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THE NATURE OF JESUS CHRIST

The Church of God has traditionally understood that there have always existed two individual God Beings, whom we know as God the Father and as Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ we have understood to be the One who was used by the Father to do all the creating, and Christ is also the One who dealt with people in Old Testament times. We have also understood that Melchizedek who met with Abraham was the One who later became Jesus Christ.

In recent times a number of people have put forward various ideas that challenge this traditional understanding. Some have claimed that Jesus Christ has not always existed with God the Father, but that Jesus Christ was at some point created by God the Father. Others claim that Jesus Christ did not exist prior to His birth as a human baby to Mary. Others have put forward ideas that a human being like Shem was Melchizedek at Abraham's time.

There is one basic point with all of these teachings that we need to understand. And that is this: All of these ideas and new teachings are based on rejecting clear biblical statements. They all require clear biblical statements to be interpreted to not mean what those statements actually say in very clear and unmistakable terms!

In any examination of the Scriptures we need to first establish that we are indeed dealing with a correct translation into English. When we have done that, when we know that the text we are reading is correct, then we need to be very careful when people tell us that this Scripture doesn't supposedly mean what it clearly says. It is the clear and obvious statements that should help us to understand statements that could perhaps be ambiguous, and not the other way around.

Let's start off by examining some clear basic Scriptures, in which God means to convey exactly what He tells us.

Some Basic Scriptures

John 13:3

“Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God;” (John 13:3).

The Greek here translated as “come from God” (i.e. “apo theou exelthen”) literally means “had gone out from God”. This verse shows that Jesus Christ had been with God the Father before His birth as a human being.

John 16:28

“I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father” (John 16:28).

Here the Greek text for “I came forth from the Father” (i.e. “exelthon para tou patros”) again literally

means the same thing ... that Jesus Christ had gone out from the Father in order to be born as a human being. Christ had existed with the Father before He came to this earth as a human being, and He was going back to where He had been before.

These verses leave no other option but that Christ had existed before his birth as a human being!

John 17:5

“And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was” (John 17:5).

With the word “glorify” Jesus Christ is here referring to “change me back into a God Being”. All glory belongs to God. There are different levels of “glory”. The highest level of glory is to be a God Being with God the Father.

What the Bible Means by “Glory”

The Greek verb translated as “glorify” in John 17:5 above is “doxazo”. This verb is formed from the noun “doxa”, which means “glory”. And this Greek noun “doxa” is in turn formed from the base of the Greek verb “dokeo”, which means “to think, to be of the opinion”. In other words, the basis for the concept of “glory” and for “to glorify” has to do with how someone thinks! Specifically, “glory” has to do with the ability to think on a certain level. And that “level” (for lack of a better word) is controlled by God the Father! That “level” is independent of a person’s intellect and IQ. So while we today may think of “glory” as renown and fame and honour and adoring praise and brightness, the concept really has to do first and foremost with a way of thinking, with the ability to think on a certain level.

As far as spiritual discernment and spiritual understanding are concerned, it is God the Father who controls the level on which any human being is able to think. And that level is intimately tied to the concept of glory. In this regard the lowest level of glory refers to when someone has just had his mind opened by God to understand some basic truths of God. The highest level of glory refers to when an individual is changed into a God Being and is then able to think in exactly the same way as God the Father thinks.

In John 17:5 quoted above Jesus Christ was asking God the Father to restore Him to that highest level of glory. The expression “which I had with you” means “which I had possessed with You”. The time to which Jesus Christ is referring is here rendered as “before the world was”, where the Greek word “kosmos” is translated as “world”. The Greek word “kosmos” always refers to mankind, all humanity, and not to this planet earth. So in this verse Jesus Christ is saying that He had shared this “glory” with God before the creation of Adam and Eve.

When understood correctly, John 17:5 makes quite clear that Jesus Christ claimed to have existed before Adam was ever created! This verse does not allow for any other possibility. The only way someone could claim that Jesus Christ had not existed before the creation of Adam, is to claim that Jesus Christ was lying in John 17:5, since this verse is neither a mistranslation nor is it of spurious origin. But if we accept the testimony of Jesus Christ as true, then John 17:5 shows that Christ existed before the creation of Adam.

Jesus Christ made the same point in John 8:58, where He stated quite categorically that He had existed before Abraham was ever born.

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

This verse very clearly negates the idea that Christ only came into being when He was born as a baby to Mary.

But let's go back to the concept of glory for a moment. Paul explained that there are different levels of glory. Notice 1. Corinthians chapter 15.

“There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory” (1 Corinthians 15:40-41).

The Apostle Paul is here speaking about the resurrection to spirit life. And he is making the point that there are different levels of glory. Now notice something Jesus Christ said in prayer to God concerning His disciples.

“And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:” (John 17:22).

In John chapter 17 and verse 5 Jesus Christ asks God the Father to give Him the glory which He had previously possessed with the Father; and a few verses later (in verse 22) He says that He has given a certain glory to the apostles. But Christ obviously could not give the apostles something that He Himself had not yet received. So in verses 5 and 22 of John 17 Jesus Christ is clearly referring to two different levels of glory.

By the end of His ministry (i.e. John 17:22) exactly what had Jesus Christ given to the apostles? He had given them a certain amount of spiritual understanding! He had in fact given them the lowest level of glory!

And what was Jesus Christ asking God the Father for at that same time? He was asking the Father for the highest level of glory, to once again be a God Being.

“Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:” (Philippians 2:6-7).

In John 17:5 Jesus Christ was asking God the Father to again make Him, Jesus Christ, equal to the Father in the type of Being they are, though not equal in position or authority. This is what Paul addresses here in Philippians 2:6. The whole context of Philippians 2:6-7 also again shows that Christ had pre-existed as God with God the Father before He became a human being.

To be quite clear: by John 17:22 the disciples had not yet received the Holy Spirit, but nevertheless Jesus Christ had already given them some “glory”. So “the glory” Christ had given them was in this instance not a reference to the Holy Spirit, which they had not yet received. Christ had been teaching them God's ways very intensely for three-and-one-half years, and the understanding imparted to them through this teaching was a type of glory. God's people today receive that same type of glory through God's spirit opening our minds to understand the things of God. They were taught by Jesus Christ in person, and we today are taught by the Holy Spirit influencing our minds (see John 14:26). We should

keep in mind that the concept of glory has to do with understanding. The glory we at this time receive from God is not the Holy Spirit per se, but the effects (the effectual working) the Holy Spirit produces in our lives.

As Paul explained ...

