

WHY DID JESUS BECOME A MAN?

By Lorri MacGregor

Last article we discussed how Jesus is truly Deity, that is, He is God according to Scripture. Jehovah's Witnesses deny this fact, mainly by using all the Scriptures dealing with the humility or humanity of Jesus. Jesus is unique in that He is God, but for a short time He functioned as a man while on earth. This did not mean He lost His Deity and was merely a man, for Colossians 2:8-9 says He had "... all the fullness of Deity... in bodily form."

Why was it necessary for Jesus to become a man? This was the only way mankind could be redeemed, because of God's perfect justice. Remember how, under the Old Law Covenant, it was "an eye for an eye," and "a tooth for a tooth"? So also, since Adam, a perfect man, lost eternal life for us, Jesus Christ, a perfect man, could redeem it back. Romans, chapter 5:12,15 explains:

Therefore, just as through ONE MAN sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the ONE MAN, Jesus Christ, abound to the many.

Truly, Jesus Christ, "God with us," did function as a man on earth. He performed His miracles in the power of the Holy Spirit, and promised His disciples, "the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do" (John 14:12). The disciples were mere men empowered by the Holy Spirit, and yet were promised that they could carry on as Jesus did. Jesus truly functioned as a man while on earth, fulfilling all the requirements to redeem us from Adam's sin.

DID JESUS EVER SAY HE WAS INFERIOR TO THE FATHER?

The cult groups denying the Deity of Jesus Christ always use Scriptures from the time of His humanity, and try to apply them to His Deity. A favorite example is John 14:28, quoting Jesus, "...the Father is greater than I" (NAS).

Is Jesus saying He is inferior to the Father? No, if Jesus wanted to say He was inferior, He would have said, "The Father is BETTER than I." The Greek word for "better" means "higher in nature." Jesus did not use that word, since He is not inferior, or lower in nature than the Father, as the cults teach.

Jesus used the Greek word for "greater," which means "higher in position." While Jesus was humbled, emptied, functioning as a man, the Father was in a higher position. This would be much like the President and Vice-President of a company. The President is in a higher position than the Vice-President but, by nature, they are both men and equal.

At this point the Jehovah's Witnesses will probably ask how Jesus could be on earth as "God with us," and the Father could be in heaven, also as God. Jesus even prayed to the Father while on earth. The answer is found in Isaiah 55:9: "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (NAS). Luke 1:37 agrees, "For nothing will be impossible with God" (NAS).

We should never try to limit God to our human understanding. If God chooses to be manifest on earth as Jesus Christ and, at the same time, be in heaven as the Father, He can do anything He wants to do! "God is spirit..." and does not have our limitations.

JESUS' CLAIMS WHILE ON EARTH

"For this cause therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, MAKING HIMSELF EQUAL WITH GOD" (JOHN 5:18 NAS, emphasis ours).

"'I and the Father are one.' The Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, 'I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?' The Jews answered Him, 'For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make YOURSELF OUT TO BE GOD'" (John 10:30-33 NAS, emphasis ours).

If Jesus had been claiming to be only "a god" as Jehovah's Witnesses and others teach, then He would not have been charged with "blasphemy." Jesus knew He was God, His disciples worshiped Him, eyewitnesses testified to His claims to be God, and the whole church believed Acts 20:28, which tells the elders, "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of GOD, which HE PURCHASED WITH HIS OWN BLOOD."

While He was on earth, Jesus was subject (not inferior) to His Heavenly Father, and this subjection or submission appears to continue until the full establishment of the New Heavens and New Earth. Subject, YES, inferior, NO!

JESUS CALLS HIMSELF THE "I AM"

In the gospel of John, chapter 8, we find Jesus disputing with the religious leaders. He spoke of knowing Abraham: "The Jews therefore said to Him, 'You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?' Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I AM.' Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple" (John 8:57-59 NAS).

Why were the Jews so angry and ready to stone Jesus? It was because He took the Memorial Name of God to all generations, and applied it to Himself. Those Jews knew very well the account in Exodus, chapter three, where Moses was about to go in before Pharaoh, and was in dialogue with God.

"Then Moses said to God, 'Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I shall say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' Now they may say to me, 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?' And God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM;' and He said 'Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you'" (Exodus 3:13,14 NAS).

Here we find a plain answer to a plain question. Moses asked God's name, and God said it was "I AM." God then went on to reveal a second name, "YHWH." He concluded the giving of both names by saying, "... This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations" (Exodus 3:15 NAS).

Jesus used the first-revealed name in John 8:58, declaring that He was the "I AM." How important is it that we believe Jesus' statement concerning His identity? John 8:24 tells us, "I said therefore to you, that you shall die in your sins; for UNLESS YOU BELIEVE THAT I AM, you shall die in your sins."

We must believe that Jesus is the "I AM" or Deity, or we will die in our sins, without salvation. The leaders of the Jehovah's Witnesses have extensively distorted their Bible in these key areas. Beware of the New World Translation! It is vitally important that Christians be able to defend the Deity of Jesus Christ to the cults.

THE FAITHFUL FINISH OF JESUS' EARTHLY LIFE

"Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God, the Father" (Philippians 2:9-11 NAS).

Yes, Jesus is exalted in the heavens, having perfectly redeemed us. In three worlds, in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, every knee SHALL BOW in worship to Jesus Christ. I tell the Jehovah's Witnesses, you can either worship Jesus now WILLINGLY in the Day of Salvation, or you will worship Him UNWILLINGLY in the Day of Judgment. Do not refuse Jesus the worship He is due as God.

IN CONCLUSION

We need to rise to the defense of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who is truly God and truly man. We need to tell the cults with the authority of God's word behind us, that Jesus Christ is not any kind of a "secondary god," or the "archangel Michael," or "merely a good man." Jesus Christ is the ONLY mediator between God and man. We close with Acts 4:12: "And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved."