

BIBLE EXPLORATIONS

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...to know the love of Christ
which passeth knowledge
that ye might be filled with
all the fulness of God Eph 3:19

Resurrection #5

HAS ANYONE BEEN RESURRECTED?

“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.” (1Cor 15:20)

According to the Law given to Israel, the first part of a crop to ripen was called the firstfruits. It was a sample of the full harvest to come. The firstfruits were offered to the Lord in thankfulness and in anticipation of a great harvest in the future.

Christ is called the **“...Firstfruits of them that slept** (in death),” because He was the first to resurrect from the dead. To Israel, His resurrection was a sample of the great harvest of ones to be raised in the future. Jesus spoke of that harvest of resurrected ones when He spoke to Jews saying, **“...everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.”** (Jn 6:39) We see that some Jews understood this, for Martha said at her brother’s death, **“I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”** (Jn 11:24)

The last day, for those Israelites to whom Jesus spoke, meant the last or end of that dispensation. It referred to a time when there would be a change in God’s ministering to them. It was to be the beginning of a glorious age with the Messiah as their king and with the other nations at their feet. However, the start of that future day of glory was conditional. It could not begin until Israel received Jesus, their Messiah-

King.

In the days of His flesh, few of Israel received Christ, and after His resurrection, still few received Him. Even though Christ as King and His kingdom were offered to them for almost 35 years after His ascension, they still refused. Had they repented and received Him, Christ would have returned. There would have followed a harvest of resurrected ones to enter His Kingdom. These would have been the firstfruits of the great harvest at the last day. (Jms 1:18)

During those 35 years, while the ascended Messiah was preached, believers in Him were told, **“...in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; AFTERWARDS they that are Christ’s AT HIS COMING.”** (1Cor 15:22,23) At the same time, the Thessalonian saints were told that the resurrection of dead believers would occur when the Lord descends from heaven. (1Ths 4:16)

Finally, about AD63, God pronounced His judgment upon the nation of Israel for rejecting their Christ and King. (Ac 28:28) God ceased His offer of their King and deferred their resurrection hope. Then He revealed a plan which He had hid in His heart until He revealed it to the Apostle Paul. (Eph 3:2-11)

God’s plan was that His Son would head up a family in a kingdom far above all heavens. This family would consist of ones out of

all nations, and without national distinction. In this family there would be no nation favored as Israel, who before had covenants with God, His priesthood and promises of a land and blessings. No longer was His word to **“the Jew first and then the Gentile”**. (Ro 3:1; 9:4; Eph 2:14-16)

Since the time God created this family, the Church which is Christ’s Body, many members have fallen asleep in death. Like believers throughout the ages, their resurrection also awaits a future day. That day will come when Christ, Who is hidden far above all heavens, appears in order to manifest Himself and His glory. Colossians tells members of the Body of Christ, **“When Christ Who is our life, shall appear, THEN shall ye also appear with Him in glory.”**

Members of the Church, Christ’s Body, are admonished to be, **“Looking** (with out-stretched neck) **for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing** (the appearing of the glory) **of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ.”** (Tit 2:13) Other members of this Church, who have died, will be resurrected and appear there with Him. We read, that the Lord Jesus Christ, **“...Shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and kingdom.”** (2Tm 4:1) There, in His kingdom far above earth and its heaven, Christ will reward all those of His Body who were faithful to Him, even those who have slept in

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Resurrection #5 ...continued

death until that day. The Apostle Paul looked forward to that day of reward. (2Tm 4:8)

In the some of the last writings of the Scriptures, John's Gospel, 1 and 2 Timothy (AD 63-68), we find that both John and Paul declare that no human has yet been resurrected. Paul wrote of the Lord Jesus Christ, "**Who ONLY hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto.**" (1Tm 6:16) And again, of Christ, Who "**...hath brought life and immortality to light.**" Immortality was unknown before Christ's resurrection.

In addition, John, in his Gospel wrote, "**And NO man hath ascended up to heaven, but He That came down from heaven, even the Son of Man Which is in heaven.**" (3:13) John penned those words late in Biblical history, after Israel's final rejection of Christ, (1:11) but

before the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, for the pool and porches of Bethesda were still in tact. (5:2)

There have been no further words from God since John's and Paul's writings. God has been silent. His last words confirm the past resurrection of His Son and the future resurrection of believers.

Has anyone been resurrected? The Scriptures declare plainly that only Jesus Christ has been resurrected. Only He has been glorified in that demonstration of mighty power which delivered Him from the grave.

