

STUDY III

THE MEDIATOR OF THE ATONEMENT

THE ONLY BEGOTTEN ONE

"Who Is He?"--The Logos, a God--The Only Begotten of Jehovah--The Bible's Testimony--"He Who Was Rich"--"Before Abraham Was I Am"--"The First and the Last"--"Jehovah Possessed Me in the Beginning"--The Logos Made Flesh--not Incarnated--He Humbled Himself--"He Who Was Rich for Our Sakes Became Poor"--No Hypocrisy in this Testimony--Our Lord's Conduct not Deceptive--The Holy, Harmless, Undefined Separate from Sinners.

"There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom." *1 Tim. 2:5,6*

IN PROPORTION as we value the work of the Atonement--our reconciliation to God, and the sacrifice for sin through which it is accomplished--in the same proportion will we esteem him whom the Heavenly Father set forth to be the propitiation for our sins, our Restorer and Life-giver. Hence, in approaching the question, Who is this great One whom Jehovah God has so highly honored, and who, by the grace of God, is our Redeemer and Savior? it is befitting that we realize, first of all, our own ignorance of the subject, and our incompetency to reach a conclusion except as the divine Word shall instruct us. Secondly, it is befitting, at the very outset of our investigation, that we remember the Apostle's testimony respecting the greatness of this Mediator, and the honor due to him. He says, "Him hath God highly exalted, and given him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." It is written also, "That all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father." *Phil. 2:9; John 5:23*

Searching the Scriptures carefully to note just what they do say, and what they do not say, respecting our Lord Jesus,

we find their testimony very explicit, harmonious and satisfactory. We will first state, in synoptical form, what we find to be the Scriptural teaching, the proofs of which we will give further along.

(1) Our Redeemer existed as a spirit being before he was made flesh and dwelt amongst men.

(2) At that time, as well as subsequently, he was properly known as "a god"--a mighty one. As chief of the angels and next to the Father, he was known as the Archangel (highest angel or messenger), whose name, Michael, signifies, "Who as God," or God's representative.

(3) As he was the highest of all Jehovah's creation, so also he was the first, the direct creation of God, the "Only Begotten," and then he, as Jehovah's representative, and in the exercise of Jehovah's power, and in his name, created all things--angels, principalities and powers, as well as the earthly creation.

(4) When he was made flesh, to be our Redeemer, it was not of compulsion, but a voluntary matter, the result of his complete harmony with the Father, and his joyful acquiescence in carrying out every feature of the divine will--which he had learned to respect and love, as the very essence of Justice, Wisdom and Love.

(5) This humiliation to man's condition was not intended to be perpetual. It accomplished its purpose when our Lord had given himself, a human being, as our *ransom*, or "corresponding price." Hence, his resurrection was not in the flesh, but, as the Apostle declares, "He was put to death in the flesh but quickened in spirit." ***1 Pet. 3:18***

(6) His resurrection not only restored to him a spirit nature, but in addition conferred upon him a still higher honor, and, as the Father's reward for his faithfulness, made him partaker of the *divine nature*--the very highest of the spirit natures,* possessed of immortality.

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(7) It is this great One, who has been thus highly exalted and honored by Jehovah, whom we delight to honor and to worship and to serve, as one with the Heavenly Father, in word, in work, in purpose and in spirit.

Scripture Testimony Respecting the Son of God

Let us now consider the Scriptural evidences substantiating these positions. We begin with the first chapter of John's Gospel. Here our Lord, in his prehuman existence, is referred to as "The Word" (Greek, *Logos*). "In the beginning was the *Logos*." Dr. Alexander Clarke says, concerning this word *Logos*: "This term should be left untranslated for the same reason that the names *Jesus* and *Christ* are left untranslated. As every appellative of the Savior of the world was descriptive of some excellencies in his person, nature, or work, so the epithet, *Logos*, which signifies a word, a word spoken, speech, eloquence, doctrine, reason, or the faculty of reason, is very properly applied to him." The Evangelist, in his epistle, uses the same title in respect to our Lord again, denominating him "the Word of life," or the "*Logos* of life." **1 John 1:1**

The title, "Word of God"--"Logos of God"--is a very fitting one by which to describe the important work or office of our Master, prior to his coming into the world. The *Logos* was the heavenly Father's direct *expression* of creation, while all subsequent expressions of divine wisdom, power and goodness were made through the *Logos*. It is said that in olden times certain kings made addresses to their subjects by proxy, the king sitting behind a screen, while his "word" or spokesman stood before the screen, and addressed the people aloud on subjects whispered to him by the king, who was not seen: and such a speaker was termed "The King's *Logos*." Whether or not the legend be true, it well illustrates the use of this word "*Logos*" in connection with the prehuman existence of our Lord and Master and his very

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grand office as the Father's representative, which the Scriptures, in this connection and elsewhere, point out as having been his office.

