

# WHO – WHAT – WAS JESUS BEFORE HIS HUMAN BIRTH?

***Was He God — was He angel — was He spiritual essence — did He exist only in the plan, thought and purpose of God? Each of the variant Hebrew names proponents find their theory in grave difficulty when one understands WHO the God of the Old Testament really is!***

by Garner Ted Armstrong

**T**HERE is irrefutable proof that the *YHVH* of the Bible is usually the same God which the New Testament reveals to be the Son — Jesus Christ. He was a literal God-being whose name is *YHVH* just as much as is the Father's. He proclaims, "I am the LORD (*YHVH*); and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob . . ." (Ex. 6:2, 3). The patriarchs saw and heard this God — the *Logos* — the Spokesman — the Son — Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

Most of you brethren have already studied the truth about Jesus' prior existence. But many of the newer members have not. All members should definitely *read* and *STUDY* this article with their Bibles to crystallize this vital truth.

## Jesus Had a Father

During His earthly ministry, Jesus Christ revealed a Father-Son relationship existing between Him and His heavenly Father. Throughout the Bible, God stresses this *family* relationship which is first between God the Father and the Son, and then between each begotten Christian and the Father. The Church is revealed as the *mother* of us all. Individuals within the Church refer to each other as "brothers" and "sisters." There is a *FAMILY* known as God.

Let's understand it.

The logical place to begin is in the *very beginning*, so get your Bible, and turn to Genesis, the first chapter. "In the beginning *GOD* [*Elohim* in Hebrew] created . . . And God [*Elohim*]

said, Let *us* make man in *OUR* image, after *OUR* likeness . . ." (Gen. 1:1, 26). God was not one Person, who was speaking to Himself — but was revealing a *PLURALITY* of persons, *MORE* than one, in the word appearing in your Bible as "God."

*Elohim* is a *uniplural* word — that is, a word which can be used as either singular or plural, like "sheep" or "deer." It can include more than one person. In fact, unlike "sheep" or "deer" the actual *form* of this Hebrew word is plural though often used as if singular.

What's more — all other scriptures uphold and support this vital truth! Listen to the words of the inspired Apostle Paul, who said, "For by him [Christ] 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." Paul went on to say, "And he is BEFORE all things, and BY HIM all things consist" (Col. 1:16-17).

Was Paul just flattering Christ — was he simply adding spiritual-sounding phrases to make Christ seem more *magnified* to the Christians in his care? Certainly not. For "ALL SCRIPTURE is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (II Tim. 3:16).

If *all things* were CREATED by Christ, then He must have been ONE of the persons included in the Hebrew word *Elohim* used in Genesis 1:1, 26.

## Christ Before Adam

Strange though it may seem, there are TWO accounts of the "beginning" of all things given in your Bible! In the Gospel of John, chapter 1, a most vital passage gives us the clear, simple TRUTH of Christ's office *prior* to His human birth. "In the beginning was the Word" (John 1:1). Notice, "*In the beginning . . .*" This was exactly the *same time* as Genesis 1:1. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was *with* God, and the Word WAS GOD."

*There* is the vital truth still unseen by so many — and yet so plainly revealed in your Bible.

The Greek word which is translated into the English as "Word" in John 1:1 is *logos* which also means *spokesman*, or one who *speaks*. To continue: "The same was in the beginning *with* God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:2-3). Yes, EVERYTHING WAS MADE BY HIM, the *spokesman* or *logos* who became CHRIST, as we read in Colossians 1:16-17.

The Person in the God Family who later *became* Jesus Christ was the One who SAID (spoke), "Let US make man in OUR image," thus executing His awesome office as the very EXECUTIVE of the God Family.

Notice how clearly John's Gospel states this truth — "And the Word [*logos*] 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).

WHO was full of grace and truth? Verse 17 says, "... grace and truth came by *Jesus Christ*."

Further light is shed on this commonly misunderstood subject in the wonderful book of Hebrews. Paul tells us, "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" (Heb. 1:1, 2).

It becomes self-evident, then, that Jesus Christ is the very CREATOR. And yet millions do not know, nor even faintly comprehend this amazing truth.

### God Made Flesh

Paul called Jesus Christ "God our Saviour" (Titus 1:3). And so — in the person of Jesus Christ, our very CREATOR became our Saviour. Christ is at once our Maker, and a member of the Godhead. Therefore, His life which He gave for us is of *far greater value* than the sum total of every living, breathing human being.

