

I AM

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The unconventional punctuation styles you will see are related to the way these studies were originally intended for the e-mail audience, using plain text to keep file sizes smaller for bulk mailing; creatively 'formatting' with punctuation, for various kinds of emphases, in the absence of formatting the actual type. You may find occasional misspellings, and the more rare cases of a Scripture reference going to a wrong passage; those will be 'typos', not intentional. With this type of POD (Print On Demand) publishing, it seems simplest, and the most prudent use of time, to not completely go through and revamp everything, but to just leave things as they are. Please accept this book, warts and all; but rather, please pay attention to, and receive God's Truth presented herein.

I AM

I AM Jehovah:

- 05 Exists
- 08 Law - I Exist
- 10 Judgment - then they will know that I exist
- 12 Mercy - then they will know that I exist
- 15 End from the Beginning

I AM the Son:

- 18 Word made flesh
- 21 Lord of the Sabbath
- 24 Forgiving sins
- 27 Healer
- 29 Raising the Dead
- 32 Redeemer
- 35 I AM the Resurrection and the Life

Addendum:

- 39 tetragrammaton
- 42 That is My Name
- 47 Could Jesus have Sinned?
- 57 Jesus 'became' a sinner?
- 59 Jesus was sin-filled?

Exists

"In the beginning God..." (Gen1:1) "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (Jn1:1) In the past "God spoke to the fathers, in the prophets; in these last days He spoke to us in the Son...being the shining splendor of His glory, and the express image of His essence.." (Heb1:1-3)

"..and they will say to me, What is His name? What shall I say to them? And God said to Moses, I AM THAT I AM...this is My name forever, and this is My memorial from generation to generation." (Ex3:13-15)

Many people have undertaken to do series on "the names of God" or the "attributes of God". This series of a dozen studies will concentrate on God's primary essence, His existence. He declares, "to whom will you compare and make Me equal; yea, compare Me, that we may be alike? -- for I am God, and no one else is God, even none like Me.." (Is46:5,9)

If we think of all false doctrine, cults, religions...anything false; if we narrow their beliefs down to their bare essence, we come up with a denial of God's existence. "Christian" religions have been proclaiming that "God is dead" and man declares his own beliefs. Perversions of Scripture have as their basis that God's Word doesn't -really- mean what it says, that His thoughts and commands aren't important enough to be sure we have them accurately. -Man- is his own essence; he denies being formed in the "image of God". (Gen1:26) Even though the theories have so many unprovable holes lacking documentation or evidence, and science actually proves the opposite, man would rather believe a scientifically, biologically, mathematically -impossible- scenario called "evolution", rather than to have to submit to a God Who claims to have "created" the heavens and the earth. (Gen1:1)

You see, when we get down to the very nitty-gritty, the bare essence of Faith; it begins with God. "..for it is right that the one drawing near to God should believe that He is.." [He exists] (Heb11:6)

Most English translations of Scripture use a convention of "all caps" to denote God's primary name. e.g. "LORD" or "GOD" as compared to "Lord" or "God". In Gen5:29 the root for "LORD" is "yehovah". In Gen15:2 for "GOD" it is "yehovih". Many non-English languages transliterate this as some variation of "Yahweh". In English, it is "Jehovah". (The most recent versions of the LITV/MKJV have attempted to convert all such instances of LORD and GOD to Jehovah.)

Simply put, "Jehovah" means "the existing one". Thus, "I AM".

This study will attempt to look at God's existence in its relationship to man. Notice, "And God said, let Us make man in Our image, according to Our

likeness...and God created the man in His own image; in the image of God he created him." (Gen1:26-27)

Notice the first thing the serpent entices, God has lied to you because he knows that when you eat this fruit, "you shall be as God.." (Gen3:5)

As we notice periodically, there are variations, today, of people trying to attain godhood. The people of charismania behave like little gods as they presume to command and demand that God do this or that, and they believe that God is 'limited' in what He is able to do, except man "prays" and thus "releases" God's power to the task of their imaginings. The Mormons look to a future state of becoming gods and goddesses. Many eastern religions believe that their departed dead attain unto states of deity, whom they worship.

In keeping with this -many- deities concept, the KJV and many Bible teachers render satan's lie as "you shall be as gods.." (Gen3:5) The word there is "Elohim". The "im" ending in Hebrew makes the word plural. But notice that when "God said, let -US- make man.." (1:26) that word "God" is also "Elohim". And notice how God uses the plural form, let -US- make man in -OUR- image. And let's further 'confuse' you with one more example. "Hear O Israel, Jehovah our God is one Jehovah." (Deut6:4) Here, again, "God" is "Elohim" (plural). Thus, we might say, "The Existing One, our [plural] 'God', is [singular] 'one' existence."

We know of the "Father, Son and Holy Spirit" by which Jesus commanded that baptisms should be conducted. (Mt28:19) Our Christian relationship with God is characterized with, "And because you are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba! Father!" (Gal4:6) We know that "God is Spirit". (Jn4:24) And we already referred to Jesus being the physical manifestation of God's essence. (Heb1) John speaks of Jesus (the Word) being "with" God in the beginning, and furthermore that Jesus "was" God.

While we may not fully understand it, and the union of marriage only partly expresses it in terms man can experience, God's essence is a "plurality" of persons, and yet being "one" God. The grand hymn expresses, "God in three persons, Blessed Trinity." Another term has been coined by many, "Godhead".

So you see, when the serpent is enticing Eve, he is not merely luring her into become one of many goddesses. He is luring her into his own rebellion against God. His downfall was when he challenged, "I will be like [resemble] the Most High." (Is14:14) Who needs God, anyway? -I- can forge my own destiny. I'm worth it. With all my self-esteem I can do anything -I- set -my- mind to. I dont 'need' God.

But you see, the thing Eve didn't realize, and humanity has no clue about, is that initially God made man in "His own likeness". First of all, man is a

tripartite being. He was formed of the "dust" (Gen2:7); that's the body. He became a "living soul"; this is something all animals possess. But something not recorded regarding all the animals; for man God "breathed..the breath [spirit] of life". Notice Paul's reference to the complete person, "..and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless.." (1Th5:23) The spirit [heart] considers God's Word, what's right or wrong; the soul considers how to implement the spirit's decisions to make the body [feet] go in the right paths. (Ps119:58-59)

What the serpent could not produce for Eve, God will. He enticed her with godhood, but mankind died. Jesus provides eternal life. (Rom6:23) And what is the nature of that eternal life to those who have put their trust in Jesus Christ? "..we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is.." (1Jn3:2)

See Also Addendum: "YHVH –tetragrammaton" & "That is My Name"

Law - I exist

When God gives the 10-Commandments at Sinai, He begins by introducing Himself. "I am Jehovah your God.." (Ex20:1) Israel has just seen God's power poured out against Egypt to redeem Israel out of slavery. They have seen the Red Sea open up for them to traverse on dry ground. They are being fed manna every morning. Every step of the way God has been carrying them "in His hand". He has pre-proven Himself to them.

Now God says, "I am Jehovah..." and here are My laws that I am giving you. In this case He doesn't need to reiterate His name too much, because Israel is already trembling at the smoke, earthquakes, lightning bolts, loud trumpet blasts. But later Jehovah enumerates and defines the Law in more detail.

You shall not do according to the world, like Egypt that you came out of. "You shall do My judgments and you shall keep My statutes, to walk in them; I am Jehovah your God" (Lev18:2-4) Now, let's remember that "Jehovah" means "existing one". In other words, God is saying, "keep My laws...I exist."

You shall not engage in incestuous relationships...I exist. (vs6)

You shall not burn your infants alive to Moloch...I exist (vs21)

You shall not defile yourself with homosexual acts, nor bestiality. The people of the world do these things. They are "disgusting". (vs27) To be vomited out for grotesqueness. Don't be defiled with the world's ways...I exist (vs30)

Revere your parents...I exist (19:3)

Don't be idolatrous...I exist (vs4)

Be kind and generous to the poor...I exist (vs10)

Don't abuse people with treachery...I exist (vs12,16)

Don't exact your own revenge, but love your neighbor...I exist (vs18)

And it goes on and on...

When Paul enumerates the reasons for God's wrath (Rom1:18) it is because of the world's "ungodliness". They reject "creation" (vs20) and insist on believing the impossibilities of evolution. They do not acknowledge God to give Him glory, and instead rely on their own "reasonings". (vs21)

And notice how Paul defines "ungodliness". They worship man and nature. This we see. Man is his own 'god'. Furthermore, they are reverting back to the 'mother earth' religions. They release (reintroduce) wolves into remote areas, and if anybody "murders" one of these wolves, the reward leading to the capture of the "murderer" is \$50,000. The reward in the same state for the capture of a murderer of a human is only \$10,000.

They have "dishonorable passions". (vs26) Women with women. Men with men "working out shamefulness"...and "receiving back within themselves the reward" for their deeds. (vs27) Despite the sugar-coating given to it, AIDS is primarily a homosexual disease.

Not to mention, all the other evils: lying, greed, violence, murder, insolence, disrespect of parents, etc. Sounds -just- like today, doesn't it. All these things come under the heading of "Ungodliness". (vs18)

Remember when God gave the laws? Here's the law...I EXIST.

Now, it's one thing for the world to reject the Most High. But notice, "..the elders of the house of Israel.." doing things in secret, "For they are saying, Jehovah does not see us, Jehovah has forsaken the earth." (Eze8:12) How many Christians live as though God does not see? Many are so concerned about the "appearance" of evil (1Th5:22); that is, what other 'people' will see; that they forget that God sees the heart. The Son of God, Jesus Christ, "..[pierces] as far as division of both soul and spirit...and [judges] the thoughts and intentions of the heart; and there is NO creature UNREVEALED before Him.." (Heb4:12-13)

You see, "the eyes of Jehovah run to and fro in all the earth." (2Ch16:9) He sees everything. Now satan also goes "to and fro" (Job2:2) as a "roaring lion" seeking victims. (1Pt5:8) But all this is not hidden from Jehovah. He exists. As His "seven Spirits" (Rev4:5,5:6), the "seven..eyes of Jehovah" (Zech4:10) go "to and fro through all the earth" He knows what is what.

When His wrath is meted out, all ungodliness (all that which is contrary to God's Law...contrary to God's essence), will be judged "according to their works." (Rev2:23,18:6,20:12-13) If you think you are a Christian and stand "by faith", remember that the outworking of that Faith is works. (Jas2:14-26) No, we don't live by works (Eph2:9, Tit3:5). But the one who claims to be God's child will behave like one. Forget the modern lie, "God accepts you JUST AS YOU ARE." Just as you are is "in sin". God does not accept sin. If you are truly God's child, you will change because of the new birth (Jn3:3) by which you were made into a "new creation" (2Cor5:17). God's essence is His Law. He gave it because "I am Jehovah"..."I exist". Therefore, the one who claims to love Him will also "keep His commandments". (Jn14:21, 1Jn5:3, 2Jn1:6)

Judgment - then they will know that I exist

But God's people say, "...Jehovah does not see us.." (Eze8:12)

"As for the word that you have spoken to us in the name of Jehovah, we will not listen to you. But we will certainly do whatever thing goes out of our own mouth, to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings to her, as we have done, we and our fathers, our kings, and our rulers, in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. And we had plenty of food, and were well, and saw no evil." (Jer44:16-17)

I used to have a friend who had a dog. This dog, if she didn't want to do what was being commanded would act coyly. She would sit back on her haunches, turn her head away and 'close her eyes'. Presumably, 'if I can't see them, they aren't really commanding me, so I can ignore them'. Like the proverbial ostrich that puts its head in the sand, pretending the danger isn't present.

If I can't see God, He must not see me, either. So I can behave any way I like. He won't be any the wiser.

Just as Israel is preparing to enter the land of promise, God sets before them "a blessing and a curse: a blessing if you hear the commandments of Jehovah your God...and a curse if you will not hear (heed and obey) the commandments of Jehovah your God...take heed to do all the statutes and the ordinances which I am setting before you today." (Deu11:26-32)

Even a cursory reading of the O.T. reveals Israel's rebellion. So, they experienced God's "curse" upon them. And God says, "and the slain shall fall in your midst, and you shall know that I am Jehovah". I didn't make the promises/threats in vain. "They shall know that [I exist]." (Eze6:7-10) God promised the curse if they disobeyed. They disobeyed. God judged. They thought God didn't see. But He did. He judged. For what purpose? So that they would know that He "exists".

These judgments did not come without warning. God sent prophets to them "rising early and sending them" (2Chr36:15, Jer11:7,25:4) but they would not listen. They were busy doing their own thing, and enjoying their prosperity. And worshiping the queen of heaven.

My, oh my! Doesn't this sound like the "church" today! A few lone voices here and there boldly proclaiming God's Word, but the "church" is busy being "just as they are". They are doing their own thing. They are following the pied pipers who tell them that it's "God's will" for them to be wealthy. And yes...also worshiping the queen of heaven. These same people are joining in with ecumenism, joining back with Rome, whose vicar prays to the queen of heaven and raises her above God.

So, when judgment comes, God's wrath (Rom1:18), what will be the purpose? Same as it was with Israel. Then they will know that God exists. He will be coming with the name, "King of kings, and Lord of lords." (Rev19:16) They will know it is God as they call out for the rocks to fall on them to "hide [them] from the face of the One sitting on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb" (Rev6:16)

Not only will God's people know He exists, but He proclaims, "And I will magnify Myself and sanctify Myself. And I will be known in the eyes of the many nations, and they shall know that I am Jehovah." (Eze38:23)

Mercy - then they will know that I exist

"And you shall know that I am Jehovah (I exist) in whose statutes you have not walked. Yea, you have not done My judgments. Yea, as the judgments of the nations who are around you, you have done." (Eze11:12)

Israel rebelled and disobeyed God. They went into idolatry. As God judges them He says, "And they shall know that I am Jehovah when I scatter them among the nations and disperse them in the lands." (Eze12:15)

But also notice that God does not -utterly- wipe Israel from existence. He says, "But of them I will leave a number of men..." (vs16) Paul speaks of the "remnant". (Rom11:5) Why? "...so that they may declare all their abominations among the nations, there where they go. And they shall know that I am Jehovah."

