

The Father-Son Relationship (Part Eight)

There Is One Supreme God — The Father
John W. Ritenbaugh
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We are going to begin this sermon by turning to Galatians 4:6 to have a brief reminder on what my last sermon was about. In that last sermon we saw, through Jesus' own words in John 1:13 especially, that *He* is the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, not an entirely different third-party spirit being. This verse reinforces this. Notice carefully what Paul wrote here.

Galatians 4:6 And because you are sons, God has sent forth the spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

That is clear. The Spirit dwelling within us is just what John 14 says. It is the Son, Jesus Christ.

Jesus is much more besides the Spirit that dwells within us. Jesus is God. He is spirit, and He is holy. He is our High Priest. He is the Head of the church. It is He who is our Savior, and also the hope of glory. He is the Word of God personified. He is also the way, the truth, and the life personified. It is His word that is spirit and life, as He said in John 6:63. It is His Spirit that is the Spirit of truth, even as it says in John 17. He is our Comforter, our Guide, our Advocate, and our Intercessor.

He has every qualification to dwell in us for His purposes, and that so-called third person of a non-existent trinity of co-equal God-beings is shown nowhere in Scripture to have ever had a relationship with the Father. It is very obvious from the Scripture that the Son has a relationship with the Father, but that so-called third being did not. It simply does not exist, and it has never existed. Jesus is God, and His relationship with the Father is well documented in the Bible.

The relationship information is skimpy in the Old Testament, but the New Testament is overflowing with it. The Christian religions in the world around us overwhelmingly, though, believe in the Trinity. I want you to turn with me to Luke 10 to a very simple statement by Jesus, but it is meaningful.

Luke 10:21 In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, "I thank you, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hid these things from the wise and the prudent, and have revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in your sight."

We are the babes He is speaking of there. We have been chosen to have the true relationship revealed to us, and to believe that it is the Father and Son's Spirit that dwells in us, and by which we have been regenerated as sons of God. Notice that I said Father *and* Son's Spirit. Now why? Because it is the same Spirit. How can this be—two different beings and yet the same Spirit? It is because They are one.

In this sermon I am going to be referring you to a lot of scriptures that I am going to read as evidence to you that what I am teaching you is the truth.

John 10:30 "I and my Father are one."

He did not mean that They are one person. He meant that They are of one mind, that They are in perfect agreement regarding the operations of Their purpose. This perfect agreement is the very goal toward which They are drawing us. But consider—and you know this is true—that at this time we are hardly at one with Them. Despite our conversion, elements of the carnal mind remain within us to this day. Again, I want you to recall that in Jesus' prayer in John 17, He specifically requested of the Father that we be one as *They* are one. It is our responsibility then to make choices in life that are in agreement with Their purpose so that we can be one with Them.

Today we are going to summarize and clarify any loose ends that remain to this series, concentrating on the relationship between the Father and the Son. The first thing I am going to do in this sermon is spend a lot of time defining a number of terms. These are terms that we might be familiar with in some way, but we may not have ever spent much time looking them up to see what they mean and how they apply to the subject that we have gone through in the past seven sermons.

In this research I am going to be using *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, *Brown, Driver, and Briggs Concordance*, *Vines, Gensenius, Bullinger's Companion Bible*, *The Reader's Digest Great Encyclopaedic Dictionary*, *Webster's Ninth New Collegic Dictionary*, and *The Reader's Digest Complete Word Finder*.

The first term is one that you are familiar with, but maybe it does not have the same meaning to you that the book seems to show. It is *Elohim*. Transliterated into English, it is *Elohim*. Sometimes they put the letter "y" in there too: *Elohiym*. This word has perhaps much wider application than some have thought, and yet at the same time does not specifically mean what many have thought. *Elohim* does not have the straightforward definition that many assume it to have.

Elohim is the plural of *El*, another Hebrew word. Everybody seems to agree on that. There is no doubt about it. "El" is translated in the King James Version (and perhaps all the others as well in order to keep things consistent) as "God." Sometimes though it is also translated "god." Its basic meaning is "mighty one." It indicates strength. *Elohim* thus indicates the plural of those simple terms. *Elohim* is the plural of *El*; but there is an interesting twist to that which forces one to be careful, because *Elohim* is not always translated "God," or "god."

