



FEED MY SHEEP

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Issue #7

May 1999

Is Jesus God? Part 3

We have been searching the Scriptures in the past two issues to determine whether or not Jesus Christ is really God, or was he some sort of subordinate, inferior being. Our studies are discovering overwhelming proofs that Jesus is very God himself. Continuing in that vein, we find very strong evidence in the question of creation.

Who is the creator, God or Jesus Christ?

Who is capable of creating everything *ex nihilo* (out of nothing)? Only the one supreme being of the universe can do that. Then to whom does the Bible attribute creation?

KJV Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth....

Genesis 1:31 And God saw every thing that he had made...

Sure enough, the Bible confirms that it is indeed the one supreme God of the universe who has created all that exists. But wait, look at John's inspired declaration in the first chapter of his gospel. This portion of a single chapter is in itself a double witness to the deity of Christ.

KJV John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The first witness consists in this: The word "Word" in that verse does not simply mean a "word" in the sense of a string of letters of the alphabet. It is the Greek word *logos* (from which we derive our word "logic"), and its meaning entails much more than simple symbols. It entails the thought, reasoning, logic and mind behind the words. One commentary says: "A Greek philosopher named Heraclitus first used the term *Logos* around 600 B.C. to designate the divine reason

or plan which coordinates a changing universe. This word was well suited to John's purpose in John 1." At this juncture, let us insert v.14 to identify the "Word" that "was God."

14 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.

The context of the intervening verses shows that Jesus is the Word made flesh, and since v. 1 affirmed that "the Word was God;" *ergo*, Jesus is God! This is an unassailable first witness. The second witness of the deity of Jesus Christ in this chapter concerns the author of creation. Genesis 1 declares that God is the creator. Yet John, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, states that the Word (which became flesh in Jesus) created all things.

3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made....

10 He was in the world, and the world was made him, and the world knew him [Jesus] not.

That is to say, that although Jesus Christ was the creator of the world, they (the people of the world in general at the time of his incarnation) did not recognize him as the creator-God. The Book of Genesis declares that God is the creator of all. The New Testament declares that Jesus Christ is the creator of all. Therefore, either Jesus Christ is God or the New Testament is lying about him when it claims he is the creator. ...Or is there a third alternative? Some say we misunderstand this concept about the Word being made flesh, and Jesus isn't really God after all.

The argument goes like this: The "Word" means nothing more than God's eternal plan or idea and that when Jesus was born, he was merely the outworking

of God's plan. Therefore, they conclude, this does not mean that Jesus was in the beginning with God and that he was God. It only means that the idea and the plan for Jesus was in God's mind in the beginning. They bolster this view by quoting this from the prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah 45:5 I am YHWH, and *there is none else, there is no God beside me...*

Isaiah 43:10 ... before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.

11 I, even I, am YHWH; and beside me there is no saviour.

These are interpreted thus: You see, the first two verses above say that there is only one God, Yahweh; and there will not be any others to come after him in the future (such as Jesus). Jesus was not with God in the beginning because it says God was alone; there was no one sitting beside him. After Jesus did his work as a son of God, then Yahweh-God exalted him and let him sit beside him at his right hand.

However, that interpretation does not hold up under the force of other Bible passages which we will turn to shortly, but let us deal with this preposition confusion first. The above interpretation sees the preposition "beside" as referring to position and location (i.e., in the beginning God was alone and there was no other God, such as Jesus, sitting beside, or next to him). — which is a strange way to interpret, since God the Father is Spirit and as such, has no particular physical space where he is located. As Spirit, God is everywhere, omnipresent is the theological term for it.

Moreover, a check of the Hebrew lexicons reveals that the preposition "beside" means "apart from" or "except;" not "next to," as in physical proximity. The above verses clearly mean that there is only one God (Yahweh) and there never will be any other God. Beside or apart from Yahweh there is no other God. We do not hold that there are two Gods: Yahweh the Father and Yahshua (Jesus) the Son—nor three Gods, for that matter, if we include the Holy Spirit. There is only one. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are not three Gods. Those terms are describing relationships in the single unity of Yahweh. There is more to be said in this regard, but we will defer that until next issue which will be focused upon the Sonship of Jesus and whether or not he was/is the "Eternal Son."