When God's elect disobey, is God's purpose thwarted? When a Christian slips and falls into temptation, is God sitting on His throne, wringing His hands in despair out of frustration, that now, because His child disobeyed, God's agenda will not be fulfilled? Not to excuse rebellion... but: there are many Christians who feel that if we do not live 100% all the time, working hard for God at all times, that there will somehow be something lacking in His kingdom. While it is true that blood is required at the watchman's hand, notice that the sinner dies in his -own- sin. (Eze33:6)

There is a mentality that -we- are to be busy building the Church. That -we- are gathering the lost. They seem to forget that Jesus said, "I will build My Church". (Mt16:18) It is God Who causes to grow. (1Cor3:6-7) At the harvest, God sends the angels. (Mt24:31) And it is Christ, the "One sitting on the cloud", Who thrusts His sickle to reap. (Rev14:16)

As Believers we are exhorted to "do all things to the glory of God". (1Cor10:31) But what happens if we fail? What if we fall? As Israel's remnant were scattered, the "wandering Jew" has been a "byword" throughout the centuries. (De28:37) They have been 'declaring' their abominations among the nations.

But notice, "where sin abounded, grace much more abounded." (Rom5:20) This is -God's- grace. God had given Israel the Law in order that they might know that "I am Jehovah." (Eze20) They rebelled. He scattered them. The remnant would declare their sin among the nations. Then God's promise is to judge the nations that have oppressed Israel, that they will know that "I am Jehovah." And then, God has a special plan for Israel.

Ezekiel ch37 is probably -the- classic, telling of God's restoration of Israel. What could be deader than a valley of dry bones? Israel was dispersed for 2000 years. There is no other society that has disappeared from existence, like Israel did as a nation, to then become reborn as a nation.

Archaeologists and historians wonder "what happened?" to societies like the Aztecs, Incas, and the various Indian nations. And yet, Israel became reestablished again in 1948. And notice starting in Eze37:15, the prophet takes two sticks and writes the names Judah and Ephraim on each stick, and in view of the people he holds the sticks together and they become "one". Forget about the alleged "ten lost" tribes. They aren't lost. God knows -just- where they are. Notice in Revelation ch7 that "twelve tribes" are marked for protection.

Why is God restoring Israel? Because of her greatness? Because of her wisdom and military prowess? Well, not really. They aren't any wiser now than they were in the days of Joshua when they negotiated with the heathen in the land surrounding them. God says, "...and I will bring you to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am Jehovah..." (Eze37:12b-13a)

Is God glorifying Israel? Is Israel so great that -they- are to be magnified? When Gog/Magog is destroyed, God says, "And I will magnify Myself and sanctify Myself. And I will be known in the eyes of the many nations, and they shall know that I am Jehovah." (Eze38:23) "Let it be known to you that I am not doing this for your sake, states the Lord Jehovah. Be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O house of Israel." (Eze36:32) In spite of Israel's bad testimony to the world, God's name (and essence) will be magnified through His mercy as He rescues Israel. "And I will sanctify My great name which was profaned among the nations, which you profaned among them. And the nations shall know that I am Jehovah, declares the Lord Jehovah, when I am sanctified in you in their eyes." (Eze36:23)

God says, "I am Jehovah [I exist], I change not. Because of this you sons of Jacob are not destroyed." (Mal3:6) God loves Israel with an "everlasting love". (Jer31:3)

Solomon prayed, "...for there is not a man that does not sin.." (1Kg8:46) Which matter John reiterates, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (1Jn1:8) And so, God remembering that we are but dust (Ps103:14), knows our frailties. And so, when we fail and sin, God's purposes are not thwarted. God is glorified...because...His -MERCY- becomes manifest.

"It is by the kindnesses of Jehovah that we are not consumed, for His mercies are not ended. They are new by mornings; great is Your faithfulness." (Lam3:22-23) And so, by God's mercies, again, the glory does not go to man, but to Him. We may fail, but He remains ever faithful...for His own glory.

Thus, it behoves those fearing God to be of the mind... "Jehovah is my portion, says my soul. On account of this I shall hope to Him. Jehovah is

good to those waiting on Him, to the soul seeking Him. It is good that a man hopes for the salvation of Jehovah, even in silence." (Lam3:24-26)

Where Israel sinned, God's grace abounded to their behalf. He will yet restore them to fellowship with Himself as He forms a new covenant with them, and instead of the Law being inscribed on stone tablets, His Law [because He exists], will be written on their hearts. (Jer31:31-34) And they, in turn, will respond: "Come and let us return to Jehovah. For He has torn, and He will heal us. He has stricken, and He will bind us up. After two days He will bring us to life. In the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live before Him. Then we shall know, we who follow on to know Jehovah. His going forth is established as the dawn. And He shall come to us as the rain, as the latter and former rain to the earth." (Hos6:1-3)

End from the Beginning

To whom will you compare and make Me equal; yea, compare Me, that we may be alike? ..remember this and be a man; return it in your heart, transgressors. Remember former things from forever, for I am God, and no one else is God, even none like Me.. (Is46:5,8-9)

As this is being written several months before you will actually read it, I have not long ago finished reading through Isaiah again. This is the first time I've read it from the Literal Translation. I don't know if it's because the LITV is so much more "literal", or if the Lord was opening my eyes anew; but I've never before seen God's 'character' in the way I did this time through. It is said, If you want to know who Jesus is, read John's Gospel. And I would say, If you want to know who Jehovah is, read Isaiah.

Somehow it seems 'appropriate' that Isaiah and Hezekiah lived at the same time. For Isaiah to have such a vision and understanding of God, to likely be an influence on Hezekiah, who was praised for following God more faithfully than any other king who reigned over Judah. (2Kg18:5-6)

Here in ch46 we see God reasoning with the sons of Israel. Yes, God gave the Law in holy awesome power. But He does not merely say, Here it is. You do it, or else. Humph! When man strays into ungodliness, as He pleads with the sinner to "Wash yourselves, purify yourselves. Put away the evil of your doing from My sight; stop doing evil." God 'reasons'. He says, "Come now and let us reason together, says Jehovah [I exist]: Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they are red as the crimson, they shall be like wool." (Is1:16,18)

So God reasons, naming the various contemporary 'gods'. (ch46) These gods must be carried. They are heavy loads. I can still remember from childhood growing up in Japan. The 'Omatsuri'. Festival time. Everybody is all dressed up. There are parades. And their 'gods' are paraded. Some of their gods are 'carried' in large carts, pulled by huge ropes...with hundreds of children grabbing the ropes, all happy, joyous and giddy...pulling their gods down the streets. Other 'gods' would be contained within little shrines, carried about on poles (reminiscent of the descriptions of the Ark carried by the Levites). Carried by strong men, dancing and jumping as they carry/jostle this 'god' along. "They carry it on the shoulder; they bear it and set it in its place, and it stands; it shall not move from its place." (vs7a)

Compare this to Jehovah. God says, "Remember this.." (vs8) What was Israel to remember? "And you shall remember all the way which Jehovah has caused you to go these forty years..." (Deu8:2) Over and over God would chide Israel to "remember" all His works on their behalf. Delivering them from bondage in Egypt. The various military victories against enemies of overwhelming odds. He uses the expression how He "bore" them on "wings of eagles" (Ex19:4) as He delivers them. Who was -

carrying- whom? Jehovah was 'carrying' Israel. And yet, in their stupidity they have reverted to the 'gods' of the surrounding nations; 'gods' that must -be- carried. God says "even to old age I am He; and I will bear to gray hair; I made, and I will carry; and I will bear and deliver." (vs4)

These idols are made from gold and silver. They measure out the precious metal. It is molten. It is formed into a god. "They fall down; yea, they worship." (vs6) But when they cry to it, "it does not answer, it does not save him from his distress" (vs7) like Jehovah did... if only 'you' would 'remember' it!

God pleads, "Remember this...remember former things from forever, for I am God, and no one else is God, even none like Me..." (vs9)

And now God defines Himself. What, specifically, distinguishes Jehovah [I exist] from all other so-called deities? If you were to be limited to 'one thing' by which to describe the Most High, what would it be?

"..declaring the end from the beginning, and from the past those things which were not done, saying, My counsel shall rise; and, I will do all My desire..." (vs10)

You see, this is God's name. Jehovah is "the existing One". "I AM" is not past tense, "I was". Nor is it future tense, "I will be". It's not really present tense, either. He surpasses all notion of "time". In God's economy, "one day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." (2Pet3:8, Ps90:4)

God is not like the currently running USWest "411" commercial, poking fun of the psychics who would claim to know your future, but can't figure out their own phone number. God does not scrunch up His face, squint real hard, putting His finger up to His head and 'hedge' as to what the future 'might' be. He "-DECLARES-" the end from the beginning. (vs10)

The best Nostradamus and others who claim prophetic powers can attain is something like 70% accuracy. God said to Israel that -any- inaccuracy in prophecy was demonic. (Deu18:22) They are false prophets.

But to Israel, prophecy was one of God's ways of proving Himself to them. "Is the hand of Jehovah shortened? Now you shall see whether My word shall come to pass to you or not." (Num11:23) And notice, once they were established into the land of promise, "Nor did fail a word from any good word which Jehovah had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass." (Josh21:45) And as Solomon dedicates the new temple, he recalls, "Blessed be Jehovah who has given rest to His people Israel, according to all that He has spoken; not one word of all His good word has fallen, which He spoke by the hand of His servant Moses." (1Kg8:56) Jehovah is 100%.

When God purposes, He calls on all His creation to fulfill it; even to "calling a bird of prey from the east" (vs11) or even a ruthless heathen king, e.g. Nebuchadnezzar, whom God called, "My servant..." (Jer25:9) in order to accomplish His promised punishment of Israel for their rebellion.

But notice, as God defines Himself, He also pleads, "Listen to Me, mighty ones of heart who are far from righteousness: I bring near My righteousness; it shall not be far off, and My salvation shall not wait; I will place salvation in Zion, My glory for Israel." (vs12-13)

The hard-hearted ones may rebel, but God's purpose for Israel will also stand. He will bring restoration to her.

So, of what good is it to us to know that God knows the end from the beginning? After all, this series began with the premise of considering Jehovah's "existence" in relationship to humanity. Unregenerate man is continually exploring, looking for man's "origins". When he doesn't believe in God, that's all he can do, is -continue- to look. He wants to know where he came from, and what is his destiny.

Knowing God's nature, the Believer can derive comfort. Mankind worries about making a living, being comfortable and in good health. Even though he doesn't understand his destiny, he wants to live as long as possible to enjoy that which he presently has.

Jesus exhorted, "Do not be anxious for your soul..." (Mt6:25) for all the things a person thinks they need to live a contended life. Look how God cares for the animals of nature, who have no 'plan' of wealth and health. They simply live from day to day, living on what God provides for them. "Do you not rather excel them?" (vs26)

Israel provides the example for us. Israel was continually exhorted to "remember" what God had done 'in the past'. Based on what God had done in the past, it provided a basis to trust His promises for the future. They had a history of Him promising something, and then -fulfilling- the promise/s. That is His nature. He is Jehovah. He "exists". He knows the future, and has the ability to fulfill His own will, for His own glory. Thus, "Jehovah our God is with us as He has been with our fathers; He shall not forsake us or leave us..." (1Kg8:57)

But what is our response to such promises and assurance? "...to incline our heart to Himself, to walk in all His ways, and to keep His commands, and His statutes, and His judgments, which He commanded our fathers.." (vs58) Remember how God "Gave the Law...I exist". God's will -is- "godliness".

Jesus put it this way, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." (Mt6:33)

Word made flesh

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (Jn1:1) In the past "God spoke to the fathers in the prophets; in these last days He spoke to us in the Son...being the shining splendor of His glory, and the express image of His essence.." (Heb1:1-3)

"And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us. And we beheld His glory, glory as of an only begotten from the Father, full of grace and of truth." (Jn1:14)

Just as it is necessary, as the bare essence of Faith, to believe that God exists (Heb11:6); we must also believe that Jesus, God's Son, came in the flesh, as fully human. One characteristic of the spirit of antichrist is a denial "that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh" (1Jn4:3). There are many who make claims of being "Christian" who do not accept the fact of Jesus' humanity. But if a person is truly of the Holy Spirit (Rom8:9,14-16), they will "confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh.." (1Jn4:2)

It was prophesied, and fulfilled, that "Behold! The virgin will conceive and will bring forth a son; and she shall call His name Immanuel." (Is7:14) Which Matthew translates for us, "God with us." (Mt1:23) Simeon took a human "baby" in his arms as he realized God's fulfilled word that he would see "the Christ [Anointed] of Jehovah" (Lk2:25-32). God's "Salvation" prepared for "all the peoples".

That He was truly a "human" baby, with fully human frailties is prophesied, "...until He knows to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the boy shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good..." (Is7:15-16) Many who refuse to recognize Jesus' humanity, speculate that because of His Deity, that He was 'not capable' of sinning. If that were the case, there would have been no purpose in prophesying about Him "choosing" between good and evil. But when we realize this, then we understand more fully when we are told that when He was "tried [tested] in all respects according to our likeness" that He did so without sin. (Heb4:15) When we read the account of Jesus' temptation in Mt4, we see satan attempting to lure Him to sin, as he had done with Eve 4000 years prior to that. If it had been known that Jesus was 'incapable' of sinning, satan would have been a fool for trying.

But Jesus, being fully "human", grew up developing human emotions just as any other man did. And as the Holy Spirit drove Him into the wilderness, He had just newly had it confirmed to Him as the Father announced, "You are My Son, the Beloved, in whom I take delight." (Mk1:11,Heb1:5,Ps2:7) And thus, satan taunts..."If You [man of flesh and blood - starving out here in the wilderness] are [reeeally] the Son of God..." And He rejects satan's advances. He remains sinless.

