of the God-head -- *just as true Christians will one day become part of the Universe-ruling FAMILY OF GOD!* Here are the FACTS -- God's Plan revealed in Scripture and in history !

Is it the destiny of mankind that one day, when we have qualified, and "overcome," to become part of the "GOD FAMILY" -- the very children of the omniscient and omnipresent and omnipotent Creator God?

Is that the real meaning hidden in the widely acknowledged fact that when we pray, we address the Great God as "Our Father"?

This truth has been hidden from the minds of billions of human beings by a cunning serpent, Satan the devil, who does not want mankind to know or understand its true eternal potential !

The churches and religions of this world have conspired to hide this incredible truth from the eyes of curious mankind. They are, in fact, the churches and religious institutions of the devil himself, who "deceiveth the whole world" (Rev.12:9), and uses the vast majority of churches to aid him in this conspiracy against the truth of God !

It seems so incredible -- and yet so awe inspiring -- that one wonders why many more churches don't conceive of it! Are they all so blind? The Scriptures seem to be full of this teaching -- almost every verse and every chapter in the New Testament seem to have some reference or allusion to it. But the strangest thing of all, perhaps, historically, is that this doctrine was well known and embraced by all the early church fathers. It was not a novel, new idea of Herbert W. Armstrong, but was an ancient and original doctrine of the Church, well grounded and established long before the Trinitarian concept took over the professing Church in the fourth century and contrary beliefs become considered heretical and worthy of death!

The Testimony of Justin Martyr

Justin Martyr (A.D. 110-165) was a Gentile, but born in Samaria, near Jacob's well. He was well educated, and became a strong Christian advocate proving Jesus is the Messiah and the Christ. He confronts pagan philosophers much like a Daniel, and also reasons with the Jews, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was indeed the long-awaited Messiah.

In "The First Apology of Justin Martyr," Justin plainly sets forth his understanding of the nature of the Godhead, and the Logos (the One who became Christ). Justin, in plain words, completely refutes the Roman Catholic-Protestant notion that God is a "Trinity," or that God the Father and the Logos were both always God, "co-equal and co-eternal."

Justin wrote:

*"And when we say also that the Word, who is the FIRST -BIRTH of God, was produced without sexual union, and that He, Jesus Christ, our Teacher, was crucified and died, and rose again, and ascended into heaven, we propound nothing different from what you believe regarding those whom you esteem sons of Jupiter. . ." ("The First Apology of Justin," chap.21, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol.1, page 170).*

Later on, in this same treatise, Justin again states very plainly:

"But to the Father of all, who is unbegotten, there is no name given. . . . And His Son, who is properly called Son, the Word, who also was with Him and was BEGOTTEN BEFORE THE WORKS [of Creation], when at first He created and arranged all things by Him, is called Christ. . ." ("The Second Apology of Justin," chap.6, page 190).

Later, in his dialogue with Trypho, a Jewish intellectual and scholar, Justin Martyr goes into some detail, proving the Origin of the Logos of God, who later became

Jesus Christ. In clear, lucid language, in chapter 61 of his lengthy treatise, Justin declares:

"I shall give you another testimony, my friends,' said I, *from the Scriptures, that God BEGAT BEFORE ALL CREATURES a Beginning*, [who was] a certain rational power [proceeding] from Himself, who is called by the Holy Spirit, now the Glory of the Lord, now the Son, again Wisdom, again an Angel, then God, and then Lord and Logos; and on another occasion He calls Himself Captain, when He appeared in human form to Joshua the son of Nave (Nun). For He can be called by all those names, since He ministers to the Father's will, and since He was *begotten of the Father* by an act of will; just as we see happening among ourselves: for when we give out some word, we beget the word; yet not by abscission, so as to lessen the word [which remains] in us, when we give it out: and just as we see also happening in the case of a fire, which is not lessened when it kindled [another], but remains the same; and that which has been kindled by it likewise appears to exist by itself, not diminishing that from which it was kindled. *THE WORD OF WISDOM, who is Himself this GOD BEGOITEN OF THE FATHER of all things, and Word, and Wisdom, and Power, and Glory of the Begetter*, will bear evidence to me, when He speaks by Solomon the following: 'If I shall declare to you what happens daily, I shall call to mind events from everlasting and review them. *The Lord made me the BEGINNING of His ways for His works. FROM EVERLASTING He established me IN THE BEGINNING, BEFORE He had made the earth, and before He had made the deeps, before the springs of the waters had issued forth, before the mountains had been established. Before all the hills He BEGETS ME. ...When He made ready the heavens, I was along with Him, and when He set up His throne on the winds: when He made the high clouds strong, and the springs of the deep safe, when He made the foundations of the earth, I was with Him ARRANGING. I was that in which He rejoiced; daily and at all times I delighted in His countenance, because He delighted in the finishing of the inhabitable world, and delighted in the sons of men. . . .*" ("Dialogue with Trypho," chap.61, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, page 228).

In the next chapter, Justin goes further, proving his case. Showing that God the Father, and His first-begotten before Creation, were together the "Godhead," Justin quotes and expounds from the book of Genesis, as follows:

" And the same sentiment, was expressed, my friends, by the word of God [written by Moses, when it indicated to us, with regard to Him whom it has pointed out, that God speaks in the creation of man with the very same design, in the following words:

'Let Us make man after our image and likeness. . . And God created man: after the image of God did He create him; male and female created He them. . . . I shall quote again the words narrated by Moses himself, from which we can indisputably learn that [God] conversed with someone who was *numerically distinct from Himself; and also a rational Being*. These are the words: 'And God said, Behold, Adam has become as one of us, to know good and evil.' In saying, therefore, 'as one of us,' [Moses] has declared that [there is a certain] number of persons associated with one another, and that they are at least two. *...But this Offspring, which was truly brought forth FROM THE FATHER, was with the Father before all the creatures, and the Father communed with Him,*, even as the Scripture by Solomon has made clear, that *He whom Solomon calls Wisdom, was BEGOITEN AS A BEGINNING before all His creature and as OFFSPRING BY GOD*" ("Dialogue with Trypho," chap.62, ANF, vol. 1, page 228).

Why is it that the is truth is so difficult for so many people to understand, today?

Justin Martyr speaks of the Pre-existence of Christ, and of His original creation, in several places in his discourse with Trypho, a learned Jewish scholar. Justin wrote:

"For when Daniel speaks of 'one like unto the Son of man' who received the everlasting kingdom, does he not hint at this very thing? For he declares that, in saying 'like unto the Son of man,' He appeared, and was man, but not of human seed. And the same thing he proclaimed in mystery when he speaks of this stone which was cut out without hands. For the expression 'it was cut out without hands' signified that it was not a work of man, but [a work] of the will of the Father and God of all things, who brought Him forth. And when Isaiah says, 'Who shall declare His generation?' he meant that His descent could not be declared" (Dialogue with Trypho, chap.76, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol.1, page 236).

It should be very obvious to anybody with an open, unprejudiced, uncluttered mind, that Justin Martyr understood that in the remotest times there was but ONE TRUE GOD --the One whom we call the Father, or Ancient of Days. At some point, called "The Beginning," God the Father begat or pro-created another Being like Himself -- the Logos -- as His first-born Offspring!

In the so-called "Christian world" of today, however, these statements are considered rank heresy and utter unorthodoxy!

The Testimony of Irenaeus

Irenaeus was a contemporary of Justin Martyr. He lived from A.D. 120-202. Polycarp had sent Ponthius into Celtic Gaul at an early date as an evangelist. Irenaeus joined him and served as an elder, having been his fellow-pupil under Polycarp.

Irenaeus also understood the nature of the Godhead, and the origin of the Logos of God. He speaks very clearly of the difference between the Father and the Son. He also alludes clearly to the supreme plan of God which He is working out with human beings. Notice some of his remarkable statements, which the modern churches have lost sight of and no longer teach, showing how far they have drifted from the original teachings of the early believers in Christ.

Notice! Irenaeus states:

"Since, therefore, the Father is truly Lord, and the Son truly Lord, the Holy Spirit has fitly designated them by the title of Lord. ..And this [text following] does declare the same truth: 'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee.' For the Spirit designates both [of them] by the name of God --both Him who is anointed as Son, and Him who does anoint, that is, the Father. And again: 'God stood in the congregation of the gods, He judges among the gods.' He [here] refers to the Father and the Son, and those who have received the adoption; but these are the Church. . . . But of what gods [does he speak]? [Of those] to whom He says, 'I have said, Ye are gods, and all sons of the Most High'" (Irenaeus Against Heresies, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, book 3,

chapter 6, vol.1, pages 418-419).

Irenaeus then goes on to show how he understood the relationship between the Father and the Son. He exclaimed:

"Wherefore I do also call upon thee, LORD God of Abraham, and God of Isaac, and God of Jacob and Israel, who art the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God who, through the abundance of Thy mercy, hast had a favour towards us, that we should know Thee, who has made heaven and earth, who rulest over all, *who art the only and the true God*, above whom there is none other God; grant, by our Lord Jesus Christ, the governing power of the Holy Spirit; give to every reader of this book to know Thee, *that Thou art God alone*, to be strengthened in Thee, and to avoid every heretical, and godless, and impious doctrine" (p419).

Irenaeus then quotes the apostle Paul in I Corinthians, chapter 8, where Paul himself discusses the nature of the Godhead, saying:

"For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth; *yet to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things*, and we through Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him.' For he [Paul] has made a distinction, and separated those who are indeed called gods, but which are none, *from the one God the Father, from whom are all things. . .*" (p.420).

Irenaeus continues:

For that all things, whether Angels, or Archangels, or Thrones, or Dominions, were both established and created by Him who is God over all, through His Word, John has thus pointed out. For when he had spoken of the Word of God as having been in the Father, he added, 'All things are made by Him, and without Him was not anything made.' David also [declared] . . . : 'For He commanded, and they were created; He spake, and they were made.' Whom, therefore, did He command? The Word, no doubt, 'by whom,' he says, 'the heavens were established, and all their power by the breath of His mouth.' But that He did Himself make all things freely, and as He pleased, again David says, 'But our God is in the heavens above, and in the earth; He hath made all things whatsoever He pleased.' But the things established are distinct from Him who has established them, and what have been made from Him who has made them. *For He is Himself UNCREATED, both without beginning and end, and lacking nothing*. He is Himself sufficient for Himself; and still further, He grants to all others this very thing, existence; but the things which have been made by Him have received *a beginning*. . . so that He indeed who made all things can alone, *together with His Word, properly be termed God and Lord . . .*" chap. 8, p.421-422).

In his next chapter, Irenaeus goes on to discuss further the fact that the FATHER is "the only TRUE God," in the absolute sense of the word --the origin of ALL things -- and the relationship of Christ to His Father as "the God and Lord supreme." Notice!

". . . neither the prophets, nor the apostles, nor the Lord Christ in His own person, did acknowledge any other Lord or God, *but the God and Lord supreme . . .* the Lord Himself handing down to His disciples, *that He, the Father, is the ONLY God Lord, who ALONE is God and ruler of all*; --it is incumbent on us to follow, if we are their disciples indeed, their testimonies to this effect" (chap.9, 1, page 422).

Irenaeus points out several times that the FATHER is the "Uncreated" One, and the ultimate One who created everything else. He explains:

“And thus in all things God [the Father] has the pre-eminence, *who alone is UNCREATED, the first of all things, and the primary cause of the existence of all*, while all other things remain under God's subjection. . . By this arrangement, therefore, and these harmonies. . . man, a created and organized being, is rendered after the image and likeness of the *uncreated God, -- the Father planning everything well and giving His commands, the Son carrying these into execution and performing the work of creating*, and the Spirit nourishing and increasing [what is made], but man making progress day by day, and *ascending toward the perfect, that is, APPROXIMATING TO THE UNCREATED ONE. For the Uncreated is perfect, that is, God.* Now it was necessary that man should in the first instance be created; and having been created, should receive growth; and having received growth, should be strengthened; and having been strengthened, should abound; and having abounded, should recover [from the disease of sin]; and having recovered, should be glorified; and being glorified, should see his Lord. For God is He who is yet to be seen, and the beholding of God is productive of immortality, but immortality renders one nigh unto God" (p.522).

Did Irenaeus understand that the plan of God was to make mankind into God's own ultimate divine sons -- to confer divinity upon them ? This view would be denounced as utter heresy and outlandish, today, in Protestant and Catholic circles. But Irenaeus goes on, making the truth plain:

"For these [the dumb animals], bring no charge against God for not having made them men; but each one, just as he has been created, gives thanks that he has been created. For we cast blame upon Him, *because we have not been MADE GODS FROM THE BEGINNING, but at first merely men, THEN AT LENGTH GODS,* although God has adopted this course out of His pure benevolence, that no one may impute to Him invidiousness or grudgingness. He declares, 'I have said, Ye are gods; and ye are all sons of the Highest'" (p.522).

This is a most remarkable, astonishing statement! Irenaeus *knew the truth!* In his time, this truth of God's ultimate plan for man and the destiny of mankind was not yet buried and hidden under an avalanche of pagan deception and duplicity. Irenaeus goes on:

"How, then, shall he be a God, who has not as yet been made a man? Or how can he be perfect who was but lately created? How, again, can he be immortal, who in his mortal nature did not obey his Maker? For it must be that thou, at the outset, shouldst hold the rank of a man, *and then afterwards partake of the GLORY OF GOD.* For thou dost not make God, but God thee. If, then, thou art God's workmanship, await the hand of thy Maker which creates everything in due time; in due time as far as thou art concerned, *whose creation is being carried out*" (*ibid.*).

How astonishing! Irenaeus understood that God the Father is expanding his FAMILY! He is in the process of creating many more "Gods" to .join Him in His Celestial Family -- the Family of GOD! He is adding many SONS to His Family, literally *REPRODUCING HIMSELF!*

The Testimony of Clement of Alexandria

But Clement of Alexandria also understood this sublime truth. Clement lived from 153 A.D. to 217 A.D. He mercilessly exposed the errors of paganism. He wrote concerning the plan of God and mankind's future, saying:

"It is but for few to comprehend these things. For it is not in the way of envy that the Lord announced in a Gospel, 'My mystery is to me, and to the sons of my house'; placing the election in safety, and beyond anxiety. . . For he who has not the knowledge of good is wicked: for there is one good, the Father; and to be ignorant of the Father is death, as to know Him is eternal life, through participation in the power of the incorrupt One. And to be incorruptible is to *PARTICIPATE IN DIVINITY*" (*The Stromata*, V,10).

Think about it! These men knew --they understood --they grasped the fact that God intends for mankind ultimately, one day, to "participate IN DIVINITY!"

The Testimony of Hippolytus

Another early church leader was Hippolytus, a Greek, who was the disciple of Irenaeus. His dates are A.D. 170 to 236. Hippolytus, like Justin Martyr and Irenaeus, also discusses at length the nature of the Godhead. Obviously this was a subject of very great importance to these early "church fathers."

Hippolytus, too, shows that in his day the nature of God was still understood, and the pagan doctrine of the "Trinity" had not yet been established in the far-flung churches scattered throughout the Mediterranean region. Let us carefully review the words of this ancient Christian teacher.

In his book, *The Refutation of All Heresies*, Hippolytus tells us in no uncertain terms that in the original beginning there was only ONE God -- the One who became known as the "Father." As Hippolytus himself puts it:

"The first and only [one God], both Creator and Lord of all, *had nothing coeval [CO-EQUAL] with Himself But He was One, alone in Himself* by an exercise of His will He created things that are, which antecedently had no existence, except that He willed to make them" (book 10, chapter 28, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, volume 5, page 150).

What was the FIRST thing the Father created, before anything else was brought into existence? Says Hippolytus:

"*Therefore this solitary and supreme Deity, by an exercise of reflection, brought forth the LOGOS FIRST. . . Him alone He produced from existing things; for the Father Himself constituted existence, and THE BEING BORN FROM HIM was the cause of all things that are produced.* The Logos was in the Father Himself, bearing the will of His progenitor, and not being unacquainted with the mind of the Father. *For simultaneously with His procession from His Progenitor, inasmuch as He is this PROGENITOR'S FIRST -BORN*, he has, as a voice in

Himself, the ideas conceived in the Father. And so it was, that when the Father ordered the world to come into existence, *the Logos one by one completed each object of creation*, thus pleasing God. . . .

". . . God, who is the source of all authority, wished that the Logos might render assistance in accomplishing a production of this kind. . . . For as many things as He willed, God made from time to time. These things He created through the Logos" (The Refutation of All Heresies, book 10, chap.29, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol.5, p.150-51).

Clearly, Hippolytus understood that the Logos was created --from the essence of the Father Himself! He understood that the Logos had a beginning, as the FIRST-BORN of all the creation of God the Father.

But furthermore, Hippolytus understood God's purpose with creating human-kind, as well. Notice his remarkable words, as he discussed the creation of man. Says Hippolytus:

"The Creator did not wish to make him [man] a god, and failed in His aim; nor an angel, --be not deceived, --but a man. For if He had willed to make thee a god, He could have done so. *Thou hast the example of the LOGOS*. His will, however, was, that you should be a man, and He has made thee a man. *But if thou art desirous of also becoming a god*, obey Him that has created thee, and resist not now, in order that, being found faithful in that which is small, you may be enabled to have entrusted to you also that which is great.

"*The LOGOS ALONE of this God is FROM GOD himself*; wherefore also the Logos is God, being the substance of God. Now the world is made from nothing, wherefore it is not God" (*ibid.*).

How plain! Hippolytus understood! There is an ORDER in Creation. The Logos is the first-born Son of God *from the earliest times, from the beginning of Creation!* God the Father is the "Uncreated God," the One who has always existed. Then He brought into being the One called the Logos, or Word, of God --the One who became Jesus Christ!

But what about mankind? What about *our* true potential destiny? Hippolytus concludes his treatise, with these awesome words:

" And thou shalt receive the kingdom of heaven, thou who, whilst thou didst sojourn in this life, didst know the Celestial King. *And thou shalt be a ,"* *COMPANION OF THE DEITY, and a co-heir with Christ*, no longer enslaved by lusts or passions, and never again wasted by disease. *FOR THOU HAST BECOME GOD . . . because thou hast been DEIFIED, and begotten unto immortality. . . .*

" And God called man His likeness from the beginning. . . And provided thou obeyest His solemn injunctions, and becomest a faithful follower of Him who is good, *thou shalt RESEMBLE HIM*, inasmuch as thou shalt have honour conferred upon thee by Him. For the Deity, (by condescension,) does not diminish ought of the dignity of His divine perfection; *having made thee*

even GOD unto His glory!" (chapter 30), page 153).

How amazing! Reading these words reminds me of when I first began to understand this awesome truth of God --the truth that God is reproducing Himself, and that we will someday "resemble HIM," because we will become His literal DIVINE CHILDREN -- literal SONS OF GOD -- by means of the resurrection from the dead, and being made immortal and incorruptible, even as God Himself, is! I first learned this truth as it was being taught by Herbert W. Armstrong of the Radio Church of God back in 1958-1959!

The Testimony of Theophilus

Another early Christian teacher, one of the early "church fathers," was Theophilus of Antioch. He lived from A.D. 115 to 181. Eusebius the early church historian lavishes praise upon Theophilus for his unwearied labors to protect the flock of God from the incursions of Satanic doctrines and heresies.

