

*We Would See Jesus: The Son of God*

## **“In the Beginning Was the Word”**

*Dan Jenkins*

**W**hen John began to write his gospel account to convince his readers that Jesus was all He claimed to be, he began with such amazing words. **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”** (John 1:1). [All Scripture references are taken from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted.] From the time of the creation there was that Word who was *with* God and at the same time who *was* God. John makes it impossible for us to misunderstand the identity of the Word. “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (1:14). Jesus the Christ, the only begotten of the Father, has existed from all eternity! He was there in the beginning with God and He was God (Deity)!

We tend to think of Jesus’ humanity, and rightly so. He lived on this earth in a body like ours and endured every trial we endure. This humanity of Jesus is emphasized by an expression used 84 times in the New Testament—the Son of Man. Yet, He is far more than the Son of Man; He is the Son of God. The theme of this year’s lectureship is focused on this aspect of Jesus. He is the Son of God, Immanuel, and the Word who existed from eternity and then became flesh. The significance of His deity will be magnified by every lesson in our studies

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together. Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God! May we proclaim, as Nathanael when he first saw Jesus, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel" (John 1:49)!

**JESUS IS DIVINE:  
HE WAS AT THE CREATION**

In the opening words of his gospel, John also described the place Jesus had in the creation of the world. "All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made" (John 1:3). Every created thing was made through the Word! The casual reader of the book of Genesis might not see the presence of Jesus and simply attribute the creation to the Father, but it was not the Father who, by Himself, created the world. Everything made in those six glorious days, without a single exception, was made by Jesus. John says that nothing was created if it was not created through Him. Jesus is not only in John 1:1; He is in Genesis 1:1!

There are those, particularly the Jehovah's Witnesses, who see Jesus as a created being. John's affirmation that everything made was made through Jesus denies this allegation. A created being could not create himself! If Jesus was created by the Father, then it cannot be true that everything created was created through Jesus. Thus when Paul used the expression, "the firstborn over all creation" (Col. 1:15), he immediately affirmed, "...by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on the earth....All things were created through Him and for Him" (Col. 1:16-17). The expression, "firstborn over all creation," cannot be speaking of *origin* but of *priority*. When Jesus described Himself as the beginning of the creation of God (Rev. 3:14), He was simply affirming that

the creation began with Him—He was the *source* of the creation.

**JESUS IS DIVINE:  
GOD INCLUDED HIM  
IN THE “US” PASSAGES**

The presence of Jesus in the Old Testament is shown in those verses where God (the Godhead) uses the plural to refer to Himself. The very first page of the Bible teaches this important truth. At first reading of the creation story, one might overlook the use of the words “Us” and “Our,” but in a more careful study these words really stand out. “Then God said, ‘Let **Us** make man in **Our** image, according to **Our** likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth’” (Gen. 1:26, emp. added). The plural pronouns, Us and Our, are meaningless if only the Father was involved in the creation of the world. If that were the case, then He would have said, “I will make man in My image, according to My likeness.” The Father was not alone, for both Jesus (John 1:1) and the Holy Spirit (Gen. 1:2) were present.

A second occurrence of this plural pronoun is found in the story of Babel. When the descendants of Noah ignored the Lord’s command to multiply and replenish the earth (Gen. 9:1), they decided to erect a tower and described its purpose as “lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth” (Gen. 9:4). They thought the tower, which would reach the heavens (to understand the meaning of heavens, see its usage in Deuteronomy 1:28), would bring about their plan and ensure they would not be scattered abroad.

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Note carefully the word used by God and the Godhead in the divine account:

But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. And the LORD said, "Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. Come, let **Us** go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech."  
(Gen. 11:5-7, emp. added)

It was not the Father alone who dealt with this sinful plan of man. He did not say, "I will go down," but "Let **Us** go down." Jesus is in the Old Testament.