But now returning to the objection at hand, it falls apart in the face of other New Testament passages which clearly denote and identify Christ as creator of all that exists. For space reasons, we will only cite one from Paul's epistle to the Colossians.

Colossians 1:16 For by him [Jesus 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:

Furthermore, when we look closely at the last of the three verses from Isaiah, we see this leads us into yet another avenue of proofs that Jesus the Christ is that one God who declared that he is the only God and savior. The verse reads: **I, even I, am YHWH; and beside me there is no saviour.** Those who deny the deity of Christ Jesus are bound to have a difficult time wiggling around this since it is clear that Yahweh claims he alone is the savior, and yet the New Testament clearly shows that Jesus is the one and only savior. Our conclusion is that Jesus and Yahweh are one and the same.

Who is the savior and redeemer?

Salvation and redemption are properly two separate and distinct themes. However, in reference to the issue of the deity of Christ, the same verses which prove the one theme often prove the other as well. For example, Isaiah speaks forth God's prophecy:

Isaiah 49:26 ... and all flesh shall know that YHWH am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob.

The God of the Old Testament, Yahweh, declares that he is the savior and redeemer. Yet one can go into practically any church and ask the Christians who their savior and redeemer is, and the answer from the Bible-believers will be almost unanimously "Jesus Christ." According to the epistle to Titus, they are correct. The New Testament verifies Isaiah.

Titus 3:4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour [Yahweh is savior.] toward man appeared,...

6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;

This is witnessed again in the same epistle a chapter earlier:

Titus 2:13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

Here again Jesus is equated with God as savior, and not only as savior, but as redeemer as well—

14 Who gave himself for us, that he [Jesus] might redeem us from all iniquity,

Who gathers the sheep?

In the very first issue of FMS, we discussed the sheep theme in the Bible, showing that the Israel people were identified as sheep. The ten northern tribes of Israel were divorced and cast off by Yahweh-God seven

centuries before Jesus' incarnation. Their casting off was by means of the Assyrian Captivity, from whence they began to disperse generally in a northwesterly direction over the course of centuries. We saw in later studies that they were not to be amalgamated and lost forever, but that God promised he would regather them and remarry them sometime in the future. Notice this prophecy from Ezekiel concerning who will do the searching and regathering of the lost Israelites.

Ezekiel 34:11 For thus saith the Lord YHWH; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out.

12 As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I [Yahweh] seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.

13 And I [Yahweh] will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, ...

15 I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord YHWH.

16 I will seek that which was lost,...

In every case, it is Yahweh, the God of the Old Testament, who declares that he will do these things. Compare those preceding passages with the following. First, Jesus himself declares his mission in Matthew.

Matthew 18:11 For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. [Cf. v. 16 above.]

That this is specifically applied to lost Israel and not merely to "lost souls" in general is shown by the next verse which deals with lost sheep. It is further clarified and established in the gospel of John.

John 10:16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

And so once again we find that what was attributed to Yahweh, claimed by Yahweh, descriptive of Yahweh, and prophesied of Yahweh in the Old Testament is always fulfilled in and by Jesus Christ in the New Testament. Jesus is the one and same God of the Old Testament. This is further proved by Jesus' claims in John 8. To set the stage, we first remember that at the burning bush incident, when Moses asked God who it was that he should tell the Israelites had sent him, God said: "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." (Exodus 3:14)

The great I AM

What man would dare claim that he is that great I AM the God of the Old Testament!? Only a lunatic, a megalomaniacal liar, or one who truly is that same

God, now incarnated in a flesh and blood body. And this is what Jesus did claim.

John 8:23 And he [Jesus] said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.

24 I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.

It is important to notice that the translators inserted the pronoun "he" after the words "I am." To give a triple witness that this was a deliberate statement and claim of deity, Jesus repeats it twice more in this chapter. In verse 28 Jesus asserts:

28 Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, ...

Once again, the word "he" is not in the original Greek. Finally, after continued heated dialogue between Jesus and the unbelieving Jews, Jesus makes it so clear that no one could possibly miss his intention of claiming that he is that same great I AM of the Old Testament. It practically leaps off the page in verse 58.