Theophilus was one of the earliest commentators on the Gospels, if not the first, and seems to have been the earliest Christian church historian of the Church of the Old Testament. Theophilus was one of a long line of faithful teachers of God's Word in Antioch, where Christians were first called "Christians. II

In his writings, Theophilus also confirms the truth that God's purpose in dealing with mankind is to elevate the humankind to the God-kind. He declares in plain words, for those who are willing to listen, in his treatise written to Autolytus:

"But some one will say to us, Was man made by nature mortal? Certainly not. Was he, then, immortal? Neither do we affirm this. But one will say, Was he, then, nothing? Not even this hits the mark. He was by nature neither mortal nor immortal. For if He had made him immortal from the beginning, He would have made him God. Again, if He had made him mortal, God would seem to be the cause of his death. Neither, then, immortal nor yet mortal did He make him, but, as we have said above, capable of both; so that if he should incline to the things of immortality, *keeping he commandments of God*, he should receive as reward from Him immortality, **AND SHOULD BECOME GOD**" (Theophilus to Autolytus, book 2, chap.27, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*; vol.2, page 105).

When we think about it, of course, it is no small wonder that Satan the devil has cleverly hidden this awesome truth from mankind, and corrupted the teaching in the mainstream churches in the world. He does not want mankind to know or to discover his potential incredible destiny! Satan wants to keep mankind blinded, contused, and in total ignorance and darkness --in order to thwart and frustrate the plan of God.

The Testimony of Origen

Origen was perhaps the greatest shining light of the Alexandrian school of the early church, the pupil of Clement, and was noted for his brilliant scholarship. He put together the Hexapla, a combination of six early translations of the Scriptures, including our modern copy of the Septuagint. At one point in his career, Origen was demoted and

stripped of all ministerial authority by the bishop of Alexandria, out of jealousy and a vengeful spirit, but he was still admired and accepted by the Asian churches. He moved to Caesarea, and completed his life's work there. Origen lived from A.D. 185 to 254, we are told.

In his treatise "Against Celsus," Origen tells us that God's purpose is for mankind to rise to the level of the "divine." This noted authority and scholar of the early church, wrote in clear and powerful words:

“. . . so, according to our view, it was the *Logos God, and Son of the God of all things*, who spake in Jesus these words, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life'; and these, 'I am the door'; and these, 'I am the living bread that came down from heaven'; and other expressions similar to these. We therefore charge the Jews with not acknowledging Him to be God, to whom testimony was borne in many passages by the prophets, to the effect that *He was a mighty power, and a God next to the God and Father of all things*. For we assert that it was to Him the Father gave the command, when in the Mosaic account of the creation He uttered the words, 'Let there be light,' and 'Let there be a firmament,' and gave the injunctions with regard to those other creative acts which were performed; and that to Him also were addressed the words, 'Let Us make man in Our own image and likeness'; and that *the Logos, when commanded, obeyed all the Father's will*" ("Origen Against Celsus," book 2, chap.9, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol.4, page 433).

Notice that the Logos is plainly shown to be subordinate to the Father --under His control and direction --that the Father commanded, and the Logos carried out His commands. This fact itself disproves the common teaching that the Father and the Son are "co-equal." Obviously, although both are God, One is subject and under the authority of the Other!

Origen goes on later to explain in plain terms the incredible destiny of mankind:

"But both Jesus Himself and His disciples desired that His followers should believe not merely in His Godhead and miracles, as if He had not also been a partaker of human nature, and had assumed the human flesh which 'lusteth against the Spirit'; but they saw also that the power which had descended into human nature, and into the midst of human miseries, and which had assumed a human soul and body, contributed with faith along with its divine elements, to the salvation of believers, when they see that *from Him there began the UNION OF THE DIVINE with the human nature, in order that the human, BY COMMUNION WITH THE DIVINE, MIGHT RISE TO BE DIVINE, not in Jesus alone, but IN ALL THOSE who not only BELIEVE, but enter upon the life which Jesus taught*, and which elevates to friendship with God and communion with Him every one who lives according to the precepts of Jesus" (Origen Against Celsus, book 3, chap.23, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, volume 4, p.475).

To "rise to be divine" can mean only one thing --to become God, as God is God --yet to remain subject and under the authority of the One True God, the Father! In other words, we are to become part of His expanding divine FAMILY of God-Beings!

Origen also tells us that the Logos is intermediate between the Father and all created things. He declares:

" Jesus. . . has recalled our minds from all sensible things, as being not only corruptible, but destined to corruption, and elevated them to honour the God who is over all with prayers and a righteous life, which we offer to *Him as being INTERMEDIATE between the nature of the uncreated and that of all created things*, and who bestows upon us the benefits which come from the Father, and who as High Priest conveys our prayers to the *supreme God*" ("Origin Against Celsus," book 3, chap.34, *Anti-Nicene Fathers*, vol.4, page 478).

With all this testimony of the early conviction and belief that the Logos was Himself created as the "first-born" of all Creation, by the Father, and is also Himself a reigning member of the Godhead at this time, and of the early teaching that the ultimate destiny of mankind, made righteous, is to become part of that Divine Family, what need we of further witnesses?

This truth was known to the early Christians! Yet today, in the view of the overwhelming majority, even of the remnant generation of the true Church of God believers, it is still considered "blasphemy" to believe that Christ -- the Logos -- was at one point Himself *created and brought into existence by the Father!* And the concept that mankind has the potential to literally *become God*, is also relegated to the dustbin of discarded doctrines, even by the very Worldwide Church of God, which was founded by the late Herbert W. Armstrong, just a few years after his death!

Just as the early church soon began to lose this vital knowledge, so in this end-time generation many of God's people have quickly lost this supreme and tremendous understanding of the plan of God!

How remarkable! How cunning is our Adversary, the devil!

A Final Witness -- The Testimony of Athanasius

Athanasius was born between A.D. 296 and 298 and died in 373. During his life, the Arian controversy broke out in the church. Arias challenged the belief that the Father and Son were co-equal and co-eternal, pointing out that if the Son were truly a Son He must have had a beginning, and that therefore there had to be a time when He did not exist. Apparently Arias also taught that the Son was created "out of nothing," and therefore was not created from the Father's essence, and was not "true God." At least, these were the claims put forth by many of his accusers in the church. During this time the church was rocked with controversy over many things, and the Council of Nicea in A.D. 325, called by Emperor Constantine, sought to unify the church in doctrine and teaching.

Where did Athanasius stand in this controversy? He wrote against some of the concepts put forth by Arias, namely that the Logos was created from nothing, and was not truly therefore "God," or divine. Nevertheless, from his own writings we discover that Athanasius did share in the belief that the Son or Logos was true God, but that He came forth from the Father.

Athanasius wrote:

"But God possesses true existence and is not composite, wherefore His Word also has true Existence and is not composite, *but is the one and only begotten God, Who proceeds in His goodness FROM the Father as from a good Fountain, and orders all things and holds them together. ...*

". ..He guides and settles the whole Creation by His own Word, Who is Himself also God, that by the governance and providence and ordering action of the Word, Creation may have light, and be enabled to abide always securely. For it partakes of the *Word who derives true existence from the Father, and is helped by Him so as to exist*, lest that should come to it which would have come but for the maintenance of it by the Word, -- namely dissolution, -- 'for He is the image of the invisible God, the FIRST-BORN OF ALL CREATION, for through Him and in Him all things consist, things visible and things invisible, and He is the Head of the Church,' as the ministers of true teach in their holy writings " (" Against the Heathen," 41, *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*, vol.4, page 26).

Notice that Athanasius tells us that the Word "derives true existence from the Father, and is helped by Him so as to exist. " Does this sound like he believed the Father and the Son were "co-equal" OR "co-eternal"? Not at all!

Athanasius later writes of this relationship:

"Or who was with Him when He made all created Existence, except His Wisdom, which says: 'When He was making the heaven and the earth I was present with Him ?' But in the mention of heaven and earth, all created things in heaven and earth are included as well. But being present with Him as His Wisdom and His Word, looking at the Father He fashioned the Universe, and organized it and gave it order; and, as He is the power of the Father, He gave all things strength to be, as the Saviour says: 'What things soever I see the Father doing, I also do in like manner.' And His holy disciples teach that all things were made 'through Him and unto Him'; and, *being the good Offspring of Him that is good, and true Son, He is the Father's Power and Wisdom and Word. ..but He is the very Wisdom, very Word, and very own Power of the Father, very Light, very Truth, very Righteousness, very Virtue, and in truth His express Image, and Brightness, and Resemblance. And, to sum all up, HE IS THE WHOLLY PERFECT FRUIT OF THE FATHER, and is alone the Son, and unchanging Image of the Father*" (" Against the Heathen," 46:6-8, *ibid.*, page 29).

Athanasius, however, disagreed with Arias and others that the destiny of mankind was also to become "God. " The truth, by his time, was already beginning to become lost!

The Supreme DESTINY of Man!

It seems incredible that all of mainstream and orthodox Christianity becomes apoplectic and goes into a spasm of volatile fury whenever the subject of the apotheosis of mankind is brought up. No teaching enrages them more, or is considered more "heretical" by the Roman Catholic Church and its minions and off-shoots over the centuries.

And yet --the early church fathers all recognized that man's true destiny, if we prove faithful, is to become VERY GOD -- *members of the divine family of GOD!*

How did this incredible knowledge become lost? When did the visible church begin to reject this astonishing truth ?

The beginning of the end of this truth began with the Arian controversy, which swirled around the Nicean Council in 325 A.D. This was the time the Emperor Constantine began to seek to establish "unity" in the professing Christian Church scattered throughout his empire. He wanted religious unity so as to help cement and consolidate his weak and tenuous hold on the Empire itself, which was in danger of breaking up.

One of the major issues at the Nicean Council was the issue of the nature of God. Was God a "Trinity," as many bishops were beginning to teach? Or was the Godhead other than Trinitarian, with three Persons? Was God ONE, as the Jews taught? And what was the true nature of Christ, as the pre-existent Logos?

A Historical Perspective on the Trinity Doctrine

The doctrine of the Trinity, first formulated at the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D., and later at the Council of Constantinople in 381 A.D., and finally at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D., claimed that Jesus Christ was equal with and of the same substance as God the Father in a sense that human beings could never attain. This doctrine was developed to counter the teaching of Arias who taught that Jesus Christ, even though having attained the full glory of divine sonship through obedience, was nonetheless subordinate to the Father. Arias further said that because of Christ, human beings could now attain to the same divine stature or status of Christ, along with Him!

According to the Trinitarian view, God in the form of the Son temporarily descended to take on human limitations to redeem mankind, and, to them, the possibility that Christ could have failed was deemed unthinkable heresy. Arias, however, declared that Christ, as the first of God's primeval creations, acted as a perfect example for the rest of God's creation, and that Christ could have failed --but through His faithfulness He prevailed, making it possible for the rest of mankind to attain to divine status as well.

The Arians, of course, were branded as "heretics" by the Catholic Church, and were persecuted and many were martyred -- slain for their beliefs.

Joseph T. Lienhard, in *The Arian Controversy: Some Categories Reconsidered*, tells us that what is known of Arian beliefs comes to us through the highly filtered lenses of their fourth century opponents. It was only in 341 A.D. that Eastern bishops of the church even learned that they were being called "Arians."

As Gregg and Groh point out in *Early Arianism -- A View of Salvation*, the real issue was how mankind became saved. The Arians believed that salvation meant that we became deified like Christ who paved the way and made it all possible. To them, "divine sonship differs in degree but not in kind; therefore the Christ was *representative* as the Son, but *by no means only possible Son*" (Gregg and Groh, p.30, emphasis theirs).

Athanasius, the prime exponent of Trinitarianism, branded Arians as heretics and accused them of blasphemy and arrogance. Athanasius ridiculed, "Thus hearing that men are called sons, they hold themselves equal to the true and natural Son. . . . They are so arrogant as to suppose that as the Son is in the Father, and the Father in the Son, so will they be" (Athanasius, *Or.c.Ar.3*, 17).

Arias, a bishop in Alexandria, Egypt, taught and believed that God the Father was and is supreme, and that aeons ago He created the One who became Christ, the Messiah. Until recently, little was really known of his beliefs and writings -- most of it has come down to us in the writings of his enemies, who opposed his beliefs.

However, an original letter written by Arias has been found. Notice the amazing insight it provides us as to the real beliefs of Arias and his followers.

A New Look at the Arian Controversy!

In *The History of the Church of Christ*, volume II, which discusses the fourth and fifth centuries, written by the late Joseph Miller, with additions and commentaries by Issac Milner, D.D.F.R.S., dean of Carlisle, and the President of Queens College, Cambridge, London, published by Luke Hansard & Sons, for T. Cadwell and W. Davies, in the Strand, 1819, we read on page 53 the following account of a letter written by Arias to Eusebius. The author states:

"I shall give the reader the epistle at length, that he may judge for himself, though some parts of it are of no consequence with respect to the controversy [the famous "Arian Controversy" over the nature of Christ]. I believe it is the only fragment we have of his writings, and it is therefore the most authentic of all records, to decide the question, what Arianism is. "

The letter follows:

"The Epistle of Arias to Eusebius, Bishop of Nicomedia

"To my most desirable lord, the faithful man of God, the orthodox Eusebius, Arias persecuted by father Alexander unjustly, for the sake of truth, which conquers all things, of which you are the defender, joy in the Lord! My father Ammonius coming to Nicomedia, it appeared to me my duty to address you by him, and at the same time to inform your rooted charity and kind disposition, which you have towards the brethren, for the sake of God and his Christ, that the bishop harasses and persecutes us greatly, and moves every machine against us, so as even to expel us from the city as Atheists, *because we agree not with him who publicly says,*

'Always God, always the Son; at the same time the Father, at the same time the Son; the Son co-exists with God without being begotten: he is always begotten, yet unbegotten: God does not precede the Son in thought, not for a moment: always God, always the Son: the Son exists from God himself.

*"And when Eusebius your Brother in Caesaria, and Theodotus, and Paulinus, and Athanasius, [not the famous Athanasius] and Gregory, and Aetius, and all the bishops in the east, said, that God who had no beginning, existed before the Son, they were condemned, except only Philogonius, and Ellanicus, and Macarius, heretical unlearned men, some of whom call the Son an eructation, others a projection, others begotten together with him, We cannot bear to hear these impieties, though the heretics should threaten us with ten thousand deaths, *But what we say and think, we have both taught and do teach,* 'That the Son is not unbegotten, nor a part of the unbegotten, by any means, nor of any subject matter, but that by will and counsel he existed before the times and the ages, full God, only begotten, *not mixed with anything heterogenous, and before he was begotten, or created, or defined, or founded, HE WAS NOT; for he was not unbegotten.* We are persecuted because we say THE SON HATH A BEGINNING: but God is without beginning. *For this we are persecuted, and because we say, that the Son is from NON-EXISTENCE, and thus we said, because he is not part of God, or of any subject matter: for this we are persecuted; the rest you know. I pray that you may be strong in the Lord, remembering our afflictions.*"*

Notice carefully! Arias did not teach that Christ the Son was not divine, or not "God," as his critics and the gainsayers of the Church alleged. He taught that Christ was indeed divine, or as he put it, "FULL GOD, ONLY BEGOTTEN." That is, he taught Christ existed "before the times and the ages," but even so, "he was begotten, or created, or defined, or founded" -- that is, He had a beginning! Therefore, He was not "co-equal" or "co-eternal" with the Father, and did not exist for all eternity --but at a certain juncture, He was "begotten," or came into existence. There was a time when He did not exist, but was brought into existence -- or "created" -- by the Father, and He was the FIRST of all His mighty works.

It appears that the enemies of Arias put words in his mouth, or misunderstood or misinterpreted some of his basic, underlying teachings! Human nature being what it is, this is to be expected. I have found many people misunderstand some of my own teachings, and misrepresent them, and enemies often cast them in a deliberately "negative light," in order to mock and ridicule them. Human nature, it seems, never changes (Rom.8:7; Jer.17:9).

However, the fact is that the Scriptures really teach that the Logos had a beginning! Furthermore, the Scriptures really do teach that God's purpose ultimately is to DEIFY mankind -- that is, those who obey Him and keep His commandments! Notice the truth!

Was Christ CREATED?

There are several Scriptures in the Bible which Trinitarians find very difficult, if not totally impossible, to explain. These Scriptures, when carefully analyzed and

examined, totally destroy and refute the doctrine of the Trinity. But at the same time, they also destroy and refute the doctrine of a "Dual" Godhead, or what some have termed a "Binitarian" Godhead of Two members!

According to the Trinity doctrine, there is One God who is expressed in Three "Persons" -- who are all combined into "One" actual Being -- not three different Beings! These three are supposed to be "co-equal, co-eternal," and "uncreated." They are supposed to have no bodily form whatsoever (it would be "anthropomorphic" to think of them as in human form, as the Bible so often declares!).

Another common theory is that originally there were Two Beings in the Godhead --who existed all eternity. According to this theory, these two Beings -- the Father and the Logos, or Son -- were themselves "co-equal, co-eternal," and uncreated. They are two Beings, yet act in unison as One. They have shape and form, and it is they who said, "Let US make man in OUR image, after OUR likeness" (Genesis 1:26).

But are either one of these concepts really true? Does the Bible teach a Trinitarian or a Binitarian Godhead?

In What Way Is God "ONE"?

In the Old Testament, God reveals Himself to Israel in the famous "Shema" which every Jew is taught to repeat daily: "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD" (Deut.6:5). This, however, is not precisely the meaning of the original Hebrew expression. The actual original Hebrew for this verse literally translates:

"The LORD our God, the LORD is *one*."

What does it mean that the LORD is "One"? The Hebrew word for "one" in this verse is *echad* and has a very interesting meaning. The Companion Bible says of this word:

"One. Heb. *'ehad* -- A COMPOUND UNITY (Lat. *unus*), one made up of others; Gen.1:5, one of seven; 1:11, one of four; 2:21, one of twenty-four; 2:24, one made up of two; 3:22, one of the three: 49:16, one of twelve; Num.13:23, one of a cluster. So Ps. 34:20, etc. It is not *yahid*, which is (Latin) *unicu.s*, unique -- a single or only one. . ."

Thus we know there is ONE GOD -- but what does that really mean? Polytheism, the worship of many gods, is pagan and demon worship. The pagans worship many gods!

The apostle Paul tells us something very interesting about the true God, however, in contrast to pagan gods. He wrote:

"For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) but to us

there is but ONE GOD, THE FATHER, of whom are all things, and we in him; and ONE Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him" (1 Cor.8:5-6).

Now this is very interesting. Here we see that ultimately God the Father is the ONE TRUE GOD. Jesus here is not referred to as "God," but as the "Lord." Yet we know that He also is God, because, in Hebrews we read of Him:

"[Jesus] Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by INHERITANCE obtained a more excellent NAME than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art MY SON , this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a FATHER, and he shall be to me a SON? ...But unto the SON he saith, Thy throne, O GOD, is for ever and ever. . ." (Heb.1 :4- 7).

Jesus also, then, is "God." But it should be obvious that He is not as great as the Father! Just as a Son is under the authority of his Father, so Jesus learned everything from His heavenly Father, and is like Him -- but under Him!

Who Is Greater -- the Sender, or the Messenger?

Jesus Himself acknowledged this fact. He said, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the WILL OF HIM that SENT me" (John 5:38). Jesus said in another place, "I am not come of myself, but he that SENT me is true, whom ye know not. But I know him: for I am FROM him, and he hath SENT me" (John 7:28-29).

Notice again. In another place, Jesus said, "I proceeded forth and CAME from GOD; neither came I of myself, but he SENT me" (John 8:42). Jesus here clearly shows that the Father exercises supreme authority, and SENT him to do a .Job --to be our Saviour! In another place, Jesus said plainly, "For my Father is *greater* than I" (John 14:28). He acknowledged the overall supremacy of God the Father, and was subject to Him in all things!