If the Bible is any indication, the Hebrew language had nowhere the huge vocabulary that English offers to us. The Bible uses only just under 8,700 Hebrew words. It is possible that their language had a great more words, but by comparison the English language today has over a half million words available for our use.

The Hebrews got around their language deficiency by using the same word in a wide variety of contexts; thus *Elohim* is used in context where strength and power are indicated even though the Mighty Creator God is nowhere in the picture. I am going to give you an example. Go to Exodus 21. I am going to show you one example here, but there are many of them. If you will recall, Exodus 20 has the Ten Commandments in it, but verse 6 of chapter 21 has some of the terms of the Old Covenant in it.

Exodus 21:6 Then his master shall bring him to the judges. He shall also bring him to the door, or to the door post; and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him forever.

Where is the word "*Elohim*" hidden in this verse? *Elohim* is exposed in the word "judges." The Hebrew people held judges, along with people like a king, to be representatives of God. In this particular case judges were His agents rendering verdicts on behalf of God, for God, for the people. Therefore they were essentially "mighty" people—people of strength and power within the community. So to them it was perfectly natural to translate *Elohim* into "judges."

In like manner *Elohim* is also used to indicate angels. Listen to all the applications of this word: angels (good angels); demons (bad angels); false gods, and even false goddesses, as well as indicating mere men of significance within the culture, such as judges and kings. But these men are certainly not immortal spirit beings.

When you think of *Elohim*, does not God or gods immediately come to mind? I am trying to slow you down from leaping to that conclusion, because it may *not*. Did you notice I mentioned false goddesses, translated from *Elohim*? This would include the people of Ashteroth—the Sidonian goddess who is mentioned in the Bible. This may lead us to the conclusion that the term *Elohim* is specifically masculine. No, it is not. It is not gender specific either. In other words, it is not limited to masculine beings, besides not being limited to God beings.

In addition to that, even though it is a plural word, it is very definitely used within a context that indicates only one person is being spoken of. What is the result for our edification here? The result is that when a God being is definitely within the context, it may indicate either the Father or the Son only, or it may indicate *both* at the same time.

So what is the sum of all this variation of usage? The sum is, brethren, that we cannot afford to carelessly assume that it always means the same thing every time, even when it is translated "God." I think this is especially important to members of the church of God. Why? Because, under Herbert Armstrong, we were taught that the word also means "God Family," and we read that right into the word. I do not care how many research books you look into, you will not find the word "family" listed as a usage or definition of *Elohim*.

How did Herbert Armstrong arrive at the "family" usage of *Elohim*? Let me tell you a little story that I was told. The person who told me this said he once heard Herbert Armstrong say that he was asked by a reporter or somebody whether he believed the Bible literally. His answer might surprise you. He said "No." He said, though very quickly, "I believe what it literally *means*, not what it literally says." There is wisdom in his reply. It was this principle that allowed him, or perhaps somebody previous to him, to add "family" to the list of usages of *Elohim* that had already been accumulated through time.

The term "family" is actually a logical conclusion to the fact that there are two God beings revealed in the Bible who are working in perfect harmony. They are so perfectly united in mind, that even though they are separate Beings, Jesus said that they are one (John 10:30 again). Now the New Testament reveals their relationship as being Father and Son. What *is* that? That is family terminology. Further, Jesus is named, especially in the book of John, as "the only begotten Son." That too is family terminology. In addition to that, those regenerated by Their Spirit are called children of God or sons of God, thus reinforcing the family aspect.

I want you to go to Ephesians 3 to reinforce what I am saying right here. Notice this statement by the apostle Paul.

Ephesians 3:15 From whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.

In addition to what I have already given you regarding family, the Bible speaks of spiritual birth, and that a marriage lies off in the future (Revelation 19), once again indicating a family relationship. Herbert Armstrong transferred all of these family concepts backward into *Elohim* in the Old Testament, and took the liberty of defining it as also indicating family, even though the family only consisted of two Beings.