There is a third time that God uses the word "Us" to refer to the Godhead. Isaiah's vision of the glory of the Lord, recorded in Isaiah 6, creates a great sense of awe as the prophet takes us through the portals of heaven to see all that is transpiring there. The Lord sits on a throne, His house is filled with smoke and the seraphim cry out to one another, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!" In the grandeur of heaven, Isaiah realizes his own sinfulness and says, "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts." God's response to such penitence was to purge his sin and take away his iniquity.

Then the voice of the Lord asks, "Whom shall I send, And who will go for **Us**?" As you read these words, pay special attention to the change from the singular pronoun "I" to the plural pronoun "Us." Our view of God in the Old Testament often causes us to think only of the

Father, but such robs us of seeing the reality of the presence of the Godhead. God is not an "I"; He is an "Us."

**JESUS IS DIVINE:  
HE IS INCLUDED IN *ELOHIM***

The reader of the Hebrew Bible would more readily see the "unified plurality" of the Godhead as he read the word for "God." The Hebrew word for God is *elohim* and this word is translated God more than 2,500 times. The amazing thing is that this word is a plural word which is also singular in nature. In English there is a somewhat parallel concept in words like herd, flock and school (as applied to fish). These words bring to mind more than one animal, but they are viewed as one. This unity is even more emphatic in the Hebrew, as illustrated by the words of Moses, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one" (Deut. 6:4)! Jehovah, our *Elohim*, is one! In a herd there may be many sheep, but in the Godhead there are not many "gods." He is one.

This same idea is found in other passages in the Old Testament. In places where you might expect to find a single noun (and such is usually the case when translated into English), the Hebrew has the noun in the plural when talking about God.

Look at Proverbs 30:3 in two translations. The New King James Version says, "I neither learned wisdom Nor have knowledge of the Holy One." Now notice the words when *literally* translated in Young's Literal Translation of the Bible, "Nor have I learned wisdom, Yet the knowledge of Holy Ones I know." The reader of the Hebrew Bible would immediately see the affirmation of the plural reference to Deity. The same is found earlier in this same book (9:10), where Jehovah in the first part of the verse is contrasted with the Holy One(s) in the second part of the

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verse. The New King James Version reads, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding," while Young's Literal Translation states, "The commencement of wisdom is the fear of Jehovah, And a knowledge of the Holy Ones is understanding." The expression "Holy Ones" is a plural parallel reference to Jehovah in the first part of the verse.

An even more familiar passage teaches this truth when one looks at the literal translation. Solomon speaks of remembering our Creator in our youth. However, look at Young's translation: "Remember also thy Creators in days of thy youth..." (Ecc. 12:1). Again, the plural usage in the original language is not to affirm multiple gods, but to acknowledge the Biblical truth of the Godhead.

**JESUS IS DIVINE:  
HE IS JEHOVAH**

While it is true that one result of Jesus becoming flesh was that He was lower than the Father, it was in this earthly period of His life that He said, "My Father is greater than I" (John 14:28). At the time of His earthly pilgrimage, He was not only lower than the Father, He was lower than the angels. "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone" (Heb. 2:9). An important question to answer is whether He was equal with the Father *before* He became flesh. Was He less God (Deity) than the Father? Another way of asking this question is to ask whether Jesus is Jehovah.

Take another look at Isaiah chapter six. When Isaiah saw the throne and the seraphim flying around that throne, their message was, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory." The Hebrew

word for LORD is Jehovah. Isaiah's response was to confess his sinfulness and then to affirm, "For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts." Jehovah then described to Isaiah the rebellious hearts of that nation: "Make the heart of this people dull, And their ears heavy, And shut their eyes; Lest they see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And return and be healed" (Isa. 6:10). These very words were spoken by Jesus regarding the people of His day: "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, Lest they should see with their eyes, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them" (John 12:40).

The point we are making is this: Isaiah saw the glory of Jehovah and spoke of hardened hearts. Hear the words of John 12:41: "These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him." Of whose glory did Isaiah see and of whose glory did he speak? John affirmed that the glory of Jesus was the same glory that Isaiah saw. That glory was the glory of Jehovah, but John says that glory was the glory of Jesus. Jesus is Jehovah! He is not the Father, but He is Jehovah.