Be it noted that the Apostle, writing under inspiration, tells us that "The *Logos* was in the beginning with *the* God, and the *Logos* was *a* God." This is the literal translation of the Greek, as can be readily confirmed by any one, whether a Greek scholar or not. The Greek article *ho* precedes the first word "God," in this verse, and does not precede the second word "God," thus intentionally indicating God the Father and God the Son in a case where without the article the reader would be left in confusion. Similarly the article precedes

the word "God" in the second verse. The entire verse therefore reads--

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with [*ho theos*] the God, and the Word was [*theos*] a God. The same was in the beginning with [*ho theos*] the God."

John 1:1

What "*beginning*" is here referred to? Surely not the beginning of the existence of Jehovah, the God, the Father; because he is "from everlasting to everlasting," and never had a beginning. (*Psa. 41:13; 90:2; 106:48*) But Jehovah's work had a beginning, and it is to this that reference is here made--the beginning of creation. The statement, thus understood, implies that our Lord Jesus, in his prehuman existence, as the *Logos*, was with the Father in the very beginning of creation. This confirms the inspired statement that the *Logos* himself was "the beginning of the creation of God": this is the precise statement of the Apostle, who assures us that our Lord is not only "the Head of the body, the Church," and "the first-born from the dead," but also the *beginning* of all creation--"*that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.*" His words are: "He is the image of the invisible God--*first born of all creation*; because by him were all things created, those in the heavens and those on the earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or lordships, or governments, or authorities: all things were created by him and for him, and he precedes all things, and in him all things

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have been permanently placed." (*Col. 1:15-18*) Hear also the word of prophecy concerning the Only Begotten, not only declaring his coming exaltation as King of earthly kings, but describing him as already being Jehovah's *first-born*, saying, "I will make him, my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth." (*Psa. 89:27*) Note also that our Lord (referring to his own origin), declares himself to be, "The faithful and true witness, *the beginning of the creation of God.*"

Rev. 3:14

In harmony with this thought of our Lord's pre-eminence from the very beginning, as the "first-born of every creature," and in harmony with the thought that he was the *Logos* or Expression of the Heavenly Father, in respect to every matter, is the next statement of the Evangelist's record, viz., "All things through him came into existence; and without him came into existence not even one thing which hath come into existence." (*John 1:3, Rotherham's translation.*) What a grand thought this gives us respecting the

majesty of the Only Begotten Son of God, the *Logos*! From this standpoint of his original greatness and pre-eminence, we have a clearer view than from any other of the import of the Apostle's words, "He who *was rich*, for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might become rich." (**2 Cor. 8:9**)

From this standpoint we can see how rich he was in the honor and glory of which he himself made mention in prayer, saying, "Father, glorify me with thine own self, *with the glory which I had with thee before the world was*." (**John 17:5**) Although everything connected with the divine plan of redemption is wonderful, astounding in its manifestations of divine love, mercy, sympathy for fallen men, yet, from this standpoint of view, all is reasonable--consistent with the divine character and statement.

Those who hold that our Lord Jesus never had an existence until he was born a babe at Bethlehem have a very inferior view of the divine plan for man's succor; and they are left without a use for the many scriptures above cited, and others, relative to our Lord's glory with the Father before the world was, relative to his great stoop, in which he humbled

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himself to take a nature a little lower than the angelic, leaving therefore a nature that was above that of angels. And the Scriptural view relieves us of all the unreasonable and fallacious theories of men, by which, in attempting to honor the Son, they have gone beyond the Word of God, and have dishonored the Word of the Lord and the apostles, which declare him to have been the Son or offspring of God, and that the Father is greater than the Son. The false view has involved its millions of adherents in inextricable difficulty in every direction.

The truth alone is reasonable.

"---It's true:

It satisfies our longings as nothing else can do."