“For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God” (1 Corinthians 2:11).

Regarding “glorying” Paul also wrote the following:

“It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord” (2 Corinthians 12:1).

Paul then continues to speak about the understanding that he was given in visions by Jesus Christ. Glory has to do with a level of understanding. And spiritual understanding and discernment are imparted to us through God’s Spirit, and that represents the first step in receiving glory from God.

Anyway, as far as the nature of Jesus Christ is concerned, John 17:5 makes clear that Jesus Christ has possessed “glory with God” before Adam was ever created. Therefore Jesus Christ clearly must have existed before the creation of Adam.

But there is one other important point to note about John 17:22. In this verse Jesus Christ states the reason why He gave His disciples this glory. It was for the purpose of making it possible for them to become one with one another. Can you see this?

In other words: unless Jesus Christ had given those disciples this glory common to all of them, this level of understanding, it would not have been possible for them to become one. Let’s look at this verse again more closely because it reveals something about the oneness of God the Father and Jesus Christ to us.

“And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.” (John 17:22).

The Greek conjunction “hina” here translated as “that” means “in order that” or “so that”, stating a purpose for the preceding statement. So Christ is here stating the specific purpose for which He had given glory to His disciples, and for which God today gives glory to us ... to make oneness amongst us possible!

And then Christ applies this degree of oneness that a common understanding makes possible to His own relationship with God the Father. He said: “... even as we (the Father and Christ) are one”! Do you grasp the monumental significance of this brief 5-word statement “even as we are one”?

The Greek adverb “kathos” here translated as “even as” means: “just as, in the degree that, according as”. It is a word that compares two different things and puts them on the same level.

Here is the point:

It is a glory, a level of understanding, common to both of them, that makes God the Father and Jesus Christ “one”!

God the Father and Jesus Christ being “one” has nothing to do with how many individual beings they happen to be (they are two distinct individual beings), in exactly the same way that us being “one” with other members of God’s Church has nothing to do with how many individual beings make up that one church body (there are many more than two beings involved here). And unless God the Father was going to restore that glory to Jesus Christ (as per His request in John 17:5), Christ could not have remained “one” with the Father ... He knew He was about to die. During His earthly ministry Christ still had the understanding He had previously possessed, and that is why even during His ministry He could unequivocally state that He was “one” with God the Father. In all things pertaining to life He had the identical understanding to God the Father ... and that made Him “one” with the Father.

The “oneness of God” has to do with a common and identical understanding, a common mind and a common way of thinking, between different individuals, rather than with how many individuals are involved! This is how God uses the word “one” in the Bible! And we need to beware of imposing our view of what “one” means on the statements God makes in the scriptures!

It is foolish to argue about what “one” means to you and to me in English. It is easy for us to apply our understanding of “one” to scriptural statements that were never intended by God to have our concept of “one” applied to them. When Christ prayed that we in God’s Church might all be “one”, He was obviously not speaking in mathematical terms! And when He said that He was “one” with the Father, that also was obviously not a mathematical statement.

As far as a common understanding making oneness possible is concerned, the same point is made in slightly different terms in the Book of Amos.

“Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” (Amos 3:3).

To become one with other individuals, in biblical terms we have to be able to “walk with them”, and that requires agreement. Put another way, Amos 3:3 tells us that two cannot become one unless they have a common understanding.

John 17:22 shows us in very clear terms how God uses the word “one” even when clearly two or more individuals are involved. We simply don’t have that level of “oneness” anywhere on earth ... we have never experienced it at any time and it is utterly foreign to us, because we are always, to some degree or other, motivated by self-interest. We have never experienced that level of oneness in any marriage, and we have never had it in the Church on any major scale! The Holy Spirit makes such oneness potentially possible, but we have always fallen short of achieving that ultimate potential. And so the only way we understand “one” is to do a head-count ... and when that tells us that there are more heads than one, then we would not readily use the word “one”!

But God simply does not approach statements that involve relationships from that perspective. And all the statements about God being one are statements about a relationship and not statements about individual identities!

This brings us to the next Scripture.

John 10:30

“I and my Father are one” (John 10:30).

Think about the ramifications of this statement. It would be presumptuous to the extreme for any of us to

make such a claim ... that we are already now “one with God the Father”. We are all still sinful and we all still fall short time and again. And none of us view everything from God’s point of view. For us in God’s Church it is an achievement if we can at least view some things here and there from God’s perspective ... like seeing a few things here and there vaguely through a dark glass (the principle of 1 Corinthians 13:12). Our ways and our thoughts are vastly inferior to God’s ways and thoughts. And in this life we will never be able to make the statement that we are “one with God”, even if we were to attain unto the level of “Noah, Daniel or Job” (to apply a point from Ezekiel chapter 14).

When two or more individuals are or become “one” it presupposes that they are equals! Equals in the type of beings they are, though not necessarily equals in the positions or the status they have. In fact, the only way oneness is possible between two or more individuals is if they hold different positions and have a different status within that oneness!

Think about that statement. When two individuals continue to hold identical positions and an identical status, then they can never become “one”! With identical status and identical positions they will unavoidably always remain separate and divided! Oneness between two or more individuals is only possible if one of them is higher in authority than all the others that are a part of that oneness. Yet at the very same time all the beings involved in this oneness must also be equals!

It would be impossible to have one body if every member of that body was an eye or an ear or a nose or a mouth. Oneness in the body is only possible because there are diverse members (eyes, toes, fingers, lungs, bones, muscles, etc.) that make up that one body. Yet all these members are equals in as far as they are all members of the human body.

By Jesus Christ telling us that He is one with the Father, it absolutely requires that one of the two of them has authority over the other. Otherwise oneness would not be possible. But at the same time it also requires that they are equals in the type of beings they are.

This may be a difficult concept to grasp? And it is not essential that everyone fully understands it, though a good understanding in this regard is certainly very helpful.

Thus a man and a woman can become “one” in marriage because before God we are equal. But at the same time we must hold different positions with different degrees of authority within that oneness ... or oneness will not be possible.

Similarly, we in God’s Church can potentially become “one” with other members of the Church because before God we are equals. Yet we also must within that oneness hold different positions and different levels of authority ... or oneness will be impossible, never mind it being elusive.

Only equals can become one! Beings that are not equals also cannot become one!

“And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are” (John 17:11).

We in God’s Church are to become one with one another, even as Christ is one with God the Father. But we are not yet one with God, and nor are we one with all other people in God’s Church. Revelation 14:1-4 shows when that oneness with all other members of God’s Church will be achieved ... when 144,000 different individuals are raised at one time to function as one bride for Jesus Christ.