Before God announces Jesus' Deity at the baptism, when Jesus is yet a lad, He knows that God is His Father. Even though the rest of the people thought that Joseph was His father [Ed: and modern perversions of Scripture promote that lie in Lk2:33], when they find Him in the temple, He queries as to why they were so concerned, "Did you not know that I must be busy in the affairs of My Father?" (Lk2:49) At what point did the "boy" Jesus -know- that God was His Father? We are not told. But knowing how humanity develops in its cognition throughout childhood, and Scripture already tells us that He came to a certain age where He knew good vs evil, it seems reasonable to assume that there was a certain point in His childhood as a "human" that He came to know.

When Jesus was hanging on the cross it was pretty plain and obvious to everybody concerned, that Jesus was "human". The Roman soldiers knew what it was like to beat up on a fellow-human male. They knew how spikes would drive through flesh and joints. They knew what real blood looked like. And when the one came, planning to break His legs, he knew what 'death' looked like, and knew that Jesus had died a "human" death. (Jn19:31-35, Mk15:44)

Thus, John would write, "..what we have seen with our eyes, what we beheld, and what our hands touched, as regards the Word of Life." (1Jn1:1)

But that He was also fully Deity, Jesus knew. The rest of this series will be devoted to exploring briefly how He manifested His Deity to humanity. Ultimately even the disciples would come to fully understand it, "Now we know that You know all things...by this we believe that You came out from God." (Jn16:30)

That Jesus was the "express image of [the Father's] essence" (Heb1:3) is something Jesus was explaining to the disciples in the upper room. "The one seeing Me has seen the Father! ..do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words which I speak to you I do not speak from Myself, but the Father who abides in Me, He does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me.." (Jn14:9-11)

Does this begin to sound just a little bit like the Believer's relationship with God? Jesus prays about the "oneness" that all Believers would have with Him and the Father. (Jn17:20-21) Remember the enticement to Eve...you shall be like God? This that Jesus was/is as God-made-flesh, as He was then "glorified" (Jn7:39), becoming the "firstfruit" to incorruption through the resurrection (1Cor15:21-23, 43-44, 53-54), is what we will become when we become "like Him" when we "see Him as He is" (1Jn3:2) when "He is revealed". God became flesh to pay the penalty of sin so that man might be able to be "like Christ" due to Christ's redeeming blood.

Thus, it was not enough that Jesus was -merely- "flesh and blood". (Heb2:14) He also had to be Deity. If God is "One" (Deu6:4) and there is

"no other God" before Him (Ex20:2-3), it means that Jesus "had to" be God, Himself. Remember how the series began by realizing God's "plurality". "Elohim" with the plural "im" ending. God saying, "Let -us- [plural] make man"? Jesus, the "human", was part of that "us" of Elohim. The 'plural' Elohim being 'one' Jehovah [existence - I AM].

As Jesus answers the scoffings of the religious leaders who ask Him to tell them -just- "Who" He is... He says, "before Abraham came into being, I AM." (Jn8:58) As the group was coming to take Him away, He meets them and asks, "Whom do you seek?" 'Jesus the Nazarene'. To which He responds, "I AM". (Jn18:4-8) The power of His name, His Deity, throws them -physically- to the ground.

"Jesus Christ, who subsisting in the form of God...emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, having become in the likeness of men and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, having become obedient until death, even the death of a cross. Because of this also God highly exalted Him and gave Him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of heavenly ones, and earthly ones, and ones under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (~Phil2:5-11)

See Also Addendum: *Could Jesus have Sinned?*

Lord of the Sabbath

"For the Son of Man is also Lord of the sabbath." (Mt12:8)

"Then some of the Pharisees said, This man is not from God, because He does not keep the sabbath. Others said, How can a man, a sinner, do such miracles? And there was a division among them." (Jn9:16)

As we have observed in various other studies, particularly the series in Matthew, Jesus was continually riling up the establishment. Let's not forget that most people didn't see Him as Deity. They saw a mere man, born from illegitimacy. "We were not born of fornication..." (Jn8:41) by contextual implication.. ".like You were..." As they "judged by appearance/sight" (Jn7:24) as today's legalists do (1Th5:22-kjv) they were not privy to "righteous judgment".

He was always upsetting the status quo. Perhaps this is why so many dramas and films attempt to depict Him as a "hippy"? A product of "free love" rebelling against the establishment. Again, those people do not acknowledge His 'holy' Deity.

There are so many recorded instances of Jesus "breaking" the sabbath. But our purpose in this study is not necessarily to study each one for its own merits, but rather to see Jesus' "Authority" over the sabbath.

In this instance where Jesus proclaims His authority over the sabbath, what was the complaint? As they walked along, as the disciples are hungry, they are picking heads of grain, rubbing the chaff out in their hands, and eating. (Mt12:1) Anybody who's been around a wheat farm at harvest time knows how tasty wheat can be in that manner. In our society today we might look at that and wonder what the "big deal" was. That took much less effort ("work") than 'cooking' a meal and setting up a dinner table. We won't look up the references now, but in the O.T. law, on the sabbath they could not even gather sticks or light a fire. Any meal cooking they did had to be done on the previous day. In the wilderness when somebody was found gathering sticks for firewood, they were stoned to death. The sabbath was to be a day of -complete- "rest". The disciples had "harvested" by picking the heads. And they had "threshed" by rubbing the grain in their hands. Both of these acts... "work".

Jesus gives them some object lessons from David and their own priestly practices, and suggests to them that "One greater than the temple service is here." (vs6) Why is Jesus "Lord of the sabbath"? It comes down to the fact that Jesus is not merely "man", but He is God.

Where did the sabbath come from? Moses? "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy." (Ex20:8) One of the judgments against Israel, in addition to their continual idolatry, was their breaking of the sabbath.

No. It came even earlier. "And the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their host. And on the seventh day God completed His work which He had made And He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because He rested from all His work on it, which God had created to make. These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created in the day that Jehovah God was making earth and heavens. (Gen2:1-4)

We have often observed that the Feasts of Israel were types and foreshadows of Jesus' coming to die for sin. Passover, His crucifixion. The waving of the sheaf of firstfruits the day following the sabbath, His resurrection. Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit.

But notice that the sabbath was there even before sin came into the world. In Gen2:1-4 God is proclaiming the history of creation. "These are the generations..." means something like 'this is the history, plan and design' for the "heavens and of the earth" in their creation. Remember Peter's words, "But let not this one thing be hidden from you, beloved, that one day with the Lord is "as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."(2Pt3:8, Ps90:4) We've already discussed this in detail in the series "Covenants and Dispensations" (in the Library).

If it is the case that "all things came into being through Him" (Jn1:3), then, just as the "potter" has authority over the lump of clay he is working with (Rom9:21), Jesus has authority over that which He brought into being. If He instituted the sabbath, He also has authority to change it.

In a purely classical sense, if a pianist decided to add a 4th movement to the Moonlight Sonata, the audience of purists would gasp in horror at the corruption of Beethoven's work. Now, if Beethoven, himself, were to somehow appear on the scene after all these years, he would have every right in the world to add a 4th movement, or a cadenza to the 2nd; or anything he so chose to do. The Moonlight Sonata is 'his' work. He composed it originally. He would have the right to modify it. But he would need to -prove- to everybody that he was, indeed, Ludwig Von Beethoven.

Jesus goes into the synagogue and there is a man with a withered hand. (Mt12:10) The purists taunt Him, "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbaths?" They want to accuse Him, because all they can see is the "law" of the "three movements". They cannot see the Creator/composer standing before them. What kind of person is going to be able to restore a withered hand to its fullness? No physicians can. Even today's science can only design artificial limbs, or graft parts from other bodies. But to take something which has withered into nothingness, and make -it- into something again... that would require the same abilities and power as the One who created it in the first place. Jesus restores the man's hand. He is

able to do so because He is the Creator. He is the One that "even the winds and the sea obey Him" (Mt8:27, Mk4:41, Lk8:25)

So, now, back to the sabbath. Who created the sabbath? God. Who can create a full hand where there was nothing but a shrivelled nothing? God. Jesus just did a little piece of God's work in view of everyone. The purists are still not "getting" it... that Jesus -is- God.

But when Jesus says that the Son of Man is "Lord of the sabbath", it means that He created it; He can change it.

Jesus had come 'this' time to fulfill the sacrificial Law, by giving Himself as the Unblemished Lamb. (1Pt1:19) Pretty soon, these Laws would be put aside, and no longer observed (Rom10:4), as He will be fulfilling them "once for all". (Rom6:10, Heb7:27, etc) But the sabbath was not directly related to His redeeming work. Remember, it was there before sin came into the world. It represents the completion of God's creation. In the 7000 year history of this creation, sabbath represents the final thousand years of Messiah's rule of peace. One of Jesus' names is "Prince of Peace". (Is9:6) Again, if sabbath ("rest") represents that which is the realm of Christ's rule, does He not have "authority" over it?

In somewhat recent proximity to when this study is expected to be mailed, there has been a weekly studies on the Ten Commandments. While we no longer observe the laws of the sacrifices of the "blood of bulls and goats" (Heb9-10), we do still observe the Ten Commandments. They represent the heart of devotion to God and Godliness. God gave them because He 'exists'. And if one studies through the N.T., all aspects of the Ten Commandments can be found in teachings to the Church. All, that is, except for one. That one is the sabbath.

People who disdain Paul's teachings find ways to circumnavigate their consciences around having to keep God's Word as written through Paul's pen; citing things like Israel vs Church, or Law vs Grace, Jew vs Gentile, etc. But notice that Paul teaches "One indeed judges a day above another day; and another one judges every day alike. Let each one be fully assured in his own mind." (Rom14:5) And again, "Do not let anyone judge you in [various things], or of -sabbaths-, which are a shadow of coming things..." (Col2:16-17)

People who cling to their idea of what they think the sabbath is or should be, find excuses for not receiving Paul's words. But, just like the Jews, they do not realize that God Who established the sabbath in Genesis, modified it in Jesus. In reality, just like the Jews, they worship the sabbath, rather than the "Lord of the sabbath". They honor the 'house' rather than the 'Builder' of it. (Heb3:3)

When Jesus defined His authority as "I AM", the Jews picked up stones to stone Him. (Jn8:58-59)

Forgiving sins

And the scribes and Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who is able to forgive sins except God alone? But knowing their thoughts, answering Jesus said to them, Why do you reason in your hearts? Which is easier, to say, Your sins have been forgiven you, or to say, Rise up and walk? But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on the earth to forgive sins, He said to the paralytic, I say to you, Rise up, and take your cot and go to your house. And rising up at once before them, taking up that on which he was lying, he went to his house glorifying God. And amazement seized all, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We saw wonderful things today. (Lk5:21-26)

As I understand it, of all the marvels of science and medicine, one of the things they cannot yet do is to make nerves heal. Many cells of the body will regenerate new cells, but not brain cells. If brain cells are damaged, functions that used to be carried out by the now-damaged cells will be learned by new parts of the brain. While they claim that advances are being made, if a person's spinal cord is severed, leaving the person paralyzed, it is pretty much a -permanent- condition. The cure for the problem is to somehow come up with -new- pathways for the signals from the brain to reach the body's extremities.

If somebody's severed spinal cord were to become 'one' again, it would require an "act of God"... even with today's level of technology. Now, go back 2000 years when they didn't have even the limited technology 'we' possess today. A paralyzed individual was considered to be in a permanent state of helplessness. There were no cures.

This paralytic individual is lowered into the crowded house, and the first words out of Jesus' mouth are, "Man, your sins have been forgiven you." (vs20) The purpose of this study isn't to figure out 'why' the man was paralyzed; did he commit some -specific- sin for which God's judgment was paralysis?

The scribes and Pharisees start reasoning the obvious question. If Jesus is the product of "fornication" (Jn8:41) as they assumed, He is cursed because of His parents. There's simply "no way" He could be God. And yet, He is claiming to forgive sins. And they -correctly- reason that the only One who can forgive sins -is- God. So, if 'this' person, born "in sin", is claiming to forgive sins, he is blaspheming. And as they observe everything else about Him, they are developing a 'picture'. He blasphemes by claiming to forgive sins, He breaks the sabbath. He's just simply doing everything contrary to the way that God "would" do things. He's -got- to be, at least, a false prophet. And in worst-case, as they would accuse Him on other occasions, of being associated with the demons. (Mt9:34,etc)

One thing we know about The Son, is that He is a "discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart". (Heb4:12) Nathanael was convinced by this. (Jn1:47-49) Here it says, "but knowing their thoughts". (vs22) Notice that at this point, they haven't confronted Jesus verbally. They are "reasoning" these thoughts. So, he gets their attention by revealing their thoughts to them. Again, it is only "God Who reveals secrets" (Dan2:28)

And then, Jesus reasons with them. Notice how God invites, "Come now, and let us reason together..." (Is1:18)

Which is easier? to say, Your sins are forgiven, or, "Rise up and walk?" (vs23) Here, now, Jesus expands a bit from the 'withered hand' from our previous lesson. He speaks of "saying". Words. Remember that Jesus is the Word Who was in the beginning with God; and -was- God. (Jn1:1) God created by "saying". When He calmed the storm at sea, He spoke the "words". So, He reasons with them...who is able to simply speak 'words' and accomplish God's power? The gentile centurion understood when he said, "...only speak a word and my boy will be healed." (Mt8:8)

If anybody were to look at somebody and say, "be healed", they are going to be as sick as they were before the words. Physicians are not known for 'speaking words', but for diagnosing, prescribing medicines, poking needles, and performing surgeries. 'Things'. Cause and effect.

Thus, if somebody could actually 'speak words' and the person was healed, they would obviously be beyond the realm of mere humanity. And what -person- understands and knows the 'speaking of words' to 'teach' it to somebody else? Such a thing is not known in the physical world. So, a person could equally -say- the words "be healed" or "your sins are forgiven" with equal results. Zip! And if a person were, actually, able to forgive sins, how would we know and observe that those sins were forgiven? Is there some way to quantify "forgiveness"? Put it in a test tube or under a microscope and see what forgiveness looks like?

But Jesus is claiming to "forgive sins". How can we know that He is actually doing what He -says- He is doing? He proves the unseen by demonstrating His authority to do what -is- 'visible', but otherwise "impossible" to mere humanity.

So, he -SAYS-, "I -SAY- to you, Rise up, and take your cot and go to your house." (vs24) It does not record Him 'touching' the individual. So there is no "power transfer". There is no magical hokus pokus. He -speaks- the word, and it is done.