John 12:16 speaks of that glory associated with resurrection. It tells us the disciples remembered things after Jesus was resurrected, "**...when Jesus was glorified.**" Then they remembered that their prophet, Zechariah had foretold that their Messiah would come, "**riding upon**

an ass and upon a colt the foal of an ass." (9:9) Then they remembered that Jesus spoke of His resurrection saying, "**Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up.**" (Jn 2:19,22)

If we claim that others have been resurrected also, do we not rob the Lord of glory that is exclusively His? Do we make God a liar? God forbid! Paul said of those in his day who taught the lie that the resurrection was already past, "**... their word will eat as doth a canker ... and overthrow the faith of some.**" (2Tm 2:17)

Let us reserve that glory for Him **Who only hath immortality, for Him** Who will raise us from the dead.

In the next issue: "Some Questionable Cases"

J.H.

The Diety Of Christ #4

We will now continue to look up references in both Old and New Testaments which will show that Jehovah and Christ shared the same titles and attributes. The contexts may be different in space and time. The Person is the same, the One God in Whom we believe.

JEHOVAH, THE SALVATION

The Psalms and other Old Testament books speak of Jehovah by yet another title, "The Salvation". For example: Psalms 14:7 & 53:6: "**Oh that the Salvation of Israel were come.**"; Psalms 62:2,6: (Jehovah is) "**...my rock and my salvation.**"; Isaiah 62:11: "**Behold, thy salvation cometh.**"; and Jeremiah 3:23: "**...Lord our god is the salvation of Israel.**"

Corresponding to this, are two New Testament references, both of which are direct references to Christ. In Luke 2:30, Simeon, holding the infant in his arms, realizes he can now die in peace

because, as he says: "**Mine eyes hath seen Thy Salvation.**" Then in Acts 28:28, Paul declares: "**...the Salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles.**"

JEHOVAH, COVENANT GOD

Jehovah is the name given to God as the Covenant God. In Jewish tradition, no truly binding covenant could be made without shedding blood. In Exodus 24:8 we have Moses sprinkling blood and saying, "**Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord (Jehovah) hath made with you concerning all these words.**" This incident is quoted in the New Testament in Hebrews 9:19-20. Indeed, the Israelites had been told the blood ritual was essential. In Leviticus 17:11 we read, "**For the life of the flesh is in the blood ... for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.**"

How is Christ connected? In Jeremiah 31:31 we read a prophetic

saying: "**Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Judah.**"

Based on this prophecy, Christ was enabled to say what he did in Matthew 26:28, a verse that we hear frequently recited in many churches: "**For this is my blood of the new testament (covenant).**" Here, Christ is the same Jehovah - setting up a new covenant with His people, Israel. Here is a follow-up of the tradition of the shedding of blood, so that the covenant is sealed in the way it traditionally should be.

Jehovah, as we say in the introduction and following articles had many titles. In article five, we will look more closely at the significance of some of those titles which all indicated the One God, and how the titles also pointed to the Lord Christ Jesus.

L.A.

The Diety Of Christ #5

We have probably heard of God's many titles, the most common ones being Jehovah and Elohim. Why did He need so many names? How does this use of different names for God cement in our minds the fact that these were also the names for Christ Jesus in one context or another? Sometimes it is not obvious. So, let us take a closer look.

JEHOVAH, GOD OF MANY TITLES

Let us look briefly at the titles of Jehovah/God as given in the Old Testament. These titles and what they mean substantiate all that has been said in Hebrews chapter one about the identity and character of Christ. The following are mainly taken from the Companion Bible edited by E.W. Bullinger. The references are mainly from two appendices 4 and 98: ELOHIM has the essential meaning of "the Creator". It indicates His relation to mankind as His *creatures*. In 2 Chronicles 18:31 both terms, "Jehovah" and Elohim" are used; Jehovah is used to represent the *covenant relationship* and is in contrast to the use of Elohim as the God of everyone including the Gentiles with whom he did not have a covenant relationship. Elohim is God the Son, the living "Word" who was given *creature form to create* (Jn 1:1-3; Col 1:15-17; Rev 3:14); and later, was endowed with *human form in order to redeem* his wayward creatures. (Jn 1:14) EL is Elohim in all His strength and power, the "Almighty". It is rendered "God" as Elohim is, but EL is God the Omnipotent. Elohim is God the *Creator* putting His omnipotence into operation. EL is the God who *knows* all and *sees* all, and that *performeth* all things for His people; and in Whom all the Divine attributes are concentrated. It is sometimes transliterated in proper names Immanu-'el, Beth-'el, etc. ELOAH is also Elohim, the Being

Who is to be worshipped. Eloah is God in connection with His *Will* rather than His power. The first occurrence associates this name with worship. (Deut 32:15,17) Hence it is the title used whenever the One Living God is contrasted with false gods or idols. Eloah is, therefore, essentially "the Living God" in contrast to inanimate idols.

How are these titles used? They are sometimes used in the exact way given in the three passages above. However, they are also used interchangeably. The Old Testament speaks several times about "the living God". In Joshua 3:10; Psalms 42:2, 84:2; and Hosea 1:10; the reference is to EL, the living God. In Deuteronomy 5:26; 1 Samuel 17:26,36; 2 Kgs 19:4,16; Isaiah 37:4,17; and Daniel 6:20 & 26; the living God is Elohim (Gentiles involved). Psalms 84:2 connects EL with Jehovah, and Psalms 42:2 connects Elohim and EL. Isaiah 37:4,17 and Jeremiah 10:10, 23:36 not only mention the living God, but also connect Elohim and Jehovah. In other words, whatever the title used for God, the reference to "the living God" is to the same *One* God.

Now, turn briefly to some of the New Testament references to "the living God". Acts 14:15 refers not just to the living God, but adds "which made heaven and earth", i.e. the Creator, Elohim. Romans 9:26 is a direct quotation from Hosea 1:10, which is a reference to EL. The references in 2 Corinthians 3:3, 6:16; 1 Thessalonians 1:9; 1 Timothy 3:15, 4:10 & 6:17; Hebrews 3:12, 9:14, 10:31, & 12:22; and Revelation 7:2 are to Theos which corresponds with Elohim of the Old Testament. It is the same term as used in John 1:1 where God is the One Who was "in the beginning"; and in Acts 17:24 is directly attributed with being the Creator. And this God was the one

who became the "revealed God". The only way in which God could reveal Himself to man was to shed His glory and come to earth in a form which man could not only look on, but be able to relate to in a better manner. We know that the Word became flesh. The contexts of 1 Timothy 3:15, 4:10, & 6:17 point to Christ as "the living God" and therefore the same Being. Read 1 Timothy 3:16: "**And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in Spirit seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.**" This is not a different God. This is the same God, Creator, Almighty, the covenant Jehovah, the only One Who is to be worshipped — who was the revealed God, because He had chosen to reveal Himself. See 1 Peter 1:20-21 also. He was "manifest". The Greek word here, *phaneroo*, means "to bring to light". That is, we could now "see" Him. That was the difference. He had been revealed.

In article six, we will see what the Old Testament says about Christ. We will look at some very important prophetic statements about Him and cross-reference them to show how these prophecies were fulfilled in Christ.

L.A.

Wise Sayings:

On Truth or Tradition

"Tradition is like the tether which prevents an animal from getting a blade of grass beyond the length of that tether". *E.W. Bullinger*

"If ye continue in My word, then ye are My disciples indeed; And ye know the truth and the truth shall make you free." (Jn 8:31,32) *Jesus*

The Deity Of Christ #6

What did the Old Testament prophecy about Christ? How do we know these were fulfilled? We have drawn a few references from the Old Testament, and have indicated that there is a correspondence in the New Testament.

OLD TESTAMENT CONNECTIONS

The Old and New Testaments often have a one-to-one correspondence. We need to look at some of these in order to make the connection between the Deity of the Old Testament and Christ in the new. In fact, when one reads of a quality of God, or a title or epithet, we should try and cross-reference this. More often than not, there is a corresponding one. It is not possible to look at every one, but we will look at a sampling below. While doing so, keep in mind that Christ is referenced in the Old Testament, too, although in different terms. For example, we believe that Isaiah 9:6 refers to Christ, His deity, and names some of His various titles and attributes: "**For unto us a Child is**

born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

There is also Isaiah 7:14 which is referenced in Matthew 1:23. "**Therefore the LORD (Jehovah) Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.**" (In Mt 1:23) "**which being interpreted is, God with us.**"

There cannot be two Immanuel Gods. So, when we read Isaiah 8:8,10 it becomes clear that this is still the One God that we have been talking about all along.

The next time, we will continue to look at one-to-one correspondence between Old and New Testament concepts, and how they related to the God of the Old Testament, and Christ of the New Testament, and how they are, therefore, ONE.

L. A.

Bible Explorations is a joint effort by a group of believers. Articles submitted are not necessarily the view point of the group collectively. Free to anyone upon request.

"**He telleth the number of the stars; He calleth them all by their names. Great is our Lord, and of great power: His understanding is infinite.**" (Ps. 147:4,5.)

JEHOVAH

I Am the God of the stars:
They do not lose their way,
Not one do I mislay;
Their times are in My Hands,
They move at My Command.
I Am the God of the stars:
Today as yesterday;
The God of thee and thine-
Less thine they are than Mine,
And shall Mine go astray?
I Am the God of the stars:
Lift up thine eyes and see,
Into eternity
And stand thy heart on Me.

Amy Carmichael