To pay the PENALTY for your sins and mine, which penalty is *death* — death for *all eternity* — unless it is pardoned and washed away (Rom. 6:23), it was necessary that Christ be *divine* — that His life be worth more than all our *human* lives put together! When Christ took our sins He paid the penalty we have incurred — *not* eternal life in hellfire, but the cessation of life — DEATH. "Christ *died* for our sins according to the scriptures" (I Cor. 15:3). Jesus was MADE FLESH (John 1:14) and became a human being for this very purpose, that He might be put to death for all mankind!

And yet, if Christ were ONLY human, His death could have paid the death penalty incurred by only *one other human*. The penalty for every individual's sin had to be paid. Remember, the penalty of sin is DEATH and God cannot die! Therefore, the penalty is HUMAN life — and God of Himself could not have paid such a penalty. It was absolutely necessary, then, that Christ be BOTH *human and divine*.

Remember, the Bible never says there is only ONE member in the God Family, but rather expresses a PLURAL-

ITY of persons — more than one. Otherwise Jesus would be a liar, for He prayed constantly to His *Father* who was in heaven.

This awe-inspiring mystery of God is grasped in its overwhelming significance only by those who will *hunger and thirst* for God's truth (Matt. 5:6). The *Logos*, the One who *spoke* and CREATED by His very WORD, "*emptied himself and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*" (Phil. 2:7-8, margin).

The divine Being who was instrumental in CREATING all things was *changed into* human flesh. Was Jesus human? YES, He was! Your very salvation depends on this fact!

### Jesus Had HUMAN Nature

It stands conclusively proved that Jesus Christ was HUMAN, that He DIED and was absolutely DEAD during the three days and three nights He was in the grave. It was for this very reason that Jesus was God made into mortal flesh — "*for the suffering of death*" (Heb. 2:9).

But notice further: "He also himself likewise [as the children are partakers of *flesh and blood*] took part of the *same*" — took on HUMAN NATURE — became flesh and blood — "that through *death* He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb. 2:14).

Because He was human, Jesus constantly had to CRY OUT to His Father to keep Himself from falling! MILLIONS of people do not understand the tremendous *battle*, the life-long *struggle* Christ had with *Himself*, in overcoming His own human nature — the natural pulls of the flesh — and in living a perfect life totally without sin, the sacrifice of which would thus be available to pay for OTHERS' sins. Not realizing this, millions *do not fully understand the extent of the sacrifice their Saviour made*, and in many cases are trusting in a FALSE SAVIOUR!

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in ALL

POINTS tempted like as we are, yet without sin"! (Heb. 4:15.)

"Who in the days of his *flesh*, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared" (Heb. 5:7).

Your very Saviour had to CRY ALOUD TO GOD, in strong crying and TEARS, for power to overcome Himself, to withstand the temptations of SIN to finally be put to death with the record of a PERFECT life. Are you WORTHY of this tremendous sacrifice?

### Jesus Christ — The "LORD" of the Old Testament

In the King James authorized version of the Bible the word "LORD" is frequently used, and usually in small capital letters. Wherever this word appears all in capital letters, it is translated from the Hebrew word YHVH. YHVH, when more literally translated, implies "The ETERNAL," or the EVER-LIVING one.

It is commonly supposed that the God of the Old Testament — YHVH, sometimes translated "Jehovah," and in the Authorized Version "The LORD" — was always God, the FATHER of Jesus Christ. *This is a flagrant error!*

Throughout the books of the Old Testament, the LORD appeared to various individuals, dealt particularly and personally with the ancient Israelites, and talked directly (though from the darkness of a cloud or the brightness of a fire) to Moses. This Person who spoke to Adam, to Enoch, and to Moses was *the One who later became Jesus Christ!*

YHVH was the God of Israel, the only One of the Godhead known to ancient Israel. When He came in human flesh they did not recognize Him. "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not" (John 1:10). However, neither did they know God the Father (Matt. 11:27 and Luke 10:22). "... No one knoweth ... who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son *will-eth* [Greek] to REVEAL him" (Luke 10:22).

*Elohim* — the God kingdom — includes both the Father and the Son who was the *Logos* or the WORD of

God (most often the One referred to by the word YHVH), and also their Spirit emanating from them, the Holy Spirit, the life, character, and power of God. Jesus, in praying for the welfare of the Church, prayed that its many members might "be ONE, as we are" (John 17:11, 21). The church is ONE body, yet composed of many members (1 Cor. 12:12). A husband and wife are ONE FLESH, yet two persons.

The word "God" has two meanings — the God kingdom or the family of God, AND the *persons* composing that kingdom or family. Christ and the Father are ONE God, not two Gods — one *Elohim*. That is why *Elohim* said, "Let us make man in OUR image" (Gen. 1:26).

YHVH was the "WORD" or Spokesman of the Godhead — its second member. As soon as God began to SPEAK to man, it was always YHVH who spoke (Gen. 2:16, 18; Exodus 20:2).

As a fragment of the evidence that the LORD of the Old Testament is the same person as the Lord of the New, compare Isaiah 8:13-14 with 1 Peter 2:7-8. Isaiah said, "The LORD of hosts" — YHVH — shall be "a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence." Peter said, in quoting this text in reference to Christ, He is "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence." Jesus is the LORD — the Eternal of the Old Testament.

Now compare Isaiah 40:3 with Matt. 3:3 and Mark 1:3. John prepared the way before YHVH (Isa. 40:3) who was CHRIST (Mark 1:14-15).

In Revelation 1:17 we read (I am going to use the *Revised Standard Version* from here on), "When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand upon me, saying, 'Fear not, I am the first and the last.'" And in verse 8, "'I am the Alpha and the Omega,' says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." Again Revelation 22:13, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." Study also Revelation 22:16 for proof it was Jesus speaking. Jesus Christ calls Himself the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. Now compare these texts with Isaiah 44:6: "Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his

Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no God.'"

Now turn to Isaiah 48:11-12. "For my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned? 'My glory I will not give to another. Hearken to me, O Jacob, and Israel, whom I called! I am He, I am the first, and I am the last.'" Verses 17-18 show it was YHVH speaking. And also in Isaiah 41:4, "Who has performed and done this, calling the generations from the beginning? I, the LORD, the first, and with the last; I am He."

All of these scriptures show that YHVH is the first and last. Christ is clearly the YHVH of the Old Testament!

### Who Is Our Redeemer?

The person of the Godhead who is our REDEEMER is Jesus Christ. John 4:42 contains this: "They said to the woman, 'It is no longer because of your words that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that *this is indeed the SAVIOUR* of the world.'" "But our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a *Saviour*, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:20). Read also Titus 2:10-14, Luke 1:68-69.

For further proof that Jesus the Saviour is YHVH, see Isaiah 49:7 and Isaiah 60:16, where He — YHVH — is the Redeemer and Saviour and *also* "the Mighty One of Jacob" — (to be OF Jacob means a son, or descendant of Jacob) — the Mighty One of all Jacob's children. In Isaiah 48:17, YHVH is also called the Redeemer and the Holy One of Israel — the One of Israel who is holy! The same is expressed in Isaiah 43:14, "Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel..." Also note verse 15 where YHVH is Israel's King. Now notice in Acts 3:14-15 that the Christ who was denied was the same "HOLY ONE" — YHVH! "But ye denied the Holy One and Righteous One... the Prince [or Author, margin] of life." See also Acts 2:27 and Mark 1:24.

### Christ Was David's "Shepherd"

Who was David's *shepherd*? The LORD — YHVH (Ps. 23:1).

In John 10:11, Jesus said *He* was the Shepherd. Open your Bible also to Hebrews 13:20: "Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great *shepherd* of the sheep..." Compare this text with 1 Peter 2:24-25, which says, "For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the *Shepherd* and *Guardian* of your souls." We also read, "Tend the flock of God that is your charge, not by constraint but willingly, not for shameful gain but eagerly, not as domineering over those in your charge but being examples to the flock. And when the chief *Shepherd* is manifested you will obtain the unfading crown of glory" (1 Peter 5:2-4).

The great Shepherd who is coming to RULE as King over all kings is YHVH. "And you are my flock, the sheep of my pasture, and I am your God, says the Lord [YHVH] God" — Christ! (See Ezekiel 34:11, 30-31.)

It is JESUS CHRIST who is coming again in person as KING of kings to rule, and to restore. In Revelation 19:13 "He is clad in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God." "From his mouth issues a sharp sword with which to smite the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron; he will tread the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty" (verse 15). And again in Revelation 17:14 we read, "They will make war on the *Lamb*, and the Lamb [Christ] will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful."

Now notice Isaiah 2:2 and Micah 4:3. "It shall come to pass... that the mountain [Kingdom] of the house of the Lord [YHVH] shall be established as the highest of the mountains [kingdoms]" — ruling the world. "And he [YHVH — Christ] shall judge between many peoples, and shall decide for strong nations afar off," and then they shall have lasting peace.

In almost every Old Testament passage, the LORD YHVH — the Eternal — is Jesus Christ. Clearly, Jesus our Saviour is the God of the Old Testament. □