

The Beginning of God's Creation

*“These things saith
the Amen, the
faithful and true
witness, the
beginning of the
creation of God.”
—Revelation 3:14*

JESUS IS REFERRED TO in John 3:16 as God's “only begotten Son.” In our text he is described as “the beginning of the creation of God.” Concerning Jesus, the Apostle Paul wrote, “By him 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.” (Col. 1:16) In Ephesians 3:9 we read that God used Jesus Christ to create all things, and John 1:3 reads, “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”

The united testimony of these texts of Scripture reveals clearly that there was a time in the dim and far distant past when God, the almighty Heavenly Father, was alone, and that his first creative act was the bringing into existence of the one referred to in the Bible as his beloved Son. After this, as the Scriptures reveal, God used his Son as his active

agent in all the remaining works of creation, and “without him was not any thing made.”

The Scriptures additionally reveal that from the very beginning the beloved Son of God was always in very close association with his Father and Creator. In Genesis 1:26 this is emphasized, in which God speaks, saying, “Let us make man in our image.” The use of the pronouns “us” and “our” indicates that in making this statement God applied it to himself and his Son, who worked with him in connection with the creation of man. Thus, these words are in harmony with the later testimony of the Apostles Paul and John already noted.

In John 1:1-3, Jesus is referred to as the “Word” of God. In the Greek text it is *logos*, which is defined as “words uttered by a living voice, which embody a concept or idea.” (*Thayer’s Greek Definitions*) In ancient times kings would speak to the people while concealed behind a lattice, addressing their remarks quietly to a mouthpiece who stood in front of the lattice, who then relayed them to the audience. This spokesman was called a “*logos*.” Jesus is the *Logos* of the Creator, acting as well as speaking for him.

CORRECT MEANING OBSCURED

The meaning of the information set forth in John 1:1-3 is obscured by the *King James* translation, particularly in verse 1, which states that “the Word [*Logos*] was God.” This incorrect translation has helped to support the tradition that the Heavenly Father and his “only begotten Son” are one and the same person. However, a more correct translation of the Greek reads, “In a beginning was the Word,

and the Word was with the God, and a God was the Word.”—*Wilson’s Emphatic Diaglott*

In the New Testament the Greek word translated “God” is *theos*, but it does not always apply to the Creator. In II Corinthians 4:4, for example, *theos* is applied to the Devil, who is described as the “god of this world.” *Theos* simply means a deity, a god or goddess, or a mighty one, the identity of the being to whom it is applied being determined by the context in which it is used. The *Logos*, or Word, was a mighty god, but not the Supreme Deity, not the great and Almighty God of the universe. As the Greek text in John 1:1 indicates, the definite article “the” [Greek: *ho*] is used to describe God, the Heavenly Father. The definite article is not used, however, with regard to the Word. Thus the correct rendering that the Word was “a god.” When the definite article “the” is used in the Greek [*ho*], it means some special, or particular person, place or thing. When it precedes *theos*, as in this instance, it refers singularly to God Almighty.

Just as the Word, or *Logos*, was with “the God” in the beginning, and served under him as the creator of all things, so he gladly came to earth on the mission of redeeming and saving the sin-cursed and fallen human race from death. The Scriptures inform us that “the Word was made flesh,” to which John adds, “We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14) The use of the word “glory” in this text does not mean that Jesus was divine while on earth. Paul explains that there is a terrestrial, or earthly glory. This was the glory that was given to Adam when he was created perfect,

and Jesus was the exact counterpart of Adam.—Ps. 8:4,5; I Cor. 15:40

A CORRESPONDING PRICE

It was necessary that Jesus be made flesh, else he could not have been the Redeemer of fallen man. It was his “flesh,” his perfect humanity, which he gave for the “life of the world.” (John 6:51) In I Timothy 2:3-6, the Apostle Paul refers to this as a “ransom,” or corresponding price. The only life that could correspond with the perfect life of father Adam, was another perfect human life. It was his perfect human life which Jesus voluntarily laid down in sacrifice, consummated on Calvary’s cross.

Contrary to human traditions which have come down to us from centuries past, Jesus never claimed that he was the Heavenly Father, nor did he claim to be equal with the Father. On the contrary he said emphatically, “My Father is greater than I.” (John 14:28) This could not be true if Jesus and the Father were one and the same person.