In His final prayer for His disciples, Jesus said, "And this is life eternal, that they might know THEE the *ONLY TRUE GOD*, and Jesus Christ, *whom THOU hast sent*" (John 17:3).

Clearly, Jesus worshipped the Father, prayed to the Father, and loved the Father, and obeyed the Father! He acknowledged the Father as "the *ONLY* true God," and that He was sent by the Father. It should be obvious, then, to anyone with an open and sincere mind, unclouded by false doctrines and long-held false beliefs, that in the God Realm, the Father is *GREATER* than the Son!

After His resurrection from the dead, Jesus appeared to Mary , and said to her:

". . . Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto MY FATHER, and YOUR FATHER; and to *MY GOD*, and YOUR GOD" (John 20: 17).

Do you see? Jesus looked upon the Father as HIS "God"! That is, He WORSHIPPED the Father! Now if He was a co-equal part of the Trinity, this would make no sense at all. Would One equal part of the Trinity WORSHIP another Part which was only EQUAL? You worship that which is GREATER in authority and power -- you don't worship EQUALS! Jesus calls the Father His own *GOD!*

Clearly, there is something direly wrong with both the "Trinity" doctrine, and also the doctrine that the "Word" or "Logos" is CO-EQUAL with God the Father and existed from all eternity, "co-equal" and "co-eternal"! What is the answer to this mystery? What is the TRUE ORIGIN of the Logos, or Word, of God? What is His real relationship to God the Father!

Here is the astounding truth! Here is the TRUE REVELATION of the Word of God!

"The FIRSTBORN of Every Creature"

In the book of Colossians we find an incredible passage of Scripture which bears upon this question, and the true nature of the pre-existence of the One who became "Christ." The apostle Paul wrote of Christ Jesus, and His pre-existence before His supernatural human birth of the woman Mary:

"[The Father] Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son. ..Who is the IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD, *THE FIRSTBORN OF EVERY CREATURE*: For *BY HIM WERE ALL THINGS CREATED*, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: ALL THINGS were created BY HIM and FOR him: And HE is *before all things*', and by him all things' consist. And he is the HEAD of the body, the CHURCH: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead that in all things he might have the preeminence" (Col.1:12-18).

When we read this passage in context, it seems to clearly suggest outright that the One who became Jesus Christ was originally made, created, or fashioned in "the IMAGE of the invisible God" -- and that He was "the FIRSTBORN of every creature" or creation of GOD the Father!

The word translated "firstborn " in Colossians 1:15 is *prototokos*, derived from *protos*, meaning "foremost" in "time, place, order or importance," and is translated "before, beginning, best, chief, first, at the beginning." It is the superlative of *pro*, which

means "in front of, prior to"; and *tokos* derived from *tikto* and *teko*, meaning, "to produce, (from seed, as a mother, a plant, the earth, etc.) -- bear, be born, bring forth, be delivered" (see *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, #4416,4413,5088).

Now, for this Scripture to be LITERALLY TRUE, and for the One who became Christ to have been the "FIRSTBORN" of every creature, He would literally have to have become the 'FIRSTBORN' *BEFORE ANY OTHER CREATURE WAS BORN OR CREATED! He would have to have been FIRST!*

The Greek word translated "creature" in this verse is *ktisis* (Strong's #2937), and means "original *formation*," "building, creation, creature, ordinance." Thus when we examine this verse carefully, we find that Jesus Christ BORN FIRST, before every other "original formation," "creature," and "creation" and "ordinance" (or law) of heaven and earth!

That is, after God the Father, *He came FIRST: and was' "FIRSTBORN"*

This statement is made, in Colossians 1:15, right before the following phrase: "For by HIM were ALL THINGS CREATED. . . all things were created by him and for him" (v.16). Thus, after the Logos, or One who became Christ, was born, or "created," He participated in the creation of EVERYTHING ELSE in the Universe!

Thus we read in John 1 the following clarification of His creative role:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning WITH God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:1-3).

In the book of Hebrews, Paul adds this insight:

"God. . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he appointed HEIR of all things, BY WHOM ALSO HE MADE THE WORLDS; who being the brightness of his glory, and the *express image of his person*, and upholding all things by the word of his power, . . . sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb.1: 1-3).

The Logos, then, was and is the "brightness" of the glory of God the Father. He is the "Heir" of the Father. It was by Him that the Father "made the worlds" -- the Universe! And now He sits at the Father's right hand in heaven!

What do these things tell us? Before we attempt to put the picture together, notice a few more clear and fascinating Scriptures.

"The Beginning of the CREATION of God"

,"

In the book of Revelation, in the seven letters to the seven churches, Jesus Christ said to the Church in Laodicea:

"These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, THE BEGINNING OF *THE CREATION OF GOD*" (Rev.3:14).

The Greek word translated "beginning" here is *arche* and means "A COMMENCE- MENT, or (concrete) chief (in various applications of ORDER, TIME, PLACE or RANK); beginning, corner, first, magistrate, power, principality, principle, rule. " Adds *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon* --

" 1. *BEGINNING, ORIGIN*; a. used absolutely, of the BEGINNING OF ALL THINGS. . . b. in a relative sense, of the BEGINNING of the things spoken of. . . 2. *The person or thing that COMMENCES, THE FIRST PERSON OR THING IN A SERIES, the leader.* . . 3. *that by which anything begins to be, the ORIGIN* . . . 4. *THE EXTREMITY* of a thing. . . 5. *the first place, principality, rule, magistracy.* . . "

The basic, underlying meaning of this word is simply "BEGINNING," or "FIRST," that which "COMMENCES" OR BEGINS -- as the first automobile in history, the first airplane, the first wheel, the first planet, the first fire, the first house built, etc.

These Scriptures give the "COUP DE GRACE" to the doctrine of the "Trinity, " "Binity, " or another similar doctrine about the Godhead!

Incredibly, by foisting off upon the world the doctrine of the "Trinity," Satan the devil has completely blinded mankind as to his true potential and has completely deceived mankind as to his true purpose for being created and placed upon this earth! ! ! If you have not read them, write for our articles: "Is God a Trinity?", "The Trinity Doctrine: Fact or Fable?", "Who Or What Was Jesus Christ Before His Human Birth?", "Was Christ Created?", and "The Origin of the Logos."

A Modern Scholar Speaks Out

James D. Tabor, Professor of Religion at North Carolina State University in Charlotte, published an excellent paper in 1984 entitled "Firstborn of Many Brothers: A Pauline Notion of Apotheosis" (Society for Biblical Literature 1984 Seminar Papers). Tabor wrote:

"In [I Thessalonians, Galatians, I-II Corinthians, Romans, and Philippians] Paul refers to Jesus as Son of God (Greek, "huios") 15 times. On the other hand, he speaks of believers. . .as sons of God (plural, "huiou") 10 times. . . 'for in Christ Jesus you are all *sons of God* through faith' [Gal.3:26] ...'For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to share the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born of many brothers' [Rom.8:29] . . . The identification of the exalted heavenly state of Jesus with that expected by believers is exact. . . . 'But we all, with unveiled face, beholding the

glory of the Lord, are being transformed into his image' [II Cor.3:18] . . .'

Tabor continues:

"My point. . . is that all which is included in the idea of 'Christ as the image of God' is applied in the most *direct* way to the anticipated future of those who believe' the message. . . . Such a relationship involves a suffering with him, which in turn leads to a 'co-glorification' . . . 'firstborn' implies more than preeminence, it points to those 'later born' . . . Jesus as the preliminary figure of God's plan is representative of the many to follow. . . The identification of Jesus the Son of God with the many glorified sons of God which follow is direct. The idea is that God is bringing into existence *a family* (i.e., 'many brothers') of beings, the Sons of God. . . Jesus, then, stands at the head of a new *genus* of cosmic 'brothers' who now await their own exaltation at his parousia [coming] "Heb.2:5-8 . . . offers a fascinating parallel to I Cor.15:20-28 as well as Rom.8:29-30. The emphasis there is that the future 'world' belongs not to angels but to humankind, and that Jesus is the 'pioneer' man who has inherited 'all things' and offers the same to the 'many sons' that God is bringing to glory. . . ."

"I would relate the Pauline concept to what Nilsson calls a 'new cosmology' which emerges in the Hellenistic period. . . .the great gulf is increasingly transcended by a more general idea of apotheosis as potential not only for heroes, emperors and rulers, but for anyone and everyone. More specifically I would relate Paul's concept of many sons of God to a host of Jewish texts in and around the Second Temple period which speak of the destiny of both individual and select groups in terms of heavenly transformation, glorification, or even enthronement. I have in mind texts like Dan.12:3 which speak of those resurrected to eternal life as shining 'like the brightness of the firmament' and 'like the stars forever and ever' . . ."

The Destiny of Man

It is the destiny of mankind, if he overcomes the base pulls of human nature, and lives a life of obedience to God's laws and commandments, through the power and inner-working of the Holy Spirit, and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, to become -- once and for all -- very divine members of the Universe-creating and ruling Family of GOD!

We will become among the divine "Elohim." We will become El Shaddai, "God Almighty." We will become equal to and one with YHVH, the "Yahveh" of the Old Testament, who in most places was the One who became Christ, the Logos or Word of God (see my article "Who Was Jesus Before His Human Birth?").

The classic, Greek static concept of God is erroneous. God is not an ephemeral "ghost" which fills all and knows all (even the future) and has done everything and so has nothing further to do -- therefore He is "static," stationary, and monolithic. That is not "God." Rather, God is a very active, growing, expanding FAMILY --and the Father Himself grows and learns as He watches His creation in operation. He has limitless ability to grow and learn, and to continually expand His Creation and creative works. That is one reason He has brought into existence His divine Family!

Isaiah tells us about this unique Hebrew concept of the true God. The prophet writes, "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his

shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the INCREASE of his government and peace [prosperity, abundance, goodness] there will BE NO END" (Isaiah 9:6-7). The Kingdom of God will grow and expand and "INCREASE" forever and ever --there will be no end to its growth and expansion, development and multiplication. It will go on and on, greater and greater, forever and ever, throughout space and time into infinity.

"After HIS Kind"

Human beings are even now in God's image and likeness. In the book of Genesis, we read that God created plants and herbs of the field on the third day, and created them to reproduce themselves, each "after his kind" (Gen.1:11-12). On the fifth day He created birds, and fish, and created them "after their kind," and "every winged fowl after his kind" (verses 20-21). He commanded them to "Be fruitful, and multiply" (verse 22).

Then, on the sixth day, God created animals of the land, "the living creature after his kind" (Gen.1:24), and "the beast of the earth after his kind" (verse 25). Notice that every living thing reproduces "after its kind." This is the law of reproduction. Each species or type of creature reproduces its own species, type, or Biblical "kind."

But then, on the sixth day, God also said, "Let us make MAN *in OUR IMAGE, after OUR likeness: and let them have DOMINION . . .*" (Gen.1:26-27). Do you see? God created mankind after His own *GOD-KIND!* But, the difference is, He created us out of physical dust (Gen.2:7). We are not Spirit as He is Spirit. We are not yet fully, completely, after His kind! We are still being programmed, processed, and developed!

Nevertheless, the Biblical revelation clearly shows that it is God's ultimate purpose to bring us as full-fledged SONS into His glorious KINGDOM!

We are even now called "the children of God" (1 John 3:1). God's invisible nature and deity are known and revealed by the things He created (Rom.1:20). He has revealed much of His likeness and image in the creation of man in His image. God desires that we become perfect -- like Him in character (Matt.5:48). Eventually we are to become changed, and made into His spiritual likeness and image (Phil.3:21; I John 3:2).

Says the Phillips translation, " All who follow the leading of God's Spirit are God's *own sons*. ..you have been adopted into the very FAMILY CIRCLE OF GOD and you can say with a full heart, 'Father, my Father.' The Spirit himself [or, itself] endorses our inward conviction that we *really are the children of God. THINK WHAT THAT MEANS. If we are his children, we are his treasures, and all that Christ claims will belong to all of us as well! Yes, if we share in his sufferings we shall certainly also share in his glory*" (Rom.8:14-17).

God is literally our "Father." We have become partakers of "the divine NATURE" (II Pet. 1 :4). Phillips has this, we "share God's *essential nature*." How could we do such a thing, unless we are also DIVINE? For God's nature is DIVINITY itself! ",

Think of it! Think what all this really means! How cleverly the devil has hidden the eyes of the world from this beautiful, sublime, glorious truth!

You and I have a chance -- an opportunity -- to become members of the DIVINE UNIVERSE-RULING FAMILY OF GOD ALMIGHTY HIMSELF! We will be just like Jesus Christ Himself, our pioneer and captain of our salvation, only we will be lesser in rank and power and position in the God Kingdom !

Will we create, or colonize, new universes? Will we be sent out to create new worlds and new peoples, and introduce them, also, to "God the Father"? And will these, in turn, in time, also go out to create new worlds, new universes?

Will Wonders Never Cease?

Will the creation of God thus continue forever, throughout infinity? Is the capacity to create and rule the ultimate, most fundamental reality?

In all these things, "Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known" {1 Cor.13:12}. Phillips has this verse: " At present we are men looking at puzzling reflections in a mirror. The time will come when we shall see REALITY WHOLE and face to face! At present all I know is a little fraction of the truth, but the time will come when I shall know it as fully as God now knows me!"

Today, we have about as much knowledge and comprehension, comparatively, spiritually speaking, as an unborn child still in its mother's womb has of the outside world! Yet, by the grace and mercy of God, we have seen things -- wonderful things -- which God is preparing for those who love Him. Glimpses of wonderful things which can hardly be put into words.

Things beyond the ability of human tongue or pen to describe.

Glorious things.

We look up at the stars at night, and marvel. We look at the mysteries and marvels in the earth -- the Grand Canyon, Yosemite National Park, Glacier, Zion -- and wonder. We look at the way of a human family, with a little baby, and the love between a woman and a man -- and are amazed. Life is so thrilling, so exciting, so incredible. And God is giving us an opportunity to enjoy it with Him, with divine pleasures forever more!

David wrote, "You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasure at your right hand " (Psalm 16: II). And I --in righteousness *I will see your face*; when I awake [*at the resurrection*], I will be satisfied with seeing *your likeness*" (Psalm 17: 15).

Chapter 15

Who Is the **"ANGEL of the LORD"** *and the MESSIAH?*

Who is the mysterious being in the Tanakh who wrestled with Jacob, met Moses at the "burning bush," who gave the Ten Commandments to Moses, and who was SEEN by the 70 elders of Israel?

Hidden in the Tanakh, or Old Testament Scriptures, is fascinating, incredible evidence that *PROVES* that Orthodox Judaism has overlooked the plain facts that attest to the Messiahship of Jesus Christ, Yeshua the Nazarene, and His incredible "Pre-existence" as the "LOGOS" of God!

Was Jesus Christ just an ancient criminal who was hung on a cross? Was He just another imposter who falsely claimed to be the Messiah, son of David, and coming King of Israel?

Read here the incredible true story -- and put away the blinders which have hidden this astounding truth from your understanding!

Is Jesus the Jew, born about 2,000 years ago, really the promised Messiah of Israel? Modern and historic Judaism has denied this fact, and over the centuries a violent campaign of antagonism and hatred has been conducted by "Christian" apologists against the Jews, who nominal Christians accuse of being "Christ killers."

On the other hand, the Jewish rabbinical establishment over the centuries has not made matters any better, by their rancorous and antagonistic attitude toward "Christians," whom they have accused of being idolaters. Even worse, during the early centuries of the present era, Jewish synagogues adopted a daily prayer in which Christians and other "heretics" were roundly cursed, and Jewish believers in Yeshua the Nazarene were

banished from the synagogues and ruled as "heretics." In the days of Simon Bar Kochba, around 135 A.D., Messianic Christian Jews were at Bar Kochba's behest executed as traitors and enemies of the Jewish state, with the approval of Rabbi Akiba and Rabbinic Judaism!

The Nazarenes, the name by which "believing Jews" were known, who kept the Torah and the laws of Moses, and adhered to Jewish customs, thus became outcasts on both sides of the fence. The growing Christian church branded them as "Judaizers" and "heretics" by the second and third centuries. Meanwhile, the Jews considered them as outcasts, renegades from Judaism, and beneath contempt.

Nevertheless, while the vast majority of Christians became assimilated into the Church of Rome and its counterparts and off-shoots, and lost contact with their Hebrew-Jewish roots, and rejected the teachings of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and misinterpreted the New Testament to suite their objectives, there always has been a small minority which has remained faithful to the Word of God -- the Jewish Nazarenes, and the various groups down through history which have remained obedient to the laws of God, kept the Sabbath intact, and remained faithful to the Word of God, as much as they were given to understand it.

But now, in these last days, before the apocalypse, and the soon-coming of Jesus Christ to restore the government and Kingdom of God to this earth, God has revealed exciting NEW TRUTH -- new evidence -- from His Word, that Jesus Christ IS the promised Messiah!

The Real Meaning of "B'Reshith"

Writes Randolph Parrish in "The Fourth Jewish Sect," concerning the Nazarenes:

"The Nazarenes were a Jewish sect of the late Second Temple period. They were the followers of Yeshua of Nazareth. They believed that a mocked and ridiculed rabbi, who had been executed under the Roman governor Pontius Pilate, was actually the promised Redeemer of Israel. They expressed great confidence in this view, because they asserted that everything which had happened to him, including his rejection, had been foretold and outlined long before in the Tenach, and that it was, therefore their very belief in the Jewish scriptures, which compelled them to recognize him as the promised Messiah.

In fact, Parrish says, the Nazarenes found evidence that Jesus was indeed the promised Messiah, or "Christ" ("Messiah" and "Christ" both mean "Anointed One") in the very first pages of the Old Testament! He continues:

"It was clear to them that the scriptures talked of nothing else, quite literally from the very beginning. For example, the opening words of Genesis 1:1 are usually translated as 'In the beginning . . .'. But the Hebrew word 'reshith' (beginning) can also have the meaning 'firstborn son.' And so, one could translate this passage as 'In the firstborn son God created the heavens and the earth.' Jerome quoted Aristo of Pella, who, according to Origen, was a Nazarene (Quaest.heb.Gen.1:1) as stating in the 'Dialogue of Jason and Papiscos' that the verse should be translated in this way. Iraneus also translated this as

'The son in the beginning; then God created the heavens and the earth' (Dem.43). Tertullian noted the same possible interpretation (Adv. Prax.5). Hilary said that 'b'reshith' could have three possible meanings: 'in the beginning'; 'in the head'; or 'in the son.' (Tract. Psalm 2:2). The modern French author Danielou noted the comparison between these meanings and Col.1:15-18, where Paul seems to write of the same three meanings: 'He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him were all things created . . . And he is the head of the body . . . he is the beginning and the firstborn . . .' This would suggest, according to Danielou, that there was perhaps an already extant rabbinical tradition of explaining the passage in these several ways, which Paul employed" (quoted from *The Messianic Outreach* 1996).

How interesting! When properly understood, the opening of the book of Genesis is actually a prophecy and a description of the Messiah -- the Son of God! It could be translated, "In the Son God created the heavens and the earth." Or, if we combine two meanings of "b'reshith" to show both truths, we would have:

"In the beginning, in the Son, God created the heavens and the earth," or, "In the Son in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."

The Father and the Son Created the Universe

How does this compare with the New Testament teaching about Christ? It is remarkable! The apostle John wrote of this same truth in the beginning of his gospel. "In the beginning was the Word [*Logos*], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. *All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made*" (John 1:1-3).