To Nicodemus Jesus speaks of the spiritual birth as being something like the wind, which is invisible to the physical eye, but which one can see the effects of, nonetheless. (Jn3) In this case, Jesus proves His authority to forgive sins, an 'invisible' dimension, by performing an equally God-like act

that is 'visible'. If we see that which Jesus did that is seen, then we can also trust Him for His promises in the unseen...

While Jesus would say to Thomas, "blessed are those not seeing and yet believing" (Jn20:29) He actually gave many bases of visual things of the "things not lasting" as a basis for us to hope in "the things not being seen" which "are everlasting". (2Cor4:18) Our faith is not a totally blind faith. Jesus' deeds provide a basis for the "substance" of things hoped for and the "evidence" of things not seen. (Heb11:1)

Thus, when He would perform the ultimate 'visible' deed in shedding His blood, demonstrating ultimate love (Jn3:16, 15:13, Rom5:6-8), we can be assured of His redemption and forgiveness of sins. (Eph1:7)

Healer

Surely He has borne our sicknesses, and He carried our pain; yet we esteemed Him plagued, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His wounds we ourselves are healed. (Is53:4-5)

"Jehovah opens the eyes of the blind; Jehovah raises those bowed down.." (Ps146:8) "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf opened. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing." (Is35:5-6a) "So says Jehovah God, creating the heavens and stretching them out; spreading out the earth...I, Jehovah, have called You...for a Light to the nations; to open blind eyes..." (~Is42:5-7)

After the people had acclaimed Jesus as the "Son of David" coming into Jerusalem, the "blind and lame ones came to Him in the temple, and He healed them." (Mt21:14) Fulfilling Isaiah 35. Sick people were not allowed in the temple. Notice how the lame man whom Peter and John raised up was sitting at the 'gate' of the temple. But Jesus was doing things differently again. He allowed the infirm to come to Him -in- the temple area. And He healed them.

Modern charismania has as one of its foundational doctrines, Is53:5, "with His wounds we are healed." However, they don't heal as Jesus did. They conjure and proclaim "be healed". It is possible that many of their subjects are healed psychosomatically. And there are many cases where various practitioners actually do heal. But there are also countless people who had "be healed" pronounced over them, who continued to be sick...many, who also died.

When Jesus healed, it says, "..He healed them -all-." (Mt12:15) Never forget that Pharaoh's magician/priests (Ex7:11) duplicated Moses' and Aaron's signs; but after a certain point, they were no longer able. (Ex8:18-19) False prophets may get -some- prophesies correctly; but they also have many errors, by which you know they are false. God's prophesies are 100%. In the same way, healings that are from God are 100%. When these practitioners conduct their healing meetings, claiming to call down God's power, yes, some probably actually -are- healed. But statistics and accounts tell that many are not. They are healing 'some', but their power is not from God.

The one born blind from birth was asked "What do you say about Him because He opened your eyes? He is a prophet" (Jn9:17) Oooh...but He did it on the sabbath!! (vs16) But when Jesus healed, everyone He touched was -actually- healed. This was one of the things that would characterize Jesus. The O.T. prophesies did not say that He would "keep

the sabbath"; we learned a couple lessons ago that He is "Lord of the sabbath". But the leaders were comparing Him to their notion of what they presumed the sabbath should be. But were not comparing with Scripture.

When John, from prison, sent his disciples to find out, for sure, if this was - really- Jesus, Jesus responds, "Going, relate to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, and the lame walk; lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised, and the poor are given the gospel." (Mt11:4-5) Jesus pointed John to His fulfillment of Isa61:1.

When the sick were brought to Jesus, He did not do a sweeping general 'prayer' over the sick multitude in a separate room, prior to going in to perform the 'main show' where certain chosen ones were brought up to the platform in front of the TV cameras. It says "they brought to Him -all- the ones having illness...and He healed them." (Mt4:24) He didn't 'pick-n-choose' the ones He knew He could heal or con. In another place "He healed them all". (Mt12:15) And rather than having complaints and repeat trips to doctors to fix what He botched up, the witness of the people was, "He has done all things well." (Mk7:37)

If Jesus was opening the eyes of the blind, and Ps146:8 says that "Jehovah opens the eyes of the blind", we can only conclude that Jesus was telling the truth when He says, "I went forth and have come from God" (Jn8:42) "I and the Father are One." (Jn10:30)

Raising the Dead

John said to Him, Are You the One coming, or are we to look for another? And answering, Jesus said to them, Going, relate to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, and the lame walk; lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised, and the poor are given the gospel. And blessed is the one, whoever shall not be offended in Me. (Mt11:3-6)

While Jesus was detained, healing the woman in the throng, "they came from the synagogue ruler's house, saying, Your daughter is dead...Jesus said, Do not be afraid, only believe" And when He sees all the weeping and wailing He says, The girl is not dead, but sleeps. And they laughed at Him" knowing she was dead. And He took the child's hand and said to her, Little girl, I -say- to you, arise! And instantly the little girl arose and walked. And they were astonished with a great astonishment. (Mk5:35-42)

Coming to a city they met a funeral procession. An only son of a widow. Jesus touches the bier and the procession stops. "And He said, Young man, I -say- to you, Arise! And the one who was dead sat up and began to speak." This incident instilled 'fear' on everyone and they glorified God, realizing that a "great prophet" had risen up. That "God has visited His people" (Lk7:12-16)

And finally, the most 'famous' incident. (Jn11) Lazarus has been dead four days. His body has begun to decay. "Stinks" (vs39) And Jesus calls out "with a loud voice" with authority "Lazarus, Here! Outside!" (vs43)

John asks, "Are You the One?" Jesus replies to those sent with, "Observe My works". He said on another occasion, "My Father works until now, and I work." (Jn5:17)

Up until now we have only looked at less 'impressive' things. Arguments about sabbath observance might be considered by some a matter of semantics. Differing viewpoints. Different beliefs. After all; aren't we free to believe what we want? And the sabbath represented a "policital" struggle between Jesus and the Jewish leaders.

The matter of "forgiving sins"...well, how can we pin something like that down? We can't put "forgiveness" under a microscope and observe it. That, again, is in the realm of the "theoretical".

Healing people? Well, a lot of people do that. I mean... there are -doctors-, for goodness sake! They heal people all the time. So, what's the big deal with this Jesus. After all, some scoffers suggest that Jesus spent time during His early adulthood in Tibet with the "masters" and perfected their art. So, it was really nothing. He was just "better" at those arts than anybody else.

Now, if anybody would be tempted to view Jesus in these ways on these matters, this final matter has no equal. Who can possibly "give life"? It is only God who "breathed" -life- into man. (Gen2:7) As advanced as modern science is, even to mapping human genes, cloning, isolating and manipulating genetic structures, growing tissues, etc... man has not figured out how to "give life"...to "initiate" it. A former friend who is a doctor was talking about his profession one day. He said that they have the technology to keep the body -parts- functioning indefinitely. But they have not mastered -life-. Approaching life from the theory of evolution (without God), thinking that life happened "spontaneously" when the certain correct combination of chemicals and temperatures were met; by "chance" of course; they have not been able to create "life" in the laboratory.

But Jesus did.

There are two ways humanity can respond to I AM, the Son, Jesus Christ, when He demonstrates His Deity. Many of the people realized that "God" was "visiting" them. When Lazarus was raised it says that "many of the Jews..believed on Him." (Jn11:45)

But there was the other bunch... "but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done." (vs46) Like little tattle tales...running to the rulers to give them the latest gossip. For the life of me, I don't understand how they could possibly still be in unbelief when confronted with Jesus' Deity! But they were. SO incensed were they with Jesus, SOooo much in rebellion against God (as Jesus would say to Saul later, "kicking against the goads"-Ac9:5), that they not only wanted to kill Jesus, but also plotted how "they might put Lazarus to death also..." (Jn12:10) Now -why- would they want to do such a thing?? Here, this poor fellow had been sick, had died, but is now raised to life again in good health. Well... because Lazarus was "proof" of Jesus's "Deity". "..because many of the Jews went away and believed on Jesus because of him." (vs11) You see, on the whole, when He came to the world that "came into being through Him, the world did not know Him. He [even] came to His own [Israel-born under the Law to redeem those under the Law (Gal4:4-5)], and His own received Him not." (Jn1:10-11)

This is what the Palestinians are doing today, on a different level. They soooo hate the Jews (and the God of the Jews), that they have been working feverishly to destroy archaeological evidence for any previous Jewish temples. They have been digging it away, hauling it off by the truckloads. They figure that if there is no "proof" or "evidence" of any sort of "prior claim" to the land, the Jews cannot reclaim it to rebuild the temple of Yahweh there.

That which is called "christian" has been doing it with God's Word; at least in the English language. God's Word is too strict. It is too severe. It is too confining. Too restrictive. Too narrow-minded. So, they have, over the years, made changes. They call them "paraphrases" and "versions". This

is what God "really -meant- to say". For many decades the changes were subtle. Now that there are so many variations, the newest ones no longer make pretenses to be "accurate" and "faithful" to God's Word. But people reading them, if that's all they know of God, will go to hell. They are not presented with God in His holiness. They are not told what sin is, nor how to be saved.

You see...just like with Lazarus. If the raised Lazarus is dead again, there is no "proof" of Jesus' Deity. We...'man'...are still rulers of our own destiny.

But, for God to promise "everlasting life" (Jn3:16), how do we know God can deliver on His promise? He sent His "only-begotten Son" to fulfill this mission. How do we know that Jesus' promises that "I will raise him up at the last day" (Jn6:40) will happen? How do we know that our Faith we place in Jesus is not a "blind faith"? A Faith placed, only to die and reach the 'other side' and find only emptiness?

Jesus -begins- His proof of this by authenticating Himself as God. Restoring life to ones who died... 'physically'. There's even more in the next two, final, lessons.

But notice that in each of these cases Jesus -speaks- the word/s. In the first two, He makes a point of saying, "I -say- to you..." And in the case of Lazarus, like a parent might yell to a child who has wandered off, "Here! Now!" An authoritative -command-. At the resurrection it is going to be a "commanding shout". (1Th4:16)

Jesus is the Word who "was God" (Jn1:1) in the beginning. Since He is the "same yesterday, today and forever" (Heb13:8), He is -still- the "Word" and He is -still- "God".

Redeemer

For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has given to the Son to have life within Himself. (Jn5:26)

But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, having come into being out of a woman, having come under Law, that He might redeem the ones under law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. (Gal4:4-5)

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us; for it has been written, "Cursed is everyone having been hung on a tree;" (Gal3:13)

In the last lesson we observed Jesus authenticating Himself to be Deity, by raising people from the dead. He promised to "raise up" believers at the "Last Day". (Jn6:40,44,54) And in the next lesson we will observe how He led the way into the Resurrection. Raising of the dead proves His authority and ability to give "everlasting life" (Jn3:16).

But we know that "all have sinned" (Rom3:10-12,23) and that the "wages of sin is -death-". (Rom6:23a) "The soul that sins, it shall die" (Eze18:4,20) If we are sinners, deserving of death, -how- does "eternal life" come "through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom6:23b)??

Jesus became a "curse" for us. The "wages" for sin had to be paid. Again, man is busy changing God's laws. There are no longer "consequenses" for actions. An evil president can be immoral, lie under oath and go through an impeachment process, and yet come away -smiling- and essentially unscathed...still retaining power. A couple days before this was written, the news had an item of a young little boy who, because he couldn't control his lust for a certain kind of cereal (just had to have it!), got in the car to drive to the store to get his favorite cereal, hitting a police car along the way. What was his "punishment" for this? Notoriety in the TV spotlight, and a "reward". Yes, indeed! A Reward! The cereal manufacturer promising a "year's supply" of his favorite cereal....BECAUSE, he had been rebellious and caused havoc. On TV shows of the various "Funniest Videos", invariably, the clips receiving 1st prize are ones where little children are throwing temper tantrums and being rebellious. Rather than being punished or disciplined for such behavior, they are rewarded with TV/media spotlights and prizes.

Is it ANY WONDER that people have no concept of God's impending wrath against the world's wickedness! And no concept of the need for "repentance" unto salvation. That there are consequences. That sin has its results that are "deserved" (Rev16:6)

Sin is cursed. Sinners are accursed. Everlasting life does not come upon us...just BECAUSE. God is so gracious. He is so good. He "accepts us JUST AS WE ARE". All we have to do is "believe". Of course, the focus of this 'belief' is a bit muddled. And how can it be otherwise, if there is no concept of how heinous sin is, and the stench of the "prison" of "death" we are in. We need "rescuing" out of that prison. That's what Jesus came to do, to "open the prison [of sin and death] to those who are bound". (Is61:1b)

But the "debt" had to be paid first. The person does not gain release from prison unless the bail has been paid, or the judge has decreed the "case dismissed", etc.etc.

Another example is given. Life, and a new plant does not grow, unless there is first "death". (1Cor15:36-37) Humanity likes to see the pretty flowers and enjoy the wonderful scent. But they don't understand that before that lovely plant grew, a seed had to be planted in the ground. Seeds will remain as "potential life" for many years...as 'hard' seeds. But that's all they are. Seeds. But when they are planted in the soil, they begin to die. If the life did not sprout from within the seed to send out the root and shoot, and it continued in the ground, the seed would soften, rot, and be dead. When the life is sprouting, the seed becomes "soft"...the beginning of that rotting process. Out of that dying comes new life.

As Jesus is looking ahead to His imminent crucifixion He says that "The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified." (Jn12:23) Being "glorified", of course, is His resurrection, etc. But notice that He speaks of the necessity to "die" (vs24) prior to that glory.