“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:” (John 17:21-22).

With references to oneness God describes relationships and not the totals resulting from mathematical calculations.

What will make us “one” with one another is the fact that we are all “in God” through the Holy Spirit dwelling in each converted member of God’s Church. We who have God’s Spirit dwelling in us are equal with all other people who also possess God’s Spirit, and equals before God can become “one”. Anyone who claims to be one with someone else is claiming to be equal to that other person, yet not necessarily in the status or the authority they hold.

Getting back to Jesus Christ: if Jesus Christ had indeed been created by God the Father, He would not have been able to say “I and my Father are one”. If One (God the Father) has always existed, while the Other (Jesus Christ) was created by the Father at some point, then they are most emphatically not “equals” and they could not really be “one”.

Think about this very carefully. We human beings are equal in the sense that we were all created by God. That puts us all on the same level, which enables us to (potentially) become one “in God”, but one with one another rather than with God. God the Father and Jesus Christ are different from us, but they are on the same level with one another, and that enables them to be one with one another. God the Father and Jesus Christ had already been “one” before Christ’s ministry here on earth, and Christ was able to say this before He died and was resurrected by the Father.

However, by Jesus Christ having gone through the experience of a mortal human life, thereby making Him equal to us human beings (though not in status or authority), that enables Christ to be on our level, and that makes it possible for Him to become one with us human beings. And Christ will indeed become one with 144,000 human individuals at the time of the first resurrection. Christ is the link between God the Father and us human beings ... Christ is already one with God the Father and He will become one with human beings at the first resurrection.

The ultimate, final goal of God’s whole plan is to create one Family in which we will all in some regards become one with God. And Christ’s role is central to achieving that plan. That oneness with God will express a relationship with God. At that point the whole plan of salvation will have been completed. But we human beings are certainly not one with God the Father at this present stage in the development of God’s plan. Yet Christ was already one with the Father during His ministry, because He has always existed with the Father.

Jesus Christ’s statement of “I and my Father are one” leaves no room for Jesus Christ to not have always existed with God the Father.

Next, consider the following hypothetical point.

If God the Father had actually created Jesus Christ at some point, then God the Father would have become Christ’s “Father” at that very instant ... that’s what the word “father” means ... to cause another being to come into existence. So God would always, since Christ’s supposed creation, have been Christ’s “Father”. Why would God then possibly want to go through the whole process again ... by having Jesus Christ give up that existence as a spirit being and be born as a human being to Mary, to become God’s “Son” a second time around?? If God’s “creation” of Jesus Christ as a spirit being “Son” had in fact been successful, why would God risk that successful creation of a Son by having that Son go through another period of testing and trying as a human being? Would God do that with the

archangel Michael ... have him cease being the archangel to become a human being where he would be tempted to sin and thus risk his very existence, when right now he is very secure in the existence he has been given by God? That doesn't make sense.

If Christ was supposedly created by God the Father, how would Christ differ from other beings that God created, like Satan and Michael and Gabriel? Specifically, Michael and Gabriel have always been, from all we are given to understand, faithful to God, yet they have never made a claim like "God the Father and I are one". Why would such faithful created beings not be one with God, if another Being (i.e. Jesus Christ) who was also supposedly created by the Father, could boldly make such a claim even before He had completed His ministry here on earth? Keep in mind that oneness is only possible between beings that are equals.

Let's look at another statement by the Apostle John.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1).

By "the Word" John is very clearly referring to Jesus Christ, as shown by verse 14.

"And the Word was made 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" (John 1:14).

So in John 1:1 we are told that Jesus Christ (i.e. "the Word") existed "in the beginning", or "in beginning", since the Greek text does not contain the definite article here. We are also told that Jesus Christ was with God, implying the existence of God the Father, and that Jesus Christ also was God. This is clearly a reference to a time before Jesus Christ was born as a human being. This verse does not say or infer that in the beginning (or in a beginning) God "created" the Word; no, here Jesus Christ is already "God", the characteristic that enables Him to be "one with the other God Being".

This Scripture states very plainly that in the beginning the Word was God! Beware of anyone trying to explain away this clear statement in John 1:1.

Let's examine some more Scriptures.

"He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew him not" (John 1:10).

"And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:" (Ephesians 3:9).

"For 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, and for him:" (Colossians 1:16).

"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;" (Hebrews 1:2).

These four verses make one and the same point, showing that the point expressed here is not an isolated statement. The only possibility is that Jesus Christ is the God Being who in Genesis chapter 1 created the universe and all life on this planet earth by speaking, which explains why He is also known

as “the Word”, or “the Speaker” of the Godhead.

Again, people who reject that Christ has always existed, must explain these clear statements away, to somehow not really mean what they say.

For example:

One man claims that in all four of these verses all the translators mistranslated the Greek preposition “dia”! But this claim is very easily disproved! Here are the facts.

Without going into great details: the Greek preposition “dia” governs two cases: the genitive (or possessive) case and the accusative case (the direct object). The meanings of “dia” are strictly controlled by these two cases, as is well-known by all the translators. Thus:

A) When “dia” is used with the genitive case, then it has the general sense of through, as though dividing a surface into two by an intersecting line. It includes the idea of proceeding from and passing out. Compare to the word “diameter”. “Dia” is typically rendered into English as “by” when it is used with the genitive case.

B) When “dia” is used with the accusative case, then it has the sense of on account of, or because of, indicating both the exciting cause, the impulsive cause or the prospective cause. With the accusative case “dia” is typically translated into English as “on account of” or “by reason of”.

Two different sets of meanings.

Now in order to do away with what these verses actually say, it is asserted that in all four verses the meanings conveyed by the accusative case are intended by God, even though the translators have always applied the meanings conveyed by the genitive case to their translations of these four verses.

So here are the facts:

John 1:10 = (the world was made) by Him; Greek = di autou

Ephesians 3:9 = (all things) BY Jesus Christ; Greek = dia Iesou Christou

COL. 1:16 = (all things were created) by Him; Greek = di autou

Hebrews 1:2 = by whom (He also made the worlds); Greek = di ou

(Comment: When “dia” is used before a word that starts with certain vowels, then the “a” is dropped. Thus “di” in Colossians 1:16 and in John 1:10 and in Hebrews 1:2 is the same as “dia”.)

Now in all four of the above verses “dia” is followed by the genitive case! “Iesou Christou” is the genitive case for “Jesus Christ”; “autou” is the genitive case of the pronoun “autos”, meaning “he”; “ou” is the genitive case of the pronoun “hos”, meaning “who” or “which”.