I think that this is permissible, with one caveat. A caveat is a warning, and the warning is this: I believe it is okay as long as you understand, and therefore take into consideration that *Elohim* is most definitely **not** always indicating family. It can be encompassed within the term, but it is not a one hundred percent acceptable definition and usage because the usage is not that consistent. And so one cannot depend that "God" always means both Father and Son in every context in which one finds it; therefore, it must be thought through carefully.

Let us look at "family" just a little bit further. What does the term "family" mean? The term "family," like *Elohim*, is a broad general term, in this case indicating people, ancestry, things, principles, laws, or kind; in fact any grouping sharing common characteristics. That is the key: any grouping sharing coming characteristics. It is a term that indicates oneness, relationship, grouping, classification.

In that definition I just gave you for family I used another term that is important for this subject. It is the word kind. "Kind" may be used as either a noun or as an adjective. As we just saw, as a noun, it is a synonym for family, and that is how we are going to be using it in this sermon. "Kind" indicates a grouping, class, or type. In usage as a noun it almost invariably is preceded by another noun that it modifies, making the grouping or class more specific. For instance, we might say a dog is of the *animal* kind. We might say that a boy is of the *man* kind. We might say, for the purpose of this sermon, that the Father and the Son are both of the *God* kind.

Now this statement—the Father and the Son are both of the God kind—places them as equal in terms of kind. That is, we can substitute "it places them as equal in terms of group, class, or family of beings." Husband, wife, and children are of the man, or human kind. This grouping does not state nor set ranking within the kind. It only states their general classification.

Mr. Armstrong defined the God kind as that family, class, or grouping of creating, ruling Beings. The important thing here is that the God kind is the creating, ruling Beings. It remains for other biblical statements to establish ranking within the kind.

Another term I used within these sermons that I need to define is the term "absolute." I need to do this because it seems I unintentionally threw some a curve using that word because they did not understand the meaning of the term. Mr. Armstrong referred to the Father as the "Supreme" God. Others in their writings, though, preferred to use the term "Absolute" God.

The word "absolute" has a number of synonyms, but when one gets its primary usage, it is this: "absolute" is that point at which there is nothing beyond. It indicates that point at which there is nothing beyond. The word "supreme" means ultimate, highest, final.

As you can see, "supreme" and "absolute" are synonyms of one another, but they are commonly used in somewhat different circumstances. For instance, there is a vodka named "Absolut." The distiller is saying, through that name, that there is no other vodka that can compare to theirs.

We may speak of "absolute" zero, meaning when one reaches that point there is no colder temperature. There is nothing beyond that. So to label God as "absolute" means that He is the only Being, including god-beings, who has no God. Did you get that? That is a ranking within the kind. There is no God beyond Him, to whom He must answer, nor to whom He must submit. This is the same way Herbert Armstrong characterized the Father. He was the ultimate; the highest. There is no God beyond Him.

So what is the difference whether you use "absolute" or "supreme"? It is just a matter of preference, that is all, because they mean the same thing. This in no way denigrates Jesus, because He too was, is, and always will be God, but He is not the Father. Is that clear?

The Bible clearly gives Jesus His due. Let us go to Matthew 11.

Matthew 11:27 "All things have been delivered to Me by My Father: and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him."

The important thing here is "the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him."

In the Old Testament the Father is at best a shadowy figure. In the Old Testament there is some indication of a relationship between at least two God beings if only because the word, the term, *Elohim* is used, and because it is plural. In addition, there are a number of places where another God being is fairly strongly implied, like in Daniel 7. However, in many of these cases it requires some knowledge of the New Testament revelation to isolate where those places are. One of Jesus' responsibilities as a man was to reveal this second being He called "the Father."