Notice that the "life" of that "seed" does not come from within ourselves. When the Sower went sowing seed, that "seed" is the "Word of God". (Lk8:11, 1Pt1:23) "Faith [Salvation]... comes by the Word of God" (Rom10:17) Who is the sower? It is the Father who "draws". (Jn6:44) The Father is the Vinedresser. (Jn15:1)

So, Jesus died on the cross. He redeemed us when He became our sacrifice. (1Pt1:18-19) How does this redeem us? What He did -physically- becomes "imputed" to us -spiritually- through faith. (Rom4) Christ died for us. (Rom5) And spiritually, we died -with- Him. (Rom6:2-8a) And as a result, because He resurrected, "we shall also live with Him" (Rom6:8b)

How does Jesus' -physical- death transfer to us -spiritually-? That is something which is in the realm of God's understanding. Remember that He created man out of the dust. (Gen2:7) But He breathed into him "spirit". Since this is a concept/process we obviously cannot understand, it should become equally obvious as to 'why' it is that we cannot save ourselves. We don't have the capacity to 'manipulate' the physical and spiritual. This is why Salvation is a "gift of God". (Eph2:8) Something we can only

"receive". (Jn1:12) We have no capacity or ability (Rom5:6) to perform any "works" to effect the change. (Eph2:9,Tit3:5)

All we can do is come to the foot of His cross in repentance and say "I am not worthy to be called your son" (Lk15:19) "I abhor myself and repent" (Job42:6) "God be merciful to me, the sinner" (Lk18:13)

The one thief on the cross next to Jesus was about as "humbled" as he could be. (Jas4:10) The other one, although beaten to a bloody pulp, just like Jesus, and hanging buck naked, railed upon Jesus, "If you are [really] Christ [like You say], save Yourself and us." (Lk23:39) But the one who was repentant realized he was at the end of his rope, under the "same condemnation". He acknowledged his sin, and Jesus' righteousness.

Joseph asked Pharaoh's cupbearer to "mention" him (in prison) when he was restored. (Gen40:14) Not asking for anything wonderful. Just, please, take notice of me, a poor prisoner. The cupbearer, of course, completely forgot Joseph. The thief asks Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." Jesus does not forget, but promises, "Today you shall be with Me in Paradise." (Lk23:42-43)

And He promises all who receive Him, "And this is the will of the Father sending Me, that of all that He has given Me, I shall not lose any of it, but shall raise it up in the last day... The one partaking of My flesh and drinking of My blood [partaking of His death -1Cor11:26] has everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day. (Jn6:39,54)

See Also Addendum: Jesus -became- a 'sinner'?

I AM - the Resurrection and the Life

I am the Resurrection and the Life! He who believes in Me, though he die, yet he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. (Jn11:25-26) For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has given to the Son to have life within Himself.. (Jn5:26)

For the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ shall rise first. The we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. And so we shall ever be with the Lord. (1Th4:16-17)

And as [the apostles] spoke to the people, the [temple rulers] came on them, being distressed that they taught the people and announced in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. (Acts4:1-2)

Remember where this whole series began? I AM Jehovah. I exist. God's existence comes from Himself. Jesus' Deity is also characterized by His own self-existence. When man was formed in the beginning and God "breathed" life into him (Gen2:7), and man was made in God's "image" (Gen1:26), it was -God's- life which was breathed into man. As a result of sin, however, man is charactrized by "death".

Just before Jesus goes to the cross, He raises Lazarus from the dead. (Jn11) In doing so, He demonstrates His ability to do as He promises, to raise up the Believer "at the last day". (Jn6)

Of course, sin had to be atoned. Jesus did that "in His body...on the tree.." (1Pt2:24) He died. However, if Jesus -remained- dead, how could He fulfill His promises to "give life to whomever He wills.." (Jn5:21)? Dead people don't DO -anything-! How would He oversee "everlasting life" (Jn3:16) if He is dead? ... since it is in Him that we "live and move and exist" (Ac17:28) and He is the One who holds all things together (Co1:17) ?? If He remained dead, "everlasting life" is a farce!

Remember another characteristic of Jehovah? "Declaring the end from the beginning" (Is46:10) purposing something, and seeing it to completion. Jesus -declared-, "Destroy this sanctuary and in three days I will raise it up." (Jn2:19) To the disciples He says, "..after My resurrection I will go before you into Galilee.." (Mt26:32) "They will crucify [Him]... and the third day He will rise again." (Mt20:19) And even in the O.T. laws and rituals, they could not let the meat of sacrifice remain past the third day. (Lev7:17-18) As it was prophesied, "For You will not leave My soul in Sheol; You will not give Your Holy One to see [physical] corruption [decay]." (Ps16:10, Ac2:31,etc) [Remember how Lazarus at the 4th day was "stinking" from decay.] Jesus' body did not get to that point.

"But now Christ has risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruit of those who slept [died physically]." (1Cor15:20)

First of all, we -know- that Jesus rose from the dead. There were hundreds of witnesses. (1Cor15:5-8) The Jewish rulers had thought to kill Lazarus to get rid of the "proof/evidence" of Jesus' ability that only God could possess. But now, Jesus, Himself, rose from the dead. In addition, there were "many bodies of the saints" who were "raised" (Mt27:52) when Jesus rose. In so-doing, Jesus -proved- that He has "life in Himself". (Jn5:26) How else could He be 'giving' life, if He didn't have it, Himself, -to- give?

And then, in rising as He did, Jesus was the "firstfruit". What was the firstfruit? When I was a youth, we would raise gardens. I 'learned' from my dad, and I passed it on to my marriage: As soon as the radishes had even a -hint- of 'red' to the root, it was -officially- a "radish". The "important thing" was to be the person to be able to say that they had had the "first radish" of the year. So, we would check them, and if there was a hint of red, we would pull one and eat the little 'string' of a root...and boast "I ate the -first- radish". That little 'string' was the garden's "firstfruit". The first thing 'harvested'.

In Israel, they would ritually harvest a sheaf of grain and bring it to the priests and offer the "firstfruit" to the Lord. On the day after the sabbath, after Passover, they would wave this sheaf. (Lev23:11) Now, where there was a "firstfruit", there were many more 'sheaves' to follow. After the sheaf was waved, then the harvest could progress.

The fact that Jesus -did- rise from the dead, means that our Faith in His promise to raise us up "at the last day" is not "worthless". (1Cor15:14) He did it... we can believe that He will keep His promise to raise us up, too.

In addition to the Resurrection, there is another class of Believer. The ones who will never see death. There are those who do not believe in the parts of the N.T. penned by the apostle Paul. They view him to be a "rogue" of some sort...going off on his own doctrinal tangents. So, when he proclaims in 1Th4:17 what has been coined "the Rapture", they denounce his teachings as being a bunch of 'bunk'. But notice that Jesus, Himself, proclaimed the Rapture.

Notice carefully as Jesus speaks with Martha He proclaims the Resurrection: "the one believing into Me, though he die, he shall live." (Jn11:25)

Now, notice how He continues, "And everyone living and believing into Me shall not ever die forever." (vs26)

This word "living" is present tense. But it's a special kind of present tense... a "historical present tense". In other words, if a person is reading an account of something, it is written as though the reader were 'right there'

as the events happened, even though, being 'history', they actually happened in the past; but the reader is made to feel that the account -is- occurring as it is being read. The same kind of thing can be said of the future. In other words, there is coming a time... Jesus spoke of the "last day" when He would "raise up" the Believer. (Jn6) And Paul speaks of when Jesus calls the Believers up to Himself in the clouds (1Th4:16-17) ...when those who are [present tense at that time] living Believers, will NEVER DIE. You see, Jesus foretold of the Rapture before Paul did. Paul merely expands on the subject, as it was revealed to him, when he says, "I speak a mystery to you; we shall not all fall asleep [die physically], but we shall all be changed.." (1Cor15:51)

Paul goes into more depth, describing the change from "flesh and blood" (vs50) into that which is "incorruption". (vs53) How death, the penalty for sin, is "swallowed up in victory". (vs54) As our new 'changed' bodies receive "immortality". Remember how Jesus predicted His own being "glorified". (Jn12:23, 13:31, etc) Remember how we considered that Jesus, God's Son, became fully "human". He took on "flesh and blood". He took on humanity's "corruption". (Phil2:7-8) And so, for Him to be glorified, as the firstfruit, means that He experienced, first, the change from corruption to incorruption. As a 'human', He died. In His Resurrection, He took on incorruption and immortality. When John speaks of us being "like Him" (1Jn3:2) when He is revealed, this is that glorious event. The Resurrection/Rapture of the Believers.

In Jesus being the "firstfruit" in this, He fulfills His claim to being the "Good Shepherd". He says, "when he puts forth his own sheep, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him. For they know his voice." (Jn10:4) Where the sheep are to go, the Shepherd goes first.

My experience with sheep as a lad was on my uncle's farm in N.Dakota. There, we often, typically, 'drove' the sheep. Like cattle. But that was usually when they had found an opening in the fence and had gotten out, and needed to be brought back in; or were being herded into an area for shearing or other chores. When the sheep had gotten 'out' and were going "astray" (Is53:6), they needed to be herded 'forcefully'.

But there was another thing I observed. My uncle would put some grain in a pail, and would go out and call, "Come sheeeep! come sheeep!" And they would come -running-, bleating. It was feeding time. They "knew" the sound of his voice, and the sounds of the bucket. I could call, "Come sheeep!" all I wanted to, and they would not pay me any mind. They did not "know" my voice.

You see, there was a difference. When the sheep were "rebellious" and going their own way, they needed to be 'driven' to get them back. But when there was harmony, all they needed was my uncle's voice.

For the Believer, "the Lord is my Shepherd". (Ps23) He "leads" me. Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." (Jn10:27) Jesus -led- the way through death, and the Believer has been "joined together in the likeness of His death". (Rom6:5) And since we have followed Him into death, "we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection". He was the firstfruit. He went through it first. We know His promise is true when He promised to "raise [us] up at the last day".

In conclusion, a reminder. This series is entitled, "I AM..." I Am - Jehovah... the One who exists. The beginning of Faith being the belief that God "exists". (Heb11:6) We must also believe that Jesus, the Son, is equally God. And Jesus' resurrection is also part of the definition of the essence of His Deity. We sometimes speak of the matter of the relationship between a person's belief about the Rapture when he has come to understand it from God's Word, and the reality of his faith in Christ. That if he understands what Scripture says about the Rapture, but doesn't accept what it teaches, that such unbelief also indicates the true nature of his Saving Faith into Christ, or lack thereof. Notice Martha's conclusion about His "DEITY" when Jesus asks her if she believes in the 'RESURRECTION' and the 'RAPTURE'...

"Yes, Lord, I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God who comes into the world..." (Jn11:27) This is the same 'Confession of Faith' the Ethiopian expressed, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." (Acts8:37)

Amen!

Addendum:

tetragrammaton - God's name ©2000

READER COMMENTS:

if one desires to really get God's name correct, one must use the tetragrammaton, which is the hebrew form of God

yud

hey

vav

hey

which is truly unpronouncable and to the Jew, so sacred, that they don't even say it. They use the word - Adonai to express the name of God. there is no J in hebrew, thus Jehovah would never ever be correct. yhvh in hebrew hvhy is the correct way, according to Hebrew, the language in which God gave His oracles initially.

VW ANSWER:

God never instructed them to not "even say it". He said, don't take it "in vain". [Same legalism as Eve: God didn't say to "not touch" the fruit.] They substituted a -title- in place of His -name-. [Adonai means == lord, your lordship, emminence, etc] As we will see next week, when He gave the Law, He enclosed and summarized successive commands with "I am Jehovah".

Trouble is, Israel was a "house of rebellion". (Ezek2:8) Just as soon as Moses was up in the mountain, they started to worship idols. Even after successful military campaigns to possess the land of promise, Joshua - still- had to exhort them to "...now put away the strange gods among you, and incline your heart to Jehovah God of Israel." (Josh24:23)

Even though He knew their rebellious heart, God said, "For I am Jehovah their God." And as He promises to remember them in the land of their captivities, it is "so that I might be their God. I am Jehovah." (Lev26:44-45) Notice in these kinds of instances, He doesn't say, "I am Adonai." He proclaims His -NAME-.

Moses' relationship with God was such that it is said that God knew him "by name". (Ex33:12) Moses called out to God in the cloud and God answered him. (Ex19:19) But with Israel as a whole, God was "not pleased" with "most of them". (1Cor10:5) They were not like David, a person after God's "own heart". (1Sam13:14) A true "Jew" [Believer] is one who is so "OF THE HEART". (Rom2:29) It was David who said, "Jehovah [not Adonai] is my Shepherd". (Ps23:1)

Jehovah is not some scholar's grammatical label... a four-letter-word!

Yes, in Hebrew it is four letters, but we are not communicating in Hebrew... At Babel God made -many- languages. Currently 'English' is the world's universal language, used officially at all international airports by pilots and control towers, etc. For the N.T. God used the world's prevailing language of that day, Greek. When Israel was in captivity, He used the prevailing language, Aramaic, in the O.T. There is nothing intrinsically 'sacred' about Hebrew, as a 'language'. Just as KJ-eze is not intrinsically a sacred 'Biblical language'. Are you beginning to see a connection here? The legalistic Judaizers include "tetragrammaton" and "the Hebrew" as their focus. English-speaking legalists REST UPON their 'KJ-only'. Jesus had plenty to say about this... "because this people draws near with its mouth, and they honor Me with its lip; but its heart is far from Me, and their fear of Me is taught by the commandments of men" -Is29:13/Mk7:7 That 'Hebrew' is not sacred... "For with stammering lip and -another- tongue (language), He will speak to this people" (Is28:11) While God gave His Name originally in Hebrew, He does not limit the knowledge of Himself to only the Jew, and the Jew's language-Hebrew. "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea." (Hab2:14)

He is the Eternally Existing One. "I AM THAT I AM". (Ex3:14) A person who cannot "receive Him" (Jn1:12) in His full 'existence' (Heb11:6), can never have the faith necessary to "please God". Just as Israel did then, they do today, along with their "Hebrew roots" friends. They are busy being "experts" in the things of "Judaism" (something S/Paul was saved OUT OF -Gal1:13-15), as they dash out "G-d's name. They are not "in Christ" (2Cor5:17); thus, having bold "access" to the Father through "the Spirit" because of Christ (Eph2:18), to come "with confidence to the throne of grace". (Heb4:16) They are not saved!