A mistranslation of Philippians 2:5-8 has been used to bolster the false tradition that Jesus was equal with the Father. The *King James Version* states in this passage that Jesus “thought it not robbery to be equal with God.” Numerous other translations give the opposite thought. Among these, *Wilson’s Emphatic Diaglott* says that Jesus “did not meditate a usurpation to be like God.” We will quote the entire passage in order to see how much this corrected rendering is in keeping with the spirit of Paul’s admonition.

“Let this disposition be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, though being in God’s form, yet

did not meditate a usurpation [to seize without authority] to be like God, but divested himself, taking a bondman's form, having been made in the likeness of men; and being in condition as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

With these words, Paul admonishes the Christian to follow Jesus' example of humility. Though before coming to earth he was a mighty god, the *Logos*, he did not aspire to be equal with the Almighty Creator. Instead, in his desire to do his Father's will, he gladly submitted to the humiliation of becoming a man to suffer and to die for the human race. As a man, Jesus continued to exhibit this same spirit of humility. He said, "I can of mine own self do nothing." "I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak."—John 5:30; 12:49

ONENESS OF FATHER AND SON

Jesus declared to the Jews, "I and my Father are one." (John 10:30) This statement has been misused in an attempt to prove that Jesus and the Heavenly Father were one and the same person. However, all will concede, we believe, that there are forms of oneness other than that of person. Jesus proved this to be true when later, in praying to his Heavenly Father on behalf of his disciples, he asked, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us."—John 17:21

It is obvious that Jesus was not asking his Heavenly Father to make his disciples one with him in person, yet he did pray for the same kind of oneness as existed between himself and the Heavenly

Father. The thought clearly is oneness of purpose, so complete that the Heavenly Father's will was Jesus' supreme rule of life, and a "delight" for him to do. (Ps. 40:8) He prayed that his followers might likewise be sanctified, or set apart, to know and delight in the divine will.

Knowing and doing the will of God is fundamental to being a faithful Christian in his sight. No one will ever gain everlasting life, either in heaven or on earth, who even in the slightest degree is in opposition to the Heavenly Father's will. It is in keeping with this that Jesus taught his disciples to pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."—Matt. 6:10

Even now, the true disciples of Christ, despite the imperfections of their flesh, seek to have the will of God done in their hearts and lives. It will require the thousand years of Christ's earthly kingdom to establish the will of God in the hearts of all mankind. However, when that great task is accomplished, the Son himself will continue to be subject to the Father, being second to him in order of rank.

Paul explains it thus, saying that Christ Jesus "must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he [God] hath put all things under his [Jesus'] feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he [God] is excepted, which did put all things under him [Jesus]. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him [the Father] that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."—I Cor. 15:25-28

Having such a clear statement of Scripture as this, who can justifiably argue that God and his beloved Son are one and the same person? How could a person be subject to himself? On the other hand, these words of the Apostle Paul reveal further the perfect oneness of purpose which exists between the Father and the Son. It is a oneness which will extend even beyond Christ's thousand-year reign. For all eternity, he will continue to be subject to the Father, delighting in all of his purposes.

IN GOD'S IMAGE

Jesus said to Philip, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." (John 14:9) This is another text which is used in an effort to prove the tradition that Jesus and the Father were one in person. However, we know that this is not what Jesus meant, for God said to Moses, "There shall no man see me, and live." (Exod. 33:20) Additionally, the Apostle John wrote, "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."—John 1:17,18

Jesus "declared" the Father, John says in the above text. Thus, we have explained what was meant by the words, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Jesus, like the perfect Adam, was in the image of God, and his perfect and glorious personality reflected the characteristics of God. Moreover, in a very special sense, he represented God in the earth. He spoke the words which God gave him to speak. His miracles were performed by the power of God and as a manifestation of the love of God. He taught his disciples the will of God.

The Son so completely “declared” the Father that had God himself been personally present with the disciples, they would have heard nothing different, seen no greater miracles, and witnessed no greater manifestation of patience, kindness, and mercy than that which was displayed by Jesus, the beloved Son of God. Thus, it was true that those who saw Jesus in the sense of knowing the virtues of his perfect character, and of being influenced by his teachings, had been brought into contact with the Father in as full a sense as it will ever be possible for any member of the fallen human race.