In this verse it says, "the one to whom the Son *wills* to reveal." In the Greek that word "will" is very strong. It indicates that when Jesus said it, He said it with emphasis, that He was strongly resolved to remove any vagueness that there might be in the Old Testament, and He would do it for the benefit of those who were called to know the Father. This is important to you and me because John 17:3 says that "eternal life is to *know* the Father *and* the Son." I think you understand very well that those in the religious world out there spend a great deal of time revealing the Son, but they do not spend a great deal of time revealing the Father. I think that before this sermon is over you will understand far better why we have to know the Father.

John 14 contains the monologue Jesus gave to His disciples following that final Passover.

John 14:28 "You have heard how I said unto you, I am going away [He was going to die, be buried, be resurrected, and go off to heaven.], and coming back to you. If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, 'I am going to the Father,' for My Father is greater than I."

By Jesus' own testimony the Father is the greater of these two God beings. That is so clear. In this sense of ranking, it puts Him in a secondary position even though He is God as well. Did Jesus lie? Was He trying to puff the Father up or something? No. He was telling the truth. "The Father is greater than I." So this statement out of Christ's own mouth cannot honestly be argued against.

We are going to look at five scriptures that show the arrangement of the relationship between these two. Notice how Jesus was teaching this right along the arrangement of the relationship between these two God beings.

John 5:30 I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of the Father who sent Me. [He was taking orders from the Father.]

John 6:38-39 For I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which has sent me, that of all which he has given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

John 8:29 And he that sent me is with me [Does not the greater send the lesser? Does not the superior send the servant? Of course.]; the Father has not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.

John 12:49-50 For 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. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting, whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.

That is very clear.

Here in I Corinthians 15, we are going to be looking at the very end of the purpose they are working out, which Paul wrote.

I Corinthians 15:27-28 For "He [the Father] has put all things under His [Jesus'] feet." But when He says "all things are put under him," it is evident that He [the Father] who put all things under Him is excepted. Now when all things are made subject to Him [the Son], then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God [the Father] may be all in all.

This string of verses is making it very clear that the lesser is submitting to the greater. Let us add something here because some might say that these statements were made while He was a man. Jesus has already been resurrected, and He is once again fully—absolutely, totally, in every way, including bodily—Spirit as He was before He became a man.

John 20:17 Jesus said unto her [Mary Magdalene], Touch me not; [It literally says, "Do not cling to me." He did not refuse her touch, but He said "Do not cling to me."]; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

He was still subject to the Father, and that Being [the Father] was His God. Do you see what I am saying here? Jesus is admitting that He was not the Absolute God. There was a God beyond Him that was greater. This declaration was made immediately following His resurrection. But for additional proof, I want you to go to Revelation 3. This is within the message to the church of Philadelphia.

Revelation 3:12 Him that overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of *my* God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of *my* God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from *my* God: and I will write upon him my new name [emphasis added].

So sixty years later, following His resurrection, Jesus has a God. Four times He said here "My God." Does this not clearly show that there was One to whom He had to answer—One in authority over Him, One greater than He?

Let us look at another verse in Philippians 2 which some may think shows a contradiction. Paul is speaking of Christ.

Philippians 2:6 Who, being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be *equal* with God [emphasis added].

Ah ha! Is it a contradiction? Well, how can this apparent "greater/equal" contradiction be reconciled? Actually, it is quite easy. All one has to do is separate the oranges from the apples, and give both the Father and the Son their due. They are most definitely, positively, equal in terms of their *being*. Both are of the God kind. Both share exactly the same nature—the God *kind* nature. Both are uncreated. Both are eternal spirit Beings. Neither had a beginning of days nor end of life. However, they are not equal in authority nor function within the kind, grouping, or family of beings. This should be easily understood. Let us go to something else that Paul wrote in I Corinthians 11.

I Corinthians 11:2-3 Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances as I delivered them to you. But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

There you have it. God's form of government is hierarchical; that is, its members are assigned rankings from the Head on down. Ranking does not indicate qualitative superiority. In other words, there is no essential qualitative difference between the Father and the Son as to Their being. Both are equally God beings; however, ranking does clearly denote responsibility and function; or we might say the roles or the parts they perform within the great unfolding drama of Their purpose. In terms of their responsibility and function, the one we know of as the Father is greater than the one revealed to us as the Son. Thus the Son, in performing His responsibilities and functions, submits to the one of greater responsibility and function.