The only reason to not use someone's name is when there is a separation due to some conflict. Before Isaiah was cleansed, he wails out "Woe is me!" (Is6:5) What is it that separates between man and God? Sin. (Is59:2) If a person is so 'afraid of' God, as Israel was at Sinai, that they cannot be in His presence, he is not saved. If a person is afraid of God, it is because he knows he is due punishment. He has not been perfected in God's love. (1Jn4:18) That love which sent His "onlybegotten Son" (Jn3:16) to die and pay the penalty for us.

"..neither is there any other NAME.." than "Jesus" by which to be saved. (Acts4:12) It is at the "NAME of Jesus" that every knee shall bow. (Phil2:10) When Jesus comes to wrench away the kingdoms of this world from satan, He will come with the NAME "King of kings and Lord of lords". (Rev19:16)

Salvation comes about when a person "calls upon the -NAME- of Jehovah" and all that is associated with it. Not merely His -title-. If you are calling,

only, upon "Adonai", you are not saved! Whether your native language renders His name as "YHVH", "Yahweh", "kami/atte arumono", or "Jehovah", you must call upon His -NAME-.

"For it shall be, all who shall call on the name of Jehovah shall be saved."
(Joel2:32a)

" That is My Name " © 2001

I am Jehovah, that is My name; and My glory I will not give to another, nor My praise to carved images. (Is42:8) For I am a great King, Says Jehovah of Hosts, And My name is to be feared among the nations. (Mal1:14)

As has been shared with the readers on the e-mailing list, a new 'translation' (Update/fixing of the NKJV) is in progress. The process involves, first, a sorting out, verse-by-verse. Then, proofreading of what's been processed. There are also some generic global changes being made.

One of those global changes is to capitalize "Hosts", where it is part of God's name, "Jehovah/God of Hosts". But, silly me, it didn't dawn on me that perhaps I should have done that at the same time I was working on some other things where I was using the word processor to semi-automate the process, while I was going through file-by-file... figuring that "there's only a -few- of those... I can just change them from within the OLB 'notes' editing function. I can just 'whip them out quickly'." ...because there's 'SO FEW' of them! ...Right!!

As I got into finding every instance of "hosts" being changed to "Hosts", I quickly discovered that there are VERY -MANY- of them! Yes, indeedies! And what I thought I would merely 'whip out quickly' ended up taking several hours. Over and over, "Jehovah of Hosts", "God of Hosts". Most of them occurring in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zechariah and Malachi.

As I was laboring through them all, one after another, on and on and on, I began to become "tired" of doing it. Almost beginning to have the thoughts, "When will I -ever- come to the end of all of these!?" Being almost tempted to think, "Why do there have to be SO MANY of them?" Somewhat also mentally thrashing myself for not having done it with the word processor. But then, feeling guilty for entertaining such thoughts, boredom became awe... at God's name! Because, you see... as I was finding every instance of "Jehovah of Hosts", by default I was also seeing bits and pieces of what God was saying to Israel, next to His own name which He was continually proclaiming. "Jehovah/God of Hosts" is repeated so often, because it is SO IMPORTANT. It is who God is!

Just as, when God gave the Law at Sinai, He introduces the Ten Commandments by saying, "I am Jehovah your God.." (Ex20:2), as He later enumerated many decrees, as we observed in the series "I Am Jehovah, I Am the Son" (in the Library), He closes important points by reiterating, "I am Jehovah your God" (Lev18:2,6,21, 19:3,4,10,12,etc)

Now, we have already studied in the past how "Jehovah" means, "the existing one". In other words, God "exists", as He said to Moses, "I AM, that I AM." (Ex3:14) That is His "memorial name" (Ex3:15), and He

reminds Israel of this through the prophet, "That is, Jehovah, God of Hosts. Jehovah is His memorial name." (Hos12:5)

But what does "Jehovah of Hosts" mean? What is "Hosts"?

First of all, one thing that it is NOT, is the round wafer the priests of Rome break, calling it Christ's 'actual' body. Jehovah does not exist on pagan altars!

When God warns Israel against idolatry He says, "And take heed, when you lift your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun, the moon, and the stars, all the 'host' of heaven, that you not feel driven to worship them and serve them, which Jehovah your God has given to all the peoples under the whole heaven as a heritage." (De4:19) Is God the God of the universe? (Heb11:3) Well, certainly, "The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork." (Ps19:1) But when He proclaims, "You shall have no other gods before Me" (Ex20:3) He goes on to prohibit the making of images in the likeness of "anything that is in heaven above..." (vs4) Thus, when He continually proclaims His name, "God of Hosts", it must be something else besides the "host of heaven" of the stars.

The stars, moons, asteroids, galaxies of the heavens are things that are 'visible'. All these things are passing away. (1Cor7:31, 1Jn2:17) "while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. (2Cor4:18) That round white wafer (of Rome) is a symbol of the sun. Anyone who partakes in it partakes in idolatry of pagan sun-worship.

"Now the king of Syria was making war against Israel.." (2Kg6:8) Sounds just like today, doesn't it! Thing is, God was continually thwarting Syria's purposes, by revealing to Israel where Syria's armies were headed, so Israel was continually able to head them off, or avoid being ambushed. After the king of Syria suspects a traitor in his ranks, someone informs him that Elisha the prophet was the one, "..Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom." (vs12) So, the solution is... 'we gotta go get Elisha!'

So Syria's "great army" goes overnight and surrounds Dothan. Elisha's servant wakes up and sees "an army surrounding the city with horses and chariots" and he does what any Godly (?) servant would do, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" (vs15) Look at this powerful army with tanks, planes, missiles, nukes and satellite surveillance technology! And their cross-hairs are scoped in on our tiny apartment! We've HAD IT!! We're done for!!

Elisha responds, "Do not fear..." (vs16) This is something every Believer into Jesus Christ should remember. Before God reveals any details to the

servant, he needs, first, to be "not afraid". Remember, we "walk by faith, not by sight". (2Cor5:7) Living a life of Faith (Rom1:17) we take courage in God's promise, "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for Jehovah your God is with you wherever you go." (Josh1:9)

And then, after he encourages the servant to not be afraid, Elisha says, "..for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." (vs16) Very much the same as the occasion when Hezekiah and his people are bottled up in Jerusalem, surrounded by Sennacherib's vast army, he encourages the people with similar words, "Be strong and courageous; do not be afraid nor dismayed before the king of Assyria, nor before all the multitude that is with him; for there are more with us than with him." (2Ch32:7)

And so Elisha asks the Lord to allow the servant, "that he may see". (vs17) What did he see? "And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha." Jehovah's "-HOSTS-".

When we look up the definition of the Hebrew word [tsaba] (which appears 393 times in the KJV) it is all about an organized army or angels, and it is all about Warfare, Battle, Fighting, Going forth or Muster.

Scripture talks much about God's "kingdom". (Ps145:13, Dan4:3, 2Pet1:11, Mt3:2, etc) With what do kingdoms back up their authority? Their military. With what does the law of the land back up its authority? Through the police and sheriffs. Paul speaks of the "authority" wielding the "sword". (Rom13:4)

When God appears to Joshua He identifies Himself as, "..Commander of the army of Jehovah.." (Josh5:14) Who is this Commander? He is the "King of kings and Lord of lords" (Rev19:16) When Joshua was about to defeat Jericho, it was not Joshua winning the victory, but the "hosts" of Heaven, commanded by none other than Jesus Christ, Himself.

When Israel's missiles had nearly 100% accuracy during the Six-day-War of 1967, was it Israel's might and technology that hit their targets? No! It was the Hosts of Heaven, with Christ at their command, guiding each one of those missiles. In fact, there have been some accounts, whether they are true or not I don't know. But where during that war some individual Israelis would be about to be overwhelmed, but the Arab armies would suddenly mysteriously turn around and retreat. The Israelis didn't see, but the Arabs were later reported to have seen "massive troops" where the "lone" individuals were hunkered down. Sounds a lot like another time when Jehovah "..caused the army of the Syrians to hear the noise of chariots and the noise of horses--the noise of a great army.." (2Kg7:6) so they skedaddled outta there and left everything behind in their camp for Israel to plunder.

When Sennacherib was surrounding Hezekiah, it says, "...Jehovah sent an angel who cut down every mighty man of valor, leader, and captain in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned shamefaced to his own land." (2Ch32:21) When people came up against Israel, they also came up against Israel's God, "Jehovah of Hosts". The people learned that God "exists". He is the "I AM". And that He commands the "Hosts" of Heaven. When Israel was victorious, "the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries" because "they heard that Jehovah had fought against the enemies of Israel." (2Ch20:29)

God's name is based on His character. What He does. Jehovah of Hosts is God's 'military' name. In the opening Scripture He speaks of Himself as "great King". And He is thus of His kingdom. This name is His name of authority in that kingdom. What is His authority, and how does He back it up? He is "Jehovah of Hosts"

And so, when we who are Believers into Jesus Christ consider spiritual warfare, what is the nature of it? Do you ever wonder why, when you try to be victorious with your 'own' commitments, resolutions, strivings, tryings, attempts, plans, plots, promises, rededications, etc... why you (we) always fall flat on our faces? The struggle is not against the PLO, communism, feminism, New Age, charismania, etc. Those are merely the humanistic manifestations of the true enemy. "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against the spiritual 'hosts' of wickedness in the heavenlies". (Eph6:12) Do you see why we need to put on "all the armor OF GOD"? (vs11) Do you see why the translation is wrong that says, "I - CAN-DO- all things..." But rather that is "I have strength for all things - IN-CHRIST- who strengthens me" (Phil4:13) The same one who is "Commander" of the Hosts of God is also the very same one who fights the "hosts of wickedness". If we want victory, we must be "in Christ". (2Cor5:17) The victory comes "through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Rom7:25)

So... back to those 393 occurrences of "Hosts". What was the Great King's message to Israel, which He was backing up with His name?

When Hannah "made a vow" to the Lord, after which the Lord gave her Samuel, who became one of Israel's greatest prophets, this communication was with "Jehovah of Hosts". (1Sam1:11) When David killed Goliath he did so "in the name of Jehovah of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel," (1Sam17:45) When God promises David of his enduring lineage and the coming of Messiah through David's Seed, this is again from "Jehovah of Hosts" (2Sam7) When Elijah has the great victory over the false prophets of Baal, and is subsequently running from Jezebel, his conversations are with "Jehovah of Hosts" (1Kg19)

And so as we get to the greatest concentrations of God's proclamation of this name it has to do with: Israel's preservation (Is1:9), God's vengeance upon His enemies (Is1:24), The whole aspects of God disciplining Israel

and then extending retribution on those who oppress Israel (Is3:1,15), His name by which He is held in reverence (Is5:16), the name by which the Heavenly creatures worship Him (Is6:3), the name before whom a sinner is humbled in repentance (Is6:5), in the sending of Jesus Christ to redeem sinful man (Is9:7), the name by which God restores Israel in the last days (Is13:4), the name by which God brings the last judgments upon earth as He prepares for the Millennium of peaceful rule of Christ (Is13:13), the name by which God destroys Babylon and crushes the world rebellion since Babel (Is14:22), when God purposes something and brings it to pass (Is14:24,27).

Jehovah of Hosts is Israel's "husband" (Is54:5), and when she was in rebellion Jehovah of Hosts chides them (Jer2:19), and his retributions against them are by this name (Jer5:14, 6:6), and also the name by which He continually pleads with them to repent (Jer7:3), and by which He condemns the false prophets who are leading them astray (Jer23).

Now, when He speaks of restoring Israel to Himself by giving them a new heart, He only refers to the name by which He introduced Himself to them originally in Egypt, "Jehovah" (Jer31:31-34), the "I AM" (Ex3:14)

But as soon as He finishes that promise, He gives His credentials and the basis for the certainty of the promise. How can Israel know that what He says will come to pass? If the sun, moon and stars were to cease existing, then His promise to restore Israel would also be false... then, it could be said that Israel will cease to exist as a nation. (Jer31:36)

You who call yourselves "Christian", but think that Israel is "done for", and that the Church has 'replaced' Israel, note this well. God has promised to restore Israel in righteousness. The certainty of this promise is based on the existence of the sun, moon and stars. Israel's continued existence is just as certain as the continuation of the visible universe. And you certainly believe that "in the beginning -GOD- created the heavens and earth" (Gen1:1), right? Well, if you believe that, then, Israel's restoration is just as certain. And the one who is seeing to it...?? He is using all of His Heavenly armies, everything at His disposal, to bring it about. And...

"Jehovah of Hosts is His name" (Jer31:35b)

Could Jesus have sinned? ©2000

The recent study "I AM-The Son: Word made flesh" stirred up some responses of the order that... If Jesus was God, God cannot sin; therefore Jesus could not sin, because Jesus was God. That Jesus was promised to Mary as "that Holy One...Son of God". (Lk1:35) That there was a difference between Adam and Jesus, that Adam was "earthy; and the second Man was the Lord from Heaven." (1Cor15:45) That Jesus was not "born -fallen-"... etc.

First of all, let us step back a moment and consider that any discussion we would have about God's essence is handicapped to begin with. We are yet in our corruption. We, in this state, even as Believers, "cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1Cor15:50) because we are yet "flesh and blood". While it is true that we "have the mind of Christ" (1Cor2:16b) God's thoughts are so much "higher" than our thoughts. (Is55:8-9) We cannot "instruct Him". (1Cor2:16a) As Job discovered when he challenged, "Surely I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to argue with God." (Job13:3) So God responds, "Now gird up your loins like a man, for I will question you; and you teach Me." (Job38:3) And when God gets just a little ways into His discourse with Job, Job responds with, "Behold, I am vile! What shall I answer You? I will put my hand to my mouth." (Job40:4) We simply will not understand this in its fullness until that day when we "see Him as He is" (1Jn3:2) as it will then all be "revealed" as we no longer see "dimly" as we then "fully know". (1Cor13:12)

In considering a brief study such as the "I AM" series, I feel humanly totally inadequate to such a task; because the Most High is so awesome, and I am so finite. And yet, for some reason, the Lord has seen fit to assign it to have been done. While I don't fully understand it, because my finite humanity doesn't want to accept (can't fathom it!) the fact of the lengths to which God went when He sent His Son (Jn3:16) to this world; that God Who is SO HIGH, would stoop SO LOW to save a rebellious human race; it baffles human reasoning! For such a "holy" God, to relinquish that position and "[take upon Himself] the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men". (Phil2:7) And this picture is painted more graphically, that He came "in the likeness of -SINFUL- flesh..". (Rom8:3) He "PARTOOK" of "flesh and blood". (Heb2:14) To fully understand salvation, one -MUST- accept the fact that Jesus came "in the flesh". (1Jn4:2) In the N.T. there are numerous references to the "flesh" being opposite of the "Spirit". (Gal5:17,6:8, Phil3:3, 2Cor7:1, etc) That the 'flesh' is related to the 'sin' nature.