These statements respecting our Lord Jesus, that he was the beginning of the creation of God, and that he had, therefore, an existence long before he came into the world as a man, to be our Redeemer, are fully confirmed by various scriptures, a sample of which is the statement, "God sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might have life through him." (**1 John 4:9**) Here the statement most positively is that he was God's Son before he came into the world, and that, as God's Son, he was given a mission in

the world to perform. Nor should it be overlooked that here, as in many other instances, the *Logos* is designated "The Only Begotten Son" of God. The thought conveyed by this expression is that the *Logos* was himself the *only* direct creation or begetting of the Heavenly Father, while all others of God's sons (angels as well as men), were his indirect creation through the *Logos*. Hence the propriety, the truthfulness, of the statement, that he is the Only Begotten Son of God.

Take another illustration: "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." (**John 3:17**) Here again his prehuman existence is implied in the sending and mission. And these statements respecting the *Logos* are in full accord

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with the history of the matter, presented to us by the Evangelist, who declares, "He was in the world, and *the world was made by him*, and the world knew him not." And again, "The *Logos* was made flesh and dwelt amongst us, full of grace and truth; and we beheld the glory of him, a glory as of an only begotten one from a father." (**John 1:10,14**) Our Lord's own statements respecting his pre-existence are indisputable. He never acknowledged Joseph to be his father; nor did he ever acknowledge his earthly life to be the beginning of his existence.

On the contrary, notice that he continually referred to Jehovah as his Father. Remember his words, "Say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified and *sent into the world*, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am *the Son of God*?" (**John 10:36**) To Mary, his earthly mother, he said, "Wist ye not that I must be about *my Father's* business?" (**Luke 2:49**) To his disciples he declares, "I came down from heaven." "I am the bread of life which came down from heaven." (**John 6:38,51**) Many in his day disbelieved this, and many disbelieve it still, but its truth remains. Some of those who heard said, "How can this be?" And some of his disciples said, when they heard it, "This is a hard saying: who can hear it?" "When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man *ascend up where he was before*?" "But from that time many of the disciples went back and walked no more with him"; because of this claim of heavenly origin and prehuman existence.

John 6:60-66

Hear him again before the Pharisees, proclaiming the

same truth, saying, "I know whence I came, and whither I go...I am from above,...I am not of this world;...I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me...It is my Father that heareth me, and if I should say that I know him not, I shall be a liar." Then said the Jews unto him, "Art thou greater than our Father Abraham?" Jesus answered, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it and was glad." (Abraham

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saw Christ's day with the eye of faith; believing the divine promise respecting Messiah. He may have seen his day of sacrifice, typified in the offering of Isaac his only son, but at all events he saw Messiah's coming glory-day, the Millennium, and its blessings upon all the families of the earth, through this promised Seed. And no wonder the prospect made him glad. He with the eye of faith beheld the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem, the glorified Church, the Kingdom class, and he beheld similarly the heavenly country --the world blessed by that Kingdom.

(Heb. 11:10,16; 12:22; 13:14)

"Then said the Jews unto him [Jesus], Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? [Abraham had been dead two thousand years.] Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily I say unto you, *before Abraham was, I am.*"

John 8:14,23,42-58

There can be no mistake about the meaning of these words. Our Lord avers that he *existed* before Abraham. Nor do the Scriptures in any place intimate that the existence of the Only Begotten ever ceased from the time it began, as "the beginning of the creation of God," until it ceased at Calvary for three days; after which he was raised from the dead to die no more, death having never more dominion over him. **(Rom. 6:9)** The incident of his birth as a human being, "a little lower than the angels," for the purpose of being man's sin-sacrifice, did not involve a death to the spirit nature preceding the birth as a human babe, but merely a transference of his life from a higher or spirit nature to a lower or human nature. Hence our Lord's words, "Before Abraham was I *am*," signify that there had been no cessation of his existence at any time in the interim, and positively identifies Jesus, the Son of God, in the flesh, with the *Logos*, the first-born of all creation. Of course our Lord's testimony was not received by many who heard it, nor has it been received by many since. There seems to be a perversity of disposition, which leads mankind to reject the

simple, plain statements of the Lord's Word, and to prefer to regard our Lord either as a sinful member of the fallen

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race, or else as his own father. Only the meek are ready to "receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to make truly wise," and only for such is the Word of God's testimony intended. (*Isa. 61:1; Jas. 1:21*) As those who heard the Master, and rejected his testimony, took up stones against him, so some who hear the truth and reject it now are ready to stone, figuratively, all who accept and teach the Master's words, in their simplicity. And now, as then, the reason is because they know neither the Father, nor the Son, as they ought to know them--as they reveal themselves.