Let us bring this into a very common situation. Is a man, because he is appointed head of the family, qualitatively better than his wife? Absolutely not. Qualitatively, both are of the human kind. Both have an assigned role, responsibility, and function. God expects us to fulfill those functions if the human family is going to be successful, and if we are going to be in God's Kingdom—His Family Kingdom.

This hierarchical governmental concept is very difficult for Israelitish people to be reconciled to. The automatic reaction of an Israelite is to say to himself, "Well, I'm just as good as they are." But brethren, that is not the issue. That is a wrong reaction because it reveals a lack of understanding and faith in God. Being "just as good as" is not the issue with God. The issue with God is for us to search

as to where He has assigned us within the Body, and then fulfill that function and responsibility, and not be concerned about what others are assigned to. He is the Boss. Let me show you a good example of this.

John 21:20-22 Then Peter, turning about, saw the disciple [John] whom Jesus loved, following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrays you? Peter seeing him says to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus said unto him, If I will that he tarry [live] till I come, what is that to you? Follow you me.

"It's none of your business, Peter, what I do with him. You just do your job, because that's what you are going to be judged on."

So when an Israelite reacts, "I'm just as good as he is," that is not the issue with God. The issue with God is, "Are we doing what has been assigned to us?" Let God judge that other person, because God is certainly going to be judging us. This is an issue in the Bible a couple of different places, and is one of the reasons why I Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4 were written. These were written to get us turned in the right direction so that we will understand God's will in this.

Let me give you another example. I will use myself. I am not an apostle. I am not an evangelist. I see no evidence of such an assignment from God to me. I am a teacher, and there I stand. My responsibility has just a small touch of an apostle's or of an evangelist's assignment, but in like manner, brethren, so does *everybody* in the Body have that responsibility.

Every member of the Body is required to give an answer for the reason of the hope that is within us; thus every member has an evangelistic responsibility, at least for brief moments of time. But my major responsibility is teaching, and teaching a group of those called of God. I will tell you that I am resolved to not get out in front of God and try to do somebody else's job. This principle is why there can be a verse such as I Corinthians 8:6. See if this does not just jump right out at you.

I Corinthians 8:6 But to us [church members—those who have God's Spirit] there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.

Do you see how clearly Paul separates the two? He has put the Father and the Son in their hierarchical order. Jesus answers to the Father even though both are God; but the Father is greater. Jesus' responsibility to the Father is you and me. He is our Lord—meaning our Boss, our Master. In addition to that, He is our Savior. He is indeed the Head of the church; but even as Head of the church, the Father is over Him, because all things flow from the same source—from the Father *through* the Son. The Son is carrying out the plan, the purpose, They devised for reproducing themselves. Jesus has an awesome responsibility, and as our High Priest it is His responsibility to make sure that we are prepared for the Kingdom of God. He has a major, major responsibility. There is one God, and there is one Lord and Master and Savior. There is one God—one Supreme Being; one Absolute; and there is no other.

Maybe you think that is just one verse. Let us see what Ephesians 4 says.

Ephesians 4:4-6 There is one body [one church], and one spirit [which is living in us], even as you are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord [Jesus Christ], one faith [meaning one body of beliefs], one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all [and that includes Jesus Christ], and through all, and in you all.

Let us back up again. Qualitatively, Jesus is just as much a God being as the Father, but His function is different. The purpose and the plan is being worked out through Him, and He is our Savior, the Head of the church, our High Priest, our immediate supervisor directly responsible for enabling us to make the right choices and preparing us for being in the Kingdom of God.

There is yet more.

I Timothy 1:14-17 And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Who is Paul talking about in verse 17? It is the Father. *He is the only wise God*. One of the reasons I chose this verse is because it might be misunderstood as referring to Christ. One of the ways you can tell is the way Paul worded this. When you see the name of Jesus Christ separated away in this manner from God, the God refers to the Father. Before we leave this verse, notice again: "the *only* God." That is so interesting.