"That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not" (v.9). "He came unto his own, and his own received him not" (v.10).

John goes on, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the *only begotten of the Father,*) full of grace and truth" (v.14).

How remarkably this ties in with John's explanation of the origin of Jesus Christ, as the "Word" or "Logos" of God, from the beginning. The Logos or Word did the actual creating. God the Father created the present Creation, the Universe, and its inhabitants, "in the son." The "son" was instrumental in their creation. Yet from the beginning, he was called "the son."

Origin of the "Son of God"

Paul discusses this relationship in even more detail. He writes: "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated [transferred] us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have *redemption through his blood*, even the forgiveness of sins: *Who is the IMAGE of the invisible God, the FIRSTBORN OF EVERY*

CREATURE" (Col.1:13-15).

Notice that Jesus -- the Word or Logos of God -- was the "firstborn of *every creature.*" This fact implies that He was the FIRST of God's Creation -- and He was the one God used to create all other things in heaven and earth. He Himself said as much in His message to the Laodicean Church. We read: "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans, write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, *THE BEGINNING of the creation of God*" (Rev.3:14).

The Greek word *arche*, here translated "beginning," means literally "the first," both in rank, and in progressive order, "first in a series," as well as first in chronological order. Thus Christ from the very beginning was the FIRST being God the Father created -- or "pro-created" from His own very essence -- and then with Him as His "Son," He then created the entire Universe!

Paul goes on, speaking of the Logos, or Word, the antecedent Figure who became Jesus Christ, our Redeemer -- "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell" (Col.1:16-19).

In the epistle to the Hebrews, Paul also points out this sublime truth. He writes: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, *Thou art my Son, this day have I BEGOTTEN thee?* And again, *I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?* And again, when he bringeth the ***firstbegotten*** [*remember, Christ or the Logos was the firstbegotten or first born AT CREATION, of ALL of Creation!*] into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him" (Heb.1:1-6).

When the Logos was first begotten, and created, born of the Father, at His very own "birth" at the beginning of time, as it were, and he was then "brought into the world," it was His destiny that all the angels of God should worship Him. And undoubtedly they have done so, from that ancient primordial time in dim antiquity.

He was, from His beginning, made -- created -- in the "image" of the Father. Thus He was a "likeness" of His Father in every respect. He was the "brightness" of the Father's glory. Thus He was the true "Light" as John says (John 1:9).

It is interesting that the first thing God "re-created" in "Creation week," in Genesis 1, on the first day, was one thing only. He said: "Let there be *light*" (Gen.1:3). "Light" was the first thing created. This was a physical "type" of the original Spiritual Creation, in which also the first thing the Father created was "Light." That light was the Logos, the true light. He Himself says of Himself, "I am Alpha [the first letter of the alphabet, a created thing] and Omega, the beginning [the first object created in a series] and the end, the first [in time order] and the last" (Rev.22:13). The Father is the original Creator -- but first He created Christ, the Logos, and in Him created all else -- in Him and through Him, so that He will be both the beginning and the "end," the first and the "last."

Who Was "the Angel of the Lord"?

Jesus showed He is that true light, saying, also: "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. **I AM** [remember, as the Son of God, He became also the "I AM" -- part of the Godhead -- who spoke to Moses in the burning bush, saying His name was "I AM THAT I AM" -- see Exodus 3:14] the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star" (Rev.22:16).

Jesus Christ -- Yeshua the Anointed One -- also used this expression, "I AM," in a fascinating context in John 8, where He said to the Rabbis who were questioning Him: "If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I *proceeded forth and came from God*; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. . . . Yet ye have not known him, but I know him. . . . Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I AM*" (John 8:42, 55-58).

The One that appeared to Moses in the burning bush, many have thought, was God the Father. But this simply cannot be so. In fact, we read in Exodus, "And the ANGEL [Hebrew melek meaning "messenger"] of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of the bush" (Exo.3:2). This was not the Father Himself, but His agent -- His "messenger." Yet it was far more than just any angelic messenger. This messenger was the Word -- the Logos -- the second member of the Elohim Godhead! For He said to Moses, later, when asked His name: "And *God* said to Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you" (Exo.3:14).

Notice! This "angel of the LORD" went on to say to Moses, "And *God* said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, the LORD [the Hebrew Tetragrammaton, or YHVH -- Yah, Yahu, or Yahveh, and perhaps other forms, meaning the Eternal, Self-Existent one, the One who is, was, and shall always be, as well as the One who Causes to be or not to be, the Creator of all there is] God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is *my name for ever, and this is MY MEMORIAL unto all generations*" (Exo.3:15).

This One who spoke to Moses was *not God the Father*, as many have assumed. This had to be the second member of the Godhead -- the Logos -- who was created by the Father, and became His very own Son, through whom He created the Universe to follow. How do we know this?

Simple: This great Being later spoke the Ten Commandments, and all Israel heard Him (Exo.20:1-17). "And God spake all these words, saying . . ." (v.1). The One who would speak would naturally be the Word, the Spokesman, the Utterer, the Speaker - - The Logos spoke on behalf of the Father. The people all heard Him speak the Ten Commandments, but were afraid, and said to Moses, "Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die" (Exo.20:18-19). God Himself, the Logos, said to Moses, "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, Ye have seen that *I have talked with you from heaven*" (Exo.20:22). From this point on, God spoke with Moses, and Moses communicated His message to the people.

Secondly: This great Being was *seen* by Moses himself, and seventy of the elders of Israel. That is, He made Himself visible to their eyes, and they beheld Him! After God gave Israel His covenant, and they agreed to perform it completely, "Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: And *they SAW the God of Israel*: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also *they saw God* and did eat and drink" (Exo.24:9-11).

Later, Moses Himself got a personal, close-up glimpse of the One who spoke to him -- the Logos in His glory. God said to him, "Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen" (Exo.33:20-23).

Who Appeared to Moses and the 70 Elders?

How do we know this was not the Father? The context shows clearly that this Person was no doubt God Himself -- He is called "God," and He gave the Ten Commandments to Israel. He is the "Deliverer" and the One who brought Israel out of Egypt. Moses had to stand upon a "rock" to see Him. What is the only way we can "see" God?

The answer is, "through Christ" -- and through Him alone! Paul wrote, "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: *and that Rock was Christ*" (I Cor.10:1-4).

To see the Father, we must go through Christ, and first see Christ! Philip, one of the disciples, asked to see the Father. But Jesus replied, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath *seen me hath seen the Father* [*He was -- remember -- the 'express image' of the Father!*]; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believe thou not that *I am in the Father, and the Father in me?* the words I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works" (John 14:9-10).

But again, how do we know that the One who appeared to Moses, and spoke to the children of Israel, and was seen visibly by 74 men, including Moses, Aaron, his two sons, and seventy of the elders of Israel, was not the Father Himself?

Simple: The Scripture says plainly, "**No man hath seen God at any time**; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John 1:18).

No man -- no human being -- has ever seen visibly God the Father! That's what the Word of God says! We can only know the Father through His messenger, His representative, His mouthpiece -- His spokesman -- the Logos, the Word, the Son of God -- the One who became Yeshua -- Jesus Christ!

Jesus Himself gave further testimony of this fact. He declared unequivocally: "And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. ***Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape***" (John 5:37). Jesus was talking with the Jewish leaders and people at this point -- principally the Pharisees, who sat in Moses' seat (Matt.23:1-3). He plainly said that no man, no Israelite, has ever heard either the voice of God, nor seen His shape or physical likeness -- His very form -- *at any time -- ever!* **NO MAN!** *This means the One the Israelites HEARD at Mount Sinai, the One the elders of Israel and Moses SAW, could not have been the Father! It had to have been the Word -- the Logos -- the Son of God!*

That this is true is attested further by the evangelist Stephen in his remarkable testimony before the Sanhedrin, the court of Israel, when he was brought to trial. In his defence before them, he reiterated briefly the history of Israel, and stated categorically: "And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him [Moses] in the wilderness of mount Sinai *an ANGEL of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush*" (Acts 7:30). The One who then spoke with Moses, the "Lord," who said He was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, was none other than the "Messenger" or "Angel" of the Lord -- the Logos, the Protean Word of God.

Steven further acknowledges: "This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the ANGEL *which appeared to him in the bush. HE [the Angel] brought them out, after that HE had showed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness forty years*" (Acts 7:35-36).

How plain! The One that appeared and spoke with Moses was the Angel of the LORD -- the Logos -- Christ in His Pre-incarnate form! He was even then the "Son of God" by actual creation -- and later became also the "son of man" by physical human birth in the womb of Mary (Matt.1:18-23). The "Son of God" later also became "the Son of man," thus making Himself human, so that He could die for our sins on the stake -- suffering the death of crucifixion -- the most painful type of death and agony known to man.

Stephen goes on, cementing this truth forever in our minds and consciousness: "This is he [Moses], that was in the church in the wilderness WITH THE ANGEL THAT SPAKE WITH HIM IN THE MOUNT SINAI, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us" (Acts 7:38).

Thus the One who spoke with Moses, and Israel, in mount Sinai, was not the Father -- it was the "Angel" of the Lord -- it was the protean Christ -- the Logos of God!

The Word "Angel"

Interestingly, the word "Angel" in the Greek language is derived from the word *ago* which means "to bring, drive," "go," and "pass (time)." The word translated "angel" is *aggelos* and literally means "a messenger," from "to bring tidings," especially an "angel." (Number #32 in *Strong's Concordance*).

The Hebrew word for "angel" is *malak* and means "to despatch as a deputy, a messenger," "an angel (also a prophet, priest, or teacher)," translated variously as "ambassador, angel, king, messenger" (#4397 in *Strong's Concordance*). *Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon* adds, "1) one sent, a messenger," "2) a messenger of God, i.e., a) an angel . . . b) a prophet . . . c) a priest . . . d) of Israel, as being the messenger of God and the teacher of the Gentiles."

Thus Jesus Christ fulfilled not only the obvious prophecies of the coming of Messiah found in the Tanakh, but also certain hidden and almost inscrutable prophecies. For Genesis 1:1 to state that "In His Son God created the heavens and the earth" itself even implies that eventually mankind would be redeemed and saved and delivered -- i.e., created anew and rescued from death -- through the Son -- that is, the whole plan of redemption, like everything else, would be done through the office of the Son of God.

Another allusion to the "Son" of God in the Old Testament/Tanakh is found in the mysterious book of Proverbs. King Solomon declares: "Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and HIS SON'S NAME, if thou canst tell?" (Prov.30:4).

It is the Father and His Son who accomplished the original Creation -- bound up the wind, set boundaries for the seas, established the limits of the earth. Obviously, then,

the One who revealed Himself to Job, and spoke to him about the creative acts of God, was also none other than Jesus Christ/the Logos/the Word of God/the Angel of the Lord.

Proverbs 8 and the "Wisdom" of God

Proverbs 8 also speaks of this profound mystery of the ages. Interestingly, the name of JESUS in Greek adds up in gematria to the numerical value of 888. The number "eight" has spiritual significance, and means "a new beginning." There were eight souls in the ark of Noah -- he and his wife, their three sons and their three wives. The "eighth" day of the Feast, Shemini Atzeret, is in reality a new Feast by itself, and represents "a new beginning" -- the New Heavens and the New Earth. So it is interesting that in Proverbs 8, itself -- not 6, 7, 9, or 10 -- that we read about God and His works, before the present creation, spoken from the standpoint of "Wisdom," as a "companion" of the eternal God, the Father.

"Wisdom" acknowledges, and teaches us, as being an expression of "the Word," or "Logos," declaring: "The LORD [the Father] possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was *set up from everlasting, from the BEGINNING*, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths [no seas or oceans], *I was brought FORTH [i.e., created, brought into being!]*; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills *was I brought forth . . . When he prepared the heavens, I WAS THERE*: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: when he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep . . . *Then was I by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him*" (Prov.8:22-30).

The LXX translation into Greek about 250 years before Christ makes this even more plain, if that is possible. Notice! Wisdom, which in Biblical language is synonymous with "the Word" of God, and the "Law" of God, and thus is an appellation of "the Logos," says as follows: "*The Lord made me [created me] the BEGINNING of his ways for his works. He established me BEFORE TIME WAS IN THE BEGINNING, before he made the earth: even before he made the depths; before the fountains of water came forth; before the mountains were settled, and before all hills, HE BEGAT ME [Notice! Wisdom was "begotten" of God the Father! How plain!]. . . . When he prepared the heaven, I WAS PRESENT WITH HIM; and when he prepared his throne upon the winds; and when he strengthened the clouds above; and when he secured the fountains of the earth: and when he strengthened the foundations of the earth: I was by him, **suiting myself to him**, I was that wherein he took delight; and daily I rejoiced in his presence continually*" (Proverbs 8:22-30, LXX).

How plain! The Logos or Wisdom of God, who later became Jesus Christ, the Saviour and Messiah, was made or created AS THE BEGINNING of God's Creation -- "the beginning of his ways for his works." The Logos was established by the Father "before time was" -- before time itself was created -- "in the beginning." Wisdom, or the "Logos," was "BEGOTTEN" of God. The Father "BEGAT" Him "before he made the earth"!

Psalm 110 and the Messiah

Another reference to this unique symbiotic relationship ("symbiosis" means mutually beneficial and helpful) between the Word/Logos and the Father is made by David in the Psalms. Notice!

Again, the Massoretic text is vague and nebulous here, but the LXX, which precedes the Massoretic text by about 750-1000 years, in being codified and created, makes the truth awesomely plain. David wrote: "The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand [where Jesus Christ is now sitting!], until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send out a rod of power for thee out of Sion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. With thee is dominion in the day of thy power, in the splendor of thy saints [compare Dan.7:27-28]: *I HAVE BEGOTTEN THEE FROM THE WOMB BEFORE THE MORNING*" (Psa.110:1-3) -- that is, *before mornings and evenings were created -- before the creations of "days" and "time" -- in other words, before the Universe with all its heavenly motions and time-keeping "clocks" was created!*

Do you see? The Massoretic text is corrupted and unintelligible at this point. Verse 3 is quite confusing and vague -- but the Septuagint makes it perfectly plain!

The "Logos" or "Word" of God, or "Wisdom" of God -- was begotten by God the Father, and brought into existence, **BEFORE THE MORNING ITSELF** was created! -- before the physical Universe was fashioned and made!

Notice that the Word/Logos was created (or "pro-created" of the essence of the Father) *before "time."* This means, of course, that He had "no beginning of days" as we read in Hebrews 7, where the apostle Paul speaks of the mystery of Melchisedek. He states of this Old Testament figure, who was a manifestation of the Logos: "For this Melchisedek, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham . . . first being by interpretation, King of righteousness, and after that also king of Salem, which is, King of peace; without father, without mother, without descent [margin, "without pedigree"], having neither beginning of days nor end of life; but *made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually [forever]*" (Heb.7:1-3). "Now consider how *great* this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils . . ." (v.4).

Being created *before time existed, before day and night were created, which are a product of the movement of the earth spinning on its axis and revolving around the sun once a year*, this Primordial Being -- the "King of righteousness" and "King of peace" -- was the Logos or Word of God! He could not have been Shem, the son of Noah, as the rabbis often teach. Shem had both beginning of days, and end of life -- and had a human pedigree. "Consider how *great* this man was," Paul asks us. Yes, how great! He was a manifestation of the Primordial Messiah -- the "Angel of the Lord" in the aspect of the eternal High Priest of God the Father, which He is! Yeshua is the High Priest of God forever (Heb.6:20; 7:11, 14-17, 24-25; 8:1-2; 4:14-16).

Isn't it about time we open our eyes, and rub out the sleepiness and fog of ignorance, and admit the TRUTH of the testimony of the Old Testament Scriptures about the pre-existence of the "Son of God" -- the Messiah?

Proof from Isaiah's Testimony

Further proof of Christ's Messiahship comes from the Dead Sea scrolls, and textual revisions of Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22 which are indicated as being necessary, based on the Dead Sea scroll evidence.

Professor James Tabor has for some time been studying the photographs of the Great Isaiah Scroll found in Cave 1 at Qumran near the Dead Sea, comparing it with the standard Massoretic text. For some time he has pointed out in lectures and in undergraduate classes that the Qumran scroll contains the word "LIGHT" following the verb in Isaiah 53:11. Thus the text should read: "from the travail of his soul he will see LIGHT." Says Dr. Tabor:

"The word 'light' drops out of the Massoretic text, leaving the verb without an object, and thus making the standard KJV and other translations rather meaningless: 'he will see [what??] from the travail of his soul.' I have speculated that the rabbis might have dropped this word in response to Christian polemics, since the Nazarenes would be trying to apply Isaiah 53 to Yeshua, with the references to 'death,' 'grave,' and 'seeing light' as paralleling the 'death, burial, and resurrection' idea that Paul claims to find 'according to the Scriptures' (I Cor.15:1-3)."

Prof. Tabor adds, showing another illustration of a variant reading in Isaiah which seems to bolster the Christian view of Jesus being the Messiah of Israel! He goes on:

"I now discover that there is an equally significant variant reading in Isa.53:8. As you know *late* Jewish interpretation has applied this entire section of Isaiah 52:13-53:12 to the Nation of Israel. In contrast, as the Lubavitch have most recently reminded us, the Talmud understands the sufferings of this 'servant' to be none other than the Messiah, i.e., a specific individual, not the entire Nation, and even says he might well be one who 'comes from the dead,' that is, someone who has already lived and died, but is resurrected (see Sanhedrin 98b). Verse 8 has always been somewhat crucial in this discussion, since it says that this Figure is 'cut off from the land of the living for the transgression of MY people.' This verse is quite a problem for those who want to understand the Servant Figure himself as the People of Israel, since he clearly suffers for them -- so much so that the Koren English translation (Jerusalem English-Hebrew Bible) which many of you have, puts here 'cut off . . . for the transgression of THE people' -- a blatant and misleading translation. Well, as it turns out the Qumran Isaiah scroll provides us with an even different reading: 'for he was cut off . . . for the transgression of HIS people.' The difference in Hebrew is merely between a yod and a vav, but the Qumran text is absolutely clear: the reading is vavsamechayin not yodsamech ayin: On the face of it, this is no major change. However, one of the problems with this whole section of Isaiah is determining VOICE -- that is, who is speaking to whom?

"Who is the "our" and "we" that runs through the chapter? If the reading is MY

people, in verse 8, then the speaker might well be YHVH, but if the speaker is the "All WE like sheep have gone astray" of verse 6, which seems most natural -- then clearly the speaker is the people, and the reading of 'HIS people' in verse 8 is quite natural. Also, this DSS reading of Isaiah 53:8 is quite significant in that it calls into question Moshe Guibbory's interpretation of Isaiah 53 as a negative character -- the Azazel 'abominable branch' who bears final responsibility for the sins of humanity (Lev.16:21-22; Isa.14:12-21). If our text reads 'his people,' then obviously this has to be a 'good' Figure, who suffers in the positive sense, bringing *kipurim* -- covering -- to *his* people Israel. This surely fits the entire context of Isaiah, where the 'servant' of YHVH is clearly either the nation Israel, or the anointed figure of chapters 42 and 49, and appears to be so delineated as a *suffering, rejected one* in Isa.50:4-9, which is then parallel to the thought of Isa.52:13-53:12. Further, that this Figure suffers death, is buried, but then subsequently *sees LIGHT*, also appears to indicate that he is seen in a *positive*, not a negative way. "Also, it should be noted that both of these readings in the Great Isaiah scroll are confirmed in the second, more fragmented copy of Isaiah (1QIsa^b), also found in Cave 1. I have carefully checked the original photographs published in 1955 by Prof. Eliezar Sukenik of Hebrew University. These readings are perfectly clear and unambiguous.