Our Lord's words are still applicable to the case, viz., "No man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him." (*Matt. 11:27*) The world knew him not: knew not of his high origin, and his great humiliation on its behalf; and when we remember that a long period of time probably intervened between the beginning of the creation in the person of our Lord, and the time when he was made flesh, and when further we remember that during all that period he was with the Father, "daily his delight, rejoicing always before him," we cannot wonder that the Son knew the Father, as his disciples and the world knew him not--as we are learning to know him through his Word of revelation and the unfoldment of his wonderful plan of the ages. Hear him again declare, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee." *John 17:25*

The key to this wonderful knowledge of heavenly things is furnished in the statement, "He that is of the earth is earthy, and speaketh of the earth; he that cometh from heaven is above all, *and what he hath seen and heard, that he testifies.*" (*John 3:31,32*) No wonder, then, that even his opponents asked, "Whence hath this man this wisdom?" (*Matt. 13:54*) And it was his knowledge of heavenly things, his intimate and long acquaintance with the Father, begetting absolute faith in the Father's promises, which enabled him, as a perfect man, to overcome the world, the flesh and the devil, and to present an acceptable sacrifice for our sins.

Thus it was written beforehand through the Prophet: "By his *knowledge* shall my righteous servant justify many, while he will bear their iniquities." *Isa. 53:11*

Now, only those who walk by faith, in the light of the divine Word, may know either the Father or the Son, or clearly and rightly appreciate the great work of atonement which they unitedly are accomplishing for humanity. But ere long, after the selection of the Church has been completed, after the Bride, the Lamb's wife, has been associated with her Lord in glory, and the Kingdom shall have come-- then the knowledge of the Lord shall be caused to fill the whole earth, and the power of the Father, which, through the *Logos*, created all things, shall be exerted through him, as the Savior, in the restoration and perfecting of those who, when privileged to know him, shall yield to his righteous requirements, so that ultimately our Lord's power, as Jehovah's agent in creation, shall be fully equaled and exemplified in his power, as Jehovah's agent in restoring and blessing the world; and thus will be fulfilled the prediction of the Psalmist-- "Thou hast the dew [freshness, vigor] of thy youth." *Psa. 110:3*

Hearken to our Lord's words to Nicodemus, who sought to know something of heavenly things, but who was refused the knowledge, because he had not yet believed the earthly things. Our Lord, in explaining to him his knowledge of heavenly things, says, "No man hath ascended up to heaven but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man."* Our Lord then proceeds to show Nicodemus the provision which God has made for the world, that they should not perish, but have eternal life, declaring, "God so loved the world that he gave his *Only Begotten Son*, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life." *John 3:13,16*

The *Logos*, the beginning of the creation of God, called also by Isaiah the Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, etc. (*Isa. 9:6*), we find described by Solomon, and represented

*The words "which is in heaven," are spurious--not found in old MSS.

under the name of Wisdom, yet with all the details which harmonize the statement with the account given by John the Evangelist (*John 1:1,18*), as follows:

"Jehovah possessed me in the beginning of his way, before

his ways of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was [formed]. When there were no depths [seas] I was brought forth: when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were set before the hills, was I brought forth; while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. 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: when he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his command: when he appointed the fountains of the earth: 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**

In addition to what we have here noted respecting the *Logos*--that he was not only the beginning of the creation of God, and the first-born, but additionally his Only Begotten Son, and that all other creations were by and through him--we find a beautiful corroborative statement in our Lord's own words, saying: "Fear not, I am the *first* and the *last*; I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive forevermore." And again, "These things saith the *first* and the *last*, which was dead, and is alive." (**Rev. 1:17; 2:8**) In no other sense or way than as the "*Only*" direct creation of God, through whom all else was created, could our Lord be the first and the last of God's creation. Any other view, therefore, would be an incorrect one, and in conflict with all the foregoing scriptures.

"The Logos Was Made Flesh and Dwelt Among Us"

--John 1:14--

The common thought in respect to our Lord's manifestation in the flesh is usually expressed in the word *incarnation*.