This evidence is quite clear!

So the KJV translators have translated these verses correctly. In each case “dia” is correctly translated into English as “by”, and in none of these four verses does it mean “on account of Jesus Christ”! People who claim otherwise simply do not understand that you cannot assign the meaning that goes with the accusative case to any passage where “dia” is actually followed by the genitive case! You simply

cannot pick and choose amongst the potential meanings any Greek word may have and select the meaning that appeals to you.

So Ephesians 3:9 and John 1:10 and Colossians 1:16 and Hebrews 1:2 are in agreement that all things were created by Jesus Christ! Attempts to do away with this clear meaning are easily disproved by the grammatical facts involved.

This point that Jesus Christ did the creating is also repeated in Hebrews 11:3.

“Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear” (Hebrews 11:3).

The expression “the word of God” in this verse does not use the Greek word “logos”, but rather the word “rhema”, which literally means “the worlds were framed by the saying or the speaking of God”. That is precisely what Genesis chapter 1 tells us.

“And God said, Let there be light:...” (Genesis 1:3).

“And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth” (Genesis 1:26).

The One doing the speaking in Genesis 1:26 is clearly speaking for more than one person, as indicated by the use of the pronouns “us” and “our”. The words “us” and “our” also already show that the individuals included in these pronouns are one, where the “image” and the “likeness” of the One Being was the same as for the Other Being. Understand that the pronouns “us” and “our” only attain validity when they are used by two or more beings who are equals, and thus have the ability to speak as “one”. The word “we” conveys a common course of action or thinking for two or more individuals ... two or more individuals speaking as one!

Regarding Genesis 1:26, Jesus Christ also later indicated to Philip the following:

“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 14:9).

To assume that Jesus Christ was at some point created by God the Father, would imply that God the Father decided to create one other being in His own image and likeness, who looked like He, God the Father, looks. And that without any assurance that Christ would not turn out to be an adversary, like Satan turned out to be? How could God possibly have taken that kind of risk, without some mechanism in place to deal with undesirable conduct by this created being ... like we human beings find it impossible to not sin, and without the mechanism of appealing for forgiveness and claiming Christ’s sacrifice to cover our transgressions we would all be lost?

And to continue, after supposedly having created this one being (i.e. Jesus Christ) in His own image and likeness, why would God the Father then have turned the entire creation process over to this created being, as per John 1:10 and Ephesians 3:9 and Colossians 1:16 and Hebrews 1:2? What could possibly have qualified this created being to bring about God the Father’s plans and wishes, which are manifestations of the Father’s inherent nature, that nature being “love”? God the Father would in effect

have turned His own future destiny and circumstances of existence over to this created being ... John 1:10 and Hebrews 1:2 and Colossians 1:16 and Ephesians 3:9 are powerful verses with very far-reaching implications.

One man, in his attempt to reconcile these four verses with his idea that Jesus Christ was created by God the Father, claims that God the Father first created Jesus Christ, and then turned the creating process over to this created being. But that doesn't make sense and implies that God the Father "retired from creating" after He had created Jesus Christ.

The only ones qualified to do the creating referred to in these verses are those who are equals, those who are one with God the Father. Being "qualified" to do something is extremely important to God! That's the whole point of the question in Revelation chapter 5 ...

"And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?" (Revelation 5:2).

Who is worthy to do certain things? Nobody less than the having always existed Eternal God is "worthy" of having done the creating in Genesis chapter 1. Only a Being who could confidently say "our ..." and "let us ..." and "the Father and I are one" could be worthy of doing something so important as creating the whole universe and all the various life forms on this earth on behalf of God the Father.

One God

Let's now examine another point. The Bible in a number of places makes the point that there is one God. And people have used such statements to assert that therefore there could not be two different Beings, both of whom are "God". For example, Deuteronomy 6:4 tells us in the KJV ...

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:" (Deuteronomy 6:4).

Rather than reading our meanings into any biblical statements, we need to try to understand exactly what it is that God is conveying. We have already seen that Christ claimed to have existed before Abraham was ever born. We have also seen in John 10:30 that Jesus Christ said that He and God the Father were one. The New Testament shows Christ praying to God the Father, yet He also stated categorically that He was one with the Father. This again doesn't agree with our concept of what "one" means, since Christ obviously did not pray to Himself. The only option is for us to try to view Christ's (i.e. God's!) usage of the word "one" from the perspective of how GOD could possibly mean "one".

God tells us that in marriage a husband and his wife are to become "one", yet these two people are obviously still two very distinct and different individuals, irrespective of how closely they coordinate their actions and their thinking. There being two distinct and different individuals does not in any way stop God from referring to a husband and his wife as "one", with the wife's fortune being in many cases inextricably tied to the things, both good and bad, that befall her husband.

So if God views the individuals involved in a marriage as "one", why would God the Father not view Himself and Jesus Christ as "one" ... when that is precisely what Jesus Christ said, and when these two Beings have always been of one mind in all their goals and intents and purposes? Specifically, it was not God's intention in Old Testament times to even tell human beings that there were in fact two distinct individuals in the Godhead. Yes, certain individuals, like David, were given this kind of inside information, but it was not for Israel as a whole to know this. And so Jesus Christ came, amongst other things, to reveal God the Father to humanity.

“All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him” (Matthew 11:27).

“And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His shape” (John 5:37).

John 5:37 shows categorically that Adam and Eve had not seen God the Father, nor was it God the Father who spoke to Abraham and to Moses and to Joshua and to the prophets. The Old Testament makes clear that some people had direct verbal and/or visual contact with “God”, yet that “God” could according to John 5:37 not have been “God the Father”. It was the “God” we today know as Jesus Christ, with whom those people in Old Testament times had contact ... and a very few individuals (like David, as shown in Psalm 110:1) understood that there was another God Being in higher authority than the God with whom they had contact. But Israel as a whole did not understand this.

Since Jesus Christ came to “reveal” God the Father, therefore He also taught us to direct our prayers directly to God the Father ...

“After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name” (Matthew 6:9).

So back to Deuteronomy 6:4 ... at that point in time God the Father and Jesus Christ were already “one” as per John 10:30, and God the Father had no intention of explaining to Israel that there were two God Beings. No doubt there are many things about Himself that God has thus far not told us.

“The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law” (Deuteronomy 29:29).