When we accept the clear teachings of the Bible that Jesus is the beloved Son of God, and not God himself, we are no longer faced with unexplainable mysteries. For example, Jesus frequently prayed to his Heavenly Father. If he and the Father were one in person, this would mean that he prayed to himself. When he cried on the cross, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” it would mean that he had forsaken himself.—Matt. 27:46

While hanging on the cross Jesus also said to his Father, “Into thy hands I commend my spirit,” my life. (Luke 23:46) He believed that his Heavenly Father would raise him from the dead. On the day of Pentecost, Peter testified that God did raise Jesus from the dead. (Acts 2:31,32) How untrue and bewildering all this would be if Jesus and the Father were the same person. It would mean that God did not raise his Son from the dead, for how could he raise himself? This, in turn, would mean that Jesus must not have actually died at all. How, then, could the ransom price be provided?

How thankful we should be that there is no necessity for trying to understand such “mysteries” as these. Rather, we rejoice in knowing the simple truth that Jesus was the beloved Son of God who humbled himself and became obedient unto death. He was actually “made flesh,” and did not merely assume a human form. He gave his humanity in death to redeem the world of mankind. He did not feign death. Everything about Jesus was genuine and sincere, just as it was with his Heavenly Father.

JESUS EXALTED

On the night before he was crucified, Jesus prayed to his Father, saying, “Glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” (John 17:5) It was a marvelous glory that Jesus had as the *Logos* in his prehuman existence. In humility, he simply asked the Father to restore this glory to him when he had finished his mission on earth as the world’s Redeemer.

However, when Jesus was raised from the dead he was exalted far above the glory and office which he enjoyed before humbling himself to become a man. The Apostle Paul wrote, “God ... hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, ... And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”—Phil. 2:9-11

The Apostle Paul speaks of Jesus as the “last Adam,” explaining that by his resurrection he was “made a quickening,” or life-giving, spirit being. (I Cor. 15:45) Actually, Jesus was exalted to the divine nature, and made “the express image” of the Father.

(Heb. 1:3) The phrase “express image” is described in the *Companion Bible* as meaning “the exact impression as when a metal is pressed into a die, or as a seal upon wax.” It is because of this highly exalted position of office and nature that Christ will provide the opportunity of life to those for whom he died as man’s Redeemer. To this end, he is referred to by the Prophet Isaiah as the “everlasting Father,” because he will give everlasting life to all the willing and obedient in his coming kingdom.—Isa. 9:6

It is in keeping with this that Jesus said, “As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.”—John 5:21-23

Not only does the Heavenly Father want us to honor his beloved Son, but, as the Apostle Paul wrote, he has commanded the angels to worship him. (Heb. 1:6,7) As the Prophet Isaiah wrote, Jesus in his highly exalted position is now the “mighty God,” to be worshiped by angels and men. However, he is not the Almighty Creator, and, as we have seen, at the close of his thousand-year earthly kingdom, he will himself continue to be subject to the Father.

Isaiah further prophesied concerning Jesus that he would be a “Wonderful Counselor,” and “The Prince of Peace.” (Isa. 9:6) These titles relate to aspects of the work to be accomplished during his coming kingdom reign. As Counselor, and through the various agencies of the kingdom, mankind will be instructed in the ways of truth and righteousness. As the

Prince of Peace, he will establish harmony between God and men, the outgrowth of which will be peace and good will in all human relationships, as promised by the angels to the shepherds at the time of Jesus' birth over two thousand years ago.—Luke 2:13,14

It was because "God so loved the world" that he sent his Son to be the Redeemer, Savior and Restorer of the people. Jesus was motivated by the same love and was willing to suffer and die that mankind might live. Let us continue to give honor to the Father and to the Son, rejoicing that they have revealed themselves to us through the Word of Truth: "That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."—I Pet. 4:11 ■

*"In My Father's house are many dwelling places;
if it were not so, I would have told you;
for I go to prepare a place for you.
If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come
again and receive you to Myself,
that where I am, there you may be also."
—John 14:2,3*

New American Standard Bible