So, what about the argument that Jesus was not "born -fallen-"? Exactly. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit. (Lk1:35) He was not a descendant of Adam, but was born a "Seed" of the "woman". (Gen3:15) Joseph was not Jesus' "father". He was born of the "virgin". (Is7:14) Something otherwise

humanly impossible, since God designed "fruitful"ness to be by "male and female". (Gen1:27-28)

The differences between the "first man, Adam" and the "Lord from Heaven" (1Cor15:45,47) is not really a correct part of the discussion. That passage is speaking about Adam relative to the "Fall". But initially Adam was created -perfect- and sinless. God would not have pronounced His finished creation "very good" (Gen1:31) if there had been a flaw (sin) in it. So, by the same token, Adam was not "created -fallen-" either. And it could have been said of Adam right after his creation, as it was of Christ, "in Him is no darkness at all." (1Jn1:5) Just as Jesus was born without a "sin nature", so too, Adam was created without a "sin nature". He was perfect, just as Jesus was without "blemish". (1Pt1:19)

But -then- (THEN), Adam "fell". And herein is the difference. Adam, although created perfect (sinless), sinned. Jesus, being conceived and born sinless, did not sin.

Let us remember that Adam was made "in [God's] image, after our [God's] likeness". (Gen1:26) And He breathed [Spirit] into Adam. (Gen2:7) Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit. (Lk1:35) Not really all that much different in origins. After all, it -had- to be this way. If Jesus was to triumph as God's sinless sacrifice for sin, taking the penalty for man, He had to be 'just like' (Phil2:7) man in order to make the penalty/judgment "equal". Jesus would have to suffer 'exactly' what man would suffer.

By the same token, He would need to be tempted just as man had been when he failed, and come away not having succumbed. (Heb4:15) Now, if Jesus' -humanity- could not have sinned, it would not have been a "fair" test, and thus, the judgment would not be equal or proportionate. (Lk12:47-48) After all, when Jesus went out to the wilderness, He did so "to be tested". "To see whether He could be made to sin". Literally, "to see how He will -behave- Himself".

Sure, He could have retained some "higher" entity. But that argument is already given: He "did not take the nature of angels". (Heb2:16) He wasn't coming to redeem the fallen angels. "Therefore it behoved Him to be made like His brothers...for in that He himself has suffered, having been tempted (tested), He is able to help those who have been tempted." (2:17-18) Now this word "help" does not so much indicate that He comes swooping down, carrying the tempted one off to where things are idyllic; but more of what knights of old apparently would do for a fallen comrade, who prods/nudges the fallen one with the tip of his lance, with words of, "Come on, get up! Pull yourself together and continue on! You can do it!" Like cows or deer, in nature, do not carry their newborn, but nudge them with their snouts and lick them to get them stimulated to stand on their own feet. If they didn't stand on their feet, and a predator came along, they would be caught and would die. If Jesus' 'humanity' had not been on such equal footing with man, such 'succoring' would be a farse. If Jesus' 'humanity' had been as a

"superman", and He came along saying, "I did it, you can, too"... that would be the utmost in cruelty. That would be like pulling the wings off a fly, and then prodding, "C'mon...fly! I can. Watch me...see?"

When Jesus took on the form of a "servant" (Phil2:7) what did that 'servanthood' entail? Here is the amazing part of this whole scenario. If we can grasp this one little point, I believe the other concerns will vanish. Recall that when He was baptized, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him. (Mt3:16) The Father confirms to Him, "You are My Son, the Beloved". (Mk1:11, Ps2:7, Heb1:5) Here is Jesus, human, indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Now notice what Paul says, "And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets". (1Cor14:32) And he also exhorts, "Do not quench the Spirit". (1Th5:19) When God sent His Son to take on human form, He deliberately put part of Himself, as it were, under the 'authority' and control of a human male. Does a servant have any 'rights'? Can a servant dictate his own life? By definition, a servant is one who is subject to another, who has authority over him. God's Son took on the form of a "servant". You see, the 'vulnerability' that God placed His Son under was not limited to a helpless 'baby' who could be easily killed at the whim of an angry king; He placed His essence within a human persona, with the full potential that this person 'could' end up doing as Adam had done.

Now, for you who would argue that if Jesus possessed Deity, His Deity could not sin, you would be absolutely correct. (Jas1:13) But the 'man' (remember, He took on "flesh and blood") could, just as Adam, created in perfection, did. How do we know this?

We already understand that the Holy Spirit indwelt Jesus. Right? The Believer, the Christian, Christ's Church... part of the Believer's 'essence' is the fact that the Holy Spirit resides. (Rom8:9) If the Holy Spirit does not reside, the person is not a Christian... by definition.

Now...do Believers, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, sin? "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (1Jn1:8) Yes, it is God's Holy Spirit living in these "sanctuaries" (1Cor3:16,6:19), but notice that if we engage in sinful activities of the world, we can "-grieve- the Holy Spirit of God". (Eph4:30)

Even though Jesus was Deity, we know His humanity suffered. He prayed if it were possible, some other way, that He wouldn't have to go through the crucifixion. (Lk22:42-45) His agony was so great that He sweat drops of blood. We get a picture that this was "strong (vehement) crying and tears" (Heb5:7) His humanity utterly DID NOT WANT to die on the cross. And while on the cross, even though His Deity -knew- for what reason He was there, His humanity screams out, "My God, My God, why did You forsake Me?" (Mt27:46, Ps22:1) And from the whole Psalm 22 we get a picture of His humanity, as He is hanging on the cross, the emotions of seeing everybody gawking at Him, and His pains.

We have spoken of this before, but let's be reminded. Just as Jesus came to an age where He knew to choose between good and evil (Is7:14-15), He also seems to have had some specific point in time where His 'humanity' -knew- that He was the Son of God. And the wording seems to suggest that His humanity needed 'convincing'; because as He is ready to head to the cross, somewhat in summary, John says, "Jesus -knowing- that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had -come-from-God- and -went-to-God-..." (Jn13:3) What an interesting statement if there had never been any question in His 'human' mind. In other words, baby Jesus didn't pop out of the womb, already knowing He was God's Son. And also when satan tests Him, it is immediately after baptism where the Father proclaims, "You are My Son", confirming what He has come to know, that satan taunts, "-If- You are the Son of God". (Mt4:3,6) This is the way satan works: we can learn a new Truth, and immediately satan will come along to try to stir up doubts as to the validity of what we have learned and/or proclaimed to others; trying to make us doubt what God has just revealed to our hearts.

Yes, Jesus was -fully- "flesh and blood"...with everything a sinless man would possess in 'humanity'.

So now let's consider the steps that led to Eve and Adam's downfall, and how Jesus "behaved" differently, to make Him be tempted "without sin".

Let us first of all make an observation. Modern "christian" psychology preaches a different definition for "sin", that 'sin' is a behavior children learn because they aren't loved properly by their parents, and they don't get their 'needs' met. Their parents continually 'shame' them, and thus they never reach their full potential. (And all sorts of variations on that theme) They suggest that if it were possible to put some newborn babies in an idyllic environment where they had no communication with parents or society, and could begin on-their-own, and develop a wholly 'individual' life, that there would be no sin. They don't believe in "original sin". (Ps51:5) They believe that sin is 'learned/programmed' and that it is "environmentally-based". That humanity, today, at birth is born perfect. It's what happens 'after' birth that creates sin (whatever it is they think "sin" is).

Well, isn't that what God did originally? He created a perfect environment. Before Adam and Eve there was no human sin. They did not have parents to shame them. There was no "family history" of abuse. Other than the one 'tree' of whose fruit they were not to partake, they had total freedom. Full potential for unlimited creativity and personal development. It was in -such- an idyllic environment that Adam and Eve sinned.

On the other hand, Jesus was brought forth into a cruel world that was rampant with sin. Other than God's provision and warning to Joseph to flee to Egypt, He wouldn't have made it past the age of 2, as Herod would have killed Him. He grew up in the midst of political turmoil, in the 'slums'. And yet with all these things going 'against' Him, He did NOT sin.

Urban blight and poverty are not the "cause" of crime. Environment does not "cause" sin. Sin is in-born. It is in the heart. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is incurable.." (Jer17:9)

So, the tempter came to both Eve and Jesus. "Is it so that God has said...?" (Gen3:1) "If You are the Son of God..." (Mt4:3) Did God reeeally say? Are you reeeally...?

Satan never -forces- us to sin. But he plants seeds of doubt. These doubts get our minds working. Recall how a Believer is one who, among other things, is renewed in the "mind". (Rom12:2) The one "who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven by the wind and tossed." (Jas1:6) He is "carried about by every wind of doctrine" (Eph4:14)

Now, Eve allows the serpent to engage her in 'dialogue', and notice what happens. (We have addressed this in the past) She perverts God's Word. She adds to God's Word and in so-doing plants the first seed of what today is the SELF-pity party, that "God has hemmed me in and given me all these harsh rules and regulations". Like Israel, she added to God's Law. "We can't eeeeven -touch- it." And then, once we are started down this path of reasoning, the penalty is decreased. Surely God doesn't really mean "death"? After all, what -is- death? Up until that point they had not seen death. How can we be sure of something we haven't seen?

On the other hand, Jesus quotes God's Word, "It is written..." And He quotes verbatim.

Eve -listened- to satan and -intellectualized-, and then her own -lusts- took hold (3:6) and she sinned. "But each one is tempted by his lusts, being drawn away and seduced by them. Then when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin..." (Jas1:15)

And then Eve entices Adam into the act.

"The words of King Lemuel...which his -mother- taught him...do not give your strength to women..." (Pr31:1,3) What happened between Eve and Adam? We don't have details. But when all was said and done, they knew what it was to be "naked". (Gen3:7) One of the things that is "too wonderful" is the "way of a man with a virgin". (Pr30:19) But Proverbs is also full of the way of the "strange woman" who "flatters" (Pr2:16,etc) and entices men. How many men have been enticed by women who turned them away from God. Solomon is a prime example. (1Kg11:1-4, Neh13:26) [And yes, I also know about this first-hand!] Society today also tells women that they must be seductresses.

Men, listen to this carefully. God did not call you to follow your wife (Eve was brought -to- Adam as his "suitable helper" -Gen2:20,22); or if you're not married yet, that enchantress who is able to pull at your heart strings

and you follow willingly, and you cater to her every self-indulgent whim, telling her that you'd "do anything" for her. Yes, she may have attracted you with her beauty, or you may happen to have found a Godly woman. If she is truly Godly, she will be in submission to you. (1Cor11:3) But if she is not Godly, RUN FOR YOUR LIFE! You may have some momentary 'fellowship' and think she is your "best friend", but if you are a truly Godly man, in the end you will weep tears of deepest regret, when her true colors become evident. Sorry ladies (you that are Godly women ..and some of you are.. will understand what is being said), but I'm going to quote from the "preacher" here... "and I found more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets; her hands are like bands. He who is good before God shall escape from her; but the sinner shall be captured by her. Behold, I have found this, says the Preacher, counting one by one to find out the sum, that my soul still seeks, but I have not found; one man among a thousand I have found, but a woman among all those I have not found." (Ecc7:26-28) "Who can find a woman of virtue? For her value is far above rubies. The heart of her husband trusts safely in her...etc." (Pr31:10-31)

Men, when judgment comes, God will not ask you, "what did your wife entice you into?" He's not going to be calling out to your wife; He's going to come calling for -you-, "Adam...where are you?" "Have -YOU-.." been disobedient? (Gen3:9,11) Yes, your wife will get her judgment, but God will come at you with "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife..." and have disobeyed. (Gen3:17) All the pleasantness of the memories of her alluring company will not benefit you then.

Eve engaged in 'dialogue' with Satan. She listened. She lusted. She partook. Then, Adam lusted (after Eve ?? ...in her new-found sin-filled allure ??), and he partook.

On the other hand, Jesus didn't waste any time with satan with 'dialogue', but quoted God's Law to him. "It is written.." (Mt4:4)

"With what shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your Word." (Ps119:9)

[Ed: we're not going to consider details here. If you're not familiar with the account, please read the passage]

So satan then takes another approach. Since Jesus wasn't going to misquote God like Eve had done, he then 'misapplies' Scripture 'out of context', and proclaims Scripture to Jesus. Do this, Jesus, "For it is written..." (Mt4:6) Does Jesus "argue" with satan? No, He quotes Scripture again; He doesn't need to "explain" the true application of what Satan had quoted... Satan already knew it.

"..rightly dividing the Word of Truth" (2Tm2:15)

Now, where satan tempts Eve with being "like God", with Jesus there is a different twist. Jesus, the 'human', knows that He is to "rule them with a rod of iron" (Ps2:9,Rev19:15) but He also knows that His "hour has not yet come". (Jn2:4) So, satan offers Jesus a "shortcut" to fame and fortune on the fast track. All Jesus must do is "bow" before satan. And Jesus sends him packing with another retort from Scripture.

"Resist the devil and he will flee from you." (Jas4:7)

But Jesus' whole 'attitude' going into the temptation can best be summarized with His words, "Go, Satan!" (Mt4:10a) Don't even allow the proverbial "Arab's" camel's 'nose' into the tent. Don't give him a 'toe-hold' in your door. Didn't you see the sign on the door that says "No Solicitors"?? Scram!! Get outta here!!