"This is particularly significant, since for the most part, this second copy of Isaiah tends to agree with the traditional Massoretic text. On this basis I think we can say with some assurance that these readings are more reliable and authentic, most likely reflecting the original text, while the Massoretic text was altered by copyists at a much later time for theological reasons.

Here, then, is further evidence that Isaiah's prophecy in chapters 52 and 53, describing a suffering servant who is rejected of men, despised, and who is killed by his enemies, but comes back to life, is literal and applies to the Messiah -- not to the nation of Israel as a whole, or as a primary meaning. What other "suffering servant" in Jewish history fulfills this role, other than Jesus Christ, put to death by His enemies in the time of Pontius Pilate? What other "suffering servant" was killed, buried, and then "saw LIGHT" -- i.e., was resurrected to new life? What other historical figure even *remotely* begins to fulfill these qualifications and aspects of the prophesied Messiah?

Proof from Psalm 22

Dr. Tabor then discusses another prophecy of the Messiah -- Psalm 22. Notice! We read:

"Finally, I have just confirmed with Peter Flint, who is the member of the Official Team who has custody of the yet unpublished Psalms scrolls from Qumran, that Psalm 22:17 also reads differently in the Scrolls. Of course here again we have another verse that has been the focus of heated Jewish-Christian polemics. The Hebrew Massoretic text has a rather impossible reading, lacking a verb: 'Like a lion (yodrishallephcah) my hands and my feet.' In the Qumran fragment the word clearly ends in a vav, not a yod -- reading 'they have pierced (vavreshalephcah) my hands and my feet,' as the Septuagint (LXX) has it (vavreshalephcah Qal Perfect 3rd plural form from reshvavcah, or hereshcah 'to bore, dig'). Some scholars had argued that the LXX was merely influenced/altered by Christian apologists, but it now turns out that the Hebrew Qumran text of Psalms, which is from the

1st century BCE, indeed reads: 'they pierced.'"

The LXX for the Messianic passage in Psalm 22 reads:

"But I am a worm, and not a man; a reproach of men, and scorn of the people. All that saw me mocked me; they spoke with their lips, they shook the head, saying, He hoped in the Lord; let him deliver him, let him save him, because he takes pleasure in him. . . . They have opened their mouth against me as a ravening and roaring lion. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are loosened: my heart in the midst of my belly is become like melting wax. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue is glued to my throat; and thou hast brought me down to the dust of death. For many dogs have compassed me; the assembly of the wicked doers has beset me round: *they pierced my hands and my feet*. They counted all my bones; and they observed and looked upon me. They parted my garments among themselves, and cast lots upon my raiment" (Psa. 22:6-18, LXX).

The Jewish rabbis still, as a whole, refuse to face up to these striking predictions and prophecies regarding the Messiah of Israel. In the newest English translation of the Hebrew Tanakh, the passage in Psalm 22:15-17 is made to read: "My life ebbs away: all my bones are disjoined, my heart is like wax, melting within me; my vigor dries up like a shard; my tongue cleaves to my palate; You commit me to the dust of death. Dogs surround me; a pack of evil ones closes in on me, like lions [they maul] my hands and feet."

This seems like an obvious and brazen attempt to deny the Messiahship of Christ, whose hands and feet were literally pierced by the nails of the Roman soldiers, as they nailed Him to the tree. But we read in Zechariah's prophecy, regarding the Messiah's suffering, "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: *and they shall look upon ME whom they have PIERCED, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son . . .*" (Zech.12:10). Here the Hebrew word for "pierced" is *daqar*, number #1856 in *Strong's Concordance*, and means "pierce, strike (thrust) through, wound." No question Christ fulfilled this prophecy, having had His feet and hands pierced with nails, and His side pierced by a Roman sword as He hung on the tree! (John 19:32-34).

The "Son of God" in the Old Testament/Tanakh

Since the apostle John records that the "Word" or "Logos" of God was with the Father, or God, "in the beginning," and took an active role in the creation of "all things" - - that is, the Universe -- does the Old Testament/Tanakh also use this expression "The Word of God"?

Indeed! The Targums -- translations of the scriptures into the Aramaic dialect used by the common people in the time of Christ and before -- show that the expression "Word of God" was often used in Old Testament times, and in Scripture. According to Alfred Edersheim, author of *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, a leading Messianic, Christian Jew of the last century, the substitution of the phrase "Word of God" for "God" occurs more than 600 times.

In Exodus 19:7, for example, instead of reading that "Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God," the Targum has: ". . . to meet the Word of God."

Also, according to the Targum, in the passage in Genesis 22 where Abraham takes Isaac to mount Moriah to sacrifice him there, and Isaac asks his father where the sacrificial lamb is, Abraham replies: "The Word of God will provide me a lamb. . ." (v.8).

Amazingly, also Genesis 1:27 reads, in the Targum: "*And the Word of the Lord created man in his likeness . . .*"

Throughout the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel, we read often, "*The Word of the LORD came*" unto them (see Jer.1:4, 11, 13; 2:1; 7:1; 9:20; 10:1; 11:1; 14:1; 16:1; 18:1; 21:1; 25:1; 26:1; 30:1; 32:1; 33:1; 34:1, 12; 35:1, 12;36:1; 40:1; 44:1; 45:1; 46:1; 47:1; 50:1; also, Ezek.1:3; 3:16; 6:1; 7:1; 12:1; 13:1; 15:1; 16:1; 17:1; 18:1, 20:221:1, 22:1, etc.).

The Septuagint (LXX) translation of the Old Testament Scriptures uses the very same word used by the apostle John for "Word" in John 1:1-3 in these verses! Was this not the same Person -- the Logos -- who spoke with the prophets, and delivered to them the "Word of the Lord"?

We read in Matthew's account of the birth of Christ:

"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matt.1:18-23).

Consider: Throughout all history, has any *other* Messiah figure come, who fulfilled these amazing prophecies? Was born of a virgin? Was despised and rejected of men? Who was killed for the sins of the world, as a "sin offering"?

What more striking fulfillment of these prophecies could there have been? Isn't it time we acknowledge the truth -- and admit and confess that Jesus Christ IS the Messiah, sent into the world?

What more proof do we need?

The translators of the Jewish Tanakh, however, have again tried to minimize this evidence, and to obscure this proof of Jesus' Messiahship. Notice how they have

translated the passage in Isaiah 7:14:

"Assuredly, my Lord will give you a sign of His own accord! Look, the young woman [notice -- not a "virgin" at all] is with child [at that present time, not a future event!] and about to give birth to a son. Let her name him Immanuel."

Looking at the Jewish version of this passage, one would hardly think anything of it. What a miserable, patry, useless "sign"! Would the God of heaven and earth really give such a miserable and nonsensical "sign" -- a "young woman" bearing a child? Why, that happens all the time, *ninety million times a year*, according to world census and population figures! And roughly half of those births are boys! Such a "sign" would be *no sign at all!*

When Almighty God gives mankind a "sign," He performs MIRACLES! When God gave king Hezekiah a "sign" that he would be healed of his disease, and live another 15 years, he had Isaiah the prophet ask the king, "shall the shadow [of the sun] go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees?" (II Kings 20:9). Hezekiah said, "It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees; nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees."

"And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the LORD: and he brought the shadow [on the king's sundial] ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz" (v.10-11).

Isaiah was a prophet used to spectacular, mighty signs! To accomplish this feat, God had to cause the sun to retreat in the sky, and go backwards ten degrees, and then resume its normal revolution! Since the movement of the sun across the sky is actually a product of the earth's revolution on its own axis, this implies the earth actually slowed to a stop in its rotation, and then rotated backwards ten degrees -- stopped again -- and then resumed its normal, routine rotation!

This is the kind of miracle our God performs! No magic tricks or parlor magician's sleight-of-hand games for Him!

Yeshua the Messiah -- *PROVED!*

Let's face it. There is so much proof that Yeshua, Jesus Christ, is the true Messiah, that entire books have been written about it. My article, "The Birth, Ministry, and Death of Jesus Christ" shows that the prophecies of Daniel 9:24-26 prove the exact year that the Messiah was to appear and begin His ministry -- 27 A.D.! That prophecy and Isaiah 53 show that He was to be "cut off" or killed in the midst of His ministry -- fulfilled in 30 A.D. Isaiah also predicted His resurrection -- as did David in the Psalms! Yes, friends -- ***Jesus Christ IS HA MOSHIACH!***

Says Henry R. Halley in his *Bible Handbook*:

"The Old Testament was written to create an anticipation of, and pave the way for,

the Coming of Christ. It is the Story of the Hebrew Nation, dealing largely with events and exigencies of its own times. But all through the Story there runs unceasing Expectancy and Prevision of the Coming of ONE MAJESTIC PERSON, who will Rule and Bless the Whole World. This Person, long before He arrived, came to be known as the MESSIAH.

"The Predictions and Foregleams of His Coming constitute the Thread extending through, and binding together, its many and diverse books, into One Amazing Unity.

"Starting with Vague Hints, there soon begin to appear Specific Definite Predictions, which, as the story sweeps onward, become more Specific, more Definite and more Abundant.

"And, as Definite Predictions multiply, accompanying Symbols, Pictures, Types, and indirect Foregleams, also increase.

"So that, by the time that we come to the end of the Old Testament, the entire Story of Christ has been Pre-written and Pre-Figured in Language and Symbol, which, taken as a whole, Cannot Refer to Any Other Person in History.

"In addition to Predictions and Types which are most evident, there may be many Hidden Messianic Intimations which are not clearly visible on the surface" (p.387).

Halley goes into many of these types and predictions in his *Bible Handbook*. I don't have space or time to do it here, but I will list some of the basic Messianic Scriptures, which you can study further on your own. They are: Genesis 3:15, the "seed of the woman"; Gen.4:3-5, Abel's offering of a slain sheep; Gen.12-22, Abraham's promise that all nations would be blessed through his "seed," and the ram slain in place of his son Isaac, showing the Lord would provide for human redemption by allowing *His own firstborn Son* to be slain for us; Gen.14, the story of Melchizedek; Exodus 12, the whole Passover story, with the sacrifice of the redemptive lamb; Leviticus 16, the slaying of the goat "for the Lord" as propitiation for sin; Num.21:6-9, the fiery serpent lifted up on a cross (see John 3:14); Num.24:17-19, a "star" rising out of Jacob; Deut.18:15-19, another prophet "like unto Moses"; Joshua himself, a "type" of the Messiah, bringing us into his Kingdom; the story of Ruth; I Sam.16 on, the life of David, and his trials, as a type of the Messiah; II Sam.7:16, David's promise of an eternal throne; II Kgs.9:5, same promise to Solomon; Job 19:25-27, prophecy of Redeemer who "liveth" and would come to deliver and redeem.

Then we have the entire book of Psalms, particularly Psa.2, prediction of anointed King, Psa.16 prediction of resurrection, Psa.22, prediction of Messiah's crucifixion, being gawked at by sinners, His suffering, bones exposed, and even His garments being parted and lots cast for His cloak; Psa.41:9, betrayal by a close friend; Psa.45, reign of Messiah, Psa.69:21, given vinegar and gall to drink (compare Matthew 27:34, 48), Psa.72, glorious reign, 78:2, predicted to speak in parables, Psa.89, David's throne and Messiah, Psa.110, Messiah to be king and priest, Psa.118:22, to be rejected by rulers.

In the book of Isaiah are many Messianic predictions, beginning with Isaiah 2, the Messianic age; Isa.4:2-6, "Branch of the Lord"; Isa.7:14, Messiah to be born of a virgin, named Immanuel; Isa.9:1-7, Messiah to be born as a child, yet also very Son of God, and

Divine; Isa.11:1-10, Messiah to be the offshoot of David, reign over whole world, usher in peace; this chapter shows He was to be descended from David's family; Isa.25-26, resurrection of the dead; Isa.35:8-10, prediction of Messiah's many miracles, healing deaf, blind, dumb; Isa.40:5-11, predicts His tender-heartedness and lovingkindness; Isa.42:1-11, shows He was to be "light to Gentiles"; Isaiah 52-53, reveals in advance the sufferings of the Messiah, His death for us, His death alongside thieves, His burial with the rich, and his resurrection -- many explicit details predicted, and all fulfilled in Jesus Christ!

Should I go on? Jeremiah 23:5-6 refers to Messiah as "the Branch"; says His name would be "The LORD our Righteousness," indicating His ultimate divine origin; Ezek.34 speaks of Him as being a "Prince forever" over the house of David; Ezek.47 predicts the life-giving stream, a type of Messiah; Daniel 2 predicts the "rock" which will smash this world's kingdoms and replace them; Dan.7 predicts the Kingdom of Messiah, ruling with the saints; Daniel 9:24-27 is an awesome prediction of the very exact time Messiah would come, preach, be "cut off," and be "hidden" from view (in grave, and then rise to throne of God); Jonah 1:17, the sign of Jonah the prophet, who was a type of the Messiah, 3 days and 3 nights in the heart of the fish, as Messiah was in the heart of the earth! Micah 5:2-5 predicted Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, just as Jesus Christ was!

There are many more allusions, indications, hints, and "types" one could refer to, but to sum it all up, as Edware Halley puts it:

"Near the beginning of the Old Testament it is stated that the Hebrew Nation was being founded for the purpose of Blessing All Nations. Then there begins to loom the figure of ONE PERSON through Whom the Nation will accomplish its mission.

"First He is called Shiloh, to arise in the Tribe of Judah, and Rule the Nations. Then He is called a Star, Who will have Dominion. And next, a Prophet, like unto Moses, through whom God will Speak to Mankind.

"And then, over and over, He is spoken of as a King, to arise in David's Family, to be called The Branch, The Prince, The Anointed One, God's First-Born, Wonderful, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

"The Exact Time of His Coming was Foretold. He was to be born of a Virgin. At Bethlehem. Part of His Childhood to be spent in Egypt. He would be brought up at Nazareth.

"He would be introduced to His Nation by an Elijah-like forerunner. Galilee to be the scene of His Ministry. He would work Miracles of Healing. And Speak in Parables. Be rejected by the Leaders of His Own Nation. Be a Smitten Shepherd, a Sufferer, a Man of Sorrows. He would enter Jerusalem riding on a Colt. He would be Betrayed by a Friend, for thirty pieces of silver, the thirty pieces of silver to be spent for a Potter's field. He would be led as a Lamb to the Slaughter.

"He would Die with the Wicked, opening a Fountain for Sin. Removing Sin in One Day. Even His Dying Words Foretold. He would be given Gall and Vinegar in His Agony. His Hands and His Feet would be Pierced. Not a Bone to be Broken. Lots to be cast for His Garments. To be Buried with the Rich. To be in the Tomb Three Days. To

Rise from the Dead, and Ascend to Heaven at God's Right Hand. . . .

"This Pre-Written Story of Jesus, recorded Centuries Before Jesus came, is so Astonishing in Detail that it reads like an Eye-Witness Account of His Life and Work.

"Suppose a number of men of Different Countries, who had never seen, nor in any way communicated with, one another, would walk into a room, and each lay down a piece of Carved Marble, which pieces, when Fitted Together, would make a Perfect statue -- how account for it in any other way than that Some One Person had drawn the Specifications, and had sent to each man his part? And how can this Amazing Composite of Jesus' Life and Work, put together by Different Writers of Different Centuries, Ages Before Jesus Came, be explained on any other basis than that ONE SUPER-HUMAN MIND Supervised the Writing? The Miracle of the Ages!" (*Halley's Bible Handbook*, p.400-401).

I do not know how some can learn about Christ, and accept Him as Saviour, Redeemer, and Messiah, and then -- years later -- begin to doubt, question, and lose their faith -- make shipwreck of their faith! But it has happened -- and is happening -- to some. But as the apostle Paul declared, in powerful, confident faith, so I say boldly, and unashamedly, with him:

"For *I am not ashamed* of the gospel of Christ: for it is the *power of God unto salvation* to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16).

"I AM NOT ASHAMED; I KNOW WHOM I HAVE BELIEVED, AND AM PERSUADED THAT HE IS ABLE TO KEEP THAT WHICH I HAVE COMMITTED UNTO HIM AGAINST THAT DAY" (II Tim.1:12).

What about you? How strong is your faith? How well do you *know, personally*, the REAL Jesus Christ -- YESHUA HA MOSHIACH -- the true SAVIOUR AND MESSIAH? You get to know Him by studying His Word. You learn about Him by READING the New Testament -- regularly, daily, together with the Old Testament, which was written as a prelude for Him -- to prepare the way and introduce Him. How well do YOU know the true MESSIAH? Isn't it time to take a careful new examination of this subject? Your eternal life could be at stake!

Chapter 16

Who Is Michael, the Archangel?

Only three angels are mentioned by name in the Bible, and only one of them is described as an “archangel”! One is Gabriel, one is Lucifer, who became Satan the Devil, and the third one is Michael. In Revelation 12, we read that “Michael, and his angels, fought with the devil, and his angels” (Rev.12:7). Michael is also called “the great prince, the protector of your people” (Daniel 12:1). Who is this mysterious figure? Is there more to “Michael” than the “Christian” world understands? Here is the evidence set forth, line by line, item by item, fact by fact, proof by proof.

The angel Michael is only mentioned by his name in four passages in the Bible, yet those passages are fraught with meaning. Before identifying who Michael is, let us examine the Scriptural descriptions of this mighty angelic being.

An old axiom I learned in algebra and geometry is that two things equal to the same thing are equal to each other! For example, if $A = 7$ and $B = 7$, then $A = B$. Simple, isn't it! So let's see what this means in the process of proving who Michael, the archangel, really is!

Michael the PRINCE

In Daniel the tenth chapter we read that the angel Gabriel came to Daniel, when he had completed a period of fasting and prayer. He came to give Daniel a message about the future, a prophecy. He went on to say:

“Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia opposed me twenty-one days. So *Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me*, and I left him there with the prince of the kingdom of Persia”

The Ferrar Fenton translation has this passage thus:

“But the Prince of the kingdom of Persia stood opposing me twenty-one days, but MIKAL ONE OF THE FIRST PRINCES, came and helped me.”

In Hebrew, the word translated “CHIEF” can also be translated “FIRST.” It is the word *rishon* and means “*first*, in time, place, or rank.” It is from the word *rishah* meaning “a *beginning*.”

The word “Prince” is from the Hebrew *sar*, meaning “a *head* person, captain, chief, general, governor, keeper, lord, master, prince.” It is derived from the word *sasar*, meaning “to have dominion, bear rule.”

Gabriel concluded his message, saying:

“Now I must return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I get through with him, the prince of Greece will come. But I am to tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth. *There is no one with me who contends against these princes except MICHAEL, YOUR PRINCE*” (Dan.10:12-13, 20-21, NRSV).

Notice from these verses that Michael is identified as “ONE OF THE CHIEF PRINCES,” as being greater than Gabriel, and as “YOUR PRINCE” – that is, the one who was over the children of Israel.

Daniel also records about Michael in chapter 12, where we read that “at the time of the END” of this age (Dan.11:40) something unique will happen:

“At that time MICHAEL, THE GREAT PRINCE, THE PROTECTOR OF YOUR PEOPLE, *SHALL ARISE*. There will be a time of anguish such as has never occurred since nations first came into existence. But at that time your people shall be delivered” (Dan.12:1).

Ferrar Fenton has this verse, “Mikal, the Great Prince, who DEFENDS the children of your people, will stand up, and a period of distress will come . . .”