Matthew 8:2 And behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.

We are starting off here on a little tangent regarding Jesus receiving worship. Let us go to Luke 5 where we have the same instance, but Luke used a little bit different wording.

Luke 5:12 And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy: who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.

The translations in each case are correct. However, Luke used a different word from what Matthew did, but by putting the two of them together it shows clearly what the attitude of the leper is. In Matthew he only said that the leper prostrated himself, but Luke's account makes it clear that he was literally belly and face down. His nose was in the dust, so to speak. There is no doubt that the leper was in the most humble and submissive position a man could possibly be in. He was totally unable to defend himself. He was not even able to look up into the face of the One he was begging to heal. The word Matthew used is the one that is used almost everywhere in the New Testament for worship. Luke did not use the same one, but you put the two together, and you can see what the position was.

We are going to go now to Matthew 4. This is when Satan confronted Jesus, and in verse 10 Jesus is replying to Satan.

Matthew 4:10 Then said Jesus unto him, Get you hence, Satan: for it is written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.

The word that Matthew used here is transliterated into English *proskuneo* [*pros-koo-neh-o*]. It is Strong's #4352. Its meaning gives the sense of a dog licking his master's hand. It means to fawn, and to crouch before. It has the sense or attitude of total obeisance and in a religious circumstance can be translated as reverence or adoration.

Here are a few more examples of *proskuneo*.

Matthew 9:18 While he spoke these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped [*proskuneo*] him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay your hand upon her, and she shall live.

Matthew 14:33 Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped [*proskuneo*] him, saying, Of a truth you are the Son of God.

Matthew 15:25 Then came she and worshipped [*proskuneo*] him, saying, Lord, help me.

Matthew 20:20 Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping [*proskuneo*] him, and desiring a certain thing of him.

Now we will go to the book of John just to show you that somebody besides Matthew used this word. This was the place where Jesus healed the blind man who had been blind since birth.

John 9:38 And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.

What is remarkable in all of these scriptures for the purpose of this sermon is that in no case did Jesus ever rebuke or even mildly correct anybody for worshipping Him, as others, including angels, who *immediately* did following anyone's prostration of themselves before them. The reason that Jesus did not is because He was indeed God, and worthy of worship. Angels, regardless of their glorious rank, are not God, and they are not worthy of worship. You will see in Revelation 19 when John was speaking to an angel, and he prostrated himself before the angel, that the angel immediately corrected him when he identified himself as a fellow servant of John.

Revelation 19:10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

Jesus was worthy of worship, and accepted it. He never corrected anyone that did it. Why? Because He was God. Now how long was He God, because we have to look into this too in order to give Jesus His due. How long was He God? Was it only while He was a man? Let us see.

Matthew 1:23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

In the announcement they are instructed that this baby that is going to be born is going to be "God with us." One of the reasons this was done is that God, through the angel, was making known to Joseph and Mary that this was going to be the fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14.

Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

The symbolic name "Immanuel" is a clue to this baby's *real* origin, and when born He was already God incarnate. "Incarnate" simply means "in the flesh." As a fleshly being, He was God.

Matthew 2:1-2 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

The announcement expands. He is not only "God with us," He is also King of the Jews, which attaches Him to many other prophecies regarding the Messiah.

Matthew 2:11 And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and *worshipped* him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense and myrrh. (emphasis added)

Jesus of course had no control over these men's worship, but God included what they did as part of His revelation, that we are not dealing here with the birth of an ordinary human being.

We are going to leap to the book of John to the first chapter, to begin to fill in the details here. John the Baptist, Jesus' flesh and blood cousin, is being questioned regarding Jesus and himself—both of them together. John is testifying here as though he is in a court and he is being questioned.

John 1:26-27 John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there stands one among you, whom ye know not; He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me [... is far more important than me], whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

John 1:30 This is he of whom I said, After me comes a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me.