So what is the big concern about God telling us to listen to only one God, since the other God Being was not going to speak to or have any kind of contact with any human being at that stage? Israel had come out of a pagan Egyptian society with multiple “gods”, and in Deuteronomy 6:4 Jesus Christ, the God who dealt with Moses and with Israel, told them to listen to only one God. There is no verb “is” in the text of Deuteronomy 6:4, as is also indicated in the KJV by the use of italics for “is’.

Here is the 1902 Rotherham Bible translation of this verse.

Hear, O Israel: Yahweh, is our God, Yahweh alone. (Deuteronomy 6:4 Rotherham)

While this translation has still included the verb “is”, it does nevertheless show that the second part of this verse can also be correctly rendered into English as “God alone”! The focus of this verse is who to listen to, and not how many members there are in the Godhead. When we correctly omit the verb “is”, then we have a correct translation of the Hebrew text that reads:

“Hear, o Israel, the eternal our God, the eternal alone”!

Rotherham's 1902 translation of this verse, coupled with the correct omission of the verb "is", shows that this verse has a totally different focus from what is conveyed by the KJV and by most other translations. On top of that we need to remember how Jesus Christ used the word "one" in reference to the Father and Himself. Christ freely spoke of the two God Beings (i.e. God the Father and Himself) as "one".

Several years ago I wrote a short paper giving a more detailed explanation of Deuteronomy 6:4, which I feel I don't need to repeat at this point. But that article on Deuteronomy 6:4 is still available for those seeking a fuller explanation.

Let's examine another Scripture.

"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

With this verse we need to keep the context in mind. This was Christ's last prayer before His crucifixion. In verse 1 He had asked God the Father to "glorify" Him, i.e. restore Him to being a spirit God Being. In verse 2 Christ showed that God the Father was going to make eternal life possible for human beings through the sacrifice Jesus Christ was about to bring. In verse 4 Christ stated that He had finished the commission God the Father had given Him. And in verse 5 Christ repeats His request to again be glorified with God the Father.

Verse 3 is in the middle of this context. Having stated in verse 2 that He had come to "give eternal life" to those people that God the Father had called, in verse 3 Christ now explains what he means by "giving eternal life" ... since very obviously He had not yet literally given eternal life to any human being. So in verse 3 Christ explains that when He said He was giving eternal life to those people God had called, what He really meant was that He had given knowledge and understanding to those people. He had imparted to them the knowledge about the two members of the Godhead ... God the Father and Jesus Christ. The wording Christ used here is simply a way of distinguishing between the two different beings in the Godhead.

Was Jesus Christ at that point in time already "the Son of God"? Yes, He was. Even Satan had acknowledged that indirectly in the questions he directed to Jesus Christ in Matthew 4 verses 3 and 6 (i.e. "if you are the Son of God"). The demons in Matthew 8:29 again acknowledged this fact, that Christ was already "the Son of God". In Matthew 14:33 this was also acknowledged by His disciples, who then promptly worshipped Christ.

"Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God" (Matthew 14:33).

Jesus Christ Himself stated the same thing in Matthew 26:63-64 in His trial before the high priest. And while He was dying on the stake the priests who passed by also acknowledged that Christ had indeed claimed to be the Son of God (see Matthew 27:43).

So we now have two distinct facts to consider: 1) Jesus Christ claimed to have been the Son of God and He permitted people to worship Him even during His life as a human being; 2) Jesus Christ also claimed to have existed with God the Father before His human existence. Yes, Christ only became "the Son of God" from His birth as a human being onwards; but this in no way limits Christ's existence to the time He was born as a human being.

Furthermore, Genesis chapter 1 makes quite clear that God did the creating. Yet we have seen four Scriptures that make equally clear that Jesus Christ is the One who did that creating (Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:16; John 1:10; Hebrews 1:2). This again leaves us no other option but to conclude that Jesus Christ was “the God” who is recorded as speaking in Genesis chapter 1.

Now let’s look at Melchizedek.

Jesus Christ Was Melchizedek

The Bible actually tells us very little about the individual called “Melchizedek”. There are exactly 3 verses in Genesis chapter 14 (i.e. Gen. 14:18-20) and one additional verse in Psalm 110 (i.e. Psalm 110:4) that deal with Melchizedek in the Old Testament. Two very brief references that amount to a total of four verses in the whole Old Testament ... that’s all we are told. There is no evidence or indication that Melchizedek ever dealt with anyone other than with Abraham. Claims that Melchizedek dealt with other people as well are only unsubstantiated lines of reasoning.

In the New Testament approximately seven times as many verses are devoted to discussing this individual “Melchizedek” ... Paul devoted Hebrews 5:6-11 and Hebrews 6:20 and virtually the whole of chapter 7, and especially the first 22 verses of this chapter, to discussing Melchizedek. Clearly Paul wanted to explain to the Hebrews exactly who this Melchizedek was, since the information in the whole Old Testament is so scanty. Psalm 110:4 is the verse Paul repeatedly quotes to make his point.

So consider this. In the Book of Hebrews Paul explains Jesus Christ’s role to the Jewish Christians of his time. And Paul felt it to be very important to devote a great deal of space, seven times more than in the whole Old Testament, to discussing this individual Melchizedek. This fact by itself should already alert us to Paul’s intentions ... to help Jewish Christians understand that Jesus Christ, the Saviour, was the same individual who had dealt with Abraham. There is a reason why Paul spends so much time discussing Melchizedek. If Jesus Christ had not been Melchizedek, then Paul would not even have made a single reference to Melchizedek in this letter ... there would have been no point to it.

The point Paul makes in Hebrews 5:6-11 is that today Jesus Christ is a High Priest after the rank, or, as we might say today, on the same level and with the same status as Melchizedek. But the previous verse, Hebrews 5:5, has already stated that Jesus Christ is also “the Son of God”.

“So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee” (Hebrews 5:5).

Realize that someone who is higher cannot be in some position or office that belongs to someone who is lower. That is the principle of Hebrews 7:7 ...

“And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better” (Hebrews 7:7).

This principle means that it is simply not possible that God, the resurrected Jesus Christ, would somehow fill the rank or status or position of a mortal man! The fact that the resurrected Jesus Christ now fills an office with the status and rank of Melchizedek means that Melchizedek must have been a member of the Godhead. There is no other possibility.

And that is precisely what Paul was explaining to the Hebrews. Notice how Paul explained this.

In Hebrews 7:2 Melchizedek is identified as king of righteousness and as king of peace. No mortal

human being could ever lay claim to these two godly attributes ... it was Paul who quoted the Scripture that “the way of peace” has not been known to human beings (Romans 3:17). Paul followed this statement in Hebrews 7 with ...

“Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually” (Hebrews 7:3).

So Paul explains that Melchizedek was not a human being ... he had no parents and had never gone through the birth process. Melchizedek was without beginning of days ... he had existed for past eternity. He also has “no end of life” ... so Melchizedek still existed at the time when Paul wrote this about 2000 years after the time of Abraham. And Melchizedek must also still exist today! There must be today an individual who is King of righteousness and also King of peace ... and that individual is clearly Jesus Christ. By saying that Melchizedek “abides a priest continually” Paul is saying that Melchizedek never stopped being a priest.

Now since Melchizedek never stopped being a High Priest and since today Jesus Christ is a High Priest with the rank and status of Melchizedek, there are only two possibilities: either there are now two High Priests (Melchizedek and Jesus Christ) with identical status or these two names (Melchizedek and Jesus Christ) apply to the one and same individual.

It is Paul’s whole point in Hebrews chapter 7 to explain that the High Priest Melchizedek who dealt with Abraham was the same individual who later became Jesus Christ. This was correctly explained to us many years ago by Mr. Armstrong, and that is as correct today as it was back then. Nothing has really changed in this regard. The idea that Shem was Melchizedek, as one man proposed, is preposterous. That idea implies that Jesus Christ has been demoted to filling the rank or status of some sinful mortal man ... if Shem had indeed been Melchizedek.

That line of reasoning also requires Paul to not really have meant what he wrote in Hebrews 7:3. These verses tells us that Melchizedek in Old Testament times had the following things apply to him:

- 1) he was without father and without mother;
- 2) he was without any line of descent;
- 3) he had no beginning of days;
- 4) he has never had any end of life;
- 5) he was like the Son of God;
- 6) he is still a priest of God;
- 7) he is the king of righteousness;
- 8) he is the king of peace.

With all of these statements Paul meant exactly what he said. And these statements simply don’t fit any human being who has ever lived, other than Jesus Christ. In a moment we’ll examine the English translation that reads “made like unto the Son of God”, because some people have read unwarranted deductions into this English rendition of “made”, as if this shows that Melchizedek and/or Jesus Christ were somehow “made” by the Father.

So Jesus Christ was with God the Father as God for past eternity. In Genesis chapter 1 Jesus Christ was “the God” who created by speaking. Later, in the days of Abraham, Jesus Christ acted as the intercessor (i.e. as a priest) between God the Father and Abraham. This was in the role of being the King of righteousness and also the King of peace (i.e. Melchizedek). At the start of the New Testament He gave up that position and existence in order to take upon Himself the form and nature of a human being, in order to make possible the forgiveness of human sins and transgressions. Upon the successful completion of His ministry and His role as our Saviour, God the Father again restored to Him the glory He had before His life as a human being, and also to the exact same role He had filled earlier under the name “Melchizedek”. And so now Christ sits at the right hand of God the Father, because they are “one”.

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God” (Colossians 3:1).

Let’s now examine the expression “made like ...” in Hebrews 7:3 more closely.

“Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually” (Hebrews 7:3).

The English word “make” has a great range of meanings, which include things like: to construct, create, form, bring about, compel a person to do something, proceed with an action, achieve a rank (like “made general in 5 years”), make a fool of, make a point, etc. In New Testament Greek the verb that means what we mostly understand by the word “make” is “poieo”. This Greek word refers to actually making something.

But this word is not used in Hebrews 7:3!

The expression “but made like unto the Son of God” is a translation of the Greek text “aphomoiomenos de to huio tou theou”. The key word here is “aphomoiomenos”, the perfect passive participle of the verb “aphomoioo”. Hebrews 7:3 is the only place in the whole New Testament where this word is used. This all by itself makes it difficult to interpret, since we have no other usages where the context might make the meaning obvious. That is why many translations of this verse are inadequate.

However, here are some translations of this particular phrase in Hebrews 7:3, which don’t use the English verb “made”:

Philips Translation = “... being like the Son of God”.

RSV = “... but resembling the Son of God”.

Douay Translation = “... but likened unto the Son of God”.

Darby Translation = “... but assimilated to the Son of God”.

1851 Murdoch Translation of the New Testament = “... after the likeness of the Son of God”. Luther’s German Translation = “... er ist aber verglichen dem Sohn Gottes”, which is German for “but compared to the Son of God”.

Two other German translations also make this point of “compared to the Son of God”.

All of these translations have been careful to avoid using the word “make”.

The point of all these various translations is simply this: it is well-known that the Greek text is not really speaking about Melchizedek being made or created in this particular verse, and it is not justified to read any significance into the English translations that use words like “made like unto” to refer to Melchizedek. To get back to the Greek text for this verse, this Greek verb is formed from the preposition “APO” joined with the verb “homoioo”. The word “apo” can refer both, to separation and to origin. The verb “homoioo” means “to liken, to resemble”. But it does not really refer to making something ... for that meaning biblical Greek used the verb “poieo”.

Now what was Paul telling us in Hebrews 7:3? After having already just said that this Melchizedek did not have any “beginning of days”, is Paul now, a few words later, trying to infer that Melchizedek “was made” or created by God the Father? If so, then why would Paul possibly have just said that Melchizedek had “no beginning of days”?

We need to recognize that we are here dealing with an awkward translation into English, and we can certainly not read our understanding of the verb “to make” into this verse ... when the Greek text doesn’t even use the verb for “to make”.

Here is what Paul is telling us in Hebrews 7:3.

With the first 5 phrases (i.e. “without father ... nor end of life”) Paul is very clearly telling us that Melchizedek was not a mortal human being. Having established that Melchizedek was not a mortal man, Paul then introduces the contrast with the conjunction “but”. Where the KJV reads “but made like unto the Son of God”, Paul is basically saying:

“rather than thinking of Melchizedek as a mortal human being, we should think of Melchizedek as resembling the Son of God (or like unto the Son of God)”.

We need to get away from any use of the word “make” in Hebrews 7:3, because the Greek text does not use the word “make”, and even though our English word “make” has a vast range of meanings, it is far too easy to attach the wrong meaning of “make” to this expression in Hebrews 7:3. The words “resembling” and “like unto” remove the unjustified inference of “making” from this verse.

Let’s now consider one more point about Melchizedek.

Paul tells us that Melchizedek was king of righteousness and king of peace. Now until the days of Samuel God was the only king over all those who would live by His laws. As God (i.e. Jesus Christ in Old Testament times) told Samuel:

“And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them” (1 Samuel 8:7).