Here is further crucial testimony to help identify Michael – he is called “THE GREAT PRINCE,” indicating he is greater than other princes; and he is “the PROTECTOR” of the people of Israel. The New King James Version says he “STANDS WATCH” over the people of Israel.

The Name “Michael”

Before we go further, take note of the name “Michael.” In the Hebrew, it is *Miyka’el*, and means “who [is] like God?” The name “Gabriel” means “man of God,” but Michael has a much more imposing name – “[one] who [is] LIKE GOD.” Very

interesting! Says Gesenius Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon, he is one “who intercedes for Israel before God.” Thus he is an “intercessor” for the children of Israel, the people of God!

The New Testament

Michael is also mentioned in the New Testament. We read in the epistle of Jude, “Yet Michael THE ARCHANGEL, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you!’” (Jude 9, NKJV).

The word “archangel” is used only twice in the Bible. It is the Greek word *archaggelos*, meaning “chief angel.” It is a composite word, composed of *archo*, meaning “to be FIRST (in political rank or power).” The word *aggelos* means a “messenger” or “angel.” So an archangel would be a CHIEF ANGEL – FIRST in rank and power.

Take note: Michael is the ONLY ONE said to be the “archangel” of God – none other has this attribution or rank! Archangel means “chief angel” or “principal angel” – the highest ranking angel! The term only occurs in the singular. This implies that there is but ONE whom the Father has designated “chief” or “head” of the angelic host!

This word “archangel” is also connected with the second coming of Christ, the Messiah. We read in I Thessalonians 4:16, “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the VOICE OF AN ARCHANGEL, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.” That voice would be His very own voice! The voice that thunders and cracks like the voice of many waters!

“The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory thunders; the LORD is over many waters. The VOICE of the LORD is POWERFUL; the voice of the LORD is full of Majesty. The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars, yes, the LORD splinters the cedars of Lebanon. . . The voice of the LORD divides the flames of fire. The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness” (Psalm 29:3-8).

When Christ returns, He will utter His mighty voice, and “cry, yea, ROAR” from on high (Isaiah 42:13, KJV). Says the prophet Isaiah, when the Messiah comes, “Behold, the name of the LORD comes from afar, burning with His anger, and His burden is heavy; His lips are full of indignation, and His tongue like a devouring fire. . . . The LORD will cause *His glorious* VOICE to be heard, and show the descent of His arm,

with the indignation of His anger and the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering tempest and hailstones” (Isaiah 30:27-30).

Could the voice of the archangel be the voice of the LORD Himself – the thundering voice of Jesus Christ, the Son of God? Why would a lesser voice be mentioned since He will utter His own mighty voice when He comes in blazing wrath and furious anger?

War in Heaven

Finally, we read again of Michael in one more place – Revelation 12, a prophecy for the very near frightening future!

“And WAR broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him” (Rev.12:7-9, NKJV).

Who is this great Warrior Archangel? This champion and leader of all the righteous angels, will WAGE WAR against the Devil and DEFEAT him and his angelic hordes?

Has anyone qualified to defeat the Devil and overthrow Him? The only one who has qualified to conquer and defeat the Devil is Jesus Christ Himself, when He defeated him by resisting his temptations in the wilderness, after fasting forty days and forty nights! (See Matt.4:1-10). He defeated him, also, and all his plans and ploys, by His death on the cross!

As Paul wrote, “Inasmuch as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might DESTROY HIM who had the power of death, that is, the DEVIL” (Heb.2:14).

No one else has qualified to defeat the Devil! No one else has qualified to SAVE God's people!

In Revelation, the apostle John records a strong angel asking the question, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?" (Rev.5:1). John wept, because "no one was found worthy" (v.4). But one of the elders says to him, "Do not weep, Behold, the LION of the tribe of Judah, the Son of David, has PREVAILED to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals" (v.5). Only Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, is worthy – "For You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood . . . and have made us kings and priests to our God" (v.9-10). He triumphed over Satan through His death on the cross – "having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them,, triumphing over them" (Col.2:15).

As Paul declared, "But thanks be to God, who gives us the VICTORY through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor.15:57).

"My Angel"

Now let's approach this subject from a different angle. Notice! In Exodus 23, we read: "Behold, I send an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. Beware of Him and obey His voice; do not provoke Him, for He will not pardon your transgressions; for MY NAME IS IN HIM. But if you indeed obey His voice and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries. For My Angel will go before you and bring you in to the Amorites and the Hittites and the Perizzites and the Canaanites and the Hivites and the Jebusites; and I will cut them off. You shall not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do according to their works; but you shall utterly overthrow them and completely break down their sacred pillars" (Exodus 23:20-24, NKJV).

Notice! The Lord God calls this angel "My Angel"! – this Angel has the power to punish for SINS; God commands His people that they must OBEY HIM, do not provoke Him to anger, and indeed says "MY NAME" – the name of God Himself – is "IN HIM"!

What Angel could this be? The translators put this word "Angel" with a capital first letter, indicating that they understood it to refer to the Pre-existent One who became Christ – the MESSIAH!

Ferrar Fenton has this passage:

“Then I will send My Messenger before your face to guard you in all your way, and to bring you to the place where I will fix you. Regard his presence and listen to his voice. Grieve him not that he may not rise to punish you, for my POWER is around him. But if you listen to his voice, and do all that I shall command, then I will love you, but I will distress your distressers. For my Messenger shall march before You”

Notice! God’s own POWER is in and around Him! Fenton put the word “power” in all capital letters. This is certainly a most unusual angel! A very unique “Messenger”! God calls this angel “MY Angel!”

“The Angel of the Lord”

This Angel would be the same one, then, often referred to as “the angel of the Lord,” in the Old Testament. Throughout the Old Testament, and in the New, the expression is used, “The Angel of the Lord.” Who is this, and what are his characteristics?

He is first mentioned in Genesis 16:7. “Now the Angel of the LORD found her [Hagar, Sarai’s maid] by a spring of water in the wilderness The Angel of the LORD said to her, ‘Return to your mistress, and submit yourself under her hand.’ Then the Angel of the LORD said to her, ‘I will multiply your descendants exceedingly, so that they shall not be counted for multitude. . . . Then she called the *name of the LORD who spoke to her, You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees*; for she said, ‘Have I also here seen Him who sees me?’” (Gen.16:7-13).

Notice that this “Angel of the Lord” is also called THE LORD, and “the God who sees” (*El roi*, “the God who sees,” in Hebrew). This is fascinating! Here an Angel is called GOD! What kind of angel is this?

The Angel of the LORD also spoke to Abraham, the father of the faithful. God tested Abraham and told him to take Isaac to a mountain and there to sacrifice him (Gen.22:1-3). When Abraham reached the spot, and was about to slay his son in obedience, we read, “But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, ‘Abraham! Abraham!’ So he said, ‘Here I am.’ And He said, ‘Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide . . .

“Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, and said, ‘By Myself, I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son – blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven . . .’” (Gen.22:11-16).

Mystery of mysteries! This Angel was no less than the LORD! Yet, He was also the angel OF the “LORD”! How can this be?

The mystery thickens. Later on, Jacob wrestles with an angel all night. The account says, “Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day” (Gen.32:24). Seeing Jacob’s dogged determination and perseverance, the “Man” blessed him, saying, “Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel [literally, “Prince with God”]; for you have struggled with God [in the wrestling match!] and with men, and have prevailed” (verse 28). “So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel [“Face of God”]: ‘For I have SEEN GOD FACE TO FACE, and my life is preserved’ (verse 29).

Indeed, this was some “Man”! Jacob acknowledged that he really wrestled with none other than GOD Himself! How could this be? Later, in his old age, Jacob blessed the sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, saying, “The Angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads” (Gen.48:16). Obviously, he was talking about God, equating the Angel of the Lord with God Himself!

Moses’ Encounter

In Exodus 3, Moses himself had a unique experience. He saw a burning bush that would not burn up, and turned aside to investigate the phenomenon. We read, “And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of the bush” (verse 2). The Angel called to Moses out of the midst of the burning bush, and said to him, “I am the God of your father – the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” (verse 6). The passage goes on to say, “And the LORD said . . .” (v.7). When Moses inquired about His name, we read, “And GOD said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM.’ And He said, Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, I AM has sent me to you” (Exo.3:14).

Who was this? He was both the “Angel of the LORD,” and “God,” and the great “I AM,” and “The LORD” [Yahveh, in Hebrew].

The answer to this enigma is given by the evangelist Stephen, the first martyr of the New Testament Church of God. We read in Acts, chapter 7, that when he was being tried by the Sanhedrin for his testimony, Stephen said to the Council:

“And when forty years had passed, an Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire in a bush, in the wilderness of Mount Sinai This Moses whom they rejected, saying, ‘Who made you a ruler and a judge?’ is the one God sent to be a ruler and a deliverer BY THE HAND OF THE ANGEL WHO APPEARED TO HIM IN THE BUSH . . .

“This is he who was in the congregation in the wilderness WITH THE ANGEL WHO SPOKE TO HIM ON MOUNT SINAI, AND WITH OUR FATHERS, *THE ONE WHO RECEIVED THE LIVELY ORACLES [THE LAW OF GOD] TO GIVE TO US, WHOM OUR FATHERS WOULD NOT OBEY, BUT REJECTED*” (Acts 7:30, 35, 38-39).

The one who brought Israel out of Egypt was the ANGEL of the Lord – He is the One who spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, appeared to him in the bush, and who spoke to the Fathers, and who transmitted the Ten Commandments – the “Lively oracles” – to give to the children of Israel! But they refused to obey the Angel of the Lord, who was also a manifestation of God Himself to them.

Who was this great Angel?

Another Name — “Commander”

This great Angel also appeared to Joshua. After Israel had crossed the Jordan River, and partaken of the Passover, he appeared to Joshua.

“And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, ‘Are You for us or for our adversaries?’ So He said, ‘No, but as COMMANDER OF THE ARMY OF THE LORD I have now come.’ And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to him, ‘What does my Lord say to His servant?’ Then the Commander of the LORD’s army said to Joshua, ‘Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy.’ And Joshua did so” (Josh.5:13-15).

Here he is called “COMMANDER of the Army of the LORD”! He stands before Joshua, and Joshua worships Him. This is no regular angel, but THE “Angel” of the LORD, whose presence makes the place HOLY. The passage goes on, “And the *LORD* said to Joshua . . .” (chap.6:2). This was the LORD Himself!

“Wonderful”

He also appeared to Manoah, the father of Samson. First, the “Angel of the LORD appeared” to Manoah’s wife (Judges 13:3). She then said to her husband, “A Man of God came to me, and His countenance was like the countenance of the Angel of God, very awesome” (verse 6). Manoah prayed to God to let the Man of God appear to them again (v.8), and the “Angel of the LORD” instructed them in raising their promised son. He asked the Angel His name, but the Angel said, “Why do you ask My name, seeing IT IS *WONDERFUL?*” (v.18). When the Angel ascended in the flame of the altar, “then Manoah knew that he was the Angel of the LORD. And Manoah said to his wife, ‘We shall surely die, *because we have SEEN GOD*’” (Judges 13:22).

Notice! The Angel of the LORD is *GOD!* And His name is “Wonderful.” The KJV has it “secret.” The Hebrew word is *paliy*, meaning “remarkable, secret, wonderful.” It is from the word *pala*, “to separate, distinguish, to be great, difficult, wonderful, marvelous.”

The same Hebrew word is found in a famous Scripture – notice!

“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Saviour is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called, WONDERFUL [Hebrew, *pele*, from *pala*], Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, PRINCE of Peace” (Isa.9:6).

Thus the Angel of the LORD is revealed to be the MESSIAH – the pre-existent SAVIOR, the One who became the Christ, the Anointed Savior of the world!

He is the “Commander of the army of God.” He is a mighty Angel of war. He is the One who led Israel out of Egypt, performed mighty miracles of deliverance, and protected them on their journey to Mount Sinai and the Holy Land. He is a mighty “PRINCE” – the “Prince of peace.”

Who is He?

Notice that the archangel Michael has these very identical attributes! He is a “PRINCE” (Daniel 10:21), who stands up for Israel (same verse). He is “one of the CHIEF [first in rank] PRINCES” (Dan.10:13). He is “the GREAT PRINCE who stands watch over the sons of your people,” Israel (Dan.12:1).

The Angel of the LORD is “Wonderful”; one of Christ’s names is “Wonderful.” They are one and the same! The Messiah is also the “Prince” of peace; Michael is also “the great Prince.” They are one and the same!

Michael is called an “archangel.” When Christ returns, He comes “with the voice of an archangel”! He is a great Prince; so is Michael; He is the head of the army of heaven; so is Michael; He is Commander of the army of God; so is Michael; He is the “Angel of the LORD”; so is Michael!

Michael, by definition, means “who is like GOD.” Christ is the One who is truly “LIKE GOD!” Notice! He is God’s very IMAGE!

For we read in the book of Hebrews that He is the very image of God! Notice!

“God, who in various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory and the EXPRESS IMAGE of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Heb.1:1-3).

Jesus Christ and Michael are the SAME individual – just two different names, stressing different aspects of His character!

Why People Misunderstand Who Christ Is

Christendom does not understand this great truth because it is grossly deceived, and believes in a Trinitarian Godhead. It believes Christ is the Second Member of the eternal Godhead. The world teaches that Christ and the Father are “co-equal and co-eternal.” But read our articles on “Is God a Trinity?” and “The Trinity Doctrine.” They show the fallacy of this doctrine.

Christ Himself, however, puts the “lie” to this ancient belief. He plainly said that His Father is greater than He Himself! He declared, “My Father is greater than I” (John 14:28). He also spoke of the Father in plain terms, saying in prayer to Him, “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, THE ONLY TRUE GOD, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” (John 17:3).

Christ was the Angel of the LORD, the Angel of God the Father – the “Messenger” of the Lord. He interacted with mankind, as the representative of the Father. The One who sends a Messenger is greater than the messenger. Christ declared, “I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. But I know Him, for I am from Him, and *He sent Me*” (John 7:28-29).

Christ said, “My Father . . . is GREATER THAN ALL” (John 10:29), including therefore Christ Himself! He declared, “Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than His master; nor is he who is sent greater than *he who sent him*” (John 13:16).

Christ declared, “For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent me *gave Me a command*, what I should say and what I should speak. . . Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak” (John 12:49-50). Again, the One who COMMANDS is greater than the one receiving the command!

Jesus said to the Jews, “I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father *taught Me*, I speak these things” (John 8:28). The Teacher is greater than the Student! He declared, “I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me” (John 8:42). Christ had His origin in God the Father, and came forth from Him – so the Father pre-existed the Logos – Christ! How clear!

The apostle Paul helps clear up the matter. He wrote, “Yet for us there is ONE GOD, THE FATHER, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and ONE LORD JESUS CHRIST, through whom are all things, and through whom we live” (I Cor.8:6).

How, then, can the Angel of the Lord, or Christ the Messiah, also be called “God” and “LORD”? How, or when, did He also become “God”?

What is the answer to this great mystery?

The GOD Family

First, we have proven that the Father and Christ are NOT “equal.” The Father SENT Him, told Him what to SPEAK, and is GREATER than Christ. Yet, Christ is also “God.” The disciple Thomas, upon seeing proof of His resurrection, exclaimed to Him, “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:28).

Paul gives us the answer! He wrote of Christ, “He is the IMAGE of the invisible GOD, the *FIRSTBORN over all creation*. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible . . . All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell” (Col.1:15-19).

He was the *FIRSTBORN* – the *FIRST* of all *CREATION* – the first being that Almighty God created! As John wrote in the book of Revelation, “These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, *THE BEGINNING OF THE CREATION OF GOD*” (Rev.3:14).

The One who became Christ HAD A BEGINNING!

In the first chapter of John’s gospel we read, “In the beginning was the Word [Greek, *Logos*], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made” (John 1:1-3). The word *Logos* means, “something said,” “the divine expression,” “utterance, word, work.” It is from the word *lego*, meaning “to lay forth.” In other words, to have a “word,” someone must *SPEAK* the word, formulate the Word in His mind, and utter the Word. Thus Christ, the Word, *originally came forth from God the Father, as His Word, Utterance, or Work*. Therefore He has primacy in all things, but always under the authority of the Father Himself.

At some time, before the Creation of the Universe, then, God the Father brought forth the individual, the Archangel, known as the *LOGOS*! He is the “Angel of the Lord,” “The Messenger of the Lord,” “the Angel,” “the Commander of the Army of God,” “Prince of Peace,” and has many other names – one of them being “Michael, the Great Prince”!

In other words, at some point in time *BEFORE* time itself was created, God the Father had a *FIRSTBORN* “*SON*”! As Paul wrote to the Hebrews, the *Logos* or One who became Christ “having become so much *BETTER* than the angels [all the other angelic beings], as He has by *INHERITANCE* obtained a more excellent *NAME* than they. For to which of the angels did He ever say, ‘You are *MY SON*, Today I have begotten You’? And again, ‘I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son’? But when He again brings the *FIRSTBORN into the world*, He says: ‘*Let all the angels of God WORSHIP Him*’ . . . But to the Son He says, ‘*Your throne, O GOD, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, YOUR GOD, has ANOINTED YOU with the oil of gladness MORE THAN YOUR COMPANIONS*’ (Heb.1:4-9, NKJV).

The Logos who became Christ, a human being, was first of all a SON OF GOD, before Creation itself! Therefore He participated with the Father in the creation of all things, the entire Universe (John 1:1-3; Col.1:14-18; Heb.1:1-3). Therefore He is also called “God” and all the angels are commanded to worship Him (Heb.1:6).

Solomon wrote of this amazing truth. He declared, in Proverbs, “Who has ascended into heaven, or descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has bound the waters in a garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His NAME, and what is HIS SON’S NAME, if you know?” (Prov.30:4).

God the Father had a SON! Together they created the UNIVERSE!

Another name of His Son is “Wisdom.” We read of “Wisdom”:

“The LORD possessed me at the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I have been established from everlasting, FROM THE BEGINNING, before there was ever an earth. When there were no depths, I WAS BROUGHT FORTH, when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills, I was BROUGHT FORTH; while as yet He had not made the earth or the fields, or the primal dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, *I was there*, when He drew a circle on the face of the deep When He marked out the foundations of the earth, then I WAS BESIDE HIM AS A MASTER CRAFTSMAN; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him, rejoicing in His inhabited world, and *my delight was with the sons of men*” (Proverbs 8:22-31, NKJV).

This Great Being, the Logos, the first born or conceived and created of All God’s Creation, delighted in the Creation of mankind. He participated in all creation, “AS A MASTER CRAFTSMAN” or Master Builder.

That is why we read in Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning God [Hebrew, *Elohim*, a plural form, meaning “THE MIGHTY ONES”] created the heavens and the earth.” And we later read, in this same chapter, “Then God [*Elohim*] said, ‘Let US make man in OUR image, according to OUR likeness” (Gen.1:26). “So God created man in His own image; in the IMAGE OF GOD He created him; male and female He created them” (verse 27).

God first expanded His divine Family by having a Son – the Logos. Then they created mankind in THEIR OWN IMAGE – the image of GOD! Why? Because God is in the process of EXPANDING HIS OWN FAMILY!

He commanded mankind, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth, and subdue it; have DOMINION over . . . every living thing that moves on the earth” (verse 28).

But today, mankind is just in the physical image of God, with body and mind made of DUST. Yet is it God’s plan and desire to bring MORE SONS into the everlasting spiritual GOD FAMILY!