Later in this same book, Isaiah showed that before Jesus came to the earth He was Jehovah, He was Deity. In chapter 35, he prophesied of the time when the world would see "the glory of the LORD, the excellency of our God" (Isa. 35:2). He even gave the visible evidence that men would have when the One would come who possessed the glory of Jehovah, the excellency of our God. The signs would be, "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, And the tongue of the dumb sing. For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness,

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And streams in the desert” (35:5-6). The presence of these signs would be proof that Jehovah had come to earth.

It is likely that you know the precise time when this prophecy of the coming of Jehovah was fulfilled. After John the Baptist was put in prison, he sent two of his disciples to ask if Jesus was the fulfillment of these Messianic prophecies. Pay special attention to the message Jesus sent back to John by these messengers. He told them, “Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: the blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them” (Matt. 11:4-5). Isaiah foretold that when Jehovah God’s glory was present there would be multitudes of miracles. Jesus affirmed that He was the One performing the miracles foretold by Isaiah. There can be no doubt about it—Jesus is Jehovah.

The clearest verse to show that Jesus is Jehovah is found in Isaiah 43:11. It is ironic that this verse immediately follows the favorite verse of the Jehovah’s Witnesses, who deny the deity of Jesus. They believe that Jesus was an archangel, named Michael, who was created by God. Isaiah 43:10 is the Witnesses’ favorite verse for it says, “You are My witnesses, says the LORD.” They wrongly use this verse to justify the name they wear. But, look how emphatically the next verse affirms the deity of Jesus. As you read this verse keep in mind that when the word “LORD” is printed in all capital letters in our *English* Bibles, it is the word Jehovah in the *Hebrew* text. “I, even I, am the LORD, and beside Me there is no savior.” A question the Witnesses can never answer without entrapping themselves is, “Is Jesus the Savior?” If they deny that Jesus is the Savior, they contradict the entire story of the Bible. However, if they affirm that Jesus is the Savior, they must admit that Jesus is Jehovah, for Isaiah



says there is no savior other than Jehovah. Jesus is Jehovah!

### **JESUS IS DIVINE: THE WORD WAS GOD**

Is there any chapter more emphatic in declaring the existence of Jesus at the beginning of the creation than John 1? Verse 14 leaves no doubt that the Word spoken of in this chapter is Jesus. He alone possessed "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." Verse one declares that this Word was there in the beginning with God and that He was God (Deity).

The only people on Earth who do not understand are the Jehovah's Witnesses or those who have been influenced by them. The Witnesses so clearly see the implication of John 1:1 that they have published their own translation of the Bible, *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, and have mistranslated John 1:1 to reflect their view of Jesus not being God. Instead of translating the last phrase of this verse, "and the Word was God," they alter it to teach their own false doctrine, "and the word was a god." According to their teachings, Jesus was *not God*, He was simply "*a god*." Their argument is that because the article "the" is not in the Greek text it must be translated "a god."

This argument is totally unsupported by any reputable Greek grammar in existence! It is an arbitrary rule they have created and applied in this particular verse. In the rest of the Bible, their own translation violates this rule repeatedly. In fact, the very next time the Greek has this form (the word "God" without having the article "the" preceding it) is in John 1:6. "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John." The article "the" is not in this verse, but even the Witnesses realize there is no way to

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translate this verse to teach that “a god” sent John. They apply *their* rule in verse one and violate it just five verses later. To see another inconsistency of their application of this rule, look at the words of Thomas when he saw the resurrected Jesus. He proclaimed, “My Lord and my God” (John 20:28). In the Greek, the article is present. Thomas proclaimed that Jesus was God! The Witnesses say that the presence of the word “the” in the phrase, “the Word was with [the] God” in John 1:1, shows deity. If so, then what about its presence in John 20:28? Jesus did not rebuke Thomas for affirming His deity. It was obvious that Thomas was not a Jehovah’s Witness!

