

1 Jan 02

JESUS: WHO IS HE

Who was Christ? Was He a man?
An angel? A "Spirit Creature"?
Was He "a god"? Was He the God,
YHWH

JEHOVAH

?

Will your conclusion be the
reasoning of a human mind, or will it
be the true testimony of the Word of
God?

A Challenge to
Search the Scriptures

JESUS:

WHO IS HE?

Who was Christ? It is the express purpose of this writing to show by the testimony of the Scriptures that this Man was more than a man, that He was Jehovah “manifest in the flesh,” contrary to popular opinion and, specifically, the doctrine that Jesus was “a god” but not Jehovah God. (See *Let God Be True*, p. 32.)

It is the conviction of evangelical Christians that Christ was the Son of God and God the Son. It is the cherished conviction of others that while he was indeed the Son of God, he was not Jehovah God but rather “a god,” a being created by the only Almighty God (Jehovah). It is plain that these views are incompatible with one another, that the one is at enmity with the other, and that one of them is untrue, “godless chatter and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge,” and “by professing it some have missed the mark as regards the faith.” (I Timothy 6:20, RSV) It behooves us, then, to follow the example of the Bereans, who “received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” (Acts 17:11)

The Holy Scriptures are the place to go to resolve these contentions, because the Word of God is “true from the beginning” (Psalm 119:160); “all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” (II Timothy 3:16) Let us then examine these doctrines in the light of God’s Word.

(Quotations are from the King James version unless otherwise noted. The Tetragrammaton “YHWH” or “Jehovah” is rendered there by “LORD” in small caps. Quotations from the American Standard version will be indicated by the notation ASV; from the New World Translation, by NW; from the Revised Standard Version, by RSV; and from the New American Standard Version, by NASV.)

JESUS: WHO IS HE?

I. He is called God.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1) And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. (John 1:14)

And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he unto Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but

believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. (John 20:26-28)

None can deny that these passages distinctly and unequivocally state that Jesus Christ is God, or, if you prefer, “a God.” Yet Jehovah declares that He Himself is the one and only true God, by Himself:

See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me. ... (Deut 32:39)

“You are my witnesses,” is the utterance of Jehovah, “even my servant whom I have chosen, in order that you may know and have faith in me, and that you may understand that I am the same One. Before me there was no God formed, and after me there continued to be none. I--I am Jehovah, and besides me there is no savior.” (Isa 43:10 NW)

Could the Holy Writ be more explicit? It expressly declares that Jehovah is the only God.¹ Can any inference be made except that Christ Jesus, if He is indeed a God, is that one God? However, if Jesus is to be considered “a God,” and distinct from Jehovah, then Thomas, who called Jesus “**MY** God” (John 20:26-28) is guilty of violating the commandment of Jehovah,

Yet I am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but me: for there is no saviour beside me. (Hosea 13:4)

Then Jesus said to him: “Go away, Satan! For it is written, ‘It is Jehovah your God you must worship, and it is to him alone you must render sacred service.’” (Matt 4:10 NW)²

and Jesus is guilty of condoning, yea, encouraging, Thomas’ act, because He said, “Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are the that have not seen, and yet have believed.” (John 20:29) But in II Corinthians 5:21 Paul tells us that Christ is sinless: “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

We know in our hearts that Jesus was true, and that the scripture record of His sinlessness is trustworthy. What, then, is the answer to these scriptures? Let us go on.

II. *Jesus intimated his identity as God both to his disciples and to the Jews.*

To his disciples Jesus said:

And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me. (John 12:46)

¹ Other scriptures which attest to this fact are: Deut 4:35; Deut 4:39; I Sam 2:2; II Sam 7:22; Psa 18:31; Isa 44:6; Isa 44:8; Isa 45:5,6; Isa 45:18; Isa 45:21,22; Isa 46:9; Hosea 13:4; I Tim 1:17; I Tim 2:5; and Jude v25.

² See also Ex 20:3.

He rebuked Philip for not having recognized the Father:

Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? (John 14:8,9)

When one Jew addressed him as “Good Master,” the Lord Jesus replied,

And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *there is none good but one, that is, God:...* (Mat 19:17 KJV) ³

These passages do not stand alone.