Until the days of Samuel God was king. So who was “king of righteousness and of peace” in the days of Abraham? Only God could have been that king. A king rules ... and the One who rules over righteousness and over peace is obviously the king of righteousness and of peace. There is no other possibility. The nations who were cut off from God had their own kings, but until the days of Samuel there had never been a human king with any kind of authority over the people of God (obviously excluding the foreign kings that may have reigned over them at some point).

So once again it emerges that Melchizedek was the same individual who later became Jesus Christ, the One who was King until Israel rejected Him, and who in the future will again be king!

Let's now examine another Scripture.

1 Timothy 6:15-16

“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” (1 Timothy 6:15-16).

Notice that the words “who is” are in italics, showing that they are not a part of the actual text. So Paul is here speaking about “the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ” (verse 14), the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords” (verse 15). And about this individual Paul writes “who only has immortality”.

Who is Paul speaking about ... God the Father or Jesus Christ?

Revelation 19:16 identifies Jesus Christ with these identical titles.

“And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS” (Revelation 19:16).

In Revelation 19:16 Jesus Christ is very clearly identified with these titles. And these titles amount to being “the only Potentate”. So is Paul saying that Jesus Christ is the One who only has immortality?

Yes, that is what Paul is saying!

But why does Paul say this? Does Paul imply that God the Father somehow does not also have immortality? No, Paul is not implying that at all. That is simply something some people may choose to read into this passage.

We must keep in mind Paul's reference points! Paul is speaking specifically about those who are or have been mortal human beings! He is not thinking of the angels who are also immortal. Nor was Paul thinking of the spirit elders and the living creatures around God's throne who are also immortal. And neither was Paul thinking of God the Father, who obviously is also immortal. Paul reveals the principle of how he reasoned in 1 Corinthians chapter 15. There he wrote:

“For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him” (1 Corinthians 15:27).

When Paul makes a statement like all things are put under Christ's control, it goes without saying that Paul assumes we understand that this obviously excludes God the Father, who is still in authority over Jesus Christ.

A similar statement is found in Philippians 2:9-10.

“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;” (Philippians 2:9-10).

Taken to the absolute, these verses would imply that Christ’s name is exalted even above the name of God the Father, and that God the Father also has to bow at the name of Jesus ... and that is obviously absurd! These statements are not intended to be taken out of context and viewed in isolation. Obviously God the Father, who has exalted Christ to this position, is still over Jesus Christ in authority. Philippians 2:9-10 and 1 Corinthians 15:27 make clear that for certain things he wrote Paul assumed that certain premises were clearly understood and taken for granted.

Likewise, when Paul is speaking about those who will eventually attain unto immortality, and he then mentions that the King of kings and the Lord of lords is the only one who has immortality at this point in time, he is obviously saying this in reference to all of us human beings who are still mortal, and he obviously is not thinking in terms of God the Father and the angels and the other spirit beings. We need to understand in reference to whom Paul uses the word “only”. It is specifically in reference to those who are and who have been (i.e. they have died) mortal.

It is only in the second part of verse 16 that Paul starts to focus on God the Father. Notice ...

“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” (1 Timothy 6:16).

With “who only has immortality” Paul is still speaking about Jesus Christ. But then he states that Jesus Christ dwells with God the Father, which is what he means by “dwelling in the light which no (mortal) man can approach unto”. Paul then further identifies God the Father with the expressions “whom no man has seen nor can see”. And it is to God the Father to whom be honour and power everlasting. Paul clearly speaks about both, God the Father and also Jesus Christ, in verses 15-16.

If Paul had intended the phrase in question to refer to God the Father, then he would most certainly not have used this phrase “who only has immortality”. That should be immediately apparent. If that phrase was intended to refer to the Father, then it would immediately bring Jesus Christ, as well as all the righteous angels and also the demons, into the equation. And it was most assuredly not Paul’s intention to infer that Jesus Christ and all the angels are somehow mortal. In his next letter to Timothy Paul made quite clear that he understands that Jesus Christ is also immortal. There he wrote ...

“But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:” (2 Timothy 1:10).

If Christ has abolished death and if He has brought immortality to light, it follows that Jesus Christ Himself must also be immortal. So irrespective of how we read 1 Timothy 6:16, Jesus Christ also must have immortality. But 2 Timothy 1:10 again illustrates Paul’s reference points ... when Christ has “abolished death” and when He has brought “immortality to light” Paul is obviously not thinking about God the Father and about the immortal angels. He is only thinking in terms of those who are and who have been mortal ... human beings!

It is unfortunate when people treat some of Paul’s statements as if they were clinically scientific and universally absolute statements. When Paul wrote, he had an audience in mind and he wanted to convey specific information. We all at times communicate in such ways. I can recall occasions when Mr. Armstrong would make some specific statements in the context of a specific sermon. When people then

later asked Mr. Armstrong: "Did you mean that as an absolute statement that is applicable under all circumstances?", Mr. Armstrong would reply with something like: "Oh no, when I said that, I had this specific context in mind. But I was not thinking of it as an absolute statement for all circumstances". Paul at times communicated in the same way ... by making statements that apply to specific contexts without being universal.

Look, it should be obvious that Paul himself was convinced that God the Father and Jesus Christ and all the holy angels are all immortal beings. Paul himself had experienced visions involving these immortal beings "in the third heaven" (see 2 Corinthians 12:2-4). The only possibility for Paul's statement in 1 Timothy 6:16 is that Paul meant this statement from a very specific perspective ... that being the perspective of all who are or have been mortal. Those whose existence has always been immortal are simply not included in Paul's line of reasoning in this statement.

Now it is true that Jesus Christ has always been an immortal spirit being, and that happens to be Paul's perspective in the Book of Hebrews. But in 1 Timothy 6:16 Paul was coming from a different perspective ... that of looking at the goal and purpose of our human existence to attain unto immortality which at this point in time only Jesus Christ has attained. That makes Christ the forerunner and the pioneer who sets out before us the way to be given immortality. It is precisely because Jesus Christ had gone through a mortal existence that Paul made the statement "who only has (achieved or been given) immortality" in 1 Timothy 6:16.

Let's look at another reference to Jesus Christ in Old Testament times, but quoted in the New Testament.

"And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that rock was Christ" (1 Corinthians 10:4).

Paul's whole point to the Corinthian Christians was that Jesus Christ was the God who dealt with Israel when they came out of Egypt in the days of Moses. In Matthew 16:18 Christ had referred to Himself as "this rock" ...

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18).