John 8:53 Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?...

56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.

57 Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? 58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I AM.

(Emphasis mine.) This time the translators could not possibly insert the pronoun "he" since that would make the statement odd and almost nonsensical in English; hence, the claim that Jesus is the great I AM comes through loud and clear. The unbelieving Jews did not miss the point either. Since from their viewpoint, this Jesus was obviously lying, he was therefore guilty of blasphemy by claiming deity and thus should be stoned to death. And so...

59 Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

These unbelieving Jews could plainly see what Jesus was claiming. How can some Bible students and teachers today not see it! I personally know several preachers who teach some of the same marvelous truths which we do: the sonship message, the true identity of Israel, the restoration of all things, etc., and yet they continue to insist that Jesus is not God. I once heard one of them illustrate it this way. He was commenting and interpreting the following passage:

John 14:7 If ye had known me, ye should [would] have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

9 Jesus saith unto him, 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; and how savest thou then, Shew us the Father?

These verses are clear. Jesus and the Father are one and the same God. But to Arians, this must be explained away. I heard a teacher do it in this manner. He said that Jesus didn't really mean that he was God. You see, all he meant was this: It's like you're at a get-together with friends and all the little children are scurrying around, and one of your friends says to you: "Look at little Jimmy over there next to his dad. Doesn't he take after his dad a lot? He really favors his daddy, doesn't he? Why, if you've seen little Jimmy, you've seen his daddy."

In other words, by stating that Jesus was merely using a figure-of-speech, the teacher can deny the deity of Christ. Granted, the Scriptures are chock-full of figures of speech, but to relegate this passage to only a figure of speech is to fly in the face of the scores of other passages which vastly outweigh and overwhelm these puny excuses to deny the divinity of Christ. For example, let's examine the Alpha and Omega passages. These both occur in the Book of Revelation.

Revelation 1:7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

With the reference to piercing him, this is unquestionably identifying Jesus Christ, who is then speaking in the first person to John in the next verse. Jesus says:

8 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.

Of course, just the claim to being "the Almighty" is another identifying mark that he is God. Only God is omnipotent-the Almighty. The other Alpha and Omega passage is near the end of John's vision. Again, no one questions that it is Jesus speaking in the first person.

Revelation 21: 6 And he [Jesus] said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

There are three separate proofs of the deity of Christ in these two verses. Set aside the Alpha/Omega statement for a moment. Look at v.7. Right there Jesus states his deity as plain as any could ever wish! I will be his God. End of discussion! But notice the second sentence in v. 6. It is a statement by Jesus that he will grant immortality. Who can do that? Only the source of life itself. It is the very same claim he made in his conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4:

John 4:14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life

Twice then, we have seen Jesus claim that he is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. Again it is a clear claim that Jesus IS Yahweh because three times in the Book of Isaiah, Yahweh declared that same attribute of eternity, past and future, for himself.

Isaiah 44:6 Thus saith YHWH the King of Israel, and his redeemer YHWH of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God. [See also Isaiah 41:4 and 48:12.] Conclusion once again: Jesus is Yahweh!

ENDNOTES

1. We are aware that the Jehovah's Witnesses' *New World Translation* of this verse renders the last portion as "...and the Word was **g**od." (my emphasis). Their view is not difficult to disprove, but since we probably have very few JW's among our readers, we will not take the space to answer their objection here. For those interested, local Christian bookstores have a number of books on the JW's which dispose of that argument Biblically.

2. In most English Bibles, when one sees the word "Lord" in all caps [LORD] or sometimes 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 Yahweh {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).

3. See our taped Bible studies: #168-171, *The Doctrine of Salvation*, (4 tapes, \$18 offering); and #172-174, *The Doctrine of Redemption* (3 tapes, \$14 offering).

4. Discussed in detail in our study, *The Samaritans*, (tapes #323 & 324; \$10 offering). On our tape ministry, we are currently in the middle of a series on the Tabernacle and how it pictures the Plan of Salvation in its entirety in all its types and shadows. There are 10 tapes in the series so far.

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