III. The creation of all things is ascribed to Christ in the New Scriptures, but to Jehovah in the Old Scriptures.

a. The following passages indicate to us that Jesus is the originator of all creation:

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. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. (John 1:1-3)

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. (Heb 2:9-10) ⁴

b. Yet Jehovah has declared that He Himself has created the worlds:

Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself. ... (Isa 44:24)

Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hand command ye me. I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded. (Isa 45:11-12)

³ Another set of passages you should see is John 8:23-27, 10:22-30, 32, 33. Please note that the Jews accused Christ of making himself God, and not just “a god,” but “the Father” (v. 30).

⁴ See also Col 1:12-17 and Heb 1:1,2, which also indicate that Christ created all things.

Ah Lord GOD! Behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee. (Jer 32:17)

According to scripture, who did create the worlds? Perhaps it was a joint work of Christ and Jehovah. But this cannot be, for Jehovah has declared that He did it by himself (Isaiah 44:24), and the “outstretched arm” of Jeremiah 32:17 is clearly Jehovah’s. In Isaiah 45:12 the Lord has made this doubly clear by the deliberate emphasis of “even my hands.”⁵ Can scripture contradict itself? No, we believe not, for Jesus himself said scripture cannot be broken (John 10:33). There can be only one answer, that the Messiah was Jehovah “manifest in the flesh” (I Tim 3:16).

IV. *The scriptures do not differentiate between Christ and Jehovah as the Savior of the world:*

- a. In the New Scriptures Jesus Christ is called the Savior:

For unto to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:11)

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. (Titus 2:13)⁶

- b. Yet Jehovah has declared in the Old Scriptures that He Himself is the only Savior:

I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour. (Isa 43:11)

Yet I am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but me: for there is no saviour beside me. (Hosea 13:4; see also Jude 25)

Let us not “reject the Bible’s straight testimony” (*Let God Be True*, p.8). It means just what it says, “there is no saviour beside me.” (Compare Isaiah 45:21-22, referenced earlier.)

- c. And in his epistle to Titus Paul calls God “our Saviour” in the same breath he calls Christ “our Saviour”:

Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to further the faith of God’s elect and their knowledge of the truth which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life which God, who never lies, promised ages ago and at the proper time manifested in his word through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by

⁵ He does in Psa 8:3, too.

⁶ The following scriptures also declare that Christ is the Saviour: John 4:41-42; Acts 5:30-31; Acts 13:23; II Tim 1:10; Titus 1:4; Titus 2:13; II Pet 1:1; and I John 4:14.

command of God our Savior; to Titus, my true child in a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior. (Titus 1:1-4 RSV) ⁷

⁷ Paul says very much the same thing in Titus 2:9-15 also.

V. *Jesus Christ laid claim to Jehovah's glory:*

Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. (Mark 8:38)

For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. (Matt 16:17) ⁸

He is spoken of as the “brightness of God’s glory” and the “Lord of glory”:

God ... hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power ... (Heb 1:1-3)

... but we speak God’s wisdom in a mystery ... which none of the rulers of this world hath known: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory: ... (I Cor 2:7,8 ASV) ⁹

And yet Jehovah declares He will not give his glory to another:

I am Jehovah, that is my name; and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images. (Isa 42:8 ASV)

For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it: for how should my name be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another. (Isa 48:11)

VI. *Christ is the “image of God” but there is none like God:*

The Father ... hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son ... who is the image of the invisible God (Col 1:15)

But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. (II Cor 4:4) ¹⁰

⁸ So also John 17:5.

⁹ See similar testimony in II Cor 4:6 and Jas 2:1. The American Standard Version is especially apt here.

¹⁰ Similar expression is found in II Cor 4:6 and Heb 1:3, especially the latter. And Christ is spoken of as being “in the form of God” in Phil 2:5-8.