Thus 1 Corinthians 10:4 is another Scripture that makes plain that Jesus Christ was the God of the Old Testament who dealt with Moses and with Israel.

Now let's consider one more point.

Christ Could Not Possibly Be a Created Spirit Being

All the created spirit beings are sometimes listed as different categories. In addition to "angels" there are also "living creatures" or "cherubim", "seraphim" and "elders". However, when no distinctions are made between different types of created spirit beings, then they are typically all included in the category of "angels".

Now Paul wanted to make very clear to the Hebrews that Jesus Christ was not, and never had been a created angel! He wanted them to understand that Jesus Christ was much higher than any created angel.

But once again we have an awkward translation into English that employs the word “made” with a meaning other than “created”. Notice Hebrews 1:4-5.

“Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?” (Hebrews 1:4-5).

First of all, let’s look at this translation of “being made”. The Greek verb here is “genomenos”, which is the second aorist middle deponent participle of the verb “ginomai”. This is not a reference to “making” but rather to “becoming”! Here are some translations that illustrate this point.

“having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they” (Hebrews 1:4 NKJV).

“having become so much better than the messengers, as he did inherit a more excellent name than they” (Hebrews 1:4 YLT).

“taking a place by so much better than the angels, as he inherits a name more excellent than they” (Hebrews 1:4 DBY).

“Having become as much superior to angels as the name he has obtained is more excellent than theirs” (Hebrews 1:4 RSV).

“By so much becoming superior to the messengers, by as much as, going beyond them, he hath inherited a more distinguished name” (Hebrews 1:4 Rotherham).

These should suffice.

The point is this: It is well-known that the Greek text in Hebrews 1:4 is not in any way referring to Jesus Christ having been “created” or “made”. Only a very narrow understanding of the English verb “to make” would lead one to such a conclusion, which is at any rate not supported by the Greek text.

After stating in the opening verses that Jesus Christ is the One who “made (the Greek verb here is “poieo” which really does mean “make”) the worlds” (verse 2), Paul in verse 3 refers to Christ’s sacrifice for our sins. In verse 4 Paul then refers to a consequence of Christ’s sacrifice for us! It is a reference to the status to which Jesus Christ had come as a result of His earthly ministry. The Hebrews understood that there are created angels in existence, and it was Paul’s point here to show that Jesus Christ is vastly superior to all those created spirit beings.

Now let’s look at verse 5 again:

unto which of the angels said he at any time, thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?

The intent of Paul’s rhetorical question is that God the Father has never at any time offered any created spirit being the opportunity to become a begotten son (as opposed to a son by creation). It wasn’t enough to quote the statement “you are My Son”, because in a sense the angels are also God’s sons (meaning God’s creations). Paul also spelled out the process by which Christ had become God’s Son! It was by the process of begetting, as opposed to the process of instant creation. It is this process that

sets Christ apart from all the other spirit beings, which can at times be referred to as “the sons of God” (e.g. Job 1:6). All others are only sons by the process of creation, and not by begetting.

And Paul’s statement here is that God has never used this process of begetting for any created spirit being ... God has never said to any created angel “I have begotten you”. The only conclusion we can draw from Hebrews 1:5 is that Jesus Christ could not possibly have been a created spirit being before He became the Son of God.

The two processes are mutually exclusive as far as spirit beings are concerned:

Any spirit beings that exist as a result of the process of instant creation cannot possibly go through the process of begetting, because they have already been created. The process of the creation of a spirit being involves a certain finality as to the type of existence possible for that created spirit being.

Any spirit being that goes through the process of begetting could not possibly have been previously created as a spirit being. The process of begetting involves a considerable amount of flexibility as to what the final result of that begetting will be ... anything between 100% success and total failure (the process is aborted) is potentially possible.

We human beings can go through the process of begetting twice ... once physically when we were begotten in our mothers’ wombs, and again spiritually when we receive God’s Spirit upon meeting God’s requirements for begetting (repentance, etc.). But when it comes to that second begetting process (i.e. to be begotten by God’s Spirit), then that process is also open to us only once! No human being can be begotten by God’s Spirit, then aborted for any number of reasons, and then be begotten again ... that is simply not possible.

Jesus Christ could be “begotten by God the Father” only because He had never been created by the Father. Christ had self-inherent life within Himself and not an existence that had been given to Him by the Father. That is why Christ was able to “empty himself of life”, as it were. Notice ...

“But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:” (Philippians 2:7).

The expression Paul used here for “made himself” is “eauton ekenosen”. Here “eauton” means “himself”, and “ekenosen” is the aorist active indicative of “kenoo”. This verb is formed from the adjective “kenos” which means “empty”. And so the RSV correctly reads ...

“But emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men” (Philippians 2:7 RSV).

A created spirit being could not possibly have done that. Anyway, Paul’s statement in Hebrews 1:5 means that Jesus Christ could not possibly have been created by God.

Let’s now summarize what we have seen.

In Summary

- 1) Jesus Christ claimed to have existed with God the Father before His human life.
- 2) Jesus Christ claimed to have existed before Abraham and before Adam.

- 3) Four Scriptures plainly state that Jesus Christ created all things.
- 4) These four Scriptures are correctly translated in the KJV and also in other translations.
- 5) John 1:1 plainly states that in the beginning Christ, the Word, was God.
- 6) Christ claimed to be one with God the Father, and oneness is only possible between beings who are equals in the type of being they are.
- 7) God's usage of the word "one" makes clear that God uses this word to describe relationships, and not necessarily head-counts.
- 8) Melchizedek was clearly an immortal spirit being and could be none other than the One who later became Jesus Christ.
- 9) References like "who only has immortality" must always be viewed from the perspective from which they are made. That perspective will usually be evident from the preceding and following verses.
- 10) Jesus Christ was "the Rock" in the Old Testament, the God who spoke to Moses.

When these things are all taken into consideration, the only sound conclusion is that our traditional understanding on this matter, as was taught by Mr. Armstrong, is correct ... that Jesus Christ has always existed with God the Father, that in the days of Abraham He was the High Priest Melchizedek, and that in the days of Moses He was the God who led Israel out of Egypt.

Probably the most helpful principles to keep in mind when examining these or any additional Scriptures regarding the nature of Jesus Christ are these two:

- 1) References to oneness are always references to A relationship rather than to a numeric value.
- 2) Some biblical statements are made from a specific perspective, where the surrounding verses make clear that these statements are not intended to be universally applicable absolute statements. In Paul's word's, "it is manifest that they (these statements) are excepted" from an unqualified universal application (applying the thought of 1.Cor. 15:27).

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