

A quick look at our religious activities schedule will show that our compound is abounding with various ideas about who and what God is. Those of us ascribing to a Christian understanding, claim to derive our notion of God from the Bible. Yet even under the banner of Christendom, hundreds of denominations differ in their worship of the living God. The Scripture says, “to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey. . .” (Romans 6:16). So, just who do you obey? Who is God?

### THE FATHER AND THE WORD

“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” (John 1:1-2). In these opening verses of John’s Gospel, we find that the Word (Greek: *logos*) was God. We also learn that the Word was with God. The Word and God were together in the beginning, and the Word was on the same plane of existence as God.

“All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1:3). “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. . .” (John 1:14). Many seem to overlook the plain teaching of the New Testament that Jesus Christ, in His preexistent state as the Word, was the agent through whom God the Father created all things (Ephesians 3:9; Hebrews 1:1-3).

Let me give an example of what I mean. In 1979, my mom and dad started a sign business in southern Georgia. My dad was a screen printer and had a friend who did hand lettering. With my mom handling the books and the phone, they began a business called Savannah Sign and Screen.

By the time I went to work there in 1988, the company was incorporated and my dad was president of a twelve-man operation. He wore decent cloths to work, met with clients, and quoted prices. The rest of us painted, printed, designed and built the signs. My dad was still a sign maker, although he was seldom involved with the manufacturing of the product. His employees, working with tools and computers—and the power of electricity—were the agents by which he produced signs.

In the same sense, God the Father is Creator. He “created all things by Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 3:9). Jesus was the Word. “He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast” (Psalms 33:9). God tells Christ what to do (John 8:28-29). As the workman, Jesus speaks, and the

power of God’s Spirit does what Jesus commands (Psalms 104:30; Genesis 1:2).

In the account of Genesis 1:1, we learn that “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” In the original Hebrew text, the word translated “God” in this verse is *Elohim*. *Elohim* is the plural form of the Hebrew word for God, *Eloah* (Strong’s) or *El* (Nelson’s), depending on the source you consult. *Elohim* is plural in form, but usually translated in the singular. An example in English would be words like “family,” or “United States.” Both words are plural in meaning, but singular in usage. The plurality of this word is more easily understood in the context of verses like Genesis 1:26, 3:22, and 11:7, where God and the Word confer about the activities and fate of man.

Both the Old Testament and New Testament contain references to more than one personage in the Godhead (Psalm 110:1, for example, which is quoted in Acts 2:29-36). In the New Testament they are identified as God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son (1 Corinthians 8:6). The Son is also called God (Hebrews 1:8-9). Through the power of the Holy Spirit, God fathered Jesus Christ in the womb of a virgin named Mary (Matthew 1:18, 20; Luke 1:27, 31-35). By this conception in the flesh, the Word physically became the “only

begotten” Son of the Father (John 1:14; 3:16) and “the Son of man” (Matthew 9:6). Paul tells us, “. . . although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:6-8 NAS, emphasis mine throughout). Jesus never sinned (Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22). He never transgressed God’s law (1 John 3:4). It was by living this sinless life in the flesh that Jesus qualified to be the only perfect sacrifice and offering for the sins of the world (Ephesians 5:2; Hebrews 10:10). John 1:12 tells us, “. . . as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.”

In Exodus 3:14-15, God identifies Himself to Moses as “I AM” and “The LORD God of your fathers, the

God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” (The word LORD here is derived from the Hebrew YHWH). In John 8:58, Jesus Christ reveals Himself as the “I am” of the Old Testament. It was this same “I am” who delivered the Israelites out of Egypt, accompanied them in the wilderness, and who was later known in the New Testament as Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 10:4, 9). This same “I am” codified His spiritual law to the children of Israel in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20), and spoke to Moses “face to face” (Numbers 12:8). Adam and Eve walked and talked with God in the Garden of Eden; however, Christ said concerning His Father, “Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape” (John 5:37). John tells us in the opening chapters of his gospel, “No man hath seen God at any time. . .” (John 1:18). This thought is reiterated in verse 6:46, 1 Timothy 6:16, and 1 John 4:12. Yet God testified of Moses in Numbers 12:8 that “He sees the form of the Lord.” In Exodus 33:18-23, Moses, under protective measures, was even allowed to see the back parts of God in His glorified form. These Old Testament encounters with God, are more precisely encounters with the Word, who became Jesus Christ.

The New Testament emphasizes the harmony between the Father and the Son, yet in numerous scriptures, makes the distinction between the two clear (e.g., John 20:17; Romans 15:6). Jesus Christ revealed His Father to His disciples (Matthew 11:25-27). He asked the Father to give them the same purpose and singleness of mind that He and the Father share (John 17:20-23). The relationship between the Father and the Son demonstrates God’s perfect and eternal way of life. The Father has always loved the Son, and the Son has always loved the Father (John 17:4, 20-26). “Father” and “Son” constitute a *family* relationship.

“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 3:14-15). God the Father is head of the family, He is greater than the Son (John 14:28), and He is greater than all (John 10:29). God is now adding to His family by begetting sons and daughters through the Holy Spirit. “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Romans 8:14). “And because

ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Galatians 4:6). “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God” (Romans 8:16).

By His resurrection, Jesus Christ became, “the *firstborn* from the dead” (Colossians 1:18). He is also “the *firstborn* among many brethren” (Romans 8:29). When Christ returns, those spiritually begotten sons and daughters will be born of the Spirit into God’s family. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: *so is every one that is born of the Spirit*” (John 3:6-8). “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” (1 John 3:1-2). “For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the *manifestation of the sons of God*” (Romans 8:19). “And as we have borne the image of the earthy, *we shall also bear the image of the heavenly*. Now this I say, brethren, that *flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God*; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but *we shall all be changed*, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, *at the last trump*: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and *this mortal must put on immortality*” (1 Corinthians 15:49-53).

This is just a small taste of what Scripture reveals about the God family. God wants you to know Him, He wants you to trust Him. Do not allow men to talk you out of what the Bible actually says about God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ. Do not take my word for it either. If you are truly seeking God, then you must diligently search the Scriptures for yourself. No one can offer you salvation but Christ alone. “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). Take that step today. Wipe the dust off that old Bible of yours and start reading it for yourself, you might be surprised at what it says. ■

## Who Is GOD?

By Garry W. Johnson,  
MOUNTAIN REVIEW Staff