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This usual thought we believe to be wholly incorrect, unscriptural. The *Incarnation* theory is that our Lord's human body, which was born of Mary, was merely a *clothing*, a *covering* for the spiritual body. The thought therefore attached to our Lord's earthly life, according to this theory, is that our Lord during his earthly life was still a spirit being, exactly as before, except that he used the flesh that was born of Mary, and that was known as the man Christ Jesus, as his veil or medium of communication with mankind, after

the manner in which angels had appeared in human form in previous times--to Abraham, to Manoah, to Lot, and others. (*Gen. 18:1,2; 19:1; Judges 13:9-11,16*) Because of this incorrect premise, many confused and unscriptural ideas have been evolved respecting the various incidents of our Lord's life and death: for instance, this theory assumes that our Lord's weariness was not real, but feigned; because he, as a spirit being, could know no weariness. The logic of this theory would imply also that our Lord's prayers were feigned, because, says this theory, he was God himself, and to pray would have been to pray to himself; hence it is argued that his prayers were merely *pro forma*, to make an impression upon the disciples and those who were about. The same theory is bound to suppose that our Lord's death was merely an appearance of death, for they argue that Jesus was God the Father, who being from everlasting to everlasting, cannot die: hence that the apparent agony and cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and the dying, were merely *pro forma*, to make the impression upon the minds of those who heard and saw. The logical argument of this theory, therefore, is that there was no real death for man's sins, but merely an appearance of one, a spectacular effect, a dramatic show, a Cinematographic representation, *a deception* produced for a good purpose--to favorably influence the sympathies and sensibilities of mankind.

All of this is wrong, and violently in opposition to the truth on the subject, as presented in the Word of God. The Scriptural declaration is not that our Lord *assumed* a body

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of flesh as a covering for a spiritual body, as did the angels previously; but that he actually laid aside, or, as the Greek renders it, "divested himself of," his prehuman conditions, and *actually took our nature*, or, as our text above declares, "the *Logos* was *made flesh*." There was no fraud, no sham, about it: it was not that he merely appeared to humble himself, while really retaining his glory and power: it was not that he seemed to become poor for our sakes, yet actually remained rich in the possession of the higher spiritual nature all the time: it was not that he merely put on the clothing, the livery, of a servant. No, but he actually became *a man*--"the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all."

1 Tim. 2:5

We shall see subsequently, when we come to consider

particularly the ransom feature of his work, that it was absolutely necessary that he should be a man--neither more nor less than a perfect man--because it was a man that sinned, man who was to be redeemed, and the divine law required that a man's life should pay the redemption price for a man's life. "As by a *man* came death, by a *man* also came the resurrection of the dead." (**1 Cor. 15:21**) But let no one misunderstand us by this to mean that our Redeemer became a man such as we are, full of inherited imperfections and blemishes. Quite to the contrary of this: the same word of God declares that he was "holy, harmless, *separate from sinners*." **Heb. 7:26,28; Luke 1:35**

His separateness from sinners is one of the difficult points with many. How could he be a man, and yet be free from the hereditary taint which affects the entire human family? We hope to see exactly how this could be, and how it was accomplished under the divine plan; but we require first to have thoroughly impressed upon our minds the fact that an imperfect man, a blemished man, one who through heredity had partaken of Adamic stock, and whose life was thus part with our life, *could not be our Redeemer*. There were plenty of sinful men in the world, without God sending his Son to be another. There were plenty of these imperfect men who were willing to lay down their lives for the accomplishment

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of the Father's will. This is fully attested by the record of **Hebrews 11**, in which it is clearly shown that many "counted not their lives dear unto them," in their faithfulness to the Lord. But what was needed was not merely *a sacrifice* for sins, but *a sinless sacrifice*, which would thus pay the sinner's penalty. And since "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God," and since "there is none righteous, no, not one," *therefore*, as the Scriptures again declare, "None could give to God a ransom for his brother." (**Rom. 3:10,23; Psalms 49:7**) It was because the Lord beheld and saw that there was no man competent to redeem the world that he laid help upon one who is mighty to save--able to save to the uttermost all who come unto the Father by him. **Psalms 89:19; Isaiah 63:1; 59:16; Hebrews 7:25**

Next we want, if possible, to see clearly how our Lord Jesus laid hold upon our race, and became a member of it, through his mother Mary, without sharing to any degree its depravity, without inheriting its blight of sin, without its curse of death laying hold upon him: for if in any manner or degree he partook of the *life* of Adam, he would have

been a partaker also of the death sentence upon Adam's life, and thus he would have come under the *sentence of death*: and if rendered thus imperfect, and under the sentence of death, he had no *life-rights* to give as man's ransom price, by which to purchase father Adam and his race from under the sentence of death imposed by divine Justice. We propose to examine this question in our next chapter. We hope to there prove that our Lord did not, in any manner or degree, become contaminated with sin or imperfection through his mother.