The difference between Adam & Eve and Jesus was "whom" they were striving to please. Eve saw in the 'fruit' something to make -her- "wise". (Gen3:6)

On the other hand, Jesus' whole purpose was, "I delight to do Your will, O My God; and Your law is within My inmost soul." (Ps40:8) "...I always do those things which please Him." (Jn8:29) He "did no sin, nor was guile found in His mouth." (1Pt2:22, Is53:9) It was prophesied of Him, "The Lord Jehovah has opened My ear, and I was not rebellious, nor turned away backwards." (Is50:5)

As Believers we wrestle with the struggle between the flesh and spirit. While we want to obey God, we also 'enjoy' many of the sins of this life. And Paul cries out "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" The answer is "...through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Rom7:24-25) How is this?

Let us get back to the originating question. "Could Jesus have sinned?" The answer to this also answers how Romans 7:25 can be true. Remember, the section of the "I AM" series under consideration is "Word made flesh". The rest of the series will be systematic proofs of Jesus' Deity. But we must first understand that Jesus was truly, fully, completely "man", with everything that is associated with humanity.

He was born in perfection, just as Adam had been created. He was tempted just as Adam had been tempted. In fact, the conditions of His testing were worse than Adam's; He was at death's door from 40 days of exposure with nothing to eat, so the first test offers revivement. But He did not sin.

When Jesus lived on this earth 2000 years ago, there was NO QUESTION amongst the people regarding His "humanity". They saw Him, they touched Him. (1Jn1:1) The people all knew Him as, "Is this not the carpenter's son?" Don't we know His family and where He is from?

(Mt13:55) They saw Him grow up "in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." (Lk2:52) They needed proof of His Deity. In fact, when He claimed to be God, the religious rulers sought to stone Him for blasphemy. And it wasn't until the very end that the disciples were finally convinced that He had "come forth from God". (Jn16:30) Because it was "obvious" to them all that He was -completely- "human".

The world today believes that Jesus was a "historical figure". There is enough written evidence that a "man" named "Jesus" lived back then, 2000 years ago. His existence as a "man" is never in question.

The ones who -do- question Jesus' "humanity" are present-day "Christians". Ironic, isn't it! We have become so used to Rome's pagan depictions of -a- "Jesus" with a pagan sun-god 'halo' around His head, that His "humanity" has become muddled. The world says that Jesus was "only" a man. And so Christians, (perhaps in reaction to that?) will say (in their minds) that Jesus was -mostly- "God"...with a 'little bit' of humanity sprinkled in there. Was Jesus 80/20, 70/30, 90/10? They don't want to accept the fact that Jesus was -FULLY- "human". He was 100% "man". He was 100% God. Just as two become "one" (Gen2:24), and is a picture of Christ and the Church (Eph5:31-32, Jn17:23); it is all possible because God is "one". For Jesus, 100% humanity plus 100% Deity equals "One". (Jn17:22) "I [the 100% 'human' speaking to you] and the Father are one!" (Jn10:30)

Interesting, isn't it! If we look at the 'chronology' of how the canon of Scripture is put together, we see the book of Jude, which is a direct picture of the days of apostasy in which we live, sitting right here -just- before Revelation, and The Revelation being about the "end" events... that 1John sits there toward the latter sections of the N.T. somewhat closer to the "end" than the epistles. And in ch2 he speaks of "antichrists", which is more of a 'near-end' historical characteristic. And then we go another couple chapters and read how one defining characteristic of a True Believer is one who accepts Jesus' -full- "humanity"; with the concept that an understanding of it is part of the Believer's essence. The fact that it is even mentioned, indicating that a question regarding the matter will come up during 'that' time in history, needing such a statement.

We have already seen how both Adam and Jesus became into humanity in perfection. If Adam had not sinned, Jesus would not have needed to come to die as He did. In fact, the "Tree of Life" (Rev2:7,22:2) was already in the Garden of Eden. (Gen2:9) Had he not sinned, would Eternal Life have begun at Eden? But Adam did sin. And Jesus came into a sinful world, born a perfect man...and did not sin.

Why is it important for us to understand this? If as being in these "bodies of death" we cry out for deliverance, and are told that it comes "through Jesus Christ" (Rom7:24-25) we are talking about more than -just- "Salvation" from the penalty of sin. We are talking about how to -live-

righteously before God. We already know from Romans ch5 that Adam's sin resulted in death for the entire human race, and that Jesus' death/resurrection gives us life. But until we have been glorified with the new "spiritual body" (1Cor15:44) we still have the pull of sin on our "flesh". (Gal5:17)

Revelation chs 2-3 speak to each church of "overcoming". He says "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame and have sat down with My Father in His throne." (Rev3:21) If Jesus could be born as a human into a sinful world, and remain perfect, having been born just as we are; this then puts 'teeth' to the saying that "no temptation has taken you except what is human". (1Cor10:13) Jesus didn't resist some sort of super-human temptation. He -did- it. We can, too. We cannot have the excuse that "I couldn't help BUT sin, because the temptation was sooooo great"... because "God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able. But with the temptation, He will also make the way out, so that you may be able to bear it."(vs13b) In other words, when we sin, we "want to" sin! If we want NOT TO sin, God will provide everything we need to resist.

God's help comes through Jesus Christ. In the world we have distress, but He says "...be encouraged, I have overcome the world" (Jn16:33) And how does Jesus aid us? When Jesus left, He promised the Holy Spirit. (Jn16:7)

How do we live for the Lord? "...in the Spirit" (Phil3:3) We cannot put "confidence in the flesh". Many pharisaical types of people try to live by their "lists" of "touch not, taste not, handle not" (Col2:21), but such efforts will fail every time.

We must first "sow to the Spirit". (Gal6:8) If you want corn, you plant "corn" seeds. If you want tomatoes, you plant tomatoes. And if you don't hoe out the weeds, what you want will get choked out. In other words, "What part of 'No Solicitors' didn't you understand? Get out!!" [Ed: This year in my garden I'm doing a new thing. I've been hoeing 'before' the weeds ever get a start. And you know, I have had a "clean" garden this year, and where hoeing used to take a couple hours, when the weeds had grown up...now, I can get through the whole garden in scarcely 10-15 minutes...and without the weeds there, hoeing is easy. With a little pondering, I think you'll understand the correlary without me spoon-feeding this one?]

And then, we must "Walk in the Spirit". (Gal5:16) As we have considered before, a -life- of "prayer". Being in continual fellowship with God. If we Walk in the Spirit, "you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh". (vs16b)

We have God's Holy Spirit residing. (Rom8:9) Jesus did it. We know we can, too. The one who claims to belong to Christ "ought himself also to walk even as He walked." (1Jn2:6) If Jesus had not been fully "human" such an exhortation would be preposterous.

Yes, Jesus -COULD-HAVE- sinned. But He didn't. He always walked "in the Spirit". He always did those things that pleased the Father. We can, too, through Jesus Christ -our- Lord. He did it first. He is our Shepherd (Jn10:14), and leads us, having gone there first, if we but follow.

"Now the God of Peace, He leading up out of the dead, the great Shepherd of the sheep, in the blood of the everlasting covenant, our Lord Jesus, perfect you in every good work, in order to do His will, doing in you that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen. (Heb13:20-21)

Jesus became a 'sinner'? ©2000

QUESTION:

Recently I heard someone state that the Lord Jesus became a sinner. Scripture in 2Cor 5:21 does say He was made sin. This statement does not ring true and I would like your input

ANSWER:

Aaah! The importance of the 'exactitude' of -words- in God's Word. Notice that verse says that Jesus became "sin", not a "sinner". Big difference.

The word "sin" indicates a quantity, an act, a quality. Whereas a "sinner" is one who is characterized by, and -does- 'sin'. We often have considered the fact that man sins because he is a sinner. "In sin did my mother conceive me" (Ps51:5)

But recently we studied how Jesus was born sinless. That sinlessness resulted in "...although He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth" (Is53:9) But His bearing our sin occurred as "the chastisement of our peace was -ON- Him...and Jehovah has laid -ON-HIM- the iniquity of us all." (Is53:5-6) Jesus was sinless, but the Father "laid" the world's sin upon him, as it says again, "...it pleased Jehovah TO CRUSH Him.." (vs10)

This was figuratively done every year in Israel when they selected two goats. This is in conjunction with the 'annual' atonement for Israel where the high priest would take blood into the Holy of Holies and sprinkle it. (Heb9:7, Lev16:34) Now, while we remember the blood sprinkled in the Holy of Holies, because the writer of Hebrews reminds us, that whole annual ritual also included the two goats. One of the goats was sacrificed. The other was a "scapegoat". (Lev16:8,10) [Or, "complete removal" -LITV] After all the ritual sacrifices and sprinklings were finished, the high priest would "...lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the sins of the sons of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send away by the hand of a chosen man into the wilderness." (vs21) And this person so-charged would take the goat and release him "far away" in the wilderness where there would be no chance of the goat returning...thus, signifying "As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us." (Ps103:12)

So, when God "laid on Him the iniquity.." (Is53:6) it was fulfillment of what the high priest had ritualized all those years, laying his hands on the head of that 'scapegoat'. Putting Israel's sins on the goat...to take them away.

But Jesus, Himself, did not -BECOME- a "sinner". Much like a stainless steel container. Intrinsically it is, well... "stainless". Now, if things are left in such a container, and become rotten, the whole thing (container AND contents) become loathsome. A person does not typically smell the

rottenness and think..."Oh, what a wonderful 'stainless' container". The whole thing is such as "NOR an appearance that we should desire Him". (Is53:2b)

Just as the "stainless" container remains -intrinsicly- a "stainless" container, it -becomes- rotten by 'association' because of what has been 'placed' -into- it. But if the rotten things are removed, the container is cleaned back up again. And thus, too, with Jesus, "For You will not leave My soul in hell; You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption". (Ps16:10)

While it doesn't say so in ch16 of Leviticus, any such offerings in the O.T. had to be "without blemish". (Ex12:5, 29:1, Lev1:3,etc.) That 'scapegoat' we spoke of earlier had to be "without blemish". Which is why Peter refers to Jesus as "the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot". (1Pt1:19)

Jesus was sin-FILLED? ©2005

Thank you for taking the time to reply. You quote part of John 9 v 31, though I do not understand why seeing that we all know The Lord Jesus was not a sinner (?)

Do you believe Psalm 22 is about the Lord Jesus? I do. This is what verse 24 says as you know: For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted: neither hath He hid His face from Him but when He cried unto Him He heard.

As I see it, the confusion amongst Christians seems to arise with 2 Cor. 5 v 21.

This is how it was explained to me - the word sin used in this verse by Paul was a Hebrew word *chatta* which can be used for sin or sin offering.

If the above teaching is true, then wouldn't sin-offering explain better fit in with all the other Scriptures that refer to the Lord Jesus as being the sinless lamb of God?

If we take literally the above scripture and what Peter says that He bore our sins in His own body on the tree, don't we end up with a sin-filled Saviour and not a sinless Sacrifice for our sins. This doesn't make sense surely?

I am very mindful in these perilous times that there are damnable doctrines and many will be led astray by them as we are all told in God's word.

How can anyone be saved if we have a sin-filled Saviour? I came out from the Roman Catholic Church and even they don't believe this (I wrote many years ago to the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in Australia). If we do not believe the Truth, God gives people over to a strong delusion, we are told only a few will be saved and no wonder if they believe this doctrine!

VW ANSWER:

The -key- is 2Co5:21... "...He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us..."

Let us imagine a courtroom scene. Say... it is something like traffic court where there are -many- 'accused' sitting, waiting for their name to be called, each one holding in their hands the 'ticket/summons'. That ticket is a document of condemnation requiring the payment of a fine....only in the case of our sin, the payment is "death" (Rom6:23) Everybody sitting in the room has a sense of 'condemnation' because each one is holding a 'ticket'. Nobody is just; "no not one" (Ps14:3,

Rom3:10,12)

Now....what Jesus did/does....He comes walking into the courtroom, walking up to individuals and offering, 'If you give Me your ticket, I will pay your penalty' So, some give Him their ticket....others don't.

The ones who give Him their ticket, now no longer are in possession of the ticket which signifies the debt of paying the fine. By the fact that they no longer have the ticket, they are now 'free' from obligation to pay the fine. (I realize I'm simplifying this....but you get where I'm going with this)

So then, Jesus, who did not commit any infraction of traffic rules, with all these tickets in hand that He has collected, walks up to the judge and the clerk-of-court, and says, "I am paying all these fines". Jesus was not guilty of any traffic offense...but by the fact of Him holding all these tickets, He is -carrying- ("bore our sins" 1Pet2:24) the blame of all those from whom He collected them. Thus, in the eyes of the court, since He is in 'possession' of this pile of tickets, -becomes- the 'guilty' party, who pays the fines.

You said you didn't understand 'why' Jn9:31 was included. Let's take traffic court a bit further into the realm of 'strange'. Supposing the judge was a sort for whom the mere sight of traffic tickets caused him to go into convulsions, thus, anytime a traffic ticket was in his presence he would divert his eyes and not speak to (nor hear) anybody holding a traffic ticket. "God does not hear sinners" (Jn9:31) So, while Jesus was on the cross, that was the very occasion where He was holding the -pile- of "traffic tickets" He had collected...from which the Judge was diverting His eyes. Normally, the Judge and Jesus are "buddies" (please understand this expression in the context as being portrayed)...but the Judge has an aversion to 'traffic tickets'. So, in his diverting His gaze, it is not Jesus who is being shunned, but that 'pile' of tickets; but since Jesus is the one holding the pile, that diverting of attention also includes Jesus. But on the other hand, since Jesus collected all the tickets, and the court room of people no longer have their tickets, the Judge is now speaking directly with them, and hearing them. "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace...." (Heb4:16)

Yes....Jesus was the spotless Lamb "without blemish" (Heb9:14, 1Pet1:19)....but He was -carrying- our sins, and as far as the Heavenly 'court' was concerned, by that fact of -carrying- our sins, He 'was' guilty. Nobody else in the courtroom could do that, because they each had their -own- ticket which needed paying.

Jesus was not sin-FILLED. "....although He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth." (Is53:9b) As we know: "out of the abundance of the heart the mouths speaks" (Mt12:34) But He "...bore our

sins in His own body on the tree," (1Pet2:24) He CARRIED our sins to the cross. And -that- is what the Father was turning away from, as Jesus cried out on the cross.

Amen!