John the Baptist was Jesus' flesh and blood cousin. You know the story, that he himself was the result of a miraculous conception and birth. He was born six months before Jesus. In these verses the apostle John is giving evidence through John the Baptist of what he had just witnessed. What he had witnessed was that when Jesus was baptized, God enabled him to understand who it was he was baptizing.

The key for the purpose of this sermon here is in this simple phrase where he says "He was *before* me." He is saying that Jesus existed before he did. Even though Jesus was born as a human being *after* John the Baptist, John is saying that Jesus lived before he lived. He is beginning to give evidence of Jesus' preexistence, as the theologians call it. That is, Jesus existed before His appearance as a man.

Let us begin to track this down. Now we have Jesus' own testimony:

John 3:13 And no man [no one] has ascended up to heaven, but he that came *down* from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

So, if He came down from heaven, He must have lived in heaven prior to His arrival on earth. In other words, He preexisted His earthly life, and at the end of His work on earth He returned from whence He had come. This verse reinforces His point of origin: heaven.

Let us go now to what the apostle Paul wrote in I Corinthians 10.

I Corinthians 10:4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

What in the world is Paul talking about here? He is talking about the ancestors of the Israelitish people going through the wilderness. You know that Moses spoke to the rock one time, and another time he struck the rock and water came gushing out. All of those Israelites drank of that *spiritual* rock. Now who was that spiritual rock? Paul identifies that spiritual Rock as Jesus Christ.

I Corinthians 10:9 Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.

Now what is Paul saying? He is saying that the God who led Israel through the wilderness and provided for them for forty years all the food they needed, all the water they needed, all the protection they needed, was Jesus Christ. So now how far back have we taken His preexistence? All the way back to Israel coming out of Egypt. But there is more.

Really, I am just giving you an overview here, but showing you how you can nail this down yourself.

Hebrews 11:24-27 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

Now what does that tell you? It tells you that Moses' faith was in Jesus Christ. This is confirming what Paul said earlier in I Corinthians 10 that the God of the Old Testament—the One who divided the Red Sea, the One who was in the cloud—was Jesus Christ. This is yet another claim that Christ was the God of the Old Testament.

John 8:58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am.

The people knew and understood exactly what Jesus said, and that is why they reacted so strongly. They were ready to stone Him. He claimed to be the "I am"—the One who made the covenant with Abraham, the One who revealed Himself to Moses at the burning bush—by identifying Himself by that name; therefore, He was saying, "I have existed forever." That is what "I am" means. It means "He who was, He who is, He who will be," translated in many modern translations as "the Eternal."

With this we can add John 1:1-2.

John 1:1-2 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.

One of Jesus' major responsibilities was to reveal the Father, and since the Bible was inspired by Him, and He is its real author, this introduction in the book of John fits perfectly within the framework of that responsibility. This introduction signifies the perfect fellowship between the Father and Son for all eternity. That is what He is saying. "I have existed with God for all eternity." John 1 is showing two distinct God beings who are perfectly united in purpose and plan, and that they had this one mind from before everything was put in operation. It means that Jesus, like the Father, is uncreated and eternal.

Let us turn to Revelation 3, again to the message to Philadelphia. Listen to what Christ says. I want you to think about whom He is saying this to. To whom is He saying this? He is saying this to you.

Revelation 3:9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship [*proskuneo*] before your feet, and to know that I have loved you.

The word "worship" here is the same word *proskuneo*. Why? There is only one answer. Those to whom He is speaking are God. Let that sink in.

Let us extrapolate just a little further. Are those who are the subject of this verse part of the Godhead? (I see Evelyn saying "No." She is correct.) Indeed they are part of the God Family, but they are not part of the Godhead; but even though they are not part of the Godhead, they are worthy of worship.

Now what is the sum of all of this? If we connect these scriptures (John 14:28 with I Corinthians 11:3, showing that the Father is the Head, with I Corinthians 8:6 and Ephesians 4:5-6 with I Timothy 1:17), that even though Jesus is indeed God, and that He is uncreated, eternal, and worthy of all worship, praise, and honor, He is not the Head God. We cannot deny what the scriptures clearly state. There is but one God in the God-Head, who is absolute and supreme, and that is the Father.