A brief discussion of the article “the” in the Greek is in order. When Greek grammars discuss the use of the article, they uniformly affirm that when the article is present it points to a *specific* entity. When it is absent it emphasizes the *quality* of the noun which follows. When Paul discussed Jesus’ death on the cross (Phil. 2:8), he did not use the article before the cross. Its presence would have pointed specifically to His cross as opposed to the other crosses at Golgotha. But this is not what Paul was emphasizing. He did not die on a specific cross, He died a “cross-death!” The emphasis is on the torturous nature of His death. He did not die a natural death—He died a “cross-death.”

Thus in John 1:1, the Word was not simply with *the* God. The last phrase proclaims it all—the Word was God! John’s point is this: the Word that became flesh was God. He was Deity. He was not a man. He was not an angel. He was not an archangel. He was Deity! He truly was Immanuel—God with us (Matt. 1:23)!

## **JESUS IS DIVINE: PROCLAIMED OF PAUL**

Our final evidence of Jesus' preexistence and deity is found in Paul's letter to Philippi. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:5-7). There was the form that Jesus had before He came to the earth, and there was the form He had while on the earth. When it was time for Him to become flesh, to take on Himself the form of a man, He "made Himself of no reputation" (Phil. 2:7). What all is involved in this phrase has been a subject widely discussed. However, this much we know – He had one form while in heaven and another when He became flesh.

What was His form when on this earth? It was certainly different from that form He had in heaven. God cannot be tempted to sin, yet Jesus was tempted by Satan (Matt. 4:1). He was tempted in precisely the same way as any human. Hebrews 4:15 affirms that He "...was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin." This same book describes His earthly form in these words, "In all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people" (Heb. 2:17). His earthly form was to be made like mankind.

What then was His form when in heaven? The text affirms that He was in the form of God and that being equal with God was not robbery (Phil. 2:6). If a man claimed to be equal with God, it would be robbery! If an angel claimed to be equal with God, it would be robbery! But the form Jesus possessed before coming to earth was

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not robbery to be equal with God, for He was God! He humbled Himself and released His grasp on His first form to acquire the form of a mortal.

**JESUS IS DIVINE:  
EXALTED IN HEAVEN**

As He approached the cross He prayed to the Father, "And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was" (John 17:5). He had lived on this earth in a state lower than that of angels. He had emptied Himself in humble service. He had learned obedience which comes from suffering (Heb. 5:8). He was about to face the torturous "cross-death." God had given Him a work that was about to be finished (John 19:30).

Hear the rest of Paul's description of what occurred after His death. "God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:9-11). He shared the glory of the Father before His earthly existence, and following His resurrection, He received that same glory again.

**JESUS IS DIVINE:  
THE APPLICATION OF HIS DEITY**

There are many practical lessons which come from an understanding of the existence of Jesus before He came to this earth. His willingness to leave heaven, to humble Himself in His life and death, to lay down His life and to do this because He loved us is the basis of our love toward

Him. "We love Him because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19). It is by the manifestation of this love that our lights shine and bring glory to the Father (Matt. 5:16).

His deity is the basis of the authority He has in our lives, for God has given Him all authority in heaven and on Earth (Matt. 28:18). He was not just a *messenger* sent from heaven to speak to mankind. He was God living on this earth and revealing that message. He created the world. He lived in the world and He has all authority over the world He created.

His deity is the foundation of the kingdom He built. The church is like a bride, like a body, like a vineyard, like a treasure and so many other figures used in the Bible. However, the clearest understanding of the nature of the church is that it is the kingdom of heaven on this earth. It is His deity that gives Him the right to be the King of that kingdom.

Finally, it is His deity that makes faith more substantial than sight! Our eyes can deceive us and we can be deceived by what we see, but faith built upon Him and upon His revelation cannot be wrong. It is His deity that allows us to proclaim to the world that it is always right to do right and always wrong to do wrong. His deity defines right and wrong!

May God help us to remember that it was Deity who loved us enough to come to Earth, to suffer, to die, to reveal heaven's message and to ascend and reclaim the glory He had before. Jesus is not merely a man who lived among us. Jesus is not an angel who lived among us. Jesus is Immanuel! Jesus is God with us!

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