And yet Jehovah declares that there is none like himself:

And Moses said unto Pharaoh, Have thou this glory over me: against what time shall I entreat for thee, and for thy servants, and for thy people, that the frogs be destroyed from thee and thy houses, and remain in the river only? And he said, Against to-morrow. And he said, Be it according to thy word; that thou mayest know that there is none like unto Jehovah our God. (Ex 8:9,10 ASV)

For I will this time send all my plagues upon thy heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth. (Ex 9:14 ASV) [The speaker is Jehovah: see Exodus 9:13] ¹¹

VII. *The apostle John says that Isaiah saw Christ, but Isaiah says he saw Jehovah:*

A passage in the gospel of John sheds more light on this mystery. John writes that Jesus told the people (John 12:34), “While ye have light, believe in the light ... ” (John 12:36) John continues,

But though he had done so many signs before them, yet they believed not on him
...For this cause they could not believe for that Isaiah said again,
He hath blinded their eyes, and he hardened their heart;
Lest they should see with their eyes, and perceive with their heart,
And should turn,
And I should heal them.

These things said Isaiah, because he saw his glory; and he spake of him.
Nevertheless even of the rulers many believed on him; but because of the
Pharisees they did not confess it, lest they should be put out of the synagogue.
(John 12:37-42 ASV; John quoted Isaiah 6:10)

It is obvious that John is saying that Isaiah saw Christ when Isaiah said these things. Turning to the Isaiah text which John has quoted, we learn it was Jehovah that Isaiah saw, for he writes:

Then said I, 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 mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts. (Isa 6:5 ASV)

This brings interesting consequences, too, for Paul tells us in Colossians that God is invisible,

Who is the image of the invisible God ... (Col 1:15) ¹²

¹¹ The following passages also declare there is none like Jehovah: Ex 15:11; Deut 3:24; Deut 33:26; II Sam 7:22; Psa 71:19; Isa 40:18; Isa 40:25; Isa 46:5 (with Isa 45:21,24,25); Isa 46:9; Jer 10:6; Micah 7:18 (with v. 17).

¹² Paul tells us the same thing in I Tim 1:17 and 6:15, 16.

John also tells us,

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 1:18)

What? Has the scripture contradicted itself? Yes, it has indeed, unless a vital scriptural implication is detected:

1. John says, “No man hath seen God at any time”;
2. And he states that Isaiah saw Christ when he (Isaiah) said “Woe is me!”
3. And Isaiah states that “mine eyes have seen the King”--Jehovah!

O reader! Does this not make it clear what Paul meant when he said that Jesus Christ “is the image of the invisible God”?

VIII. *Divine names of Jehovah are used to refer to Christ:*

Many of the divine names used of Jehovah in the Old Scriptures are used in reference to Christ in the New Scriptures.

a. Foremost of these probably is the series, “Alpha and Omega,” “First and the Last”, and “beginning and the ending.” Obviously these are synonymous, meaning “He who has always existed, does exist, and always will exist,” “the Only Immortal,” etc. They are not used loosely in scripture. These names are used of Jehovah in the Old Scriptures:

Thus saith Jehovah, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, Jehovah of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and besides me there is no God. (Isa 44:6 ASV)

Hearken unto me, O Jacob, and Israel my called: I am he; I am the first, I also am the last. (Isa 48:12 ASV) [The speaker is Jehovah: see Isaiah 47:4] ¹³

In the book of Revelation, Jehovah, Almighty God, says:

I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty. ... Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the Living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades. (Rev 1:8, 17b-18 ASV)

He who spoke, then, was clearly the Lord Jesus ¹⁴, and he identifies himself with the First and the Last. In chapter 21 the Lord continues,

¹³ Isa 41:4 uses this phraseology, too.

¹⁴ The reader is challenged to prove this by reading Rev 1:8-18 in context.

And he that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he saith, Write: for these words are faithful and true. And he said unto me, They are come to pass. I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit these things; and I will be his God. ... Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to render to each man according as his work is. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. (Rev 21:5-7, 22:12-13 ASV)

The speaker identifies himself in verse 16:

I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things for the churches. (Rev 22:16a ASV)

Is it not clear then? It is explicitly stated that “the Alpha and Omega,” “the First and the Last,” “the beginning and the end” of the Apocalypse is none other than Jesus Christ, the Almighty, the God of the Old Scriptures, Jehovah. (I have used the American Standard Version with its improved scholarship to silence the cavilling which would surely be invited by quoting the interpolations of the King James Version in the quotations above in Revelation, even though the conclusion is identical.)

