



FEED MY SHEEP

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Issue #6

April 1999

Is Jesus God? Part 2

One of the greatest controversies in the first few centuries of the Christian era was over the issue of whether or not Jesus Christ was truly God. Unquestionably, the apostles and the first couple of generations after them had no doubt about his deity, but by the end of the second century, serious doubts about his deity had crept into many parts of the growing church. Recall that this was happening even as the Christians were being severely persecuted and martyred for their faith. It was not until the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D. that this doctrine, known as Arianism, was declared a heresy. Out of this gathering of 318 bishops came the Nicene Creed:

“[We believe] in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only son of God, begotten of the Father, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down and was incarnate, and was made man; he suffered, and the third day he rose again, and ascended into heaven; from thence he cometh to judge the quick and the dead.”

We at SKM certainly do not believe that everything that became orthodoxy is necessarily biblically correct, nor that everything church councils have declared as “heresy” is necessarily so, but in this case we agree one hundred percent with the condemnation of Arianism. Even the Nicene Creed above has an error which somehow slipped past the notice of 318 learned men. It states that Jesus is “the only Son of God.” Yet Luke 3:38 tells us that Adam was the son of God. Yes, I know “son” is in italics, but compare v. 23; it is legitimately part of the translation.

It is our purpose in these several issues of FMS to demonstrate from the Scriptures that Jesus is indeed God. It has been said many times by those who reject the deity of Christ that because Jesus never said “I am God,” that he never claimed to be God. This is shortsighted. In fact,

he did claim to be God on numerous occasions. But he veiled many of those statements so that one needs to “put two and two together” in order to see it.

We began this avenue of proofs in the last FMS by titling it “Bible Algebra 101.” (If $a=c$ and $b=c$, then $a=b$.) We showed that it was God (YHWH) who is called “the Rock” of Israel in the Old Testament, yet it is Jesus (Yahshua) the Christ who is called “the Rock” in the New Testament. Conclusion: YHWH and Yahshua are one and the same. Jesus Christ IS the God of the Old Testament.

Names, titles and descriptions of God and Jesus

The same method is applicable to the title “shepherd.” We have all seen artists’ renditions of Jesus as “the Good Shepherd,” with staff in hand, leading a flock of sheep. And indeed, he is the great shepherd. It is recorded twice in the gospel of John.

John 10:11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

... 14 I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

The apostle Peter confirms it in his first epistle. Referring to Jesus, he says:

1 Peter 2:25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

Thus the New Testament clearly proves that Jesus is the great shepherd of Israel (Israel are the sheep, remember? — FMS #1.) Yet, the Old Testament in that most famous of all psalms states just as clearly that Yahweh (God) is the shepherd.

Psalms 23:1 YHWH¹ is my shepherd; I shall not want.

Bible algebra: If two things (a and b) are equal to

the same thing (c), then the two things (a and b) are equal to each other. God is the shepherd. Jesus is the shepherd. Jesus is God. Let's take another title of God: the Holy One (of Israel).

Isaiah 43: 14 Thus saith YHWH, your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; ...

15 I am YHWH, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King.

Compare this identification of God as the holy one with Peter's identification of Jesus as the holy one. It occurred immediately after the power of God through Peter had healed a man at the gate of the temple who had been lame from birth. The people were astonished.

Acts 3:12 And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?

13 The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.

14 But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;

15 And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.

Additional references to Jesus as the holy one are found in Acts 13:35 (where the prophecy from the psalm that the body of the holy one would not rot in the grave is shown fulfilled in Christ Jesus), and Mark 1:24 (where even an unclean spirit recognizes Jesus as the holy one).

Immanuel versus Jesus (Yahshua)

Some Christians are confused when reading this account concerning the name of the savior, given in a dream by an angel to Joseph when he found Mary pregnant.

Matthew 1:21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

Some wonder why we don't call the savior by the name "Immanuel Christ" instead of "Jesus Christ." The answer is that the phrase "call his name" can have several meanings, one of which is the way we normally un-

derstand it; i.e., as a person's given name; e.g., John Smith. However, the Greek phrase translated "call his name" also allows a wide variety of other meanings, including to indicate titles, rank, authority, description, etc. Thus, we have come to know our savior in the English language by the name "Jesus."² "Christ" is not his last name, of course. It is a translation of the Greek *Christos*, which is in turn a translation of the Hebrew *Meschiach* ("Messiah"), which is a descriptive title meaning "anointed."

"Immanuel," on the other hand, is not his "name" in the normal English sense of the word, but rather a description indicating the rank and authority of this babe who was to be born. The angel told Joseph this baby was fathered by the Holy Spirit and the offspring would be known as "God with us." Is that not what has happened over the past two millennia in orthodox Christianity? We have claimed and acclaimed Jesus Christ as God and he is with us now by means of his Holy Spirit, even as he was with his apostles in the flesh.

Supposing that Christianity had evolved with no followers ever having claimed Jesus was God. Christianity would then have been just like the myriad other pagan religions whose founders or chief organizers were and are acknowledged still as mere men: Buddha, Lao-Tse, Confucius, Zoroaster, Mohammed, etc. Had the Arianists won out, the angelic prophecy to Joseph would have failed! Thus, this passage actually is a double proof of the deity of Christ. (1) Jesus would indeed be "God with us." (2) It prophesies that his followers would "call his name" (i.e., describe and rank) him as God.

Who is the bridegroom?

The theme which led us into examining the deity of Christ was his spiritual marriage. Let us revisit and amplify that theme as it relates to the savior's divinity. Early in the gospel of John, we see John the Baptist calling himself the friend of the bridegroom and alluding to Jesus as the bridegroom.

John 3:28 Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.

29 He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.

Shortly after Jesus commenced his ministry, some of John the Baptist's disciples queried Jesus about fasting. Jesus took this opportunity to call himself the bridegroom.

Mark 2:18 And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast: and they come and say unto

him, Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not?

19 And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.

20 But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.

Later, towards the end of his earthly ministry, Jesus told the parable of the ten virgins. Here again he identified himself as the bridegroom.

Matthew 25:1 Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. ...

10 And while they [the five foolish virgins] went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut

Clearly, Jesus intends to get married, and these mentions of the bridegroom obviously are not referring to a physical marriage but to a metaphorical and spiritual marriage. That it is indeed a metaphorical marriage is demonstrated by John's vision on Patmos where he recorded the following description of the bride:

Revelation 21:2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ...

First we see that the bride is identified as a city—new Jerusalem. This is certainly not that old city in the current Israeli state. In fact, it is not a physical city at all, as is shown in verses 10-23. This “city” is a group of people who collectively are in a bride relationship to God.

9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels ... saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

So the “husband” of verse 2 is now called “the Lamb,” obviously Jesus Christ, whom John the Baptist had acclaimed at the river Jordan as “the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29, 36).

10 And he [the angel] carried me [John the apostle] away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

11 Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;

This phrase “having the glory of God” indicates that this group of people have had a “tabernacles” experience. That is, they have been given their complete salvation of

spirit, soul and glorified bodies.³ Their bodies radiate with the glory and luminosity of God in them.

12 And had a wall great and high, *and* had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:

Here we find—all the way at the end of the New Testament—a description of this “city” which indisputably links it with the people of Israel—all twelve tribes! This is surprising to those of typical Judeo-Christian theology who have been taught that (1) the modern “Jews” are all Israel, or (2) that God is working now with some non-Israelite peoples called “gentiles,”⁴ or (3) that ten of the twelve tribes of Israel were swallowed up and amalgamated with non-Israelites and are never to be a separate people again. Not so, my dear friend! God knows where each and every one of them are because he intends to marry them. Not each and every one, however. Physical descent from the twelve tribes alone does not qualify one for this calling as part of the national bride. Only those of the twelve tribes who have been justified and sanctified will qualify (i.e., salvation phase one and salvation phase two; again, we refer to our Tabernacle in the Wilderness studies for further explanation. See footnote 3.).

Furthermore, we are not discussing salvation *in general* here, but a special calling for those of Israel who are the bride of Christ/God. This special calling of Israel does not nullify salvation for others; but it does mean that others have not been chosen by God to be his wife. That is for Israel alone. In the Old Testament, all the millions of Israel without exception were part of the national bride married to Yahweh-God (See FMS #2). In the New Testament, the still-future national bride will not comprise the now hundreds of millions of physical Israelites, nor even all the “saved” Israelites, but only those of the “saved” whom God has chosen to mature spiritually at this time. Again, to make this point abundantly clear, this special election by God of Israel as his wife does not in any way deny salvation in general to anyone.

In prior issues of FMS (#2-4), we have discussed at length the marriage and divorce relationships between Yahweh, the Almighty God, and the nation of Israel. We showed how that after the divorce, God foretold that he (Yahweh) would someday remarry Israel. Here is added proof of that:

Hosea 2:16 And it shall be at that day, saith YHWH, that thou shalt call me Ishi [my husband]; and shalt call me no more Baali [Lord]. ...

God says that there would come a day when Israel would call him (Yahweh-God) “my husband,” and not call

him “Lord” anymore. (Interesting, isn’t it? The vast multitude of Christians still call Jesus/God “Lord.” There is nothing wrong with that; it simply indicates that we have not seen the national remarriage yet.) The point is that Yahweh, not anyone else, would remarry Israel. That Israel would have to be Christians is evident from the next verses:

19 And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies.

20 I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know YHWH.

Only Christians have righteousness imputed to them; only (fully) saved Christians can be (fully) faithful to Yahweh. Another Scripture showing God as the bridegroom is in Isaiah.

Isaiah 61: 10 I will greatly rejoice in YHWH, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh *himself* with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth *herself* with her jewels.

Notice that the word “himself” is in italics. In the FMS this means it is thus printed in the KJV, and not italicized for emphasis by me, unless indicated otherwise. Therefore, we know that the word “himself” was inserted by the KJV translators for better English or for clarity. However, this practice, though often necessary for those reasons, is also unavoidably interpretation and commentary upon occasion. This, in my opinion, is one of those occasions. I do not believe it means that the bridegroom is decking himself with ornaments. It is obviously referring to the bridegroom (God) decking the bride with salvation and righteousness, as with ornaments! In any event, the bridegroom is YHWH-God.

We have now seen that Jesus Christ is the bridegroom, and that YHWH, the God of the Old Testament, declared that he is the bridegroom; that it would be he who would remarry Israel. Therefore, either Jesus is a usurper trying to steal God’s wife, or Jesus is Yahweh, the God of the Old Testament and the God of all creation.

ENDNOTES

1. (For the benefit of new readers, we will continue to run this footnote for a number of issues.) In most English Bibles, when one sees the word “Lord” in either all caps [LORD] or in upper and lower caps [LORD], it indicates that the Bible translators have removed the sacred name of our God, which is YHWH (as transliterated from the Hebrew letters, and pronounced Yah-

weh {Yah-way}). It will be our general practice to re-insert the sacred name where it belongs, either as the tetragrammaton (YHWH) or as the pronounced name (Yahweh).

2. The name “Jesus,” is derived from the Greek “Iesous” (pronounced “Yay-soos”). Iesous is the Greek translation of the savior’s Hebrew name “Yahshua.” (The accent is on the second syllable.) Yah is the shortened form of Yahweh. Yahshua means “Yah (-weh) saves” or “Yah (-weh) is salvation.” The name of the Old Testament hero, Joshua, is really also “Yahshua,” the English letter “j” having only in recent centuries acquired its hard “dg” (as in fudge) sound.

Although it is our practice to reinsert “Yahweh” as we quote the Old Testament (as explained in note #1), we choose to retain the English name “Jesus” in the New Testament, rather than “Yahshua.” This is because (1) when Paul wrote his epistles, he wrote them in Greek and he consistently used the translation “Iesous.” If a translated name for the savior into the *lingua franca* of Paul’s day is acceptable or even preferable by him, then we should not hesitate to use the English translation, Jesus, today. (I have heard claims, but have seen no credible proof that Paul wrote in Hebrew. Nonsense, he traveled all over the Roman Empire communicating to Christians of various countries, and Greek was the *lingua franca* of the empire. It would have been totally illogical for Paul to have written in Hebrew for his Greek-speaking constituencies)

(2) When translators of the OT remove the holy name of God (YHWH) and substitute “LORD,” they are not translating the Hebrew name of God into English, they are changing his Hebrew name to an English title. God is the Lord of the universe, but his name is not “Lord,” or “LORD.” There is no justification for “removing from” and “adding to” the Scriptures; in fact, it is forbidden by the Scriptures. However, Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, translated the name of the savior from Hebrew into Greek, and therefore we feel it is entirely appropriate to use the English translation Jesus.

3. On our tape ministry, we are currently in the middle of a series of studies on the Tabernacle in the Wilderness and how it pictures the Plan of Salvation in its entirety in all its types and shadows. There have been 8 tapes in the series so far.

4. Write for the 8-page tract *A Study into the Meaning of the Word “Gentile.”* Free with self-addressed stamped envelope.

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