It all happens through Christ the Messiah. We read in Philippians:

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of GOD, did not consider it robbery to be equal [margin, “something to be held onto to be equal”] with God [in His very own spiritual image and likeness as His first-born Son], but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He HUMBLER HIMSELF and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly EXALTED Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil.2:5-11).

Through the death and resurrection of the Messiah, Yeshua the Anointed One of God, we may have our sins forgiven, and receive the Holy Spirit of God, and be begotten of God, and grow in Christ and His spiritual image so that one day we, too, can become members of the very GOD FAMILY!

The Expanding Family Through Christ

Notice! Paul wrote:

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the SONS OF GOD. . . The Spirit Himself [or, itself] bears witness with our spirit That we are CHILDREN OF GOD, and if children, then HEIRS – HEIRS OF GOD AND JOINT-HEIRS WITH CHRIST, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the GLORY which shall be revealed in us” (Rom.8:14-17).

God created mankind in His own image so that one day He can set him over all the works of His hands! As David wrote in the Psalms, “You have crowned him with glory and honor, and set him over the works of Your hands. You have put ALL THINGS in subjection under his feet” (Heb.2:7-8, quoted from Psalm 8:4-6).

Paul goes on, “For in that he put ALL in subjection under him, He *left out NOTHING that is put under him. But NOW we DO NOT YET SEE ALL THINGS put under him*” (Heb.2:8).

As Ferrar Fenton puts it, “But if He subjected all, He could leave nothing unsubjected to him. However, we do not yet now see all subject to him” And Moffatt has it, “Now by putting all things under him, the writer meant to leave NOTHING outside his control. But, as it is, we do not yet see all things controlled by man.”

“All things” means “ALL THINGS” – LITERALLY! It means THE UNIVERSE AND ALL CREATION!

Can your mind grasp, comprehend, and encompass the awesome PLAN God has in store for those who love and serve Him faithfully, and who endure trials and tests to the very end?

WE WILL RULE THE UNIVERSE, as CO-HEIRS with CHRIST Himself!

All the planets, all the galaxies, all the splendors of Creation! Everything in space and time! As Paul wrote,

“But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming. Then comes the END, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father For He has put all things under His feet. But when He says, ‘All things

are put under Him,' it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. Now when all things are made subject to Him, Then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all" (I Cor..15:23-28).

What a glorious Plan! What an awesome Calling! What a tremendous Eternity in store for the beloved and obedient!

Adam Clarke's Commentary

The Adam Clarke Commentary has much to say about "Michael the archangel," mentioned in Jude 9, where Jude relates,

"Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, 'The LORD rebuke you!'"

Notice what Clarke has to say:

"Verse 9. *Yet Michael the archangel*] Of this personage many things are spoken in the Jewish writings. 'Rabbi Judah Hakkodesh says: "Whenever *Michael* is said to appear, the glory of the Divine Majesty is to be understood.'" *Shemoth Rabba*, sec.ii, fol.104, 3. So that it seems as if they considered Michael in some sort *as we do the Messiah* manifested in the flesh."

Clarke continues:

"Let it be observed that the word *archangel* is never found in the *plural* number in the sacred writings. There can be properly only one *archangel*, ONE CHIEF OR HEAD OF ALL THE ANGELIC HOST. Nor is the word *devil*, as applied to the great enemy of mankind, ever found in the *plural*; there can be but one monarch of all fallen spirits. *Michael* is this *archangel*, and head of all the angelic orders; the *devil*, *great dragon*, or *Satan*, is head of all the *diabolic* orders. When these two hosts are opposed to each other they are said to act under these two chiefs, as leaders; hence

in Rev.12:7, it is said: ‘MICHAEL *and his angels fought against the DRAGON and his angels*. The word *Michael* seems to be composed of *mi*, who, *ke*, like, and *El*, God; *he who is like God*; hence by this personage, in the Apocalypse, many understand THE LORD JESUS” (vol.3, page 953).

Adam Clarke goes on, “It may be added, that the Jews consider *Michael* and *Samael*, one as the *friend*, the other as the *enemy*, of Israel. *Samael* is their *accuser*, *Michael* their *advocate*. ‘Michael and *Samael* stand before the Lord; Satan accuses, but *Michael* shows the merits of Israel. Satan endeavors to speak, but *Michael* silences him: Hold thy tongue, says he, and let us hear what the Judge determines; for it is written, *He will speak to his people, and to his saints*; Psalm 55:9.’ *Shemoth Rabba*, sec.xviii, fol.117, 3” (*ibid.*).

Michael and Lucifer

Michael and Lucifer contended or fought over the body of Moses. They will fight at the end time when war erupts in heaven one final time. They have been enemies – primordial foes – down through the ages. If Michael were over the devil in authority, at that time, then why did he call upon the LORD to rebuke him, instead of putting him down himself? The answer is God the Father has placed Lucifer, an anointed cherubim, the highest order of angels, over the earth as a king (Isaiah 14:13 – note that Lucifer has a “throne” below heaven, on the earth). But Lucifer, perfect in all his ways from his creation, chose to REBEL against God and led one third of the angels in a plot to take over the Universe, or to at least make himself co-equal with God (Isaiah 14:12-14; Rev.12:4).

Lucifer was one of only TWO cherubims who were “anointed” by the Father, receiving a special dispensation of His Spirit and power (Ezek.28:12-14). He was one of the TWO cherubim who covered – protected – God’s Throne (verse 14). The other One was the Logos – the One who became Jesus Christ – the One whose name was also “Michael”!

This ancient reality is depicted in the two mysterious cherubim who “covered” the Ark of the Covenant and the Mercy Seat in the ancient Tabernacle and later the Temple of God. Moses was told: “And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work you shall make them at the two ends of the mercy seat. . . you shall make the cherubim at the two ends of it OF ONE PIECE with the mercy seat” (see Exo.25:17-21).

These two were unique in all the Universe! They were composed of pure gold at the end of the Mercy Seat, depicting the Throne of God, and yet they were “*of one piece*”

with the mercy seat” (Exo.25:19). They protected the throne of God. They faced each other. In the beginning they were “equal” – like siblings or brothers. They were the two “PRINCES” CLOSEST TO GOD of all beings in all Creation!

Their character was shaped by being “hammered” – that is, put through fiery trials – and one became the essence of humility and obedience, and the other one at some point became lifted up, proud, and became disobedient (Ezek.28:14-15, 17).

Showing their original “equality” with each other, they were depicted alike, facing one another (Exo.25:20). They were both “princes.” The Logos or Messiah was the “Prince of Peace” (Isa.9:6), the coming “Prince” (Ezek.44:3), “Prince and Saviour” (Acts 5:30-31) and the “Prince of life” (Acts 3:15). Lucifer, who became Satan, was “the prince of the power of the air” (Eph.2:2), the “prince of this world” (John 14:30, 16:11), and “prince of demons” (Matt.12:24, Mark 3:22).

Both of them are also characterized as “morning stars” (Isaiah 14:12; II Pet.1:19; Rev.22:16).

The point of this is, Lucifer and the Logos were created by God the Father, and at the time of Moses, the Logos had not yet become Christ our Saviour, and had not yet triumphed over the Devil; therefore, as Jude writes, when contesting with the devil, he called on God the Father to REBUKE him! When Lucifer was cast out of heaven ages ago (Isaiah 14), it was God the Father who threw him out, for Christ said to His disciples, “I saw [as one watching the event] Satan fall as lightning from heaven” (Luke 10:18).

“Chief Archangel”

The same Bible Commentary, on the book of Daniel, is also most interesting. The angel Gabriel relates to Daniel that when the prince of the kingdom of Persia stood opposing him, Michael came to help him (Dan.11:13).

Adam Clarke continues:

“But lo Michael] Gabriel, who speaks, did not leave Cyrus till Michael came to take his place. Michael, *he who is like God*, sometimes appears to signify the *Messiah*, at other times the *highest* or *chief archangel*. Indeed, there is no archangel mentioned in the whole Scripture but this one” (vol.2, page 606).

Even Adam Clarke, a believer in the Trinity, recognized that Michael seems to refer to the Messiah. If he had understood that Christ Himself was originally a created Archangel, then he would have understood fully the identity of this mysterious personage!

In II Enoch, the patriarch says, “And Michael, the LORD’s greatest archangel, lifted me up . . .” (II Enoch 22:6).

“Stand Up” – “Arise!”

Michael was considered the Guardian of the Jewish or Israelite people. As such, Daniel 12:1 says he will “STAND UP” when a time of great trouble comes upon the people of Israel, during the time of the End!

Question: Who is going to “STAND UP” when Israel is threatened to be devoured by all her enemies? Who will Israel call upon?

Answer: “But the LORD will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you. The Gentiles will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising” (Isaiah 60:2-3).

“RISE UP, O LORD! Let Your enemies be scattered, and let those who hate You flee before You” (Numbers 10:35).

“Arise, O LORD, in Your anger; lift Yourself up because of the rage of my enemies; RISE UP for me to the judgment You have commanded” (Psalm 7:6).

“Arise, O LORD! O God, lift up Your hand! Do not forget the humble” (Psalm 10:12).

“Awake! Why do You sleep, O Lord? ARISE! Do not cast us off forever” (Psalm 44:23).

“Arise, O God, judge the earth; for You shall inherit all nations” (Psalm 82:8).

It is Yeshua, Jesus the Messiah, who will rise up to SAVE His people, in the coming day of travail and trouble! He is the true Guardian of Israel – their Protector and Deliverer! “Behold, the day of the LORD is coming . . . For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished. . . . Then the *LORD will go forth and fight* against those nations, as He FIGHTS

in the day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives” (Zech.14:1-4).

“Thus the LORD my God will come, and all the saints with You” (verse 5).

“I will sing to the LORD, for He has triumphed gloriously! . . . The LORD is a man of war; the LORD is His name” (Exo.15:1-3).

“The LORD shall go forth like a mighty man; He shall stir up His zeal like a man of war. He shall cry out, yes, shout aloud; He shall prevail against His enemies” (Isaiah 42:13).

Michael leads the angels of God IN BATTLE against the Devil (Rev.12:7). He defeats him in a mighty heavenly conflict. But who else can defeat the Devil but the Christ of God?

Notice! It is the LORD Yeshua who is the HEAD or CAPTAIN of the armies of the LORD! It is He who will lead His armies to battle in the End Time, as He returns from heaven to punish the wicked and ungodly, and to deliver His people from death, captivity, and the sword.

The apostle John declares:

“Now I saw heaven opened, and, behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And THE ARMIES IN HEAVEN, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God” (Rev.19:11-15).

It is only reasonable to conclude that the mighty Warrior, Christ, who leads the angelic armies to fight the nations at His return, is also the same individual who fought the devil and his angels in the heavenly, cosmic conflict, and defeated them!

Therefore, Michael and Christ must be one and the same! There cannot be *two* captains of the hosts of the LORD! There cannot be TWO commanders of the heavenly hosts of God! Only Christ is also named Yahveh-Sabaoth – “the LORD of Armies” or “Hosts”! (I Sam.1:3, et al.).

Only ONE Qualified Intercessor

According to Jewish lore, Michael is the intercessor for the Jewish people, and Israel. Says the “Testament of Dan,” speaking of Michael:

“And now fear the Lord, my children, be on guard against Satan and his spirits. Draw near to God *and to the angel who intercedes for you, because he is the MEDIATOR between God and men for the peace of Israel. He shall stand in OPPOSITION to the kingdom of the enemy.* . . . This angel of PEACE will strengthen Israel so that it will not succumb to an evil destiny” (*Testament of the Patriarchs*, Dan 6-1-5).

This angel says to the patriarch Levi,

“I am the angel who makes intercession for the nation Israel, that they might not be beaten” (*Testament of Levi*, 5:6).

This angel is linked to the archangel Michael. In I Enoch we read,

“Michael, one of the holy angels, for (he is) obedient in his benevolence over the people and the nations” (I Enoch 20:5).

In the book of Jubilees, in the *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, volume 2, Michael is called “the angel of the presence” (Jub.1:27), “And the angel of the presence, who went before the camp of Israel” (1:29). But if Michael is the intercessor for Israel, the people of God, then what do we do with the testimony of Peter and Paul?

Peter declared of Jesus Christ, “Nor is there salvation [deliverance] in any other, for there is NO OTHER NAME UNDER HEAVEN given among men by which we must be saved [delivered]” (Acts 4:12).

As Paul wrote, “For there is one God and ONE MEDIATOR between God and men, the man *Christ Jesus*, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time” (I Timothy 2:5-6).

There can be only ONE intercessor! And Paul made it clear who that intercessor is, when he wrote: “But He [Christ], because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through HIM, since He always lives to make INTERCESSION for them. For such a high priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless [innocent], undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens” (Heb.7:24-26).

Christ is the true intercessor, and mediator, for man before God the Father, as it is He who died to pay the price for our sins and transgressions – who gave His life for us! And now He is our “High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens” (Heb.8:1).

“He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. . . . For Christ has not entered the holy place made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us” (Heb.9:24).

Therefore, Christ Jesus and Michael must be ONE AND THE SAME INDIVIDUAL, under two different names! Michael, the Guardian and Intercessor for God’s people, is another name of Jesus Christ, Yeshua, the only true Guardian, Intercessor and Mediator for God’s people! As the Scriptures show, Christ has MANY names and wears many crowns and diadems (Rev.19:12, 13, 16).

God’s Wonderful Revelation

How exciting – how wonderful – how clear the truth of God really is, when He reveals it to us! The Plan and Purpose of God is way past man’s imaginings – way beyond his uttermost thoughts and ideas!

As Paul exclaimed, “Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor? Or who has first given to Him and it should be repaid to him? For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen” (Rom.11:33-36).

“But as it is written: ‘Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God’ (I Cor.2:9-10).

Chapter 17

The Books of Enoch, the “Prototype,” “Chosen One,” and “Metatron”

In ancient Jewish literature before the time of Christ, there is evidence of the belief in a “Lesser Yahweh” – a Great Being who was “Second in Command” in the Universe. The New Testament reveals this to have been the Christ. The mystery of this super powerful Being is revealed in the book of Enoch, quoted by the apostle Jude. Notice what Enoch wrote about this ancient Being!

Fascinating insight into the existence of a super-powerful Being, who was also called the “Son of man,” long before there was a human being created, is found in the mysterious book of Enoch, the ancient man of God who “walked with God” (Gen.5:24), before the time of Noah and the Flood.

In the scholarly volume entitled *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, edited by James H. Charlesworth, there are three books translated from ancient Middle Eastern languages, including the Ethiopian, which bear the name of Enoch, the seventh generation from Adam. The Ethiopic book of Enoch is also known as I Enoch, and is the oldest of the three. The ancient tradition of Enoch’s having walked with God, and then vanishing, because God “took Him,” gave rise in ancient times of many haggadic stories among the Jewish people.

The book of Enoch, or I Enoch, tells of God taking Enoch to heaven, either literally or more likely in a vision, where he was given insight into the secrets of the mysteries of the Universe, as well as a glimpse into the future of mankind, and the ultimate divine judgment.

The original language of the book of Enoch is believed by some scholars to have been Hebrew; others think it was Aramaic, a language closely related to Hebrew, and still others partly Hebrew and partly Aramaic. Parts of the book date to pre-Maccabean times, or before 160 B.C. The book itself remains a great mystery to scholars as to its true origin and dating.

It is very interesting to note, however, that the book was well known to many Jewish people, particularly the Essenes and early Christians. Jude, the brother of Christ, quotes from it in his epistle, demonstrating his acceptance of its authority and reliability. He quotes from it as factual and authoritative: “And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, ‘Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him’” (Jude 14-15).

The Ethiopic Enoch says, “Behold he comes with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon them, and destroy the wicked, and reprove all of flesh for every thing which the sinful and ungodly have done, and committed against him.”

This quotation, by the brother of Christ Himself, illustrates the high respect the early apostles had for this book. It was also quoted or used by the authors of the book of Jubilees, the Twelve Patriarchs, the Assumption of Moses, 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra.

The book of I Enoch was important in the early church, being used also by the author of the epistle of Barnabas, and by Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Origen and Clement. Tertullian had an exceptionally high regard for it. “But beginning in the fourth century, the book came to be regarded with disfavor and received negative reviews from Augustine, Hilary and Jerome” (p.8) – the very time the Roman Catholic Church began to become dominant and formally accepted the Trinity doctrine, which is contrary to the teachings of the book of Enoch. Writes E. Isaac, “The relegation of I Enoch to virtual oblivion by medieval minds should not diminish its significance for Christian origins; *few other apocryphal books so indelibly marked the religious history and thought of the time of Jesus*” (*ibid.*).

Enoch reveals God as righteous and just, the Creator of the world, the holy lawgiver, the dispenser of history and ultimate judge of all.

I Enoch discusses the concept of the heavenly Messiah (chapters 45-57). “The Messiah in I Enoch, called the Righteous One, and the Son of Man, is *depicted as a PRE-EXISTENT HEAVENLY BEING who is resplendent and majestic, possesses all dominion, and sits on his throne of glory passing judgment upon all mortal and spiritual beings*” (page 9).

The First Book of Enoch revolves around the theme of the last judgment, the coming destruction of the wicked, and the triumph of the righteous. It speaks of the coming resurrection of the righteous dead, the coming of the Messiah to judge the world, and the fate of sinners, including the fallen angels, and apostate Jews. A central emphasis in the book is that sinners are economic exploiters, political oppressors, and socially unjust people of the world.

For several centuries, in fact, the book of Enoch was accepted as scripture, or inspired prophetic literature, by the apostles and early Christians. Charles F. Potter wrote

in 1935, of its importance and discovery. He declared, “In the mountain fastness of Ethiopia there was preserved for thirteen centuries a precious manuscript which not only throws much light on the Bible but which also was itself in the Bible for five centuries” (*The Book of Enoch*, page 3). He points out that in the fourth century, when debate arose regarding the New Testament canon, the book of Enoch, was included in the debate, “which had long been accepted as Scripture by Jesus and Paul, and the whole Christian Church, for several centuries.” Deemed uncanonical by the Catholic theologians of the fourth century, it “gradually dropped out of use, and finally disappeared.”

Centuries passed, and not until a Scotsman, James Bruce, came along, who cherished the idea that the book of Enoch still existed somewhere, in an Ethiopic version, was it rediscovered in 1768 by Bruce in a remote region of Ethiopia. No copy of the original language book is known to be in existence, but the Ethiopic version has been preserved in twenty-nine manuscripts.

What does I Enoch tell us about the existence of the Messiah, and His origin?

I Enoch

In this apocalyptic book, dating centuries before the time of Christ, we find very interesting statements regarding a Being of great authority who was the first creation of God. He was also foretold to become the Messiah. Notice! Enoch declares:

“At that place, I saw the One to whom belongs the time before time. And his head was white like wool, and there was with him another individual, whose face was like that of a human being. His countenance was full of grace like that of one among the holy angels. And I asked the one -- from among the angels -- who was going with me, and who had revealed to me all the secrets regarding the One who was born of human beings, ‘Who is this, and from whence is he who is going as the *PROTOTYPE OF THE BEFORE-TIME?*’ And he answered me and said to me, ‘*This is the Son of Man*, to whom belongs righteousness, and with whom righteousness dwells. And he will open all the hidden storerooms; for the Lord of the Spirits has chosen him, and he is destined to be victorious before the Lord of the Spirits in eternal uprightness. This Son of Man whom you have seen is the One who would remove the kings and the mighty ones from their comfortable seats and the strong ones from their thrones. He shall loosen the reins of the strong and crush the teeth of the sinners. He shall depose the kings from their thrones and kingdoms” (I Enoch 46:1-5, as translated by E. Isaac, from the volume, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, edited by James H. Charlesworth).

In the translation of Richard Laurence, Archbishop of Cashel, professor of Hebrew in the University of Oxford, 1821, we read this passage as follows:

“There I beheld the Ancient of days, whose head was like white wool, and with him *another, whose countenance resembled that of a man. His countenance was full of grace, like that of one of the holy angels.* Then I enquired of one of the angels who went with me, and who shewed me every secret thing, concerning

this Son of man; who He was; whence He was; and why He accompanied the Ancient of days.

“He answered and said to me: *This is the Son of man*, to whom righteousness belongs; with whom righteousness has dwelt; and who will reveal all the treasures of that which is concealed; for the *Lord of spirits has CHOSEN him; and his portion has surpassed all before the Lord of spirits* in everlasting uprightness” (Enoch 46:1).

The passage goes on to show that this “Son of man” – who sits with the Ancient of days and accompanied Him – will execute judgment, hurling kings from their thrones, and punishing all who lift up their hands against the Most High.

Notice how clearly this parallels the New Testament description of Jesus Christ, who is identified as the “Logos” or “Word” of God who was with God “in the beginning” (John 1:1-4). Enoch calls this Person the “Prototype of the Before-Time.” Paul says Christ was the “firstborn of every creature” (Colossians 1:15). Christ Himself was referred to often as the “Son of Man,” just as Enoch foretold. He also says He was “the beginning of the creation of God” (Rev.3:14).

The fact that Enoch, in his book, speaks of this primordial Being as “the *Prototype of the Before-Time*,” indicates that He was the *first One* made in the very *image and likeness of God*, and this also indicates that there will be more like Him in the future.

Enoch goes on describing this Person, in the translation by E. Isaac, as follows:

“At that place, I saw the One to whom belongs the time before time. And his head was white like wool, *and there was WITH HIM another individual, whose face was like that of a human being*. His countenance was full of grace like that of one among the holy angels. And I asked the one – from among the angels -- who was going with me, and who had revealed to me all the secrets of the One who was born of human beings, ‘Who is this, and from whence is he who is going as the PROTOTYPE of the Before-Time?’ And he answered me and said to me, ‘This is the *Son of Man*, to whom belongs righteousness, and with whom righteousness dwells. And he will open all the hidden storerooms; for the Lord of the Spirits has chosen him, and he is destined to be victorious before the Lord of the Spirits in eternal uprightness’” (I Enoch 46:4).

Enoch clearly referred to an Individual chosen by God – the “Before-Time” – who was a “Prototype” of Himself and who was also called “The Son of Man,” because He would later be transformed into a human being, and who would be victorious over all enemies. What clearer picture could we have of the Pre-Existent Messiah?

Enoch continues:

“At that hour, *that Son of Man was given a name, in the presence of the Lord of the Spirits, the Before-Time; even before the creation of the sun and the moon,*

before the creation of the stars, he was given a name in the presence of the Lord of the Spirits. He will become a staff for the righteous ones in order that they may lean on him and not fall. He is the *light of the Gentiles* and he will become the hope of those who are sick in their hearts. All who dwell upon the earth shall fall and worship before him; they shall glorify, bless, and sing the name of the Lord of the Spirits. For this purpose *he became the CHOSEN ONE; he was concealed in the presence of the Lord of the Spirits prior to the creation of the world*, and for eternity. And he has revealed the wisdom of the Lord of the Spirits to the righteous and the holy ones, for he has preserved the portion of the righteous because they hated and despised this world of oppression (together with) all its ways of life and its habits in the name of the Lord of the Spirits; and because they will be **SAVED IN HIS NAME** and it is his good pleasure that they have life” (I Enoch 48:2-7).

Notice that this Person was given a name even before the creation of the sun, moon, and stars – the physical Universe. He was to be a “light to the Gentiles.” He was the “Chosen One,” who was concealed by God prior to the creation of the world. He was to be the “Saviour,” and all those who would be saved would obtain salvation “in His name.” Who was this Being? Peter declared of Christ, “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). It was the Logos, or Word of God – Jesus Christ!

Matthew said of Jesus Christ, that He dwelt in Capernaum, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah, who wrote, “The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: The people who sat in darkness have *seen a great light*, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death, Light has dawned” (Matt.4:13-16).

In the Laurence translation, we read this passage:

“In that hour was this Son of man invoked before the Lord of spirits, and his name in the presence of the Ancient of days. Before the sun and the signs were created, before the stars of heaven were formed, his name was invoked in the presence of the Lord of spirits. A support shall He be for the righteous and the holy to lean upon, without falling; and He shall be the light of nations.

“He shall be the hope of those whose hearts are troubled. All, who dwell on earth, shall fall down and worship before him; shall bless and glorify Him, and sing praises to the name of the Lord of spirits.

“Therefore the ELECT and the CONCEALED ONE EXISTED in His presence, BEFORE THE WORLD WAS CREATED, AND FOR EVER” (48:2-5).

These words clearly show the belief and teaching among the Jewish people, even in a book regarded as authoritative by the apostle Jude, of the existence of a great “Son of man” – the “Elect” – the “Concealed one” who existed before the heavens and the earth were formed – One who dwelt in the “presence” of the “Ancient of days”!

In chapter 49, we read the following:

“The Elect One stands before the Lord of the Spirits; his glory is forever and ever and his power is unto all generations. In him dwells the spirit of wisdom, the spirit which gives thoughtfulness, the spirit of knowledge and strength, and the spirit of those who have fallen asleep in righteousness. He shall judge the secret things” (I Enoch 49:2-4).

Now notice this in the Laurence translation:

“But iniquity passes away like a shadow, and possesses not a fixed station; for the Elect one stands before the Lord of spirits; and his glory is for ever and ever; and His power from generation to generation. With Him dwells the spirit of intellectual wisdom, the spirit of instruction and of power, and the spirit of those who sleep in righteousness; He shall judge secret things. Nor shall any be able to utter a single word before Him; for the Elect one IS IN THE PRESENCE of the Lord of spirits, according to his own pleasure” (Part II, 2-4).

Similarly, the New Testament says that Christ, in His pre-incarnate form, was appointed by God the Father as “heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds: who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholdeth all things by the word of his power” (Heb.1:1-3). Christ was “the image [i.e., “prototype”] of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature” or “all creation” (Col.1:15-16). He is the “Elect One,” and the “Chosen One,” of God. He is the One prophesied by Isaiah, when he wrote of the coming Messiah,

“There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots [this implies that Jesse would both be his ancestor, as well as his descendent, since this “Branch” was to grow out of his own roots, as well as come forth as a branch from his stem!]. The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD” (Isaiah 11:1-2).

Thus Jesus Christ, like no other human being, fulfills these ancient prophecies! And plainly, according to the words of Enoch, Christ is described as having existed ages before His human birth and conception! He is described as being present AT CREATION!

How plain! How clear! How obvious! Jesus Christ most certainly *did* pre-exist His human birth!

III Enoch and the Mystery of “Metatron”

Ancient Jewish apocalyptic literature of the centuries following the first century and time of Christ shows astounding evidence that the Rabbis believed and wrote about a mysterious Being who was anciently especially chosen by God the Father, who was considered above all the other angels, and who was even known as the “lesser Yahveh.”

Who was this mysterious and enigmatic Being? Could it have been the Logos – the One who became known as Jesus Christ? Here’s the evidence!

An ancient book, sometimes called “3 Enoch,” or the “Hebrew Apocalypse of Enoch,” dates to the fifth and sixth century, and purports to be an account by R. Ishmael, a rabbi of that time, who – like Enoch – had visions of heaven, God’s throne, and His chariot, and received unique revelations from a super-archangel whose name was “Metatron.”

This book dates to the period when the visible Christian church, with headquarters in Rome, was repudiating the prophecies of Enoch. Being written by a Jewish rabbi of that time, it illustrates a widespread *Jewish* theology of heaven and its occupants.

Says the translator, P. Alexander, this book is written in Hebrew, and was also known by different titles – *The Third Book of Enoch*, *The Book of the Palaces*, *The Book of Rabbi Ishmael the High Priest*, and *The Revelation of Metatron*. Rabbi Ishmael was a famous Jewish scholar who lived during the Bar Kochba period, roughly 135 A.D. Some of the document no doubt traces back to his time and even earlier, but it was redacted and edited and finalized later, although the actual date is in dispute.

I wish to cite a number of key references from this *Enoch* because they illustrate with tremendous veracity and authority that the concept of a heavenly DIVINE BEING, next to the Ancient of days, or Supreme God, is well known and was greatly accepted by Jewish rabbis of the first few centuries of the present era. To them, it did not conflict with the idea of “One God” at all.

One scholar, H. Odeberg, states that a passage in 3 Enoch which “appears to describe Metatron as a primordial being” actually “dates from a time not later than the first century A.D.” (Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, p.226). It is acknowledged that 3 Enoch “contains some very old traditions” (p.229). The book describes heavenly visions, such as Enoch experienced, and from which it gets its name, although the author was not Enoch himself, but one who like Enoch was gifted with special revelations from God.

What does this book tell us about the Jewish concept of heaven and God’s throne?

3 Enoch presents God in the image of an emperor and His court. He has His heavenly palace, His throne, “and, in Metatron, His grand vizier” (p.241). Says P. Alexander, “By far the most significant angel in 3 Enoch is Metatron. Metatron’s position in the heavenly world is briefly and accurately summed up in the title ‘*The lesser YHWH*’; he is the *HIGHEST* of the archangels and *GOD’S VICE-REGENT*. Like the Holy One himself, he has a throne and presides over a celestial law court” (p.243).

The name “Metatron” itself has prompted much speculation as to its meaning. The Latin *metator* was used of “anyone who prepares the way.” The Greek word

metaturannos means “one next to the ruler.” The Greek *meta thronon* means “next to the divine throne,” “the second throne.”

Says P. Alexander, “The powerful ‘angel of the Lord’ in the Old Testament (who is sometimes hard to distinguish from God himself) may be the prototype of 3 Enoch’s Metatron” (p.246). In a Dead Sea scroll (*11Qmelch*) the personage known as Melchizedek “appears as being exalted over all the angels,” and it is stated that He will “preside over a heavenly assize and exact punishment, with the help of the other angels” (p.249). The Qumran community apparently regarded Melchizedek as the high priest of the heavenly Temple – the same role in which Metatron is pictured in 3 Enoch.

Thus Metatron is the same personage as Melchizedek – and the apostle Paul identifies Melchizedek as none other than the One who became Jesus Christ! Paul writes that Melchizedek, to whom Abraham paid a tithe of all (Gen.14:18-20), was “without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but MADE LIKE the *Son of God*, *REMAINS a priest continually*” (Heb.7:1-3).

Notice! This person had no parents, humanly speaking. He was KING of Salem, or Jerusalem, meaning, “king of peace” (verse 2). His name, itself, means “King of righteousness.” He pre-existed the Universe, having no “beginning of days.” He is an ETERNAL being, having “no end of life.” Thus His beginning had to be BEFORE CREATION, as “days” are defined as a product of the earth turning on its axis causing night and day.

Says P. Alexander, “A number of clear parallels between the heavenly Melchizedek of Qumran and the Metatron of 3 Enoch at once suggest themselves: both figures hold exalted, if not pre-eminent, positions among the angels; both are heavenly judges . . .” (p.250). Both also had “earthly lives” – *as did Jesus Christ!*

“Metatron” Revealed!

Now let’s notice what 3 Enoch reveals about this mysterious figure known as “Metatron” in Jewish apocalyptic, mystical literature of the early centuries of the present era! Let us examine how this being’s pre-existence compares with the stated pre-existence of the Christ, the Nazarene – Jesus, the “Son of God” and the “Son of man.”

In 3 Enoch, Rabbi R. Ishmael begins with a vision wherein he ascended to behold God’s chariot in heaven. He prayed for God to protect him, as he felt very insecure in this awesome place. He relates, “At once the Holy One, blessed be he, summoned to my aid his servant Metatron, Prince of the Divine Presence” (3 Enoch 1:4). In 3 Enoch, the overwhelming majority of chapters begin with a reference to “Metatron, Prince of the Divine Presence.”

In chapter 3, the Rabbi asks Metatron, “What is your name?” He replies, “I have seventy names, corresponding to the seventy nations of the world, and all of them are based on the name of the King of the kings of kings; however, my King calls me

‘Youth.’” (3:1-2). Compare this with Proverbs 8, where Solomon speaks of Wisdom as being “brought forth” in the beginning. Solomon quotes Wisdom as saying, “When He appointed the foundations of the earth, then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him” (Prov.8:22-25, 29-30).

Metatron was called “Youth,” by God the Father, the Ancient of days. This implies that as compared to the Father, the super-archangel Metatron has a beginning, a time when He was “youthful.” Yet He became the Prince over all God’s Creation, and Co-ruler of the Universe!

R. Ishmael then asked Metatron, “Why are you called *by the name of your Creator* with seventy names? You are greater than all the princes, more exalted than all the angels, more beloved than all the ministers, more honored than all the hosts, and elevated over all potentates in sovereignty, greatness, and glory . . .” (3 Enoch 4:1).

Who was this being called Metatron?

Metatron said to Rabbi Ishmael, “Out of the love which he had for me, more than for all the denizens of the heights, the Holy One, blessed be he, fashioned for me a majestic robe . . . He fashioned for me a kingly crown . . . He set it upon my head, *and He called me, ‘The lesser YHWH’ in the presence of his whole household in the height, as it is written, ‘My name is in him’*” (3 Enoch 12:1-5).

The book of 3 Enoch then tells of an episode where a certain Aher came to behold Metatron, and set his eyes on him, and was afraid and trembled, “when he saw me seated upon a throne like a king, with ministering angels standing beside me as servants and all the princes of kingdoms crowned with crowns surrounding me. Then he opened his mouth and said, ‘There are indeed two powers in heaven!’” (3 Enoch 16:2-4). Of course, he was mistaken – there are not two Gods in heaven, both equal to one another. Rather, Metatron was subordinant and subject to the authority of God the Father, even as Jesus Christ said, “My Father is greater than I” (John 14:28).

In section called “Appendix to 3 Enoch,” with additional chapters and material, we read more of Metatron. Notice!

“Metatron is Prince over all princes, and stands before him who is exalted above all gods. He goes beneath the throne of glory, where he has a great tabernacle of light . . .” (15B:1).

“The Holy One, blessed be he, said: I made him strong, I took him, I appointed him, namely Metatron my servant, who is *unique among all the denizens of the heights. . .*” (48C:1).

“I made honor, majesty, and glory his garment; beauty, pride, and strength his outer robe, and a kingly crown . . . I bestowed on him some of my majesty, some of my magnificence, some of the splendor of my glory, which is on the throne of glory, and *I called him by MY NAME, The Lesser YHWH, Prince of the Divine*

Presence, knower of secrets. Every secret I have made known to him in love, every mystery I have made known to him in uprightness.

“I have fixed his throne at the door of my palace, on the outside, so that he might sit and execute judgment over all my household in the height. I made every prince stand before him to receive authority from him and to do his will. I took seventy of my names and called him by them, so as to increase his honor. . .

“As it is written, ‘So the word that goes from my mouth does not return to me empty: he carries out my will.’ It does not say here, ‘I carry out,’ but, ‘he carries out,’ which teaches us that Metatron stands and carries out every word and every utterance that issues from the mouth of the Holy One, blessed be he, and executes the decree of the Holy One” (3 Enoch 48C:1-10).

How clear it is that this personage, Metatron, is another name for the Pre-existent Logos, the One who carries out EVERY WORD AND UTTERANCE of God the Father – that is, He is the same One as the “Word” of God – the LOGOS – the Pre-Existent Jesus Christ!

Notice it again –

“. . . Metatron stands and carries out every word and every utterance that issues from the mouth of the Holy One, blessed be he, and executes the decree of the Holy One” (10).

In comparison, we read in the gospel of John:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it” (John 1:1-5).

The Greek word for “Word” here is *Logos* and means “utterance, word, speech, #3056 in Strong’s Concordance, and means literally “something said (including the thought), by implication a topic . . . also reasoning (the mental faculty) or motive; by extension, a computation; spec. (with the article in John) the *Divine Expression* (i.e. *Christ*) – account, cause, communication . . . matter, mouth, preaching, question, . . . speaker, speech, talk, thing . . . tidings, treatise, utterance, word, work.”

“Metatron” is another name for the Celestial Being who became the Lord Jesus Christ – Yeshua Ha Moshiach – the Messiah!

Enoch prophesied of this truth. The Jews during the time of Christ should have seen and understood it, because they had the book of Enoch. They had all the Old Testament prophecies. They knew the writings of Philo. They had the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs.

3 Enoch declares further of Metatron:

“These are the seventy names – each of them like the sacred name on the chariot, engraved on the throne of glory – which the Holy One, blessed be he, took from his sacred name and *bestowed on Metatron* – seventy names by which the ministering angels the King of the king of kings in heaven above. . . .

“The angel Metatron, Prince of the Divine Presence, Prince of Torah, the angel, Prince of Wisdom; the angel, Prince of Understanding; the angel, Prince of Glory; the angel, Prince of the Palace; the angel, Prince of Kings; the angel, Prince of Rulers; the angel, Prince of the exalted, lofty, great and honored Princes, who are in heaven and earth, said, YHWH the God of Israel is my witness” (3 Enoch 48D:5-6).

This Being says He was the One who revealed the Divine Name to Moses at the burning bush – the “Angel of the Lord” (Exodus 3:2-6, 13-15). The other angels, according to the account in 3 Enoch, did not think mankind should have knowledge of the full meaning of the name YHWH or YHVH – YAHVEH. They said, “Why are you revealing it to flesh and blood?”

Metatron said to them when they questioned Him about it, “Because the Omnipotent One has given me the authority from the high and exalted throne, from which all the sacred names proceed with fiery lightnings.” He goes on, “But their minds were not set at ease until the Holy One, blessed be he, rebuked them and drove them out of his presence with a rebuke, saying to them, ‘I wished, I desired, I ordered it, and entrusted it to my servant Metatron alone, because he is unique among all the denizens of the heights. Metatron brought it out from my storehouses and committed it to Moses, and Moses to Joshua, Joshua to the Elders, the Elders to the Prophets’” (48D:8-10).

Metatron is another name for the Angel of the LORD – the One who appeared to Moses and said, categorically, “I AM WHO I AM. And He said, ‘Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, “I AM has sent me to you.”’ Moreover God said to Moses . . . This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations” (Exodus 3:13-15).

Jesus Christ said plainly that this great individual was He Himself. He told the Pharisees, “Mose assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM” (John 8:58).

There is no question, no doubt at all, that Jesus Christ pre-existed His human form as the Logos, the Word of God, the Angel of the Lord, Melchisedek, the Son of God, and Metatron – the “Lesser YHVH.” He bore God’s name – He was God’s “Son,” from the beginning of Creation, “the image of the invisible God, the FIRSTBORN over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible” (Col.1:15-16).

Therefore Titus spoke of Him as “our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13). Therefore Jude wrote of Him as “God our Saviour” (Jude 25). Therefore the apostle Thomas, who doubted the resurrection of Christ, when he put his fingers into his

wounds, and his hand into his side, worshipped Him, saying, “My Lord and my GOD!” (John 20:28).

Those who do not understand this fundamental truth are indeed lost and perishing. For as John wrote, “He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son.. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also” (I John 2:22-23).

Do you know the *real* Jesus Christ – the Logos who became flesh and blood? Do you really *know* your Saviour? It’s time you did!