The closing words of the Apocalypse confirm this by stating that he who “comes quickly,” as in Revelation 22:12, is Christ:

He who testifieth these things saith, Yea: I come quickly. Amen: come, Lord Jesus. (Rev 22:20 ASV)

b. Another set of names ascribed both to Jehovah and to Jesus Christ is “King of kings and Lord of lords.” Jehovah is called by these names in the following passage:

I give thee charge in the sight of God ... and before Christ Jesus ... that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen. (I Tim 6:13-16) ¹⁵

Jesus Christ is called the King of kings and Lord of lords:

¹⁵ In the Old Scriptures the description used is “God of gods and Lord of lords,” and is found in Deut 10:17 and Psa 136:1-3.

These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful. (Rev 17:14)

And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True ... and his name is called the Word of God. ... And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. (Rev 19:11-16)

c. Finally, Jehovah is called “the Rock” likewise as is Christ called “the Rock.” The reference to Jehovah is found in the following passages:

For I will proclaim the name of Jehovah: Ascribe ye greatness unto our God. The Rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are justice: A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, Just and right is he. (Deut 32:3,4 ASV)

For who is God, save Jehovah? And who is a rock, save our God? (II Samuel 22:32 and Psalm 18:31 ASV) ¹⁶

Christ is called the Rock:

Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. (I Cor 10:4)

IX. Passages referring to Jehovah are used to refer to Christ:

Passages clearly referring to Jehovah in the Old Scriptures are used in several places in the New Scriptures in reference to Christ.

a. First, Jehovah has declared that unto Him every knee shall bow and every tongue shall swear:

I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. (Isa 45:23)

The preceding verses in this text, verses 21 and 22, identify the speaker, showing Him to be Jehovah. But in his epistle to the Philippians, the apostle Paul quotes this very verse in reference to Jesus:

¹⁶ Jehovah is called the Rock also in Deut 32:18; Deut 32:31; II Sam 23:2,3; and Psa 18:46.

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil 2:9)

b. In the book of Zechariah the terrible day of the LORD is described, when Jehovah shall come to earth to fight the nations gathered around Jerusalem. It says He shall come with his saints:

Behold, the day of the LORD [Jehovah] cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle ... Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives ... and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee ... And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one. (Zech 14:1-5,9)

In his epistle to the Thessalonians, Paul portrays Christ as the one who will come with his saints:

And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: to the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints. (I Thess 3:12,13)

c. In the Old Scriptures Jehovah has told that one day He would send a messenger before Himself, to “prepare the way of Jehovah”:

A voice cries:

“In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD [Jehovah], make straight in the desert a highway for our God.” (Isa 40:3 RSV)

In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said,

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness:
Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.” (Matt 3:1-3 RSV)

So this messenger was John the Baptist. Again,

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me ... saith the LORD of hosts. (Mal 3:1)

... [Jesus] began to speak to the crowds concerning John: ... “This is he of whom it is written, ‘Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare the way before thee.’ ” (Luke 7:24,27RSV)

The Lord Jesus says it was John the Baptist who was sent to “prepare the way of Jehovah,” and John makes the same claim himself (“He said, I *am* the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.”—John 1:23 KJV). Whose way was he preparing? John says to the Pharisees,

...I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe’s latchet I am not worth to unloose. ... The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. (John 1:26,27,29,30)

John declared that in order that Jesus “should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.” (John 1:31) This is the one for whom John was preparing the way--“Make straight the way of Jehovah”!

X. *Jehovah is the one “whom they have pierced”:*

Jehovah speaks of Himself as “me whom they have pierced”:

And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son ... (Zechariah 12:10)

In this passage, it is Jehovah Himself who is speaking of His return at the end of the Day of the LORD (v. 8). But John quotes this verse in reference to Christ (John 19:37).

XI. *The church is redeemed with God’s own blood:*

Luke, in the book of Acts, quotes Paul as saying that the church is redeemed with God’s own blood:

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. (Acts 20:28)

Some may object that the text should read “the church of the Lord.” The margin in the American Standard Version, at “the Lord,” indicates “Some ancient authorities, including the two oldest

manuscripts, read God.” The New American Standard Version reads “the church of God.” And this is consistent with the rest of the scriptures we have cited.

XII. *The Messiah is Jehovah:*

Finally, the Scriptures expressly declare that the Messiah will be Jehovah himself:

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. (Isa 9:6)

—Hobart M. Hudson

This is an abridged version of the study “Jesus: Who is He?” The expanded version may be obtained by writing: